

CAR FREE DAYS OUT CL01

... how to enjoy St Austell without the car!



The Green Corridor

A walk along the Green Corridor to Wheal Martyn Clay Museum

Starting from the main rail/bus station, walk westwards towards the footbridge over the railway (do not cross) and then down the hill to the Church. From Holy Trinity Church in the centre of St Austell proceed up North Street, past the Queens Head and the Old Manor House and on up the hill until you cross over the railway bridge. Immediately after crossing the railway turn left into Tremena Road.

After a few hundred metres the turning onto the trail leading to Wheal Martyn will be seen on the left. This takes you alongside the railway for a short distance, with the massive railway viaduct in front. The trail then drops down onto the bed of the old branch line.



Continue along the side of this 'Green Corridor', passing the remains of a large china clay drying kiln on the right. In the wood on the opposite side of the valley was Trethowel china clay works, now obscured by trees. China Clay is a white clay used in paper, ceramics, paint and many other uses. Producing china clay has been the main activity in St Austell for the past 200 years and is still Britain's second most valuable mineral export, after petroleum.

Follow the path for 2km where the main path veers to the right and continues steeply up the hill towards Carludden and Eden. Do not take this path, but descend on a path on the left which leads to a footbridge constructed over the main road to a trail on the other side, again on the bed of the old branch line. Pass by several more drying kilns until the Museum is reached.

The Museum is centred around the refining and drying operations of an early china clay producing complex. There is also a purpose-built Museum with a fascinating series of displays, some interactive, describing the history of china clay mining and the Cornish culture associated with those who worked in the industry (an admission fee is payable). Outdoor displays feature large waterwheels driving pumps and the refining and drying of china clay, plus many other artefacts large and small (including a locomotive and rolling stock) used in the industry.

The Green Corridor

This is a pleasant walk of about 2 miles along the Green Corridor linking St Austell town centre with Wheal Martyn Museum and China Clay Country Park. 01726 73500

Opening Hours
10-00am - 2.00pm

How to get to Wheal Martyn without the car!

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Discover St Austell without the car!



The visitor should then proceed up the hill, through a short tunnel to the viewing platform where it is possible to see two active china clay producing pits - Wheal Martyn and Greensplat. China Clay is obtained from granite which has been altered (kaolinised) to a soft matrix which can easily be broken down in water into a slurry composed of coarse quartz sand, fine micaceous residue and kaolinite - the mineral forming china clay.

The coarse sand is removed in the pit and is disposed of in the large tips dotted around the skyline. Many of these sand tips have been landscaped so that they are almost indistinguishable from natural hills. An increasing amount of waste sand is used in construction. Further refining separates the micaceous residue from the china clay, which is then conveyed in pipelines to drying units.

"...after all that exertion a nice cup of tea awaits in the Museum restaurant"

Descend from the viewing platform; at a bifurcation take the path on the left (do not go down the way you came up) and walk on a level path through some trees. This is an old tip from an early phase of Wheal Martyn. Then descend through the woods to the Boulder Park and the SSSI where many of the rock types seen in the china clay tips are displayed. The path then leads down into the old china clay works seen earlier. After all that exertion a nice cup of tea awaits in the Museum restaurant, which also sells a wide range of other drinks and hot meals. There is also a shop selling a good range of quality goods, including ceramics, souvenirs and books.

Return the same way as you came or, if you are feeling energetic, take the steeply rising path mentioned earlier to Carludon and then walk down the hill to St Austell or catch a Western Greyhound Bus 529 at Tregonissey into the town.

