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The Loe Pool and Porthleven

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Free National Trust Car Park at Chyvarloe (SW 652237)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 103 – The Lizard – Falmouth and Helston
Distance	5 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk takes in the famous Loe Pool (also known as The Loe) and Loe Bar and the little town of Porthleven, with its rugged rather than pretty harbour. Much of the walk is on lanes and estate drives and is therefore very straightforward.

The Loe Pool is Cornwall's largest natural lake which was formed around 800 years ago when a bar of sand/shingle formed across the mouth of an estuary. It is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and plays host to a large variety of birds. It is part of the Pensose Estate, now owned by the National Trust.

The Bar itself is home to a large variety of plants.

Please note that a combination of undertow, strong currents and freak waves make the sea along the edge of the Bar very dangerous and no-one should enter the sea here. The Bar itself is plenty wide enough to keep well out of harm's way.

This route could be done as a walk from Porthleven but I have started from the small, free, rough National Trust car park at Chyvarloe so that lunch refreshment can be enjoyed in Porthleven (my favourite is the Ship Inn by the harbour). To get to the car park, turn southwest off the A3083 (Helston/Lizard road) by the bridge (SW 670252) over the road outside the Royal Naval Air Station base at Culdrose. The road has no signs. At the fork in the road after 1.3 miles, go right.

Start: Walk right from the car park (SW 652237). At the edge of the car park is a footpath marker post indicating the direction for Loe Bar. Continue along the stony lane, ignoring the track off to the left after about 100 yards, until you reach the Bar. Cross it and go up the obvious footpath at the far side. Turn right at the end of the stone wall (SW 641243) and go through the gate and past in front of the lodge house.

Stay on the broad estate road, passing a two way fingerpost and following the direction for "Helston and Porthleven".

Shortly after the fingerpost, go right in front of the old stable block (SW 642257) and at the next 'T' junction of tracks, turn left in the direction of "Car Park and Porthleven" indicated by the fingerpost.

The track curves round past the old bath house where the disused plunge pool can be seen through the windows. On reaching the junction with the drive to Penrose House (not open to the public), turn right (SW 641259).

At the next junction, turn left, again following a fingerpost for “Car Park and Porthleven” and immediately, turn right up some steps and follow the path through the trees – it is easy to miss this.

On reaching a broad tarmac track by a notice board, go straight ahead through the car park coming out by the thatched Whitstone cottage. Turn left along the road (SW 238259) and follow it to Porthleven where there are various refreshment opportunities and public toilets.

When you have looked at Porthleven, return to the harbour and walk left along the seafront road. As the road turns sharp left almost going back on itself, carry straight on along the dead end to the car park.

Half way along the car park on the left, take the footpath “Church Cove 3¾ miles” and a National Trust sign “To Loe Pool”. Follow the clear path back to Loe Bar and retrace your steps to the car park.

