



## LET'S EXPLORE *St Carantoc*

### YOU WILL NEED

Good shoes or boots for walking on rough paths, a drink and a snack, a camera on a phone.

### THEMES

Holy Well, Celtic saints, church, Cornish history, estuary wildlife, shipbuilding, rock stacking.

### DISTANCE

3km or 1.9 miles. This pilgrimage is a fairly level walk that takes in a variety of habitats from sand dunes to farmland to road walking.

Saint Carantoc was a 5th century saint who founded a monastery in Cornwall where the village of Crantock can be found.

Start at the the **car park** behind **Crantock Beach**. Head through the gate and up the steps, turning left at the top and following the coast path northwards. The path bends round to the right with the **River Gannel** now below you to your left.

Follow this path along the ridge, through the meadows and woodland. You'll see the pits of ancient quarries amongst the trees and the Gannel poetry bench.



# The Legend of Saint Carantoc

Saint Carantoc travelled extensively and as well as being a celebrated saint here, he is also remembered in Wales, Ireland, England and Brittany. He's also one of the few saints whose life is mentioned in connection with **King Arthur**! The legend is that Carantoc had lost his portable Altar (a special stone which the Celtic saints would use to celebrate communion on while travelling or on pilgrimage) and that Arthur knew where it was but wouldn't tell Carantoc until he helped him with a troublesome dragon. Carantoc knelt in prayer to God before entering the dragon's lair, whereupon he placed his priest's stole around the dragon's neck and lead it from the cave like a puppy. Carantoc was unhurt and convinced the dragon to leave Arthur and his people alone. The saint then collected his altar and headed on his way.



Follow the path out onto the lane at **Penpol**, opposite the old horse trough. Turn left here and drop down into Penpol Creek, where sea cargo which had been brought up the Gannel was once loaded onto wagons and taken to Truro.

The Gannel was a much more industrial landscape in the past, with many mines, quarries, ports and shipbuilding yards along its banks.



**Can you imagine how different it must have looked?**

The shallow waters of the creek are a great place to practice **Rock Stacking**, which is a fantastic way to pray or meditate because it helps you to empty your mind, to be present and to connect with the natural world around you.



## TIME TO PLAY

Spend some time in the shallow water and have a go at building your own rock stack.

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



Estuaries are really special environments because of the diversity of habitats within them; just along this small stretch we have dunes, beach, sea, salt marsh, meadow, freshwater stream and woodland! This also means they're a great place for wildlife, especially birds.



**Can spot any of these birds on your pilgrimage:**

**The Little Egret** is a white heron with black legs and yellow feet. It has a black bill and long plumes on its head and neck during the breeding season. These birds were once very rare in the UK, but their numbers are on the increase, especially in tidal estuaries such as the Gannel.



**Listen out for the eerie 'cue-lee' call of the Curlew.** It is the unmistakable sound of the estuary. They can be identified by their long blue legs and long, down curved bill.

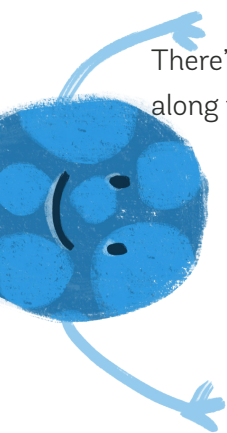
**Oystercatchers** are easily recognisable by their striking plumage and loud 'peep-ing' call.

The **Turnstone** can be seen darting around the estuary living up to it's name – turning over stones as heavy as its own body in search of food!



There's another, mysterious call which locals say you can hear along the estuary late at night.

The **Gannel Crane** is the name given to the mysterious creature which produces the haunting shriek that has caused many a sailor to run for his life in fear... Although it's probably just foxes!





Head back up the Penpol lane following it past the trough and a few houses before coming to a granite stile on your right. Head through here and following the path across the field, where after another stile, you'll find a restored **Celtic cross**.

The road now leads down into **Crantock village**, a great place to stop for something to eat – the Albion pub even has a secret smugglers tunnel running underneath it! It's also believed that a large part of the original monastery and village founded here by Carantoc was buried beneath the sand dunes and still lies out there somewhere - although no one is quite sure where!



**See if you can spot this unique door on the way down the hill?**

The village is home to two **Holy Wells**, one in the village centre and another a little further on down the road towards the beach. It is thought that the well in the centre of the village, which was used as the local water source until relatively recently, is more modern than the ancient St Ambrose well.

Be sure to stop at both wells as you explore the village as well as calling into the church dedicated to St Carantoc.



**Who do you think this statue depicts?**



**Can you find this in the churchyard?**



**How many saints can you recognise on the altar?**



## READY TO REFLECT?

Take a moment to sit in the quiet stillness of this ancient church and reflect upon all that you've encountered on your pilgrimage; think about St Carantoc who first came to this place over a thousand years ago and all the generations of people who've gathered here since to pray, meditate and worship together.



Head out of the church and follow the road back down to the car park. The section of the river opposite the car park is a brilliant swimming spot – Why not finish your Pilgrimage with a dip in the Gannel, just as Carantoc would have done all those years ago.

Well done Pilgrim! You did it!

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



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another pilgrimage  
adventure soon!*

