



## LET'S EXPLORE *Gunwalloe*

### YOU WILL NEED

Good shoes or boots for walking on rough paths, a drink and a snack, a camera on a phone. You might want money for an ice cream!

### THEMES

Two beaches, the church of storms, technology, shipwrecks and legends.

### DISTANCE

3km or 2 miles, but with some steep hills. The walk crosses a beach and follows the coast path, which may be muddy after rain.

This church is said to be on the site of a 6th century monastery. Legend has it that St Winwaloe sailed from Brittany in France to Cornwall and landed on this beach. He lived in a hut among the sand dunes, where there is now a bell tower.

Start at the National Trust car park at Gunwalloe. From here turn left out of the carpark and follow the path closest to the beach, keeping the sea on your right, till you find St Winwaloe Church. The church dates from the Middle Ages, but was restored in 1870. The detached tower is thought to be the oldest part. It is the only church on a beach in Cornwall.



This church has another name – “The Church of the Storms”.



Can you think why it might have this name?



Can you find this statue of St Winwaloe?



In the graveyard, look for the two graves of 12-year-old boys, called Ronald Munting and Harry Dale.

Ronald was evacuated to Gunwalloe during the Second World War and should have been safe from the bombings in London. Harry was a local boy.

One day they climbed through the barbed wire, which surrounded the minefield on the beach, and they were killed by the explosion.

Walk out of the church and turn right across the beach. There is a river flowing across this beach all year round.



Can you see the patterns it makes in the sand?



Can you see where the water has worn away the sand to make a channel to flow along? This is how a river makes a valley, by eroding the soil and rocks on each side.



Look for sea holly and thrift growing amongst the sand dunes.



Have you ever wondered how plants can grow on sand? They have adapted specially to deal with these conditions and need very little water or nutrients to survive.



*Extra*

There is an **optional Beach Scavenger Hunt** to do here (see separate sheet) or when you get to Poldhu Beach.



Walk over the wooden footbridge at the back of the beach and continue up the hill, which is quite steep.



**Stop and rest halfway up the hill and look back at the church.**



**Can you see the Tamarisk hedge which surrounds the church?**



**Why do you think that hedge was planted there? (It is called a “windbreak” which is a good name!).**



**On this bit of path you might see a white flower called sea campion. Have a look for it and more thrift as you walk up the hill.**



There have been many **shipwrecks** in this area. Dollar Cove is named after the Spanish coins that have been found from a shipwreck of an 18th century Spanish Galleon. In January 1787, the Rio Nova ran aground in a violent storm. She was carrying 2 tons of coins from Spain to the Bank of England, for safe keeping during their war with France. The ship broke up and spilled the coins into a gully in the bay. The silver coins are still occasionally found on the beaches here.



This area was also used by **smugglers**. The Hazlephron Inn, which you will have passed as you drove to the car park, was built in 1468, making use of timber from various shipwrecks. Many parts of it are hundreds of years old. Within the thick wall between the lounge and the Fishermen's Bar is a shaft leading to a tunnel. It is thought this was connected by a passage to Fishing Cove and used by smugglers.



When you get to the top of the hill, follow the coast path sign to the right. Be careful because the path is close to the edge of the cliff.



**Look for seabirds here. You might see different seagulls, cormorants and oyster catchers.**

Follow the path round the corner and you will have a good view of Poldhu Beach in front of you. This is often used by surfers, if the wind and waves are right.

Follow the road downhill to the beach, cross over the stone bridge.





# The Legend of Lutey

There is a legend about a fisherman called Lutey, who lived at Poldhu. He rescued a mermaid who was stranded on the rocks and she rewarded him by giving him magical powers. These powers were inherited by his descendants who became a powerful class of white witches, called pellars.



Halfway across the bridge, look for this:



Why do you think it has been painted black?



You can walk onto the beach here and visit the café (which sells delicious hot chocolate, snacks and ice cream). There are toilets here.

## Extra

There is an **optional Beach Scavenger Hunt** here (see separate sheet) if you chose not to do it at Church Cove.



Look for this sculpture among the sand dunes. Can you see what it is called? (There is a metal plaque with writing low down.) It was made with reclaimed timber from Falmouth docks.



Can you see the long grass that grows in the sand dunes?

It is called marram grass and it is the first plant to colonise sand. It has tough roots which bind the sand together so it doesn't blow around. The dunes then become stable. When the marram grass is established, other plants, like sea holly and thrift, can move in and grow. Marram grass was once harvested by local people all over Cornwall. They used it to weave mats for barn roofs and for fishing nets.



Leave the beach and turn right, following the sign to **Marconi Centre**, near the cafe. Follow the tarmacked driveway towards the big house on the hill. Continue straight till you see a sign to the left for the Marconi Centre. Take this path to the left.



There is a large board with information about Marconi and how important this site was for technology and telecommunications. Go through the gate and straight ahead to the monument. There is lots of information on the 4 plaques around the monument. Can you find the answers to these questions on the monument?



**What year were the first wireless signals sent across the Atlantic?**



**What was the name of Marconi's yacht?**



**What was the Poldhu Wireless Station used for?**

Marconi's work marked the beginning of modern telecommunications and wireless technology.

You can walk back to Poldhu Beach by the same route, or go back on the coast path which has lots of steep steps, but great views!

Walk back to Church Cove, cross the wooden bridge again and go straight on past some reed beds. Stop here to listen.



**Can you hear the wind rustling the reeds?**



**Can you hear any birds?**



**What sort of creatures might live here in this habitat?**

Walk to one of the beaches so you can see the sea; there are 2 to choose from (one either side of the church). Find somewhere to sit and be still for a few minutes.

## READY TO REFLECT?

Pilgrims walk to get to a destination, but also to come closer to God. Pilgrims make their journeys with God and find time to pray and thank him for the world.

Sit or stand still on the beach. Listen to the sea, watch the waves, be still and quiet and breathe deeply for 2 minutes. Think about nature, the changing seasons, the trees, plants, the animals and insects. Christians believe that God created the world and everything in it.

If you want to, say a prayer to thank God for the wonderful world we live in and for all the beautiful things in nature around us.



## TIME TO PLAY

Can you create a piece of beach art here, using the natural materials on the beach?

It could be a picture of a Celtic cross or a sea creature, or anything else. Take a photo to post on Instagram so we can all see it.

You might like to get more involved with nature, join a beach clean up to help support wildlife, or create something at home in your garden to help nature. Discuss it with your family.



Congratulations! You have completed the Gunwalloe Micro Pilgrimage.  
Now it's time to walk back to the car park.

**DON'T FORGET TO POST & TAG YOUR PHOTOS ON INSTAGRAM: #PILGRIMEXPLORERS**



*Join us for  
another pilgrimage  
adventure soon!*

