

ST. JUST AND CAPE CORNWALL

South West

Distance: 4.8 miles

St Just-in-Penwith is a town boasting many layers of history. It began as a monastic settlement before becoming a medieval village, and then evolved to become a mining town in the 19th century. Because of this, owners interested in history are sure to enjoy the route, while all the old buildings and varying terrain keep things exciting for even the more discerning four-legged Rambler.



Let's Begin



Set off from the Market Square (there are two squares so make sure your owner doesn't get muddled up). The one you want is next to the Wellington Hotel.



Walk down Church Street, keeping the church itself on your left. You might want to tell your owner that the church you see in front of you is a 1334 rebuild of the original and it houses two medieval wall paintings, but don't be surprised if you just get sshhed: I'm yet to meet an owner who speaks dog, but we must keep trying mustn't we?



Carry on past the rows of lovely granite houses - pretending you're not jealous of the dogs that live there - and on to Venton Square East. Turn a slight left down the path there. You'll pass the granite house with steps outside. This used to be the St Just's National Church School.



When you reach the bottom of the path, take a left turn along the road, keeping a watchful eye on your owner all the time as there is traffic about on this road. Get on the footpath as soon as you can and follow the road round to where it meets the B3306 St Just-St Ives road at Nancherrow. Just before you reach the junction you'll pass Old Foundry Close, where mining equipment was made in the 19th century.



At the junction, cross the B3306 and head along the narrow lane opposite, which leads you into the Kenidjack Valley. This used to be one of the area's most prominent mining sites, as you'll see from all the old buildings. It was a bustling hamlet with a bakery, smithy and even a Poor House. I recommend having a really good sniff about - it's very rewarding.



Shortly, the lane you are on will become a track snaking up the valley side; stay on it and keep right when you reach both the first fork and then the second fork in the lane. The second fork will present views of the Kenidjack Valley to the left as well as Cape Cornwall and its imposing chimney. Now's a good time for a good old scratch while your owner takes in their surroundings.

Stay on the track as it bears right, keeping your eyes peeled for views of mine workings and more industrial chimneys, as their appearance means it's time to turn down a small path (the Coast Path) that juts off to the left and back of the track. When you see it, turn left along this path.



Your owner should be encouraged to look back over their shoulder at the views of the Crowns Mines - coastal mines nestled haphazardly in the face of the cliff - as they make their way along the Coast Path. A bark or two wouldn't go amiss to make them turn round - they really are great views.



Carry on along the path until you get to the ruins of Kenidjack Castle set on a headland. Enjoy the views over Cape Cornwall and, further back, the rocks of the Brisons. Even further out to sea you'll be able to make out the Lighthouse of the Longships, which is just off Land's End. Imagine doing the doggy paddle all that way. Tires me out just thinking about it!



Take the Coast Path down to the left of the ruins and you'll come to a stone stile over a wall. Leap over and make your way down to a track.



When you reach the track, take a left. You'll be strolling along above several more mining remains in the valley below.



When you come to a fork in the road, bear right so that you're going down into the valley. This makes for a particularly good pace, and while we all know that four feet are better than two, don't rub it in and leave your owner behind.

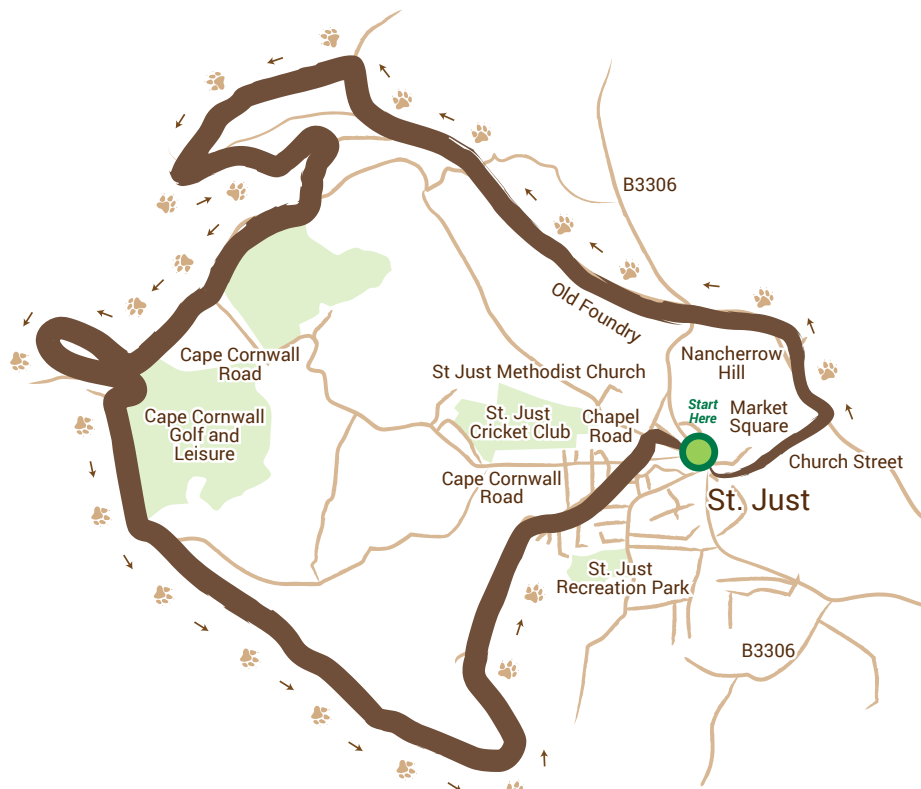


When you reach the bottom of the valley, turn left and then go along the next path you see on the right, heading for the old workings. Cross over the footbridge. This valley used to be a hubbub of industry, with 50 working watermills. You'll also see the ruins of the Kenidjack Arsenic Works to the left of your path. All very interesting facts, but how to communicate them to your owner? I usually settle for a lick of the hand.



Before long, the path will start to ascend the other side of the valley. When you get to a meeting of paths, go right so that you're walking along the edge of the valley.





Cape Cornwall



Crowns Mines

You'll come to a junction by a house called Wheal Call, and the path you're on will then reach an access road leading to Cape Cornwall. Turn right.

Cape Cornwall is England's only cape: a fact that my owner finds very exciting. I rather prefer the fact that in 1987 the Cape was bought by Heinz. It was donated to the National Trust later, but it's still an interesting fact if you're as fascinated by food as I am.

Of course you'll want to take a look at the Cape for yourself, so go along the path through the field next to the road, going through a stile and out into the field which has a ruined building in it. These ruins are again worth a sniff around, as they mark the spot of one of the earliest Christian sites in this part of Cornwall, St Helen's Oratory.

Carry on past these ruins and over a stone stile in the corner of the field. Resist the urge to scamper through the gap you'll see in the wall - this is the wrong way! - and instead take the path after the stile.

When you reach an outcrop of rocks, turn left uphill.

While the ascent may leave you tongue-out and slightly unimpressed, the view out to Land's End will cheer your owner up and really, isn't that all that matters? And dog biscuits of course, love those dog biscuits.

When they've finished staring, take your pick from one of the paths down the hill.

If you fancy stopping off at the National Coastwatch Institution's lookout, take the track on the right which passes the buildings.

If not, and the urge for your next bowl of miscellaneous meaty chunks is driving you on, head back down towards the car park. Just before you reach it however, take a right down the track and go down the steps after the gate.

Take a left up the tarmac path and when you come to the junction take a sharp right and back. It's rather a steep ascent, but it'll be worth it to end on a high (surely that pun earns me a doggy treat?). When you reach the road at the top, go on ahead then take a right that strays off the lane - opposite the trig point.

If you look to the left, in the space between the lane and the path, you'll see the walls of Ballowall Barrow. This National Trust-managed construction is a unique Bronze Age tomb with a long history as a sacred site. It was excavated in 1878 by Cornish antiquarian William Borlase, and it's free to look around. What's more, (and most importantly) dogs on leads are welcome.

Staying on the Coast Path, you can carry on along the clifftop and pass several capped mine shafts before following the path as it snakes down and round into Cot Valley, where it joins a lane. If the urge to feel the sand between your paws takes hold, it's worth noting that dogs are always allowed on the beaches at Cot Valley, no matter what time of year it is. Just the way it should be, if you ask me.

When you reach the lane at Cot Valley, take a left. This will take you off the Coast Path (which turns right) and will send you up the lane. Follow its many twists until you find yourself back in St Just. When you reach the junction at the top turn right then left, shuffling past the car park and back - tongue hanging out by now - to Market Square. Oh, and hopefully a cosy blanket for a good old sit down.

