



Standing stones, stone circles, burial chambers and the remains of ancient villages, Cornwall has all this and much more, making it perfect for families and children keen to learn more about the past. Many ancient relics are still in remarkably good condition and provide an intriguing insight into the customs, culture and rituals of our predecessors.

They can be found across the county in fields, on the moor or by the roadsides and, if you know where to look, they're easy to locate and explore. Although some of the ancient sites are located in the middle of nowhere and necessitate long treks to get to them, there are plenty that are easily accessible and suitable for those not wanting to walk too far, making them ideal for families. An added benefit is that most sites are completely free to go and see, so if you're on a budget you won't need to spend a fortune to visit a variety of places.

Most sites are not usually swarming with visitors either, so offer a quieter and calmer visit than many of the mainstream tourist attractions. But, if you're keen to visit these attractions, they're all within easy reach, as is the stunning Cornish coastline and many beaches.

**Trethevy Quoit** (Map ref: SX 259 688)

Most people tend to expect ancient relics to be located in the middle of nowhere, far from habitation or modern buildings. However, the highly impressive Trethevy Quoit chambered tomb is situated in a field amazingly close to the back of a row of cottages at St Cleer, near Liskeard. Aply known locally as The Giant's House, it is a huge structure with a massive capstone that rests on seven uprights. The capstone has a hole at its tip; whether the hole had a purpose is unknown, but some suggest it may have been used for astronomical functions.

**The Hurlers** (Map ref: SX 258 714)

There are several stunning stone circles in Cornwall and The Hurlers on Bodmin Moor is no exception. It's located about four miles north of Liskeard at the Minions village and the stones can be clearly seen from the car park.

This is one of the largest prehistoric sites in England and consists of three granite stone circles. The north circle is 35m in diameter with 16 stones remaining (originally there were 28), the middle



# exploring ancient Cornwall

Cornwall is a popular holiday destination, but apart from the obvious tourist attractions, it's also home to a host of ancient relics. Rachel Newcombe and Dave Farmer look at what's on offer for families wanting to explore areas off the beaten track.

circle is oval with 17 stones (originally 28) and the southern circle, which has almost been demolished by a cart track, has nine stones remaining from an original 26. Nearby there are also two standing stones known as The Pipers. Legend has it that the stones were men turned to stone for hurling a ball on Lord's Day.

**Lanyon Quoit** (Map ref: SW 430 337)

Clearly visible in the distance, yet easy to miss close-up due to the high walls and hedges, Lanyon Quoit chambered long barrow is well worth visiting. It's located close to a minor road from Mardon to Trevowhan and is a Neolithic burial monument, believed to be about 4000-5000 years old. Access is easy via a set of stone steps and it's very impressive up close.

It was originally much taller, even large enough to ride a horse underneath it, but it was damaged in a storm in 1815 and subsequently re-built by local residents. Legend has it that giant's bones were found there.

**Carn Euny** (Map ref: SW 402 288)

Carn Euny is an ancient settlement that was occupied until the first century AD and it's located 1.5 miles west of Sancreed. The foundations of huts are clearly visible all across the hillside, but the most striking feature is the underground passage, or fogou, that runs just below the surface of the ground in the middle of the village. The main part of the passage is explorable and provides viewing of a circular walled chamber. The village is in the care of English Heritage but is free to visit. Access is via a small signposted lane.

**Chysauster Iron Age Village** (Map ref: SW 473 350)

Situated 2.5 miles north west of Gulval, near Penzance, and off the B3311 road, this late Iron Age village is now in the care of English Heritage and is the only ancient location requiring an entrance fee. The village was last inhabited nearly 2000 years ago and consists of a number of courtyard houses, many of which are very well preserved.

The boundaries, garden plots and central street are all clearly visible and the houses share the same basic circular design. It provides a good insight into what life would have been like many years ago. The village also has a fogou, an underground passage, but it's not as good an example as the one found at Carn Euny.

**Merry Maidens** (Map ref: SW 432 244)

Very few stone circles have survived in their entirety through time, so the complete and well-preserved Merry Maidens stone circle has to be seen. It is in a field just off the B3315 road, 4 miles south west of Penzance, and consists of 19 granite stones. A




field nearby is home to two further standing stones referred to as The Pipers. The legend associated with it is similar to that of the Hurlers in suggesting they were people turned to stone for dancing on a Sunday and the extra two stones were the musicians.

**Tregiffan Burial Chamber** (Map ref: SW 430 245)

Tregiffan burial chamber is literally just down the road (B3315) from the Merry Maidens and is easily


spotted as it's on the grassy roadside verge. The burial cairn has been partially destroyed by the road, but the chamber remains visible. A particular feature to look out for is the cup-marked stone close to the passage entrance. It's actually a copy, though, as the original stone has been removed to the safety of a museum. Do remember to take care here, as there's no pavement or railings between the chamber and the road and it can be busy.

**Family attractions** Other family attractions in Cornwall that may appeal include:

 National Maritime Museum, Falmouth. Open daily from 10-5. Tel 01326 313388 [www.nmmc.co.uk](http://www.nmmc.co.uk)


Flambards Theme Park, Helston. Open most days from Easter to end of October. Tel 01326 573404 [www.flambards.co.uk](http://www.flambards.co.uk)



 Poldark Mine, Wendron. Open most days from April to November. Tel 01326 573173 [www.poldark-mine.co.uk](http://www.poldark-mine.co.uk)

National Seal Sanctuary, Gweek. Open daily from 10am. Tel 01326 221874 [www.sealsanctuary.co.uk](http://www.sealsanctuary.co.uk)



 Blue Reef Aquarium, Newquay. Open daily from 10am. Tel 01637 879134 [www.blureefaquarium.co.uk](http://www.blureefaquarium.co.uk)

The Eden Project, Bodelva, near St Austell. Open daily from 10am (9.30am in the summer). Tel 01726 811911 [www.edenproject.co.uk](http://www.edenproject.co.uk)



**Accommodation**

Cornwall boasts a range of accommodation options suitable for all budgets, from camping and caravanning, to bed and breakfasts, guesthouses and hotels. For information and advice on accommodation options, contact the Cornwall Tourist Board - Tel 01872 322900 or see [www.cornwalltouristboard.co.uk](http://www.cornwalltouristboard.co.uk)

