

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June my daughter and I together with my dog, Sky, attempted to walk Offa's Dyke from Four Crosses to Pool Quay.

Everything went very well, the cows, mostly young heifers or yearlings, didn't bother us very much, the dog was on a lead in all the fields that had animals in them. There were fields with sheep. We made detours if the cows looked very close to the path or skittish but mostly we were ignored.

After possibly the third or fourth field we had passed through with cattle in, we came to a field with a group of seven or eight very young heifers and a very young bull. They were lying down on the banks of the argae. The only detour from the path we could make was down the other side of the argae. The field here was very narrow, a quick assessment suggested staying on the argae was the best choice as if we dropped down the other side the cows and bull could come charging down on top of us.

When this small herd saw us they started to get up. On this, Sky, decided to bark, the bull in particular charged at us. My daughter let go of the dog and the dog was promptly kicked by the bull. We were almost exactly half way between Four Crosses and Pool Quay. We managed to get out of this field and able to sit down and examine the damage to Sky. She had a very nasty wound just above her wrist, but it didn't seem to be bleeding very much. The leg was obviously very tender but there seemed to be no broken bones. After a stop for refreshments and to gather our thoughts we decided that the only thing to do was to keep going towards Pool Quay, where we had parked one of our cars.

The next field we entered also had a herd of heifers, a bigger herd and older than the ones before. These decided to get closer and closer, again the only option was to drop down off the argae. Sky, began to get very agitated by these cows, she was, of course, limping on three legs. We made an escape through a gate but could not exit this very large field as there was a herd of cows down the far end near farm buildings.

After about ten minutes or quarter of an hour, we could hear voices on the other side of the hedge, I went over to the gate, where the cows were still congregated, and was able to speak to three walkers. They very kindly persuaded the cows to leave the gate and we eventually got back into the field. The three young men had warned us that there were at least three more fields with cows in between this spot and Pool Quay. We were able to make our escape from Offa's Dyke along the side of a field of wheat to a lane. My daughter then went off to Pool Quay to get the car.

Later that evening Sky was seen by our local vet at Four Crosses and kept in overnight. On Wednesday she had an X-ray which revealed that her wrist was dislocated and some damage done to the cartilage. She will require a pen-carpal arthrodesis when her wound has healed.

The point of all this is that we walked through approximately ten fields, of which six or seven had cows of various ages in them. There were probably another seven fields to go and of those at least three had cows. It seems to me that the farmers should take some consideration for walkers along that stretch of Offa's Dyke, have cows in perhaps every other field, there seems to me there should be more co-ordination between the various farmers along that stretch. Even the most well behaved dog gets agitated on being confronted with so many cattle in one stretch.