

Time and tide

Explore the Dee Estuary around Flint in North Wales



Discover a dramatic and constantly changing environment

Experience a fragile coastline at the mercy of the sea

Find evidence of the River Dee's industrial past

Enjoy the views from part of the new Wales Coast Path

www.discoveringbritain.org

**the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks**



Created in collaboration with



This walk was a runner up in a competition to design a walk held by the U3A in collaboration with the RGS-IBG



This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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Time and Tide

Explore the Dee Estuary around Flint in North Wales

The Dee Estuary divides North Wales from England. It's a borderline landscape, a shifting, transitional place that's neither land nor sea but somewhere in between.

Depending on the tides, the estuary can look very different. You might meet fast flowing water lapping angrily at the shore or vast, shimmering mudflats home to a lively population of birdlife and seals.

This walk journeys through thousands of years of landscape change to find out how the estuary was created and how it has been used and adapted over time.



The remains of Flint Dock, once a centre of trade and transport
© Val Philipps



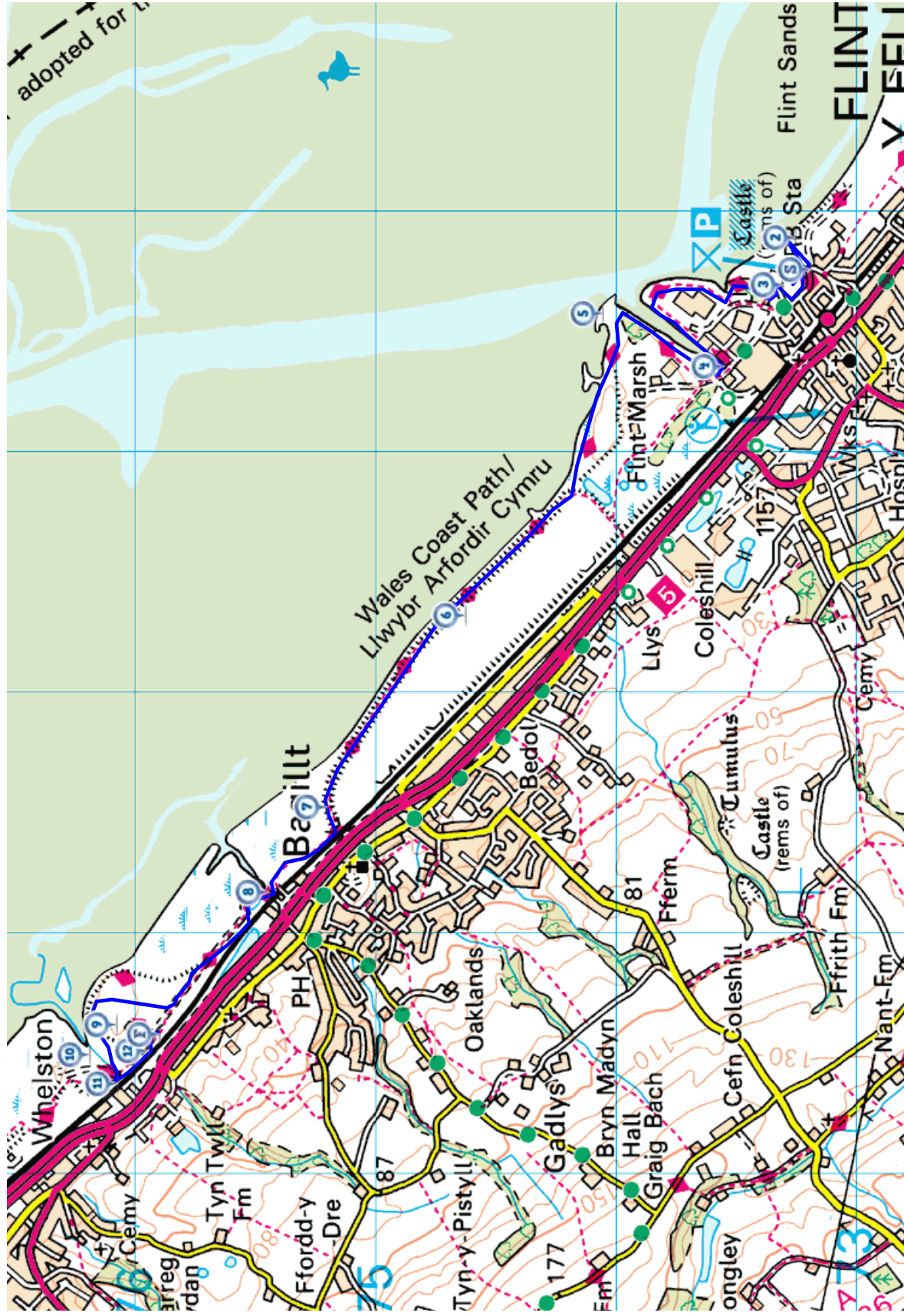
A grounded fishing boat in the 'holy' Harbour
© Martin Haslett

Follow part of the new Wales Coast Path to discover how the estuary was once a busy centre and transportation hub for manufacturing and trade.

Find evidence of this industrial heritage and see how nature has returned to flourish here.

Discover a thirteenth century castle built by an English king. Watch fishermen return with their catch at a 'holy' harbour. Meet Bettisfield Bob and find a Welsh dragon on top of a coalfield.

Route overview

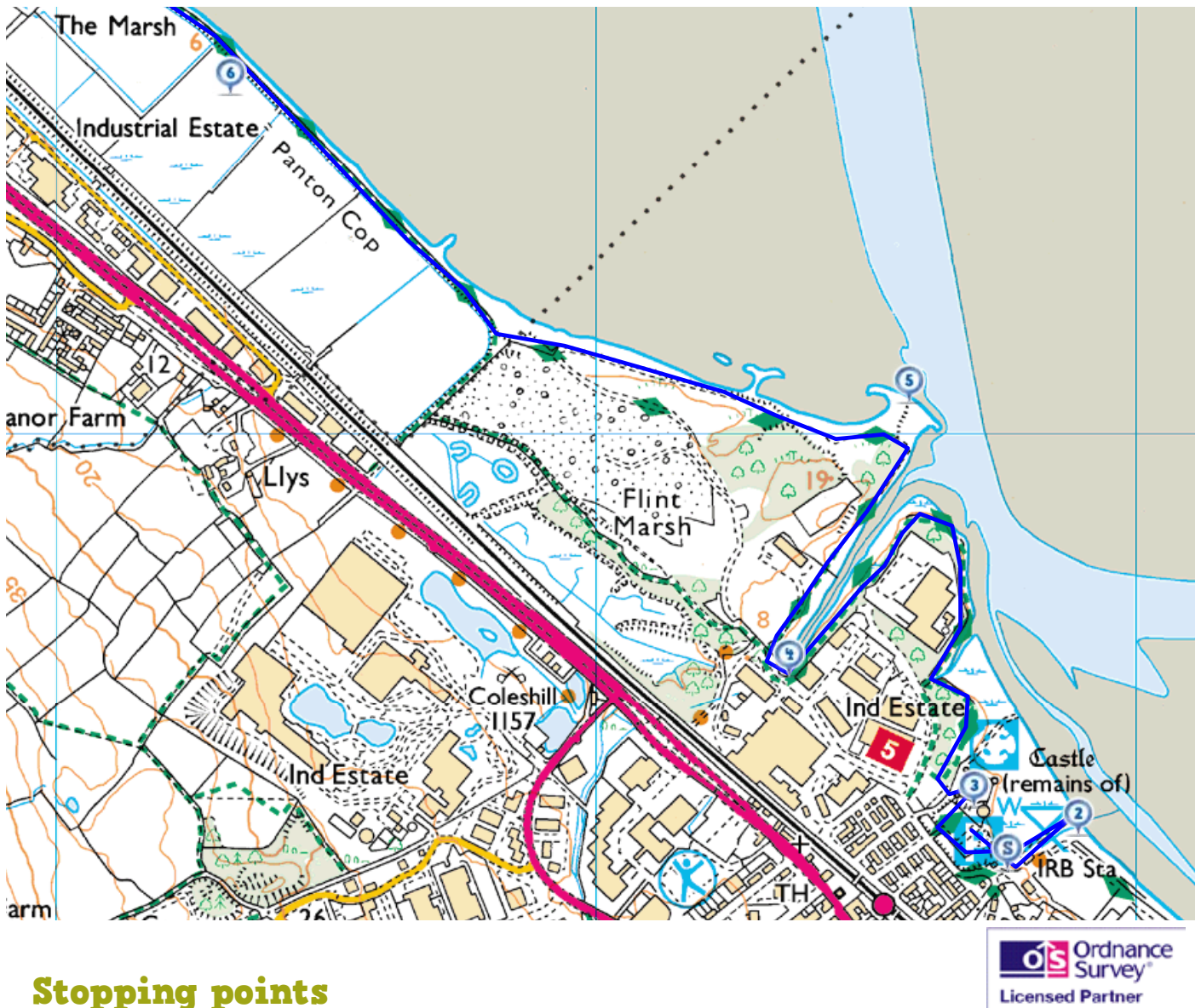


Practical information

Location	Dee Estuary, Flintshire, North Wales
Getting there	<p>Train - Flint is on the main London to Holyhead railway line with regular services from Chester, Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly and London Euston.</p> <p>Bus - Arriva Bus route 11 runs between Flint and Bagillt (to and from Chester). Services every 30 minutes weekdays, hourly at weekends.</p> <p>Car - Flint is approximately 12 miles from Chester on the A548. Free parking is available at Flint Castle car park.</p> <p>Bicycle - Flint and Bagillt are on National Cycle Route 5 - North Wales Coast.</p>
Start point	Flint Castle car park, Castle Road, Flint CH6 5PH
Directions from railway station to start point	Exit the station and go along the short road straight ahead (Lower Sydney Street). At the end turn left into Chester Street then turn left opposite the Swan Hotel to go uphill along Castle Road. Continue over the railway line. Follow the road round to the castle car park.
Finish point	Car park by former Bettisfield Colliery, Bagillt CH6 6HE
Return journey	You can return to the start point at Flint by bus (see Directions 13) at the end of the booklet.
Walk distance	3 miles
Level	Gentle – A mostly flat route following the Wales Coast Path.
Terrain	Sections of the coast path can be muddy and slippery after rain.
Conditions	One section of the walk is along a high sea wall so take care with children, especially in wet and windy weather. Take warm clothing as the estuary can be blustery.

Suitable for	<p>Families – plenty of sights for all ages</p> <p>Dogs – must be kept on a lead</p>
Refreshments	<p>There are various shops, cafés and pubs serving food in Flint and Bagillt. We recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anne's Patisserie (2 Trelawney Square, Flint - next to the railway station) for teas and coffees and excellent cakes (closed Sundays). - The Lunch Box (56 Church Street, Flint) for take-away sandwiches and drinks.
Toilets	Please note there are no public toilets on the walk route.
Places to visit	<p>St Winefride's Well, Holywell This spring known as 'the Lourdes of Wales' is one of Britain's oldest pilgrimage sites Seasonal entry times; minimal admission charges www.saintwinefrideswell.com</p> <p>Greenfield Valley Museum, Holywell Set in a 70-acre Heritage Park, the site includes a childrens farm, fishing reservoirs and ancient monuments (such as the remains of Basingwerk Abbey). Free daily entry to the park; charges and seasonal opening times apply for the museum buildings. www.greenfieldvalley.com</p>
Tourist information	<p>Discover Flintshire Tourist Information Centre Earl Road, Mold, CH7 1AP Email: info@moldtouristinfo.co.uk Tel: 01352 75933</p> <p>Flint Library also has visitor information Church Street, Flint CH6 5AP Email: flint.library@flintshire.gov.uk Tel: 01352 703737</p>

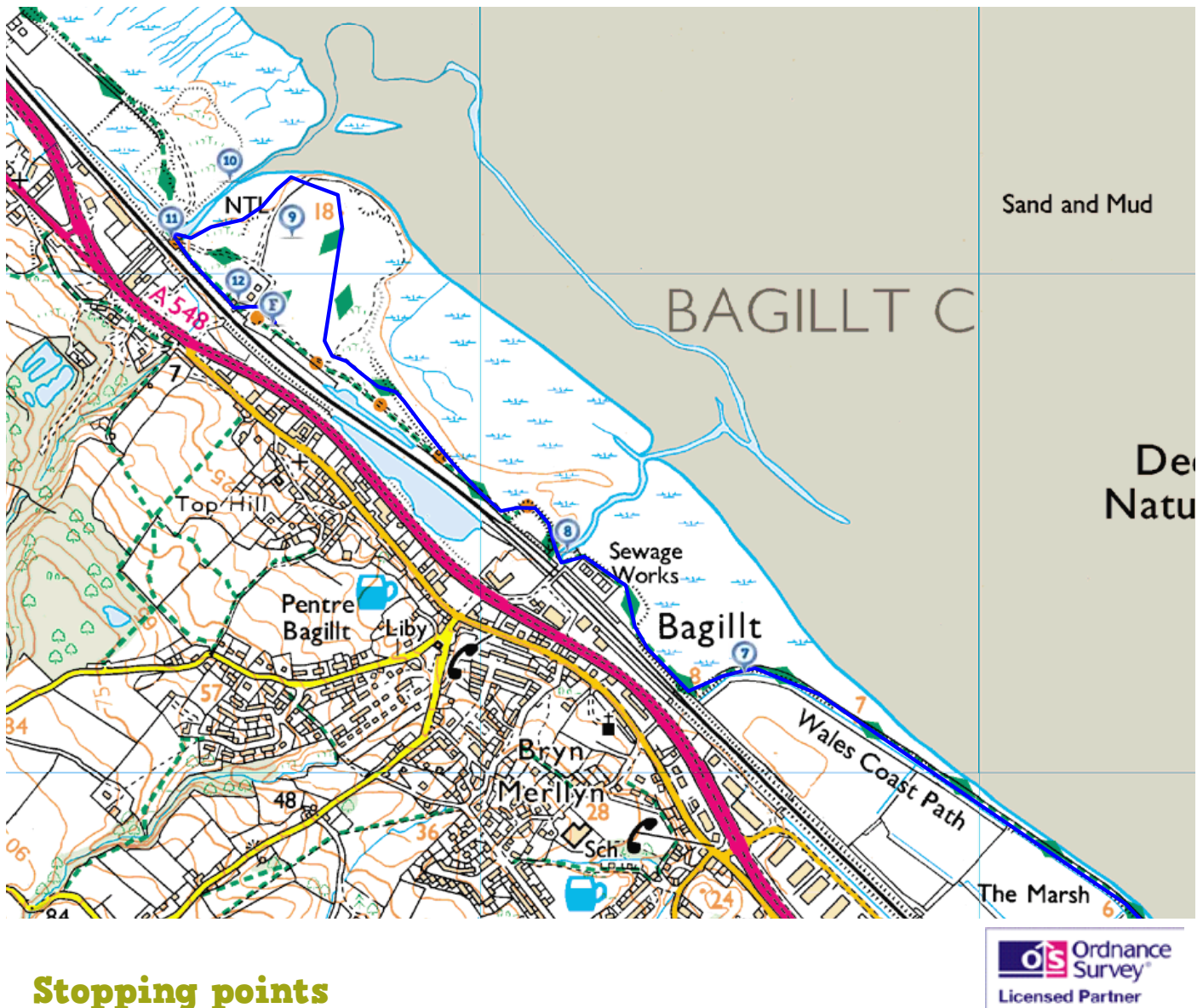
First part of the route



Stopping points

- 1** Interpretation board at Flint Castle car park
- 2** Sands of Dee information board
- 3** Flint Castle
- 4** Flint Dock
- 5** Flint Point
- 6** Panton Cop sea wall

Second part of the route



Stopping points

- 7.** Bagillt Marsh
- 8.** Station Gutter
- 9.** Dragon beacon, Bettisfield Hill
- 10.** Bagillt Harbour
- 11.** Milwr Tunnel outlet
- 12.** Former Bettisfield Colliery buildings
- F.** Totem pole markers, Wales Coast Path

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to the Dee Estuary

Interpretation board at Flint Castle car park

Directions 1

From the car park, take the footpath to the left of the lifeboat station. Go through the gate and proceed about 100 metres to the Sands of Dee information board. Listen to Track 2.

2. Where two waters meet

Sands of Dee information board

Directions 2

From the information board retrace your steps to the castle car park. Follow the street ahead (Castle Dyke Road) and as it passes a row of redbrick cottages. Turn right and follow the main entrance path into Flint Castle. Listen to Track 3.

3. Edward's first castle

Flint Castle

Directions 3

Having explored the castle now exit over the moat and immediately turn right over the grass heading into the silver birch trees. Where the path splits, follow it downhill towards the water. Continue on the path (passing a concrete, fenced-off area on the left) to walk alongside an inlet. Stop when you reach the information panel for Flint Dock at the head of the creek. Listen to Track 4.

4. A hive of industry

Flint Dock

Directions 4

Facing the inlet, turn left and follow the Wales Coast Path sign to reach a road. Follow the sign to Flint Point, passing the Flintshire Coast board and keeping the banks of the inlet on your right. Continue on the path till you reach Flint Point which is marked by a small concrete obelisk, a beacon and an interpretation panel. Listen to Track 5.

5. A view upstream

Flint Point

Directions 5

From Flint Point, the route continues northwards along the banks of the Dee with wide views of the estuary. You can follow the Wales Coast Path; however it runs a little way inland and more spectacular views can be seen if you bear right after a few hundred yards and follow a path along the river bank, eventually rejoining the coastal path.

When the main path turns left, keep on the smaller right hand path, go down a slope and through a kissing gate, turn left, then turn right again to reach the embankment of Panton Cop. Stop about halfway along. Listen here to Track 6.

6. Defending the shore

Panton Cop sea wall

Directions 6

Continue along the top of the embankment until it ends and you reach a flat, grassy area. Follow the Wales Coast Path keeping the grassy area on your right. Stop somewhere along here to find out about Bagillt Marsh. Listen to Track 7.

7. Nature takes control

Bagillt Marsh

Directions 7

Continue following the Wales Coast Path. Pass through a kissing gate and you will shortly reach a small inlet known as Station Gutter with a gravel parking area and an information board. Listen to Track 8.

8. Decline and fall

Station Gutter

Directions 8

Follow the signs toward Bettisfield along a tarmaced cycle way. Go up through a gate and onto a raised path. At the end of the path follow the Wales Coast Path signs through a kissing gate and up some steps. Continue up the hill and stop when you reach a beacon. Listen to Track 9.

9. Beacon of identity

Dragon beacon

Directions 9

Facing the Bettisfield information board go ahead across the grass gradually bearing left to a path through the gorse which eventually leads down the slope to a kissing gate. Walk across the road to look out over an inlet known as Bagillt Harbour or the Holy Gutter. Listen to Track 10.

10. Holy Gutter

Bagillt Harbour

Directions 10

Follow the path inland along the edge of the inlet. When the road splits go through the metal gate following the Wales Coast Path. Stop by a tunnel outlet where a large volume of water gushes out. Listen to Track 11.

11. Ten mile tunnel

Milwr Tunnel outlet

Directions 11

Do not go ahead through the kissing gate but with your back to the water follow the yellow arrow along a gravel path with a steel fence on your right. Go through two kissing gates to meet a road. Walk up the road and stop near the derelict redbrick building with a sculpture in the window. Listen to Track 12.

12. From coal to countryside

Former Bettisfield Colliery buildings

Directions 12

Continue a short distance into the car park. Stop by the wooden benches and carved totem poles. Listen to Track 13.

13. Reinventing the estuary

Totem pole markers, Wales Coast Path

Directions 13

We hope that you have enjoyed the walk. To return to Flint we suggest taking a local bus, Arriva route number 11. From the car park by the colliery buildings, go under the railway bridge and across the main road into Bagillt High Street. The bus stop is near The Feathers pub. Alight in Flint outside The Ship pub.

Further information

Visit Wales

www.visitwales.co.uk

Flintshire County

www.flintshire.org

Discover Flintshire

www.discoverflintshire.co.uk

Wales Coast Path

www.walescoastpath.gov.uk

Dee Estuary Birding

www.deeestuary.co.uk



Sunset over the Dee Estuary
© Paul McGeevy, Flickr (CCL)

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Val Philipps** for creating the walk, providing photographs and the audio commentary
- **Martin Haslett** for supporting Val, testing the walk (in the driving rain!) and providing photographs
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- **Flint Library** for its helpful and friendly staff
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- **Oakenholt Farm Bed and Breakfast** for a comfortable stay

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