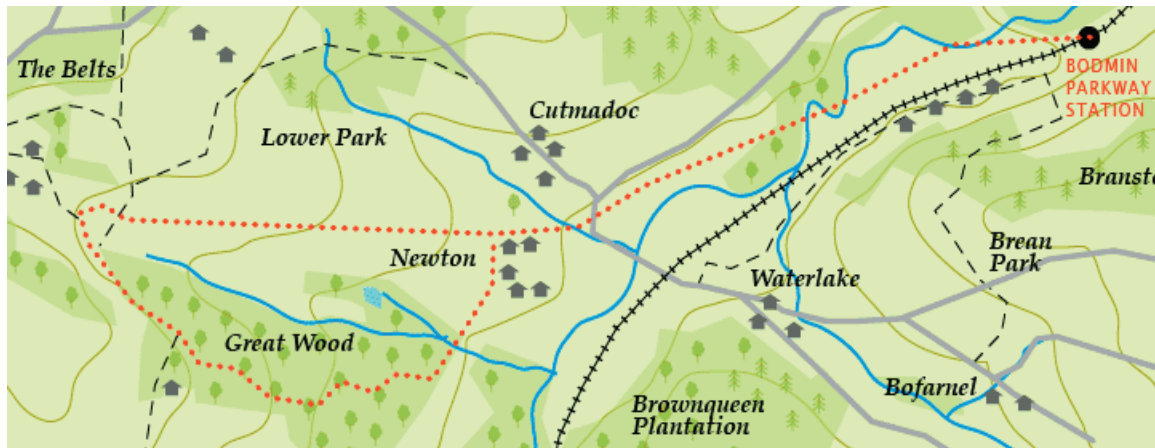




## Cornwall

### Lanhydrock Estate



Here's a walk that's the basis for a great day out that doesn't include the car. Lanhydrock, one of the National Trust's grandest Cornish properties, can be reached easily by train. It abounds in wonderful walks that can be enjoyed all year round - in winter the Trust has a cosy log fire blazing up at the magnificent house where you can enjoy a cup of tea and a piece of cake to reward your pedestrian labours. Though be warned only a small portion of the main house is open to the public in winter.

The area is situated in a secret and attractive corner of Cornwall - a sort of riverine hinterland that lies in a wedge between the county's three main roads, the A38, A30 and A390.

Bodmin Parkway Station is the key to accessing Lanhydrock without using your car, and usually there are plenty of services passing through on the Plymouth to Penzance line. There's also the Bodmin and Wenford Steam Railway which links the station with the town of Bodmin.

This walk starts at the station - about a mile-and-a-half from the Lanhydrock House. The path is well signposted and in a few hundred yards passes under the main line and almost immediately enters National Trust property. It then crosses the River Fowey and runs along the old carriage drive providing direct access from Lanhydrock house to the station, known as Station Drive.

The Fowey is one of the region's most beautiful rivers. Its source is high on Bodmin Moor and from there it runs through

*Basic Walk: from Bodmin Parkway Station to the National Trust owned house at Lanhydrock and back via the Lady's Walk through Great Wood.*

*Recommended map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 107 - St Austell and Liskeard. Or Trust's Country Walks leaflet 'Lanhydrock Estate'. Map ref: SX111641*

*Distance & Going: four miles, easy going.*

*Refreshments: available at main house.*

*Trains: phone 0845 7484950 for times and fares or call 0870 9000772 to obtain pocket timetables for the region.*

deep, wooded stretches to its estuary, which begins just south of Lostwithiel, three miles from Lanhydrock. The river's tidal zone used to begin above the ancient town which, until the fourteenth century, was a port full of sea-going boats. The tin streamers put paid to that with their penchant for redirecting streams and rivulets to wash away debris so that they could find the heavier metals. Many Cornish rivers have suffered silting caused by tin prospecting and mining.

The path which leads to Lanhydrock's gatehouse at Newton was built in the 1860's by the then Lord Robartes as a scenic carriageway to link his great house to the railway. He was a great supporter of the iron road and had special facilities at Bodmin Parkway, as well as a special halt at Respryn for luggage and goods.

Halfway along the drive you could take a right turn and climb the footpath that leads up through Hart Wood and Costislost Plantation to rejoin the Trust-owned estate by Lanhydrock's cricket ground. In fact Lanhydrock is surrounded by fine walks, but I recommend continuing along Station Drive to Newton Lodge, as this way you get to walk up The Avenue - one of the estate's most celebrated features.

The gateway at the lodge is dated 1657 which makes it nine years younger than The Avenue that it guards. John, Second Baron Robartes, planted the first row of trees to celebrate the Parliamentary victory in the Civil War. His scheme only ran to a single line of sycamores (one or two of which still survive) but the Avenue was deemed to be such a good idea additional rows of beech were planted in 1827.

As you ascend The Avenue, so more and more of the mansion comes into view - first the elegant pinnacles of the gatehouse - and then the two ornate wings of the house itself. On either side you will catch glimpses of the historic parkland, now managed organically, which has undergone a ten year restoration project to recreate the magnificent designed landscape.

In 1620 a rich merchant from Truro called Richard Robartes bought the estate, and this association with one of Cornwall's most influential families (which lasted until the 7th Viscount Clifden gave it to the Trust in 1953) ensured Lanhydrock's evolution as one of the grandest houses and estates in the county.

The main house would have disappeared completely had it not been substantially rebuilt after a fire in 1881.

The gate in the gatehouse is locked during winter months and you have to walk around to the left through a yard to gain access to the front door. Just inside you will find tea, coffee and cake on sale as well as the National Trust shop which is situated a little further into the great interior.

Before rounding the corner into the yard, you will notice a wide, unpainted gate leading to the woods - and through this begins the second half of the walk, leading back to the station.

Beyond the gate there's the dark and magical Great Wood, a wonderful tract of ancient woodland boasting not only the usual mix of British trees, but also rarer species such as the Plymouth pear (*Pyrus cordata*). It's all part of a project that

began when Lanhydrock was chosen as the site for the cultivation and protection of one of England's rarest trees under English Nature's Species Recovery Programme.

Keep to the left through the woods following a well laid path called Lady's Walk which descends towards the bottom of the park. It ends at a track that, to the left, leads us back to Newton Lodge and beyond, down the old carriageway to the station.

On the way we pass the ha-ha which is the wall marking the lower part of the park and so are able to gain one last view of Lanhydrock's lovely demesne.