

Walk: SOC 09
Location: **Cycle Track Walk Ystalyfera to Pontardawe**

Directions: Turn left out of castle and head south down the A4069 towards Swansea. If you get as far as Tesco's Pontardawe you have gone about five miles too far. As you head south, watch to ensure you come off at the correct roundabout. As you leave Ystradgynlais behind you, you come up to a large roundabout with, off to the left, a Co-Op store and a pub called the Black Lion. There is then a stretch of road which goes under a road bridge and comes out at a roundabout with – you carry on towards Swansea. If memory serves, the next roundabout on from this should be the one with the walks. Take the exit off the roundabout into the lay-by – there is food van advertised in the lay-by though I have not seen the van operational very often.

Park up, cross over the River Tawe on the metal railed tarmac surfaced footbridge leading off to the left, and head on down south along the tarmac cycle path.

Distance (miles): 9 miles approx
 Time (hours): 0.17
 Length of Walk: 2-4 hours depending how far you continue south.
 Dates Walked: 31/07/2009, 19/09/2009,

Parking: Free in lay-by beside advertised roadside caravan diner which is just off the roundabout.

Pop in to: Tesco's at Pontardawe, and the canal towpaths around Pontardawe.

Description: A cycle path which is tarmac all the way, though it gets rougher towards Pontardawe. Perfectly prammable and a pleasant level walk.

You will pass through open areas, forests, a couple of small waterfalls on your left, then more tracks, becoming gravely and potholey as you progress further south. It seems you are going on forever. There are some turnings you can take to the right but they will just bring you back to the main A4069 Brecon to Swansea road.

At some point you will come across a way marked path – probably after an hour of walking, depending what speed you can walk at, maybe a little over three miles from where you parked. This is an important side path which goes off to the right, while the main path continues on south. The main path does not actually go much further, - another mile and you come to a steep awkward set of steps and end up in an area of terraced housing. The cycle path simply terminates here.

Instead, and to get to Pontardawe, turn right at this sign posted path (it should be signed to Pontardawe), over a fairly narrow footbridge which crosses the River Tawe, and then after the bridge, you turn left.

Alternative route to Pontardawe:

You can turn right and get on to the canal paths, passing north of the games fields which would now be on your left as you go along the path. You can then get into Pontardawe itself by turning left on to the canal paths. The canal leads you straight into Pontardawe town, and you can get to Tesco's off the canal path. But this route will take you back on yourself at first. The quicker route is to just put up with the industrial estate and walk along the pavement to Tesco's – assuming you even want to go to Tesco's that is.

Possible circular route for your return:

For a circular walk option, in theory you could get back along the canal paths which run parallel to the A4069 the opposite side to the cycle path. You could attempt an alternative 'circular' route all the way to the car. The canal paths stretch from south of Pontardawe, and seem to go north for some miles. However I am not altogether sure where they terminate.

Unless you know how to get on to the canal paths, I would not bother with this way back as I do not believe the canal paths get you all the way back to the roundabout where you've parked – I have not fully explored this option yet but I suspect you would at some point have to cross the A4069 to rejoin the cycle path going back the way you came.

To Tesco's via industrial estate:

Having turned left after the footbridge over the River Tawe, you will pass some football pitches on your right before the track ends at the top end of the pitches, and you come into a mini industrial estate which is on the outskirts of Pontardawe.

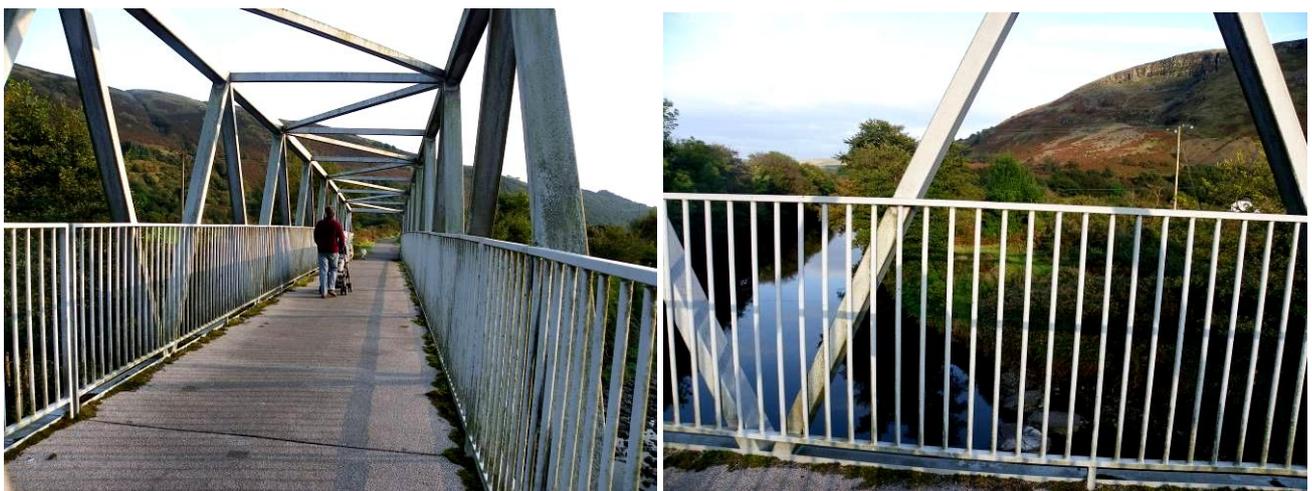
The town of Pontardawe is not worth visiting but the canal walks in this area are worth doing (see Tesco's Canal Walks).

Walk along the industrial area to Tesco's, do some shopping maybe, then return the way you came.

It's probably four or even five miles to get to Pontardawe from where you parked, so this makes about an 8 mile walk, all on level ground with no hills whatsoever. You are basically walking parallel to the A4069 though some distance away from it so you are not aware of the road.

Pictures taken on 19/09/2009:

Metal footbridge over the River Tawe from car park off roundabout on A4067.



This cycle track goes from just south of Ystradgynlais to a little beyond Pontardawe, or rather, to a row of terraced houses opposite Pontardawe, after about 4 miles. To go to Pontardawe, you will take a sign-posted right hand turn off, after about 2.5 to 3 miles from this point.

If however you get bored of the flat tarmac path, there is a path off to the left which gave us a small circular walk through forest tracks (right picture).



This waterfall is half way along the forest path which you will see branching off to the left a mile or so down the cycle track,

