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Malborough to Bolt Head

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| Starting point and OS Grid reference | Free car park at Malborough (SX 710378) |
| Ordnance Survey map | OL 20 South Devon – Brixham to Newton Ferrers |
| Distance | 8.4 miles |
| Traffic light rating |  |

Introduction: This walk takes in some dramatic coastal scenery, the superb beach at Soar Mill Cove with plenty of shelter to get out of any breeze amongst the rocks and the promontory Bolt Head. There is also the opportunity to see the National Trust house of Overbecks and/or its exotic garden. There is only a small amount of road walking mainly on the approach to Salcombe. There is only really one moderately steep section out of Soar Mill Cove but not quite enough overall to make me grade it amber.

Start: The walk starts from the free car park at the village of Malborough, opposite the filling station (SX 710378). To get there, turn right opposite the garage on to Collaton Road, off the A381 Kingsbridge to Salcombe road where the road bends sharply. The car park entrance is on the left after 100 yards or so.

Leave the car park by its entry road and at Collaton Road turn right. At the first road junction on the left, before the main road, turn left. This is Well Hill leading to Shute Park. Follow the road down ignoring the right turn. As it bends to the right, take the track straight ahead indicated by the public footpath fingerpost.

The track becomes a narrow footpath which opens into a tarmac lane where you turn right. Follow the lane until it swings left at a farm and take the public footpath on the right. Pass Stable End House and go through the gateway straight ahead.

As the track rises, there are distant views to the Salcombe Estuary (technically a ria) and Malborough village with its church spire behind you. You reach Furzedown Farm quite suddenly. Turn right up the tarmac farm track and at the road, turn left (SX 707834).

Within 300 yards, you come to a road junction for Rew, Combe and South Sands. Carry straight on for Soar ¼ mile and at the next fork in the road, turn right.

As the road divides at a grassy island, take the right hand road for Soar Mill Hotel. A fingerpost shortly on the right indicates you are heading for Soar Mill Cove. As the road bends left to the hotel, continue straight ahead through the gate as indicated by the footpath arrow. Follow the broad track down and turn left where the yellow footpath arrow indicates and follow it down to the Cove. The lovely beach is ahead if you wish to avail yourself but otherwise, at the bottom of the field (SX 698376), turn left to follow the coastal path indicated by the acorn sign.

After the climb from Soar Mill Cove, the path levels out for a quarter of a mile or so. Ignore the finger post to the left for Malborough and Soar, unless you want to shorten the walk.

The next fingerpost confirms the coastal path is straight ahead but it is worth a brief diversion a few yards right to Goat Rock for a good vantage point of the coast.

The next fingerpost provides another opportunity to shorten the walk back to Malborough but my route continues along the coast to Bolt Head. As the path meets a broad track, turn right and right through the next gateway to Bolt head. The next footpath post indicates the coastal path goes straight on but turn right to access Bolt Head proper. The next gateway picks up the coastal path again.

Through a gate in a stone wall by a finger post proclaiming "Bolt Head", descend right then curve left by the rocky promontory where you catch sight of the Salcombe Estuary. Below you (if the tide is out) are the beaches of Starehole bay where, In 1936 the 4 masted sailing barque, "Herzogin Cecilie" sank. Its outline is supposed to be visible at low tide but I must confess to never having seen it on several visits!

The coastal path emerges at a road where a left turn indicates Overbecks and sharp Tor. Unless you are visiting Overbecks, turn right and head for Salcombe. At the next junction, turn right and follow the road past the South Sands Hotel (with an opportunity for refreshment on the deck). Continue past the Tides Reach Hotel and ignore the finger post to the left just by it.

You could now continue along the road to North Sands and take a left bridleway to Malborough – probably the simplest route to follow. However, the road here is narrow and quite busy at times and I chose to get off it as quickly as possible and also explore some of the lesser visited areas of Salcombe and envy the large houses! The route is a bit complicated so concentrate!

Beyond the Tides Reach Hotel, continue up the road and turn left at Froude Road. The public footpath fingerpost is hidden behind the large gatepost. As you get to the property Oversteps, turn right. After a few hundred yards, the path turns back on itself at a gate saying Stowes Hill. The path eventually opens into a tarmac lane (De Courcy Road). Continue and at the junction with a three way finger post, turn left.

After passing a house on the left called Lillerby, pass between two metal posts and shortly after turn right at a set of fingerposts down a narrow footpath. When you reach a broad track, turn left. Follow this unmade road until you get to a timber house with a timber fence and bear left on the footpath to the left of this property.

On reaching the road at a stile, turn left. This lane will take you straight back to Malborough, about 1¼ miles. However, if you want to avoid road walking and are up for some more adventure, as you walk along the road, look out for a broad lane on the right at a left hand bend (SX 724383). If you pass the entrance to Stowes Hill Farm, you have missed it!

You reach a wall on the left. Follow this along until you reach a footpath on the left at a gateway. Take this and walk parallel to the hedge on the left, turning right at the corner of the field (there is a faded footpath arrow). About halfway down the field, our route goes left over a stile into the woods (SX 726383).

At the next junction of footpaths, keep left and over the stile. Footpath arrows indicate the route. Over the next stile and you are on Martins Way (still just a footpath). At the junction, turn left.

At the next crossroads of footpaths, keep straight ahead. The path comes out in a tarmac lane. Turn left. Follow this lane ignoring the right hand turn at Higher Collaton until you reach a 'T' junction where you turn right into Malborough.

