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Stackpole Quay to Bosherton

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Stackpole Quay – National Trust Car Park (SR 953959)
Ordnance Survey map	OL36 – South Pembrokeshire
Distance	6.5 miles
Date of Walk	7 July 2017
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This is an easy but lovely, varied walk through Pembrokeshire's Stackpole Estate, which provides for some spectacular cliff-top scenery, fabulous sandy beaches and a wander alongside the famous Bosherton Lilly Ponds.

Although the history of the estate goes way back, for practical purposes it essentially began in the 18th Century when the Campbell family inherited the estate through marriage. They built the Stackpole Court mansion (since demolished), tiny Stackpole Quay harbour to provide for their love of sailing and by damming three valleys, created 100 acres of Bosherton Lakes. The lakes are more generally known as Bosherton Lily ponds, on account of the water lilies which carpet the surface in early summer. There are three distinct arms.

There is a small village of Bosherton. It mainly comprises a group of more modern properties, rather than a "chocolate box" picture but does have a pleasant pub for refreshment and St Michael and All Angels church, with an unusual asymmetrical tower.

On the estate too is the original walled garden. This is huge and with a pleasant café. You will come across fingerposts leading to it during the walk. Owned by the National Trust, along with the rest of the estate, it is leased to MENCAP who use it to teach horticulture. As such, it more a working garden with plant sales, rather than a tourist attraction, unless you have a particular interest in horticultural history.

I started the walk from the National Trust car park at Stackpole Quay, where there is another café and toilets. The easiest route to describe is via the B4319 out of Pembroke (off the circular one way system). Follow this road to St Petrox and the signs to Stackpole Quay. As this is a circular walk, you could equally start from the National Trust car park at Bosherton, or the one at Broad Haven Beach (not to be confused with Broadhaven on Pembrokeshire's North coast).

Start: In the National Trust car park (SR 953959), head back towards their shop and take the path to its right, following the fingerpost for Barafundle and passing the café and toilets.

The path takes you down to Stackpole Quay. From there, follow the path for Barafundle which is signposted. Climb the path to the very top of all the steps.

The path then opens out on to the cliff tops and it is a case of following as close as is safe to the cliff edge, keeping the sea on your left. There are quite a number of paths

here, some of which cut corners away from the cliff edge. However, unless you want to shorten the walk, avoid the short-cuts, as you will miss some of the best coastal scenery.

You will arrive at an archway (SR992952) which is the entry to fantastic Barafundle Beach. Drop down the steps to it and walk along the rear to another set of steps at the far end, to resume the coast path. The dry sand suggests the tide would not normally be a problem.

After a short stint through the trees, you will be back on open ground once more.

Continue until you reach the large Broad Haven Beach (SR 981940). The route turns inland. You have the choice of walking the path to the right of a stone wall, or you can do as I did which was to scramble down the few rocks on to the beach and turn right along the edge of the beach. In my case, this was to sit on the rocks for a picnic and enjoy the beach.

If you have taken the path to the right of the wall, you arrive at a three way fingerpost. Turn left then quickly right to follow a public footpath fingerpost. If you have walked along the beach, cross the footbridge and turn left to follow the public footpath fingerpost (not the coastal path one).

The path takes you through the trees, alongside one of the Bosherton Lily Ponds.

Just after passing a brick built building on the left, the path splits (SR 968948). To visit the village of Bosherton, turn left (no more than two hundred yards and returning the same way). To continue the walk, turn right across the footbridge.

At SR 972947, bear right to a viewpoint overlooking the lake and continue to rejoin the path.

Soon, another long footbridge crosses the second of the Lakes' arms (SR 974947).

On reaching a fingerpost with "Middle Arm" running down the post, turn right following the direction of the "Broad Haven" fingerpost. After a short distance, reach another fingerpost with "Grassy Bridge" on the post, this time, ignore the right turn to Broad Haven and continue following the obvious path running parallel with the lakeshore.

The next landmark is the Eight Arch Bridge (SR 977956), so called for obvious reasons. This can be seen some distance in advance. Here, pointing to the left is a fingerpost for the "Walled Garden", should you wish to visit. It is just short of half a mile from the bridge.

The route continues across the bridge. Once over it, follow the broad clear track back to the car park, going straight over a crossroads of tracks and through a walkers' gate.

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