



Bosherston Lily Ponds & The Stackpole Estate Walk

Description:

An enchanting flooded valley, a haven for wildlife, otters and great fishing. The valley opens out to the beautiful broad haven south bay. Take some bread to feed the birds.

Distance covered: 5 miles **Average time:** 2.5 hours **Terrain:** Easy going, some climbs over the headlands

Directions:

Park in the national trust car park on the headland above Broad haven south and take the path down to the beach, the rock just out to sea is called church rock for obvious reasons.

Walk along the beach and turn inland at the far end of the bay and follow the stream to the back of the beach. Climb up and over the stream and bear left to follow the edge of the ponds. As you are walking look for the many small animal paths which cross the footpath to the ponds, most of the tracks are made by Otters and if you are lucky you have a good chance of seeing one.

After about a mile you will meet a small river, at this point bear left into the sand dune system and follow any of the paths which double back in the direction from which you have come.



History of Bosherston and Stackpole:

The 80 acres of lakes were created by the damming of the three narrow limestone valleys in 1780 and 1860 by the earls of cawdor owners of the Stackpole estate. The estate once centred on an elegant

baronial mansion, Stackpole Court , built on the estate. But during the Civil War, the Earls took the side of the King, and the house was besieged by Parliamentarians, to whom they eventually surrendered. A newer home of limestone was built in later years with extensive gardens, greenhouses and fine collections of plants. Unfortunately much of the Stackpole Estate was requisitioned in the war to create a training ground for troops. Merrion camp still occupies this land. Unfortunately, this made the estate unviable and The Cawdors left to return to their Scottish estates. Crippling taxes on the empty mansion meant it was demolished in 1963, leaving only the outbuildings and the parkland that includes Bosherton Lily Ponds.

Walk along the western edge of the ponds rounding the end of the tongue of the lake and continuing to walk back down the other side. Cross the stone causeway to the other side of the lake and again follow the path to the right. if you rememberd to bring bread for the birds this is the best place to hold out you offerings. the birds here are so tame they will actually feed from your hands if you stay still!

When you see the grassy bridge on your right don't cross it, instead carry straight on. After a way you will see the former site of Stackpole court. Cross the eight arch bridge and follow the path out across the fields emerging in the beautiful 18 th century harbour of Stackpole quay. The boat house tea room is a great place to stop and replenish your energy.

Now bear south (right as you stand facing the coast) and follow the coastal path down to Barafundle bay. Once you have finished exploring this beautiful bay backed by sand dunes and woodland you can climb back up the costal path and on towards Stackpole head and its guillemot and razor bill colonies, keep your eyes peeled for Choughs.

Continue on the path back down onto broad haven and up into the car park

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