

## Ceiriog Valley walk - walking east (down the valley)

Walking downstream from Pont Faen, a choice - you can aim for Chirk "Under the Aqueduct" (35 mins); or the shorter 20 mins. "Castle Woods" walk direct to the train station, or to Glan Wylfa Car Park (15 mins.).

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

*Pont Faen to Chirk*

*There is a bus stop at Pont Faen*

*Distance 1.5 km. Height gain 35 metres (112 ft). Time 35 mins*

Standing on the bridge, face the main road and go through the kissing gate on your right. Walk along the river bank for 9 mins. to pass under the great railway viaduct, then the canal aqueduct built in 1801 before railways were even invented! Follow for another 8 mins. along the riverbank to a brick building and ascend the ramp to the main road (until recently the A5 London to Holyhead trunk road). Carefully cross the road. Left of the drive into the former mill, take a gap between two metal gates onto an initially tarmac path. Keep ahead alongside the old millrace. After a stile and a little footbridge keep ahead on the path which swings right, up towards an old stone wall. Steps and a stile lead to the main road, turn right for a couple of minutes walk back to Chirk Car park.

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

*Pont Faen to Chirk Train Station*

*Distance 1 km. Height gain 30 metres (100 ft). Time 20 mins*

From the bridge, face the main road. Ignore the kissing gate on right and walk uphill on the main road for 100 metres to take a footpath forking left up through woodland, crossing the historic track-bed of the Glyn Valley Tramway. 200 metres from the road, the path it passes through a low stone wall and 15 metres beyond, turn left onto a walled track. Pass a caravan park and keep ahead to reach the splendid white ornamental castle gates. Turn right here for the final 5 minute walk to the train station.

*If you wish to continue into Chirk itself, keep straight ahead for 8 minutes*

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

*Distance 750 metres; Height Gain 30 metres; Time 14 minutes*

Face the main road and ignore the kissing gate on your right. Walk up the main road for 100 metres, cross the road onto a footpath, up through woodland crossing the track-bed of the historic Glyn Valley Tramway. 200 metres from the road, pass through a low stone wall, ignore the path leading off left and continue ahead. Cross a footbridge (The Matchbox bridge) which again crosses the Tramway to emerge onto the main road. Cross and go left to a mini-roundabout to view the magnificent aqueduct and viaduct. The canal tunnel is beneath your feet! Then keep ahead a few yards to the car park.

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

*Offa's Dyke to Pont Faen*

*There are bus stops at Pont Faen and at Castle Mill*

*You may join the walk here by taking public transport to Castle Mill (there is almost no car parking)*

*Distance 2.7 km. Height gain perhaps 5 metres (20 ft). Time 47 mins*

Visit the information boards behind the stone wall for details of the Battle of Crogen Then cross the river bridge and up the short steep lane to a T-junction. Turn left up the lane for about 10 or 11

mins. to the Old School House which is on your right, with a clock above an upstairs window and a spire with weathervane. Twenty metres beyond the house, take the tarmac lane left

*You are now on the route!*

From the Dyke, continue on the broad track with fine beech trees on your right and superb views to the left. Ten mins. from the dyke, reach a crossroads and go left, downhill on a good stone track for 200 metres (3 mins.) to cross a stile on right. Keep ahead to a low broken wall/hedgerow into a humpy field (quarry on right). Go slightly left to pass just left of a large tree stump and through hedge gap. Turn right here for 15 metres to a gate and stile, then pass right of a stone and brick outhouse and ahead passing right of the attractive 'School House' to a tarmac road.

Ahead on the road for just 20 metres, then left downhill on tarmac lane. Pass a 'Public Footpath' sign on your right and keep ahead through 2 gates onto track passing beneath an ancient, mighty and quite rare Black Poplar to a gate/stile (6 mins. from road). Take your last view of the Castle before going right on a clear path into Pentre Wood for 10 mins. At a fork, take wooden steps uphill then down. Below on your left is the Chirk Trout Farm. Continue along the riverside where a stile/gate leads into meadowland, still beside the river. A second field brings you over a stile to a tarmac lane and telephone box. Go left for 1 minute to reach Pont Faen. Cross the bridge back into Wales.

*You may catch a bus here, but you would miss one of the 3 attractive options for last section into Chirk.*

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

*Pontfadog to Offa's Dyke*

*Distance 3.5 km. Height gain 170 metres (550 ft). Time 1 hr 15 mins*

From the Post Office, cross the road towards the Car Park, taking the lane over the river bridge. Climb the hill, ignoring all right turns for 1.5 km (1 mile) to attain higher ground. After a level section the lane drops downhill. Keep ahead for about 13 minutes until reaching a large 'nissen hut' barn on left backed by tall coniferous trees. Opposite is a small tumbling stream.

*You can opt for an easier way by taking country lanes. You save 60 metres (195 ft) of height gain and about 8 mins.. (Stages 3-2). If your legs feel the need, you may take the lane to Bronygarth and down the steep lane to Castle Mill for a bus.*

The lane swings away left here, but we go ahead up an open-gated tarmac drive for 2 mins. to its end. Go ahead through the gate, then immediately right through a gap in the hedgerow. Walk steeply up the field, keeping to the left hand hedge to climb a stile. Catch your breath, then continue up for just 30 metres to hawthorn trees. On easier ground, walk ahead, level, then dropping to the bottom corner of woodland which slopes down from right of the field. Pass a large sycamore tree which stands forward, and continue past a couple of hawthorn trees to climb a stile. Now walk gently uphill, diagonally left aiming just left of a grove of trees which lie on right of the meadow. From below the grove swing left, keeping roughly level, passing just left of boulder and ahead to gate and stile at the far right corner of the field. Immediately over the stile, go 90 degrees right uphill for 50 metres to another stile, then left onto a rising track. In 5 mins. cross a stile beside a gate onto a larger track and go left for 30 metres to arrive at Offa's Dyke. The dyke here is still the boundary between Wales and England 1200 years after it was built! Now for the "English Bit"!

*To catch a bus, the Dyke path will take you down to a lane to Castle Mill on the main B4500 road.*

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

*Glyn Ceiriog to Pontfadog*

*Bus stop, shops, Post Office, "The Institute" and refreshments at Glyn Ceiriog.*

*Bus stop, Post Office, pub, a garage at Pontfadog. Also a tramway waiting room!!*

*Distance 4 km. Height gain 60 metres (190 ft). Time 1 hr 25 mins*

Leaving The Cross, head downhill on a side road to the Post Office, cross the road and take the riverside footpath. In 7 mins. you will again reach the main road which must be crossed. Take the lane alongside the school playing field and in 4 mins reach a T-junction. Go right for 8 mins. along this lane, passing a GPO letterbox. 20 metres after a wayside seat take the stile on left. Cross the field diagonally right to pass behind the part-timbered building, swinging right behind this building to follow above the hedge line. Just before reaching a stream gully, turn left for 50 metres up to a stile and footbridge to cross the stream.

A track leads you below a stable block to a gate, then follow up a driveway (left of the house) to a lane. Go left uphill on the lane for just 2 mins. to a hairpin bend where a path leaves the lane right between derelict (at 2012) buildings. After stiles go diagonally left uphill to follow contouring hedge line for 2 mins. to a stile, then ahead for a further 1 min. to use steps and stile on left. Now follow above the same hedge line for 2 mins. to cross a stile in the right-hand corner of the field. Turn right downhill on a path between hedges. A stile leads into an open field. Take the small depression ahead to a gate and stile into mixed woodland. Descend diagonally left for 3 mins., then directly downhill for 1 min. to cross a stile and onto a tarmac lane.

Turn left along the lane for 7 mins. to an "arrowhead" crossroads. Keep ahead for 150 metres, but just before the road dips downhill, by a high retaining wall on left, fork left on a rising track for 200 metres (3 mins.), then fork right, downhill, on a woodland path for 4 mins. to its end by a house on the right. Take a sharp right down a tarmac track to the main road and left along the road for 6 mins. to the centre of Pontfadog.

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

*Pandy to Glyn Ceiriog*

*Glass Studio and bus stop at 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! If you do that, go back down to the river and turn left along more tramway trackbed, which joins the road in 5 mins. Then follow the main road for about 20 mins. You will miss out on excellent views, and the road has no footway so take special care.

Our recommended route follows the minor lane which runs just north of the tributary river, Afon Teirw (Bulls river). From Pandy follow this lane for 11 mins.. Fifty metres beyond a cottage 'Rhosydd', fork right up stone track, rising steeply for 7 mins. to a ford. Don't cross it but go sharp right over a stile and uphill for just 75 metres (1.5 mins.). Now go 90 degrees left to a gate and ahead for 6 mins. on a grassy track passing above a derelict building on your left and through a gate ahead. Go right, climbing another gate, for another 6 mins. up an 'avenue' track to the crest of the rise.

Turn 90 degrees left up another 'avenue' to its end, then diagonally right (above the fence and below the gorsy bank) swinging a little left to attain the crest of the ridge (7 mins.). Pause to admire the views all around! This is the highest point on the whole walk. Turn right keeping to the crest of the wooded ridge to cross a stone track in 4 mins. keeping ahead on often boggy ground. Take care as you approach farm buildings.

You may care to divert right to avoid deep mud, but return to the route as soon as possible, passing right of these buildings to go through a gate. Descend the sunken track for 7 mins. to reach a lane and continue downhill for 4 mins. to join the main road. Go left and in 5 mins. reach 'The Cross', the centre of Glyn Ceiriog.

*Bus stop, shops, Post Office, refreshments at Christian Centre or Pubs and The Institute.*

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

*Tregeiriog to Pandy*

*Bus stop at Tregeiriog, Pontricket & Pandy. Glass Studio at Pandy*

*Distance 3 km. Height gain about 15 metres (50 ft). Time 45 minutes*

Cross the lane but NOT the river bridge, taking a riverside lane for 7 mins. to pass through a road gate. Immediately after that gate and before the lane starts to swing right and rise, pass through a gate on left on a permissive path\* ahead across a field, following a hedge and keeping about level. Keep ahead over 2 or 3 fields for 6 mins. to a stile. Ahead, to cross a further stile by a small and boggy stream! Cross the stream onto a level but faint grassy track and follow with the hedge above you. Another stile, and continue just below the field boundary to yet another stile to emerge in 11 mins. onto an old drovers' road. Go L downhill for just 1 min.,\*\* then right at a white cottage.

Follow this track uphill between attractive and well-restored stone buildings. Continue along the track on to what was the terminus of the former Glyn Valley Tramway. In 10 mins. reach the disused and dangerous Hendre Quarry (right of the track). Take the right fork and continue for 8 mins. through woodland passing several ruins of former quarry buildings. Descend to a stile, continue to "The house with a bell" (once the Quarrymasters House) and cross a tarmac lane onto the National Trust Tramway track. Continue for 10 mins. to cross the river (on former tramway bridge) and in 50 metres turn left, for 2 mins. passing houses and the Glass Studio. This is the small hamlet of Pandy.

\* If the permissive path is closed, follow the lane to the white farmhouse then descend left on public footpath to the bottom corner of the field by the stream.

\*\* You can join or leave the walk here via the lane over the bridge up to Pontricket on B4500 for a bus.

*You may join the path at Tregeiriog by taking public transport to Tregeiriog crossroads. Follow the side road going downhill to the river bridge in 5 mins*

## **Stage 7 - The Pheasant Strut**

*Llanarmon to Tregeiriog*

*Bus stops at Tregeiriog and Llanarmon. Llanarmon has public toilets and refreshments in two excellent hotels*

*Walk around the lovely village before commencing your walk. You will want to come back to explore the area further*

*Distance 2 km. Height gain 45 metres (140 ft). Time 35 mins*

Our walk begins at the crossroads centre of Llanarmon D.C.. The attractive finger post points the road to Oswestry. Follow this route past the Church and uphill for about 7 minutes. Immediately before a wayside seat, a level gated track leads off left. After 3 minutes pass a traditional stone barn and swing slightly left through a field gate ahead. Keep ahead uphill and as you crest the rise see a stile ahead. Cross a further field ahead it , going gently downhill, and go through a gate. Climb the stile immediately on your right and cross the small stream beside it. Walk left with a

hedge on your left. In 2 minutes pass a stone house (Ty'n y fedw) on your left and walk ahead for 5 mins. on a level path just above the hedge. Much bracken!

Go through a gate into a wood and keep level and ahead for 7 mins, to emerge into a meadow. Keep level (contouring) to leave the field in 4 mins, through a gate onto a stone (becoming tarmac) track. Go left downhill for 3 minutes to meet a tarmac lane by a Pumping Station. To stay on the walk, keep straight ahead. Tregeiriog village has a bus stop and 'phone box. To use them, go over the river bridge and ahead for 5 mins.