

St Anthony Head Access Statement

St Anthony Head, Near Portscatho, Truro TR2 5HA

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<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/st-anthony-head>



Welcome

- On the tip of the Roseland peninsula, St Anthony Head offers commanding views across the Fal estuary and beyond to St Mawes, Falmouth and the Lizard Peninsula. Famed for its military history for centuries, there are big guns, batteries and fortifications to discover. With level paths from the National Trust car park to the headland, there's easy exploring for everyone
- Mobile phone reception is good

Directions

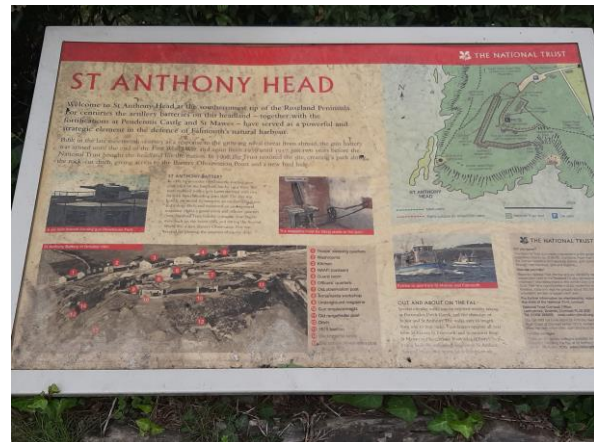
- From the A390 St Austell to Truro road, take the A3078 to St Mawes. At Trewithian, take the left turn signposted Gerrans/Portscatho. Continue through the villages onto Porth and St Anthony Head. These are narrow country roads which are single track in places, so be prepared to pull in or reverse to let other vehicles through
- Alternatively, if you are starting from Truro, you could take the iconic King Harry car ferry across the River Fal to the Roseland Peninsula. The ferry is about one kilometre past the entrance to the National Trust's Trelissick House and Gardens. On leaving the ferry, take the road past the village of Philleigh or drive via St Just in Roseland to Trewithian on the A3708 and then on to Gerrans and St Anthony Head

Public transport

- There is a (passenger only) water taxi from St Mawes to Place Quay
- There is a Western Greyhound 550 bus from Truro to St Mawes

Parking

- The level car park has a compacted gravel surface
- There is a pay and display machine at the entrance to the car park. Members park free of charge
- There is an information board at the end of the car park near the National Trust holiday cottages. This explains the military history of the site



*Left: looking back into the car park from the path to the holiday cottages
Right: information board*

Toilets

Beyond the car park lie the former military buildings which once formed the officers' quarters. These are now National Trust holiday cottages, two of which (The Captain's Quarter and the Major's Quarter) are adapted for wheelchair users. Three of the cottages form a terrace set back from the path and a further small cottage, Tiffy's, stands near the start of the coastal footpath. The disabled toilet is on the far side of Tiffy's. There is another public toilet building a little further along next to St Anthony's Battery.



NT Holiday cottages with Tiffy's, the flat roofed square building, at the far end. The disabled toilet is on the other side of Tiffy's

- All the public toilets on this site, including the accessible disabled toilet have had to be closed due to Covid restrictions during the Winter of 2020/21. We hope to open the facilities again from Easter 2021, probably from 9 am to 5.30 pm. As soon as restrictions are over, the toilets will remain open for 24 hours a day
- Access to the disabled toilet is level and runs past the National Trust holiday cottages. It is about 30 metres from the car park

- There is a short shallow concrete ramp from the grass into the disabled toilet building
- The door is 93 cm wide
- The toilet is 45 cm high and is right hand transfer
- The handrail on the right-hand side is 79 cm high
- There is a 26 cm gap on the right-hand side of the toilet and a 60 cm gap on the left.
- There is a 155 cm clear space in front of the toilet
- There is a washbasin with a lever tap
- There is a hand dryer and a sanitary bin
- There is an obscured glazed window letting in natural light and a bulkhead light on the wall



Left: Ramp to disabled toilet

Right: interior disabled toilet



Places to eat and drink

- There are no refreshment facilities at St Anthony's Head but there is a café at Porth, 3 kilometres away

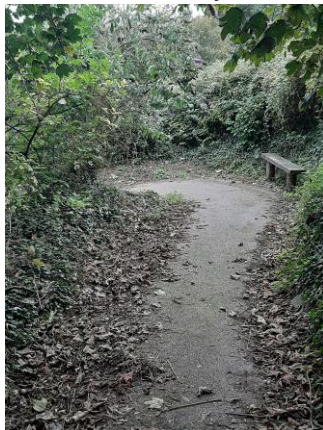
Designated walking trail / footpaths / viewpoints

- There are good views across the estuary to Falmouth from the car park itself
- The main viewpoint is at the headland from where you can see across the bay to St Mawes, Falmouth and along the coast to the Lizard Peninsula
- The coastal path starts just beyond Tiffy's holiday cottage and there is a simple bench just at the beginning of this stretch. The bench is 49 cm high and has no back rest or arm rests
- 60 metres further along the coastal path lies St Anthony's Head itself which is a good place to picnic. There is a further simple bench here which is 79cm high and has no arm rests or back rest
- The buildings forming the former Battery are built into the ground under the headland and there are some steep drops down to them, so please keep to the coast path
- Continuing along the coast path, you will eventually reach a kissing gate through which the path leads on across Kilgerran Head and along the coast to Porth and Portscatho



*Left: first bench on the coast path just beyond Tiffy's holiday cottage
Right: St Anthony Head looking back in the direction of the car park*

- Just beyond the car park and next to the information board is a wheelchair accessible sloping path down to the Battery Observation Post and bird hide
- The first section of the sloping wheelchair path is 140 m long. This leads to a left-hand fork signposted to the bird hide which is 320 m further along. (The path going straight ahead leads down to the coastal footpath and on round to Place, but it is fairly steep and there are stiles and rough ground along the coast path itself.)
- As you make your way to the bird hide you will pass two separate quiet viewpoints, each with a simple bench. These look across to Falmouth and the Lizard. These are both accessed via a short slope up from the path
- Before you reach the bird hide, you will see the former Battery Observation post with its concrete window openings high up in the wall looking across the bay to the Lizard.
- The small bird hide at the end of the path looks down to a small beach and across to high cliffs where you can sometimes see Peregrine Falcons and other birds




*Left: sloping wheelchair accessible path down to route to bird hide
Right: level path to bird hide*





Left above: path up to first viewpoint on the bird hide path
 Right above: access to second viewpoint on the bird hide path

Right: Information about the Observation Post


THE NATIONAL TRUST


BATTERY OBSERVATION POST

You are standing in the Battery Observation Post (BOP), built during the Second World War, and manned by signallers, telephonist, gun control officers and clerks.

Their role was to identify enemy ships, and measure their distance, course and speed using a depression position finder and a depression range finder. They would make calculations which would allow for the change in position of moving targets during the flight time of the shell. All this information would be relayed to the gun crews in the battery, via the command centre at Pendennis.


After the war the building was abandoned and allowed to deteriorate. In 1997 the National Trust restored the building and the painted panorama above the observation window was recreated by students from Falmouth College of Art. The Trust laid a new walk along the rock-cut ditch leading to the BOP and, further on, a bird hide (see below).

- 1 The depression position finder tracked far-off targets by telescope, calculating their position.
- 2 The depression range finder tracked closer range, fast moving targets, such as motor torpedo boats.
- 3 The two searchlights at the water's edge were controlled from here.
- 4 Stereoscopic binoculars provided a rough estimate of the range and bearing of targets (marked).
- 5 Telephone lines kept the Observation Post in touch with the Battery Plotting Room and the gun crews.
- 6 A time of flight indicator was a warning bell which sounded three seconds before a shell hit the target.
- 7 A painted panorama provided a visual aid for identifying the geographical position of enemy targets.




Using the stereoscopic binoculars


BIRDLIFE
 The cliffs here, and at Zane Point and Killigerran Head, provide superb vantage points for observing seabirds. Kittiwakes and tall-winged fulmars glide across the vertical rock. For an extraordinary and sharp perspective on the rocks below the lighthouse, and ducking parties of gannets patrol offshore, individually during high tides into the waves in groups of twos, or threes. You can get a closer look at breeding seabirds from the bird hide, just to the east of the Battery Observation Post. If you're lucky you might even spot a pair of porpoises frolics swimming over a cliff ledge.



Feeding bottlenose




Cutaway diagram of the Battery Observation Post



Bottlenose dolphins

ST ANTHONY LIGHTHOUSE
 Just south of the entrance to Falmouth harbour lies the Minster reef, whose rocks have gained the bulk of hundreds of ships. In the past, large red flag were flown as rudimentary navigational aids, and it was not until 1713 that Trinity House engineer James Walker built St Anthony lighthouse to guide shipping into the estuary. A large fog bell was hung outside the tower, replaced by a horn in 1914 when the paraffin lamps were converted to electricity. Automated in 1978, the lighthouse (www.nationaltrust.co.uk) was used in the opening credits to the children's TV series *Jungle Book*.



St Anthony Lighthouse

MARINE LIFE
 The muddy rocks of the Fall Estuary, famous for their eel-pot beds, and the rocky shores around St Anthony Head are designated a Special Area of Conservation for their variety of marine wildlife. Highly-coloured sea slug and anemone live on the moist exposed reef of St Marys Bank, while combated and scallop beds soothe the shores of the nearby red grass beds – an rock-water meadow of flowering marine plants. In summer you're likely to see the large, swirling fins of large herring shoals, feeding on plankton, and pods of bottlenose dolphins are year-round visitors.



*Above: Inside the bird hide
Right: a view from the hide*



Beach

- The nearest beach is Great Molunan, a beautiful sandy cove accessed off the coast path towards Place. However, the beach can only be reached by clambering down rocks with the help of a knotted rope anchored to the ground, so it is not accessible. There is a footpath opposite the Pay & Display machine at the entrance to the car park which leads down onto the main coast path and over to Molunan, but this path is steep and can be muddy. It includes a steep section with rough stone steps

Date: December 2020