

Weatherman Walking

Sully to Penarth



Approximate distance: 5 miles
 For this walk we've included OS grid references should you wish to use them.



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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.

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Start: Hayes Road car park, Sully

Starting ref: ST 148 679

Distance: Approximately 5 miles

Grade: Leisurely

Walk time : 2 hours

This linear route travels along the coastal path from Sully to Penarth, for an insight into the area's rich and exciting history. You can pay a visit to Sully Island, view remains of historic WW2 gun batteries and stand on the spot where the first ever radio transmission, over open sea took place. The route ends at Penarth's iconic pier which earned the Victorian town the reputation of "The Garden by the Sea".

Parking

A free car park is available on Hayes Road, Sully. As you join Hayes Road from the direction of Sully Moors Road or the B4267, the car park is the second left turn with a height restriction. It is easily missed, so keep your eyes peeled! It's directly opposite a very large industrial estate. This is a linear route so remember to think about your return journey. Regular buses run between the start and end point.

Directions

Having parked at Hayes Road car park, join the coastal path and turn left. We are following the 'Vale Trail' markers throughout this walk. Follow the route along with the sea to your right; eventually you will pass Sully Sailing Club on your left. Continue following this route until you reach the edge of a caravan park. Turn left here, and follow the path up to another metal kissing gate. Go through this gate and turn right. Be careful as at this point as you are walking on a road.



Car park entrance



Metal gate where you are going to turn right

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This road will lead you towards Swanbridge bay, home to a restaurant, pub and Sully Island. It's possible to pay a visit to the island via a rocky causeway, at low tide. However any visitor should pay attention to the RNLI's warning signs and traffic light system, there's a countdown clock which shows how long you have left to visit the island. It's a 40 minute round trip so make sure you factor that in. It also can be slippery so appropriate footwear is a must. It is very easy to become trapped by the incoming tide and many walkers have had to be rescued over the years. If in doubt, call 999 and ask for the coastguard. Never ever attempt to swim back.



Sully island RNLI traffic light system

1 Sully Island (ST 16587 67016)

"Sully Island is a small tidal island located just opposite the Captain's Wife pub. It's 14 and a half acres in total and is accredited as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It has had a rich history with pirates and smugglers using it throughout the ages. A few years ago a mystery buyer purchased the island to keep it preserved in its current state."



Derek at shipwreck on Sully island

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Continue in the same direction, with the sea to your right. You will pass 'Swanbridge House' which is a residential home today but was once the summer residence of the Marquess of Bute. This section of the walk is also on a quiet road, continue through the canopy of trees. Eventually, you will come across the entrance to a caravan park on your right. Immediately after the caravan park there is a metal kissing gate also on your right. Enter the gate and follow the path, keeping the hedgerow to your right all the way through. Keep your eye out for the Vale Trail signs.



Swanbridge House



Metal gate after caravan park

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At the end of this path you will come to a wooden bridge on your right. Cross over, and continue following the Vale Trail signs pointing towards the sea. We will be turning left along this path, but if you take a very quick detour to your right you will have a fantastic view of St. Mary's Well Bay, and a former World War II searchlight station.

Following the path left, you will eventually spot a Lavernock Point's gun batteries.



Wooden bridge



WWII searchlight station

2 Lavernock Point Gun Batteries (ST 18053 67929)

"The concrete remains are a scheduled ancient monument. The anti-aircraft battery was utilised during World War II. It was adapted from an earlier construction first built in the 1860s by the Royal Commission in order to protect against French invasion. Four anti-aircraft guns were arranged in a clover-leaf pattern with a lighter, 40mm Bofors gun nearby. There were batteries similar to this all over the country during the war, but few remain today."



Alan, Derek and Colin check out the remains of Lavernock gun battery

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Once you've taken in the battery remains, rejoin the stone path you were on. Follow this until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through this gate and into Lavernock Nature Reserve. As you walk through, keep the hedgerow to your right, and when you reach the exit gate, leave the reserve and turn right onto a quiet country road.

Follow Fort Road down until you reach St Lawrence's Church on your left.



Entrance to Lavernock Nature Reserve



Gate to exit the reserve

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St. Lawrence's Church (ST 18593 68206)

"St. Lawrence's Church is a late 18th century limestone church at Lavernock point. The church's exterior wall has a plaque commemorating Guglielmo Marconi, who in 1897 famously sent and received the first ever radio transmission over open sea between Lavernock Point and Flat Holm Island."



St Lawrence's Church with Marconi plaque

Continue in the same direction, and you will walk past Lavernock House on your left. This was once Lavernock Farm. The Marconi transmission took place between there and nearby Flat Holm Island. Follow the Vale Trail, turning left back onto the cliffside path. Keep going along the path across these cliffs until you reach a wooden kissing gate.



Wooden gate

You are now onto a long, straight stretch with Penarth Pier in the distance. Keep following this path.

Continue straight all the way down until you reach the esplanade. There are a number of shops, restaurants and the Italian Gardens on your left here. Continue a few hundred yards further where you will reach the entrance to the pier. Time to buy yourself a well-deserved ice cream!

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4 Penarth Pier (ST 19116 71294)

'Penarth pier is a Victorian pier built in 1894. It has been recently restored; and won pier of the year in 2014!'



Colin and Derek on Penarth pier

To get back to your car, regular buses run between Penarth and Sully. For up to date travel information and bus routes visit www.traveline-cymru.info

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Dinosaur Footprints

This programme saw Derek and Colin Jackson take a detour and hunt for Dinosaur Footprints. If you'd like to do the same here is a guide on how you can attempt to find them. The best time to spot the Triassic tracks are just after high tide when they may retain small puddles of water.

Location: Bendricks Beach, CF63 3RF

Slipway Grid Reference: ST 13393 67157

Footprint Grid Reference: ST 13327 67065 (approximately)

Parking: You will find some roadside parking just behind the beach near the Atlantic Trading Estate / the Household Recycling Centre.

Access to the shore is a short walk across some rough ground and down the remains of a slipway. As you walk down the slipway look to the right and you will see a number of 'shelves' layered into the rocks. There are a number of footprints that can be found along these shelves; the clearest are visible on a shelf to the right a stone's throw away from the slipway. The easiest way to find them is to have an explore yourself! If you are lucky enough to find them the advice is to not damage or remove them.



Map to find the dinosaur footprints



A Triassic track