Weatherman Walking

Talacre to Rhyl
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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For this walk we’ve included OS grid references should you wish to use them.

APPROXIMATE DISTANCE: 10 MILES
A linear walk along the **Wales Coast Path** combining quiet sections with lots of wildlife as well as impressive seaside landscapes. At about 10 miles long, this walk can easily be extended to make it more of a workout by exploring the dunes or alternatively there are a number of stopping off points along the way and several car parks which can make the route shorter.

**Start:**
Danger Point, Granary Court Business Park, Station Road, Talacre, CH8 9RL

**Starting Ref:**
SJ 11831 83936

**Grade:**
Easy.

**Distance:**
Approximately 10 miles.

**Walk time:**
Approximately 4 hours for the full walk. This is a linear route so you will need to plan your return journey in advance.

**Parking:**
Free public parking and toilets at Danger Point Activity Centre. Pay and display car parks and meters at Rhyl and various points along the route.

**Travel information:**
Buses run regularly between the SeaQuarium in Rhyl and Talacre (Station Road or Beach). Check local bus timetables for details.

**Further information:**
Visit the ‘latest news’ section of the official Wales Coast Path website for more information and path diversions - https://www.walescoastpath.gov.uk
The tarmacked path bends a short way inland, allowing a clear view of the former colliery site, marked with a wooden sculpture of a miner and pit pony. There were as many as 70 pit ponies working here at one time and they were used right up until 1968.

**Directions**
Starting at the Danger Point Activity Centre car park just off Station Road, follow the waymarks towards the railway line and across the pedestrian bridge.

The path leads around the edge of the former Point of Ayr Colliery, mined for over a century until it closed in 1996. The site has been razed to the ground but the original colliery wheel has been sited along the footpath as a reminder of its history.

**Pit Pony Sculpture** (SJ 12762 83905)
The tarmacked path bends a short way inland, allowing a clear view of the former colliery site, marked with a wooden sculpture of a miner and pit pony. There were as many as 70 pit ponies working here at one time and they were used right up until 1968.
This is an excellent location to spot some of the 13,000 birds which return to feed on the rich mudflats and saltmarshes. Godwits, redshanks and oystercatchers are all regular visitors each autumn and this is considered one of the most important wetland areas in Britain.

Directions
Walking on, it’s well worth taking a short detour off to the right closer to the estuary where there is an RSPB viewing hide.
Talacre or Point of Ayr Lighthouse (SJ 12098 85270)
The lighthouse is a Grade II listed building, erected in 1776 and now in private ownership. It has oak foundations and used to have two lights, one directing shipping out at sea and the other lighting the mouth of the River Dee.

Directions
From here it’s less than a mile along a straight path to Talacre or Point of Ayr lighthouse and there’s plenty of parking and cafes at this point so you could even start your walk from here if you choose.
TALACRE TO RHYL

Directions
Apart from a wonderful beach, this point is also the start of a 3-mile section of dunes which are home to a wealth of endangered wildlife and you have the option to walk along the beach or follow one of the designated pathways through the sandy hills.

Talacre Warren and Gronant Dunes (SJ 11086 84974)
The Talacre Warren and Gronant Dunes area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation.

Sections of the area are cordoned off at certain times while conservation work is carried out. Among the rare species which are being encouraged through various breeding programmes are the natterjack toad and the sand lizard.

A sand lizard

Derek and conservationist Mandy Cartwright

Derek and conservation team
Natterjack Toads
These dunes are the only breeding site for natterjack toads in Wales. They were reintroduced here in 1995. Staff and volunteers keep the grass short, the ground clear and their breeding pools, or scrapes, in good condition to try to boost their numbers.

They are most likely to be seen at dusk and are recognisable by the unmistakable yellow stripe down their back and bright golden eyes.

On damp nights in spring you may even hear the males’ reverberating call, echoing for more than half a mile across the dunes!
These dunes are also rich in history linked to the Second World War. As the bombs rained down on Liverpool on the opposite side of the Dee Estuary, many families tried to escape the blitz seeking shelter in the Gronant Dunes. They lived in caravans or small wooden shacks and started their own little community in an effort to keep safe.

You can also spot remnants of old concrete lookout posts or pillboxes dotted along the coastline. These were manned by personnel tasked with watching the sea in case of invasion. Today, looking out to sea, you will see a vast number of wind turbines.
Directions
Continuing along the designated coast path you pass a golf course on your left before reaching the start of the 4 mile long, wheelchair friendly promenade which links Prestatyn and Rhyl.

There is a good car park near the Beaches Hotel so for anyone with a wheelchair, bicycle or pushchair, this is a good alternative starting point.

Walking on about quarter of a mile you will arrive at an impressive stainless steel sculpture on the walkway marking the spot where the two longest pathways in Wales meet – the Wales Coast Path and the Offa’s Dyke Path.

Little Tern Viewing Platform (SJ 08449 84546)
Little terns are the smallest of five tern species that breed in the UK. They are migratory sea birds and return from Africa every spring and this beach is the only one in Wales where they nest. They can be spotted by their black head, white forehead and distinctive black-tipped yellow beak.

They can lay 1-3 eggs which are well camouflaged in the nest consisting of a shallow scrape on the bare sandy or shingle beach just above the high tide line. By August the colony has dispersed and the birds make their way back to their wintering grounds in Africa.
Directions
Continue along the concrete path for about a mile passing cafes and seaside shops and you will reach the start of Rhyl; it has its own microclimate and is often referred to as ‘Sunny Rhyl’.

A sign explains this area of seashore was once a prehistoric forest and at low tide you can still see the remnants of this ancient woodland on the beach.

The sculpture is in the form of a stylised sun and at its base are a number of limestone blocks for seating and photographic opportunities for those walking the trails. From this point you could head south for 177 miles all the way to Sedbury Cliffs, Chepstow.
Among the local attractions linked to the sea is a kitesurfing school, which was the first of its kind in Wales. It is run by Simon Jones who gave me a lesson in the fast growing sport.

It’s not easy! I had to learn the art of controlling the kite, doing that on top of a board takes a bit more practice.
Miniature Railway (SH 99946 80704)

Marine Lake used to be a tourist destination with fairground rides and a zoo, dating back to 1895 but the funfair was demolished in the late 1960s.

Rhyl Miniature Railway has been running since 1911 and the narrow gauge railway travels around the lake. Manned mainly by volunteers, there’s also a small museum for enthusiasts.

Directions
One local attraction well worth a detour is the Rhyl Miniature Railway. To reach it, keep on the coast path towards the marina then cross the road to your left and head past the Marina Quay Retail Park towards Marine Lake - it’s well sign-posted.
End, Pont y Ddraig (SH 99642 80831)
The harbour has undergone rejuvenation and this stunning bridge, which opens vertically, is the crowning glory.

There are cafes and toilets here, so it’s a great spot to relax and people watch before your return journey.