

Hope Cove to Bolberry Down



- Start:** | Outer Hope car park

- Distance:** | 4.5 miles.

- Difficulty:** | Moderate. 1 stile, 1 flight of steps. There are two ascents on the walk, though the climbing is long and steady rather than very steep.

- Terrain:** | Coastal footpath with some uneven ground; surfaced road; green lane; fairly even country footpath.

- Parking:** | Car park at Outer Hope. Parking fees apply.

- OS map:** | Explorer OL20

- Grid Ref:** | SX676402

- Public transport:** | See www.travelinesw.com

- Refreshments:** | In Hope Cove and at Bolberry Down

- Toilets:** | Public toilets in Outer Hope.

This walk is available in the following formats from www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/walk



online walk



downloadable PDF

downloadable route map onto your device



South West Coast Path walking app – enhanced content with photos, audio and film.



KEY
--- Main route

© Crown Copyright and database right 2019. Ordnance Survey 100022628

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Walks

Directions

- 1 Turn left out of car park and follow the lane through the village. This becomes a path and then a road again down into Inner Hope.
- 2 By the slipway follow the coast path up the steps. Follow the waymarked path. After the second marker you can take a short detour to the tip of Bolt Tail to see the remains of the Iron Age Fort and a commanding view of the Bay.
- 3 Continue on coast path following waymarkers, then walk across Bolberry Down. After Ocean Reach restaurant turn left, continue down lane to a T-junction and turn left on to road.
- 4 After a short distance bear right down hill with farm and thatched cottage on your right, then climb uphill to a green lane on left marked Sweethearts Lane.
- 5 At the next junction turn left signed Public Footpath. The path cuts off to the right by the gateway to Higher Barton and runs across one small field and right along the field margin of the next.
- 6 Through gate, turn left at stone stile and tall waymarker post, through adjoining gate and follow the field edge footpath back to Hope Cove.
- 7 Cross the road and follow the path down steps by the side of St Clements Church, then turn right and return through Hope to the car park.

Further Interest

Heritage

In the summer of 1588, thousands of people gathered at Hope Cove and Bolt Tail to watch the 140 ships of the Spanish Armada as they moved in a great crescent formation up the Channel.

In October of that year, one of those ships was back at Hope Cove. The defeated Armada had fled around the top of Britain via the North Sea. As they headed back down the west of the country, storms scattered the fleet. The San Pedro el Mayor, a transport ship fitted out as a hospital, was blown back up the Channel, and her exhausted crew could not prevent the ship being driven onto the Shippen Rock between Inner and Outer Hope. The 140 survivors were initially sentenced to death, but were eventually ransomed back to Spain.

In the 1800s dozens of ships at a time might take shelter from South-Easterly gales in the cove at Hope. The village was a centre of both fishing and smuggling. Kegs of brandy and rum were weighted with stones and dropped to the sea floor by ships plying from France. Local fishermen would then recover them at the same time as they hauled in their crab pots, and bring them ashore.

At Bolt Tail can still be seen the remains of the ramparts of an Iron Age fort, probably built around 600 BC. The rocks along this stretch of the coast have been the scene of several shipwrecks. Perhaps most famous and tragic was the HMS Ramillies. In 1760 this ageing and leaky 90-gun warship was caught in a severe gale in the Channel, and attempted to make it back to land. Mistaking it for Rame Head near Plymouth, the crew tried to round Bolt Tail into what they thought would be the safety of Plymouth Sound. Instead the already battered ship smashed into the cliffs. Over 700 men died and the loss of the ship was a national disaster.

Landscape

From Bolt Tail, the view extends beyond Rame Head near Plymouth, and well into Cornwall. The spoil heaps from the China Clay works around St Austell - the 'Cornish Alps' - can often be made out. Locals report that lights on the Lizard peninsula can even be made out on clear evenings.

The rock along the coast from Bolt Tail is mainly schist. This is a metamorphic rock, altered by heat and pressure, which splits readily along parallel lines. In this area, large slabs of the rock were placed in rows, on end, to form the earliest field walls.



This walk along with many more can be downloaded from www.southdevonaonb.org.uk

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Walks

Wildlife

The rough grassland around Bolt Tail is a good hunting ground for the Kestrel. This small bird of prey can often be seen hovering on reddish brown wings, its tail feathers fanned out. These cliffs are also home to the Peregrine Falcon. A sleek figure with dark grey plumage, the Peregrine hunts other birds and is one of the fastest of all animals. When stooping to dive after prey it can reach speeds of up to 200 km/h.

The clifftops around Bolberry Down support breeding pairs of Yellowhammers - named for their vivid plumage - along with Skylarks, Meadow Pipits and Cirl Buntings. The area is also home to the Dartford Warbler, a rare and shy bird with a deep red-brown breast.

Along the coast path grow clusters of Yarrow, with feathery leaves on a dark green-blue stem, and flat umbrellas of white florets. There are drifts of pink Thrift, the spinach-like leaves of Sea Beet, and the low, bright red and yellow flowers of Bird's Foot Trefoil. Toadflax also grows here, its yellow lipped flowers massed on straight stem-spikes.

Heading inland, the hedgerows are threaded through with the blooms and red berries of Honeysuckle. In the shady lanes the green straps of the Hartstongue Fern thrive, as does the delicately mottled brown Speckled Wood Butterfly, and the boldly coloured black, red and white Red Admiral.

This walk is available in the following formats from www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/walk



online
walk



downloadable
PDF

downloadable
route map onto
your device



South West Coast Path walking app –
enhanced content with photos, audio and film.

Working in partnership



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas has supported Explore South Devon to promote circular walks within the South Devon AONB using the South West Coast Path National Trail.



South West
Coast Path
Association