



The cottage cleaner, Vicki, sent Nicky the piccy of an icy Llyn Ogwen.



She also sent one of Pistyll Tan y Garth in case you have forgotten what it looks like.

Due to our friend Covid, there is very little activity, for this year, to report from members. The Scottish winter meet in Scotland was cancelled thanks to lockdown. However, this might have been to our benefit. Having watched the webcams through the week, the hills started with a modest amount of snow which appeared to be steadily washed away by daily rain, not that much was visible because of the cloud.

Upcoming stuff.

8pm on 30th March - Zoom AGM - David has emailed you with the Agenda and will give details of how you can join in.

Dave Gray has put together the meets list for 2021, soon to be uploaded to the website.

I've managed to organise a long distance day walk every couple of years but it's difficult to find something suitable. If we walk 30+ miles then it's a long way back to the cars so a circular walk is ideal. Having re-read the Huxley book "A history of the GMC since 1967" I have found my next challenge and will be seeking company. For those of you with access to the book, it's on page 23. It starts at the chapel crosses Moel Siabod to Bwych y Rhediad, Ysgafell Wen, Moel Druman, across the Crimea Pass then East over Moel Farlwyd and Moel Penamen down to Dowyddellan and across the moors to the chapel. First Established in February 1978, this must be doable on a summer hut weekend. Looking at the route on the map(s) it would appear that it follows county boundaries for much of the way. This I suspect may be due to the fact that many navigators on the hill mistake boundary lines for footpaths. Fortunately as so many people do this the routes are usually well walked with access through boundary fences. Rough calculation on the map says about 20 miles, book says about 5000ft ascent, so we can probably add a bit onto both those. To put it into perspective it's a bit less than the Yorkshire 3 peaks which is 25 miles with 6000ft ascent.

Articles this month:

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- 2) North Wales Coast Walk by Dave Gray
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The Gwydyr Mountain Club Newsletter

March 2021

Edited: Chris
Harris

1) LOCAL PLACES OF INTEREST - by Chris Harris

A few local places that you may not have discovered that you could use as part of a walk and you might like to Google:

A) From the bottom Bottom of Marshlands Road in Ness (by the Harp), there is broad path beside parking area leading out across the marshes. You can easily follow it out to the river then anticlockwise where it rejoins the road by the Old Quay (Ness not Parkgate). It's not a long way but on a clear day the views are great.

B) **Shotwick Castle.** Wirral's only true castle, built in 1093. There's no masonry left but the earthworks are still there. It's nearer Saughall than Shotwick. Reasonably easy to find from the lane (cycle track) that runs from Woodbank to Saughall or from the Southeast through Dingle Woods.

C) **Shotwick Village.** St Michael's Church where there are grooves in the stonework of the porch where archers sharpened their arrows. There is a mooring ring in the perimeter wall where the boats could tie up. Shotwick Hall built in 1662 is a beautiful old building. There's a path leading from Puddington across the fields to Shotwick Village. Sometimes a bit muddy in places. If you are in Puddington there is a new cafe, called Gift Cafe, opened there. This area is not well served by refreshment stops so it's handy for paths that you may rarely use. I've not tried it yet and opening is a bit restricted at the moment. Not licensed for alcohol !

D) **The bear pit in Eastham woods.** From the Victorian time when there was a zoo and gardens there.

E) **Hockenhull Platts:** where 3 ancient packhorse bridges cross the River Gowy. It's a bit further away but an option for when lockdown is lifted. Accessible from Platts Lane on the Waverton end or from Tarvin village to the Northeast.

Dave Gray sent me an article about his walk following the North Wales Coastal path which my inspire some of you to follow in his size 9's in the near future when we are allowed out. It includes the all important public transport links that you may need.

2) Mersey to Seiont Step by Step: A North Wales Coast Walk (by Dave Gray)

This article is about a long distance walk I did as a section hike, finishing in July 2019, from Ellesmere Port to Caernarfon, mostly on the North Wales Coast Path. It was very varied with a lot of interest and I hope it'll give people some ideas of new things to do, as and when Wales opens up again, particularly for days when the mountains are clogged in.

Who, when and why

I got the idea for doing this walk gradually! For one of the midweek day trips that Mark Barley and I do from time to time, Mark had had the idea of getting the train to Tal y Cafn, walking through the hills past Ro Wen hostel and through the Pass of Two Stones, and then down to Llanfairfechan station. On a sunny day in August 2017 I joined him at Llandudno Junction. We thoroughly enjoyed the day, it was good to do a linear route, to take in the Pass in a different way, and to check out how the Neolithic people were getting on with Maen y Bardd burial chamber! We also saw a red kite, my most northerly sighting of this bird.

Then in December 2018 poor weather at the Chapel sent me home via Aber Ogwen on the coast. From here I had a splendid walk, there and back again, to Llanfairfechan, along a wild, bleak and colourful coast with good views to Anglesey and Penmaenmawr. There are several nature reserves on this route, which teems with birdlife – curlews, lapwings and little egrets.



Maen y Bardd (photo medievalheritage.eu)



Looking towards Penmaenmawr

“Hang on!” I thought. “I’ve just clocked up quite a bit of the North Wales Coast Path, and the route done last year with Mark is well superior to schlepping around the A55 at Penmaenmawr, and tramping the Marine Drive

around the Great Orme - why not miss out those tedious bits and try to link in some more sections of coast, into a good new long distance trek?" So off I went!

All stages bar numbers 7, 9 and 10 below were done on day trips, and all bar the walk with Mark were solo efforts, though later on Mark and I repeated the walk from Fynnongroyw to Prestatyn on a lovely sunny day.

How – Stages and logistics

The Coast Path website is excellent and is at <https://www.walescoastpath.gov.uk>. As this walk is linear, I used mostly a combination of the car together with public transport. I quickly became an aficionado of the Arriva Wales no.11 bus, on its complex and interminable pilgrimages from Chester to Rhyl! The website <https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/wales> can be a little recalcitrant at times but will get you the info you need in the end.

Here are the stages I did and the transport used, arranged in east/west order rather than the order in which they were actually done. Parking places are in brackets, * indicates limited parking space. If you want to take more cars it's possible to vary this by parking in large car parks e.g. in Flint.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Ellesmere Port to Chester | Merseyrail both ways; I walked the canal |
| 2. Flint to Chester | Train both ways from home |
| 3. Flint to Fynnongroyw | Car (at GR130825*); Bus to Flint and walk back to car |
| 4. Fynnongroyw to Rhyl | Car (at GR130825*); Walk to Rhyl and Bus back to car |
| 5. Rhyl to Colwyn Bay | Car (at Rhyl Marine Lake); Bus to C'wyn Bay and walk back |
| 6. Colwyn Bay to Pen yr Orsedd | Car (C'wyn Bay streets); Circular walk around Nant y Groes |
| 7. Tal y Cafn to Pen yr Orsedd | Car laneside (GR784719*) S of Bryn Castell; Out and back. |
| 8. Tal y Cafn to Llanfairfechan | Train both ways; (I parked on streets* in Llandudno Junct.) |
| 9. Aber Ogwen to Llanfairfechan | Car (616725); Out and back |
| 10. Aber Ogwen to Porth Penrhyn | Car (616725); Circular walk to Tregarth/Half Way Bridge |
| 11. Caernarfon to Porth Penrhyn | Car (586729 Bangor Prom); bus B'gor – C'fon and walk back |

Pen yr Orsedd is at GR831741. With two cars stages 6 and 7 would be easier combined, or you could use the train Colwyn Bay – Tal y Cafn to do the combination. Stage 10 was to fill in an awkward gap, I used the old tramway and paths plus the “other” North Wales path. A campaign planned from the start wouldn't have needed this stage! You'd probably park on Bangor prom and use the train or bus Bangor – Llanfairfechan to sweep up stages 9 and 10 as one stage.

The part of the route between Talacre and Colwyn Bay is better done when the tide is out, that way you can stick mostly to the sands and avoid promenades and crowds of people.

What – some further highlights of the trip

At first I was a little concerned that the route might be intruded upon by the A55 and other grot. Not so, there were only two short bits that were a bit grim, and they were only about 3 miles in total. One was on the pavement of the A548 south of Flint, the other right beside the A55 just east of Colwyn Bay.

Otherwise, the route was very attractive and varied. Here are some more highlights

The walk from Fynnongroyw to Rhyl surprised me. The section out to Talacre includes a nature reserve with good views over the Dee to the Wirral, and has historic interest in the monuments to the old mine at Point of Ayr Colliery. The sight of the gas terminal is a bit daunting but free of intensive agriculture the area has not only birds but also loads of orchids. Point of Ayre lighthouse is the beginning of a vast beach/dune/saltmarsh that takes you pretty much all the way to Rhyl. The old lighthouse is very atmospheric, plonked down alone in a sandy desert.

The real surprise though is Gronant Dunes nature reserve, behind and I suspect partly protected by Presthaven Sands Caravan Park. It is simply plastered with wild flowers and orchids, so many that I got used to them being there! The spit at Gronant is a RAMSAR protected site, reserved for the birds, it is a major colony of nesting Little Terns and is the only such colony in North Wales. The RSPB maintain a watch over it in the summer, and you can cross from the coast path to walk out to a hut manned by the wardens, where you can observe the terns without disturbing them.



Point of Ayr Lighthouse

Marsh Orchid at Talacre

Most beautiful of the stages was I think Caernarfon to Port Penrhyn. I walked down to the riverside which gives fine views of the Castle, and then the walk goes past the remains of the town walls. Once out of town it is a cycle/foot path that mostly follows the line of the old railway eastwards up the Menai straits. These were turquoise blue, and the hedges are full of wild roses. Other wildlife included a weasel, something I've seen only around a dozen times.

This section has been improved relatively recently; a huge loop of road walking being replaced by a pleasant walk around the coastal fringe of the Vaynol Estate that is now owned by the National Trust. So if your maps are old, check out the website!



Plas Newydd and Menai Straits from Coed Tir, Vaynol Estate

It's quite exciting to then pass under the Britannia and Menai Bridges. At the bottom of the Britannia bridge is a display about the old tubular bridge that was destroyed in the '70s including part of the original tubular structure that survived the fire. The route goes up to the end of the suspension bridge and I walked across – you're really high up above the Straits.

The real surprise was the next piece from Bangor University to the Pier. It was an idyllic section, very peaceful despite being so close to town, with the path going up and down along a wooded coastline that felt quite remote. With the blue water below I could have been by the Mediterranean!

Bridges also featured in the first section I did as a planned walk, Flint to Chester. The path gives you unusual and striking views of the new Flint Bridge, the old blue bascule bridge at Queensferry, and the old swing bridge on the Borderlands railway. I've just discovered while writing this article that the blue bridge was built by Sir William Arrol & Co, a firm which built amongst others the Forth Railway Bridge, the Tay Railway Bridge (the one that's stayed up!), Tower Bridge in London, the first Severn Bridge and the Humber Bridge! A real plus was seeing the barge that used to take the A380 Airbus wings down the Dee. This started up and set sail down the river with a wing aboard just as I walked past! I wonder if I saw one of the last ever commercial sailings on the upper River Dee...



Flint Bridge



The barge sets sail

In Conclusion

The last section I did was a bonus add on – walking the Shropshire Union Canal from Ellesmere Port to Chester. I went down to where the canal joins the Ship Canal, as near to the Mersey as you can get. The boat museum there is interesting. Arriving in Chester past the crowded canal side wine bars is a bit of a contrast to Ellesmere Port – I felt if I'd yelled out “Toby!” every male head in the place would have turned round! I hope this account of my walk has been of interest and maybe tempts you into giving some or all of it a go.

3) THE JURASSIC COAST & ISLES OF SCILLY – September 2020 - by Alan Bartlam



Old Harry Rocks near Studland Bay

What a fantastic holiday this turned out to be! Withheld from early spring due to Covid-19, we stayed for four nights in Weymouth. This was a far better resort than the likes of Bournemouth, Poole or Swanage. Very busy but thoroughly enjoyable and some great walks along the Jurassic Coastline, taking in the local highlights of Lulworth Cover, Durdle Door, Corfe Castle and Old Harry Rocks.

This was a preamble to our main target of the Isles of Scilly, as neither of us had been there before. It is 28 miles off the mainland from Lands End. We flew over from Exeter (an airport with just 3 flights a day!) and landed in St. Mary's an hour after take off.



What a stunning place. Clean, tidy, quiet, hardly any vehicles or youngsters and beautiful landscapes. Our hotel (Tregarthens) was right by the harbour of Hugh Town and made for easy access to Garrison Hill. Lovely location and really nice hotel.

But it only once you leave the small townships that you can fully appreciate the incredible countryside and seascapes which are so close at hand. Great paths (and hardly any roads) make for a walkers paradise. The scenery is simply stunning. It also felt like we were going back in time!

On St. Mary's there were great beaches and rock formations. On Trecco, simply beautiful plants everywhere. On St. Martins, wonderful seascapes and on St. Agnes, the most amazing rock formations I have ever seen. This was my favourite island of the lot, helped by the facilities, cafes, pub etc. which were noticeably absent from some of the islands (a lot of hospitality does not exist on Sundays and Mondays!)



It was a holiday I shall always remember with a great deal of affection. I would love to think that we may get another chance to visit once more and I would fully encourage any nature lovers/walkers to get themselves over there! It is quite simply, a wonderful place to stay.

4) JOINING THE GMC by Mike Gavin

I have always had a great love for the hills and mountains from family days out to Loggerheads climbing up the Cat-Walk and holidays to Barmouth with the Panorama walk.

I was about 12 when I had my first trip up Moel Femeau and Snowdon while attending a schools international camp at Colomendy, then belonging to Liverpool City Council. A year or so later, I joined Old Swan Boys Club, started my Duke of Edinburgh Award, staying as a member of the club until I gained my Gold at the age of 17. During these years, we did our expeditions over the Denbigh Moors and into Snowdonia. Part of my gold expedition was along the Roman Road from Rowen to camp above Aber Falls, then over to Bethesda and finally taking in Snowdon via Crib Goch. I am sure you will agree some good miles and climbs carrying all the camping kit and food required.

We also did a fair bit of rock climbing at Helsby, Laddow Rocks and the Llanberris Pass. In fact I can remember having one of my first illegal pints in the Pen-Y-Pass Hotel while climbing and sleeping rough amongst the boulders a bit further down the valley. We also entered one of the first big Orienteering competitions held at Welbeck Abbey and later another at Tockholes in the Pennines.

Later I joined the Liverpool Scottish Territorial Army Unit and this took up a lot of my time. I did participate, as part of a team, in the Army Orienteering Championships on a number of occasions.

With my job teaching at Rock Ferry High School, I became involved supervising the D.O.E. Award Scheme, teaching map reading, route planning and all the other different elements required to pass at each level. Initially I was assisting a long established member of staff and mountaineer, Hal Winter a member of the Midland Association of Mountaineers (MAM). They had a hut near Llyn Ogwen ('Glandena'), that we used when supervising the Gold Expeditions in Snowdonia.

Towards 1990, I finished with the Territorial Army and wanted something worthwhile to occupy my time. I worked with Lyn Jensen, she and Paul had helped me, on numerous occasions, to supervise the award expeditions in the Clwydian Hills between Afon Wen and Llangollen. We used camp sites mainly at Colomendy School, Cilcain, Llandegla Village and Valley Crucis Abbey. During the long evenings, we would discuss different topics and the GMC came up and in the early 1990's, I went down to the Crown Hotel to join. At about the same time, Ross McGraw was also in the process of joining and we became good friends, the two new boys on the block. Our first few weekend trips were to the hut with much drinking and socialising. One of these was for Huxley's 50th birthday celebration. Lots of bottles of champagne and various bits of food were given out for people to carry up to the summit of Moel Siabod on the Saturday. We all had a really good

celebration on the summit and returned to the hut to carry on before heading to the Tyn-Y-Coed. I might add that the celebrations went on into the wee hours. The next morning most members did not feel fit to drive home so they decided to do Moel Siabod again. Most times out at the hut, Moel Siabod was top of the list for walks. After a few months, Ross exclaimed, 'Why is this club called the Gwydyr Mountain Club ? It should be the Moel Siabod Club! that seems to be the only hill some people want to do!'

Having been members for about a few years, Ross and I decided to add a camping meet to the list. We would seek out a camp site in the Rhinogs and advertise it to all the members. A camp site was found just outside of Harlech, members were notified on the Tuesday night meets in the Crown, August bank holiday weekend 26th/27th 28th. We had no takers for the meet, please remember that in those days, you either committed to attending a meet on the Tuesday evening, or you phoned the meet organiser, no e-mails then! We thought we had better still go ahead as we had advertised the dates, the location of the camp site and the time for the start of the Saturday walk. The weather was not good but we still did Rhinog Fawer, Rhinog Fach and Y Llethr about 10 miles in all. Next day, we took the train into Barmouth and walked back to the station at Llanbedr via the mountains, another 13 or so miles. As we were on our own, we decided to pack up and head home a day early. We were not put off and organised another camping meet a year or so later.



This picture shows the camp site at Dinas Caravan Park and left to right, Brian Bernard, Dave Gray, John Huxley, Linda Jensen and Paul Jensen.

This was again in the Rhinogs at a camp site, a mile or so inland from Llanbedr between Barmouth and Harlech. Linda and I had done a recce a few weeks previous and thought the site, Dinas Caravan Park and Camping, seemed to be just about perfect for a GMC meet. Large field with various little areas suitable for groups, you could light fires and it had a decent toilet block with showers. The showers were run off a meter requiring an old 10p or two shilling piece to operate the hot water. These could be obtained at the farm house for 10p. Linda Jensen did the honourable thing and purchased about ten of these to make it easier for everyone but I think she ended up bringing a few home with her and might still have them. Camp was established on the Friday and a good few of us went down to the Victoria Hotel on the main coast road to enjoy a few beers. We did a long circular walk on the Saturday and I think everyone was happy to spend the Sunday pottering around Barmouth. Huxley was with us and he met an old school friend from Caldy Grange on the site. He was so concerned about us disturbing anyone he ordered us all to be quiet after about 9.00 pm and get to bed early (talk about the pot calling the kettle black). This site does not take group bookings now, I wonder why? Ross and I discussed the venue for our next camping meet and thought Cadair Idris to be worthwhile as we rarely seemed to venture that way. Linda and I did a recce and found a good site at Ty-nant actually on the pony path. This had good toilets, a small bunk house, a very picturesque field with stream. It also had the Gwernan

Lake Hotel a short walk away for the post hill pint. What more could GMC members ask for. I think we used this site twice and I have merged the two into one memory. The ascent was in two groups half went up the Pony Path while the adventurous did Fox's path (a steep ascent up a scree slope) and met on the summit. All returning on the Pony path.

The meet was spoiled when we started cooking our dinners in the evening and drinking our wine then suddenly the midges came out everywhere forcing us to seek refuge in our tents and avoid too many bites. Dave Gray came out with some very interesting head covering to keep the midges away but still let him drink his wine.

We planned our next (and last meet) to be on the Mawddach estuary, camping at Bontddu. This was a good site enabling us to do a linear walk into Barmouth, passing a Welsh Gold Mine, take in a few hills and then get the bus back to camp. A few did a shorter walk into Barmouth and spent some time supporting the local pubs. We all ended up on the same bus back to Bontddu and a pint in the local.

I think everyone enjoyed these camping meets but in the early 2000's, Linda and I had retired and purchased an apartment near Alicante, Spain and consequently did more travelling to and from Alicante by car, often camping in France and Spain on the way.

Ross in his small camper-van was away travelling around Europe for most of the summers and we often talked about the different sites we had used in France, Belgium and Spain. We left the organisation of the camping meets in the UK to younger members. I must point out that Dave Gray has also put on numerous camping meets especially in Dent (for good walks and a pub crawl) and Rhayader mid-Wales.

Camping has always been popular with many GMC members and I am sure it will continue to be so. It is just that being over 70 makes it more difficult, often having to get up a few times during the night for calls of nature. Linda and I might manage another camping trip into France and Spain but are looking more at booking into small hotels or self catering accommodation.

Ross is no longer with us but I am sure he will live on within the club when we talk about good times shared on past meets and plan for the future. The one thing that Ross and I agreed on was that if you want something to happen in the GMC, do not wait for someone else to organise it, you could wait for ever. Talk to other members and organise it yourselves, that is how the GMC works at its best.

5) WAINWRIGHT BAGGING BETWEEN LOCKDOWNS - by Helen Grant

In Sep 2020 Glenn and I decided to continue our quest of doing all the Wainwrights. We rented a cottage for the week in the quieter south western Lakes near the Duddon valley. The cottage Brighthouse was in the middle of nowhere (perfect) well relatively with access through a farm and unmade track on its own surrounded by streams and fields of cows and sheep. The nearby village of Ulpha was deserted.



Pics of view from cottage of Dunnerdale Fells and inside real fire ideal for warming up the red wine.



Pic of me at summit Harter fell in the wind

Next day we ventured over to Wasdale meeting more cars than we expected along the single track roads. Buckbarrow, Seatallan and Middle Fell were ticked off with mist, rain and sun at various times during the day and a rainbow at one point too.

Pic Glenn in sunshine in Wasdale at the end of the walk

One of our objectives for the week of mixed conditions of mist, rain and wind was ticking off Harter fell from the Hardnott fell road. I said why don't we drive that way from Ambleside not realising Glenn would go in to Topgear mode over the Hardnott and Wrynose passes with the car steering itself down the very steep and winding road. The walking route up to Harter fell was pleasant though after that with the ancient Roman fort ruins at Hardnott passed along the way.



Monday we succumbed to a kit drying day as several pairs of boots and clothing were still soggy and the rain persisted all day.

Next day we tackled Green crag via Worm crag in the mist walking from the cottage. Good navigation practice in the mist on boggy ground and returning via White Moss and Duddon valley. Surprisingly we saw no one except a herd of black cattle.

Photo of Glenn soaked in Duddon valley

Wednesday we tackled Grey Friar and Great Carrs from Wrynose Pass in the wind but the sunshine made an appearance. Not a bad way to spend our Anniversary! Thursday, our last day, the weather improved for our ascent of Slight Side and Scafell with great views from the top.



Pics Glenn and view from Scafell

Another 10 Wainwrights done despite a week of mixed weather. Can't wait to get back up there once we are allowed.

6) MY FAVOURITE LOCKDOWN WALKS - by David Lane-Joynt

See next page.

My Favourite Lockdown Walks by David Lane-Joynt

The Welsh border is closed, the golf club is closed, the climbing walls are closed, and anyway only local travel is allowed except where necessary. So I have been doing a lot of walking recently, and appreciating again just how fortunate those of us who live in the Wirral are. We have such fabulous walks only a short drive away.

It is probably my nautical background, but I love the sea views and my favourite walks are along our coast. The walk along the North Wirral coastal path is a favourite. I drive to Moreton and park in the car park with the take-away coffee/snack bar near Leasowe Lighthouse, then walk along the coast to New Brighton. Particularly when the tide is in, with a stiff breeze blowing and the waves come crashing in onto the concrete sea defences, it is very exhilarating. It can get very crowded walking along the concrete pathway, and some cyclists seem intent on mowing down any pedestrians in their way, but except at high tide you can walk along the beach all the way to New Brighton.

Walking along the beach is a very social exercise, as there will always be dog walkers around. I like dogs, although I cannot keep one in my flat. So when a dog rushes up to me on the beach, wags its tail to say hello, then drops its ball or stick or whatever else it is chewing to ask me to throw it for them, then I like to say hello back to the dog. Often I then start talking to the owners. I also meet people that I know on the beach. A little while ago I met Tony Lambert on the North Coast beach. He was walking around attached to a large parachute which he uses for powered paragliding (I think that is the term for it). You often see people kitesurfing when the wind is up. It looks very exciting and I would love to be able to give it a go, but I think that one is better left to a younger generation.

I also like the walk along the coast from New Brighton to Seacombe. You walk along past all the fishermen, some of whom have two rods out over the Mersey, and can appreciate the view across the Mersey to the world famous Liverpool Waterfront.

My favourite lockdown walk, however, has to be the walk up the Dee estuary. Start from Red Rocks at the Northern end. There is no car park, but plenty of parking space along Stanley Road leading to Red



Red Rocks at high tide looking over Liverpool Bay



The North Hoyle Offshore Wind Farm

Rocks. The picture shows Red Rocks at high tide, but at anything other than that there are acres of sand all around. From Red Rocks you look across to Hilbre Island or out into Liverpool Bay onto the North Hoyle Offshore Wind Farm. Did you know that North Hoyle was the UK's first major offshore wind farm? Commencing operations in 2003, North Hoyle produces sufficient electricity annually to

power 50,000 homes.

Walk along the coast from Red Rocks towards West Kirby, and there are stunning views out to Hibre and North Wales beyond. The Dee Estuary Birding website tells me that “in this area the shore is a high tide roost for thousands of waders.” “In the winter months Dunlin and Knot should be seen in their thousands with Bar Tailed Godwit, Sanderling, Ringed Plover and Grey Plover.”



Part of the Wader Roost at West Kirby, the marsh in the foreground. The species shown are Dunlin, Knot and Grey Plover. (source deestuary.co.uk)



The view of Hibre seen across the marshes



West Kirby seen from the marine lake perimeter

At West Kirby (the North West’s riviera town) you can walk out to Hibre, but watch the time of high tide so as not to get stranded on Hibre. I walked out a couple of weeks ago. It was windy and rather cold which deterred most people and I found only one other person on the island when I got there. I prefer it that way as in summer the island gets very crowded.

Usually I don’t walk out to Hibre, but continue by walking around West Kirby’s marine lake. On a still day you get an excellent view of the West Kirby waterfront with reflections in the water. From the marine lake perimeter, you also get fine views looking upriver. During the winter months the sun is low in



The view upriver from the marine lake perimeter



West Kirby Sailing Club

the sky and the light across the water enhances the view with some fine cloud formations. There is usually something interesting happening at the marine lake. It is popular with sail boarders who can achieve high speeds on the sheltered waters or maybe it is just watching dogs swimming in the water then get out and shaking themselves all over anybody nearby. The other day a group of youngsters were diving and swimming. This is not allowed, but they are welcome with me to go swimming in the sea at the current temperature of the water.

Walk on past the West Kirby Sailing Club at the far end of the marine lake. At high tide you have to detour slightly to reach the beach, but when the tide is lower you can now walk along the beach as far as you want.



Looking upriver from near the steps to Caldy car park



Looking across the Dee to North Wales

There are steps up to meet the Wirral Way at the Caldy Car Park, and the Wirral Way provides an alternative route back to West Kirby. Personally, I prefer to continue along the beach to the Dee Sailing club



Thurstaston Shore with Sally's/Shore Cottage in the centre. In winter the mud flat on the right is full of waders. (source deestuary.co.uk)

and beyond along the Thurstaston shoreline as far as Sally's Cottage where there are steps up to the Thurstaston centre. The café there serves good coffee, as long as you remember to take a face mask with you.

The return journey can be back along the shoreline, or can be back along the Wirral Way as far as West Kirby The walk takes me a little over two hours of brisk walking.