

## **Ceiriog Valley walk - walking west (up the valley)**

### **Stage 1a - Under the Aqueduct**

*Chirk Main Car Park to Pont Faen*

*Distance 1.5 km. Height gain 20 metres (65 ft). Time 30 mins.*

Leave the main Chirk car park through the 'No Exit' way, turning left on to the main street. Continue past the church and begin to go down the hill. About 70 meters after leaving the last building in town, cross the stile on your left. Follow the grassy track to the right downhill, then bear left towards the old mill building. Cross the footbridge over the old mill race, go over the stile and keep ahead to a metal gate. Go through a gap left of the gate and carefully cross the road and through the kissing gate opposite. Continue down the track and follow the river bank, passing under the massive aqueduct and viaduct. Keep to the river bank on your left until you get to a stone bridge. Pass through the kissing gate to the right and onto Pont Faen (stone bridge).

Cross the bridge into England!

OR

### **Stage 1b - Castle Woods**

*Chirk Train Station to Pont Faen*

*Distance 1 km. Height Gain negligible. Time 15 mins.*

Leaving the station, turn R, crossing the railway bridge and canal tunnel, ahead for 5 mins. to the impressive castle gates. Turn left onto the tarmac drive. Where the drive bends left into the caravan park, keep ahead. At a T-junction go right, downhill through woodland. Emerge onto the road, go right for 100 metres, then left onto an old stone bridge, 'Pont Faen'.

Cross the bridge into England!

OR

### **Stage 1c - Glan Wylfa Car Park to Pont Faen**

*Distance 750 metres. Height Gain negligible. Time 12 mins.*

Located in Castle Road (B4500), this car park is close to the canal and aqueduct. Leave the car park and turn right to cross the road before a mini-roundabout. Pause to view the superb aqueduct and viaduct. The canal tunnel is beneath your feet! Proceed on the B4500 for about 130 metres and cross the road onto a footpath and footbridge (known as the Matchbox bridge) which crosses the track-bed of the historic Glyn Valley Tramway. Continue on this footpath. Ignore a path joining from the right and descend through woodland. Re-cross the Tramway track-bed to reach the road. Go right downhill for 100m, then left onto Pont Faen (The Stone Bridge).

Cross the bridge into England!

## **Stage 2 - The English Bit**

*Pont Faen to Offa's Dyke*

*Bus stops at Pont Faen and at Castle Mill*

*Distance 2.7 km. Height gain 154 metres (510 ft). Time 1 hour 5 mins*

From the bridge turn right onto a riverside lane (we have just joined a section of the Maelor Way). Just past the telephone box go over the stile on right and through a meadow with the river on your right. Follow along to the next stile that leads into woods owned by the Woodland Trust. Follow the

path along the riverbank, and then up and down the steps, turning left at the bottom of the flight. Continue ahead crossing a stile out of the wood and ahead to another stile onto a track. Pass beneath the huge Black Poplar tree to follow the track to double gates at a house. Continue up the lane to a road at the top.

You can opt for an easier way by using country lanes and save 50 metres (160 ft) of height gain and about 6 mins. (Stages 2-3). But for the recommended walk turn right for just 20 metres then fork left into a 'green lane' which runs down the left side of the old school building. Follow this short lane to its end and climb over a 'hidden' stile beside the gate. Go through a gap in the hedge on your left and cut diagonally across a humpy field with a quarry on your left, through an old hedge line and then a small field to the stile onto a stone track. Turn left uphill on this track for 5 minutes to a crossroads. Turn right still uphill for another 8 or 10 minutes. The track levels out, and your climb is rewarded by magnificent views and a fine stand of beech trees and views of the castle across the valley. Arrive at a cutting through the 1200 year old Offa's Dyke. You are back in Wales!

*Footsore? You can take the Dyke Path downhill, then a lane steeply down hill to the bus route at Castle Mill.*

### **Stage 3 - Terraced lanes and pastures**

*Offa's Dyke to Pontfadog*

*Facilities in Pontfadog include a Post Office / General Store, bus stop, telephone box, old tramway waiting room, a garage and a welcoming pub, the Swan Inn*

*Distance 3.5 km. Height gain 65 metres (214 ft). Time: 1 hour 5 mins*

Just 30 metres beyond Offa's Dyke, as the track widens, take a stile by gate on the right onto a fairly level track. Continue, as the track descends to two gates and a stile. Take the stile on right into a field and drop down for 50 metres. Climb another stile by a gate. Go ahead, initially with a fence on your left, but as the fence bears away, keep ahead (just right of a boulder), fairly level, for about 200 metres, then swing gently right, gently downhill to a stile near the field corner. Go ahead, passing hawthorn trees, then traversing gently uphill before dropping to reach the left corner of the field. Cross the stile and descend quite steeply, keeping to the right hedge, through a gap ahead, then left to a gate which opens onto a tarmac drive. Follow the drive for 2 mins. to a lane with a large "nissen hut" building opposite. Follow this lane uphill, straight ahead, ignoring all turns and forks to the left. After 45 minutes on the lane, descending in stages, you reach a river bridge into Pontfadog village.

### **Stage four - Meadow and Woodland**

*Pontfadog to Glyn Ceiriog*

*Bus stop, Pub, Post Office and garage at Pontfadog. And a tramway waiting room!!*

*Bus stops, Post Office, shops, The Institute, refreshment in Pubs and Christian Centre at Glyn Ceiriog*

*Distance 4 km. Height gain 80 metres (250 ft). Time 1 hr 30 mins*

From Pontfadog centre follow the main road towards Glyn Ceiriog for about 6 minutes to a crossroads. Take the minor lane right, rising back on itself for 3 or 4 minutes to the end of the tarmac. Go sharp left here on a footpath above a garden to emerge (after approximately 400m) on a broader track. Turn left to reach a tarmac lane and continue right for 150 metres to reach an 'arrow-head' crossroad. Keep ahead passing a letterbox on this initially level lane for about 6 mins. to reach "30MPH" restriction signs.

Proceed a further 80 metres to the crest of a rise and here turn right between houses up a shor

green lane to a stile. Ahead, uphill and then diagonally left through mixed woodland to a gate and stile into an open meadow. Follow the little depression uphill where a further stile leads to a path between hedges. Just 35 metres up this path find a stile on the left into a meadow. Follow on level ground above the hedge-line for 100 metres to use a stile and steps on left. Continue along the same hedge-line, but now below it and cross another stile. Keep generally ahead, but now dropping slightly away from the hedge, aiming to pass below a small group of Scots Pine trees to stiles.

Pass between old derelict buildings (as of 2012) and onto a tarmac lane. Turn left downhill for 1 1/2 minutes to a hairpin bend and leave the lane to follow ahead down a drive above a house. Pass through a small gate, then diagonally right and down, below a stable block, to a stream footbridge and stile. Go downhill 50 metres to a hedge-line, then right to follow above the hedge and a large house, then diagonally left to a stile onto a tarmac lane. Turn right along the lane for 8 mins., then take the left junction around the edge of the school playing fields to reach and cross the main road opposite the school entrance. Find a riverside footpath and follow this for 8 mins. to its end by Glyn Ceiriog Post Office. Go right uphill for a short distance to end this section at 'The Cross'.

There are refreshments (Pubs or Christian Centre), bus stops, P.O., shops and 'The Institute'.

### **Stage five - The Pandy Hump**

Glyn Ceiriog to Pandy

Bus stop, shops, Post Office, and refreshments at Glyn Ceiriog

Bus stop and glass studio in Pandy

Distance 2.5 km. Height gain 150 metres (500 ft). Time 55 mins

This section goes over the magnificent 'Pandy Rock' which dominates the valley, and will make you puff. Alternatively you can take the option of walking the valley road, and save yourself over 20 minutes! You will miss out on wonderful views though, and the road has no footway so take special care.

If you do take the road option follow the B 4500 from The Cross towards Llanarmon for about 20 mins., and shortly after the entrance to the caravan park turn left through a gate onto the National Trust tramway track which brings you into Pandy in 5 mins.

To follow the recommended route take the right fork about 5 mins. after leaving The Cross, signposted for Nantyr. Continue up this road for about 5 mins. until, reaching a hairpin bend, you continue straight ahead on a rough track past a wooden cottage. Continue up this steep sunken path for about 11 mins. until you reach a field gate. Go through this and walk straight ahead - there's a farm on your right hand side. The path can be very muddy here and you may wish to skirt to the left to avoid some of it. Remember to keep the old hedge line, which runs from the farm up the hill, on your right hand side. After about 4 mins. cross a stone track and continue up the ridge, again with the same hedge line on your right hand side.

After another 5 mins. of walking gently uphill the land levels out. You have reached the highest point of the whole walk so take time to appreciate the extensive view! Here look for the 'green lane' which forks off to the left and follow this with a fence line on your left, downhill. Stick closely to the fence line rather than the track and as the fence ends turn left to follow an old green 'avenue' down the field. At its end turn right and follow a similar 'avenue' down to and over a field gate and continue for a couple of minutes until coming to two field gates on your left.

Go through the wooden gate and drop down onto the low green lane following right of an old hedgerow past a derelict building, then swinging right to a field gate and down to the conifer wood. Turn right and follow the fence down the hill and cross a stile at the bottom. Turn sharp left, without crossing the stream, and follow this forestry track downhill for 5 mins. At the tarmac lane, go left to

reach Pandy to approximately 400m.

### **Stage six - The Quarry and Tramway**

Pandy to Tregairiog.

Bus stops at Pandy, Pontricket and Tregairiog. There is a Glass Studio at Pandy

Distance 3 km. Height gain 20 metres (70 ft). Time 50 mins.

Cross the main road with care and head for the telephone box. Walk down the lane past the row of houses on your right. Go through the gate at the end and turn right to join the National Trust Tramway track. Continue along this level path for about 10 mins. until you come to a lane which you cross directly to go through a gate by a house with the bell on it (once the Quarrymasters House). Continue straight ahead along the Tramway crossing a stile and after 1 min. follow the left hand fork uphill. Continue along this track for about 12 mins., passing the entrance to the disused (and dangerous) Hendre Quarry, ignoring all turns to your left or right until you come to the attractive stone buildings of Hendre Farm.

Go between the main house and outbuildings and follow the gravel track downhill. At the T-junction (go right over the river for 6 minutes for a bus stop) turn left up the lane for a minute then turn right through a field gate and then almost immediately over a stile to follow a level track below the hedge line. Continue for a couple of mins. and where the farm track bears left into the field above, continue straight ahead to a stile. Follow the grassy level track along for about 3 mins. until reaching a stream and crossing a stile. Keep right to a stile, then keep to the fence line on your right for 5 mins. to reach a tarmac lane. Follow the lane to your right, through the gate, for about 8 mins to reach a cross roads.

If you wish to go to the hamlet of Tregairiog to catch the bus, turn right here over the river bridge and ahead for 5 mins. to a telephone box and bus stop.

### **Stage 7 - The pheasant Strut**

Tregairiog to Llanarmon D.C

Bus stops and phone boxes at Tregairiog and Llanarmon. Llanarmon has public toilets

Refreshments in plenty at two excellent hotels!

Distance 2 km. Height gain 45 metres (150 ft). Time 40 mins

Cross the lane (but not the river bridge) and on a minor lane pass the pumping station on your right. Go through the road gate ahead and continue for one min. before turning right through a gate into the field. Continue level "along the contour" for 4 or 5 mins. to reach a gate ahead near the bottom of the mixed wood. Go through the gate and follow the level track through this pheasant wood. After about 4 mins. where the main track drops down through a field gate, continue ahead on a grassier track (just inside the wood) with the fence on your right. After 4 mins. leave the wood through another field gate and continue (much bracken) with the fence still on your right. After 4 mins. pass left of a house (Ty'n y Fedw) reaching in two mins. a slightly boggy area. Slightly right to cross a stream and stile in field corner.

A sign warns that "path 1 is temporarily closed" but we take another path through the left field gate and straight ahead up the field to cross a stile. Keep straight ahead and as you crest the rise, soon see an isolated barn ahead. Pass through a gate and keep left of this barn onto a level grassy track. In 2 minutes a field gate opens onto a tarmac road. Follow this road down for about 5 minutes into the village of Llanarmon, your journey's end!

You may join the path at Tregairiog by taking public transport to Tregairiog crossroads. Follow the

side road going downhill for 4 mins to the river bridge.