

Hi everyone,

I was a bit nervous starting this leg of the walk, due to the back problem with which I finished the last leg, but in the event I managed to complete the trip without serious medical issues. Most mornings I woke up with an ache or pain somewhere, but once I stopped thinking about it, it usually went away!

This trip took me from Aberystwyth to Chester, a total of 439 miles, completing the Wales Coast Path in the process. I have now walked over 2,500 miles, and am starting to believe that I can actually complete this challenge!

Overall the weather wasn't too bad: a few windy & rainy days, which kept the ground soggy (especially the farm fields which the path occasionally crossed!). One of the challenges I hadn't experienced on my walk so far was autumn leaves coating the path: this both increased the slipperiness and concealed any loose stones which might cause a trip or stumble – one more hazard to concentrate on! Generally, the Welsh Coast Path was well-signposted, though I did see several blank fingerposts, where the attractive blue and yellow path roundels (see attached) had clearly been removed, presumably by souvenir-hunters – although the occasional farmer who resented walkers crossing his land may sometimes have been responsible!

I managed to watch most of the England and Wales rugby matches at the World Cup on pub televisions, mostly surrounded by crowds of Welshmen who were extremely good-humoured, even when their team lost. (And just as good-humoured when England lost!)

I met a retired Welsh journalist and author ([Lloyd Jones \(Welsh writer\) - Wikipedia](#)), doing a stint as a volunteer litter-picker in one of the coastal car-parks, who claims to be the first man to walk and write about the true perimeter of Wales, which, he explained to me, was not along Offa's Dyke as this misses out a large part of northern Wales around Wrexham. We had a fascinating conversation about life the universe and everything, and I then had to pick up my pace considerably to reach my destination (Conwy) before dark!

In Anglesey I had a few days of great walks along the north coast, but just before I reached Holyhead the rains came with a vengeance. The following day I was drenched and almost blown off the path traversing around the slopes of Holyhead Mountain, and that set the trend for the rest of my time on the island, only stopping when I got back onto the mainland. For the last five miles or so into Chester the path was a strip of tarmac alongside the dead-straight (and flat!) canalised section of the River Dee: easy to walk but rather boring. Luckily I met a lady who was going my way together with her dogs, and our conversation shortened the miles considerably, without setting back my schedule! There's always a silver lining...

I return to Chester tomorrow (Friday) and, God willing, will arrive in Gretna on the Scottish border by the end of November. I will then return home, and am not planning to walk in December or January: days too short and weather too unpredictable! Then I will restart the walk in Berwick on Tweed, at the other end of the Scotland-England border. I do not plan to walk along the land border itself, because (a) there is no continuously-defined path, and (b) there is very little habitation either. I have to admit to being influenced by the only person I know of who has written a book about this route (Ian Crofton, "Walking the Border") and who was about 40 years younger than me, wild camped, got lost a few times, had to boil all his water lifted from streams, and generally had an pretty awful time!

A couple of video clips, if the link works for you: one of a mummy seal seeing off a male who might attack her baby (alternatively he might be her mate, and she's merely berating him for not bringing

back enough fish!), and the other of a cunning plan by the Welsh to deal with the effects of rising sea levels, by emptying the sea!

<https://fb.watch/o3dARZegRp/>

<https://fb.watch/o3dISgmclx/>

For photos, you'll either have to look at my Facebook page, or wait for the book.....

Below is a link to a google map of the actual route I've covered so far – as before you can zoom into this to see more detail. And as before, you may find it easier to view on a PC rather than on a phone or tablet, due to the amount of data involved.

Map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1m5pHQ9Ek8cTAEAr3aL-glVswJPVf00A&usp=sharing>

All the best,

Brendan