



nearby. After I'd had a look round, we entered the village of Cwm-yr-Eglwys with its tiny ruined church. The route then led us through lowland fields before heading towards our ultimate destination, Newport.

**DAY 14**  
**Newport - St Dogmael's**  
 (via Cemaes Head & Poppit Sands)



**DISTANCE 16 miles**  
**TIME 8 hours**  
**ASCENT 2,900ft**  
**START** Started walking from Newport  
**END** Caught bus back from St Dogmael's to Newport via Cardigan and drove home  
 Our last day was a long one, because walking around Cemaes Head and down to Poppit Sands is quite a distance, and the constant heat was tiring. The section along the cliffs is rather exposed but the views are impressive. I had a great sense of achievement when I saw the final marker of the coastal path in St Dogmael's and felt even better when I boarded the bus and headed back to Cardigan!

**A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY**  
 Overall I walked 191 miles with

Dexter in just under 93 hours. The route suits active dogs, especially those used to walking long distances, scrambling across rocks and swimming — a dip is lovely when it's sunny.

The cliffs are dangerously high in places so I recommend you train your dog properly, or keep him on a lead if you think he may stray near the edge. Most of the stiles are dog-friendly, so I didn't have any problem getting Dexter across. A few ponies run wild on the cliffs so you may meet one unexpectedly. It's always worth being prepared!

The main issue, however, was drinking water, with Dexter requiring more than three litres a day. I carried about three and replenished our supply whenever I could — this was simple because there are plenty of

streams and you can buy it from vendors on many of the beaches. I can't fault the quality of the accommodation — the standard was high and represented superb value and we were made welcome by the owners.

Pembrokeshire is as unspoilt now as it was 50 years ago when I was a child — a little known and picturesque county, it's well worth a visit. We were treated like royalty wherever we went and such friendliness makes a real difference when you're on holiday. Also, the coastal bus was always on time so the planning worked perfectly.

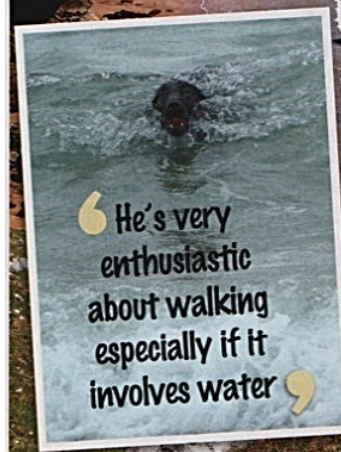
**DEXTER'S TRAVELS**

You can follow Dexter's progress on his blog at [dexter-for.blogspot.com](http://dexter-for.blogspot.com) and on my website at [www.whitecottage.org](http://www.whitecottage.org)

TRIED & TESTED

# Pembrokeshire's Coastal Path

Michael Elcock walks the Pembrokeshire Coast Path with canine pal Dexter



I loved growing up with dogs — as a child they were very much members of the family. However, when I grew up and left home, I didn't think it fair to have one and leave him alone all day. I would get one after I retired. So when that day arrived, the only question was what breed should I get?

As I love walking and have a holiday cottage in the Lake District, a local breeder recommended I get a Flatcoated Retriever. Although I'd never knowingly met one, I was intrigued and did a little research. The more I discovered about them, the more I wanted one. I finally made up my mind when I met an American with a similar lifestyle while trekking in Nepal. He'd just lost his Flatcoated Retriever and was getting a puppy when he returned home.

I contacted the Flatcoated Retriever Society where the Litter Secretary suggested someone in Lambourn, which is near Newbury where my mother lives. A litter was due shortly. The mother was a household pet so the litter would be brought up in an ideal environment. I chose my puppy and Dexter moved in during February '08.

Since then Dexter has accompanied me on all my walks and holidays and has achieved the Kennel Club's Good Citizen Gold Award. He's very enthusiastic about walking, especially if it involves water

and is climbing all the summits in Wainwright's *Pictorial Guides and Outlying Fells* and swimming in all the tarns in John & Ann Nuttall's *The Tarns of Lakeland*.

After walking the Wye Valley, I felt I needed another challenge especially as I'd just turned 60. Remembering with affection the holidays I had in Pembrokeshire as a child, I decided that walking the Pembrokeshire Coast Path was the obvious choice. I realised that carrying my kit all that way would be a nightmare even before I'd decided whether I needed a tent.

Luckily, I heard that the coastal bus services were pretty reliable and worked out that, if I used both my car and buses, I could sleep in guesthouses every night and travel to and from the start or finish each day.

The bus timetables appeared reasonably compatible with my plans so all I needed was to find accommodation. Rather than stay somewhere different every night, with the hassle of packing each morning, I decided to use the same place several nights in a row, then move on. I was pleased to find that Pembrokeshire's geography lent itself well to my itinerary.

I searched online extensively and, with the help of the Dogfriendly database, I found several suitable establishments and all had rooms available even after I deferred the trip by a week at short notice. One even gave me a larger room.

