Welcome to the Mining Trails guide
The formerly rich mining area of Cornwall’s Mining District is home to a 60km-plus network of multi activity trails. Routes such as the Coast to Coast and the Great Flat Lode Trails where being mainly traffic-free, offer improved and safer access to schools, places of work, local facilities, historic settlements and visitor attractions. The network of trails also offers people a unique opportunity to access our internationally important mining heritage.

Much of the trails network closely follows the tramway and railway routes once used to transport ore and vitrified stock to and from the many tin and copper mines to ports such as Devonport and Portreath. Whether you are a walker, cyclist or horse rider, the expanded network offers extensive opportunities to exercise both mind and body. It combines better access to the carefully conserved remains of this unique mining area with spectacular views and exceptional wildlife.

The Portreath Branchline Trail
In 1836 the Hayle Railway was constructed to link the engineering works and harbour quay at Hayle with the copper mines around Camborne and Redruth. It had two major branches, the one up to the Tresavean Mine above Lanner and the other down to the port of Portreath. The sea train hauled section to Portreath terminated at the top of the hill and was connected to the port by a massive incline. The Portreath branch continued as a successful freight line until its closure in 1936.

Length of trail: 5.5 miles (8.8km)
Nature of trail: The trail connects Portreath on the north coast with Brea Valley and Penhallick Leats, and links with the popular Great Flat Lode Trail. It includes some sections of high aerial and coastal walk which is unsuitable for horses.

Where to park: Parking is available at Portreath and there is easy access to the trail from Tehidy East Lodge car park.
Links with: The Coast to Coast Trail, the Tresavean and the Great Flat Lode Trail.
Points of Interest: The trail links the coastal village of Portreath with Brea, passing under the Portreath Incline and using the route of the Portreath Branch Line where possible. Quiet roads and off-highway links extend the trail through to Pool and on to Tuckingmill Valley Park where the trail follows the Red River valley to Brea.

The Great Flat Lode Trail
In the 1860s, when many copper mines were closing, a ‘lode’ of tin ore was discovered to the south of Car Mina in an area that previously worked copper deposits. This lode, over 2 miles long, was also flatter than most, lying at an angle of about 30 degrees instead of the usual 70 degrees from the horizontal – hence its name, the “Great Flat Lode”. The tin mines here were some of the most successful in the late 19th Century.

The northern section of the trail follows the route of the first tramroad, or tramway, in Cornwall. The tramroad opened in 1812 to link the lucrative Gwennap mines with the north coast port at Portreath. The southern section of the trail includes the Gwennap Mines themselves and follows the route of the Redruth & Chasewater Railway to Devoran.

Length of trail: 11 miles (17.5km)
Nature of trail: Generally level and mostly off-road.

Where to park: Portreath Beach Car Park, Elm Farm Coast to Coast Cycle Park, Bank of the River (Cambridge), Bike Chan at Bosun, Carrown Valley Car Park and Devonar or Cornwall and Tolgus Gold Mines.

Links with: The Tresavean Trail, The Redruth and Chasewater Railway Trail and The Portredrust Branchline Trail.
Points of Interest: This trail now connects the two former mineral ports of Portreath and Devoran, on the north and south coasts respectively, with the historic Gwennap Mining District, once described as ‘...the richest square mile in the Old World...’ A loop from this trail takes in the extensive Great Flat Lode Site.

The Tresavean Trail
Opened as part of the Hayle Railway, the Tresavean branch was built to serve Tresavean Copper Mine and originally hauled copper ore and Welsh coal along its entirely horse-drawn section from the top of Buller Hill. A series of grade sets for it’s 4’ 6” gauge rails can still be seen in places along the former track bed. The line closed in 1936.

Length of trail: 2.1 miles (3km)
Nature of trail: Generally level and off-road.

Where to park: Lanner Village or Buller Hill car park.

Links with: Easy circular detours on footpaths in the village centre and back again on the Redruth & Chasewater Railway Trail and link in to the extended network of trail.

Points of Interest: The Tresavean Trail follows the branch line route from the top of Buller Hill, it passes through an area of ancient mining history, the village of Lanner providing expansive views across the valley to nearby Carn Marth. A recreated section of railway will be visible from the remains of Treavean Mine.

Other useful information
Active Travel Maps
These maps provide sustainable travel info for dozens of trails nearby including walking, cycling and public transport information together in one place. www.cornwall.gov.uk/activetravel

The Tehidy Trail
The Tehidy Trail is based on the existing network of trails and tracks through Tehidy Country Park. It starts near the village of St Austell, and proceeds to the coast via the village of St Austell, St Austell, and then follows the natural coastline down to Portreath. The trail ends at Portreath and pick up the Coast to Coast Trail or head towards Camborne and link up with the Great Flat Lode Trail.

The Redruth & Chasewater Railway Trail
The Redruth & Chasewater Railway Trail was the first in Cornwall to use upright iron rails and wagons with flanged wheels when it opened in 1826. Initially horse drawn, the railway conveyed wagonloads from mines around Gwennap and Redruth to the port of Devoran. The line was successful and in 1854 it was converted for steam locomotives. The decline in Cornish mining fortunes eventually led to its closure in 1912.

Length of trail: 7.7 miles (12.4km)
Nature of trail: It is mostly level and off-road, and occasionally crosses the public highway.

Where to park: Limited parking available near Twesilhead Wood and on the road near Camborne at the Buller Hill section near Lanner Hill.
Links with: The Great Flat Lode Trail, the Tresavean Trail and the Coast to Coast Trail.
Points of Interest: The Redruth & Chasewater Railway Trail branches off from the Coast to Coast Trail at Twesilhead and follows a route of contrasting scenery (woodland and moorland) with spectacular views across Cornwall. Following as closely as possible the original railway route the trail bypasses the villages of Catharach and Lanner. Gwennap Hill is close by and Carn Marth can be accessed from the trail. The trail then continues to the west of Lanner before connecting in to the Great Flat Lode Trail and Tresavean Trail at Buller Hill.

This activity was recorded in the valley from as early as 1602. An 1836 estate plan of the Manor of Tolgus and Cornwall’s oldest powered streamways along this valley floor.

Length of trail: 0.8 miles (1.2km)
Nature of trail: The trail is level and off-road, with one road crossing. It is easy to access from the Coast to Coastal Trail.

Where to park: In Portreath, Elm Farm Coast to Cycle Hire (Cambridge) or at Cornwall Gold and Tolgus Mill.
Links with: The Coast to Coastal Trail.
Points of Interest: Experience the 19th century tin mill at Cornwall Gold, the former Tolgus stream trains are also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).