

## Marloes Round

Starting point and OS Grid reference	St. Martin's Haven – National Trust car park ( SM 761089)
Ordnance Survey map	OL36 – South Pembrokeshire
Distance	8.5 miles
Date of Walk	1 July 2017
Traffic light rating	

**Introduction:** This easy, circular, coastal walk explores the headland west of Marloes village. It takes in some dramatic coastal scenery with views to a number of islands, the remains of an Iron Age fort, an old World War II airfield and the village of Marloes itself.

The first landmark is the former Wooltack Point Coastguard Station. It is situated at the highest point of the headland and operated until 1969. It is a typical coastguard station construction and now a Scheduled Monument, owned by the National Trust who refer to it as Haven Point Coastguard Station. It reopened in 2016 as part of the National Coastwatch organisation and is run by volunteers.

Beyond here is Wooltack Point, looking out over Skomer Island. This was last permanently inhabited in 1950 and is now famous for its birdlife, notably puffins, sea life and flora. It is managed by the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. Boat trips are available from St Martin's Haven, a few minutes walk from the car park. It gets very busy!

From further along the route, you see Stockholm Island, whose existence is virtually a mirror of Skomer's.

Gateholm Island is a tidal island although access would not be easy due to steep sides. There does not look to be a great deal there although it was the subject of a Time Team dig. It has remains of a Bronze Age settlement.

At Hooper's Point are the substantial remains of Dale Airfield. This was a Royal Naval airfield, constructed in 1941 and operational by 1942. Vickers Wellington bombers took off from here, hence the length and size of the runways. They engaged in convoy protection, anti-submarine patrols and bombing raids in Occupied France.

From Hooper's Point, the route turns inland to the peaceful village of Marloes with a good pub, the Lobster Pot. The village has an unusual 30ft clock tower, in an Arts and Crafts style erected by the Pembrokeshire Liberal Association in 1904 in memory of William Fourth Baron Kensington. The clock still functions.

The walk starts from the National Trust car park at Martin's Haven. Although it gets very busy, due to it being the start point for boat trips to Skomer, it has a large overflow area, which I doubt would ever be full. You could also start from the village

of Marloes where there is on street parking. To get to St Martin's Haven, take the B4327 from Haverfordwest. Follow the signs for Marloes and drive straight through the village. The road ends at the car park.

Note if you were wanting a more demanding walk, you could combine it with the St. Anne's Head walk as a short half mile walk on the coast path would link the two. This would give you an overall distance of around 16/17 miles.

**Start:** Turn left out of the car park (SM 761089) and walk along the road. At the end of the road, go through a gap in the large wall and a walkers' gate, then climb the rough steps ahead.

At the top of the steps, bear right. The white coastguard station at Haven Point, also known as the Wooltack Point Station is visible. Make your way to it.

From the coastguard station, take the path nearest the coastline, with the sea on you right and head out to the Wooltack Point headland (SM 754094). There are good views across to the larger Skomer Island and the smaller Midland Isle. The smaller isolated rock to the left of Skomer Island sticking out of the water is the Mew Stone.

After exploring the furthest headland, retrace your steps a short distance to join the path following the coastline. At this point, you are following a concessionary path. As you join the main Coastal Path (i.e. the path which joins directly from the car park SM 760088), there are visible signs of an ancient fort (embankment and ditch).

Turn right here to follow the Coastal Path, again with the sea on your right and that is virtually all the direction needed for quite a while.

At SM 756089, there is a good view along the cliffs, where you can clearly see the geological bending of the strata.

Just beyond here is the almost attached to the mainland Gateholm Island.

You reach the large bay of Marloes Sands and at SM 781077, there is an attractive beach with steps down.

At SM 785075 is another beach access point.

At the far side of the Marloes Sands bay, you reach Hooper's Point. There are views here to St Anne's Head. Walk round this for a short distance, keeping your eye open for a fingerpost to the left, in the middle of the point. Walk round the point as far as you want to, noting on the left the end of a wide concrete runway of the disused airfield. When you are ready, make your way to the fingerpost. There is a faint path to it from SM 792063.

As you get closer to the fingerpost, join another wide concrete "roadway" (which may have been a runway, or access to one).

Follow this concrete way, passing a two way fingerpost and later, passing through a gate, with a yellow direction footpath arrow. Ignore a turn here to the left and stay on

the concrete way. Eventually, the concrete bends sharply right. Just round the bend is a walkers' gate with yellow arrow. Go through this and follow the broad track.

The track becomes a tarmac lane, which you follow to the road. At the road, turn left and after a few yards, turn right along a bridleway marked with a fingerpost on which is the motif of a horse and rider (SM 792082).

The short section of bridleway exits in the village of Marloes, at the clock tower. There is a bench here where you could pause for a picnic. Turn left along the road, passing the Lobster Pot Inn.

Walk through the village, passing the National speed limit signs. Opposite a large lay-by on the left, turn right following a public footpath fingerpost (SM 786085).

The path runs alongside a large field, turning sharp left at its end. When it joins the Coastal Path (SM 786089), turn left and follow it to Martin's Haven. As you join the Coastal Path, there is a nice view of Musselwick Sands.

Martin's Haven is obvious by the jetty from which trips to Skomer set off. Turn left here to return to the car park.



