

# The Clay Trails



## The Route

**Where:** (1) Par to St Blazey, (2) Bugle to Eden, (3) Wheal Martyn to Eden

**National Route:** links to National Routes 3 and 2

**Distance:** (1) 3 miles, (2) 4 miles, (3) 5 miles each way

**Terrain:** traffic-free and wheelchair-accessible, but not always flat

**Public transport:** railway stations at Par, St Austell (bike-bus link to Eden) and Bugle

**Bike hire:** Bugle Cycle Hire – 01726 852285; Barlow's Cycles, St Austell – 01726 73117; Pentewan Valley Cycle Hire – 01726 844242; Bodmin Cycle Hire – 01208 73555

**Maps:** leaflet available locally or from Sustrans

**OS maps:** Explorer 106/107, Landranger 200

**Tourist information:**

St Austell TIC - 0870 445 0 244

**Places to search for on**

**Sustrans website mapping:** St Austell, Par, Bugle, St Blazey

This is unmistakably china clay country – stark white spoil heaps contrast with deep blue flooded pits and turquoise lakes inland, while the height of the Wheal Martyn Trail offers spectacular views across the whole of St Austell Bay. China clay was discovered in Cornwall in the 18th century, and the growing popularity of porcelain turned china clay extraction into a thriving local industry. The newly refurbished China Clay Heritage Centre at Wheal Martyn is well worth a visit. The Clay Trails are created in partnership with Imerys Ltd.

Par Beach to St Blazey Trail passes through the local nature reserve and St Andrew's Park, the railway station and through the marshes of the old river estuary. A footpath links St Blazey to Eden; cyclists can use nearby Cornhill Lane: quiet but hilly.

The trail from Bugle to Eden has one climb, to Treskilling Down, past woodland, with a picnic shelter overlooking fishing lakes, then via Starrick Moor.

The Wheal Martyn Trail offers a 360-degree panorama. To the south, the whole of St Austell Bay from Dodman point to Nares Head

is spread out before you. To the north, west and east you can see the complete history of the China Clay industry, from the conical wooded hills of the earliest workings to the gigantic pits currently being worked, mica dams as smooth as glass, and flooded pits with electric-blue water and steeply wooded sides. Shelters made from locally-sourced materials by local artists (Abey Smallcombe) invite you to spend a while admiring the view at strategic points. After you pass the mica dams, the route forks right to the village of Carthew and left to Wheal Martyn and the China Clay Heritage Centre, which is well worth a visit. The route crosses the main road using a new bridge, linking an ancient circular china clay dry to a specially constructed ramp, topped with huge granite boulders and a viewing platform.

A fourth trail to St Austell opens shortly.

The Eden Project, which offers discounts (and fast-track queueing) to people arriving on foot or by bike, is a famously popular visitor attraction, as well as a serious research facility and education resource, aiming for carbon-neutrality.

From St Austell, National Route 3 continues towards Mevagissey via the sub-tropical Lost Gardens of Heligan, lovingly restored after lying fallow for the best part of a century.

*The spectacular landscape of the Clay Trails*

