

Inspired to explore?

After this tour you may be inspired to explore a little further. In addition to these remains there are many more sites which are worth visiting here on the Lizard and further afield in Cornwall.

The impressive **Cliff Castles** of **Lankidden** and **Chynalls** are a couple of miles further north on the coastal path.

The impressive **holed stone Tolvan** is found in the village of **Gweek**, it is on private land so please ask before accessing it.

Halligye Fogou is located just outside of the village of **Garras**, a subterranean Iron Age remain this is well worth a visit.

I hope you enjoy the tour, without many hills the Lizard makes the perfect place to cycle. If you do decide to do this by car please park responsibly when visiting the sites.

Take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footprints.

Lizard
BEACONS

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A TOUR OF ANCIENT LIZARD
CAROLYN KENNETT (FRAS)



Early Lizard

The Lizard in Cornwall is the most southerly part of the UK. Due to its underlying geology it is a unique and beautiful landscape. It is surrounded by coastline and the interior forms a plateau with a gently sloping top, which has amazing extensive views. This leaflet will take you on a trip through the ancient Lizard peninsula looking how some of the earliest inhabitants used this landscape, creating beacons which could be seen from far and wide. The ancient beacons come from a long period in time and cover the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

There is evidence of people residing on the Lizard since prehistoric times. The first people who roamed this part of the world were hunter gatherers, but by the Bronze Age people had started to settle and live in small communities. There is evidence of people living, farming and burying their dead here. The earliest monument is a Neolithic Portal Dolmen, but by the Bronze Age there are single standing stones or menhirs being erected.

The Lizard also has a large number of barrows from this time. The final type of monument on this tour is the impressive Iron Age cliff castles off the southeast coastline. These were made to be seen, perhaps as a defence against incoming invaders from across the sea.

Neolithic Dolmen

A Portal Dolmen is a Neolithic monument which is very distinctive. It has three or four upright stones, topped by a large capstone. They may have been surrounded by an earth mound, this mound could have helped raise the impressive capstone onto the other standing stones. Often known as a Quoit here in Cornwall, two of the standing stones form an entrance or a 'portal'. This is perhaps symbolic of someone moving past their life here on Earth. Although these monuments are extensive elsewhere in Europe there are only 20 examples in the UK. Many of these are in the neighbouring region of Penwith in Cornwall, but the Lizard has one example called "The Brothers of Grugith". Dolmens can be very impressive and when they are built on ridges they can be seen for miles around. Although the example here on the Lizard is not the most impressive it should give you a flavour of what the Neolithic people were building.

Iron Age Cliff Castles

Cliff castles would have acted as a prominent focus or beacon within the later prehistoric landscape, Dating from 500BC they were multipurpose. The reasons for these would have been social, administrative and possibly defensive. The area is rich in copper and there would have been wealth here generated from trade. The cliff castles are similar to their inland counterparts the hillfort. They are located in very exposed areas of the coastline so occupation would likely be seasonal. The sites of the cliff castles had probably been used before by the earlier population living on the Lizard.

Bronze Age Menhirs

It is very difficult to draw conclusions about the purpose of single standing stones in the landscape. Many are tall and impressive and they would have therefore acted as beacons within the landscape. The use may have been multipurpose and also change through the centuries, they could have marked; ritual sites, align astronomical events, be burial sites, meeting places or boundary stones. There are at least 6 menhirs on the Lizard and these tend to be sited near watersheds or on higher ground. With a more prominent position in this flat landscape they could be seen for miles around.

Bronze Age Barrows

Barrows are more widespread on the Lizard than the neighbouring regions of Cornwall. They are found across the length and breadth of this area. Many of these were used as burial sites but may have been multipurpose across the ages. It is interesting that there is evidence that some of the barrows on the Lizard were covered in orange clay, making them stand out against the landscape. These monuments will have been used for a variety of purposes including, burial, ritual and beacons within the landscape.



Lizard BEACONS

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HELSTON



BEACON 4 SW 7796 2312
50°03'59.9"N 5°06'14.5"W

Roskruge Beacon is even an eponym after our theme of ancient beacons. Another great example of a Bronze Age barrow this one gives excellent views especially over the Helford estuary.



BEACON 5 SW 7776 2104
50°02'52.6"N 5°06'20.1"W

Tremenheere Menhir is found within a farmer's field. The name of Tremenheere is Cornish and translates to Standing Stone Farm. At 12ft tall this menhir would have been erected in the Bronze Age. The stone itself is made of an unusual material, Antiquarian Borlase thought it was made of 'ironstone' it is in fact made of the local igneous rock known as gabbro.



BEACON 6 SW 7752 2009
50°02'21.3"N 5°06'30.4"W

Crousa Common are a pair of stones found to the south of Roskruge Beacon. One of the stones has fallen and is laid on its side. Legend has it that these stones were thrown by St Keverne at St Just. Close pairs of menhirs are not unique there are other examples in Penwith (Drift pair) and on Bodmin Moor (The Pipers). Locally to the south of the B3293 at SW 774 196 is a barrow which has a cist within it.



BEACON 7 SW 7617 1980
50°02'09.9"N 5°07'37.5"W

This is perhaps the oldest monument you will see on your tour. This monument is thought to be a Neolithic Portal Dolmen or Quoit. Interestingly there are indentations on the large capstone. These are thought to be cup markings.



BEACON 8 SW 7555 1650

Iron Age Cliff Castle – Carn Kennack

Park at Kennack Sands and walk to the outcrop which divides the beach. This is an Iron Age Castle Fort called Carn Kennack. This castle is part of a line of Iron Age defences. To the south is Enys Point, while just ½ mile east along the coastal path is another Iron Age Cliff Castle, Lankidden. Behind that is the Cliff Castle of Chynalls. These impressive promontory headlands were chosen as positions of prestige and offered protection for the local population around 500BC. Today it is a great place to stop and take in the wonderful view. Time for tea anyone?



BEACON 1 SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W

Starting location Mawgan in Meneage village green. Here you will see a large inscribed stone. The inscription is in Latin and reads 'CNEGUMI FILI GENAIUS' which translates as '(the stone) of Cnegumus, son of Genaius'. The inscription probably dates from around the seventh century. The menhir predates this and was placed here within the Bronze Age.



BEACON 2 SW 7256 2116
50°02'49.4"N 5°10'41.4"W

Dry Tree Menhir – a short walk from the nature reserve carpark, this menhir is impressively tall. It is in fact 1 metre shorter than it originally was, as it was saved and re-erected in 1916 by Sir Courtenay Vyvyan. As tall as the stone is it is dwarfed by the neighbouring communications dish of Goonhilly.



BEACON 3 SW 7256 2120
50°02'47.7"N 5°10'42.4"W

A short walk along the path is the barrow Cruc Draenoc. It is recognisable as there is a survey trig point positioned on its top. Once you climb to this point you will see extensive views across Goonhilly Downs. This barrow can be seen from as far away as St Austell Uplands. Once topped by orange clay this would have made the barrow stand out against the surrounding landscape even more.

