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Here and Now- October 2011.

The Fal River Autumn Walking Festival.

A crude estimate of 60 miles (95 kms) of shoreline marks the boundary between land and water around the Fal Estuary. Add the South West Coast Path from Helford Passage to Falmouth and from Place House to Portloe on the Lizard and Roseland Peninsulas respectively and the irregular and indented coastline increases to 85 miles (136 kms).

In previous ice ages the sea level was much lower and further out than at present causing the eventual melt waters to travel for longer distances thus creating thin fjord like valleys, which are now submerged under what we know as the Carrick Roads and Helford River. The Fal and the Helford rivers are drowned river valleys and Falmouth is the third natural deepest water terminal in the world. The landmass of the Roseland Peninsula itself is angled to such a degree as to make the Percuil river on its seaward journey from its original springs carve its route torturously over 8kms through the landscape. It has virtually been incapable of finding the quickest and closest route to the coast, which is only half a kilometre away. Incomparable.

The walkable landscape includes many of the 41 classified Cornish habitats of coastal, marine, farmland and wetlands. One negotiates woodlands, estates, gardens, villages, silted creeks and beautiful sandy and stoney beaches. To walk around the rivers of the Fal, Helford, Truro and Percuil one can traverse and discover ever-changing and diverse scenery, which is unparalleled in Cornwall.

Enmeshed in this story of the landscape is the human relationship with the terrain and especially with the sea. The maritime heritage, the defence of the British Isles, the bounty of the sea, the smuggling and shipwrecks are all here in the many stories that are ready to be told of the human interaction with this areas land and seascape. The DNA of this special area of Cornwall is without equal.

A partnership of those involved with working, conserving, enjoying and providing services in the local landscape have got together to present the inaugural Fal River Autumn Walking Festival sponsored by the Nare Hotel between October 21st to November 6th. There are around 75 guided and non-guided walks. Geographically it takes in all areas between Helford Passage and Falmouth to the west, Portloe and Nare Point to the east and Truro and Tresillian to the north. For details a 64-page programme is being produced. Alternatively <http://www.kingharryscornwall.co.uk/walkingfestival>

Paul Simmons September for October/November 2011.