

The South West Coastal Path – From Falmouth to Plymouth

For the last five years I have taken time out to walk the South West Coastal Path. I started in Minehead in 2015 and have plodded slowly round the North Devon and Cornwall coasts to Lands End and last year I started coming East on the South Cornwall coast, reaching Falmouth before returning to Bourne. This year, the objective was to walk from Falmouth to Plymouth.

It is Britain's longest National Trail at 630 miles and, arguably, the toughest. The total ascents and descents are more than four times the height of Everest.

But the scenery, wildlife, and quirky little surprises along the path more than make up for the effort. Let me share some of those quirky little surprises with you.



Medieval Stone Coffin

The Coast Path goes round St Anthony Head and the remains of a WW2 gun emplacement.

A little further on there is a Wreck Post. There are several of these on the path. They were erected by the Coastguard service and were designed to simulate a ship's mast in training exercises. A rocket and line were fired at the post and made fast to the top. A Breeches buoy could then be attached to practice cliff top rescues.

A little way passed the lovely fishing village of Portscatho, you come to Nare Head, and the remains of a WW2 Decoy site designed to protect Falmouth. It also has the enigmatic traces of a Royal Observer Corps Nuclear Bunker as a reminder of the Cold War.



Wreck Post



Royal Observer Corp Nuclear Bunker

Further along the coast, passed Portloe, I came across Porthlune Cove and the more peaceful prospect of Caerhays Castle.



Caerhays Castle

On the Way to Gorron Haven you come across Dodman Point with its impressive stone cross which must be visible for miles out to sea.



Dodman Point

Dodman Point offers some superb views along both the Cornwall and Devon Coasts. Here is just one to give you an idea of the lofty and airy feeling you can get walking the Coast Path.



The Path has many lovely little towns and villages. Fowey will be familiar to many, but I was taken by this sculpture.



It is Rook with a Book and celebrates Daphne Du Maurier's love of Fowey where she lived. She wrote many books, including 'The Birds' which was adapted for Alfred Hitchcock's film.

There are other sculptures and monuments along the Path. I was surprised to come across this one, just outside Looe. It is for 'Nelson', a one eyed seal who settled on the rocks of Looe island and made the harbour his dining room.

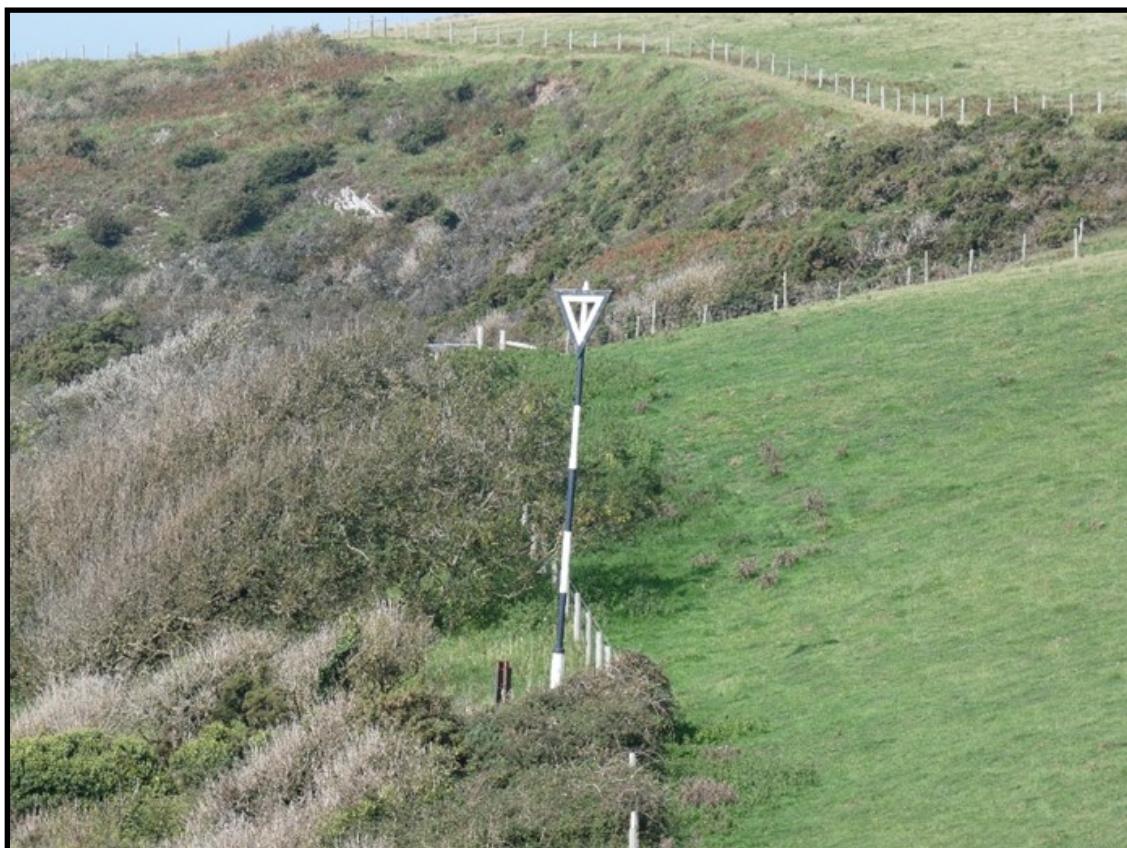


I was intrigued by this stone obelisk which the Path skirts round and which seems to have been placed randomly overlooking the sea.



It is clearly visible from sea and is a landmark – a mark on the land to warn mariners of dangerous rocks a few hundred yards offshore.

Here is another one, close to Portwrinkle - less impressive, but doing an equally important job.



There are many more interesting little points along the Path, and the guidebook and notes printed by the South West Coastal Path Association are essential reading to appreciate and understand them.

Let me leave you with this one.



Some brave souls built a chapel at the top of remote Rame Head. It would have been a tough walk to church on a Sunday morning.....



....but the view is awe inspiring.