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A round walk from Helebridge on the Bude Canal. By cycle track to Bude and its canal sea-lock, returning along the Bude Canal. Optional detour at start by canal inclined plane and field paths to Hele hamlet,

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#### Useful Information

**Parking:** Park in Helebridge village, in a small car park (10 cars) at 21559/03680, alongside the south bank of the Bude Canal. If full, you should be able to park on the lane opposite the car park.

**Getting there:** From A39, 1 mile south of southern branch of A3072 into Bude, and opposite the turning to The Weir, taker turning E into Helebridge village.

**Intermediate Parking:** Large pay car park in Bude near the bridge over the canal.

**Refreshments:** Bude, Falcon Inn and Olive Tree, both by canal. Helebridge, the excellent Weir café/bistro, owned by the nearby up-market Whalesborough holiday complex.

**Toilets:** Next to TIC in Bude main car park as above.

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#### Helebridge to Bude Canal Sea Lock – 2.02 miles

Go R out of the car park, crossing bridges over the canal and the River Neet and follow the lane which bears L uphill gently to a hunting gate on your L. (150 yards) Go through the gate and go R on the footway alongside the A39 road uphill for about 140 yards. Here bear R following the cycleway sign downhill on a concrete track. At the bottom go L under the road and R on a tarmac track gently uphill and bearing L after 100 yards or so. At a tarmac lane, go L on it towards Bude. (0.31 miles) After a bit less than ¼ mile pass on your R SW Water plant. (0.54 miles)

*Here the cycleway proper begins.*

Continue on the wide tarmac track, crossing a tarmac lane. (0.75 miles) (*Here L heads for the Bude Canal at Rodd's Bridge, R goes between the red-brick piers of a former railway bridge*). After about 60 yards the track passes an elaborate National Cycle Network milepost on L (one of 1000) (1.10 miles), and bears L/R round Bude Rugby field. At 1.15 miles there is a potentially wet and muddy patch. Immediately after a wooden seat on R, the track bears R. (1.19 miles) At that point a track goes L to cross a bridge over the River Neet to reach the Bude Canal.

At 1.35 miles you could cut off a corner by continuing forward through reeds but the path can be wet and muddy. Better to bear R on the official cycle path over a wooden bridge over marsh. At a lane bear L, following the cycle sign, passing on your L a fenced enclosure with car park, River Life Café, Bude Cycle Hire and The Bank Tapas Bar and continuing on the track.

The short cut comes out on your L. (1.44 miles) Continue forward on a bridge over the River Neet to a storyboard on your L about the London and South Western Railway (*arrived 1898, caused closure of Bude Canal, line closed October 1966; terminus was in Bulleid Way off to your R (NE)*). Also on the board are other items about the Bude Marshes Nature Reserve and Cornish Way NCN. Eventually the Canal towpath comes in on your L. (1.63 miles) Follow this along the canal northwards. At 1.71 miles you pass a Bude Canal and Marshes notice board on your R and at 1.73 miles there is an interesting storyboard about buildings on other side of canal - the old lifeboat house, Granary Court, the Stapleton family shipyard (1800-1917), and the Petherick family grain mill. If you go R here into the car park there is a TIC, Canal Visitor Centre and Toilets. Continue to a gap to the road. (1.76 miles)

Cross the road, go R for about 30 yards and turn L along the north bank of the canal basin. Follow this almost to the end to the canal sea-lock. (2.02 miles) *On the way you pass the Olive Tree café, a takeaway, craft workshops, Fire Station, a road at 1.75 miles leading to the Bude Light and the Castle, Bude library, the Castle Tea Rooms and more craft workshops. At the point where the buildings on your R end, note "sand-rails" which carried wagon loads of sand for trans-shipment inland to farms for soil improvement. The River Neet appears on your R. From beyond the sea-lock there are good views across the extensive beach to a sea-pool, and forward to The Breakwater with Chapel Rock at its end.*

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**Bude Canal Sea Lock back to Helebridge – 2.00 miles**

Cross the sea-lock and go L along the west bank of the canal. At the end, when you reach the road, is the Falcon Hotel. (2.28 miles) Go L on the road for about 15 yards and cross at the refuge to the gap to the canal towpath. You now follow the towpath (no cycles allowed) almost all the way to the end of the walk. *Dotted along the route are 'sculpture seats', wooden carvings in the form of chain links; all carry inscriptions in Cornish; all I can translate are Bewnans "life" and Avon "river"*.

After about ¼ mile pass on your L a Bude Marshes Nature Reserve Bird Hide. (2.56 miles) 400 yards later a bridge on your L (2.77 miles) crosses to a viewpoint over the marshes and continues over a bridge over the River Neet to the cycleway. After another ¼ mile note on your L a stubby milepost "Bude 1" (3.04 miles) 250 yards on you go through a wooden gate to Rodd's Bridge. (3.19 miles) Go R to cross the canal and then L on the west bank towpath. After 200 yards you come to the first of two restored locks. (3.30 miles) After another 260 yards a small wooden FB on your R leads to duckboards and a path signed "coast path via community woodland" (3.45 miles) 200 yards on is the second restored lock. (3.56 miles) 500 yards on note a storyboard explaining the fish pass on the weir to your L, where the River Neet leaves the canal. (3.85 miles) *As you continue along the tow path you see The Weir café/bistro across the field to your R.*

Shortly you come to a stile and open gate, leading to a car park. (3.89 miles) Go L over a wooden footbridge over the river/canal following a sign for Marhamchurch and Helebridge. Immediately after the bridge, with a Bude Canal and Marshes notice board on your R, don't go forward to the busy A39 but bear L on a tarmac path down under the A39. The path bears R and L, leaving the river heading L to go under the road, up to the lane in Helebridge. *Note on your L the course of the canal, completely blocked at this point.* Go R on the lane to the car park. (4.02 miles)

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**Optional interest detour at the start of the walk – adds 0.55 miles**

Turn R out of the car park on to a lane, cross the bridge over the Bude canal and immediately go right on the tarmac towpath along the N side of the canal. *Soon note on your L a storyboard about the Marhamchurch Inclined Plane. (275 yards) The Inclined Plane itself begins about 50 yards further on. Here, note on your R the loading bays into which the small butty boats went to be hitched up to the tow rope on the inclined plane.* The path is now fairly steep up to a wooden gate to a crossing track. On your R is a SW Water pumping station.

Go L on the track downhill, leaving Hele Canal Foundry buildings on your L and its associated house on your R to a wooden FB over the River Neet. Go through a wooden gate and the track continues gently uphill to a T. (485 yards) Go R on the track to an open gate leading to a small group of houses. On your L is a FP sign to Hele. Here follow a winding path uphill, soon up 9 steps then up 4 more steps and over a wooden stile into a field. (510 yards) Continue uphill on a path bearing R and then L to a crossing track. (560 yards)

Continue uphill with a hedgerow on R, scrub on L, up to a cross track and a wooden stile to a field. (600 yards). Go over the stile into the field and follow the RH hedge still uphill, up to 140 feet then downhill to a wooden stile by a galvanised gate and go L on a very short track to a tarmac lane at Hele. Go L on the lane (715 yards), which winds downhill (*view forward of Whalesborough Farm, owners of The Weir*) to a hunting gate on your R. (0.63 miles). *Here you join the main walk at the end of the first sentence.*