

# CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDY



## Landscape Character Area Description

LCA - Redruth, Camborne and Gwennap

LCA No

CA11

JCA

### Constituent LDUs

Total 11: 80, 170, 171, 172U, 173U,  
174, 327, 328, 404U, 416, 418



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<b>Location</b>	Area including Redruth and Camborne and extending north towards Truro (Threemilestone) and east towards Feock.
<b>Designations</b>	2 LDUs fringe the AONB and Heritage Coast to the north and AONB to south: LDUs 80, 172, 174, 327, 416 have SSSIs; LDUs 80, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 327, 328, 416, 418 have WHS [4 different areas]; 8 LDUs have SMs and 2 LDUs have CGS.

## Description

The area is a small scale rolling landscape with underlying slates and siltstones running from the exposed north coast to the Fal ria in the south. The strong influence of over 300 years of tin and copper mining has affected both the present day land use and landscape pattern of this area. This is reflected in the Gwennap and Redruth and Camborne mining districts. Extensive areas of disturbed or derelict land from this earlier industrial activity are evident with many developing into fragmented semi-natural habitats with scrub, bracken and heath. Extensive areas of Lowland Heathland occur along the narrow coastal strip between Portreath and Porthowan. Pasture is the dominant land use. Small irregular fields of anciently enclosed land predominate in more sheltered valleys and hillsides with the often rather larger, straight-sided fields of recently enclosed land on more exposed, marginal ground, containing both improved and rough pasture. Woodland occurs in semi-natural form in the valley floors and as mixed plantations on the upper valley sides. The Camborne-Pool-Redruth urban area is extensive and a military airfield lies east of Portreath on the coast. Outside these areas, settlement is dispersed but dense with small farms and some estate land. Miners' smallholdings have influenced the distinct field pattern.

## Key Landscape Characteristics

Rolling slate and siltstone landscape with small scale inland but more open on the north coast.

Post industrial mining landscape with many visible mining relics, including old engine houses and revegetating spoil heaps with remnant surviving or developing woodland, heath or wetland.

Extensive Lowland Heathland with bracken and scrub along coastal strip

Pastoral landscape of improved and rough grazing with extensive areas of rough land.

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## Landscape Character Area Description

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Strong field pattern enclosing small-medium scale fields and narrow lanes.

Trees, occurring in hedges, valleys, corner of fields and around farm buildings.

Valleys which are shallow and narrow, containing small streams.

A well populated landscape containing Cornwall's largest built-up area.

Many built structures giving the landscape a cluttered appearance.

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### Geology and soils

Exposed in the cliffs at Portreath middle and undifferentiated Devonian slates, greywackes and siltstones underlie the bulk of the area with dolerite, basalt and 'greenstone' lying beneath Camborne. Secondary intrusions of mineral-rich material adjacent to the granite massif of Carnmenellis (LCA10) have led to this landscape being intensively exploited for tin, copper, lead, zinc and iron. The soils are shallow hard rock soils.

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### Topography and drainage

This is rolling landscape where its topography and land use closely relate to its geology. The area is made up of two undulating catchment basins lying north east and east of Redruth and separated by the low ridge of the North Downs. The streams from the northerly basin flow towards the north coast and enter the sea at Portreath whilst those of the other basin flow eastwards into the Carnon River which eventually joins the River Fal. These streams form incised, narrow valleys which emphasise the rolling nature of the landscape. Others radiate from the adjacent higher land of the Carnmenellis upland (LCA10) such as the Red River between Redruth and Camborne that carries water down to the coast through LCA28 (North Coast-Reskeage Downs).

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### Biodiversity

Much of the farmed land is improved grassland/pasture interspersed with arable and rough grazing, found throughout the area. In the more sheltered parts Cornish hedges have much scrubby growth with mature trees forming a network of ecological corridors between the farmed and the semi-natural areas. Small fragmented areas of broadleaved woodland, bracken, scrub, heath and wetland mostly occur along the small incised valleys, especially where mine-workings have been abandoned. The remnant woodland, heath or wetland has survived or has developed around the workings, forming interesting and sometimes unique assemblages of associated fauna and flora, some now notified as SSSIs for their notable bryophytes. Larger areas of woodland are restricted to the lower parts of the valleys, as at Nance Wood SSSI which is Upland Oakwood, and the estates at Scorrier and Trevinge which have areas of Lowland Wood-Pasture and Parkland. Lowland woodland plantation occurs in the area. There is extensive Lowland Heathland with bracken and scrub along the coastal strip from Portreath to Porthtowan within an SSSI that continues into LCA 12 (St Agnes) and LCA 28 (North Coast-Reskeage Downs). A small area on and around the estuarine part of the Carnon River has Coastal Saltmarsh, Intertidal Mudflats, Reedbeds, Fens and Wet Woodland.

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### Land Cover

The strong influence of over 300 years of tin and copper shaft mining has affected both the present day land use and landscape pattern of this area. The main landcover is improved grassland/pasture, some arable and rough grazing. There are extensive disturbed areas left over from the mining industry where, left abandoned, scrub, bracken and heath has colonised. Small areas of woodland occur along the narrow incised valleys. The settlement cover is a combination of the large urban areas of Camborne and Redruth with a dispersed but dense mining and rural settlement pattern outside.

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### Land Use

There is a mix of medieval and post medieval enclosure overlain with areas of disturbed or derelict land from earlier industrial activity. Farming is a mixture of pastoral and arable with extensive vegetable growing. There are mining smallholdings as well as estate land. Remnants of the mining industry with engine houses, tramways and bare ground tips can still be found. Some of this land is being reused for newer industrial purposes; other areas are regenerating to heathland. There is widespread urban development. The military base, RAF Portreath, lies on the coast just east of Portreath.

### Field and woodland pattern

Small irregular fields of Anciently Enclosed Land predominate in more sheltered valleys and hillsides but a very large part of the LCA consists of exposed, marginal, former Upland Rough Ground, enclosed in post-medieval period into the larger, straight-sided fields of Recently Enclosed Land. A particular feature of the latter is the areas of 'miners' smallholdings', marked out by a relatively dense but dispersed rural settlement pattern with a network of small lanes. The ornamental landscape of the former Scorrier estate lies within the LCA. Field boundaries are Cornish hedges. Many support significant scrubby vegetation and trees so that the pattern they create is strongly textured. In some areas field boundaries are deteriorating and are being reinforced in a haphazard way with wire and corrugated iron. Woodland occurs as semi-natural in the valley bottom with estate plantations on the upper valley sides and over old mining areas.

### Settlement pattern

Outside the main towns, the predominant pattern in the former industrial areas is of dispersed but relatively dense settlement based on farmsteads and miners' cottages. Redruth is a planned medieval market town, with elements of its medieval urban topography remaining intact. Camborne was a medieval churchtown. Both settlements expanded rapidly in the post medieval period in response to mining and increased commercial activity. Their central Victorian cores remain intact with characteristic nineteenth century terraces of simple miners' cottages and areas of prosperous middle-class housing, added to by more modern housing and industrial estates. Some smaller villages based around double range farmhouses have undergone rapid growth, both during the busy industrial and mining period and more recently. These include the expanded villages of Chacewater, Lanner, Carharrack and St Day which have historic infill blocks forming clusters rather than having become linear settlements like Perranwell and Carnon Downs. Devoran has medieval origins but its present form as a settlement based on industrial terraces is a consequence of its development from the early nineteenth century as an industrial port served by the Redruth and Chacewater Railway. Portreath had a similar function as a port and also developed terraced housing in the nineteenth century. Settlements such as Threemilestone, Blackwater, Mount Hawke, Playing Place and Carnon Downs are now modern dormitory suburbs of Truro. The layout, building materials and siting of new development at the edges of the main towns often has little consideration for the landscape, for example at Illogan. Buildings range from dispersed farmsteads to small corrugated iron sheds, with derelict engine houses and other mining structures forming distinctive silhouettes on the skyline. The lesser buildings of the mining and associated industries, together with the many Methodist chapels, form significant built components in the landscape. Together these elements create a 'busy' landscape. Where the valleys meet the coast they become very incised and steep-sided, as at Portreath, and contain important complexes of mining buildings and structures which give a very special feel to the landscape. At Portreath, the valley opens out into a small cove with a sandy beach and exposed harbour that was once actively involved in shipping out tin and copper ore for smelting in South Wales, and importing coal to fuel the mining engines. However, the use of larger ships resulted in the decline of this port. The old ore storage sites have been replaced by modern housing developments. Key building materials are killas and slate with render. Modern materials include brick and concrete block with roof tiles.

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### Transport pattern

The busy A30 runs through this area. This is dual carriageway with few junctions and travellers pass quickly through this landscape. The A393 skirts the area linking it to the south coast and the A39 runs on the southern extremity. Various B roads serve the closely spaced scattered settlement. Within this complex pattern are numerous small lanes, many of them old mine tracks. In recent years, horse riding has become popular with bridleways re-using the old tramways left from the mining activity. The mineral tramway project provides access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

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### Historic features

The dominant historic landscape character of this LCA derives from its industrial history, but there are significant earlier elements, among them large barrow groups on higher ground north of Carnon Downs and at Three Burrows and Two Burrows. There are also surviving traces of Iron Age and Roman-period defended farmsteads (rounds), indicating the long history of settlements and farming across the lower ground in the area. There are medieval churchtowns at Perranwell (Perranarworthal), Camborne and Redruth and substantial areas of essentially medieval landscape in the form of Anciently Enclosed Land. Mining is the dominant element, however - Gwennap was once described as the richest square mile in the old world - and the most visible historic features are the remains of the mining industry including derelict engine houses, foundries, calciners, powder magazines, miners' cottages, tips, spoil heaps and Methodist chapels, railways and numerous mining tracks. The mines at Mt. Wellington and Wheal Jane have recently closed. There are a number of estates originally developed by the mine owners such as Scorrier, Burncoose, Pengreep and Trevince.

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### Condition

Generally the condition is good. Field boundaries are gappy and there is scrub reversion to the north. Derelict mining heritage areas are unmanaged. Settlement expansion is of poor quality in places.

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### Pressures

- Development pressure within and on the edges of settlement both small scale, cumulative and large scale.
  - Reversion due to lack of management in marginal farming areas.
  - Conflicting land use on despoiled mining land.
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### Aesthetic and sensory

This is a very special, atmospheric landscape containing pockets which have been left to nature after mining activity and which consequently retain a peacefulness and remoteness that is lost in other parts of the Landscape Character Area which are more built up. Only a glimpse of the landscape character of this area can be gained from the fast roads such as the A30, which pass occasional gaunt and dramatic engine houses. Though a confused landscape at first impressions, after exploration it reveals a wealth of local detail and much of interest. The wide extent of the former mining landscape is a reminder of the area's past importance internationally in the development of mining and engineering technology.

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### Distinctive features

The most distinctive features are the remains of the mining industry including derelict engine houses, tips, mining tracks and Methodist chapels. These create a complex, small scale landscape. Carn Marth; Gwennap Pit and the railway viaducts are other impressive features.

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### Visions and objectives

This is a very busy landscape with the extensive urban development in the west of the Landscape Character Area and the main communications corridor of the county. The eastern portion is more pastoral but everywhere there is the legacy of the mining industry making it the core of the World Heritage site.

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The objective must be to conserve and enhance the historic mining heritage of the area whilst ensuring that development continues and is well integrated into the landscape.

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## Planning and Land Management Guidelines

Create a comprehensive development plan for the whole of the urban area as well as the villages to accommodate expansion and ensure integration with the landscape.

Provide strong design guidelines for development differentiating between those adjacent to large urban areas and those adjacent to small settlements.

Conserve and manage the historic industrial landscape- particularly in the World Heritage sites.

Develop a strategy to encourage planting especially within the estates encouraging new woodlands as well as small copses and planting on hedgerows and field corners.

Integrate new development and existing farm buildings into the landscape with carefully designed planting including pine and sycamore.