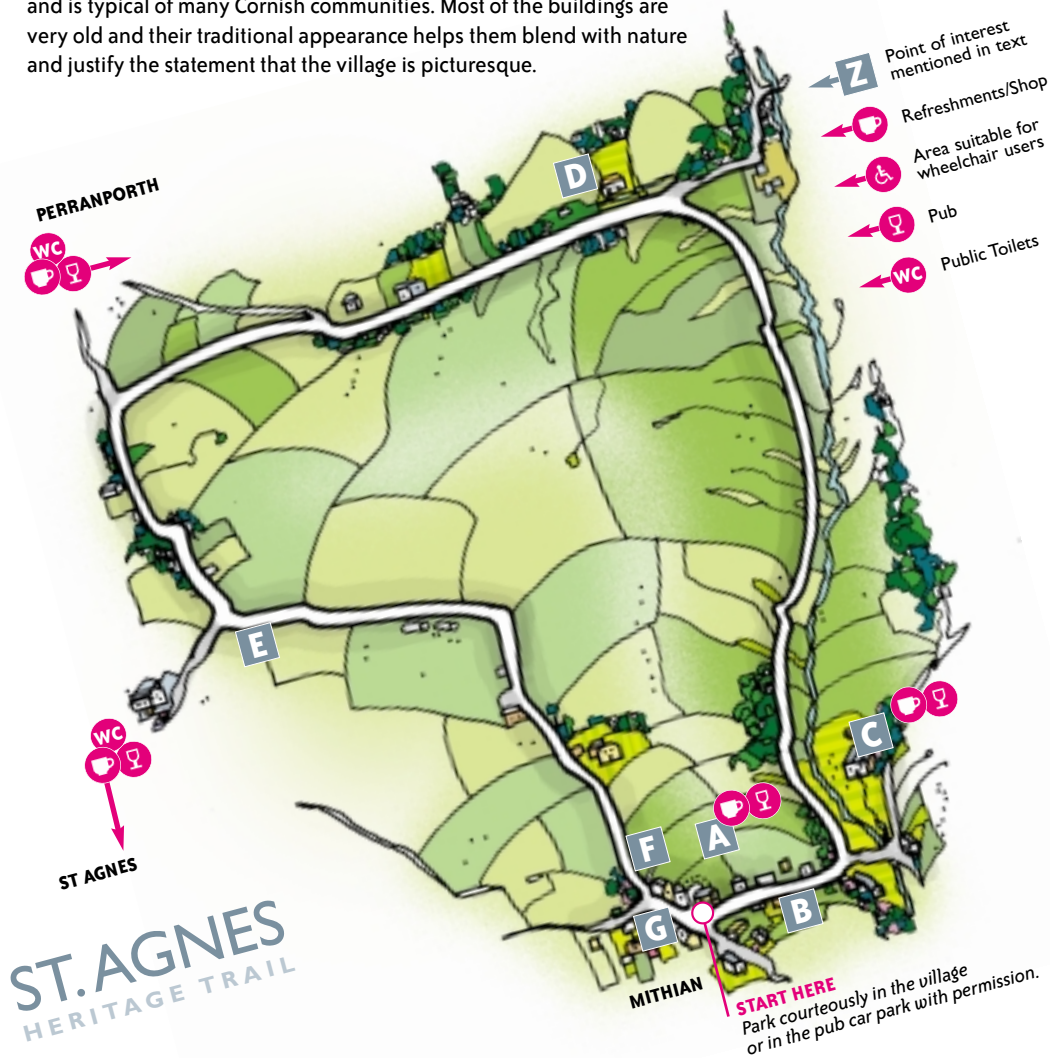


Mithian Walk

Miners Arms, Rose-in-Vale, Harmony Cott, Piggy Lane, Mithian

Leaving St Agnes by car from Peterville (heading to Perranporth on the B3285) you will soon come to the very small hamlet of Barkla Shop. It is situated on the two sides of a valley and is notorious for its road layout including a very sharp, left-hand bend. The surname Barkla is often encountered in these parts and there used to be two "shops", a blacksmith and a carpenter, side by side, near the thatched cottage at the bottom of the dip. The buildings were demolished to widen the road.

The Mithian turning is a little further up the hill on your right. Known as Mithian Lane, this road takes you to the heart of the village and as the "square" comes into view you will appreciate why the place has delighted artists and photographers over the years. It lays claim to be the second oldest village in Cornwall and is typical of many Cornish communities. Most of the buildings are very old and their traditional appearance helps them blend with nature and justify the statement that the village is picturesque.



START HERE
Park courteously in the village
or in the pub car park with permission.

THE VILLAGE HALL

On your right as you enter the village, you will see a row of three white cottages with thatched roofs. The lower of the cottages used to house the Mithian post office. Immediately past this row of thatched cottages is the Village Hall. Built in 1893 with the help of John Passmore Edwards of Blackwater (see Walk 10) it originally served as a reading room or literary institute for the men of the village. The usage rules were gradually adapted to reflect the wishes of the users providing relaxation for the men of the village and respite from the women-folk who were not allowed access. The front porch was not part of the original building and was added circa 1910 **A**. These buildings can be looked at in more detail towards the end of your walk.

MINERS ARMS

In the centre of the village on your left you will see the Miners Arms public house **A**, this is the starting point of the mapped walk. Formerly the Miners Inn, it was a part of Mithian Manor and is undoubtedly a very old building. There are a number of mysteries surrounding it, not least its precise age. Many books state that it was built in 1577 but it may well be older considering its historical and physical link with the Manor House across the road. It has been supposed that the building was used extensively for smuggling and that the tunnel that runs under the road and re-emerges in the Old Manor House was for this purpose. Smuggling was prevalent for a number of centuries and the inn was conveniently placed to store the merchandise from the prying eyes of the Revenue Men.

It is also suggested that the tunnel could have been a hiding place or escape route for Catholic priests or monks following the Reformation of the mid 1500s. This would seem to fit in nicely with the various stories of lost chapels, monasteries and priest holes that abound. This is a period when Cornwall and England were involved in religious persecution of both Catholics and Protestants depending on the persuasion of the particular monarch at the time. It has been rumoured that the clothing and bones of a monk was found in the tunnel but that may just be a bit of garnishing. That the tunnel exists is not in doubt; a number of people examined it when it was opened in the 1960s.

MITHIAN MANOR

Turn left after leaving the pub along the road signposted to Perranporth and Truro. Look over the gate to your right and you will see the complex of houses that was adapted from the original buildings of Mithian Manor **B**. The Manor House does not give the impression that it was ever a grand building and we must assume that it was of no great importance. It did, however, own all of the land and buildings of Mithian on the north side of the river. We know that it did not exist as a manor at the time of the Domesday Book. We also know that the Wynslade family had lived there for many years at the time of the Prayer Book Rebellion in 1549. It is said to

c.1905

A



have belonged to a French Nobleman prior to that which seems perfectly reasonable considering the Norman French influence after 1066. To place its building date as between 1200AD and 1400AD would seem reasonable. As you start to descend the hill you pass over the tunnel that once connected the Miners Arms and Mithian Manor. This rather steep hill was once known as The Lane. Prior to that it was referred to as Brewery Hill, so named because the brewery horse and drays could not get up the steep hill necessitating the barrels to be hauled up by ropes and the empty ones rolled back down.

ROSE-IN-VALE

As the road begins to level out at the bottom of the hill take the footpath sign posted to the left. A large Georgian House comes in to view on the right; the beautiful hotel and grounds of Rose-in-Vale [📍](#). The Rose-in-Vale was the winter residence of Captain John Oates who was the major owner of the Great Wheal Leisure Copper Mine at Perranporth and many other local mines.

Built circa 1770, this must have been an elegant house with its Gatekeeper's cottage at the entrance. The Tithe

map of 1840 shows Capt Oates as the occupier and Sir R. R. Vyvyan as the landowner. Capt Oates probably took up residence during the very early 1800s and was living there up until the 1850s. The Nankivells and James' lived in the property before Captain Oates.



When Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nankivell lived there, John Opie, the renowned local painter, visited them, his sister being in service there. Ada Earland, in her book John Opie and his Circle says, "Mr. Thomas Nankivell of Rosenvale and his daughter, Joyce, had also been kind to the boy"; there is a tradition in the family that Opie painted young Mrs.

Joseph Townsend (Joyce Nankivell) out of gratitude for assistance she had given him in his artistic training. Joyce Nankivell was a local beauty, possessing "great sweetness and animation." The name of her father's house, "Rose-in-Vale, is said to have been given as a pretty compliment from a visitor to this fair Cornish flower set in the deep valley in which stood the house." Joyce has been described elsewhere as "The Belle of Mithian."

Along the right of the path is an old water-leat which once provided water to power a mill. After a short distance you will find the ruins of Magor's Mill and two cottages complete with trees and bushes growing out of the derelict cob walls. The gristmill, still in use in the early 1900s, is where local farmers would bring corn for grinding into animal feed. Get the timing right (early Spring) and you will see a carpet of daffodils and bluebells covering the wooded bank, once referred to as the Daffodil Gardens. **Continue along through the woods and out on to the path across open fields with the river bubbling and gurgling along to your right. Cross the first field via the stile to the left of the animal shelter. At the end of the second field, in the bottom right corner, you will pass through a kissing gate and then over a stile to the Perrancombe tarmac road where you turn left up the hill.**

Opie was the son of a carpenter, his talent was recognised by John Wolcot, who trained him and took him to London in 1781. Opie achieved immediate success as a portrait painter (becoming known as the 'Cornish Wonder') and from 1784 painted a distinguished series of subject pictures. He exhibited at the RA 1782-1807, being elected ARA in 1786 and RA in 1787.

c.1908

D



In 1805 he was elected Professor of Painting at the RA; the lectures which he delivered in 1807 were published posthumously.

J. Opie



HARMONY COTT

On your right is a thatched cottage, Harmony Cott [D](#), the home of one of Cornwall's historic sons, John Opie (1761–1807). Known as The Cornish Wonder, he was a talented and acclaimed artist who became a professor of painting at the Royal Academy and was eventually buried in St Paul's Cathedral. As a young boy he was indentured to his father who was a carpenter. In this he helped his father with household repairs and was working in Mithian at the house of Benjamin Nankivell when he saw a picture of Ellenglaze farmyard. Lakes "Parochial History of Cornwall", tells us, "he would frequently introduce himself on some pretence or other and was observed to take sly peeps upon a farming-picture and then go hastily away to sketch it. He also drew an exact likeness of Mrs. Nankivell's cat". **Continuing to the top of the hill we now rejoin the B3285 and turn left back towards St. Agnes.**

c.1910

F



PIGGY LANE

On the sharp bend (look for the white chevrons traffic sign) take the lane to your left, its entrance marked by a pair of granite posts **■**. This is Piggy Lane, also referred to as Trewartha Lane or Warra Lane. This goes down to Trewartha Farm, a former tenement of the Manor of Mithian. Cornwall County Council Monuments Record states that it was first recorded in 1550 and the name is Cornish from "tre" and "guartha" meaning upper farmstead.

Continue down the lane, turn left at the bottom, and you are back in Mithian **■**. The walk takes a leisurely 45 minutes, just sufficient to justify a pub lunch.

c.1907



Any direct quotations from "Mithian" are with the kind permission of the author, Tony Mansell.

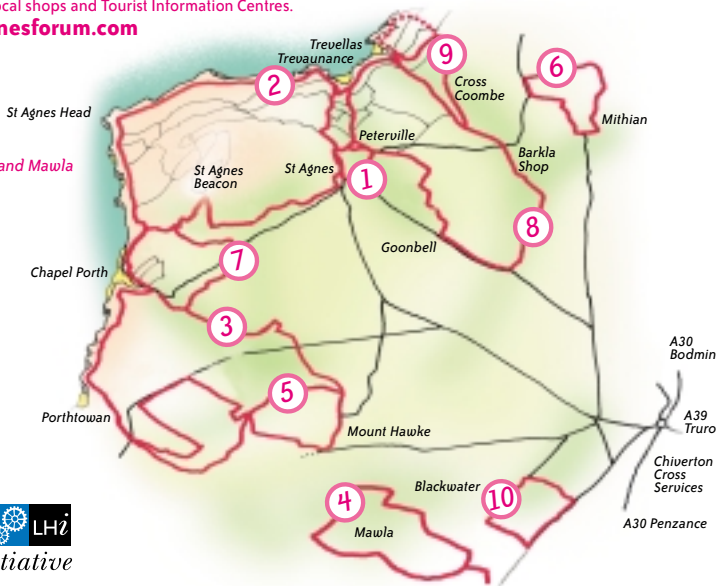
G

This map is one of a series available from local shops and Tourist Information Centres.

For further information visit www.stagnesforum.com

- Walk 1 St Agnes Village Trail
- Walk 2 St Agnes Beacon
- Walk 3 Porthtowan, Banns Vale, Mount Hawke and Chapel Porth
- Walk 4 Wheal Rose, the Poldice Plateway and Mawla
- Walk 5 Mount Hawke
- Walk 6 Mithian Walk
- Walk 7 Wheal Coates, Chapel Porth and Wheal Lawrence Valley
- Walk 8 Water Lane, Wheal Butson and Jericho Valley
- Walk 9 Jericho Valley and Cross Coombe
- Walk 10 Blackwater

St Agnes 2000
Regeneration Forum
Chairman - John Slater
Parish Rooms
St Agnes
Cornwall




Local Heritage initiative



walk number

6

ST. AGNES HERITAGE TRAIL

Mithian - Miners Arms, Rose-in-Vale,
Harmony Cott, Piggy Lane, Mithian
4km or 2 miles

