

Bovisand Park Private Estate is only 4 kilometres away from Plymouth as the crow flies although there is a body of water that needs to be negotiated if you do want to travel in as straight a line as possible. Fortunately, there is a ferry that runs for most of the year from Mount Batten which takes you to the Barbican. If you would rather walk, there is a longer but very interesting route through Oreston and over Laira Bridge. Indeed, this could be turned into an interesting circular walk that requires the ferry in only one direction. Best of all, these routes are very well signposted as they are both recognised routes on the South West Coast Path.

Starting from the shop on the Estate, walk down towards Bovisand beach following the South West Coast Path. Climb up the other side from the beach towards the car park. As you get to the car park turn left heading towards Bovisand Fort and walk through the car park. Before you get to the fort, the coast path turns right and takes you up and around the fort. From here you follow the coast path as it climbs up towards Staddon Heights. There is quite a lot of ascent and descent but you get magnificent views out over Plymouth Sound.

Eventually you will get to Jennycliff which has a café and toilets if you need to take a break. You can also see the old gun emplacements which guarded the entranceway to Plymouth Sound from enemy attack. Continuing on the coast path you climb a little more before descending down towards the old RAF Mount Batten which had been a seaplane and then helicopter base until it was closed in 1992. There are lots of interesting items to explore as you follow the coast path; you can see the 1917 seaplane hangars (which are some of the oldest in the world), Mount Batten Artillery Tower (which dates from the 17th Century), old barrage balloon tethers and the Cattewater Breakwater (from the 19th Century). There are also memorials to the various squadrons who flew the large Sunderland seaplanes from Plymouth during the Second World War. Interestingly, one of the squadrons was the 10th Royal Australian Air Force Squadron which was the only Australian unit that was not withdrawn from Europe after the Japanese attacked in the Far East. You can see one of the propellers from a Sunderland plane as a memorial just outside the Hotel Mount Batten. From this point you can see the loading point for the Ferry to the Barbican. These tend to depart on the hour and half hour but you might want to check their website for up to date timings and fares: <https://www.mountbattenferry.co.uk>

If you want to continue your walk towards Oreston, rather than take the ferry, you continue to follow the Coast Path alternate route (still marked on the Ordnance Survey Maps). These alternate routes are specifically designed to avoid having to rely on seasonal ferries and other possible complications. This route soon takes you past the impressive slipways for the old, huge seaplanes. You then walk through the marina towards Turnchapel. As you leave the Marina you will soon see a blue plaque on the wall for Lawrence of Arabia who was stationed at Mount Batten as the airman T.E. Shaw in the late 1920s and early 1930s. He was instrumental in improving the motor tenders and promoting the idea of using them to rescue downed crews.

You then walk through the narrow streets of Turnchapel which has some shops and pubs if you wish to break up your journey. As you leave Turnchapel you will walk through the old base for the Special Boat Squadron before they relocated in 2013 to Devonport. Then follow Barton Road as it swings back towards Hooe Lake. You will pass an old railway bridge before the water opens out again. There are many interesting wrecks and abandoned boats in this shallow area. It was also a staging point for American soldiers to load up before embarking

to the D-Day beaches of Normandy in 1944. There is a memorial to these US forces at the grass section just before the Royal Oak pub.

Continue to follow the coast path as it takes you up the hill past the pub and away from the roads and back to some footpaths. Watch out for an abrupt turn to the left that takes you back down to the waterline, it is clearly signposted. Continue to follow the path as it veers left with Hooe Lake on your left and Radford Lake on your right. Walk under the impressive looking Radford Folly. Keep the water to your left until you start to climb. You now have a choice to follow the coast path through Oreston or to turn right and follow the old railway track. I think the railway line is actually much nicer and quieter to follow than the official route and it is also more direct. You can follow this all the way until it comes out near the large Morrisons store.

Continue straight down the hill with Morrisons on your right and turn left at the roundabout and follow the road until it crosses Laira Bridge. At this point you are back on the coast path route and should see the signs again. As soon as you have crossed the River Plym take the first left turn and follow Finnegan Road. This will soon take you to TR2 (Theatre Royal Production Centre) and views back out over the water again. Continue to follow the coast path through Cattedown. You can clearly see the old quarry activity in the area and also the many old warehouses for this commercial port. Soon the path rises up and veers to the right and gives you some very nice views back towards Mount Batten and over to the Barbican. You will also see an impressive looking St. Christopher medallion to help guide travellers on the official coast path.

You then head down towards Coxside. When you reach Clovelly Road, turn to the left and head towards the National Marine Aquarium. For part of the way, Teats Hill Road turns into 'Rope Walk' which is so called as it was an area where rope was laid out in its strands and twisted in to create the stronger and thicker rope. Walking past the Aquarium you cross over a small bridge to the Mayflower Steps. From here various ships of exploration and settlements set off for the Americas, New Zealand and Australia amongst other places. After leaving the Mayflower steps, turn left immediately and you can find the Mount Batten Ferry so that you can cross back towards Mount Batten and then follow the Coastal Path back the way you came earlier back to Bovisand. This is quite a long and involved walk with lots to see along the way. In total it is about 14 kilometres (8.7 miles) long but there are lots to distract you and there is quite a lot of ascent and descent. Make sure you set aside enough time to get the most out of this fascinating walk.

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December 2021

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