



LET'S EXPLORE *St Michael's Mount*

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 ice cream!

THEMES

Wildlife, legends, history, pilgrims.

DISTANCE

4km or 2.5 miles of easy walking. The walk goes through Marazion marshes and across the beach, so it could be muddy and wet underfoot.

Start at **Marazion Station carpark**. There used to be a railway station here which was opened in 1852. In the 1890s, it was important for handling fish, fruit and vegetables from the surrounding farms and harbours, which were taken by train up to Truro and other towns.



Can you see the old station building?

Walk across the road (be careful because it can be busy) and turn right. Stay on the pavement beside Marazion marshes, walking towards the village. It may not look very interesting, but this is an important habitat for wildlife. This is the largest area of reed beds in Cornwall and it is home to 500 insect species and over 250 bird species.





Look out for a small gap in the hedge on your left, where you can walk into the wildlife sanctuary. Follow the path down to the water and stand still. Look and listen. You might be lucky and see a heron, or swans, geese or ducks here.



Can you hear any birds calling?



Walk along, keeping the water on your left, looking and listening. You will reach another path to the left, which leads into the marshes area. Follow this path for a little way. There are benches in various places so you can sit and watch and listen.



In Spring and Summer...

... you might see herons, swans and ducks nesting or swallows swooping down to catch insects and you might hear reed and sedge warblers (strange whirring calls). You might see yellow flag irises and marsh marigolds flowering.

In Autumn and Winter...

... starlings gather to roost in the reeds at dusk. They fly together in amazing aerobatic displays called “murmurations”. The rarest bird here is the bittern, which is a large brown bird like a heron. It is very secretive and walks about in the reeds, catching fish.

The reed beds are managed by the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). Every winter, work is done to cut down the trees which invade the marshes and clear areas so that fish will thrive.

You will have to turn round and walk back out of the marsh area on the same path. Go back to the road, cross over (carefully) and find a small path through the sand dunes.



Turn left and follow the path over a footbridge, which is alongside the road bridge.



Can you see what year the road bridge was built in?



Continue straight on, crossing the large carpark and find the paved walkway above the beach with great views of St Michael's Mount on your right. You will see a large play park on the left and toilets as well. Walk past the **Lifeguard building**.



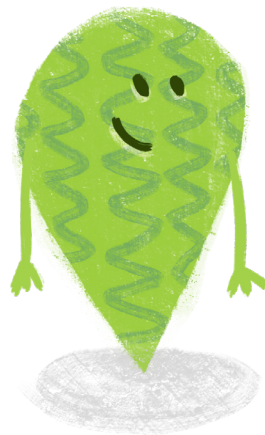
Can you find this stone memorial?



Can you see what year HMS Warspite ran aground?



What was her nickname?



Continue walking into the village. You will pass a very narrow building called **Chapel Rock Café**.



Why do you think it has this name?



Why is it so narrow?



Continue walking into the village.





Can you find these two statues of sea creatures in **Marazion village**?



Look for the **Town Hall** on the left (it has bright red doors).



Can you see a date on this building? (Look up!).

Continue walking until you come to the **War Memorial** on the left of the road, opposite the **church**.



Can you see a Celtic Cross here?

There are thousands of Celtic crosses in Cornwall, some beside roads, some on wild open moorland and some in graveyards and cemeteries. A Celtic cross always has a circle joining the 4 parts of the cross together.

Look at the gates in front of the **war memorial**.



Can you see the music notes?



The hymn is "Abide with me" which has been an important song for sailors and people at sea for hundreds of years.



Cross over the road, carefully and go inside **All Saints Church**, if it is open.

You will see a huge painting of Cornish legends, with a picture of St Michael, the archangel, warning sailors about danger.



READY TO RELECT?

Sit quietly in church for a few minutes and think about all the people who have worshipped and prayed here for hundreds of years. Take time to breathe deeply, relax and enjoy the peace and quiet. What can you see? What can you smell? How does it make you feel? If you want to, perhaps you can say a prayer to God, thanking Him for the good things in your life and asking Him to protect you on this journey and on your life's journey.



Walk back to the beach and sit with a good view of St Michael's Mount. Read about the legends which belong to St Michael's Mount.

The story of St Michael

St Michael is the leader of the angels and is often painted with a sword as he fights against the devil. It is said that the archangel St Michael appeared on the western side of the island – below where the entrance to the castle is today – to warn fishermen of certain peril. It's a legend which has brought pilgrims, monks and people of faith to the island ever since, to pray, to praise and to celebrate.

Extra

Go across to the island, either on the causeway or by boat. You can walk round the harbour for free, but you need to pay for entry to the castle, unless you are National Trust members. Check for opening times: <https://www.stmichaelsmount.co.uk/>



A giant legend

A long time ago a giant called Cormoran lived on St Michael's Mount. He was a vicious giant who raided the local farms every night for cows and sheep to eat.

One day, a young lad named Jack decided that he was tired of the giant's behaviour and he took the matter into his own hands. The brave young man went over to St Michael's Mount, while the giant was sleeping, and dug a huge pit at the bottom of the hillside.

Jack then blew loudly on his horn, loud enough to awaken the giant and enrage him. The giant stormed out of his bedroom and ran down the hillside, where he was swallowed up by the hole in the ground. Jack made sure he was dead by killing him with a pickaxe.

When the people of Cornwall heard about Jack's great victory, they gave him a parade and declared that from then on, he must be referred to as "Jack the Giant Killer". Jack then went on many adventures becoming a great hero and slaying several more giants.

HISTORY

This is one of the most distinctive and spectacular spots in Cornwall. The mount is only actually an island at high tide, but is joined to the mainland by a rocky causeway at low tide. A Celtic monastery existed on the Mount between the 8th and 11th centuries.

Then in 1050 Edward the Confessor granted the land to the Norman Benedictine Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel. However it was not until 1135- c.1150 that a Benedictine Monastery was built here. It started off with only 12 monks. The Benedictine community here survived until 1425.

The castle was then owned by the St Aubyn family and has stayed in that family ever since. It is now shared with the National Trust. You can visit and walk around some of the rooms, the gardens and battlements.

TIME TO PLAY

Can you create a sandcastle in the shape of St Michael's Mount?

You can use any natural materials you find on the beach.

You can take a photo of your creation and post it on Instagram.



READY TO RELECT?

Congratulations! You have completed the St Michael's Mount Micro Pilgrimage. Sit quietly for a few minutes.

Pilgrims have visited St Michael's Mount for hundreds of years, believing it to be a holy place. Think about how many thousands of feet have walked over the causeway to the castle: pilgrims, soldiers, family members and visitors.

Pilgrims go on journeys in order to get closer to God. They travel to a holy spot to pray and find peace. Use this time to sit and reflect.

The world is a beautiful place. Look at the sea, the sky, and the people coming and going. Christians believe that God created the world, so if you want to, say a prayer now, thanking God for this beautiful place.

And ask God to help you to do your bit to look after nature.



You will need to walk back along the beach or the road to get to the **carpark**.

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



*Join us for
another pilgrimage
adventure soon!*

