

CAST

CAST-OFF

ACTIVITY MAP

SET OFF ON A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY AND EXPLORE
THE COBER VALLEY FROM LOWERTOWN TO LOE BAR

Activity map 2020 © CAST

CAST-OFF ACTIVITY MAP SUMMER 2020

CAST has moved its holiday Think and Make activities outside this summer, so families can keep safe and explore the wonderful Cober Valley.

Every Tuesday and Saturday throughout August artists will be stationed along the trail to inspire invention and making. To find out what is going on and where, please check the CAST website or CAST Cornwall facebook page each week. We won't be put off by a bit of drizzle and hope you won't either, but check on the day in case of extreme weather or last minute changes. Sessions will run from 10am to 12 noon and 2 to 4pm.

As households need to stay two metres apart from each other, there may be times when it's difficult to get close enough to see or hear what an artist is doing. Please be patient and try out some of the activities on this map while you wait. CAST-Off helpers will be on hand with useful tips, so let them know you're waiting. They will also be collecting feedback, and contact details for 'track and trace'.

The Countryside Code: While you enjoy the countryside please remember to be considerate of others, leave gates and property as you find them, make sure nothing you do harms animals, birds, plants or trees and take your litter home with you. Take care around livestock - keep your distance. Leave no trace!

THIS MAP is designed to be taken with you out into the environment to find your way to new and interesting places in and around the Cober Valley and to inspire you to think, make and do as you go.

THE SKETCHBOOK AND PENCIL you collect from CAST is yours to keep. Bring them with you whenever you CAST-Off, to draw your observations. Fill your sketchbook creatively and imaginatively with whatever you learn or discover while you are out and about. CAST will give prizes for the most creative sketchbooks at the end of August.

BRING A BAG to carry your map and sketchbook and any other equipment from the list below, and to fill with interesting things you find in nature.

USEFUL THINGS TO BRING: STRING, COLOURED PENCILS, BLUNT NAIL (FOR MAKING HOLES), MAGNIFYING GLASS, BINOCULARS, COMPASS, WATERCOLOUR PAINT.

CAST-Off is devised by Lucy Grant and organised by the Helston-based arts organisation CAST (Cornubian Arts & Science Trust)

CAST, 3 PENROSE ROAD, HELSTON, TR13 8TP C-A-S-T.ORG.UK F B: CASTCORNWALL #CAST-OFF

Supported by: Arts Council England, The Garcia Family Foundation, Cornwall Heritage Trust, FEAST and Little Parc Owles Trust. Organised with assistance from: Incredible Edible Helston, Helston Climate Action Group, Helston Town Council, Museum of Cornish Life Helston, National Trust, and South Kerrier Alliance.



Supported using public funding by
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1 STEPPING STONES

THIS MARKS THE START OF THE CAST-OFF TRAIL, WHICH FOLLOWS THE RIVER COBER AS IT SNAKES DOWN THE VALLEY TO THE SEA AT LOE BAR. FROM HERE YOU CAN EXPLORE AND PLAY IN THE WOODS, VISIT BEN'S DEN, MAKE A HAL-AN-TOW STICK OR WILD WOODLAND CREATURE, GO ON A SHAPE HUNT OR MAKE AND DRAW WITH CHARCOAL. BRING YOUR SKETCHBOOK, IMAGINATION AND SOME STRING!



◀ HAL-AN-TOW

It is an ancient tradition for young men and merry maids to gather greenery in the woods at dawn on Flora Day, before processing noisily through the town to chase out the cold, dark of winter and welcome in the summer light. The 'Hal-an-Tow' is thought to refer to a florally decorated stick carried in procession. As Flora Day was cancelled this year, the chasing out of winter still needs to be done! Find a good stick and tie on summer things as you go - leaves, flowers, twigs or feathers. Make sure you chase out the winter still hiding in dark places and celebrate the summer!



IVY CROWNS ▶

The Hal-an-Tow performers also wear crowns or headdresses made of green leaves which is a tradition of many May celebrations all around the world. Leaves of laurel, myrtle and ivy were used in ancient Greece and Rome to crown winners of poetry contests and athletic competitions, as well as for many feasts and celebrations. Look among the trees for strands of ivy or bendy willow twigs to twist and wind into a headdress of your own!



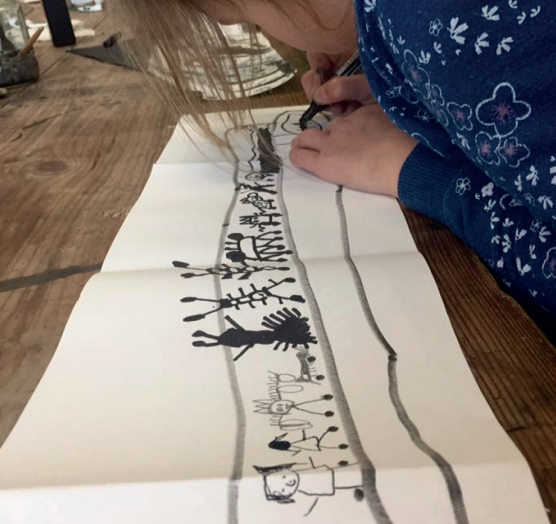
◀ SHAPE HUNT

See how many different kinds of leaf shape you can find in the woods. If you fold a leaf down the middle does one side look the same as the other? If it does this is called symmetry, some leaves are symmetrical, but some definitely are not. Draw the different leaf outlines carefully into your sketchbook and collect some specimens to take home. Can you identify the trees your leaves came from? Come back in the autumn and see how the leaves change.



MAKE A LEAF COLLAGE ▶

When you get home trace half of each leaf (or copy the shapes from your drawings) onto folded paper. Line up the middle of the leaf with the folded edge. Cut the shapes out and glue them onto coloured paper to make a leaf collage. Make as many different leaf shapes as you can. Do some of them look like trees? Try inventing symmetrical leaf and tree shapes in the same way. Stick your collage in your sketchbook and show us what you make using #CAST_off



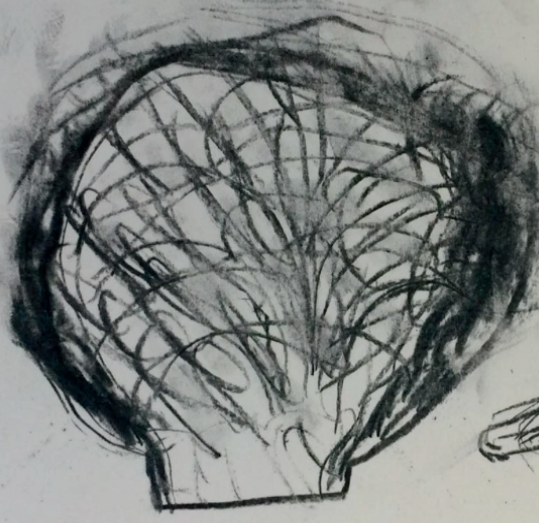
◀ GO ON A PICTURE JOURNEY

Use your observation and imagination to draw a story about your travels and explorations in your sketchbook. Who or what do you see on the way? Work along the page from left to right and go as far as you can go! Write a little bit about what happens and make your drawing as interesting and beautiful as your story. Colour it in when you get home, or wet the paper and experiment with inks or paint. Continue your journey in your imagination. Who knows where you will end up!



2 COBER FOOTBRIDGE

THE FOOTBRIDGE IS NEAR ST JOHNS, NOT FAR FROM THE OLD MILL THAT WAS POWERED BY A WATERWHEEL TO GRIND FLOUR. THE BRIDGE CONNECTS THE OLD HELSTON TO LOWERTOWN BRIDLEPATH WITH WINDING FOOTPATHS THROUGH THE WOODS... SEE HOW THE RIVER TWISTS AND TURNS, PLAY POOH STICKS, PADDLE AND PLAY ON THE SHORE. EXPLORE THIS WILD AREA TO MAKE MAPS, IMAGINE FAIRY STORIES AND CREATE WILD WOODLAND CREATURES.



CHARCOAL

A traditional artists drawing material made from sticks or twigs burnt in a special way without oxygen, charcoal is particularly good to draw with. It gives distinct rich black lines, but can also be smudged with your fingers (and toes) to create softer marks and shading. Look out for charcoal being made on pop-up days at Ben's Den or collect some from other places around the Cober Valley and Penrose. Have a go at drawing with it in your sketchbook!

CHARCOAL MADE FROM CHARRED STICKS AND TWIGS



WILDWOOD CREATURES

Who lives in these ancient woods? What shy creatures graze, prance or creep in the half-light and drink at the stream? Gather leaves, acorns, twigs, seeds, bark and anything else you find along the way. Bring your materials to Cober Camp and collect a piece of clay to make yourself a mystical woodland creature. Where does it come from, what is its name, what sound does it make? Draw it in your sketchbook and find a place for it to live in the woods. Take a picture and share it using #CAST_Off



WOODLAND FOLK

Whenever you go out walking, take a collecting bag with you and look out for pieces of nature on the ground, especially seed cases, acorn cups, pine cones and twigs that you can glue together at home to make into little woodland people or animals. Make heads with beads or acorns, add wool for hair, beards from wild clematis or even give them sycamore seed wings and draw or paint faces. Keep your nature finds in a rummage basket or bowl, or make a nature table to display them on.

5 DEGIBNA WOODS

IN 1272 KING EDWARD I GRANTED LAND OF A CORNISH ACRE AT DEGIBNA TO WILLIAM DE TREVILLE ON CONDITION THAT HE PURCHASE AND MAINTAIN A BOAT AND FISHING HOOK FOR THE KING'S USE ON THE LOE WHENEVER HE SHOULD VISIT! THESE MAGNIFICENT WOODS ARE STILL FIT FOR A KING AND A GREAT PLACE TO EXPLORE AND PLAY. LOOK UP AT THE ENORMOUS TREES AND LOOK FOR LAKESIDE BEACHES TO PADDLE ON, SKIM STONES OR LAUNCH BOATS FROM.



OAK TREES AND GALLS

Look out for oak trees in the woods. Some are very old and full of secrets! Collect leaves and acorns and compare their shapes and sizes. Look out for oak galls. These special little balls are created by the amazing relationship between a wasp and an oak tree. The wasp lays an egg at the tip of an oak bud, which then grows to form a little round ball (or gall) for the wasp grub to grow in. Do not pick green ones from the tree, they may still have wasps inside! But if you are lucky enough to find one on the ground, look for a tiny hole where the little wasp climbed out and left.



MAKE A BOAT FLOAT

Look for bits of fallen wood or bark that could float, to make a boat base. Use twigs for masts and different types of leaves for sails. Use a nail from your tool kit, or a sharp stick to make holes to stand the mast up in and poke holes to thread on leaf sails. Be careful to keep your sails light. If your boat is top heavy it may capsize! Decorate your boat with feather or flower flags. Try out different sail configurations. Do they catch the wind? How does the boat sail? Show us using #CAST_Off



THIS STUFFED TROUT IS AT THE MUSEUM OF CORNISH LIFE



OAK GALL INK

This ink has been used since the middle ages and is still made and used today. Oak galls make very good ink that does not rub off or fade away. The Magna Carta Libertatum (Great Charter of Freedoms) from 1215, Leonardo da Vinci's drawings and Shakespeare's plays written in the 16th and 17th centuries are still clear and bright because they were made using this special ink. Look out for pop-up oak gall ink making and drawing.

LOE TROUT

Loe Pool was once famous for its 'peculiar kind of bastard trout' thought to be a cross between a sea fish and a fresh water fish from either side of the Bar. It was said: 'the eye is large, the back a deep black purple... the belly... a bright pearl colour. The spots are hexagonal annulets of scarlet, the flesh very red... and much esteemed.' It was so good even King Edward I wanted to catch one! Imagine what this huge and magnificent trout might have looked like and draw it in your sketchbook. Show us using #CAST_Off.

6 CARMINOWE CREEK

SIT IN THE GRASS ABOVE CARMINOWE CREEK, LISTEN TO THE SOUNDS AROUND YOU - WIND, BIRDS, TREES, WATER... TAKE IN THE WIDE OPEN SPACES. LOOK ACROSS LOE POOL TO THE WOODS OPPOSITE AND OVER TO THE SHINGLE BEACH OF LOE BAR, WHICH SEPARATES THE POOL FROM THE OPEN SEA AND THE HORIZON BEYOND. THE SEA WOULD ONCE HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH SHIPS IN SAIL COMING AND GOING FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

MAKE WILD PAINT

The earliest form of paint is thought to have been ash from a fire mixed with animal fat. We make paint from all sorts of things - coloured rock and earth, ground up chalk, brick, charcoal or even tumeric from the kitchen. To make it stick onto a surface pigment is mixed with anything from water, to oil or even egg yolk! Make a palette of colours from different crushed, dry materials. Experiment by mixing your pigments with water, egg or glue. Paint on different surfaces too, like wood, rock or cardboard and use your homemade brushes!



BOUNCING BOMBS

During World War II, Penrose Estate was commandeered by the military and plenty went on in secret. The airforce used the Loe for rocket and torpedo firing practice and it is rumoured that Barnes Wallis tested his famous bouncing bomb on the smooth waters here. Do your own bouncing bomb practice by the waters edge. Skim flat stones and make them skip across the water. How many times can you make them bounce? Imagine and draw the scenes of night flights and bombs! Share them using #CAST_Off



HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU BOUNCE A FLAT STONE?



MAKE A WILD BRUSH

Collect pine needles, grass, leaves or feathers and bind them to a stick with string to make wild brushes. Make lots of different shapes and sizes to make all sorts of paint marks. Carry them with you when you go out to the beach or lake and make water paintings on the surfaces of rocks and stones. What kinds of marks can you make? Flick, drag, dot or splodge. Photograph your energetic paintings and share them with us using #CAST_Off

3 CORONATION PARK

THIS PARK AND BOATING LAKE WAS BUILT TO CELEBRATE THE CORONATION OF KING GEORGE V IN 1912. THERE USED TO BE REGULAR WATER CARNIVALS AND FIREWORKS AT PLUM FAIR. LOCAL SCHOOL BOYS HAD SWIMMING AND BOATING LESSONS HERE. THE ONLY SWIMMERS NOW ARE THE DUCKS AND SWANS, BUT IT IS STILL A MUCH LOVED PLACE OF RECREATION.



BLUE HEART REWILDING ▼

Look out for the new Wildflower Meadow recently planted by the Coronation Park team. The meadow has been laid to provide a home for wildlife and demonstrate how re-wilding can be achieved in your own garden. It has been recognised with a Blue Heart as part of the BLUE Campaign, promoting re-wilding of gardens, parks, verges and other patches of land. Volunteers from Helston Climate Action Group will show you how to make a seed bomb or a blue heart marker and go about rewilding in your own garden!

8 THE WALLED GARDEN

THE WALLED GARDEN IS THE OLD KITCHEN GARDEN FOR PENROSE HOUSE. IN THE OLD DAYS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TENDED BY A TEAM OF GARDENERS TO GROW ABUNDANT FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FOR HOUSEHOLD NEEDS. TODAY IT IS A PLEASANT PLACE TO SIT, RELAX AND ADMIRE THE WILD FLOWERS.



▲ INCREDIBLE EDIBLE

This project aims to make use of green spaces in and around the town for community growing - inspiring, informing and enabling people to grow their own food, together. Work has started on building a community garden here in Coronation Park, by the bridge over the river. Look out for volunteers working here and they will tell more you about what they are doing and how to get involved. Incredible Edible hopes eventually to have an edible trail through Helston. CAST has already joined the trail with a planter of giant courgettes!



CAN YOU HEAR BIRDS? ▼

Don't just look, listen. Can you hear the birds? Can you hear different kinds of call? Some birds, like blackbirds and robins, live here all year round, but others, like swallows and sand martins spend the winter in Africa, then fly all the way here for the summer! See what birds you can spot swooping to catch insects over the meadows and Loe Bar and what kinds of birds you can see on and around the water at Loe Pool. Look out for herons and kingfishers. At night you might hear bats and barn owls. Draw birds in your sketchbook and share using #CAST_Off

▲ PAPER BOATS

When the lake first opened, local school boys (no girls!) had swimming and boating lessons here and you have always been able to hire boats of different sorts: rowing boats, paddle boats, indian canoes and now even giant swans! Make your own Coronation Lake boat. Collect coloured paper and instructions near the cafe and have a go at folding an origami boat, or even a duck! Look out for pop-up boat races on the Cober river over the summer!



DUCKS DUCKING TO FIND FOOD UNDERWATER.

image: Tom Koerner / USFWS

◀ DRAW THE DUCKS

At one time people swam in the boating lake, but now only the ducks do. There are many different kinds of ducks, geese and swans that visit or live on the lake. How many different kinds can you see? Do they have any special markings and how do they compare in size? Have a go at drawing them in your sketchbook. If you do an especially good job, show it to Helston Climate Action Group volunteers and they might give you some seed to feed the real ducks. Share using #CAST_Off

LIE BACK AND LISTEN - WHAT CAN YOU HEAR AROUND YOU? CAN YOU DRAW SOUNDS? HAVE A GO.



The Wreck of the HMS Anson, by Clive Arthur Carter

7 LOE BAR

HERE THE COBER RIVER FINALLY FLOWS UNDER THE BAR AND INTO THE SEA. ON ONE SIDE THE SEA IS DEEP, THE CURRENTS ARE STRONG AND THE WATER TREACHEROUS. ON THE OTHER SIDE, AFTER CENTURIES OF INDUSTRY, DRAMA AND DISTURBANCE, THE POOL SITS CLEAR, CALM AND TRANQUIL.

WATCH OUT FOR LITTLE THINGS LIVING UNDERFOOT!



Image: Steve Hatch

◀ MOTHS, BEETLES, SPIDERS & BEES

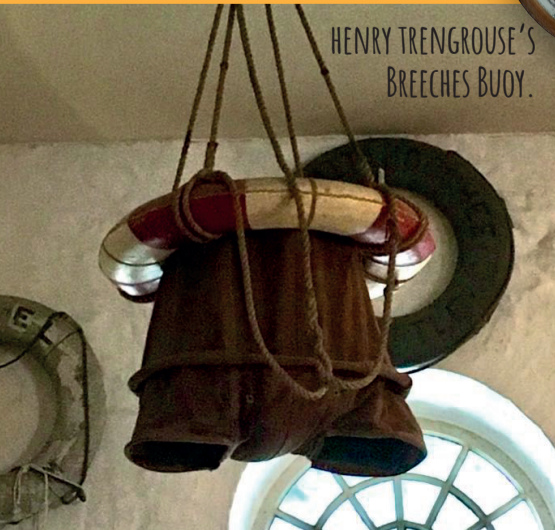
Loe Bar is the only place you might find the very rare Rustic Sandhill Moth, but you would have to look very hard as it is so well camouflaged amongst the shingle and only lives for five days! You may be more likely to see it as a caterpillar, so keep your eyes peeled. Always try to be observant and careful where you tread and look out for all the interesting moths, caterpillars, bees, beetles and spiders that live here - including the Sand Dune Wolf Spider! Remember to draw carefully any you find, making a note in your sketchbook of special colours, markings or features, or draw what you think they might look like! Share using #CAST_Off

SHIPWRECKS ▲ ▼

In 1807 a Helston boy called Henry Tregrouse watched helpless as the Navy ship HMS Anson was wrecked on Loe Bar in a fierce storm. Many sailors were drowned not far from the shore. Henry was so affected by the tragedy that he was later moved to invent the 'Breeches Buoy', a rocket-launched pulley designed to bring stranded sailors ashore when ships ran aground. His invention went on to be widely used and saved thousands of lives. You can find out more about Henry Tregrouse and see the painting above at the Museum of Cornish Life in Helston.



HENRY TREGROUSE'S BREECHES BUOY.

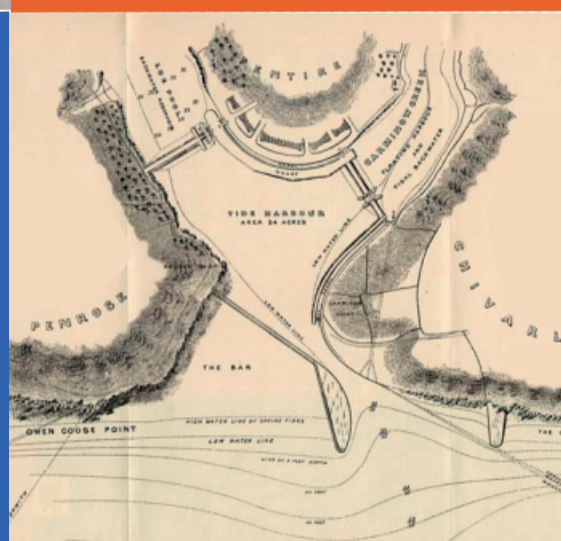


JAN TREGAEGLE ▶

There is a story that Loe Bar was created a long time ago by Jan Tregaegle, the wickedest Cornish man that ever lived. For his many crimes, he was set an endless diabolical task of moving sand from Gunwalloe Cove to Porthleven, which the sea was always sure to return to its former location. While employed in this task he is said to have dropped a sackful of sand at the mouth of the river Cober, causing Loe Bar to be formed, and creating Loe Pool behind. Make a picture in your sketchbook of wicked Jan Tregaegle at work and share it using #CAST_Off

HELSTON PORT ▶

It is said that long, long ago, Loe Bar did not exist and the Loe was not a pool at all, but a long tidal estuary open to the sea. Ships would have been able to sail right up to Helston to load up with cargoes of silver, tin, leather or grain. Over the centuries storms, tides and currents washed the shingle beach across the mouth of the estuary, to create what we now know as Loe Bar and Loe Pool. For a time Gweek was the nearest port, as Porthleven was just a marshy cove until the harbour was built in 1825. In 1837, the Lord of Penrose dreamed of making the Loe a port again and even had plans drawn up. Imagine ships sailing upriver to Helston!

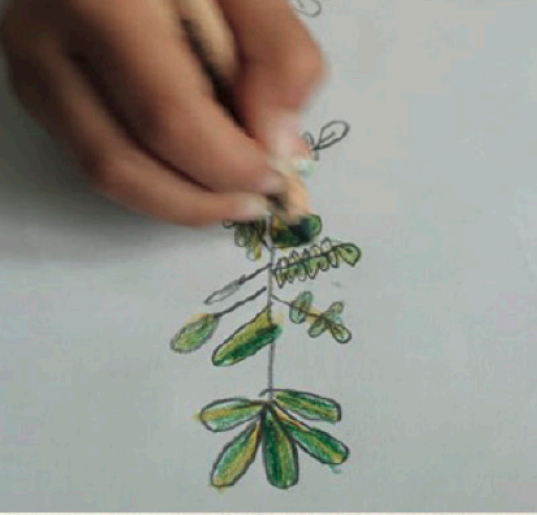


WICKED TREGAEGLE SPILLS HIS SACK OF SAND



GRAND SCHEMES ▶ ▲

Over the years there have been many grand schemes, designs and inventions in and around Penrose. Lord Rogers commissioned plans to build a harbour wall and entrance at the Bar in 1837. Aircraft practised with new underwater torpedo technology and bouncing bombs. There were water wheels running mills and all sorts of steam-powered mine engines pumping out mineshafts. There were even designs for a paddle-steam-dredger, which would scour the marshes for silver. Draw your own grand design and tell us what it is for. Share your inventions using #CAST_Off



◀ BOTANICAL DRAWING

A botanist studies plants and flowers and observes them very carefully, making detailed drawings of the specimens they find. There are many different species of wild plants and flowers along the valley. Without picking them, sit, observe and make drawings in your sketchbook of any special specimens you find today. Note how many petals a flower has, or the shape of the leaves. Flowers come and go week by week, so what you see today may be gone the next time you visit and something different may have grown in its place. Draw plants and flowers wherever you go.

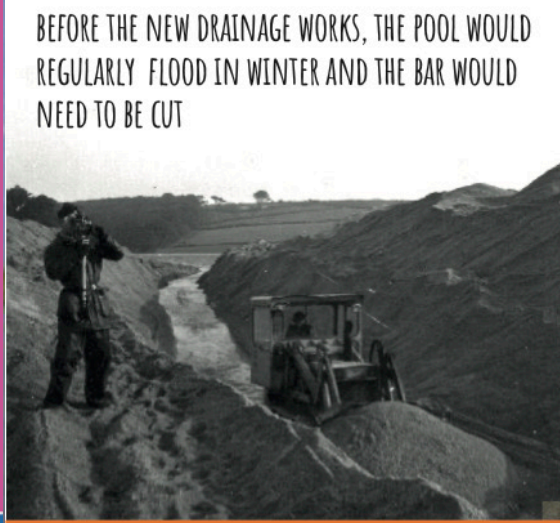


DECIDE HOW YOU WILL DRAW FEATURES ON YOUR MAP.

◀ MAKE YOUR OWN MAP ▶

Imagine you are a bird in the air, looking down on your journey. Is the bird's view any different from what you see around you? Imagine what the shapes and patterns in the landscape look like from above and draw them to make a map. Decide on symbols to draw to mark interesting things on your route, including trees, rivers, buildings, bridges, paths and roads. Make a note of what your symbols mean. Mark down your favourite places and give them names of your own. Add places and things you'd like to do or see.

4 WHEEL POOL
 THE AREA AROUND PENROSE HAS BEEN MINED SINCE THE ROMAN TIMES AND THE ENGINE HOUSE AT WHEEL POOL STILL STANDS TODAY. SILVER WAS MINED FROM SHAFTS 50 FATHOMS DEEP AND THE MARSHES AROUND IT WERE LITTERED WITH SILVER SPOIL. THE MARSH HERE IS NOW TREASURED INSTEAD AS A BEAUTIFUL HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE AND FLOWERS.



BEFORE THE NEW DRAINAGE WORKS, THE POOL WOULD REGULARLY FLOOD IN WINTER AND THE BAR WOULD NEED TO BE CUT

▲ THREE HALF PENNIES

There used to be three flour mills around Loe Pool. These were naturally powered by water wheels, which turned heavy mill stones and ground grain into soft fine flour to bake into bread. Sometimes in winter the valley would flood and the high water would slow the wheels and stop the milling, so there was no bread! At such times, the Mayor would present three half penny purses, one from each mill, to the Lord of Penrose to seek his permission to cut the Bar so the flood water could escape. First a small channel was cut, which would soon become a roaring torrent as the whole pool and all its contents poured out into the sea. Over the following days the waves and tides would replace the Bar once more.

*The sea she is no lady
 Around the coast of Cornwall
 stroked by the rolling sea,
 a thousand ships a sailing
 brought spice and post and tea,
 but that sea she was no lady,
 at times she'd rage and rant
 and dash those poor ships about
 on rock and cliff and sand.
 Then when she acts a lady
 all soft and pretty pert,
 she'd hide those ships all shady
 beneath her flowing skirt.*



SEE THIS IMAGE AT THE MUSEUM OF CORNISH LIFE

MAKE A DRAWING ▲

You don't only have to draw with pen and paper, you can draw with any of the things you find around you when you are out and about. A drawing could be made with rocks, shells, flotsam and jetsam on the beach or with twigs, leaves and seeds in the woods. Find a good place to sit down wherever you are and make an imaginary picture to illustrate something new you've learned today or make a portrait of yourself, or your friends and family. Share using #CAST-off