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## Salthouse to Bude

<b>Starting point and OS Grid reference</b>	Salthouse (SS 199032). Free car park
<b>Ordnance Survey map</b>	OS Explorer 111 – Bude, Boscastle & Tintagel
<b>Distance</b>	5.8 miles
<b>Date of Walk</b>	14 September 2016
<b>Traffic light rating</b>	

**Introduction:** This walk to Bude starts from a free car park at Salthouse, some two miles south. It provides a pleasant walk along an attractive section of the South West Coast Path and an interesting return via the Bude Canal.

Bude was once a very minor place, primarily a source of sea sand, used as fertiliser by farmers, owing to its unusual high calcium carbonate content. This was shipped via the Bude Canal, as was coal from South Wales. Eventually, the canal linked with the London and South Western Railway at Holdsworth. As for other canals, the railways ultimately spelt doom. Today only the sea lock works, which allows some craft to use the canal basin. However the stretch covered by this walk is pleasantly in water.

My first sight of the canal revealed the route to be a tarmac path which put me off to some extent. However, it is one of the most attractive canal sections I have walked and a cycle track along the old railway line nearby means one is not frequently alarmed on the towpath by cyclists ringing (or more likely not ringing!) their bells. I was fortunate to come across a heron, which, unusually for the species, was more concerned with finding fish than running away and I was able to get really close.

Bude really came into its own at the start of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when Victorians discovered the joy of the seaside and sea bathing. Bude has some fine beaches and good surfing. The railway was extended to Bude in 1898. However, it was closed in 1966 when the “Beeching Axe” fell.

The castle in Bude was built for Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, a Victorian inventor and is worth a visit if you have time. Amongst other things, he discovered limelight and the precursor to oxyacetylene welding. Sadly he seemed to receive little recognition. Entrance is free and it is worth a look. There is also some information about the Bude Canal.

As you approach Bude, you pass The Storm Tower, a Grade II listed building built in 1835, possibly as a coastguard refuge. It was designed by George Wightwick for Sir Thomas Dyke Acland.

The walk passes a pub in Bude where refreshment can be taken although this is fairly early in the walk. You will also pass The Weir Bistro, just as you leave the canal section.

The walk starts at Salthouse, on the coast road between Widemouth Bay and Bude. The easiest way to get there is to turn west off the A39 at Box's Shop. Follow the sign for Widemouth Bay (village) and continue through it. The parking is on the left just after the Bay View Inn.

**Start:** Take the footpath out of the rear of the car park and head out to the point for a good view over Widemouth Sand. Return the same way, to the coast path and turn left (north).

Little more instruction is required. Just follow the coast path to Bude. Initially, the footpath shadows the road passing some bungalows with enviable views out to sea. The road and the path briefly come together at Philip's Point (SS 199043), a nature reserve.

Shortly after this, you get good views over Bude.

At SS199058, pass the trig. point and what looks like the remains of an information board, sadly lacking its substance.

Arrive at Compass Point (SS 200063) and the Storm Tower with the points of the compass marked around its top.

There are one or two paths here heading down towards Bude and it matters little which you choose. Essentially, head down towards the right hand (nearest) side of the bay, to the right of the breakwater and after walking along a tarmac path, you will eventually see the lock gates, after descending some steps, where the Bude Canal meets the sea.

On the other side of the canal is the heritage centre at The Castle.

The route continues along the right hand side of the canal. There is a canal basin by the road bridge where there are cafes and a pub, the Brendon Arms, where you can obtain refreshments.

You need to cross the road bridge, then turn right to follow the left hand bank of the canal.

At SS 211048, cross the canal via a bridge carrying a lane and continue along the right hand side of the canal.

Pass another set of locks (SS 211046).

At SS 215037, you arrive almost at the road where there is a three way fingerpost. To the right is a café/bistro. Follow the fingerpost straight ahead for Widemouth Bay, then turn right along the drive to the café, as far as another fingerpost (SS 214036), where you turn left, passing a notice board about Walesborough Woods, planted in 2001.

Follow the path and go through a walkers' gate before heading gently uphill. There may look to be a fork in the path., depending on traffic. If so, you need the right hand fork. Behind you on the hill, with its prominent church is the village of Marhamchurch.

When you reach a junction of several tracks, keep straight ahead to the road. Go straight across the road and follow the fingerpost for the coast path. At the coast path, turn right back to the car park.

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