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Aberaeron to Aberarth

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Car park by council offices/police station (SN 454627).
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 198 Cardigan & New Quay (Aberteifi A Ceinewydd)
Distance	5.4 miles
Date of Walk	18 September 2020
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This short circular walk is ideal for a half day exploration of the coast north of Aberaeron to Aberarth, with a countryside return route. The coastal section follows the shingle beach divided by many groynes to protect the shore from erosion. Constructed of old sections of railway lines and sturdy timber, they have obviously been there many years.

One tip, if you like blackberries and are there at the right time of the year (in my case it was September), pack a container in your rucksack and collect your fill. There were loads!

Aberaeron is a well kept, attractive Georgian town with many colour washed buildings of different hues all of which looked recently painted. There are many listed buildings. It has a pretty harbour with an assortment of small boats. The beaches are primarily shingle so it has the feel of a town rather than a resort, though it has plenty of facilities for tourists. Historically, it was a fishing port and shipbuilding town and indeed was one of the major ports on this coast. The railways arrived in 1911 and its importance as a port dwindled from then. Sadly the railway itself only lasted until 1965.

Aberarth is a quiet lovely village which shares the Aberaeron love of colour washed buildings. The Afon (river) Arth flows through it to the sea, hence the name of the village, Aber meaning estuary. The village dates from Norman times when they built Dinerth Castle, which sits South East of the village. If you follow the river inland on the map, you can find its site though I believe nothing much remains. Aberarth's church is on top of hill which is a steep climb from the village and in a superb location with fine views. You will pass it on this route. Because of this short but quite steep climb on a grassy path, I include an amber traffic light!

The walk starts in Aberaeron. Although there are car parks in the town centre these quickly fill and I parked in the large car park by the council offices. This is situated on the south west side of the town, off the A487. The council offices are signposted. The police station is also there so it should be a safe enough place for your car!

Start: From the car park (SN 454627), walk down to the beach on the obvious grassy footpath to the fingerpost. Do not try and cut the corner across the field, because there is no exit. At the beach, you need to turn right across the top of the pebbles. These lead to the harbour, although you can drop down to use the short section of road, in front of the bungalows.

On reaching the harbour, work your way round it to the far side, using the footbridge. It is then simply a case of following the Coast Path along the top of the beach. The path starts off on the "prom" then is along the top of the pebbles before finally taking a route along the top of the low cliffs to Aberarth. It is obvious when you get there because the Coastal Path fingerpost points inland (SN 477638).

The onward route is up the steps then straight up the main street but it is worth taking the first short road on the left to have a quick look at the village. The river mouth is not really worth a trip unless you are particularly interested.

At the main road (A487), by the traffic lights, turn right along it. There is a pavement. Just after the bus stop, you need to search carefully for the footpath across the road. There is a drive going to Fron Villa and Messina Park and above is a wooden clad house. The footpath is just by the gateway and leads past the wooden clad house, to its right (SN 478637).

Beyond the house, the path is enclosed at first then through a walker's gate opens into a steep field. The path bears slightly to the right. If you lose track of the path, just keep heading to the highest point of the hill. You should see a stile.

Once over the stile, follow the left hand boundary of the field. As you pass through gorse bushes, you will catch sight of the church tower and a kissing gate takes you into the churchyard. Follow the path through to the tarmac lane and turn right.

Follow the lane as it bends left. At the next bend, as the lane bends right, on the left corner is a stile (SN 478632). Cross this and follow the left hand boundary up the hill. There are good views here back to the church. Cross a stile at the top of the field, then follow the right hand boundary.

Cross another stile and keep straight ahead, following the hedged track. This opens into a field and you can see the next stile ahead. Cross and follow the left hand boundary to another, after which follow the right hand boundary.

Arrive at the end of a tarmac lane (SN 473625). Take the track straight ahead, marked as a bridleway on a fingerpost. Ignore the route to the right over a cattle grid.

Follow this track for about a third of a mile. As it bends sharply right to a farm (Cefntyncoed), take the footpath straight ahead (branching left off the track on the bend) (SN 468624).

Follow this path downhill and you will soon catch sight of Aberaeron.

The path arrives at a broad lane. Turn right for a few yards to the junction and keep straight ahead downhill.

There is a footpath through the school grounds which I had intended to take back into Aberaeron but because of the coronavirus pandemic at the time this was closed so I continued down the road to meet the A482. In fact, this enabled a pleasant stroll by the river back to the harbour and is actually the nicer route.

At the A482, turn left to cross the river bridge, then cross the road and take the little lane to the left of the river bridge. At first it looks like the drive entrance to somebody's house. Follow the riverside path and at the A487, turn briefly left and cross the road to pass through the gap in the wall, back to the harbour. It is now and easy retrace back to the parking.

