Approximate distance: 12 miles
For this walk we’ve included OS grid references should you wish to use them.

The Weatherman Walking maps are intended as a guide to help you walk the route. We recommend using an OS map of the area in conjunction with this guide. Routes and conditions may have changed since this guide was written. The BBC takes no responsibility for any accident or injury that may occur while following the route. Always wear appropriate clothing and footwear and check weather conditions before heading out.
This delightful walk takes you through the scattered farms and lanes of the Llansteffan Peninsula and around its spectacular headland, offering commanding views of the South Wales coast. The walk begins in countryside farmed by Dylan Thomas’s family. It’s an area where he spent many holidays as a child and which inspired the much-loved poem Fern Hill. It leads on to the Taf estuary with views over to Laugharne, and then rounds the headland where there are spectacular views out to sea and across a long stretch of the south Wales coast. The walk ends in the picturesque village of Llansteffan with its vast sandy beach. This is a long walk but the paths are mostly good and the climbs, while long, are not too steep.

**Directions**

Park your car in Llansteffan and catch the bus to Carmarthen from outside the Sticks Hotel. Buses were running every two hours in Spring 2014 so it is worth timing your arrival to coincide with the bus timetable. You can find bus timetable information online or from Carmarthen Tourist Information (01267 231557). Get off at the request stop near Fernhill – the junction for Llangynog.

After getting off the bus follow the minor road towards Llangynog. Ahead you will see electricity pylons and a farm called Rhydlydan. Continue to follow the road past the farm, where it starts to climb. As the road levels out you will see the house, Fernhill, to your right.
Weatherman Walking

Fernhill (SN373 156)
This was the home of Dylan Thomas’s beloved Aunt Annie, and he spent many childhood summers and weekends here. Dylan’s family started farming in the area in the 1790s and when he was growing up they farmed over 1,000 acres. The house gives its name to Thomas’s poem Fern Hill which is a celebration of childhood innocence. The house is private and there is no public access.

After passing Fernhill the road continues to climb. Go straight past the turning for Glogddu.
As you come to the top of the hill ignore the right turn to Glog and take the left turn signposted to Creigiau Bach and Blaentir.

As you follow this lane you pass a house on the left and the entrance to Blaentir. Keep going straight ahead. Just after Blaentir there is a kissing gate on the left signposted as a footpath. Go through the gate and follow the path through the woodland.
The path through the woodland is pretty clear and there are footpath waymarkers on the way. It can be a little muddy in places. At the other end of the wood is a stile into a field.

Over the stile head straight across the field and look for a gap in the hedge ahead. There is no path evident on the ground here. Keep a look out for hares in this area – you might be lucky enough to spot one.

Once through the gap in the hedge head diagonally down towards the bottom left hand corner of the field and enjoy the lovely views of hills and farmland. At the corner of the field there is a stile which you cross into another field. Now head towards the farmhouse. When you get there look for a stile in the bushes just below the farmhouse.
The path here follows the road between a hedge on the left and a fence on the right. Continue to follow beside the road on the coast path through two further gates. Eventually the path re-joins the road for about 25 yards, crossing a bridge over a stream.

Take the minor road to the right after the bridge and head up the hill. This is still signposted as the Wales Coast Path but as you start to climb the hill the coast path heads off to the left. Ignore this turning and walk straight up the hill past Blaencwm – another house that was dear to Dylan – on the right.

Blaencwm (SN 370 140)

The charming Blaencwm was home to Thomas’s aunt and uncle Polly and Bob Williams in the late 1920s and for much of the 1930s. Thomas would often stay here and wrote drafts of some of his early poems here. Later, in the 1940s, Thomas’s parents moved into the house and it became a refuge from war-ravaged London. Thomas and his wife Caitlin spent two summers here. The house is private and there is no public access.
After the house the road rises steadily and you follow it for at least a mile and a half. The road passes through picturesque woodland, open farmland and passes isolated groups of houses. On the left you will pass the access road to Llwyngwyn Farm. The farm has been in Thomas’s family since the 1790s. There is no public access to the farm.

The road takes a sharp left after a white cottage on the left and at this point another road goes off to the right. Take the road to the left.

The road continues to climb passing, at times, between tall hedges. The road will then turn sharply to the right and there are two gates in front of you. One has a sign saying “Penpicillon Next Left”. At this point there is a sometimes muddy farm road to the left which is signposted as a footpath.
As you approach a farm you will pass through two metal gates (the first of which is usually open). As soon as you get through the second gate look up the bank to your left and you will see a stile. Climb the bank (steps were due to be installed in spring 2014) and cross the stile.

Stay in the right hand field and follow the hedge ahead and then to the right. Keep the hedge to your left. There may be cattle in this field. At this point you will catch your first glimpse of the Tywi Estuary away down to your left.

When you reach the corner of the field you will find a wooden stile – which you cross. It can be muddy around here.

The path then follows the side of the field with the hedge on your left. Continue through several fields in the same way – crossing four stiles – and enjoying views of the surrounding hills. There can be long grass in these fields. After the fourth stile ignore the opening to the left and continue downhill keeping the hedge to the left. Continue through a gap where there is a disused gate and stile, and then through a final stile which takes you onto a minor road. (There were plans to replace this stile with a kissing gate in spring 2014).

Once through the kissing gate there are three potential routes – to Llansteffan, Carmarthen or Llanybri. Follow the road to the right signposted Llanybri.

As soon as you get through the gate there is a stile at the top of the bank to your left.

Cross the wooden stile in the corner of the field.

Follow the narrow road to Llanybri.
The road soon bends to the right but our route carries straight on up the dirt track. There is a sign saying: “Unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles”.

The track takes you on a climb between hedges but watch for views of the Tywi estuary in the gaps on the left. The path eventually levels out and takes you into the village of Llanybri near a modern house called Brynilai.

Take the road left towards the Farmers Arms public house – where Thomas used to enjoy a drink - and continue past the pub. On your left is the ruined chapel Yr Hen Gapel.

**Yr Hen Gapel** (SN 338 126)

Llanybri has a long religious history and there has been a church here since at least the 1380s. In the Middle Ages it was a stopping off point for pilgrims on their way to St Davids. The chapel is called Yr Hen Gapel, which means The Old Chapel, and is probably the only medieval church in Wales to become an Anglican church and then a non-conformist chapel. The chapel closed in 1962 and was largely demolished following a fire in 1974. If you leave the road and walk to the other side of the chapel there is a war memorial and an information board with details of the chapel’s history. Dylan’s beloved aunt, Ann Jones, who lived at Fernhill, is buried at the nearby Capel Newydd. Dylan wrote the poem, After the Funeral, following her funeral there.
Continue along the road past the ruined chapel until you get to a crossroads at the junction with the Llansteffan to St Clears road. Go straight across the crossroads beside a white house called Lynwood which was once the Black Horse pub.

You will soon pass Holy Trinity Church on your right. As you continue along this road you will begin to get views over the Taf Estuary through gaps in the hedges. The road continues down and as it rounds a white house (called Parc Yr Hendy) you will get wonderful views across the Taf Estuary to Laugharne. The sharp eyed will be able to pick out Dylan Thomas’s Boathouse to the right of the town.

The road continues downhill past a house called Hatch Hill and then comes out at a T-junction. Turn left towards the modern house at Mwche. Opposite the modern house is a metal farm gate – signposted as the Wales Coast Path.

Go through the gate and turn left through a second gate. Then turn right and follow the fence. Keep following along the fence until you reach a wooden stile. Cross the stile and carry on along the other side of the fence.
Head for the stile in the fence ahead of you. Cross into another field and then follow along the top of that field. You will be heading towards the bottom of a small wood where you will cross a wooden stile over the fence. Go over the stile and follow the short path into another field.

Follow along the top of this field keeping the fence to your left. In the top corner (some 10 yards above the gate) there’s a stile which takes you into woodland.

After crossing the stile step across the small brook and follow the path which drops slightly before joining a long clear grassy path. This is flat and then starts to rise. Look out for views across to Laugharne on the right. The path then meets a stile by metal farm gate. Cross the stile and turn left.
Follow the path straight along beside the fence and then between two fences. It is waymarked as the Wales Coast Path.

After the path turns to the right it drops to a kissing gate and there are steps down the bank to a single track road. Turn right and follow the road downhill. Go straight on past a farm entrance on the left and a road to Pentowyn on the right. After the lane to Pond Cottage the metalled surface ends and you walk down an unsurfaced road. The road eventually reaches a metal farm gate. Pass through this and down a grassy path, ignoring the farm gates to the left. This path can get increasingly muddy as it continues towards the estuary.

When you reach a wooden stile and gate you have reached the end of the public right of way at Black Scar Point. From here you get clear views across the estuary to Laugharne.

**Black Scar Point** (SN 311 107)

Until the middle of the 20th century there was a ferry service from Black Scar Point to Laugharne. Ferries had operated across the Taf for centuries, carrying pilgrims as well as passengers across the water. The ferry was also used by Dylan Thomas. From the end of the path you can get clear views of the Boathouse and the Writing Shed at Laugharne, as well as Sir John’s Hill and the town itself.
To continue the walk turn around and retrace your steps up the road. Continue past the kissing gate where you initially joined the road. There is a long climb ahead.

As the road flattens out you begin to get views out to sea on your right. Soon you will be able to look out across the sands at the Pendine firing range. Ignore two roads turning off to the left – but immediately after the second road take the turning to the right. The road is marked as the Wales Coast Path and is also signposted to Lord’s Park Farm and Laques Fawr.

As you go down this road – ignoring the turning to Laques Fawr on the right – you can enjoy views of the Tywi Estuary to the left and the sea on the right. You will pass a National Trust sign on your right.

As you continue along the road look out for a wooden gate on the right which is signposted as the Wales Coast Path (The wooden signpost is on the left side of the road). There is also a sign to Wharley Point.

Go through the gate and follow the path uphill. At the top you are rewarded with fine views across the Bristol Channel and over the expanse of sand at the MoD’s Pendine firing range. Continue through another gate wooden gate with coast path and National Trust signs.

The views on this section of the walk are spectacular, and there are benches dotted along the route from which you can enjoy them.
The path here is clear and continues around the headland. Ignore the turning down to “Cold Blow”. The route continues through another gate with coast path waymarkers. The path begins to descend through woodland. The sea is on your right – and at a scenic viewpoint you get a great view of across Scott’s Bay to Ferryside on the other side of the Tywi. You should just be able to make out the top of the tower of Llansteffan Castle ahead of you.

You will eventually reach a fork in the path on the approach to a small stone cottage. Our route takes the lower fork past the cottage. Note that this is a permissive right of way and if the path is closed you need to take the upper fork around the cottage. (If you do go on the upper fork head up until you get to the top. Then take a sharp right, which takes you down beside a stone wall. You will then reach a white gate).
Both paths reach the white gate, which you pass through, and continue the walk along the coast path, through another white gate which gives access to the large sandy beach. From here look for the path heading uphill behind the beach. Don’t take the grassy track to the left.

As the path flattens out another path joins from the left. Carry straight ahead. As you continue you will pass benches and, at one point, an information board about the estuary. You will continue to enjoy fine views. There is access to the beach at several points on your right. You will also pass a stone shelter at one scenic viewpoint.

After the shelter you begin to get views of the vast sands of Llansteffan beach through the trees on your right. You might also spy Llansteffan Castle through the trees on your left.
You are now in Sticks Wood where you will pass an information board about its history. At this point the path forks and you take the upper (left) fork. You soon join a road - carry straight ahead here. The hill to the left leads up to the castle and a road to the right goes down towards the beach. You are now heading into Llansteffan, with views of the beach on your right and Plas Mansion on the top of a hill to the left. In a field on the left of the road is a dead tree which was struck by lightning in the 1970s. Continue along the road past the vicarage until you reach the end of the walk beside the church in the town centre.

**Llansteffan (SN355 110)**

The quiet village of Llansteffan takes its name from St Ystyffan who founded a church here in the 6th century. It became an important staging post between the ferries over the Tywi and Taf estuaries - and its strategic importance was immediately recognised by the Normans who built a wooden castle above the village. The stone castle was built on the same site by the Camville family who owned it from the 12th to the 14th centuries. The village became a popular holiday resort in the 19th century, especially after the railway reached Ferryside in 1852. There were major redevelopments in the town to cater for the holiday-makers, many of whom were from mining communities in the south Wales valleys.

The walk ends in the centre of the village by Llansteffan Church.