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.
Weatherman Walking

Moelfre

Start: Village centre car park next to Porth Moelfre
Starting ref: SH 5122 8632
Distance: 4.68 miles
Grade: Easy / Moderate
Walk time: 2 hours (2.5 hours including stops)

This walk on Anglesey has a bit of everything, from famous lifeboatmen to mysterious standing stones. For part of the way the route follows a section of coast known as the ‘shipwreck coast’, due to the numerous wrecks that have taken place in its treacherous waters and which inspired something very close to Derek’s heart – weather forecasting!

The coastal path is well-trodden and signposted. A section of quiet country road then leads away from the coast before paths through fields take you back to Moelfre.

Moelfre Village

Moelfre is a picturesque village with spectacular beaches, a working lifeboat and a fascinating history. Translating as ‘barren hill’, Moelfre was a focal point for a sea battle in 1157 between Anglesey seamen and Henry II’s fleet, but it was during the 19th century that the village really expanded as a maritime hub. On a clear day you can see the Great Orme 14 miles away!

Looking back from the coastal path towards Moelfre village and beach
Directions
From the car park, walk up the hill and turn right onto the coastal footpath. A short distance around the headland, the path leads past the original 19th century lifeboat station and slipway to reach the statue of Dic Evans in front of the RNLI visitor centre.

Dic Evans statue (SH 5153 8653)
Dic Evans was a member of the Moelfre lifeboat who was awarded not one RNLI gold award but two - as well as an MBE! The first was for his role in the rescue of the Hindlea crew in 1959 and the second came when Dic was 61 and involved in the rescue of the crew of the Greek ship Nafsiporos, along with his son, David. Serving with the lifeboat was a family tradition, with Dic’s father, grandfathers and an uncle also crewmen before him.

Dic died in 2001 and this 14ft statue, by sculptor Sam Holland, was unveiled by Prince Charles in 2004. The statue stands outside the RNLI-run Seawatch Centre, which tells the story of Moelfre and includes an RNLI shop.

Moelfre’s first lifeboat station was built in the 1830s and, since then, its crew has saved more than 1,000 lives. During the time of Derek’s visit, the existing lifeboat station, built in 1909, was being demolished and a new station built in its place.
A little further along the coastal path is Moelfre’s new lifeboat station. During its construction in 2014, there was a well-signposted diversion from the coastal path, alongside the RNLI shop and through the car park to the road, before returning, via a couple of right turns, to the coastal path near a row of whitewashed cottages.

The closed section of coast path was due to reopen in January 2015, bringing walkers past the brand new lifeboat station and leading to the beach by the row of whitewashed cottages, described above.

The Swnt (SH 5165 8684)

The Swnt is a narrow channel between Anglesey and Ynys Moelfre, a small island which is home to many sea birds. If you’re lucky, you might see a porpoise or two swimming in the bay!

Continue along the coastal path for about 200 yards to reach a memorial plaque and bench at the end of the small promontory.
The Hindlea Seat (SH 5157 8688)

This stone memorial commemorates the heroic rescue of the entire crew of a steamer called the Hindlea, which got caught in a storm on October 27 1959. She moved to sheltered waters off Moelfre but it was still a very dangerous position for the crew and the lifeboat, with hurricane-force winds of up to 104mph. The lifeboat crew, including Dic Evans, managed to save all eight crew members by using the huge waves to bring the lifeboat level with the steamer eight times and jumping from deck to deck to rescue the men one at a time.

At low tide the remains of the Hindlea can still be seen on the rocks below, a short distance along the coast path from the memorial. Strangely, the Hindlea was wrecked 100 years to the very night that another ship called the Royal Charter was wrecked at Moelfre. Unfortunately, the outcome for those aboard was far worse, as we’ll discover next.

Continue along the well-trodden coastal path, passing through a kissing gate to a small caravan site. Make sure you stop to read the large information board as it has interesting details about this section of coastline!

After a further 250 yards, a sign on the left of the path points to a short detour over a stone stile to get to the Royal Charter monument.
Royal Charter Memorial (SH 5096 8692)

This memorial overlooks the spot where the Royal Charter ran aground and pre-dates the commemorative statue we passed earlier at the Sealife Centre, which was unveiled in 2009 to mark the shipwreck’s 150th anniversary.

The Royal Charter was carrying gold from South Africa to Liverpool when it got caught in a terrible storm on the night of October 26 1859 - a night when many other ships were also wrecked. Just 41 of the 452 passengers survived, and this was mainly due to the efforts of Moelfre men who made a human chain into the sea to rescue them. Many of those who died were weighed down by heavy clothes and the gold they were carrying in their pockets.

Legend has it that Moelfre became rich that night, with many of its houses supposedly being built with the gold from the wreck, which was washed ashore in the following weeks. Villagers were criticised in the press but an account by Charles Dickens, who visited Moelfre following the tragedy, was sympathetic towards them and paid tribute to the rector, who comforted relatives and buried scores of bodies. Almost 150 were buried in Llanaligo churchyard, whilst many other graves can be found in churchyards along the Anglesey coast.

The wreck site is still popular amongst divers, who have found many personal items including women’s brass suspenders, a child’s shoe, chess pieces and bottles of wine.

Retrace your steps from the memorial and continue along the coastal path, skirting around the back of a house overlooking the delightful small bay of Porth Forllwyd.

Bear right at the entrance to the neighbouring property and skirt around the back of the bay to reach the section of path overlooking the wide expanse of Traeth Lligwy beach (SH 4958 8712). This leads to the car park and toilet block, which get very busy during the summer months!
From the car park at Traeth Lligwy, turn inland and follow the road. After a quarter of a mile, go straight across at the crossroads and walk another mile along or so until you reach a kissing gate with an information board on the right.

Go through the gate, down a short flight of steps and bear right across the field to reach the old chapel clearly visible straight ahead.

Hen Gapel Lligwy (SH 4973 8646)

Hen Gapel Lligwy - the old chapel - is one of three sites in the Lligwy settlement, all from different periods of history and managed by Cadw. The oldest part of the chapel, now an atmospheric ruin, was built in the 12th century, at a time when an increase in Viking raids led to many wooden churches being replaced with stone buildings. The small chapel to the side, with the crypt underneath, was a 16th century addition.

From the doorway of the old chapel, bear right, across the field, and join the path that leads from the roadside kissing gate. Head for another kissing gate at the right hand side of the small woodland ahead. The obvious path up through the woods leads to a clearing and the site of the hut circle.
Din Lligwy (SH 4964 8614)

This impressive site is an ancient fortified settlement dating back to the Iron Age and later used by the Romans. A glass jug, pottery shards and a silver ingot have been found here, as well as evidence of iron smelting and iron-working in workshops, fired by coal thought to be imported by boat from Conwy.

A wall around the settlement is thought to date from the fourth century, when the Romans’ power was fading and raids were becoming more common. The village was abandoned 1,600 years ago, but the foundations and the layout are still very clear and give an excellent insight into life here.

From Din Lligwy, retrace your steps down through the woods, across the field and back to the road. Turn right and continue along the road for about 300 yards where, on the right, is a kissing gate, leading to Lligwy burial chamber.

The layout of Din Lligwy hut circle is well preserved

Derek learns more about Din Lligwy’s fascinating history

Derek and Bedwyr are filmed as they head towards Lligwy burial chamber

Head through the kissing gate for a prehistoric surprise!
Lligwy burial chamber (SH 5012 8602)

This burial chamber – or cromlech, in Welsh – is from the late Neolithic period and therefore one of the last of these kinds of tombs. Its capstone weighs 25 tons, leading to some speculation as to how it was transported here!

Originally, the huge stone would have been covered with earth and a small tunnel would have led into the chamber. The site was excavated in 1908 and the remains of up to 30 people were discovered, as well as a beaker and other late Neolithic artefacts.

Return to the road and continue for about 700 yards until you reach a metal kissing gate leading into a field on the left. Follow the right hand field boundary and a stream on the right, until the stream turns away to the right. From here, head diagonally left across the field to reach another gate into the next field.

Keeping the hedgerow on the left, walk towards the house and outbuildings in the far left hand corner of the field. Turn right at the outbuildings and follow the concreted access road to the corner, with a driveway to a house on the right.

Follow the public footpath signpost right, along a short but sometimes muddy path alongside the house to reach a field. Initially you need to bear right across the field, then head to the left corner, where a hidden pathway leads through a thicket of small trees. Follow the path to a metal gate, go through it and walk past the end of a row of houses to reach the road.

This access road takes you to the main road, where our route turns left, downhill, and back to the starting point at the village car park.