

## Country Walks around Wrexham

Brymbo – Mount Pleasant – Bwlchgwyn – Mount Sion - Brymbo

Approx 5 miles / 3.5 hours

This walk starts at the George and Dragon pub (grid ref SJ 294541) in the village of Brymbo a few miles north west of Wrexham. There are some excellent panoramic views of Wrexham and the Cheshire Plain along the way.

The route descends through picturesque wooded valleys and crosses open farmland, passing many of the features from the area's industrial past. The mix of habitats allows the walker to experience something new throughout the seasons.

**Directions:** From Wrexham town centre take the A525 towards Ruthin. After crossing the A483 take the second right signposted for Brymbo. Take the second right along this road after approximately 1 mile. At the T junction turn right onto the B5101. Pass through the village of Lodge and the pub "Y Tai" on the right, before turning left up the hill by the sign for Pen y Garth residential home. Turn right following the car park signs.

**Parking:** There is a small car park opposite the school on the road to the pub. The George and Dragon can be seen uphill on the left from the car park entrance.

**Buses:** The number 12 and 13 buses link Brymbo with Wrexham. Bus information: 01978 266166.

**Map:** Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 256 covers the area but the extract supplied will be all you need for the walk.

- It should be noted that this walk may be muddy and slippery in some places so please wear suitable footwear and take extra caution.
- This route is not suitable for wheelchairs or buggies.

### Walk Directions

Stand with your back to the George and Dragon pub (1) and walk up the road to your right. This is Pen y Graig Road. Pass the "Poppy Field" cul de sac to your right. As you walk uphill along road you will pass the Rocko (2) on your left, a sculpture which commemorates Brymbo's recent industrial past. You can stop here and look behind you at the lovely views over the surrounding landscape.

The path to the sculpture has stone seats with insets bearing the names of families who worked at the steelworks in the past. There is also a separate stone with a relief portrait bust of John Wilkinson, a local Ironmaster. The sculptor worked with the community and consulted with local people to produce a work which reflected the industrial heritage. The design for the sculpture was based on images of the old steel works that former workers suggested, the hot steel, the huge scale of the machinery and the intense heat.

As you carry on along Pen y Graig Road have a look at the different ornate chimney pots on the houses. You will come to a cross roads. Ahead of you, to the left of the magnificent oak tree is Brake Road.

The oak (3) is one of our longest living trees, spanning many generations. For this reason, old oaks were used by the Druids, by Kings and the Church for important meetings and ceremonies. They were planted to mark boundaries because of their longevity and strength to endure for hundreds of years. An oak tree will take 70 to 80 years before it begins to produce acorns. By then the trunk will be about 20 inches in diameter, but this will still be a young tree in the life of an oak.

Walk uphill along this tree lined country lane. As it bends to the left take the lane on the right, passing the stone house on your left. Then as the lane bends to the right you will see a stile in front of you next to a large field gate. Cross this stile and carry straight ahead through the gorse bushes. As the main track bears to the left take the smaller path to the right. You will see Brymbo Pool to your right across the field.

Brymbo Pool (4) was once a natural lake of 3 acres. It was enlarged to 5 acres in 1892, and again enlarged to 8 acres in 1958. Its purpose was to provide a constant source of water for the steel works. Following the closure of the works the pumps used to fill the pool were decommissioned. This resulted in a dramatic fall in water levels at the pool, coupled with leaks in its bed. During 1996 remedial work was undertaken to seal the bed of the pool with clay, therefore preventing further leakage. The current area of Brymbo pool is around 3 acres again.

Carry on along this path past the overgrown remains of a hedgerow on your right. As you approach the large stone structure follow the path to the left towards the corner of the field. This building is a bottle chimney (5).

The chimney, dating back to John Wilkinson's era, was built between 1792 and 1794. It was one of his earliest industrial undertakings in the area and formed part of his nearby lead smelting plant. The chimney once stood over 100 feet (32 metres) high before being demolished in 1962, leaving the current 25 feet (8 metres) tall remains.

Cross the stile in the field corner, bear left and follow the track downhill through the mature large holly trees. You will see a large house in front of

you. This is Hurricane House (5), a private residence which stands next to the former site of Wilkinson's lead works. With the house on your right pass through the field gate and bear left towards Minera Road.

Take care as you turn left on Minera Road and walk along it for approximately 50 metres until you see a stile in the hedgerow on your right. Cross the stile and head downhill across the field keeping the hedge to your left. As you cross the 2 stiles next to the field gates you will notice the parallel hedgerows close to each other.

These mark the route of an old railway line (6), the Minera Mineral Railway track which served Brymbo's Ironworks with lime, ore and coal such as from the nearby Pen y Coed Colliery.

Keep the hedgerow to your left again as you walk downhill across the next field. Pass the small wooden bridge on your left and descend into the wooded valley. Ahead of you there is a lovely stone bridge crossing this enchanting steep sided valley. Cross the bridge and the nearby stile ahead of you before returning to open farmland.

With the beech wood and hedgerow on your left walk uphill towards the next stile. You can turn round and look back towards Hurricane House here, and look left down the wooded valley. After crossing the stile walk uphill across the field diagonally towards the top right hand corner. Then cross the stile next to the track. Keep the hedgerow on your right, before crossing another stile and heading up the track in front of you. You will cross a babbling brook before walking uphill into the next field. Cross the field diagonally with Cefn Farm on your right, heading towards the field gate. After walking through the gateway, keep the hedge to your right and walk towards the stile in the corner of the field.

Cross the stile onto Cefn Road and directly opposite you will see another one. Climb over that and head downhill to the stile in the bottom left hand corner of the field. After crossing the stile there, head over the next one nearby on your right and head uphill towards the farm buildings. This is Waen Farm. Go through the 2 field gates, and immediately turn left towards another one that leads back into a field. Go through there and keeping the fence on your right and walk onwards the next field gate.

With the fence and wooded area on your right hand side walk towards the stile in the corner of the field. Cross over and head along the path back towards Cefn Road. Turn right and walk along the lane into the village of Bwlchgwyn.

At a height of 1090 feet (333 metres) above sea level, Bwlchgwyn is one of several places claiming to be the highest village in Wales. The name translates as "White Pass" in Welsh. The area is well known for its snow during winter and this may be the reason. Another explanation is that it refers to the white limestone cliffs nearby. It has also been suggested that the original name was Bwlchgynt meaning "Windy Pass".

Ignore the footpath to your right and carry on along the lane towards the school. As you approach the school and before the road junction turn right and walk along the path to the left of the house. Cross over the track and continue along the path. When you reach the house turn left and walk along the gravel driveway to the road. This is the A525 Wrexham to Ruthin road. Turn right and walk along the pavement towards the War Memorial (7) which is located in the lay-by, on the bend in the road as it bears to the left.

The memorial was erected in memory of the 12 local people who lost their lives during the First World War, and the 2 people who died during the Second World War.

This is a lovely spot to rest and look at the panoramic views over Wrexham and eastwards towards the Cheshire Plain. Or look westwards towards the dramatic expanse of the moorland landscape. This is also the starting point for Route 5 of the Country Walks Around Wrexham. This is a 5 mile walk around Nant y Ffrith.

Take the lane to the right of the War Memorial. This is Glascoed Road. Follow this lane for about a mile, passing a stone quarry to your left in Coed Mawr and the 2 lanes on your left. As the lane bears left and you will see a junction on your right, take this right hand lane. This is Cefn Road again.

Cefn Road (8) follows the line of a main Roman route that passed through here from the village of Ffrith, to the top of Brymbo Road, then over to the old Ruthin road which traverses the Llandegla moors. In 1602 the ghosts of a Roman army were reported marching through the area, although nothing has been seen since then.

Walk along here until the lane dips as it crosses a stream. Cross over the stile to your left. Keep to the right hand side of the field and head towards the corner. Climb over the next 3 stiles keeping the trees to your right as you walk through the open farmland. Cross the stile and descend into the woodland.

After walking down the wood steps turn left. Cross over the small boardwalk and head towards the lane. Turn left and walk uphill. As the lane bears to the left follow the footpath ahead along the track and turn right off the track into the woodland. Head downhill through the woodland, descending 2 sets of wooden steps, before crossing the stream and walking uphill to your left. Ignore the paths to the right and left and carry walking ahead up the valley slope. Cross the stile into open farmland. Ignore the stile directly opposite and instead head towards the top left hand corner of the field. This meadow is a riot of wild flowers in the summer.

Climb over the stile onto Minera Road. Take care as you turn left and walk downhill towards the stile on your right. Cross the stile and walk straight across the field and another 2 stiles. As you head from the stile you will see a muddy track to your left, head towards this, and walk along the path keeping

the track to your left. When you reach the stile cross over it onto a gravel track.

Turn right. On your left you will see the remains of the Minera Mineral Railway (9) track once again. Walk up the gravel track back towards your starting point. As you reach the brow of the hill you will see the George and Dragon pub in front of you. You have reached the end of your walk.

### **The countryside code**

- Leave all gates as you find them
- Please respect other walkers
- Take litter away with you
- Keep dogs on a leash
- Respect the habitats and wildlife