

Salcombe to Snapes Point

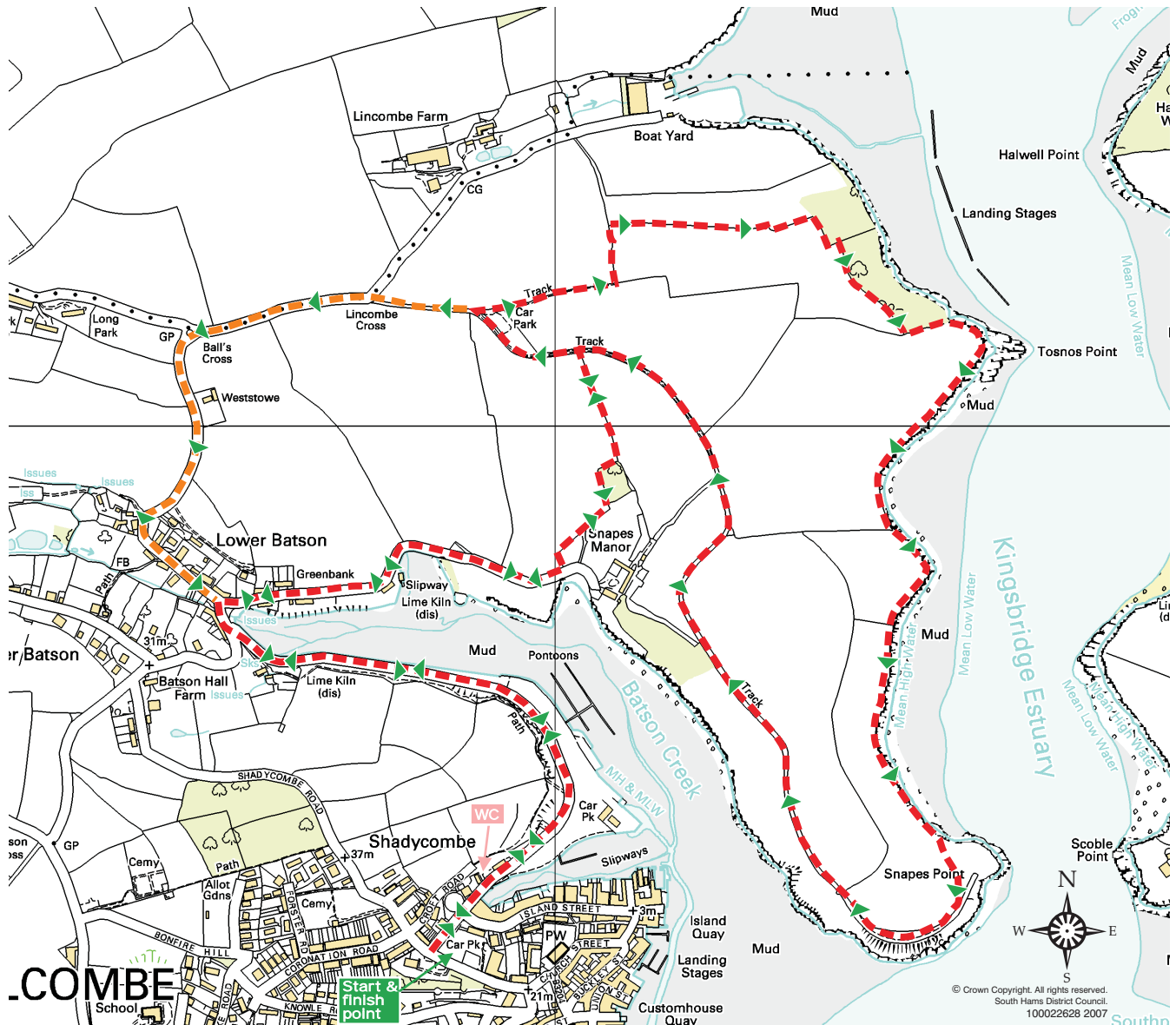
This lovely tranquil mosey winds around sleepy creeks and fingers of land nosing out into the lapping waters, with brilliant and surprising views to keep your senses sharp.

Start:	Shadycombe Car Park, Salcombe
Distance:	4.5 miles (Shorter route 2.75 miles).
Circular Walk:	Yes
Grade:	Moderate (Shorter route Easy to Moderate)
Terrain:	Surfaced road; track; field footpaths, fairly even underfoot with occasional adverse camber.
Obstacles & Steep Gradients:	None. This route is not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.
Public transport:	Bus services to Salcombe: 606 from Kingsbridge; 92 from Plymouth and Kingsbridge. Bus stop by Shadycombe Car Park.
Refreshment stops:	Several pubs, cafes, and restaurants in Salcombe
Toilets:	Public toilets Gould Road, Salcombe: 150m down from Shadycombe Car Park on left.
Parking:	Shadycombe Car Park, Salcombe. Pay and Display
Accommodation:	Please contact Salcombe Tourist Information Centre 01548 843927 www.salcombeinformation.co.uk
Other facilities:	Post office and variety of shops in Salcombe. Salcombe Tourist Information Centre in Council Hall, Market St. Public payphone by Shadycombe Car Park.
OS map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Ref:	SX 738392

Directions

1. From car park entrance turn right down Gould Rd. Continue past Boat Park and along creek to Batson.
2. At head of creek at Batson, turn right up lane signed as no through road.
3. At the creek head by Snapes Manor turn left through kissing gate up footpath.
4. Footpath leads around back of manor house and up old green lane.
5. At the top turn right signed 'Snapes Point'. Alternatively, for shorter walk turn left and follow old carriageway up to National Trust car park. Turn left there along rd, joining 'Alternative' route below.
6. Follow carriageway downhill. As you near the creek, turn left following sign for Snapes Point. Walk up to viewpoint at knoll, and over brow to follow waymarker arrow along path which drops down to follow field edges above creek.
7. After Tosnos Point, path climbs around back of small woodland. Just before gate out of field, turn left and follow fence line up hill then along contour.
8. At fingerpost turn left signed 'Car Park' then right through next gate to National Trust car park.
9. Here you can turn left and down the old carriageway and then left again to retrace your steps via the path around the back of Snapes Manor and along the road to Batson. Alternatively go straight on along road and turn left at Hall Cross, signed 'Batson ¼ Salcombe ¾'.
10. At Batson take the road back along the right bank of the creek past the lime kiln, and retrace your steps to car park and bus stop.





Further Interest

Heritage

Look up behind you to the right as you walk down Gould Road past Creek Car Park and you will see the chandlers and boat repair shops clustered along the creekside. In the 19th century the yards here built barges, 500-ton barquetine ships, and the sleek Salcombe clippers.

These clippers brought citrus fruits from the Azores back to the markets in London. Built for speed rather than safety, many of them didn't make it home, foundering on the high seas.

Across the creek as you walk out of Salcombe is an old lime kiln, still very much intact. Another one stands on the near bank at Batson. Limestone was brought up the creek in barges and burnt in the kilns, then spread as a powder on the fields to reduce the acidity of the soil, or used in lime mortar and in lime wash for painting cottages.

The name Batson means 'the place where Bada laid his stone'. The village has been here since the Saxons came, and Bada must have been a chief in those times. Batson existed as a settlement well before Salcombe, which only began its rise after the Norman Conquest.

The track down which you walk towards Snapes Point was laid by one enterprising and optimistic Commander Mock in the 1800s. It was intended to carry an extension of the railway line from Kingsbridge to link with a bridge across Batson Creek to Salcombe. This ambitious scheme never came to anything, so the peace and quiet at Snapes Point persists.

From this old carriageway there is a fine view of Salcombe across the water. Around 1600 the town was reported as being "full of dissolute seafaring men, who murdered each other and buried them in the sands at night".

Salcombe soon pulled its socks up, however. It became a thriving fishing port and a famous centre of shipbuilding. By the

time these trades began to decline, the well-to-do were building villas on hillsides here, and the seeds of the modern-day tourist trade were being sown.

The large boat you can see moored in the estuary as you walk above the creek beyond Snapes Point is the Egremont. This was once one of the ferries across the Mersey, and now serves as the headquarters of the Island Cruising Club.

The present-day site of the boat yard down in the valley at Lincombe is said to have been a favourite spot for smugglers to land their contraband in days gone by.

Up on the top of Lincombe Hill, non-conformist preacher John Hicks would address his flock back in the 17th century. During one of his sermons, henchmen sent by the 'official' church arrived on horseback to attack him. The preacher fled to a nearby farm, where he just missed being pitchforked as he lay hidden in the hay in a barn.

Wildlife

Wading birds are often to be seen pottering around by the waterside at Batson. Look out for the Redshank, with brown plumage above and white below, a long straight bill and lanky red legs. Other likely sightings include the striking white, orange and black, red-beaked Shelduck, and the black and white Oystercatcher with its orange bill and piping call.

Along the tideline all around the estuary you may spot a Common Sandpiper. This wader, with a dark stripe through the eye and a penetrating 'tyew' call, is a summer visitor.

Terns are also found on the estuary. These are graceful birds are smaller than most gulls, though with similar colouring. They have pointed, swept-back wings, dark heads and sharp bills, and catch fish in rapid little plunge dives from just above the water.

Cuckoo Pint grows along both the lane from Batson to Snapes Manor, and the green lane running up the hill behind the manor house. This curious plant also goes by various other fancy names including 'lords and ladies', 'parson in the pulpit', 'hobblegobbles' and 'Kitty-come-down-the-lane-jump-and-kiss-me'.

It has spade-shaped leaves, and a finger-shaped inflorescence within a leafy cowl. The plant gives off a faint smell of rotting meat. This attracts insects, which the cuckoo pint traps in its sheath of leaves while they pollinate its flowers.

Along this same lane you may also find the rare Balm-leaved Figwort. This tall, square-stemmed plant with wrinkly leaves produces rust-red, two-lipped flowers in spring and early summer.

The scrubby woodland above the tideline beyond Snapes Point attracts birds such as the Blackcap, whose name derives from its dark head, and the Chiffchaff, whose name describes its steadily-repeated song.

This area is also home to a pride and joy of South Devon, the nationally rare Cirl Bunting. This traditional farmland bird has yellowish-green body plumage with red-brown patches, and a striking yellow-striped head.

