

Bantham Village Store and Coffee Terrace

At first glance, Bantham Village Store is just a village shop equipped with a red letter box and telephone kiosk and adorned with gorgeous hanging baskets.

But inside, you will not only find shelves stocked with a wide range of items from bread to sand buckets; sugar to surfing gear, toys and trolleys to towels (all remarkably displayed in a compact way that is clean and clutter free) but you'll also find a licensed cafe with the benefit of Bantham's picturesque seascape.

On the menu to eat in, or take away are:

Breakfasts priced from £2 (for a light bite) to £7 for the full English breakfast. Alternatively, for a fair moderate price, a bacon or sausage sandwich.

Lunches offer homemade soup at £4.95. Jacket potatoes, and baguettes with a selection of fillings, including brie, bacon and cranberry. Pies have steak, cheese and onion fillings, and there are sausage rolls. The house lunch special is a Salcombe Smokie: mackerel fillet salad.

Vegetarians and kiddies are catered for... and a box of toys is provided.

We chose a table on the terrace behind the shop where, even at low tide when the scene is sandy, the view of the river's estuary is simply beautiful. A brass telescope is set up to bring Burgh Island, Bigbury and beyond, clearly into view.

We arrived after a morning walk on the coastal path. The sun was warming while a wind chilled us and we kept a brisk pace. The sounds of the sea and wind were in harmony. Now and again we saw the bobbing of a rabbit's white tail. It was pretty, but notices warn of adders in a conservation area behind a loose fence so we kept to the path. By the time we reached the shop, not far beyond the pub, we were ready for hot drinks. The service came with cheerful welcoming chat.

On the terrace the furniture is rustic from weathering and is the perfect place for a view of Burgh Island and the River Aune. A splendid swivelling dining Pod can be reserved for breakfast or lunch creating a different experience.

Although our table is in the open, it is sheltered from the south westerly wind and we absorb the estuary view and the folly where a foot ferry carries walkers across the river mouth. Today there are craft at moorings and, on the opposite side, a golf course tractor cuts grass as we wait for our drinks. In the undisturbed tranquillity, birds' songs are full-throated and an apparently famished robin comes trustingly to our table for crumbs. The locals call him Paul

The hot chocolate is rated 'The Best you can Get'. The Cappuccino is excellent too. Perfect hot drinks in generous cup sizes enjoyed with fresh pastries.

A once sea-worthy rowing boat and a wheelbarrow are now plant containers. A wall mural is in tune with the nautical theme and in keeping with nearby nautical flags. There's a barbeque roaster on one side and cane fencing maintains the natural look to hide plastic covered equipment. Terraces on two levels provide seating for 50, and there are four more tables indoors when it's not nice out.

Bantham Village Store and Coffee Terrace is open all year round. In the winter months beginning November, it opens later and closes earlier.

If you're driving, there's parking for small vehicles in front of the shop, and for 4x4s and the like, there's ample space in the lane behind the shop.

Their phone number: 01548 560645

Find them on Facebook for reviews and pictures.