

Holyhead Mtn

Circular Coastal Walk

This is a rugged and fascinating walk: the area is rich in wildlife, natural beauty and human history. It is a place of wild, heather-clad hill tops, towering sea cliffs, unspoilt green countryside, and ancient buildings. Steep, on-road in places, and potentially boggy.



20.4km



CHALLENGING

Directions

1 Country Park to South Stack

Exit the car park along a path past the lake. Join a track and then go through a kissing-gate into a field heading for the mountain. Follow a stony path to *North Stack*. Leaving *North Stack* follow the track up the hill and bear right at the telegraph pole, bear left up a particularly steep section and pass a number of walled enclosures. You will then begin to descend, getting



South Stack Lighthouse

glimpses of *South Stack* as you go. ***There is a path off to the left to the summit of the mountain, but it's steep, so take care if you choose to take***

it. The path levels out and is easy to follow down to the headland. After reaching *South Stack* turn left down the road.

Short-cut option: return to Country Park

Very shortly turn left and follow another well-defined path parallel with the previous one. As you get closer to the mountain bear right, skirting around the base. *Follow the walls and at the cross-roads in the paths, go straight across. You will reach a lane. Head left by some houses. At a T-junction turn left and follow the lane to the end. A path then bears left, then right, following a fence. Walk down a set of steps and you will be back at the start.*

2 South Stack to Porth Dafarch



Ellin's Tower

Turn right, off the main road down the steps to *Ellin's Tower*. Then follow a path back up to the road. Follow the road past the RSPB Visitor

Centre and, shortly after, some prehistoric hut circles on your left down to the



Prehistoric hut circle

T-junction. Go through the kissing-gate opposite, and follow a path parallel with the road. At the end cross the lane and go through a kissing-gate to follow the Coast Path onto an area of open heathland on the clifftop. Don't forget to enjoy the views: far ahead of you are the mountains of *Eryri* and the *Llyn Peninsula*, and behind you *Holyhead Mountain*. Follow the main track all around the coast watching out for ravines, and keep following the waymarkers to *Porth Dafarch*.



Porth Dafarch

3 Porth Dafarch to Country Park

Turn right along the road after the beach taking great care (no pavement). Just before the golf course turn left up a drive *Isallt Fawr*. At the end, follow the waymarkers taking the grassy field-edge, and down a track to a lane. Turn right onto the lane past a ruined cottage on your left. Turn left onto the road, then just around the bend turn right up the steps into another field. Follow the path over the gorse-covered hill, down to the houses. Pass around the right-hand side of the houses through three gates to meet the quiet cul-de-sac road *Cae Rhos*. Turn left heading for the busier road. When you meet it (opposite the farm track) turn left along the road. Then turn right over the ladder-stile onto a field-edge footpath up over farmland heading back towards *Holyhead Mountain*. Follow the yellow markers through heathland and



Stone gateposts

scrub. You will meet another road. Turn left past a large white house, then right onto a footpath, following the yellow markers in a large loop around the back of the house. Cross more gorse-covered heathland, and when you reach a wall bear left. Follow the path downhill, and then up again past a farm *Cae Alltwn* on your right. Bear left keeping a rocky outcrop on your left, and follow the footpath around another farm *Tre Wilmot*. Follow the yellow waymarkers up to another path through a farmyard and out onto the road. Turn right, taking great care along the road (no pavement), past a dome-capped *Well*, then left up a track. Just after the hairpin, turn left onto a narrow, very steep track up the slope to join the path skirting the mountain. Follow the instructions in *italics* in Section 1. ■



Holyhead Mountain

History and Interest

● Technically not a mountain at only 220m, **Holyhead Mountain** is Anglesey's highest point. Along with a *Trig Point*, there are the ruins of an *Iron Age Hillfort* at its summit and a *Roman Watchtower*.

● **Breakwater Country Park** is a former quarry but now a wildlife haven. It's a great place to begin exploring the mountain and rocky coast. There is a small information centre and shop too.

● **Tŷ Mawr Hut Circles** are the remains of a settlement dating back to the Neolithic (late Stone Age). People lived here between 2500BCE and 500AD.



Witch's Well

● **Witch's Well** is an unusual octagonal brick tower with a domed roof. The present structure dates from the 1860s.

● **South Stack** is home to the 19th century *lighthouse* and *suspension bridge*. The 60m cliffs and stacks offer some world-class rock climbing opportunities.

Wildlife

The areas of heather, bramble-scrub and gorse attract *stonechat*, *wheatear*, *willow warbler* and *linnet*. Other notable birdlife includes *cough*, *peregrine falcon*, and *little owl*. Many species of passerine migrants are spotted in spring and autumn.

Off the cliffs can be seen *puffin*, *fulmar*, *guillemot*, *razorbill* and *gannet*.



Razorbill

Grey seals, *porpoises* and *Risso's* and *common dolphins* may be seen off the coast.

The rare plant *spathulate fleawort* grows nowhere else in the world except for this stretch of heathland on *Holy Island*.

Public Transport

● *Holyhead* is served by railway, but the walk starts a short distance out of town. The nearest bus stop is at *Maes y Myndd, Llaingoch*. Bus No. 22 stops there but it's still a short walk to the Country Park.

Refreshments

● Plenty of options in *Holyhead*.
● The RSPB Visitor Centre has a café, as does the *Breakwater Country Park*.

