

Country Walks Around Wrexham

Route 6 – RHOSLLANERCHRUGOG

Mountain Reservoirs (5½ miles / 3 hours)

Rhos – Ty Mawr – Esclusham Mountain – Bronwylfa – Rhos

- *This route may be linked to CWAU 3 to create a 9 mile walk.*

This walk is a gentle climb up to Esclusham Mountain passing Ty-Mawr and Cae-llwyd reservoirs and includes a short section of moorland. It begins at the Sun Inn, Hall Street, Rhosllanerchrugog (grid ref. 289468).

Cars: Plenty of parking space is available nearby.

Buses: There are regular bus services from Wrexham, travel information: 01978 266166.

Please ensure that your dog does not stray from the footpaths. Keep it on a lead in fields with sheep and on the open mountain where the grouse are easily disturbed.

- *The route is not suitable for wheelchairs, buggies or small children.*

WALK DIRECTIONS ARE IN BOLD TYPE

Starting from the Sun Inn, Rhos, follow Hall Lane for a short distance away from the village, to Park Lodge with its stone relief depicting the sun. The emblem is believed to be part of the Jones family crest, owners of Llanerchrugog Hall in the late 18th century.

The building was originally part of the Llanerchrugog Estate and a tree-lined driveway to the Hall ran from here through the estate parkland.

Retrace your steps for a few metres to take the path through a long narrow open space, this was once a Great Western Railway line linking Rhos with Wrexham. In 1893 a group of Rhos businessmen formed a consortium to run their own railway to connect the village with Wrexham. The promoters had the support of Sir G O Morgan, Member of Parliament for the division and Mr Geo T Kenyon, member of Denbigh Boroughs and a director of Ellesmere Railway. They had also been promised strong financial support by traders from Rhos and Wrexham who felt that it was most important to be able to communicate directly with Merseyside and the North Wales coast and, by means of the Ellesmere line which was nearing completion, with the Midlands and South Wales. At this time, they had to pay the GWR to transport their goods to Ruabon and then there was a further charge for bringing them to Rhos by road.

The GWR already had a mineral railway from the Shropshire Union Canal at Trevor Wharf. It ran behind Rhos via Brook Street to Copi Brickworks and on to Llwyneinion. However, when the GWR learned of the project they put forward their own proposal and it was this scheme that was adopted by Parliament.

The Wrexham-Rhos branch line was opened to goods traffic on 1 October 1901 and to passenger traffic on 1 March 1905. It left the main Shrewsbury line at Felin Puleston to run through Rhostyllen and Legacy to Rhos. The railway was later extended south of Rhos to link with the Pontcysyllte line at Afon Eitha.

Leave the surfaced path where it turns right to a residential road and continue on the grass to the far left corner of the open area. At the road turn left and continue for about 200 metres until you reach the quarries by Llwyneinion Wood. In 1757 Isaac Wilkinson, a prominent figure in the coal and iron industries of the 18th century, leased coal and ironstone mining rights from Cae Glas Estate nearby and built a highway to the pits. Coal from Llwyneinion supplied Wilkinson's Ironworks at Bersham.

The most important era of Llwyneinion (Einion's grove), however, was under Thomas Jones of Llanerchrugog Hall. In the early years of the 19th Century he opened an ironworks here, in partnership with Rigby of Hawarden. By 1817 the ironworks had two very active furnaces, producing some 70 tonnes of pig iron per week. This was the highest output in North Wales at the time.

An 1865 map of the Ruabon collieries shows the Half Square Colliery as being south of Llwyneinion Brickworks. In the adjacent part of the wood, old tips mark the site of the colliery which, according to the Geological Society, worked the Llwyneinion Half Yard and possibly the Wall and Bench seams above.

As well as coal and ironstone, the wood also had deposits of fireclay and, in 1883, the Llwyneinion Slate Brickworks was founded to exploit this. Later known as the Llwyneinion Tile and Brick Works, it closed in 1929.

Leave the road, taking the signposted path on the left into the wood. In summer, honeysuckle blossoms in luxuriant splendour along this footpath that may have been part of a link between the hillforts at Bwlchgwyn and Ruabon.

In approximately 200 metres you meet a well-used path crossing at right angles; turn left and, roughly in a straight line, cross five fields to the road.

Turn right and follow the road for 200 metres. With the farm, "New Buildings", on your right, turn left into a lane. After a while Ty-mawr Reservoir can be seen through the hedge on the right. This was the second reservoir built by the Wrexham Waterworks Company. Its construction was authorised in 1902 by an Act of Parliament that also changed the name of the concern to the 'Wrexham and East Denbighshire Water Company' so that it would more appropriately indicate the extensive area served. The reservoir, which holds 600 million litres of water, took 4 years to construct and was officially opened on 2 October 1907. Fishing is the only sport allowed on the reservoir, which is well-stocked with trout.

Ignore all gateways to arrive at a T-junction with a stand of trees opposite. Turn left, cross the old stone bridge and go through the gate. Ignore the path to the right and follow the track straight ahead up the hill. If you look back you will get a splendid view of Cae-llwyd Reservoir. This was the first reservoir built by the Wrexham Waterworks Company. The company was established by a Bill of Parliament in 1863 and received the Royal Assent a year later. By 1874 it was supplying water to a large part of East Denbighshire and a small part of Flintshire. To cope with the increasing demand it was given

authorisation to construct Cae-llwyd as an impounding reservoir to collect water from nearly 400 hectares (1,000 acres) of moorland on Ruabon Mountain. The reservoir was completed in 1878 and has a capacity of 175 million litres.

After you pass through a gateway under the Scots pine, take the track that diverges to the right. The track curves left by some oak trees, then bends right. Make your way over to the gateway on the right.

Cross the nearby stile, rejoin the main track and bear right, heading towards the corner of the forest. Follow the path which gradually converges with the fence on the right, meeting it by the stream. As you cross the moor look out for grouse, buzzard and kestrel.

This mountain, most of which is common land, covers an area 10km by 5km. It was sold by the Crown to Sir Watkin Williams Wynne on 15 June 1857 for just over £208, and Sir Watkin also gave £2,000 for the sporting rights. Grouse shooting still takes place but the moor is now mainly given over to sheep, which the local farmers round up twice a year, first to dip them and later to drive onto lower pastures for the winter. This seasonal movement of livestock is called transhumance. Lead was once mined on the mountain and to the west of the path are the remains of four shafts and other workings.

This vast upland expanse, consisting of Eglwyseg, Ruabon and Esclusham Mountains, is of considerable natural and geological interest and is a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The heather moor, with its associated plants and birds and the spectacular limestone outcrop to the southwest are of particular significance.

Cross the stream via the stepping stones. Follow the path, which gradually makes its way right towards the double fence, parallel with the wall. Six hundred metres further on, cross the stile to follow the path down the hill. Do not go towards the mast. At the corner of the stone wall by the old buildings, bear right. Continue down to the road via the stile by the gate.

Turn right and follow the road round to the left. At Tan-y-fron notice how the stream runs under the buildings. **Your next stile is on the right, under the power lines. Bearing slightly to the right, cross the field and pass through the hedge between the oak and ash trees. Continue in the same direction to cross the bridge near Plas-yn-fron (brow hall).** The hall was owned in 1780 by Ellis Yonge of Bryn Iorcyn and Acton Park and, after his death in 1785, became the property of his two daughters Penelope and Barbara. It remained in their hands until well into the 19th Century. By 1844 the farm, then comprising over 80 hectares (200 acres), had passed into the possession of John Burton of Minera. The original part of the house possibly dates from 1660. The Jones family, who have been here since 1925, manage over 150 hectares (370 acres) of pasture land.

Now walk straight across the field, go over the stile and continue along the road to the wood, passing the waterfall on Pentrebychan Brook. Bearing left, follow the road past the large oak tree to the junction and turn left.

Continue past Wrexham and East Denbighshire Water Company's Gronwen Filter Works. This was constructed to purify the water from the Cae-llwyd reservoir. The powers for its construction were given by an Act of 1880, which also

extended the statutory area of supply into Cheshire and still further into Flintshire. The installation was completed in 1885 and consisted of three filter beds and a service reservoir able to hold 2.9 million litres. A fourth filter was added in 1911. Work was carried out in 1982 to refurbish the filters.

Halfway down the steep hill, look for a stone on the roadside to your right bearing the legend '7 – 1913'. This is said to be the memorial to a girl who died here in 1913 when she fell off a vehicle while the road was being built.

Turn right into a lane just above the first house. This building was originally the stables for Bronwyfya, the house across the road. During the Great War they provided horses for the British Army. The paddock is now a delightful walled garden.

Continue along the lane to the entrance of the 16th Century cottage, Tan-y-lan. This is a grade II listed building with an exposed crude cruck in the gable end. The cruck is part of the building's main framework, formed from two long curved timbers rising from the foundation. Inside there is a small area of wattle and daub visible on the stairs, but please note the house is a private dwelling and not open to the casual visitor. Tan-y-lan was once part of the Plas Power Estate and the Fitzhugh family still retain the mineral rights to the land. **Take the path to the right of all the buildings.**

Follow the path, at first enclosed, then via kissing gates along a field edge to a lane. Where the lane bends left, take the stile on the right into a conifer plantation.

At the crosspaths turn left along the main footpath down to the lane. Turn right and then right again at the road junction, towards Rhos. Now retrace the first part of the walk by re-passing the quarries, turning right onto the disused railway and turning left at the road, back to the Sun Inn.

FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

RESPECT – PROTECT – ENJOY

- Be Safe – Plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

(Please help clean up our countryside – take home someone else's litter).

If you experience any problems on this walk or if you would like to make any other comment please contact Public Rights of Way, telephone 01978 292057, or visit our website www.wrexham.gov.uk/rightsofway.