

# PORTHGWARRA

It is often described as a picturesque cove that is hidden away waiting to be found. It faces due south and is sheltered and secluded. There are lots of reminders of Porthgwarra's fishing heritage but now only one boat regularly works from the cove for shellfish. Surrounded by soft coloured and heavily fissured granite cliffs it is full of character. It is owned by Lord St. Levan.



*The slipway and beach at low water*



**TR19 6JR** - It is a little over 2kms from Polgigga and the B3315 which goes from Penzance to Lands End. The road from Polgigga is narrow in places and passing can be difficult in places. There is ample parking which is located a very short distance up the valley from the Cove. The parking area is in 3 former fields (capacity 200+ cars) but for much of the year parking is sensibly restricted but is more than adequate for demand. There is no roadside parking.



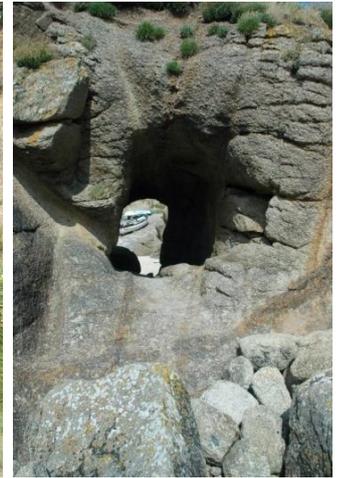
Access to the beach is down the granite slipway which is fairly steep and would be difficult for some with disabilities. There are however seats at the top of the slipway with wonderful views of the Cove. Access to the eastern boulder strewn side of the cove is opposite the shop and above the stream.



The white sandy beach below the slipway is fairly small even at low water; there is no sand at high water. It can be plagued by large quantities of seaweed especially when the wind has come from the south and apart from the smell can make it distinctly



*The tunnel to the 'hulleys'*



*The miner's tunnel*

less attractive. There is an interesting array of caves and rock pools. At the foot of the slipway on the left is a tunnel dug by miners from St. Just to give farmers horse and cart access to collect seaweed (a traditional way of fertilizing the fields). There is another tunnel leading seawards which was the fisherman's access to the tidal 'hulleys' built in the rocks to store shellfish. The hulleys had wooden top covers and trapdoors and were used to store crabs and lobsters prior to taking to market: they ceased to be used over 25 years ago.



There is safety/rescue equipment at the top of the slipway. There are no lifeguard facilities. Swimming is relatively safe within the Cove but there are strong currents further out to sea. It is best at high water. However, swimming is not pleasant when the cove is inundated with seaweed. Conditions can often be ideal for inflatables but off-shore winds can be strong further out in the Cove so care is needed.



*The sandy beach at low water*



It is not a surfing beach but when there is a swell and waves it can be a fun beach to bodyboard, especially for children, as long as care is taken.



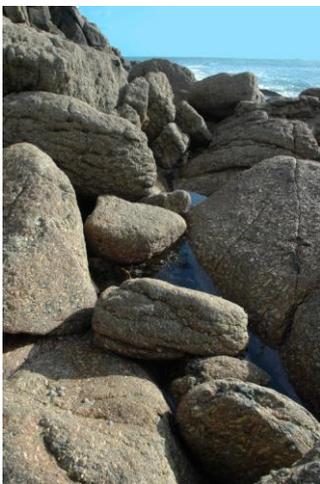
The remains of the shellfish storage 'hulleys' in the rocks



Porthwarra is an excellent beach for snorkelling and rock pooling especially at low water on the eastern side of the cove. Wrasse are common as are the smaller fish such as Shanney, Blemy and Goby's. Sea anemones, other coelenterates, and, a rich variety of seaweed such as Coral Weed and Pepper Dulse make for a colourful experience. Sea angling is popular particularly from Carn Scathe.



Dogs are permitted from November to Easter Day but are not permitted between 8.00hrs to 19hrs in summer and during the day in spring and summer.



Rock pools amongst boulders



The winch



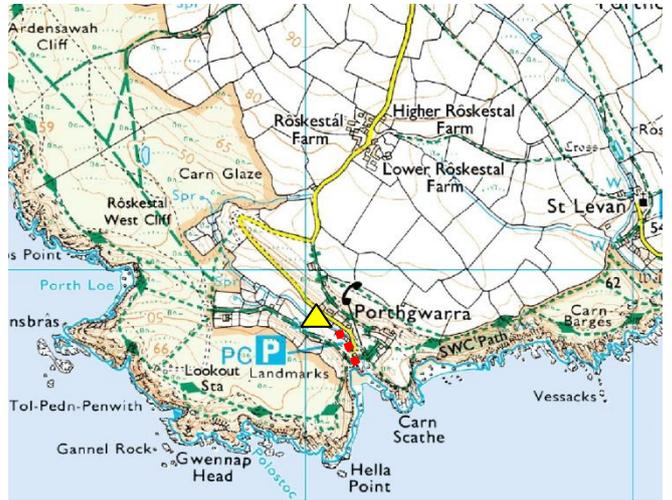
The toilets are easily accessible and signed from the road; there are no disabled facilities.



The small shop and cafe is located close to the slipway and has a small eating area outside. It is only open from April to October. There is a pub, small stores and post office at Porthcurno 5kms away. Use of the slipway needs to be obtained from the harbourmaster (sign by the winch).



The beach is not cleaned and although water borne rubbish is no worse than other beaches along this stretch of coast there is evidence amongst the rocks and boulders above HWM on the eastern side of the cove. The water quality at nearby [Porthcurno](#) is excellent and the stream running into the Cove uncertain.



Location – Part of OS Explorer Map 102



Porthwarra is far more than a beach but has a history that epitomises this part of Cornwall. Many people use the parking facilities to walk to Lands End, (a distance of 5kms) and a walk that is truly inspiring on the right day. Others walk (2kms) to the stunning beach at [Nanjizal](#) which is nearly halfway to Land's End whilst others to [Porthchapel](#) to the east. It is also a haunt for bird spotters, especially in the autumn, as interesting migratory birds can be seen. The Runnel Stone, a hazardous rock pinnacle, is situated about 1.5kms south of Hella Point. Several shipwrecks lie near the rock, including the 6000 ton City of Westminster which grounded in 1923; there is much information about the wreck and the reef which has interesting marine life and is popular with divers.



Sand at low water and the sculptured granite of Carn Scathe