

North Norfolk Coastal Walk 2017

Pre-plan and Daily Diary - Zak Delanoy

Preparation:

Firstly, we bought the Cicerone walking guide *The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path* which was very useful, apart from the fact that it had the trail detailed going in the opposite direction to the way we chose.

Planning for the expedition proved a little tricky as not only did we need to find a time when we were both clear of family commitments, we were also required to locate campsites at chosen intervals along the way that had availability and would allow under 16's to camp there without an adult! Once we had attended our interview and were given funding, we looked into planning it in further detail and therefore began ringing campsites. We originally envisaged the trip would take place over 4 days and 3 nights. Nevertheless, having been politely declined by three campsites, walking our expedition over 3 days and 2 nights felt more practical. Additionally, this would ensure we had reasonable days of walking throughout the expedition. After the change of plan, we rang another campsite for day 1, both of us were apprehensive during our fourth phone call. Fortunately, it was successful.

We had used the National trails website when researching for campsites since it enabled us to locate the ones along our walk. We ideally wanted the next campsite to be approximately two thirds of the way along the coastal path. Yet there was only one campsite listed a couple of miles either way of our intended situation which, because of our ages, quickly rejected us after we enquired for a booking. Consequently, we spent a while scanning the internet for any campsites which were not mentioned on the website. Finally, we found one which we could contact, we emailed and were accepted.

Day 1 - Saturday 19 August 10:30am

Dropped off at Cliff Avenue, Cromer. We began our journey in the sunshine along Cromer's Esplanade beside RNLI shore side Lifeboat Centre. Overall, we walked 16.75 miles to arrive at our first campsite.

Accommodation 1

Galley Hill Farm Camping - just inland from Blakeney and 0.85miles off the coastal path.

Arrival: 5pm

Costing £3 each for the night.

Evening supplies from Spar in Blakeney, cooked on our Trangia. Also purchased snacks for us to eat whilst walking the next day.

Day 2 - Sunday 20 August. Departure 9am

We set off from the Galley Hill campsite and covered 16.55 miles to reach our next destination, Burnham Breck Camping.

Accommodation 2

Burnham Breck Camping - also 0.85 miles off the Coastal Path on the outside of Burnham market. This campsite is a pop-up campsite in that it is only open for the month of August and is operated by the local (St Margaret's) church with all funds raised going towards its upkeep.
Arrival: 4pm

Costing £10 each for the night

Evening supplies: Unfortunately, in Burnham Market we struggled to find somewhere for food: The Market Stores, Pie shop, post office etc. were all closed. Ravenous, we continued, heading out of the village we found a garage with a fish and chip shop which we should have guessed was closed. However, there was a Mace where, like the first night, we bought food to heat up and some extra snacks to keep us going during our last stretch.

Day 3 - Monday 21 August. Departure 8am.

We completed the final leg of our journey, 16.3 miles, arriving at our destination, Cliff Parade, Hunstanton at 1pm.

Overall, our trip was very rewarding for all these reasons and many more...

...it was a good challenge physically

...it gave us first-hand knowledge on coastal erosion

...it gave us interview experience

...we had to persevere when organising the trip

...we had to be independent whilst camping alone

...we had to co-operate when splitting up jobs equally

...we extended our knowledge on Henry Morris himself

...we learnt how to be efficient with our money

Coastal Erosion and the Norfolk coast - David Dow

Coastal erosion is present in many British coastlands and, especially with the added impact of global warming, seaside towns like the ones we walked through such as Cromer, Hunstanton and Wells-next-the-Sea and surrounding coastline are all at risk. Below is a brief explanation

of coastal erosion and the ways towns along the North Norfolk coastal path are protected from the immense power of the sea.

Coastal Erosion and what it means for Norfolk

It is the physical breaking down of cliffs leading to a retracting coastline which eventually results in loss of houses, businesses and other seaside structures. This has a huge knock on effect on local income from seaside businesses and tourism will be greatly reduced if the area becomes unsafe as towns start falling into the water. It would affect the Norfolk coastline greatly, destroying the environment and socially and economically impact on the seaside resorts as residents' homes and businesses are at risk. Erosion happens in a few ways -

Hydraulic Action- the physical power of strong destructive waves hitting the coast and breaking it apart.

Abrasion- Rocks and sand suspended in the waves hit the shore and as they do adding to the breaking and eroding of the coast.

Solution- Acids contained in sea water will dissolve some types of rock such as chalk or limestone.

Preventing Coastal erosion

Coastal erosion is a huge risk, yet that doesn't mean that it impossible to defend against. As we walked through Norfolk coastal towns and along the shoreline we witnessed many defences in place that reduce or prevent erosion in the area.

Hard engineering approaches

These are expensive, short term, unsustainable defences yet are also extremely effective with a high impact on the environment.

Groynes- Wooden structures that stretch into the sea that stop the movement of sediment(sand) from the beach stopping it being eroded and taken away by waves back wash. The movement of the waves' swash (inward movement) at a diagonal to the beach and its backwash (outward movement) picking up sediment at 90 degrees is called longshore drift. They help maintain the sandy beaches of the Norfolk coastal path in areas like Cromer and Sheringham.

Sea wall- These concrete walls are re-curved to reflect the power of the waves back on itself - stopping them eroding the coastline as they prevent any of the waves energy hitting the shore line. This is present especially in Sheringham and Hunstanton.

Rock Armour- We discovered that this prevention technique is present in many large seaside towns along the coastal path, such the rock armour reinforcing the sea wall in Sheringham. It is formed of many huge boulders piled up on the beach to absorb the energy of the waves and to allow the beach to build.

Soft engineering approaches

These strategies are much cheaper, less damaging to the environment and are more sustainable than hard engineering but are not always as effective. We saw evidence of all these in place along the Norfolk coastal path.

Dune regeneration- Planting Marram grass that is often found on dunes to strengthen and support them stopping waves destroying them as quickly, protecting the land behind.

Beach re-profiling -Putting the sand onto the beach into large piles that absorb the waves impact.

Beach replenishment- Adding more sand to the beach to replace the sand that has been eroded and taken away by longshore drift, this sand needs to be regularly replaced.

We had been keen to study coastal erosion during our journey as this is a subject we are researching at school as part of our Geography GCSE. It was very interesting to see the effects and preventative measures for ourselves along this stretch of coastline.

With thanks to Henry Morris Trust

from

Zak Delanoy and David Dow

Expedition photos



Setting off from Cromer



Groynes and sea wall in Cromer



Cliff and Sea Wall, East Runton



Sea wall, West Runton



Rock Armour, Sheringham



Rock Gabions, Sheringham



Cliff erosion, Weybourne



Galley Hill Farm Campsite



Marram grass near Holkham



Sand Dunes, Holme



Sheer cliff erosion with Caves, Hunstanton



Rubble from unstable cliff face, Hunstanton



Mission complete