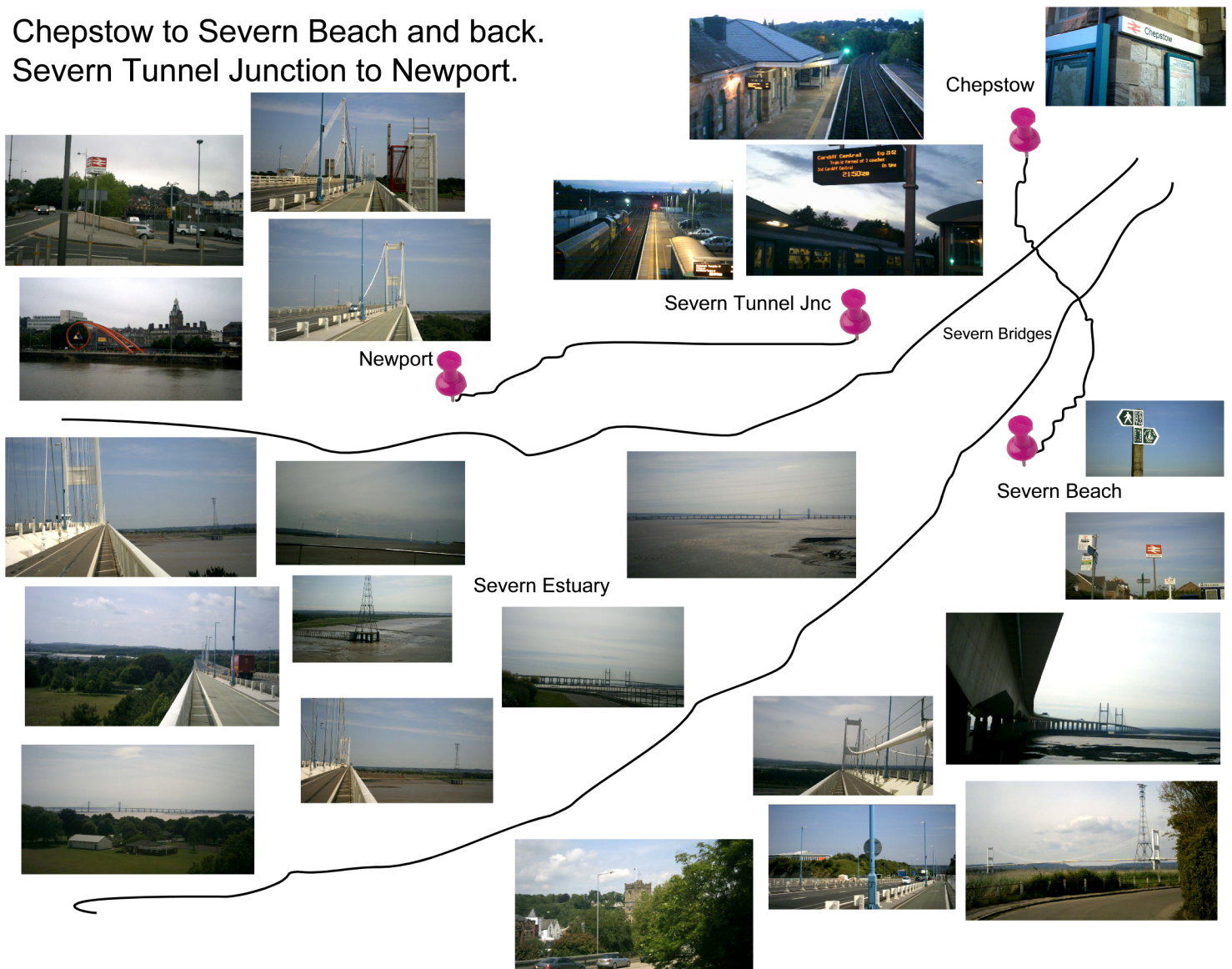


Chepstow to Severn Beach and back. Severn Tunnel Junction to Newport.



You have probably gathered by now that I like walking over bridges. Well, with this walk you get two for the price of one, or so I thought. Originally I had intended to get the train to Bristol and walk from there to the Severn bridges. I didn't know whether you could walk over them both, so it might have been risky to walk all the way from Bristol to try and find out. So, when I reached Newport I had a change of heart and decided to get the train to Chepstow. The Severn Bridge at Chepstow is the older of the two, although I have reason to believe that there was an original railway bridge that was destroyed and that's why the trains travel along a tunnel under the Severn Estuary. Today there are two road bridges but the one from Chepstow is like two bridges in one anyway. I was hoping to cross over the old bridge to Severn Beach and then cross back over the new bridge back to South Wales and Newport, but it didn't work out that way. Getting from Chepstow to Severn Beach was pretty straight forward but I wasn't sure that they let you walk over the new bridge, besides, I couldn't find any way onto the bridge apart from via the road. I then made my way to Severn Beach station to see if I could get a train into Bristol, but the next train was nearly three hours away. I made my way to Pilning station, which is on the main line between Bristol and Newport. The Station is quite some distance from the town and when I finally did reach the station I was kindly told that only two trains stop there a week and that is on the weekend. This was getting frustrating, but it wasn't going to stop here. I thought I would walk back to Chepstow. I followed the numerous bridle ways, cycle paths and footpaths trying to get back to the bridge. Some of the footpath gates were tied up and locked. I got the feeling that they don't like walkers too much around there. I finally found my way out of the maze and back to Chepstow and got the train back to Severn Tunnel Junction. It was now getting very late so I stayed overnight.

The next morning I made my way along a quiet lane past some farms and through a wooded area and down a path along a hedgerow. I kept thinking to myself that I hope there is a way out at the end of this. Thank God there was and I came to a main road. This main road had a great cycle path running along the side of it but by now my feet were really beginning to hurt, after all the walking I'd done the day before. I thought I was never going to reach Newport. When I reached Newport Station I realized that my ticket said "From Bristol" on it, and because they have automatic barriers at the station I thought they weren't going to let me in. Thankfully someone came along and let me through after I explained. After all the walking I had done, that was the last thing I needed. My feet took over a week to get right and I really thought I wasn't going to be the same again. The week after I had another big walk to do down in Dorset.

By Philip Catherall