

'HENWYN-TRE KERNOW'

Cornish Town Names

(Ranked in order of population)

Name in English	Name in Cornish	Probable Roots	Kap'n Pol's Notes
St Austell	Sen Austel	'sen' (saint) + ' Austel ' (saint's name)	The more famous Sen Mewan was a companion of Sen Austel and the two travelled to Brittany.
Truro	Truru	'try' (triple) + ' berow ' (fierce river)	The three rivers are: the Allen, the Kenwyn and the Glastenian.
Falmouth	Aberfala	'aber' (river mouth) + ' fala ' (river name)	The Cornish name was invented in the 1970s – there are no historic 'aber' names in Cornwall.
Redruth	Resrudh	'res' (ford) + ' rudh ' (red)	Some say the 'rudh' is from the blood of Cornwall's biggest giant, Bolster, who was tricked into cutting his wrists and bled to death.
Camborne	Kammbronn	'kamm' (step) + ' bronn ' (rounded hill)	The founding of 'Kammbronn' is told in <i>Beunans Meryasek</i> – a Cornish play/poem/satire written 1504 by Rad Ton.
Newquay	Tewyn Blustra	'tewyn' (dune) + ' bleustri ' (running stock)	Newquay is the home of Cornish gig rowing – all modern gigs are built to the dimensions of the Trefry.
Penzance	Pennsans	'penn' (head-land) + ' sans ' (holy)	When 'Pennsans' got its own parish, the 'penn' was said to be a 'human head' (hence St John the Baptist is the patron saint).
Saltash	Essa	'essa' - Norman French 'ash-tree'	With two bridges 'Essa' is the gateway to 'Kernow' (Cornwall) which begins at the eastern bank of 'Dowr Tamar' (River Tamar).
Bodmin	Bosvena	'bos' (dwelling) + ' menegh ' (monks)	The monks of 'Lannwedhenek' (Padstow) gathered the treasures of 'Sen Pedrek' (St Petroc) and went inland to escape coastal attacks – founding Bodmin.
Helston	Hellys	'hellys' (ancient court)	'Hellys' was the stannary town for both of the counties of 'Pennwydh ha Keryer' (Penwith and Kerrier).
Penryn	Pennrynn	'penn' (head, end) + ' rynn ' (point of land)	In 'Pennrynn' there was 'Kolji Glasnedh' (Glasney College) where the great middle Cornish plays were written.
St Ives	Porthia	'porth' (cove, entrance) + ' la ' (saint's name)	'Porthia' was founded by 'Sen Ia' (St Eia) who travelled from 'Iwerdhon' (Ireland) on a leaf!

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St Blazey	Lanndreth	'lann' (church-enclosure) + 'treth' (beach)	The 'treth' is the same as 'chi war dreth / tywardreath' (house on the strand) because in the 16th century the sea reached the town.
Liskeard	Lyskerrys	'lys' (court) + 'Kerwyd' (personal name)	'Lyskerrys' was the first town to welcome drivers in both Cornish and English.
Launceston	Lannstevan	'lann' (yard) + 'Stefan' (personal name)	Cornwall's ancient capital 'Lannstevan' was named after King Stephen, when the town was moved from Dunheved in Norman times.
Hayle	Heyl	'hey!' (estuary)	Specifically, a 'hey!' is an estuary that dries out at low tide as opposed to a 'logh' that is a 'permanently wet sea-inlet.'
Torpoint	Penntorr	'penn' (head-land) + 'torr' (crag hill)	This 18th century new town was named in English from a near-by headland and translated into Cornish in modern times.
Bude	Porthbud	'porth' (cove, entrance) + 'bud' (river-name)	The river-name possibly means 'dirty' and the Cornish name refers to Bude Haven.
Wadebridge	Ponswad	'pons' (bridge) + 'wad' (wading-place)	The famous 'pons war wlan' (bridge on wool) was probably not built on actual wool sacks but from the profits of the wool trade.
Callington	Kelliwik	'kelli' (grove) + 'gwig' (settlement)	'Kelliwik' was mentioned in the Cornish play <i>Bewnans Ke</i> as being a stronghold of King Arthur.
Looe	Logh	'logh' (sea-inlet)	Strictly this is East Looe with 'Porthbyghan' (West Looe) being on the opposite bank.

All items in the 'Names in Cornish' column have been provided by Akademi Kernewek (<https://akademikernewek.weebly.com/placenames>). 'Kap'n Pol's Notes' are based on the research and musings of our Cornish Language Officer.