

ST. AUSTELL RUNNING CLUB

THE SAINTS' WAY RELAY SUNDAY 28TH MAY 2023



The annual Saints' Way relay will take place on Sunday 28th of May.

For those who haven't done this before, it is something different from normal training or racing. It gives a chance to run socially and chat with other club members and whilst it does involve running, the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly with regular stops for refreshment. The first running of this

event was in May 2008 and its popularity has grown annually with as many as 80 club members taking part. The event is run in groups and is guided by experienced club members along the whole route.

To cope with the increased numbers wishing to complete the whole distance we now have two start times from Padstow and we arrange minibuses to transport the runners from St. Austell to the start for which there is a charge to cover the vehicle hire. If you require a place on the minibus you need to book one. The steadier group start from Padstow at 8:00am and the quicker group start from Padstow at 9:00am. The two groups are usually combined by the third or fourth leg.



BACKGROUND

The Saint's Way follows the probable route of early Christian pilgrims making their way from Ireland and Wales to Brittany or Santiago de Compostella in Galicia, Spain. The route starts at the picturesque harbour in Padstow and heads along Little Petherick Creek, over St Breock Downs and onto Lanivet. The second part of the walk visits the rocky Helman Tor before heading south following the edge of the Fowey River skirting the ancient town of Lostwithiel. The river is finally reached at Golant before the last few miles to Fowey, where the pilgrims would set sail across the sea.

There is no actual historical evidence of a cohesive pilgrim's route here, although sections of the trail are known to be ancient paths connecting shrines, standing stones, Neolithic hill forts, holy wells, chapels and churches that would certainly have been used by the early saints and missionaries.

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However, the route, which, is also known as the Mariner's Way, is likely to have first been used by early Celtic traders. Gold travelled from Ireland through Cornwall and Brittany to the Mediterranean and it is thought that Egyptians, Greeks and Phoenicians journeyed to the west coast of Britain even before the Iron Age in order to trade with the Celts. During the 5th and 6th centuries the Anglo Saxons pushed the Celts further and further to the South-West, at the same time that Celts fleeing the yellow plague in Wales arrived in Cornwall.

THE ROUTE

The route is split into 6 sections and is suitable for members of all abilities. You choose the distance you wish to cover from 4 miles to the full 30 miles. You can do just one leg, two consecutive legs or whatever you wish. The logistics of transport is sorted out when we know who wishes to do which leg. We arrange for runners on similar legs to car share and leave one car at the start of the leg and another at the end of the leg they wish to undertake.

Year on year this popular event encourages more members to take part and many doing the whole route as a taster for ultra-events.



The event starts at the Parish Church in Padstow and the meeting place will be in the car park by the toilets at the top end of Padstow. (Don't drive down into the town).



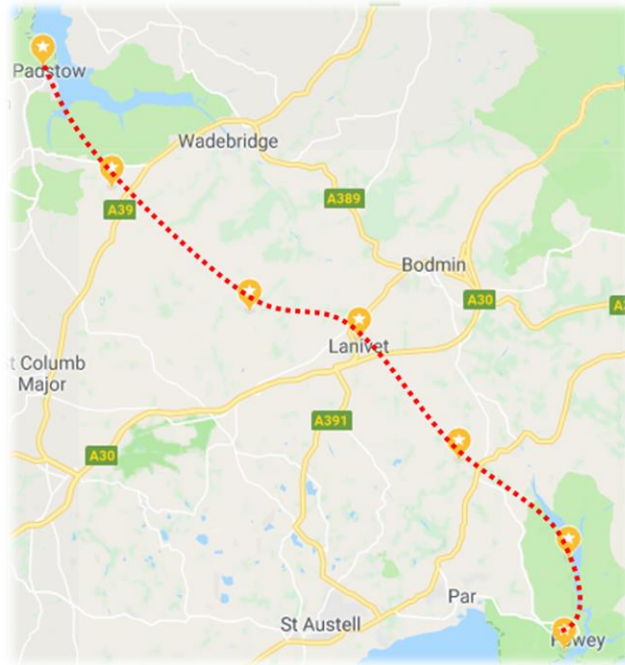
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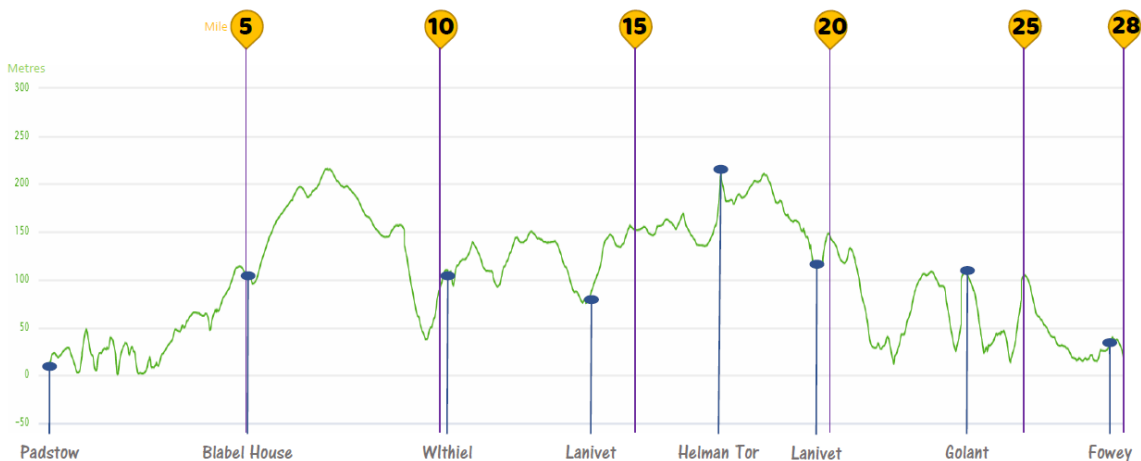


The legs of the course are shown as stars on the adjacent map and further detail is given below.

- Leg 1:** Padstow to Blabel House (5 miles)
- Leg 2:** Blabel House to Withiel (6 miles)
- Leg 3:** Withiel to Lanivet (4 miles)
- Leg 4:** Lanivet to Lanlivery (5 miles)
- Leg 5:** Lanlivery to Golant (5 miles)
- Leg 6:** Golant to Fowey (4 miles)



And we all know you like a little bit of elevation, so here are some of the high points.....



Over 1,250 metres (over 4,000 feet) of total ascent.



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START AT PADSTOW: 8AM FIRST WAVE THEN 9AM FOR FASTER GROUP

LEG 1 PADSTOW TO BLABEL HOUSE (5 MILES 60% OFF ROAD). ASSEMBLE 9:00AM

The route starts from the church and then a small stretch of road to get us out of Padstow before heading off road along the creek to Little Petherick. It is a little hilly with some narrow paths and one muddy stretch, the scenery is attractive with views down the Camel estuary. After Little Petherick the route continues with road and paths to Blabel House after Blabel House we pick up the road and follow to the changeover just before the A39.



Leg 2 Blabel House to Withiel (6 miles 75% off road) Assemble 10:00 am



This leg involves the steady climb up and over St. Breock Downs which offers splendid panoramic views over the whole of Mid Cornwall.

St Breock Downs is presided over by a 16 foot prehistoric standing Long Stone of Men Gurta. Originally five metres high and weighing some 16.75 tonnes, St Breock Downs Monolith is Cornwall's largest and heaviest prehistoric monolith.

First time Saint's Way runners are required to run around the stone three times in an anti-clockwise direction and then kiss the stone.

You can look back to Padstow and see out across the Doom Bar or looking East view Brown Willy and Rough Tor. Straight ahead Helman Tor is in view and to the West is St. Agnes Beacon.

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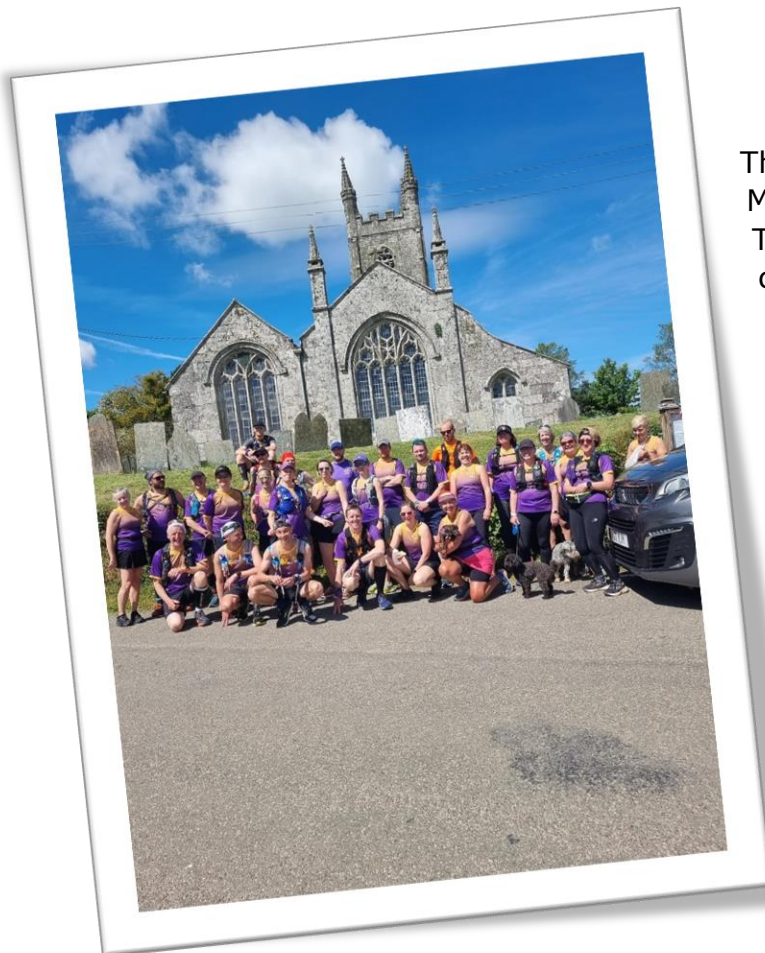


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From the top there is a short stretch of road then the trail takes fields and paths before the final pull up a track to Withiel.

En route is 'Beavers Creek' which first time Saints Way runners are required to run through.



The leg finishes outside Withiel's Mediaeval Church St. Clement. This parish has links to a 4th century Irish saint whose name, Urel, is derived from a word meaning 'a place of trees'.



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Leg 3 Withiel to Lanivet (4 miles 30% off road) Assemble 11:00 am

The route makes its way from Withiel to the larger parish of Lanivet, whose 15th century church of St Nivet is supposed to stand in the exact geographical centre of Cornwall.

The route leaves Withiel by undulating footpaths and takes in one muddy stretch of lane (which sometimes contains REAL MUD); there is one longish hill on the road and then a small stretch of fields before descending to Lanivet where the leg finishes in the car park on the main road.



The parish takes its name from the Celtic words 'Lann' meaning church site and 'Neved' meaning pagan sacred place.

Toilets and a shop are available here.

This is a common place for a lot of other runners to join run.



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Leg 4 Lanivet to Lanlivery (5 miles 50% off road) Assemble 12:00

Initially there is a steady climb on the road out of Lanivet then up onto Helman Tor for again superb views of the region.

Helman Tor, a nature reserve overlooking the marshy ground of Red Moor. Helman Tor is home to a Neolithic hill fort of the rare and distinctive type discovered by archaeologist Roger Mercer in the late 1970s. This type of fort is called a Tor Enclosure and consists of large hilltop or hillside enclosures situated near natural rock outcrops and surrounded by at least one circuit of stone-built walls.

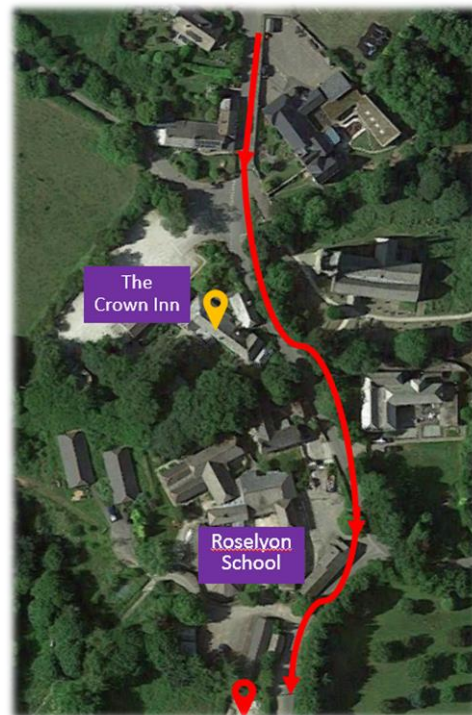


The route then picks up the old drover road to Lanlivery. Depending upon the weather there can be some muddy patches.

The leg finishes around the corner from Roselyon School just beyond the Crown Inn.

Lanlivery, has the church of St Brevita, a saint about whom nothing is known, which boasts a tower 100 feet high, the second highest in Cornwall.

Just in front of the church is the 12th century Crown Inn, which was extended to house the stonemasons who built the church of St Brevita. There has been an inn on this site since the 12th century and much of the present building dates back to this time.



A useful location for some runners to quench their thirst.

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Leg 5 Lanlivery to Golant (5 miles 40% off road) Assemble 13:00

Initially the route descends from Lanlivery on road then a small stretch off-road before it crosses the A390. Beyond the A390 the route takes a farm track down a very picturesque lane heading towards Mill Town. After that the road sections are hilly but there are some lovely views into the Fowey Valley.



The leg finishes in the lay-by just above the Church of St. Sampson at Golant.



Golant is a small waterside village on the banks of the River Fowey that has associations with Kenneth Graham and the story of Tristan and Iseult. The east bank is owned by the National Trust, and it is said that Kenneth Graham wrote 'Tales of the Riverbank', the precursor to *The Wind in The Willows*, after a trip along this river in 1907. Golant lies in the parish of St Sampson, whose life is one of the earliest recorded of all the saints. Sampson travelled from Dublin to Wales and then on to Cornwall, probably utilising parts of the Saint's Way.



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Leg 6 Golant to Fowey & Coombe Farm (4 miles 50% road) Assemble 14:00

The route leaves Golant on footpaths that run high up beside the river Fowey, down to Saw Mill Creek. After that there is a steady pull up through the woods then a descent on roads to the Ferry car park in Fowey.

We are usually joined by others who have run previous legs at this point, and we assemble to run through Fowey.



The obligatory team photograph in front of the church of St Fimbarus in Fowey that traditionally marks The Saints' Way. There may be confusion whether this church was dedicated to St Barry the Irish saint Finnbar, first Bishop of Cork.



However, this is not the end for St Austell runners, so onto Ready Money Beach for a well-earned ice cream.



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Readymoney Beach

This is the official end of the run, and many take the opportunity to get into the sea for a well-earned swim.

The final part is up the path from Ready Money Cove to the National Trust Car Park at Coombe farm Lankelly lane where the few remaining victuals are consumed.



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Jake the Peg, and the extra Leg

As seems now traditional, not content with running all the way from Padstow to Fowey a few of those training for Ultra events continue round the Coast path to the Ship Inn at Par adding an extra three miles. The majority work out the transport logistics on how to retrieve their cars and then re-assemble at the Ship Inn Par for some refreshment.



Logistics

If you would like to be involved, further details will be issued via the club website and our Facebook page.

Some of the route is on roads and narrow lanes so please take care and have regard for other road users. Please avoid causing an obstruction and park off road wherever possible.

Some of the route uses footpaths and farmland. Please take care and follow the countryside code and close all gates and have regard for the landowners' property and stock.

It would be good if the runners ran in their Club Vests or T-shirts.

Runners need to consult the team lists to confirm which stage or stages they are running. It works best if you arrange to leave your transport with change of clothes, towel, drinks etc. at the changeover point at the final stage you have elected to run. Organise locally with the other runners and supporters to get a lift to the start point of the first stage you have elected to run.

It is usually possible to change arrangements on the day and get a lift back or forward to where your car is parked.

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The refreshments along the route are a significant feature of this event and runners take pride in the grand STARC bake off to bring along sweet and savoury treats to be shared along the way. There are volunteer support crews from the club who transport the food and drinks to the check points.

Nearer the time a list of who is signed up for which legs will be published on the website and the forum



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