

HAYLE TOWANS

and Mexico Towans

These beaches are at the southerly end of the wonderful sweeping stretch of sand on the southerly side of St.Ives Bay that is over 5.5kms long from the Hayle Estuary in the south to [Godrevy Cove](#) in the north with [Common Towans](#), [Phillack Towans](#), [Upton Towans](#), and [Gwithian Towans](#) in between.



The beach at Hayle Towans at low water

Hayle Towans starts at the River Hayle and the Estuary and loops round to Black Cliff, which at high water separates it from Mexico Towans and the long stretch of beach northwards. The word 'Towans' is a Cornish word meaning sand dunes. Part of Hayle Towans is often referred to as Harvey's Towans after the Hayle family that began Harvey's Foundry that was world famous at the height of the mining era in the 19th Century and was largely responsible for the development of Hayle as an important port. The once port of Hayle is now little more than a small fishing harbour largely due to the difficulties of negotiating the mouth of the river at low water. The part of the beach next to the River is particularly dangerous because of the strong currents. Upstream the river not only has the harbour but opens up to the important wildlife areas of Lelant Saltings, Carnsew Pool and Copperhouse Pool. The word 'Hayle' is derived from the Cornish 'Heyl' meaning estuary. Hayle beach adjacent to the river is opposite [Lelant](#)



Views of the beach next to the River Hayle



Harvey's Towans looking across the river to Lelant Beach

[Beach](#) and [Porthkidney Sands](#). Under no circumstances should an attempt to be made to cross the river even at low water.



TR27 5AF - The main car park (capacity 350cars+) for both Hayle Beach and Mexico Towans can be reached from the Copperhouse end of Hayle on the B3301 and the road signposted to Phillack and the Towans opposite a petrol filling station. Continue through Phillack and further on a large holiday complex on the right and chalets on the left; the road turns sharp left and the car park is on the left. Opposite the car park entrance is a public footpath (180m) to the main part of Hayle Towans Beach; by going down this footpath and turning right on to the



From Lelant Beach



Looking to Porthkidney Sands

Coast Path after a 400m walk on Black Cliff there is the access down the dunes to Mexico Towans Beach. Alternatively to get to the Estuary end of the beach – **TR27 5AS** - from the A30 take the B3301 into the centre of Hayle. North of the railway viaduct and the harbour there is a sharp right hand bend; just beyond there is a narrow bridge on the left that leads to the former industrial area of North Quay. The road gives way to a sandy track that leads to a parking area (capacity over 150 cars) on Harvey's Towans above the mouth of the estuary. There is a short path down through the dunes to the beach at the side of the river. By continuing along the Coast Path from the car park past some old chalets there is a path down the dunes to the northerly facing beach. Mexico Towans can also be reached from Phillack village by a public footpath from Chuchtown road along Mexico Lane.



View across to Carnsew Pool



Signs at Harvey's Towans



Part of Hayle Beach next to the estuary faces west and is constantly changing as the dunes in recent years have either accreted or eroded. There is usually a fair area of sand above high water with the beach shelving sharply down to the river channel at low water. By contrast the main beach faces north and has a strip of sand below the dunes at high water and an extensive area of sand as the tide goes out. Below the cliff there is little or no sand except by the main access point. Mexico Towans Beach has a strip of sand below the dunes at high water and joins up with Common Towans at all stages of the tide. An hour after high water it is possible to walk around Black Cliff on the sand to Hayle Beach.



There are safety/rescue points at various points above all the sections of beach. The RNLI have lifeguard Units at the main access point to Hayle Beach which is also the location for the Hayle Life Saving Club. There is also a lookout at Mexico Towans on the cliff at the edge of the dunes. Both units operate from mid May until late September with designated bathing areas which are well away from the dangers of the mouth of the estuary.



The Beach next to the river from Lelant Beach



Entering the water along the river or the mouth of the estuary is strictly prohibited because of the strong and dangerous currents at all stages of the tide. It is possible to swim in the designated areas when the lifeguards are on duty and below the main access point at Hayle Beach on a rising high tide and when conditions permit. Swimming at Mexico Towans again should only be undertaken in the designated area due to strong currents, especially at low water and on an ebbing tide.



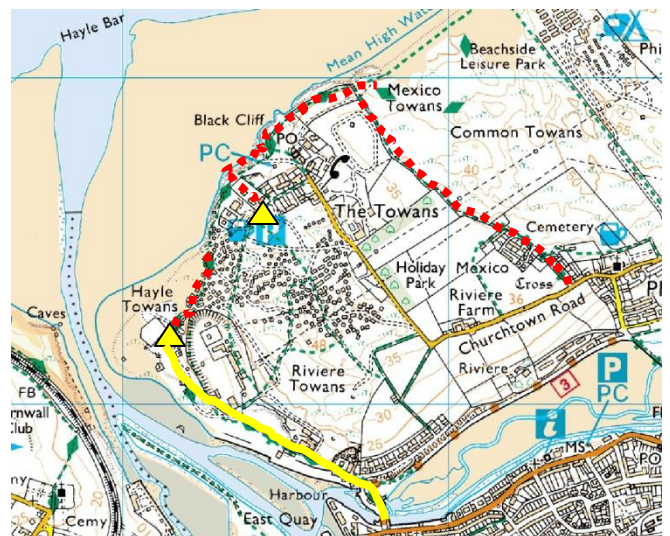
Surfing is popular off both beaches and can be cleaner than, and not as strong, as the beaches towards Godrevy. The beach near the river mouth is usually much flatter but can be good in a big swell but because of the currents should only be attempted by the more experienced surfers.



They are not snorkelling beaches. There are a few rock pools around Black Cliff but they are not a feature of the beaches.



There are restrictions on dogs at Hayle Beach up to Black Cliff from the beginning of May until the end of September 8.00hrs to 19.00hrs but no restrictions at Mexico Beach. There are toilets next to the Lifesaving Club but nothing at Mexico Beach. There is a pub next to the main car park but shops, cafes and restaurants are all located in the centre of Hayle and Copperhouse.



Location – Part of OS Explorer Map 102



Water quality is generally very good. Away from the river mouth they are good family beaches if somewhat exposed.