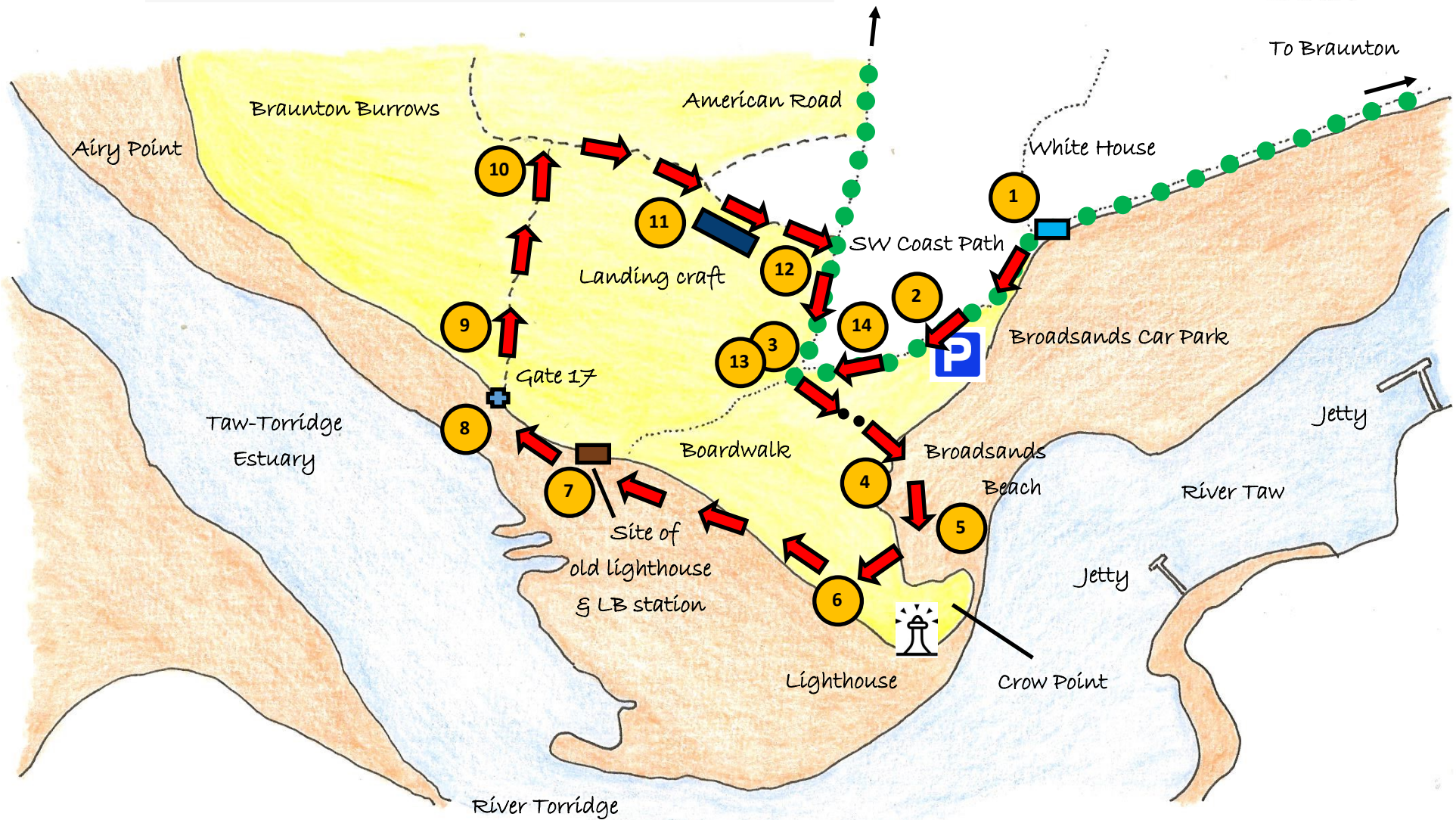


A Walk at Crow Point, North Devon



To Sandy Lane Car Park

To Braunton



A Walk Around the Crow Point Area

Total distance: 3.75 miles (6 km)

Terrain: Flat, but some areas of loose sand

1. The walk begins at Crow Beach House, known as the 'White House' for obvious reasons. Please note that access here by car can only be gained via a toll road with charge of £2.50 throughout the year. The White House is a prominent landmark that can even be identified from the far side of the estuary. It was earlier the Ferry House, the slipway alongside being the site of the old ferry to Appledore which fell into disuse in the 19th century. Nearby was the site of St. Anne's Chapel, now lost in the dunes. In 1843, the Marsh Inspectors gained ownership of the White House, and in 1942 it was requisitioned by the war department and used for storage of ammunition and land mines which were placed on the beach from the estuary to Saunton.

2. Follow the road / path to the main car park at Broadsands.

3. Pick up the path at the far end of the car park, where you will pass a carved 'Tarka' totem pole. Follow it until you reach a junction with the American Road (built by the GIs who trained here).

4. Turn left here to reach the access to Broadbands beach, marked by a number of boulders that prevent vehicular access. This was an important location for landing craft training - embarkation, loading and debarkation. At the top of beach can be found the remains of a lateral concrete wall and individual beach obstacles, all with explosion damage.

5. Pause for a while on the beach to enjoy the view of the Taw-Torridge estuary. The river Taw flows from the left, with Barnstaple in the distance. Directly opposite (across the river Torridge) you can pick out the villages of Instow, the old Yelland power station jetty, and the Zeta Berth jetty used for amphibious vehicle training. On the near side of the river to the right is the sand spit of Crow Point, and behind it on the far bank is the village of Appledore.

6. At low tide, you can turn right towards Crow Point to get a better view of the confluence point of the rivers Taw and Torridge. At the end of the spit is a small tubular steel lighthouse, only 5 metres high. Its light flashes every 2.5 seconds and can be seen from a distance of six nautical miles. It was originally powered by acetylene gas, but was converted to solar power in 1987.

7. Keep heading to the right along the coastline, and you will reach the ruins of an old lighthouse and some timber groynes. The original structure was built here in 1820, and stood at a height of 86'. It played a crucial role in guiding ships through the dangerous Bideford Bar sandbank in the estuary. The old lighthouse was crewed by a two-man team, and its light could be seen for 14 miles out to sea. It was demolished in 1957 and replaced by the unmanned structure you have just passed. Along with the original lighthouse, a life boat station was built here to aid sailors in trouble in the Bristol Channel that





surrounds the area. It was demolished too, but some evidence of the original structure still remains.

8. Continue along the coast towards Airy Point, where the coastline bends northwards. If you are feeling energetic, you could keep walking all the way to Saunton - but it is a slog along the sand for some four miles. Alternatively, after ten minutes or so, take a steep path that rises into the dunes.

9. Enter the dune system of Braunton Burrows through gate 17, and head for the hillock straight ahead.

10. The path runs alongside to the left, and becomes more clearly defined. Continue to the dune ridge ahead (which you could climb for excellent views of the estuary and parts of the ATC) and pick up the obvious track that leads out of Twayblade Slack at the top.

11. Continue along this track, and turn right at the crossroads at the bottom to reach the concrete mock ups that represented some of the landing craft used in the assault training. (What3Words: cheerful.sharpened.graph). A series of scale outlines of Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVPs) and Landing Craft Mechanised (LCMs) were created, and troops practiced on these before moving to assembly areas for actual embarkation on landing craft on Broadsands beach. To the north of the LCVP and LCM mock up area, six Landing Craft tank (LCT) and two LCMs were constructed. These were much larger and substantial structures with concrete bases to represent LCTs with lowered ramps as if they had just been beached. 6-foot high scaffold poles stood around their edges with canvas curtains or corrugated iron used to recreate the sides of craft. The original bases were built to the dimensions of the Mark IV LCT, but as landing plans developed it became clear that the Mark V version would be used in the invasion. Additional aprons were added to the rear of the existing bases to represent the extended deck area of the updated craft. Inscribed in the concrete of one such extension is the mark of its constructors, "146 ECB, Co C, 1st Platoon".

12. After leaving the landing craft mock ups, continue on the track to exit onto the American Road via gate 21 (What3Words: unhappy.locals.scornful).

13. Turn right to where it broadens out into an open space. There are often soldiers gathered here while taking part in present-day training exercises.

14. Pick up the path to lead you back to the Broadbands car park, and the White House beyond.

