

## ROGERS WALK FOR CHARITY 2009

**Total Raised - \$30,360**

On Thursday 14th May 2009 Roger Completed the Cornish section of the South West Coastal Path in just 16 days. Congratulations Roger on your amazing achievement!!!

### Introduction to Roger

It is with great pleasure that we introduce to you Roger Gillett, who is well know and well respected in the local and international insurance community both in Bermuda and overseas.

We offer Roger all our best wishes in his efforts and thank him greatly for his generosity.



In Rogers Own Words:

"For the past couple of years I have been intending to walk the coast of Cornwall, the English county in which I grew up.

In October of 2008 my best friend from those years, with whom I continued to have frequent contact, died from an aggressive brain tumor. Graham Sotheran was 55 years old at the time of his death, and it is in his memory that I will end my procrastination and complete this walk.

The Cornish Coastal Path runs from the Devon border on it's North coast near Bude, to the Devon border on it's South coast at the mouth of the River Tamar. A total

distance of 296 miles. Details of the South West Coastal Path can be found on [www.swcp.org.uk](http://www.swcp.org.uk).

Incidentally, the City of Plymouth on the Devon side of the Tamar is the port from which the Sea Venture departed almost exactly 400 years before the date on which I anticipate completing the walk.

The walk will be unsupported i.e. I will have to carry everything I need, which shouldn't be much, and I will sleep wherever I can find a bed or a hay barn at the end of each day. I expect to take just over two weeks to complete the walk, averaging twenty miles or so each day. This, I am told, is ambitious as the coastline is very hilly and at some rivers I may need to wait for the tide to drop to avoid very long detours.

And now to you, I need your encouragement. Having decided to make this walk it occurred to me that I should make this my personal End To End and seek sponsorship for it's successful completion. With this in mind I am inviting you to make a donation, which will be split equally between Bermuda Cancer and Health and Cancer Research. All I need from you right now is to reply indicating how much you would like to pledge.

I am sure you receive many requests for charitable donations and thank you for considering mine. No amount is too small for this worthwhile cause."

## Keeping You Updated

**Tuesday 28th April 2009 - No Turning Back**

Roger left Bermuda for his epic trip on the BA flight to UK yesterday evening, joined by his walking companion Roger Scotton.

All of us here at the Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre wish Roger bon voyage and look forward to seeing Roger's daily updates.

The Updates have been written by Roger Gillett on as near to daily basis as possible.



## Day One - April 29th

Our first Surprise was as the plane came into land at Gatwick and the pilot told us the temperature outside was 1° Celsius. Roger and I had the same thought – we didn't bring clothes for 1° Celsius!

Other than the flight to Plymouth being cancelled and having to take a later flight, travel was uneventful.

We had a good nights rest at my mothers and on Wednesday morning we took a very pleasant drive in brilliant sunshine and blue skies with my sister to Bude to start the walk.



## Heavy Traffic in Cornwall

At Bude, was very pleased to find my old work colleague from Royal Insurance in Plymouth, who I worked with from 1969 – 1972. Having exchanged a few emails with me, he had turned up to see me off as he promised he would. Tony walked with us for the first 20 minutes, again, beautiful sunshine although the

air was crisp.

## Setting off in Bude with send off from old work colleague from 37 yrs ago, Tony Oxnam.

The first 5 miles past Widemouth Bay were easy and had us feeling very confident. Little did we know what was coming next. The next 12 miles or so were probably the most physically challenging walking conditions I'd ever encountered. Streams ran down to the sea cutting very deep valleys in the



high cliffs and our hearts dropped each time we climbed one only to find there was another one to descend. After Crackington Haven where we stopped for tea, the terrain was slightly easier, but the wind grew strong and it rained quite heavily. It was blowing so hard I was almost blown off a style, I reached out to steady myself and caught hold of a fence which turned out to be an electric cattle fence. A bit of a surprise!

We were very pleased when we came over the last ridge and we saw the Wellington Hotel, Boscastle, where we planned to stay the night.

[Go to DAY 2](#)

## Day Two - April 30th

After a big very breakfast, a little later than we would have liked, we set off for Tintagel, but only after we had visited the Post Office to mail some of the gear that Roger decided he didn't need back to my mother's. He was disturbed that for some reason his back pack was heavier than mine.

Whilst the terrain from Boscastle to Tintagel was not as hard as we had experienced the first day it was very wet and we were soaked through despite our gear. Even the walking boots which had served me well on Kilimanjaro seemed to have lost their waterproofing. But by lunchtime the sun was shining and we arrived at the tourist spot in Tintagel close to the



castle of King

Arthur fame

where we ate our

first Cornish

Pasty.

It was fortunate

that the coastal

path ran close to

the castle as Rees

Fletcher had

agreed to sponsor

me only if I

climberd over to

the ruins on the

rocky outcrop.

Roger stayed on

the coastal

footpath and took photos of me waving from the castle ramparts.

### **For Rees. That's me descending from the castle at Tintagel**

After Tintagel the path signposts gave us an inland option which we thought we would try, but unfortunately managed to get lost in country lanes as a result. This was more road walking than we would have liked and probably added a couple of miles to the journey. But we arrived in Port Isaac around 4.45pm, took a well earned deep bath and at the time of writing this were contemplating where we would eat, as tonight we are staying in a small, but very nice Bed and Breakfast called Orion House.

View of coast looking north to Bude



One of the many deep valleys with giant sand bad descending as climbing



A rest near Boscastle



Where are the flat paths?



Rocky Valley approaching Tintagel



Looking east to Trebarwith sands and another 10 miles to Port Isaac





OK so it's not all walking



[Go to Day 3](#)

## Day Three - May 1st

We left Port Isaac in sunshine but with a chilly breeze.

**Yes they do seem to be wild horses.  
Am I running with them?!**

Jill McDonnell who owned the B&B we stayed in suggested we may want to take an alternative



field route to Port Quinn. This we did but soon found ourselves in a narrow pathway ankle deep in cattle manure and urine. Needless to say, the thought of my boots no longer being waterproof was gross.

We certainly did walk through fields, one of which contained bullocks (Young Bulls) that blocked our path. I had been chased by bullocks when I was younger, but was fairly sure they would move aside, but not certain. In fact they didn't move until we were about 5 yards away, when my aggressive noises convinced them that we weren't afraid of them. In fact of course we were playing chicken.

Not much at Port Quinn other than some interesting deserted cottages buried in an overgrown hedgerow.



We walked on to Lundy Hole

**Lundy Hole, just west of Port  
Quin.**

The coastal path here was beautiful with thick heather and gorse.

**Walking West toward the Rumps with an iron age cliff fort. Moule Island to the right**

**At the Rumps with weather building on the horizon**



Approaching the Rumps with its Iron Age Fort and just off that Moule Island was impressive. From there we had an easy walk in to Polzeath where we watched the surfers braving the weather. We stopped for coffee and the rain that had been threatening arrived.

**My wet dogs taking a break!**



**Another photo of Roger's back heading into Polzeath where a hot cup of coffee awaits!**

**That will need to be one heck of a drive**



**St Enodoc church which was once buried in sand, in a sand dune area called Rock! You figure**





From Polzeath to Rock the walk was easy but the rain fell harder and harder, by the time we reached the ferry terminal at Rock we were soaked through (as you can see from the photo).

**Waiting for the ferry to Padstow and yes it is that wet!**



**Padstow on Obby Oss day! A little rained out. A Pagan celebration of fertility held every May day**



**The Obby Oss himself!**

We arrived in Padstow on Obby Oss Day, a Pagan ritual based on fertility. As far as we could see, it was based on drinking. The rain continued to fall heavily causing me to buy a new rain jacket and Roger Scotton to buy new rain trousers because they had lost their effectiveness. We left Padstow through a church yard and found ourselves in the middle of an Obby Oss Parade.

**And celebrants**



A few miles on we arrived at a hotel called Wellparc where we stopped for the night. They only had a twin room and their en-suite consisted of a shower cubicle in the room. The best part of this stay was that the proprietor Ray took my boots from me and delivered them back in the morning completely dry.

[Go to Day 4](#)

## Day Four - May 2nd

When we left Trevone early it was crisp, but sunny.



Our route today took us through Trevone Bay and along cliffs with very steep sided gullies, not valleys, so we didn't descend them. The path was along the cliff top and was spectacular.

We stopped for tea at Mawgan Porth and you'd think it was mid-summer with all the families on the beach sunning and playing in the water.

For all of our travails on the prior days, this day was awesome. The cliff path was mainly level and the views over Bedruthan steps and Watergate Bay could not have been more perfect. On the cliffs over Watergate, my phone rang and it was a good friend of Graham and mine called Paul Stacey. He was calling from Western Australia to give encouragement.

**Not much of a river but enough to get your feet wet.**



**These are the sign posts we must follow. Beautiful surf in background.**



**The steps of a legendary giant named Bedruthan. The photo does not do justice to the scale.**



**Watergate bay, a surfer's paradise.**



As we approached Newquay, there were a lot of surfers in the water. As I understand it, Newquay is the surf capital of the Northern Hemisphere. In fact it was so sunny that both Roger and I were sun burnt on our faces.



This is June at the Eliot Hotel in Newquay for whom I write the following:

*The receptionist lady from Brum  
Was impressed with the distance  
we'd come.*

*She treated us nice  
And for the same price,  
Gave us two rooms instead of  
just one.*

That evening we saw two sides of Newquay, the town full of hen and stag parties and back at our hotel where a coach full of tourists were playing bar quizzes and bingo.

[Go to Day 5](#)

## Day Five - May 3rd

We managed an earlier start as we needed to catch the tide right to cross the Gannel at the lower crossings available. Later and the tide would have covered the bridge that we used.



The morning walk took us past Crantock and Holywell Bay, again some magnificent beaches.



**Holywell Bay and it isn't even summer!**

**An impression of the path.**

**Not a castle but a typical mine pump engine building.**



The mines ran way out under the seabed.no mechanical equipment, and you think you work hard!



At Penhale we decided to cut inland to avoid walking on the sand dunes, which can be really tough going. Instead we walked a couple of extra miles some of which was beside a beautiful stream but a lot of it was on tarmac (not our favourite). Perranporth was a good spot to make repairs and refresh. The refreshment consisted of a pasty, Victoria cream sponge with clotted cream and tea.

From there the scenery started to change, especially around St Agnes, where the cliffs for miles are strewn with the bi-products of the copper and tin mining industry for which Cornwall was once famous. The landscape was interesting with the pump engine buildings

and covered mine shafts. Our paths were channeled through mine slurry. The rough stony surface though was tough on the feet.

At Chapel Porth again we followed a sign taking us up a stream, but we must have missed a sign and walked way off our route, again adding miles. We arrived in Porthtowan having been at it for nine hours with two short breaks. We took rooms in the Beach Hotel overlooking a beautiful Bay and slept with the windows open listening to the surf pounding on the beach.

The proprietors John and Sian made a donation to our cause and after a great meal there we were early to bed.

**A view from my bedroom window at the Beach Hotel in Porthtowan!**



**Relaxing at dinner in Porthtowan.**



[Go to Day 6](#)

## Day Six - May 4th

Day 6 started overcast and we were walking with concerns about Roger's feet as he had developed a number of blisters and it looks as though he will lose both his big toenails. But he soldiered on and we've made good time on the day where we were attempting a greater distance.





**The sheltered beach at Carbis Bay, imagine this with the sun shining.**

The approach to St Ives through Lelant and Carbis Bay was spectacular and as I write this I'm soaking my feet and looking forward to a good meal in my favourite coastal town in Cornwall, St Ives.

**Oh no, not valleys again**



**The beautiful St Ives Bay looking toward Hayle**

**Hell's mouth near Godrevy Point**



**Approaching St Ives where artists congregate because of the special light!!I'll look out for it!**



[Go to Day 7](#)

## Day Seven - May 5th

Well today we're starting a little late as the lady who runs the B & B didn't want to serve breakfast until 9, so I've had time to lie and think.

One story I'd forgotten to tell was that after we'd trudded through the cow excrement, joking about how, working in the insurance business we'd been trudging through BS for years, we entered a field with just one bullock. Now Roger S did not grow up in the country and was quite anxious about this young bull's intentions. I convinced him we were safe but as we walked I looked over his shoulder and with the appropriate look of shock on my face said "look out"! Roger S leapt in to the air, doing a 180 and landing with his feet already shuffling backward. I laughed so hard I nearly fell in the mud.

I realize also that I've sold my home county short in my descriptions. This is a land of great contrasts. As we walk we move from high rugged cliffs to wide sandy bays, some bays with huge crashing waves and others with calm waters with only a ripple hitting the beach. We walk with the sound of the sea and gulls on our right while on our left we hear skylarks almost constantly.

Interesting to see is that on the coast so far there is hardly a tree to be seen, the conditions being too harsh, and yet we have walked through fields covered in primroses. More than I've ever seen. Other areas have been covered in bluebells and violets sprinkle the hedges. All these in addition to plants more commonly seen on the coast, like sea pinks and of course the gorse which is in full bloom.

Today we face one of our toughest challenges. The stretch between St Ives and St Just is the most isolated with no villages or hamlets en route. It is rated as severe with steep rocky paths and mud. But, the good news is that this will be our last day walking West. The most westerly point of England as a matter of interest is Cape Cornwall which we hope to reach today, not Land's End which we will see tomorrow.

I feel confident because as we were reading a menu outside a restaurant last evening a seagull managed a direct hit on me. Not a bulls eye as that would have been my head, but all over my shoulder. For those unfamiliar with Cornish seagulls, they are huge and well fed, so I leave the rest to your imagination. In Cornwall we consider a direct hit good luck.

We left St Ives under overcast skies and the drizzle that was forecasted looked very likely. As soon as we hit the coastal path we found signs diverting us inland. We weren't surprised by this as we had seen on the news a week ago that roads and paths near Zennor had been washed away. In fact some young people have lost their lives when their car had been swept into a stream that was in flood caused by a downpour further up the valley.

**Diverted due to washed out coastal path. Roger S seeking directions! Don't think they get too many knocks on the door out here!**



**This section is between Zennor and Pendeen Watch. Muddy and rocky paths making it very slow going**



Consequently we didn't rejoin the Coastal footpath until after Zennor. The stretch between Zennor and Pendeen Watch was muddy and very rocky this being the reason that this stretch was rated as severe. It made going very slow.

The granite cliffs on this stretch of the coast were quite unlike any of the other cliffs we've seen. With what looked like blocks of granite laid one on top of another. The good thing was that the streams were unable to cut deep valleys down to the sea, instead tumbling over the cliffs at the waters edge. The absence of valleys was a relief to us.



After Pendeen Watch the scenery change completely again, the next four or five miles being one of the most intense historical tin mining regions. At Geevor and Levant it was interesting to see the engine rooms built almost at sea level at the bottom of cliffs. I hope my photographs do some of the scenery justice.

**Pendeen Watch with very large foghorns**



**Mine works at Geevor**



Now that's what I call a pasty. Bought at Geevor Mines



Some very treacherous sections of path near Lelant



Mine buildings at Lelant near water's edge. the mines extended more than a mile under the sea.



Near Botallack we were diverted from the footpath again this time by a gentleman representing the Cornwall County Council who advised us that here were [choughs](#) nesting close to the path. This apparently was one of only three nesting pairs in the whole of the UK . The Chough is seen on Cornwall 's Crest, so is considered something very special here. By now the sun was shining and we were renewing our sun block.

At Kenidjack we followed a sign which took us down a fairly large stream right to the seas edge. We had seen no bridge and therefore crossed the stream by leaping from boulder to boulder. Something didn't seem right, but we continued. We saw what looked like footpaths

running diagonally across the cliff's edge. If they were footpaths they hadn't been used for a long time. But not wishing to go back the way we had come, we forged ahead Indiana Jones style. What Indiana Jones didn't have to encounter was a pool of something very nasty smelling, that I suspect was something worse than the cow manure previously encountered. This caused us to climb and make our own path up the cliffs edge until we found a way forward to Cape Cornwall.



At Cape Cornwall we stopped for Ice Cream and Tea before walking up the road to St Just. St Just turned out to be much larger than I had remembered and we found accommodation at The Commercial Hotel. We were delighted when the proprietor Paul agreed to allow us to wash and dry all of our clothing which by now had become very smelly.

An evening in St Just. Firstly you need to know that St Just was a mining town and still has that feel with 4 pubs within a few yards of each other. I was told by Paul the proprietor that it is England's smallest town and is also the town furthest away from a motorway.

Before dinner we went on a mini pub crawl and met Jack, a wonderful old fella who was 76 and had worked in the tin mines before joining the Coldstream Guards. Whilst admitting people died in the mines he played down the dangers and explained that in that time you simply did what you had to do to make a living. He was a big man who you could imagine was strong in his time, but he was softly spoken with a warm manner which made him immediately likeable. We returned to the Commercial Hotel and ordered our meal only to

have Paul appear and berate us for not returning earlier as we'd promised. We didn't realize but he was the chef and like us he was hoping to sit in the bar and watch Manchester United play Arsenal in the Champions League semi final. He and I support Man U, so when they scored their first and second goals I ran into the kitchen to let him know. It felt quite natural because he had made us feel so at home.

It would have been easy to stay in the bar and celebrate the win, but it's up and at 'em again in the morning albeit in this environment I feel very aware that we are after all only walking a few miles, not working deep below the ocean chasing a tin seam with a pick and shovel for twelve hours.

Got to Day 8

## Day Eight - May 6th



**The Commercial Hotel owned by the Woolcock family for over 100 years**

Off to Land's End on a very misty morning.

**A misty Whitesand beach at Sennen**



This turned out to be by far our toughest day since day one. We started in heavy mist and set out for Lands End. There we took the required photos showing the mileage to Bermuda but were disappointed by how commercial it had become.

**The required mileage shot**



**Pretty bleak out here today but we managed to find another tourist to take a photo**



After that we walked on a tough never ending path which was very rough with a number of hills, as far as the Minack Theatre. This was a very interesting place, an open air amphitheater built on the cliff side, but unfortunately there was no performance showing. From there it was a tough slog all afternoon to Mousehole. Some interesting coves and cliff side with the lichen covered granite but to be truthful the going was so tough we struggled to enjoy the sights. Tomorrow we look forward to a flatter easier walk.

**Doesn't it look like these rocks were stacked there. Must have been those Cornish giants!**

**The Minack Theatre but unfortunately no performance showing.**





Porthcurno cove where the sea is almost as blue as Bermuda's on a sunny day.

Penberth Cove



### A beach of huge rounded pebbles



We are staying in a B&B called Lowenna owned by Mr and Mrs Males. A lovely house overlooking Mounts Bay with St Michaels Mount in the distance.

A hot bath and down to the Ship Inn for dinner.



**This is the reward for a very tough day. Mousehole on a sunny evening, and a pint of Proper Job Ale.**

[Go to Day 9](#)

## Day Nine - May 7th

An easy start to the day and we are now walking the inside of a curve, not the outside. This means we can actually see the town we are heading towards, all be it way in the distance across Mounts Bay .

Before leaving Bermuda , I was excited about the thought of walking and not knowing what was around the next corner. Walking frequently in Bermuda I always knew what was coming next. Yesterday cured me of that somewhat, as with each new headland we were hoping in vain to gain sight of Mousehole.

But that's behind us now and the gentle start to day eight with the initial flat walking clearly in view was very welcome.

We passed through Newlyn, a large fishing port, and skirted the seaward edge of the large town of Penzance . No point going shopping we don't need anything more to carry. We walked between the beach and the railway track, a main line track connecting Penzance with Paddington.



**Newlyn, just a short walk from Mousehole**



**Striding out of  
Penzance looking to  
crack off some miles on  
this easy 4 mile section**

In clear view for miles on our right was St Michael's Mount. We have both visited this beautiful sometimes Island which one can walk to at low tide. We didn't make the detour today, all be it we swopped memories of visits to St Michaels Mount with our children.



Through the historic town of Marazion (where we bought a pasty and ate it on the hoof) and back on to the coastal path.

**Leaving Marazion & entering real coaspath. St Michael's Mount in background.**

A moderate path over low cliff tops to Prussias Cove after which it started to drizzle

heavily, carried by a strong wind off the sea. We delayed putting our raingear on as we quickly get as wet from inside as we would from the drizzle.

At Praa Sands we stopped for water at a beach side café/bar where we asked "How far to Porthleven?" The question was debated for sometime between the locals with opinions ranging from twenty five minutes to three hours at least. In the event it took us just about one and a half hours and we were pleasantly surprised when we rounded a small headland and immediately dropped into Porthleven.

**Another mine on a gorse covered cliff. Near Porthleven.**

**Entering Porthleven in wind driven drizzle.**



On visiting the Post Office to obtain cash (here incidentally the lady behind the counter told me I looked bedraggled), overjoyed we discovered a launderette, to be visited later after a hot bath in the rooms we found at the Harbour Inn. A great view from my bedroom window and a special curry night on offer. Well fed and expect to sleep soundly.

**Pretty cool heh! The view from my room in Porthleven.**



**And these babies are spending the night in the boiler room!**

**Heaven!**



**Walking the coast is not all glory!The laundry has to be done sometime**



Our accomodation on day 8. Good food, good service and a nice deep bath



The view back toward Porthleven on a blustery day



A school friend of mine Gary Davies has been following my progress and spoke with me this evening to obtain my itinerary in the hope that he will be able to join me for some section of the walk. But even if he doesn't, receiving the encouragement of a phone call is always welcome.

[Go to Day 10](#)

## Day Ten - May 8th

Last night I discovered that the two pairs of new hiking socks I'd been using had now become thread bare at the heels, just showing how much rubbing of my feet was taking place. But not to worry a back up plan was put in place.

We left Porthleven on a sunny but blustery day. The wind was blowing from the west at about 30-35 knots; enough to chill us even though the sun was shining. We soon reached Loe Bar, which is essentially a sand bar holding back the fresh water of Loe Pool. Loe Pool is claimed as one of the possible sights where King Arthur threw Excalibur into the lake.



**Not lost, just confused by water on our left. Loe Pool, Cornwall's largest freshwater lake separated from the sea by a sand bar, Loe Bar**



**Loe Bar with Roger S**

As we walk we read a sign indicating we were at the site where the first radio signals were sent across the Atlantic, the letter S in Morse code being picked up in St John's , Newfoundland .

Walking along the cliff side we reached Church Cove at Gunwalloe, where as you might expect we found a church, 14 th century with the spire separated from the main building,



I've read no explanation why. Sited almost on the beach it is not surprising that the church has been damaged many times by the sea.



**The 14 century church at Gunwalloe which as you might expect is frequently damaged by the sea.**

Photographs unfortunately do not do justice to the miles and miles of beautiful cliffs we've walked; this simply cannot display the scale. On this coast, the waves were whipped up by the strong westerly wind, crashing impressively on the rocks below. High though the cliffs were, we could see and feel spray from the breaking surf.

At Kynance Cove, one of my favourite beaches in Cornwall we stopped for rest and repairs. In a spot sheltered from the wind we relaxed and felt ourselves challenged to move again. Rougher here than I had previously seen, it was still an awesomely beautiful spot.

We walked a short distance on to the Lizard and from the cliffs there were able to watch seals as they searched for food near the rocks.

**A windswept pair of walkers**

**The beautiful Kynance Cove with the sea entering both sides of the beach**



Search and Rescue helicopter patrolling the cliffs and beaches



Roger S's pretty foot. Now his sisters will call for sure!



The Lizard, mainland England's most southerly point



You may just be able to make out a seal, we saw many around the Lizard



For you Insurance dudes, this station was used to log shipping as it passed the Lizard. The practice was eventually stopped because it was too dangerous!



Devil's Frying Pan near Cadgwith



And then on to Cadgwith where we took the steep road up to Ruan Minor only to find we should have taken the left hand option, not the right. So back down to Cadgwith and up the other side. Probably another 45 minutes of walking we didn't need. To make matters worse, Chrissy (at the B&B we had found) told us the only pub was back down the hill in the village. She saw our faces as we



discussed going back down the hill or going without dinner. Roger S was already considering what was in his backpack. She eventually felt sorry for us and her husband Nick prepared for us a lovely meal and even provided us with a complimentary glass of wine. We showed our gratitude by enjoying it immensely.

[Got to day 11](#)

## Day 11 - May 11th

We left Chyheira and walked back down to Cadgwith where conflicting signposts showed 6, 7, or 8 miles to Coverack. We attacked this and made Coverack in good time.

At Coverack I went into a gift shop to buy a Cornish flag for £1.00, but in talking to the shop keeper, Mrs Englefield, she was interested in what we were doing and contributed £2.00 to our cause.

From there we followed the path over very low cliffs, for those interested it is actually a phenomenon called a raised beach, in other words this at one time was the beach. The going was good but wet underfoot with nothing too serious in the way of hills. We passed through some coastal quarries which whilst interesting were industrial developments of the worst kind.

The water on this side of the Lizard was clear and calm, and in contrast with the magnificence of the cliffs we'd been walking, much of this was pretty.



### **Sometimes we be walking through woods**

When we reached Gillan we had to detour around the creek as the tide was too high for the stepping stone crossing, adding two miles to our journey. From St Anthony to Helford we passed through woods with glades full of bluebells. The cliffs had also been covered by them, but in the shaded woods they'd grown so thick it was almost a carpet of blue.

Now I am getting romantic because I'm missing Deborah my wife. Roger S is good company but we can't stand too long looking at bluebells together.

At Helford our accommodation for the night was a beautiful Sail Loft. Mrs Royall was impressed with our accomplishment and contributed £5.00 to our cause.

**What a cute family!**

**Some walk others arrive by more modern forms of transport.**



**Yes this is me in a moment of Cornish patriotism. To those who know its meaning MEBYON KERNOW**



**Here be Hobbits**



**A more recently unused quarry. They don't make ruins like they used to**



**Is this not a bad place for lunch, overlooking the bay outside Falmouth Harbour where out of work cargo ships hang out. Looks very relaxed but we'd just walked 12 miles!**



Cornish for ladies and gents.



The signs we follow and he's really not in that much pain!



OK so now what do I do? Swim, swim!



The very pretty Gillan creek



OK this was really odd. Freerange chickens feeding on a beach! What must the eggs taste like?



Gillan creek with swans.



Now is that a lot of bluebells?



Our sail loft pad for the night. Apparently the oldest building in Helford.





The only, but excellent, pub in Helford.



Leaving Chyheira where we had been so kindly treated by the Yorkshire lass Chrissy and her husband Nick.



[Go to Day 12](#)

## Day Twelve - May 10th

We had been told that the ferry from Helford would probably not run until 10am, but there was a chance it might respond to the signal board on this side of the river at 9.30am. The ferry was just 2 minutes away and as we rounded the corner early, at 9.20am, the ferry was in fact pulling away. The ferryman however, nosed back in and we stepped aboard for the very short ride across the inlet.



**The ferry that brought us from Helford. Four quid for a five minute ride!!!**

As we walked away from the ferry towards Durgan the view of the inlet was beautiful, with calm waters and dozens of moored sailboats.



**Making friends with the locals!**

We stepped out our ten mile walk into Falmouth knowing we had other ferrys to catch and no ferry schedule to follow. As it happened we just missed the ferry to St Mawes and had to wait fifty minutes for the next one. We put the time to good use with a visit to a coffee shop, a pasty shop and Boots the chemist!

We arrived in St Mawes passing the Artillery Castle built by Henry VIII to find the next ferry to Place was not for another forty minutes, during which time we were able to locate the St Mawes Social Club, where the lady behind the bar signed us in so that we could watch part of the Manchester United v Manchester City football match.

The ferry to Place was a small open boat with every seat taken by a passenger.

It was like a summers day walking the low cliffs into Porthscatho and we were able to stop for a few minutes and watch a huge slow moving basking shark cruise the waters below us.

The hedgerow birds were singing and all was right with the world. This, with ferry rides and down time was one of our most relaxing days with only fifteen or sixteen miles of walking. Tomorrow I'm more concerned, as we have twenty miles to cover over strenuous paths to Mevagissey.

**The Point with our sail loft attached**



**Arriving in St Mawes.**



**The full ferry to Place. No, he really is happy!**



**Place House, very French.unoccupied I understand.**



**Towan beach just before we saw the basking shark**



The B&B tonight was again up a hill. Another shared room in a B&B you might call Spartan.

The local pub was dead and the music playing was Lonny Donegan. The food was surprisingly good, but the ambience did not encourage us to stay for a late night

[Go to Day 13](#)

## Day Thirteen - May 11th

We were warned at breakfast that there were strong winds forecast up to gale force 9 with gusts of 75 miles an hour! In our faces!



**[Looking back to Portscatho from near Nare's Head](#)**

With this news we set off in a hurry hoping to cover as much ground early in the day as possible. This we achieved, attacking the strenuous path until we reached Port Loe. There

we stopped for coffee for five minutes and ended up chatting with the coffee shop owner for half an hour.



**Dianne Crewes and her coffee shop at Portloe**

The cliffs were low, but somehow there were a lot of steep short ups and downs. After stopping for my pasty at Porthluney Cove, with Caerhays Castle sitting impressively only a short distance back from the beach, we marched on to Gorran Haven and from there to Mevagissey feeling quite pleased with ourselves for completing the twenty miles in good time. The wind grew stronger and stronger as we walked, but I would say it did not reach gale force.

**Roger S was impressed with this!**



**Caerhays Castle from just above the beach.**

**Looking back at Portloe**



**The bay at Gorran Haven in which you would normally expect calm waters!**



**Dropping down in to Mevagissey where fish and chips await!!**



Tonight we are staying in the B&B called the Old Parsonage, very pleasant.

Got to Day 14

## Day Fourteen - May 12th

We start the day a little upset as when using the launderette the night before we managed to over-cook our clothes meaning that our t-shirts and my trousers are now a couple of sizes smaller. This was in addition to the fact that the washing machine and the dryer took so long we ended up being two sad old guys sitting eating take-away fish and chips in the launderette.



**Ken at the Old Parsonage in Mevagissey seeing us off after a good breakfast.**



**Waves crashing on the seawall at Mevagissey.**

It was tough going this morning all the way to Charlestown. Steep hills and steps for seven miles. After this, it was a straight forward flat walk into and around the china clay port of Par. Nothing pretty here, although we did see a number of pheasants in the fields before Charlestown. Beyond Par there were more cliff walks which we quickly completed to get ahead of the promised rain. I am now sitting in Fowey at 6pm and the rain has still not yet materialized. Hopefully it's gone in a different direction because we don't want it tomorrow.

**Yes the path ahead is as steep as it looks.**

**And at the top!!**



Amazing! Roger S from Southend is getting quite at home in a farmyard!



Tonight's accomodation in Fowey. Roger S has a new shirt in the bag as his 'going out' shirt was shrunk last night!!



Roger S sporting his new shirt! Makes me feel scruffy!



The church at Fowey. The Inn we're staying in dates back to the 1500's. Established by a friend of Drake and Raleigh who made his money as a privateer. Cool huh!





**Inside the dining room of the Ship Inn. Unfortunately there were unforeseen issues with our rooms so the proprietor Andrew Kent refused to charge us. I've told him that what he would have charged will go to the cause, another £45!**



## **Reflection**

As we get closer to our final destination I am reflecting on the experience.

Emotionally, I've been aware of my reason for completing the walk. Graham's name has been mentioned many times as Roger S and I have exchanged stories from our childhood and youth.

Spiritually, I've been uplifted by the sheer beauty of nature with the sights sounds and

smells coming together in a way that cannot be copied by any artist or TV producer, but still remembering that nature's true masterpiece is friendship.

Physically and mentally we've been challenged but in a way that gives satisfaction at the accomplishment, and we do it by choice. How different for those who have to face the physical and mental challenges of serious illness.

I have also been humbled by seeing the results of the endeavours of previous generations who dug mines with pick and shovel 2 miles out under the sea.

And finally my faith in the fundamental goodness of man has been restored by the friendly way we have been treated in our journey, and of course the generosity of all of you who have contributed to this cause, in honour of my good friend Graham.

## Day Fifteen - May 13th

We are now conscious that the end of our walk is near. We start the day with great breakfast and take our last ferry ride, this time to Polruan.



### On the ferry from Fowey to Polruan. Our last ferry

We were impressed with the sophistication of Fowey. With its deep harbour and great anchorages it attracts yachtsmen from all over the country and indeed the world. The ferry ride was short but interesting, with attractive towns on both banks of the inlet.



**Well I didn't know there was this much fishing boat under the water.**

The first 7.5 miles went well despite the strenuous terrain, but what was notable was how quiet it was. The sea was much calmer and the wind had eased, giving the cliff side and coves a very peaceful feel.

As we approached Polperro we heard a whistle and looked up the path to see my friend from school, Gary Davies, who had agreed to join us. We chatted and caught up over coffee and cakes in Polperro before setting off together for Looe. Gary entertained us for 5 miles and made the time go quickly on this moderate and pleasant path. Looe was soon before us.

**My school friend Gary Davies, who joined us from Polperro (in background) to Looe**

**Looe or St George's Island with Rame Head in background**



Looking up into Looe



The banjo pier and beach at Looe



If the ferry fare for dogs is 20p, what do you charge a duck?



Looking back on Fowey



Looking back along the coastline just after Polruan



We had to walk up the river on the West Looe side, before crossing the bridge to East Looe, a bustling little town attractive to tourists. There I bought a Cornish flag and a stick of rock for my friends at the Bank of Butterfield, who sponsored me, but with this request.

Gary left us in Looe and for the next 4 miles we walked through woods, conscious of the sea on our right but not able to see it. We were getting glimpses of Rame Head, the last headland we would round before entering the Tamar estuary.

I developed a strain in my lower left calf muscle and was glad when we found our accommodation for the night in Donderry. A lovely little house named Rose Cottage.

## Rogers Coastal Path Walking Tips!

1. All miles on a map are definitely not equal.
2. When climbing a steep slope don't look up, it's too depressing.
3. When climbing around a rocky crag with a sheer drop below, don't look down, it's too frightening.
4. If the pool of cow excrement and urine looks too deep for your boots, it is!
5. If the short cut looks too good to be true, it is!
6. The adjectives, easy, moderate, strenuous and severe (all used to officially describe sections of the path) are entirely subjective.
7. Beware guidance from those who apparently know better i.e. Shopkeepers, barmen and cafe proprietors.
8. If you've worn a shirt for three days and you think it might smell, YOU STINK.
9. Vaseline is God's gift to walkers. Don't hesitate to plaster it on any part of your body you think might rub!
10. Don't walk past a toilet without at least considering its use. You don't know when you will see one again.

[Go to Day 16 - The last Day!](#)

## Day 16 - The End!

**Thursday 14th May**



**Roger putting his rain pants on with Downderry in the background**

We started today in high spirits, only 17 more miles. It was a damp hazy morning as we left Downderry.

The evening before, as it was raining, Pete, who with Katherine owns Rose Cottage, drove us to a nearby pub where we ate and watched more football. As it was still raining later he even came to collect us! How's that for customer service.

The path out of Downderry was a zig zagging path up to the highest point of the Southwest Coastal Path (462 feet) and continued to Portwrinkle. Strenuous but thankfully not too long.

The worst part was that the night's rain had left the grass very wet and the path was not well tended. We were soon forced to stop and put on our rain pants.

We left Portwrinkle skirting the golf course and on through the army shooting ranges at Tregantle. The wildlife was very apparent as scores of rabbits scampered away at our approach and pheasants startled us as we came upon them.

We were then in very familiar territory for me as we walked along the cliffs of Whitsands where Graham, Paul, Frank and I spent so much of our youth.

My sister Marion, brother-in-law Harold and Deborah met us with pasties and water on the cliff top. It seems an age since they waved us off in Bude.

I really love the views at Rame Head and Penlee Point, it was a shame it wasn't clearer.

At Cawsand we stopped for tea before walking towards the fort at Picklecombe and in to Mount Edgecumbe Park. This walk was gentle and interesting as we looked across at Drake's Island and Plymouth on the Devon side of the Tamar.

We reached Cremyll, where a large group of family and friends were gathered to greet us.

As you might expect an emotional moment with, Graham's wife Elizabeth and their son and daughter, Mark and Claire.

I am pleased that I did this walk for so many reasons but I have to say that I am glad to have finished. Just think, tomorrow I don't have to get up and walk!

A big thank you to Roger S for walking with me. Our conversations made so many days easier than they would otherwise have been.

Thank you to all those wonderful people who we've met along the way and all of you who have tracked us, supported us and encouraged us. Knowing you were all watching kept our spirits up and kept us going on those tough days.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Jenni at BCHC who has had the job of tracking me down and keying in my daily log even on those days when I was tired and reluctant.

Despite the fun you will have seen we had, for us both this was a very meaningful experience which your engagement with us has enhanced.

**Katherine at the door of their lovely cottage**



**Dropping in to Portwrinkle with Rame Head appearing through the haze**



**Rame Head getting closer**



**And yet closer**



**The distinctive Rame Head**

**Pasties delivered by Marion and Deborah, and look what Harold's brought**





The beaches of our youth at Whitsands



Devon, on the opposite side of the Tamar



Kingsand taken from Cawsand. Effectively one village but one used to be in Cornwall the other in Devon



Sharon at Moran's coffee shop in Cawsand who refused to charge us for our tea



The folly in Mt Edgecumbe Park



Drake's Island in the Tamar



Mum's house. Well not quite. Mt Edgecumbe House looking back as we walked towards family and friends waiting at the gate



The finish line ahead



The flag on my pack is the Cornish flag



Roger, Roger over but not out.  
Congratulations on completing 296  
Cornish miles on foot



Graham's wife Elizabeth and his sister  
Barbara





Go to A visit to the Sea Venture Departure Point on May 15th