

# REDRUTH TOWN TRAIL

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

## 1 Mining Exchange (1880)

The proximity to the railway station (1852) attracted many dealers to this part of town. The Mining Exchange (right) replaced Tabb's Hotel (since demolished) in Fore Street where mining business and ticketing (or bidding) for copper and tin took place. Mine Captains were fined for swearing here, the proceeds going to the Miners' Hospital at West End. To the left is the Purser of Wheal Peavor's office (1880) and to the right, the former Bain & Field's Bank (1880) and the Post Office (destroyed by fire in 1982), which reopens in 2001 as the Cornwall Centre.



## 2 Abbott & Wickett (1880) & the Malayan Tin Dredging Company (1891)

Go up Station Road. Opposite the railway station, the two single-storey offices traded in stocks and shares; their customers were met at the station. Look for 'GWR 1888' on the railway bridge and the Victorian waiting room on the downside platform.

Continue up the hill to Wesley Chapel (1826). Walk 300 yards up Wesley Street, looking out for a lane on the right with lines of granite setts. This was the terminus of the Redruth & Chasewater Railway (1824-1915).

Return down Wesley Street. Note the last building on the right, once the Railway Inn (1840). Cross back over the road to the top of Fore Street. The three-storey gothic tudor building built in 1892 on your right was the Williams' house, whose clothing shop next door was one of the town's oldest businesses. Shute Row further down is named after a water source for the town. Look above the shopfronts to see the grandeur of the 19th century buildings.

Flowerpot Car Park is on the site of the United Free Methodist Chapel (Flowerpot Chapel, 1865), destroyed by fire in 1973. The decorative urns from its roof now adorn the gateposts of Victoria Park. Opposite, was the Wesleyan Association Chapel (1839), now Jim's Cash & Carry.

## 3 London Inn (1776)

The Old Coach House was originally a coaching inn called the London Inn, rebuilt in 1837. Note the sturdy granite columns at the front door and the arched entrance to a stable yard.

## 4 The Moody Family

Opposite on the site of the Post Office, is where James Moody (1823-1887) had his photographic studio. His daughters Fanny and Lily were both principal singers for the Carl Rosa Opera Company. Fanny (1866-1945) became an international opera singer, being the Prima Donna for the Royal Italian Opera Company, and was known as 'The Cornish Nightingale'. Previously the Post Office site was known as Jack's Splatt (Jack's Platt) or Coulson's Meadow, where fairs and travelling theatres performed.

## 5 Trounson's Store (1870)

On the corner with Alma Place was Samuel & Tom Trounson's high-class grocery store (right). Built for £2,000, its ornate stone and brickwork is topped with carved pinnacles. They were also corn merchants, importing and storing the corn at Truro.

Turn left into Alma Place. On the right is the Coffee Tavern (1880) (top right) with its lamb carrying a cross and flag. Built by public subscription to



promote temperance, the poor came here for tokens to buy tea, coffee, soup and newspapers. In Edwardian times, Redruth Rugby Football Club players changed here before matches and boys carried the bags and boots of their heroes to the Recreation Ground. Opposite is the back of Trounson's, where the old host that lifted products into the store is still in place.

Go right, down some steps, and at the bottom on the left is the site of the Redruth Market House (1877-78). Head right, along Market Strand.

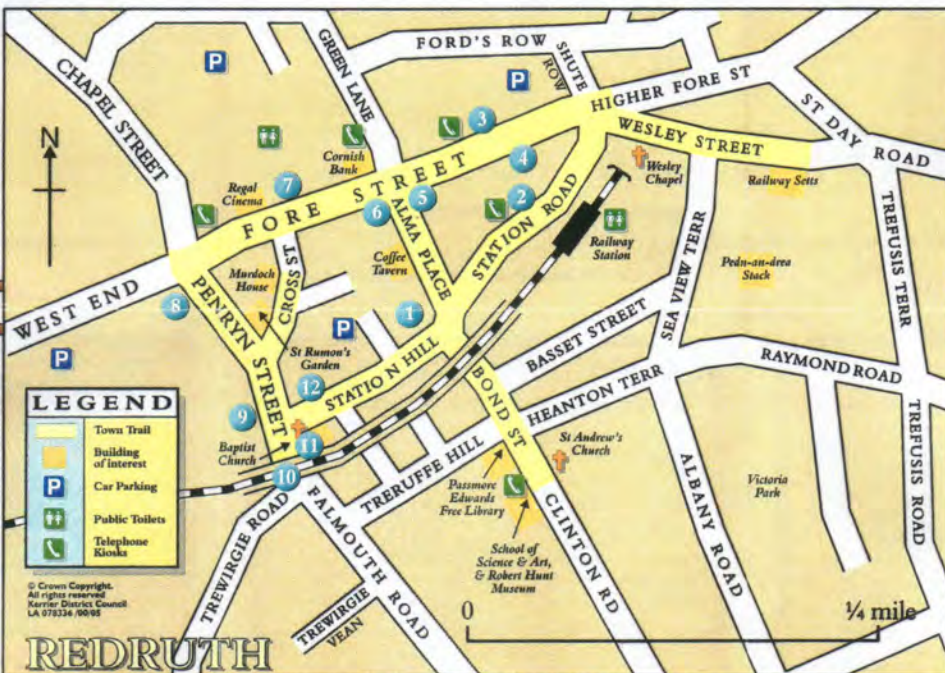
## 6 The Town Clock (1828)

Built to replace an earlier one, the open arches at ground level were closed in for use as police cells in 1841. Later in 1904 the tower was raised one storey and the original top placed above the new section. It is said that Trounson's store had blocked the view of the clock for miners living in the top part of the town. Carry on down Fore Street. In the late 19th century there was much rebuilding here and the architecture still reveals a wealth of interesting detail. Lloyds TSB was originally the Cornish Bank. Look for an 18th century slate-hung building at the entrance to Symons Terrace, one of the oldest in the street.

## 7 King's Arms

On the right is the pre-Victorian King's Arms – today the Halifax Building Society. Its front courtyard was known as 'Tatey Court' because potatoes were sold here. Fore Street had many inns which were transport centres for horse-drawn coaches as well as drinking houses. People lived over their shops in Fore Street and traders' stalls lined the street, especially on busy Saturday evenings. In the mid-19th

century their long back gardens were built over with courts of small cottages that had no plumbing or sanitation. These are now mostly demolished, though Lemin's Court (two properties up from the art deco Regal Cinema) gives an idea of how they looked. The bottom of Fore Street is the site of the original ford across the stream, covered over since the 18th century.



## 8 Tweedy, Williams & Co's Bank (1856)

Turn left into Penryn Street. On the right The Redruth Chambers occupy a granite building erected on the site of Tweedy, Williams & Co's Bank (later renamed The Cornish Bank and rebuilt in 1906 as Barclays Bank). The British Legion Club next door was Trengweath House, the home of the banker Robert Tweedy.

Enter St Rumon's Garden (above), opened in 2000 in the shell of Druid's Hall (1859) – once Redruth's cultural centre with its library, large assembly room and theatre. In 1910 it became a cinema (later known as the Gem Cinema) and then the Zodiac Bingo Club which burnt down in 1984.

Go through the gardens into Cross Street. On your left is Murdoch House, (c.1660) built on the site of the mediaeval chapel of St Rumon (c.1400), which was a sanctuary for pilgrims going to and from St Michael's Mount – note St Rumon's Cross sited outside. Townspeople also used the chapel in preference to the long walk to St Euny Parish Church. In 1779 William Murdoch came to Redruth as an employee of Boulton & Watt to install and repair their machinery at the mines. His hammer mill once stood nearby. In 1784 Murdoch built an innovative miniature steam-driven self-propelling locomotive and in 1792 he lit his then residence, Murdoch House, with piped coal gas – probably the first building in the world to be lit this way!

## 9 Old Town Hall & Court House (1850)

Turn right to rejoin Penryn Street. Cross over at the pelican crossing and head for the viaduct. Just before is the Old Town Hall & Court House, erected under the Small Debts Court Act by Robert Blee. Look for his initials on the front of the building. It was also used as a theatre before Druid's Hall was built in 1859. Later it became the office of the solicitor and historian Thurstan Peter, who excavated the Neolithic and Iron Age settlements on Carn Brea in 1895.



## 10 Railway Viaduct (1884-88)

Built from Carn Marth, Carn Brea and Devon granite, its massive arches (left) are 70 feet (21.4 metres) high. It replaced Brunel's wooden viaduct of 1852. Look on the pavement for the GWR boundary stone.

## 11 The Theatre

Return to the pelican crossing, cross back over. Then cross the bottom of Station Hill at the traffic lights to the Redruth Baptist Church (1877). The pre-Victorian building (once a grain store and stables), between the church and the viaduct, was originally part of a much larger building often used by travelling theatre companies. In 1828 the actor Edmund Kean appeared here in *The Merchant of Venice*.

## 12 The Savings Bank

Return to the bottom of Station Hill, cross back over the road at the traffic lights and head up the hill. The elegant terrace on your left was built in 1827. The Redruth Albany Football Club building originally housed the Savings Bank (1818-1892) and then afterwards became the Redruth Urban District Council offices (1894-1934).

Note the Clinton and Basset boundary stones in the wall of the Fair Meadow Car Park. Edward III (1327-77) granted a Charter for two annual fairs and two markets a week to be held here. Redruth also had the Butter Market, and other stalls in Fore Street and Market Strand, attracting people from miles around. During one of the three cholera outbreaks between

granite building currently houses the Cornish Studies Library, with over 40,000 volumes on local subjects (it moves in 2001 to The Cornwall Centre in Alma Place).

Next door is the former School of Science & Art (1883) and the Robert Hunt Museum (1890). Built as a memorial to its founder by the Miners' Association of Devon and Cornwall, the museum's large mineral collection is now at the Camborne School of Mines.

Opposite is St Andrew's Church (1883), built on the site of Trieruffe Manor House. The church and No 1 Clinton Road were both designed by Redruth-born architect James Hicks, as well as all the buildings on the west side of Alma Place.

Retrace your steps along Bond Street. Look right up Basset Street, to see Pedn-an-drea Mine stack, built in eight tiers during 1824 and one of Cornwall's highest stacks at 145 feet (44.2 metres). Pass back under the railway bridge to return to Alma Place.

