

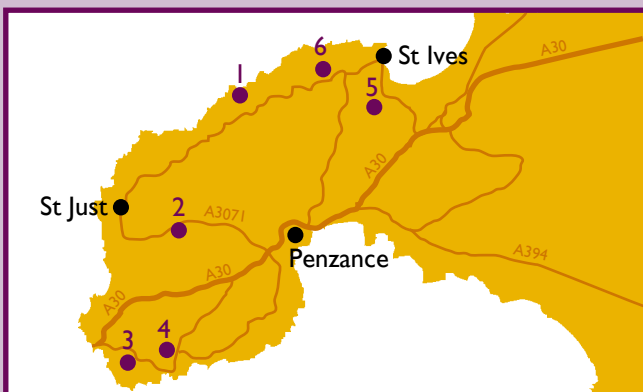


How to get to Baker's Pit

From the A30 at Crowlas, turn west on the B3309 and continue to the T-junction with B3311 at the top of the hill. Turn right and continue until the road drops into Nancledra. At the bottom turn left to Georgia, before a narrow bridge leads into the village. A few hundred yards further on, turn left, then left again (sign-posted to Georgia). Pass Georgia Farm and follow the road, which becomes a track. There is a pull-in on the righthand side, with room for two or three cars.

Other heathland sites in west Cornwall

If you have enjoyed visiting Baker's Pit, why not explore some of the other local heathland sites? The following sites have been supported by the HEATH project and are accessible to visitors. Grid references are supplied for the car park nearest each site using the Ordnance Survey's Explorer 102 'Land's End' map.



1. Carn Galver. Owned by the National Trust. Grid ref: SW 4210 3640
2. Chapel Carn Brea. Owned by the National Trust. Grid ref: SW 4480 3945
3. Roskestal/Ardensawah. Private ownership. Grid ref: SW 3710 2175
4. Treen Cliff. Owned by the National Trust. Grid ref: SW 3950 2295
5. Trecrom Hill. Owned by the National Trust. Grid ref: SW 5175 3590
6. Rosewall Hill. Owned by the National Trust. Grid ref: SW 4880 3945



the **HEATH** project

The HEATH Project (Heathland, Environment, Agriculture, Tourism and Heritage) is funded by the European Interreg programme and the Heritage Lottery Fund and is administered in Cornwall by Natural England. In Cornwall the project covers 58 sites encompassing over 3,500 ha, on the Lizard, in West Penwith and St Agnes. It hopes to rejuvenate heathlands by reconnecting with sites, advocating good land management techniques, encouraging local community involvement and promoting heathlands as a valuable resource.

The Countryside Code

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Project partners:



Supported by:



For more information on this and other nature reserves please contact:

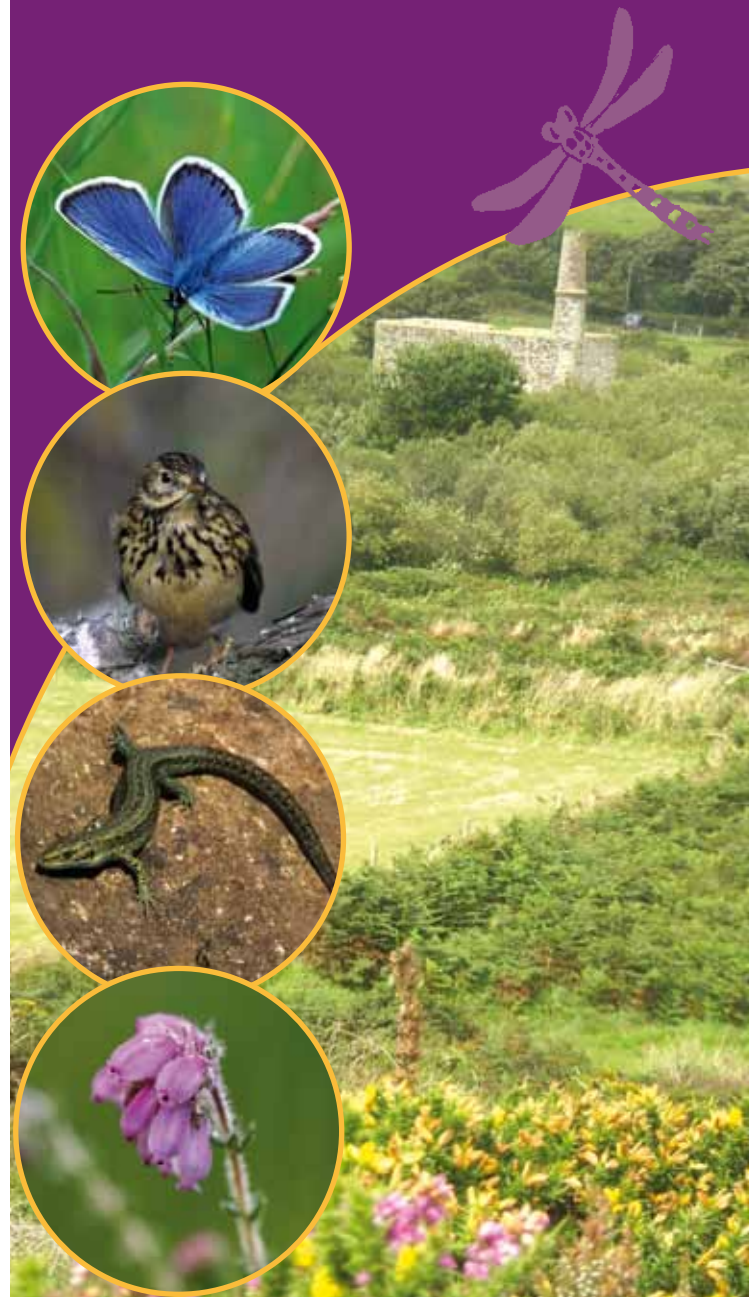
Cornwall Wildlife Trust
Five Acres, Allet, Truro TR4 9DJ.
Tel: (01872) 273939.
Website: www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk



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Heathland self guided trails

Baker's Pit



Welcome to Baker's Pit Nature Reserve

Baker's Pit is a fascinating place with a wealth of wildlife and archaeological features. This large reserve, most recently a china clay works, was gifted to Cornwall Wildlife Trust in 2000 by Imerys. The reserve consists of heathland, some areas of pasture managed by local farmers and open water, created by flooding of the disused clay pits.

This leaflet shows what you might see as you follow the Baker's Pit self guided trail waymarkers around the reserve.

The trail shown inside should take between one and two hours to complete.

The trail paths are clearly defined but the ground is uneven, often very muddy and slippery in places, so suitable footwear should be worn. The trail also passes through kissing gates and over stiles.

Please be aware that cattle are often present on the site during the summer and early autumn months.



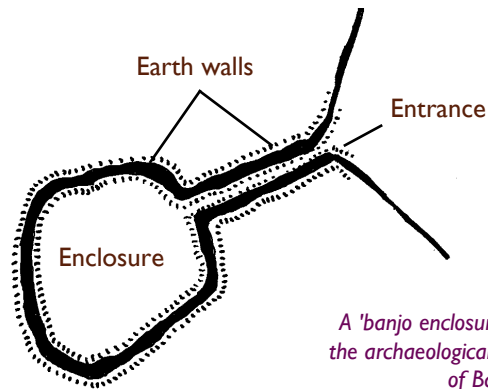
The flooded china clay pit.

Archaeology



As with many heathland sites in Penwith, Baker's Pit has an amazing array of archaeological remains.

Archaeologists have found the remains of 18 Bronze Age roundhouses, the homes of people who farmed here 4000 years ago. In the same area, and dating from the Iron Age (800BC - 43AD), is the only example in Cornwall of a 'banjo enclosure' (see diagram below), with access via a narrow 'funnel'. Overlying these prehistoric remains are narrow medieval strip fields and the obvious holloways (slightly sunken tracks bounded on either side by banks), also likely to date to medieval times.



A 'banjo enclosure' one of the archaeological features of Baker's Pit.

The wonderfully preserved china clay works at Baker's Pit dates to the mid-1800s and in a relatively small area allows you to follow the entire process from the initial quarrying (winning) of the raw material all the way through to the final product, dried china clay.

The clay was packed onto horse-drawn carts for transport to Penzance docks.



The 19th century engine house.

Land management

Most lowland heathlands have been created through a mixture of climatic, geological and in particular human activity dating back to prehistoric times. Since their creation, lowland heathlands have played an essential part in the economy of rural communities in Cornwall, providing extensive grazing and domestic fuel in the form of peat and furze, together with bracken for animal bedding and stone for building.

These uses declined in the 20th century with the result that many of these rough ground areas have become deserted and overgrown with bracken, dense heather, furze and other scrub to the detriment of wildlife and people.

Grazing and small scale controlled burning is vital to the health and rejuvenation of heathland. It restricts the level of scrub invasion and creates a mosaic of ecological niches for plants and animals, making heathlands rich in wildlife.



Heathland in flower



Cutting fire breaks



Scrub cutting



Burning



Cattle grazing

This trail is designed to allow you to walk it at your own pace. It should take approximately one to two hours to complete.

Park your car by the reserve gate, (P) taking care not to block access. Go through the kissing gate to the Information Board. Continue up the track to the 19th century engine house. (1)

1. Engine house

This housed a beam engine which pumped the valuable clay slurry from the clay pit to the settling tanks.

Take the next gate on the right to view the flooded clay Pit. (2)

2. China clay pit

This area is the site of the former china clay pit. Now flooded, it provides a great habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

Return to the track and turn right. Take the next right through a wooden gate, cross the hay meadow and pass through the metal gate. The large mound on your left is a clay waste tip, (3) walk to the mound's summit for views of the whole reserve area.

3. Mound

This mound is actually a tip of waste material from the china clay pit. Climb the steps to the top for some fantastic views.

After enjoying the views return to the trail and follow the waymarkers through a wooden gate to Polhigey, (4) the remains of an 18th century hamlet. Continue through another wooden gate and cross the track ahead, to ascend the hill. Look back for more fine views.

4. Polhigey

Here are the remains of around six buildings which make up this deserted settlement. The name Polhigey comes from the Cornish for 'the ducks' pool'.

At the top of the hill, climb the stile and cross the hedge. Continue along this path for a short while until you reach a T- junction. Turn left and walk downhill along a medieval holloway. To your left is a prominent round mound which is a Bronze Age barrow. (5)

A little further on, if you cross the stile on your right, you can make a short diversion to Castle an Dinas and Roger's Tower, an Iron Age hill fort and 18th century folly, with expansive views over Mount's Bay.

5. Bronze Age Barrow

Probably about 4000 years old, this mound is likely to have been the final resting place of someone important from the local community but may also have been a local shrine.

The Baker's Pit trail continues downhill (on your left through the kissing gate is an alternative route along another medieval holloway back to the car park). For those staying on the main trail, continue straight ahead (downhill).

6. Medieval holloway

Try to imagine people from the medieval period until the early 20th century, leading their livestock onto the moors for summer grazing and carrying home bundles of cut furze to fuel their homes.

To your left is the main heath area (7). At the next junction you meet a stone track, turn left. Once you pass the cattle grid, take the second right turn, which is a fork that takes you to the clay processing works.

7. Grazing

Grazing and trampling helps maintain the heathland, improving it for wildlife, whilst helping to prevent bracken and scrub from taking over.

8. Banjo enclosure

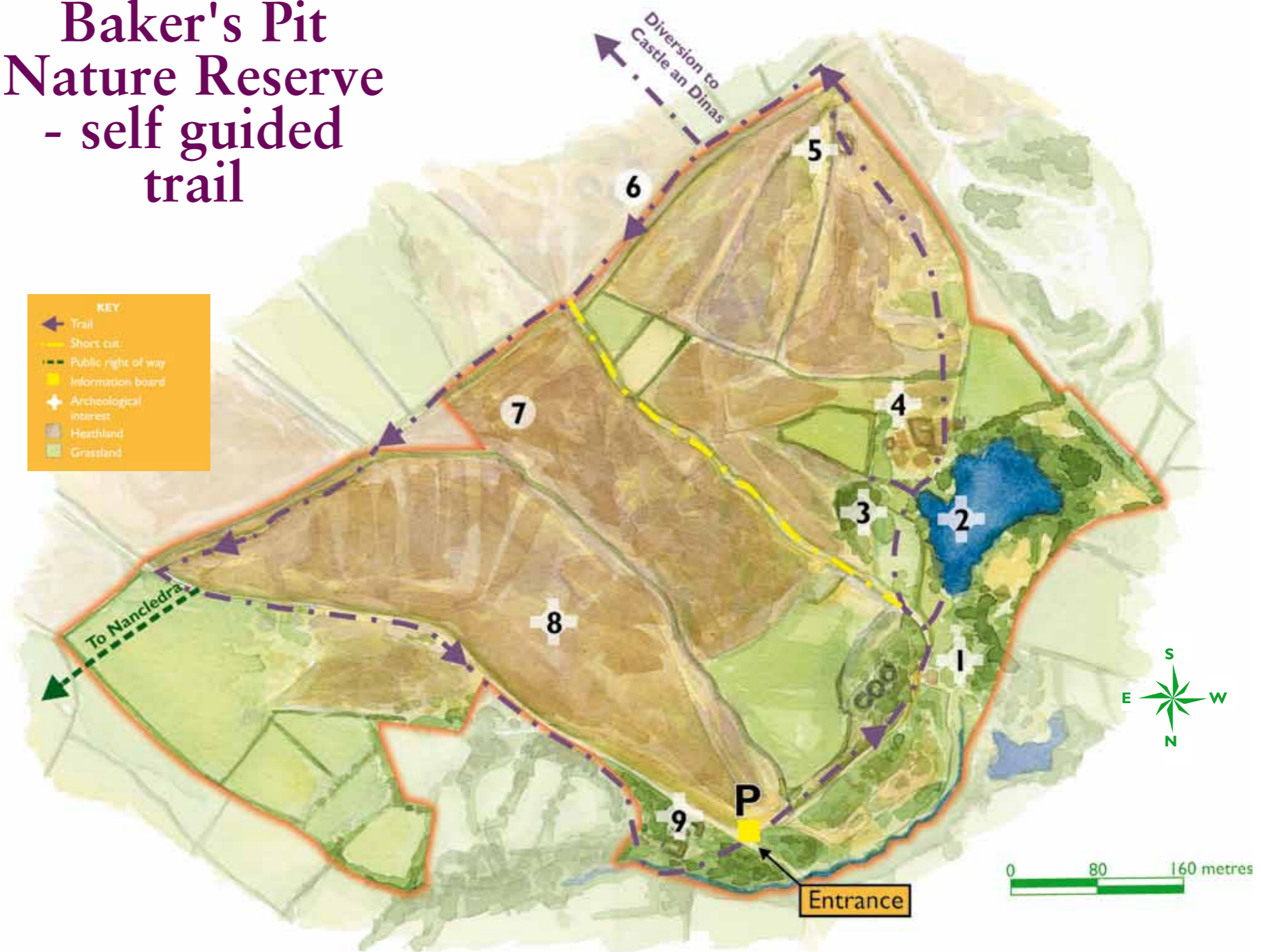
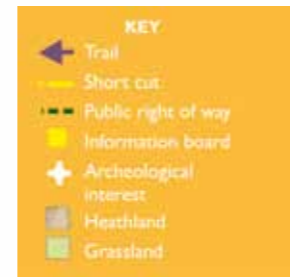
Although not visible under the vegetation, this is the location of the Iron Age enclosure and earlier roundhouse settlement.

Here are the remains of storage tanks and the 'clay dry' with its chimney (9). Take the next left path round the back of the buildings to see the clay dry fire mouths on your left. Continue along this path to the car park.

9. Pan kilns and clay dry

These structures were used for drying the refined clay. The furnace provided heat which was drawn under the clay floor by the chimney.

Baker's Pit Nature Reserve - self guided trail



Common lizards feed on insects, spiders, snails and earthworms. Look out for them basking in the sun during spring and early autumn.



Adders prefer areas of rough open countryside. They eat small rodents, lizards and frogs. In winter several adders will hibernate together in a hibernation den.



Hen harriers are regular winter visitors (October - March) to the Penwith moors, they can be seen coming into the heaths at dusk to roost.



A common heathland butterfly, the **grayling** is camouflaged when at rest, it is on the wing between June and September.



The heathland areas at Baker's Pit are designated as Open Access.