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Holyhead to South Stack and Holyhead Mountain

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Holyhead, Breakwater Country Park (SH 226834)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 262 – Anglesey West/Gorllewin Ynys Môn
Distance	4.7 miles
Date of Walk	12 September 2018.
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk takes you from Holyhead via the famous South Stack lighthouse over Holyhead Mountain.

Holyhead Mountain is the highest point on Anglesey at 722 feet (220 m). Although its height barely justifies the term “mountain” it nevertheless has a real sense of summit, not least because it has a trig. point and because there are fantastic views inland over Holyhead, along the coast and out to sea. The area on which it sits has the name Holy Island, although it is not really a separate island at all, by reason of an isthmus at Trearddur.

By the trig. point are some stone foundations believed to be remains of a Roman watchtower.

From the headland, you get the famous view down to South Stack lighthouse. This was built on a small island in 1809, to aid navigation of ships on the Dublin/Holyhead/Liverpool route.

On the outward leg of this walk, you pass a curious double, curved roof building which was used to store gunpowder for nearby quarrying. This provided the stone for the Holyhead breakwater.

You also pass the North Stack Fog Warning Station. At first glance, by reason of its white painted buildings, it looks like there should be a lighthouse there but it only has the horn.

The cliff top area is a myriad of official and unofficial paths, so a precise route description is difficult. However, using the sea, the mountain and the forest of radio aerials near South Stack as your reference points, getting lost should not be a risk. However, do treat the cliffs and mountain with respect. There are steep drops and rocky terrain.

The walk is generally pretty easy but I have given it an amber traffic light by reason of the route to North Stack and the red because of the steep climb up Holyhead Mountain, very short though it is.

The route is a “figure of 8”, so it can be shortened to exclude the South Stack section if desired.

The walk starts from the car park at the Breakwater Country Park at Holyhead. To get there, take the A55 dual carriageway to Holyhead, as though you were going to the port. Where the junction is for the port entrance (off to the right), ignore it and

continue straight ahead. The road curves round by the sea, passing the marina before ending at the Breakwater Country Park car park, via an easy to miss left turn, despite the name board, opposite a shelter.

Start: From the car park, exit towards the coast following the sign for “South Stacks Path”.

Pass the lake and on joining the coast path, turn left following the fingerpost for “South Stacks”. After a few yards, branch off right following the Anglesey Coastal Path sign.

At SH 221837, you pass a curious building with a curved roof. This was the magazine where gunpowder was stored for the quarry, excavating stone for the Holyhead breakwater.

The white buildings of North Stack buildings come into view.

At SH 218837, the path divides. Keep to the right hand path. This is to provide a closer look at the North Stack buildings but you can cut the corner if you wish.

At North Stack, turn left, climbing the access track and guided by the Anglesey Coastal Footpath sign. The track climbs quite steeply, then levels out. After a further one hundred and fifty yards or so, continue on the coast path by taking a right turn off the access track (SH 217837). You will see a marker post on the near horizon, confirming this is the correct route.

Just before some rocky crags to the left, the path splits. Turn right (SH 218832).

As you start to approach the radio masts on the promontory, the path splits. Take the right hand fork.

As you come to a square aerial array, the path splits again. Once again, keep right.

Join the access track to the square array and turn left along it for a few yards before branching off to the right.

Continue along to the headland for a view down to South Stack lighthouse.

There is a dilapidated look-out station, described by notices as dangerous. To continue the route, with your back to this, turn right along the broad track, a few yards inland.

Join another broader track, a few yards from a small square building. Turn left and on reaching another track, go left again heading towards Holyhead Mountain.

Pass to the right of a small lake. This had dried up on my visit, due to the recent drought but its normal location was obvious. Soon, pass to the right of a second lake.

Join another path and turn right to join a very broad, tarmac track and turn left. When this divides (the better track going left), take the right hand leg (SH 211824).

Come to a junction, which you should recognise from the outward journey. Follow the red arrow and the Coast Path sign on the post towards Holyhead Mountain.

At another junction (SH 213826), there is a post with a red arrow and coastal sign. Take the path to the right of this. There is a good chance of seeing rock climbers in action on this section.

Arrive at a 'T' junction of paths where there is a wooden post, with an arrow pointing right for a "circular walk" with a cross. Turn left to walk parallel with the cliffs.

Join another path at a 'T' junction. Turn right and shortly at another junction, right again, following the yellow arrow (SH 216829). You now back on the path you came out on.

After a hundred yards or so, turn right up a steep path to the summit of Holyhead Mountain (SH 217830). This is before the path actually marked "Summit" and may be steeper!

To find the descent path, walk clockwise round the summit mound. Look out for the first path descending left, in the direction of the port at Holyhead.

Continue descending steadily until you see a narrow path off to the left (SH 223830), just before some small rocky outcrops. Take this path, heading towards the outer breakwater.

Meet another path at a 'T' junction and turn left (SH 226830).

At SH 227830, deep in shrubbery, the path divides. Turn left. There is a post with a yellow arrow indicating the way. You should already have noticed the chimney by the information centre, where you started.

You soon come to another junction. Turn left.

Exit on to the road close to the chimney and turn left to return to the car park.

