

CHARLESTOWN

or Polmear

Known primarily as a picturesque harbour and visitor attraction, it has two well frequented beaches either side of the harbour. Charlestown was originally the fishing village of Porthmeur (or West Polmear) and was developed as a port in the 18th Century by Charles Rashleigh after whom it was named. The harbour and beaches are now owned by a company that has a small fleet of tall sailing ships, some of which are moored in the harbour and popular with visitors.



Polmear Beach (east of the Harbour) and Appletree Point



PL25 3NJ - On the A390 at the Mount Charles roundabout, St.Austell, the road to Charlestown (1km) is signposted. On reaching the Harbour, which is on the left, the entrance to the car park (capacity 150 cars) is opposite. There is also a limited amount of roadside parking. Care needs to be taken with what may appear potential parking spots as they may be private areas or private land.



The beach west of the harbour and the outer harbour wall



It is only a short walk (200m) from the car park along the road to the beach on the west of the harbour. Access on to the beach is down the slipway making it fairly easy for the less mobile. To get to the larger beach on the eastern side of the harbour involves taking the road opposite the car park to Quay Road and walking alongside the harbour to a small subway and a short flight of steps on to the beach. Alternatively, when the lock gates are closed the eastern beach can be reached by walking down the road from the car park and across the lock and then down the steps to the beach (about 250m)



Despite the charm of the harbour and the backdrop to the beaches, neither are especially attractive in their own right mostly due to concrete structures crossing both beaches. Nevertheless, they are popular and bounded by two distinctive headlands, Polmear and Appletree Points. The larger easterly beach is about 250m long at low water, but considerably less at high water. It is mostly shingle but with patches of sand and rock platforms at low water. The far end is quite secluded and the most attractive part of the beach. The smaller beach on the western side is also predominantly shingle but has larger areas of rock at low water.



The harbour

Both beaches are southerly facing and sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds. They also both are gently shelving and can experience patches of seaweed when certain wind conditions prevail. The cliffs are prone to cliff falls so care needs to be taken and signs heeded. A number of small caves are of interest.



There is no safety equipment at either beach.



It is relatively safe for swimming especially on a rising and higher tide.



It is not a surfing beach but on occasions there can be waves that make body-boarding possible and good fun.



On a rising tide, and when conditions are right, snorkelling can be very worthwhile around Polmear Island and Appletree Point.



At low water the rock platforms on both beaches provide numerous pools of interest. Exploring along the foreshore past Polmear Island to **Duporth Beach** is well worth it.



Rock Pools at low water towards Polmear Island



Dogs are not permitted at any time in the year.



Toilets are located in the car park which is a fair walk from the larger easterly beach.



There are a few shops (but they not geared up for beach activities) and two pubs, one of which has an outside seating above the smaller beach. There are also two restaurants.



There are two private slipways which can be used by small craft such as kayaks on an occasional basis but permission to use them for the launching of dinghies is required from the Harbourmaster's Office.



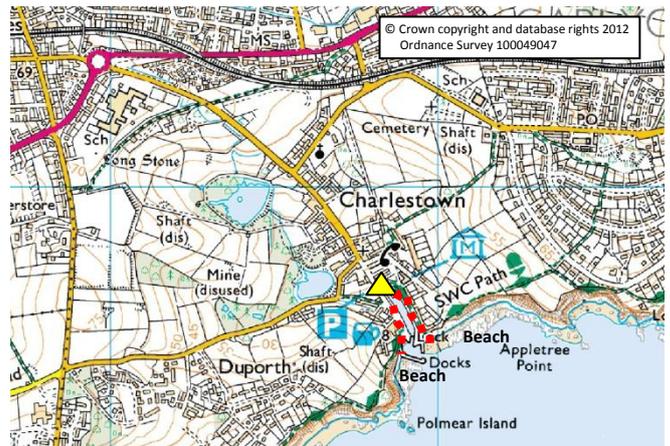
Water quality meets guideline standards.



The more attractive end to the main beach



The Charlestown Shipwreck, Rescue and Heritage Centre in Barkhouse Lane, next to the car park is open from March to October and offers much of interest, including many and varied exhibitions reflecting past life in Charlestown, local history and shipwrecks: it also has a restaurant and shop.



Location – Part of OS Explorer Map 107

The Harbour is a favourite for film sets and has included the 'Onedine Line' and 'Poldark'



The Subway to reach the easterly beach