

Pendennis Point became a focus of resistance to the threat of foreign invasion once again during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it saw significant action during the Second World War. Today the guardroom has been restored to the way it was during the First World War.

The castle also houses the collected cartoons of George Butterworth, published daily throughout the Second World War and donated by Butterworth's widow, a near neighbour. It is said that Butterworth's cartoons of Hitler and Mussolini so infuriated the Nazi leader that he added the cartoonist's name to his hit-list.

**The footpath into woodland on your left here is just a pleasant (but fairly steep) detour which drops you back on the pavement a little further on along the headland.**

The Coastguard Station, just around the point, opened in 1981 and is the most southerly coastguard station in the UK. Its area extends from the Devon border on Cornwall's north coast to Dodman Point in the south, and includes the Lizard, Land's End and the Scilly Isles. With the area of sea covered reaching to 30 degrees west and 45 degrees north, this gives the station the biggest Search and Rescue region in western Europe, at around 660,000 square miles.

There is also an old lime kiln on the point, once used to make lime by burning limestone and coal, which would have been brought here by ship.

**4. Once you have explored the features around Pendennis Point (and the castle if you make the detour to visit it), return to the Coast Path, which now follows a footpath through woodland beside the road before coming out on the road above Falmouth Docks.**

**5. Carry on along the road past the docks until you come to the T-junction.**

**6. Turn right here, continuing across the roundabout and under the railway bridge. (There is no access to the seafront here, as the marina area is privately owned). Continue ahead on Bar Road as it curves inland and then sweeps to the right to continue in the original direction.**

**7. Reaching the car park on your right, turn left onto Avenue Road, passing under the railway bridge to continue ahead to the main A39 road. Crossing over, carry on in the same direction, along Gyllyngvase Road, to return to Cliff Road. Here turn left along the South West Coast Path back to The Royal Duchy Hotel.**

## Other useful information

To download a digital version of this walk go to [www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/walksdb/836](http://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/walksdb/836)

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# Pendennis Castle Walk



Photographer: Roger Hollingsworth

A visit to Pendennis Point, where there have been fortifications defending Falmouth's waterways for over two millennia. Also taking in the sandy beach at Gyllyngvase and the exotic plants along the seafront, the walk is mostly flat and on easy paths and pavements.

**Start/finish:** Royal Duchy Hotel  
**Distance:** 2.9 miles (4.6 km)  
**Difficulty:** Easy

This leaflet is produced by the South West Coast Association to help the guests of The Royal Duchy Hotel enjoy their stay.



Distance:  
**2.9 miles (4.6 km)**

## Pendennis Castle Walk

**1. From The Royal Duchy Hotel, facing the sea turn left onto Cliff Road and the South West Coast Path towards Falmouth.**

Gyllyngvase Beach is Falmouth's largest beach, a fine crescent of sand at low tide fringed by fingers of rock which provide great opportunities for rock-pooling. Along the seawall exotic plants with large lush leaves and blossom are a riot of colour in the summer and the tall palms of the dracaena in the gardens give it a tropical air. Looking across the bay, you can see Pendennis Castle looking out over the tops of the woodland on the point.

**2. Follow the Coast Path along Cliff Road and then Castle Drive, which travels around the headland towards Pendennis Point.**

**3. To visit Pendennis Castle, take the left-hand fork on the headland.**

The name Pendennis comes from the Cornish words 'pen', meaning 'head', 'end' or 'promontory', and 'dinas' (or 'dynas'), meaning 'fortress'. This suggests that there was probably a promontory fort here in the Iron Age, when many such defensive settlements were built on headlands around the coasts of Cornwall and North Devon. There has been speculation that the Romans, and later the Vikings, also used the site for defensive purposes, and there are the remains of artillery stations all around the point from later in its history.

It is thought that the most likely place for the promontory fort would have been on the south-eastern tip of the headland, where the remains of the Tudor blockhouse of Little Dennis stand today. The blockhouse was built as a part of Pendennis Castle, constructed between 1540 and 1545, along with its partner castle across the water at St Mawes, when Henry VIII established a chain of artillery fortresses to defend the coastline from French and Spanish fleets.

In 1598, during the reign of Elizabeth I, a new rampart was built around the castle, and it was strengthened again the following century, prior to the English Civil War. In 1646 the future Charles II hid out here before sailing onwards to the Scilly Islands, and after this the castle was subjected to a further five months of siege before it became the penultimate Royalist garrison on the British mainland to surrender.

