

# Cornwall's Secret Coast

Robin Jones

Imagine a Mediterranean-style beach all to yourself – in Britain's top summer holiday destination, and in the peak summer period. Yes, it really is true. A world away from the crowds of Newquay, St Ives and Looe lie scores of stunningly-beautiful expanses of golden sand that have been completely missed by the guidebooks and brochures.

Here lies the real Cornwall, the one that you no longer readily see, the delectable duchy as it was before so much of the easily-accessible parts of the coast became commercialised.

Centuries-old fishing harbours off the beaten track, lofty ruins of tin and copper mines, coastal paths lush with tropical vegetation, villages that time forgot, enticing coves hidden beneath soaring slate cliffs, secret surfing spots, ancient chapels and holy wells and a fairytale castle with a secret hidden in its depths.

A host of hidden locations is revealed in these pages. Many can be reached by car; others are accessible only on foot, with walks of a mile or less, but in each case, the end result really is worth the effort if you are looking for something truly different.

So, forget the big resorts. If visiting Cornwall really means getting away from it all, this perfectly-sized book, packed with beautiful photographs and priceless information, is the one for you.

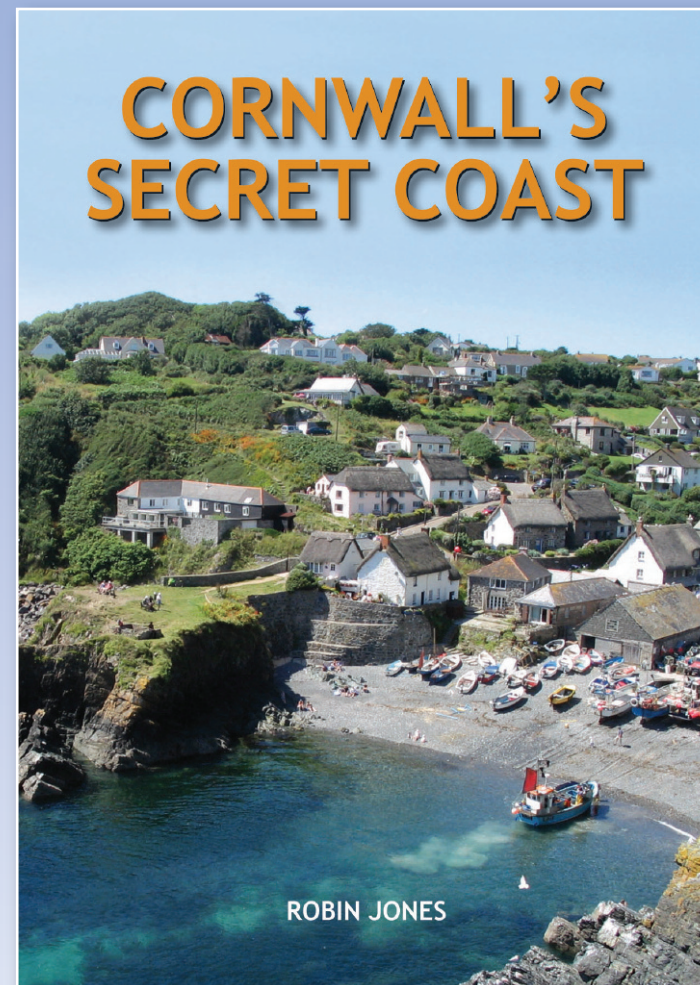
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin Jones has been visiting the coast of south-west England since childhood, exploring places off the beaten track as a labour of love. A native of Solihull and a graduate of Birmingham City University, he is a former evening newspaper news editor, founding editor of *Heritage Railway* magazine, and is a landscape photographer. He is a regular visitor to the Padstow 'Obby 'Oss festival and even has Cornish and Devon Rex cats! Amongst other books he has written for Halsgrove are *Lighthouses of South West England*, *Britain's Bizarre Railways*, *Isambard Kingdom Brunel: Engineer Extraordinaire* and *Spirit of Padstow*.

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# CORNWALL'S SECRET COAST



A 2007 production of *The Tempest* at the Minack Theatre. ROBIN JONES

The Song of the Sea arch at Nanjizal. MASA SAKANO\*

Example of a double-page spread.



## CHAPTER TWO THE CANAL WITH TWO PORTS

Bude prospered as a resort after the arrival of the North Cornwall Railway and has long been famous for its superb stretches of golden sands and surfing waves.

However, it was an earlier form of transport which was largely responsible for creating the town: The Bude Canal.

Bude Haven is the name of the sandy inlet of the rocky coast through which the River Neet flows into the Atlantic. The shelly sand on the North Cornwall beaches acts as a soil conditioner and enhancer, much prized by farmers over the centuries.

Plans for a canal to carry this precious agricultural commodity to inland farms were first mooted in 1774, but it was not until 1819 that an Act of Parliament was obtained to build it.

A broad barge canal was built from Bude Haven two miles eastwards to Marhamchurch, and a tub boat canal from there to Red Post four miles away.

The line here divides into two, one stretch veering off to the north and on to Holsworthy and Thornbury, with a separate supply feeder from Virworthy and Alfordisworthy Reservoir, known today as Lower Tamar Lake.

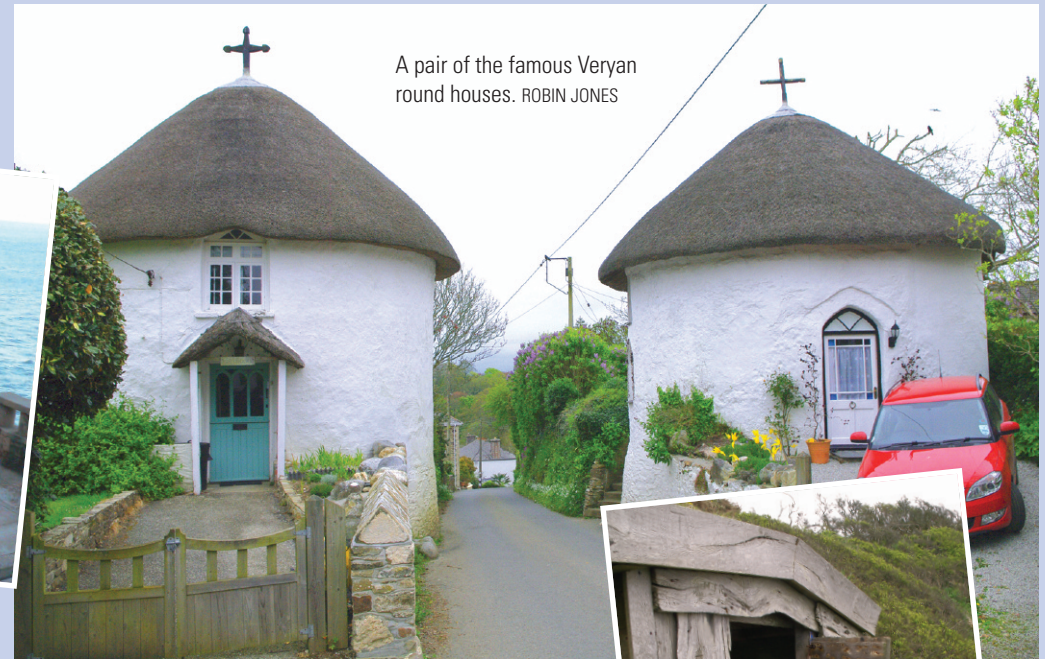
The southern branch ran towards Launceston, in the hope of joining the navigable section of the Tamar, thereby providing a safe shipping route to eliminate the hazardous voyage around Land's End. Construction of the 35-mile Bude Canal network was completed in 1825, but the southern line finished three miles short of Launceston at Druxton Wharf.

The rails of a short narrow-gauge horse-drawn tramway, which conveyed wagons loaded with sand from Summerleaze beach to the harbour wharf to be loaded into canal boats, can still be seen set into the quayside.

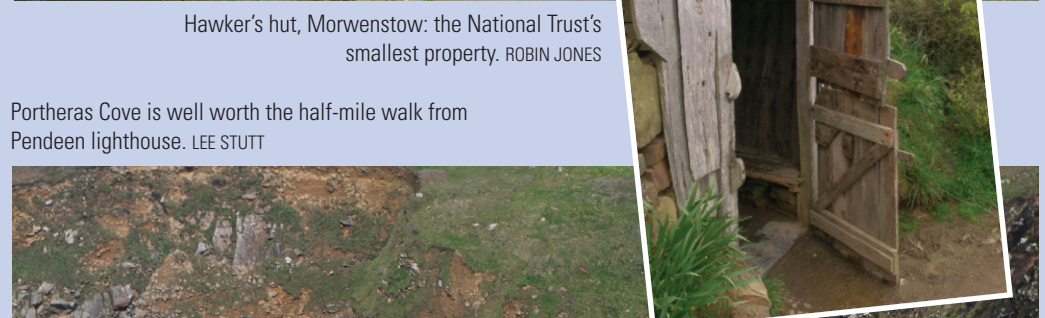
The remarkable feature of the Bude Canal was its six inclined planes. The only locks on the whole length were at the harbour entrance itself and at Rodds Bridge and Whalesborough on the barge canal section. The tub boats were equipped with small wheels at the sides to allow them to be hauled on rails by chains up inclined planes – the sole

Opposite, top: The sea lock as viewed from Summerleaze Beach. ROBIN JONES

Opposite, bottom: Crowds gather to watch the reopening of Bude's sea lock in 2010 following restoration. BUDE CANAL & HARBOUR SOCIETY



A pair of the famous Veryan round houses. ROBIN JONES



Hawker's hut, Morwenstow: the National Trust's smallest property. ROBIN JONES

Portheras Cove is well worth the half-mile walk from Pendeen lighthouse. LEE STUTT

