

STANBURY MOUTH

Rane, Holacombe & Caunter Beaches

These are an extensive series of beaches between Higher and Lower Sharpnose Points which are accessible from Stanbury Mouth. All are remote and for the more adventurous. The cliffs along this stretch of coast are some of the best in Cornwall comprising of classic heavily folded sedimentary rocks.



Stanbury Beach with Rane and Holacombe beyond



EX23 9PH - 4 km north of Kilkhampton on the A39 there is a minor road to 'Shop' which leads to Stanbury Cross where the narrow approach road ends about 800m from Stanbury Beach where there are two small parking areas adjacent to the road for about 50 cars. There is little or no roadside parking.



From the lower parking area there are two



Rock strewn path access to Stanbury Beach



Signposts to the beaches at the end of the access road

public footpaths – both are marked and obvious. One runs down into the valley then follows the valley bottom and joins the Coast Path. It can be very wet, especially in winter and is about 900m in length. The other is signposted to the Coast Path and follows a well defined route across farmland and is slightly shorter (800m). It joins the Coast Path above Caunter Beach but involves a steep decent to the valley bottom and hence a climb on the return. Both paths lead to a short permissive access to the beach next to the stream. As a result of recent flooding the line of the path has been seriously eroded and strewn with unstable rock. In winter, the path and the stream are as one making access precarious.

Although the access on the public paths is straightforward, the final 70m or so on to Stanbury Beach is not easy and unsuitable for the less well able.



All four beaches are similar in makeup. In summer, Stanbury Beach has a sizeable area above the high water mark which is mostly shingle, stone and rock outcrops with small patches of greyish sand. At low water areas of fine yellow sand are exposed together with distinctive rock platforms whose geology defines the character of this stretch of coastline. In winter, especially after storms, there can



Rane Beach in winter

be little or no beach above high water. Two hours either side of high water it is possible to access Rane Beach and the smaller Holacombe Beach beyond by going across the rocks at Rane Point on the south-westerly side of Stanbury Beach. Both beaches are shingle and stone but can have patches of grey sand in summer and are covered at high water but have the same rock platforms and numerous rock pools. Rane can have some fine yellow sand exposed in summer but Holacombe is rocky at low water and is further to get to across the rocks than it looks so it is

important to leave enough time to return to Stanbury Beach and not get cut off by rising tides.

The scramble to Caunter Beach on the north-westerly side of Stanbury Beach beyond Hippa Rock takes some time and realistically can only be undertaken at low water – negotiating the rock pools and slippery rocks is not easy. Once on Caunter it is a daunting experience due to the towering cliffs, a sense of sheer isolation and no exit except the scramble back to Stanbury. Caunter in summer is similar to Stanbury with some grey sand but mostly shingle and stone with some yellow sand at low water. If the trek to Caunter is undertaken a stay will be short to ensure a safe return.



There is limited safety/rescue equipment at the access to Stanbury Beach but nothing at the other three beaches. There are no lifeguard facilities.



Swimming is dangerous especially at low water due to the currents, and for most of the year, the swell, surf and hidden rocks – it is the same for all four beaches. There can be fine surf at low water when there is a north-westerly swell and off-shore wind but because there are no lifeguards it is not recommended other than for the seasoned professionals with considerable local knowledge and technical expertise.



The rock pools are a feature of all the beaches at mid to low tide but snorkelling is not advised and could be dangerous.



Dogs are permitted all year.



The waterfall next to the access path above Stanbury Beach in winter

The inland path from the beach to the parking areas



There are no facilities at all.



Cliffs and rock formations above Stanbury Beach



The beaches are not cleaned and there are large amounts of water borne litter above high water. The water quality is excellent.



Stanbury Beach above high water In summer



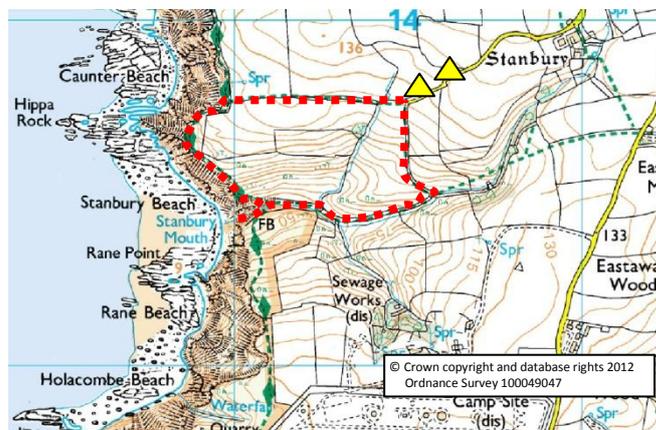
Caunter Beach at half tide in winter



Rock pools at Stanbury Beach



View from the path acces



Location – Part of OS Map 126



If the tricky access on to Stanbury Beach can be negotiated the beach is an exhilarating experience.