

A brief history of Grampound

In the past the little white river, part of the upper reaches of the River Fal which runs under the bridge at the bottom of Fore Street, was a deep and busy waterway with a Roman encampment nearby. About 1,600 years ago the Romans built a great bridge here; in Norman times the bridge was called Grand Pont, as the village was the lowest crossing point on the River Fal, by which name the village was known and from which its present name has evolved.

The community flourished and by 1332 Grampound was given its charter by Earl John of Eltham which gave the townspeople the right to 'hang convicted thieves' and to exemption from taxes and tolls on the repair and building of other bridges. Most importantly they were granted the right to hold 52 markets a year without payment of dues. The seven-sided market cross still remains in Grampound outside what was once the market hall. The clock tower, now a landmark on the A390, was a symbol of the status of the borough in later years.

The tanning of leather in Grampound goes back to medieval, perhaps even Roman, times and the large cattle markets supplied the hides. At one time there were five tanneries in the area, which was a centre for leather. From 1711 the Croggon tannery flourished in Grampound and until quite recently produced high quality leather by the traditional oak-bark method.

A small dark chamber behind the market hall was the gaol. Perhaps it was used quite often, as later in its history Grampound became a notorious 'rotten' borough, with much buying and selling of votes. It was once described as 'one mass of notorious corruption' but, as it was also described elsewhere as 'a place of great privileges and very poor inhabitants', maybe the temptations were hard to resist.

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Grampound sent two members to parliament from the time of Edward VI up to 1824, but was in that year disenfranchised for bribery, being the only borough so treated prior to the Reform Bill of 1832. It had the honour of introducing to parliamentary life two very notable men, Wm. Noye, the great lawyer (1604 to 1611), and John Hampden, the hero of the ship-money dispute (1620) and prominent parliamentarian during the Civil War, both good friends of the people, though the former deserted the popular cause. In 1768 it was represented by Grey Cooper, secretary to the treasury, and Charles W. Cornwall, afterwards speaker of the house, a man of great ability.

The village possessed a mill, mentioned in the Domesday Book, located at the end of what is still called Mill Lane. In 1501 there were spinning mills, in 1653 fulling mills and later, in 1801, these became woollen manufacturers. From 1816 the industry changed to glove manufacturing.



A walk near the ancient township of **Grampound with Creed**

Walk No. 3

A circular walk (about 4 miles)
in beautiful countryside
to the west of Grampound

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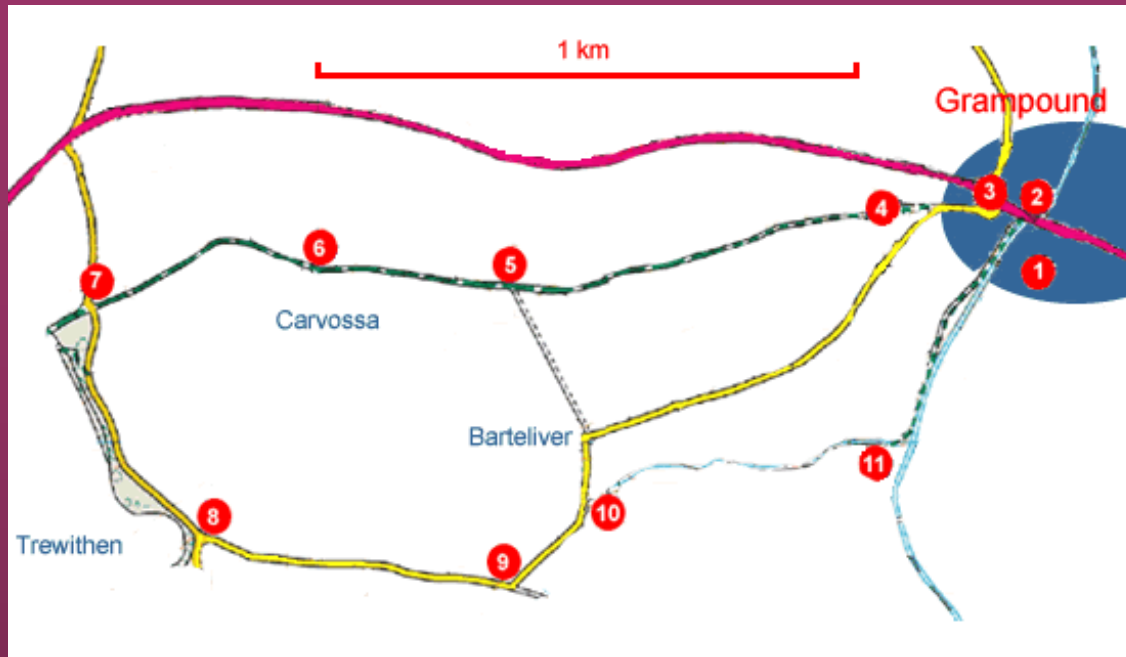
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A good walk in the countryside around Grampound mostly on quiet lanes, footpaths and a bridleway.

Free parking is available at Grampound Recreation Ground where you will also find public toilets.



- 1 From the Recreation Ground Car Park, turn left past the school (built 1869) onto the main A390 and walk westwards across the bridge over the River Fal. Grampound's name derives from the Norman-French Grand Pont, which the bridge became known as after it was built in the 13th century, just a few metres downstream from the present position. Turn immediately left into Old Hill. Grampound is famous for its leather tanning and tanneries have, until recent years, been an important part of Grampound life for centuries. This part of Grampound is known as Bermondsey and is named after the famous London leather market. The bottom of Old Hill once held a blacksmith's shop and woolsheds, but now features a number of attractive cottages.

- 4 As the road steepens take the right fork passing Glen View on your left. The road here is fairly steep and soon becomes a rough track as you reach the footpath sign. You are now on the Old Roman Road which was once the main route out of Grampound for horse-drawn traffic. The wide track eventually levels out and can be muddy in places in wet weather and sometimes noise from the nearby busy A390 can be heard, but there are fine views through gaps in the hedges to the clay country and beyond.

- 5 Continue along the track passing a left turn with a gate telling you to "Keep Out". In the past this went along beside the field known locally as "The Hockey Field". The daughter of the then tenant of Barteliver Farm was a keen hockey player and older residents remember games there as well as the village gymkhana. Continue along the track and you will soon be passing, on your left, the site of the earthwork fort Carvossa, used between the first and fourth centuries AD. Carvossa was excavated in 1968-71 and there are a number of interesting artefacts in the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. It is, today, difficult to see the earthwork clearly due to the thick hedges and trees. To the north, from the next two field gates, the view is of Grampound Road in the distance and, closer, a radio mast said to be the site of the geographical centre of Cornwall. After approximately 1½ miles from the start of the walk the track ends at a road. Although only a lane, cars can come at speed so cross with care to the opposite wide track and go through the gate marked "Trewithen Farms", part of the large working estate of Trewithen.

In about 100 metres to the left, the barbed wire is covered with plastic to make an entrance to a permissive footpath through the woods. Take this path and about half a mile it will bring you to a stile and the main drive to Trewithen House and Gardens. Turn left at the stile, cross the cattle grid (or go through the gate alongside), left into the road and almost immediately right into a narrow, quiet lane signposted to "Trevilvas".

Follow this lane, noting the views through gaps in the hedges, and after about another half mile or so there is a gated track to the right and a farm track straight ahead, the lane turning sharply to the left. Continue along the lane as it starts to go downhill at first gradually and then more steeply to reach the valley bottom. Ahead you can see Barteliver Farm. Turn to the right, taking the footpath which slopes downhill through pinewoods and past a disused quarry.

This path roughly follows the course of a stream which eventually meets the River Fal. When you meet the main river, turn left and follow the river path back to Grampound, about 500 yards along the bank, noting the River Authority information signs along the way. With luck you may also see the herons that fish along here.



Grampound in about 1900, hardly changed to this day, apart from the outfits and the traffic!