

Bishop's Walk and Hope's Nose

3 miles (5 km) | Circular route | Grades 1 to 3

footpath with short section of coastal road. Unsuitable for wheelchair users.

Starting Point: Anstey's Cove car park accessible from Babbacombe Road, Torquay.

This walk provides a wonderful introduction to the natural splendour of geographical Torbay and an understanding of its attraction for Victorian residents and visitors.

The first section of this walk follows what is known as 'The Bishop's Walk'. The Bishop in question was Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter from 1831 until his death in 1869. His home was the nearby mansion of Bishopstowe, now the Palace Hotel. Since those days, trees have grown up to obscure much of the view but clearings do exist providing views of the sea and shoreline.

Early on, Anstey's Cove becomes visible through the trees with the great limestone headland of Walls Hill standing dominant above. The seemingly sculpted point of the headland is known as Long Quarry Point and from here limestone

was quarried in Victorian times to provide building stone for the growing town of Torquay. Stone was also used in the nearby marble works where it was made into ornamental furnishings to decorate the nearby Victorian villas.

The route of the Bishop's Walk, now part of the coastal footpath, is cut into the rock face and takes the walker around Black Head where it provides the first views of Hope's Nose. Hope's Nose provides a delightful but small curving bay into which sailing ships could seek shelter in stormy conditions. It is possible that this hope for respite brought about the name of Torbay's most northerly promontory.

The Bishop's Walk ends where it joins Marine Drive and initially a footpath above the road separates walkers from vehicles. Now the magical panorama of Torbay begins to emerge, punctuated nearby by its two limestone islets of Orestone (to the left) and Thatcher Rock, home to colonies of guillemot and kittiwake. There is access down to the shoreline at Hope's Nose from the road but, be warned, it is a steep climb in places.

The route now turns to run along the northern side of the bay via a section of footpath and the Marine Drive, down to



Meadfoot Beach. Evergreen Holme Oak is common here, a species of tree that was introduced by the Victorians. A footpath can now be followed up the Ilsham valley terminating at Kents Cavern. A popular tourist attraction, Kents Cavern is also a scheduled monument and Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its geology and archaeological finds, being Britain's oldest recognised site of early human habitation, over 500 thousand years ago!

From Kents Cavern it is only a short stroll back to Anstey's Cove car park.

