

# PLAIN-AN-GWARRY TRAIL

A one-hour trail starting and finishing at Alma Place.

**1 Belmont House**  
Head north out of Alma Place, cross Fore Street and into Green Lane. On your right, on the corner of Ford's Row, is

**Belmont House** (pictured left), built in 1837, replacing the 18th century home of Dr William Pryce (1735-1790). The interior features unusual groined ceilings and Ionic pillars: beneath is a large wine cellar. In 1853, it was a school, but later it became a traditional residence for local doctors, including the Pryce family, with a surgery attached. Cross over Green Lane to the

**Masonic Hall** (1876) opposite Ford's Row. The Redruth-born architect James Hicks designed it, with a façade incorporating Bath Stone, but refused to pay for carvings done by Bernard Wilder, of Harry Hems' Exeter firm, claiming they were improperly done. Hicks was succeeded as County Architect by Sampson Hill (1862-1917), whose office (1901) is next door to the Masonic Hall, with his dwelling adjoining it to the north. Among his local designs are The Elms in Green Lane, and the Infirmary block of 1897 at the Camborne-Redruth Community Hospital.

Next you come to the **Radical Club** (1886), the base for the Radical Liberal, Charles A V Conybeare (1853-1919), during his period as MP for the Camborne Mining Division. After 1895 it was also used as a mining instruction school before reverting to a Liberal Club in 1901.

**2 Claremont House**  
Continue along Green Lane and, almost opposite Bellevue, you'll see **Claremont House**, a good example of a large town house, built around 1830, originally with extensive gardens. It was inhabited by wealthy Capt Thomas Teague, who died in 1839, and in 1851 by Francis Pryor (1819-1870), mining consultant,

who altered and enlarged the dwelling. During his career he earned an estimated £80,000 and wisely left little. Further along Green Lane, the cottages (pictured right) opposite the entrance to Claremont Road are some of the oldest in Redruth. Claremont Road itself was a residential area for business folk and clerks, constructed from 1883 by Redruth-born

builder Arthur Carkeek, knighted in 1917 for his many enterprises, which included military defences on the Isles of Scilly.



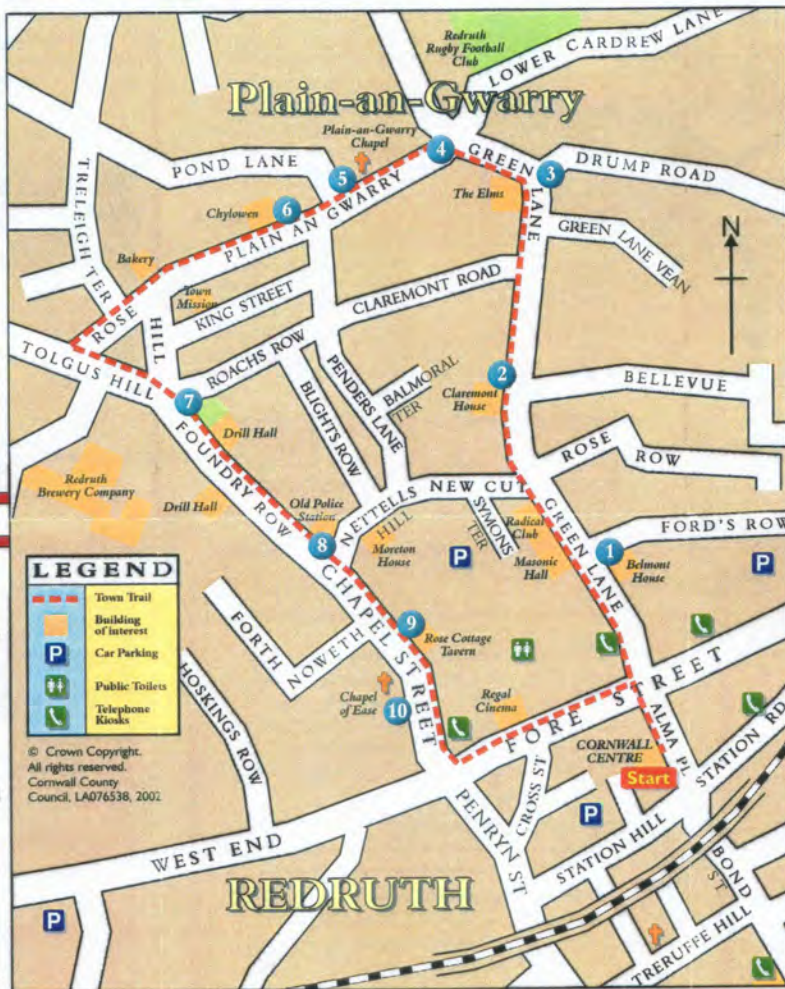
An earlier house was inhabited by J Bevan in 1842, and in 1887 by Edward Tangey, of the Cornish engineering firm, who built a fuse factory within its extensive grounds.

The area where you are now standing, incorporating the bottom of Green Lane and Drump Road, and the fields of Cardrew School, was possibly the site of the ancient **Plain-an-gwarry** - place of the play - or amphitheatre, where miracle plays would have been performed in the Cornish language up until the 17th century.

**3 Plain-an-gwarry**  
Follow the road round to the left, passing on the corner The Elms (1900 - pictured left), designed by Sampson Hill for Mr Tom Trounson, grocery wholesaler. In more recent times it served as a Labour Exchange.

**4 Redruth Rugby Football Club**  
To your right, a short way down Lower Cardrew Lane, is the town's **Recreation Ground**, originally Hocking's Meadows.

Bought in 1883 by a limited company, it is the home of the Redruth Rugby Football Club and the favourite venue of the Cornwall RFU with its southwest corner, known as Hellfire Corner, vividly retained in the memories of opponents! The Redruth RFC has produced many fine players, amongst them Richard Sharp who captained England, and made 17 appearances in 1960-63, and 1967. The great legend, however, remains Bert Solomon, a highly talented centre three-quarter, who played 26 times for Cornwall, but only once for England, in 1910 - he declined to play on two further occasions. At that time, young boys carried the boots and bags of their heroes from the changing rooms at the Coffee Tavern, in Alma Place, to the ground.



**5 Plain-an-gwarry Chapel**  
Walk down Plain-an-gwarry along the righthand side until you reach **Plain-an-gwarry Chapel** (pictured below) built for the Primitive Methodists in 1883 and designed by James Hicks, replacing the 1826 chapel nearby. During its building, three workmen were killed when the scaffolding collapsed while they were positioning a huge granite block 30 feet above the ground. Across the road, look for the blocked arched door in the wall, once a water-source during the Victorian period and earlier. Steps descend to a watercourse (adit) draining from Pednandrea Mine at the top of the town. On rainy days miners used to walk underground from the mine to emerge here.

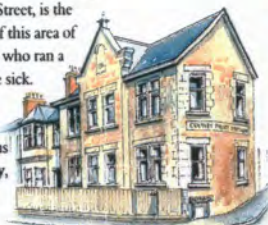


**6 Chylowen & James Watt**  
Continue through Plain-an-Gwarry. On your right is **Chylowen** (No 12) the house where James Watt (1736-1819), of Boulton & Watt engineers, stayed when consulting with their agent, William Murdoch, on the erection of mine pumping engines in the 1780s. He also rented a house at Cusgarne, Gwennap, to be near the mines of that area. Further along, the brick building on your left, opposite Rose Hill and set back, was a

**bakery** during the Victorian and Edwardian period. Local people took bread and saffron cakes there to be baked for a small charge. It later became the HQ of the Redruth Pigeon Fanciers Club. There is also a tradition that the Plain-an-gwarry was actually in this area.

In the mid-19th century, this part of rapidly-growing Redruth was over-crowded and insanitary, rife with disease and prostitution - with only 11 privies shared between 133 dwellings. Nearby, in King Street, is the **Redruth Town Mission** (1868) established in the heart of this area of impoverished courts. It was headed by a Town Missionary, who ran a night school here, in addition to preaching and tending the sick.

**7 Foundry Row**  
Walk down Rose Hill to the junction with Tolgus Hill. Ahead you can see the **Redruth Brewery Company**, greatly expanded since established in 1792, using exceptionally pure water from the Wheal Silver Adit. The

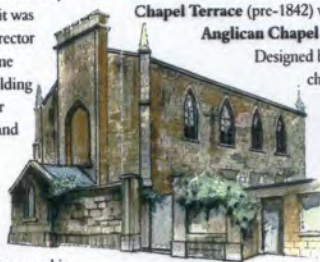


**Brewery Hooter** was once a familiar sound, signalling the start of work, etc.

Turn to your left: at the corner of Roachs Row, the small playing area occupies the site of a millpond. This was part of the **foundry and hammer-mill** established in the 18th century, where the **Community Centre** now stands, and which gave its name to Foundry Row. Stationary and portable engines and steam boilers for mines were made here.

Adjacent to the playing field, and incorporated into the **Community Centre**, is the **Old Drill Hall**. Built for the Territorial Army, it was opened in 1912 by Major General E C Bethune CVO CB, Director General of Territorial Forces. It was the base for the local Home Guard during World War II. Across the main road the low building opposite is another **Drill Hall** used during World War II, after which it was also used for dances, boxing, wrestling matches and table-tennis exhibitions, featuring world champions.

**8 Police Station**  
Walk along the Row to the old **Police Station** (pictured left) at the corner of Nettell's Hill, which opened in 1909, replacing another at West End. It has recently been converted to dwellings. A few yards up the hill, on the right, is **Moreton House**. Richard Trevithick lived here in 1797 for the first nine months of his marriage. Tradition says that it was here that he demonstrated a working model



of his first high-pressure steam locomotive to Lord and Lady de Dunstanville and Basset, and Mr Davies Gilbert. In 1827, Mr P Pender, Attorney at Law, lived here, giving his name to the adjoining Pender's Lane, behind Blight's Row.

**9 Rose Cottage Tavern**  
Cross the bottom of Nettell's Hill, and continue along Chapel Street to reach, on your left, **Rose Cottage Tavern** (pictured above), the 18th century building where the Jenkin family of Trevirgwe House stayed while their home was being rebuilt in the 1820s. A mediaeval cross (now outside Murdoch House in Cross Street) was discovered here when a stable was pulled down in 1939.

**10 The Chapel of Ease**  
Directly opposite, across the road, are the fine houses of **Chapel Terrace** (pre-1842) with granite ashlar fronts, and the **Anglican Chapel of Ease** (pictured left), completed in 1828. Designed by Charles Hutchens, along with the churches of St Day and Chacewater, it provided a nearby alternative to the parish church. The Bishops of Exeter and Madagascar preached here. It closed for worship in 1916, and was then used as a Labour Exchange, a prisoner of war camp for Italians during World War II, and as a clothing factory and wholesale stores.

Continue past Rose Cottage. The area now occupied by shops, the Tax Office etc, was once the site of a **cock-pit**, where cock-fighting took place. It was replaced by Dr W Boase's nonconformist chapel after 1802, which gave its name to Chapel Street.

Turn left up Fore Street, turning right before the clock tower to return to the Cornwall Centre at Alma Place.