

CHIRK & RIVER CEIRIOG WALK

This walk goes from Chirk to Chirk Castle, crosses the parkland, descends to the Ceiriog River, and along the river back to Chirk. There is variety in this walk: open pastures, woodland and riverside. The walk is 7 miles long, starting from the Chirk car park, although it could be started from the Chirk Castle car park; allow about 4 hours. Be prepared with boots, and a torch if you want to go through the canal tunnel.

How to get there: from Wrexham go south along the A483 to the junction with the A5, take the 3rd exit at the roundabout, and at the next roundabout take the 1st exit to Chirk, turn left just before the Hand Hotel, and then right into the car park. You can also get there by the No. 2 (Oswestry) bus from Wrexham, there are buses every 30 minutes, or by train to Chirk station.

Leave the car park at the far end, through the Hotel's car park, and cross the road by the pelican crossing, and turn left. At Castle Road turn right, and walk to the end of the road (a T junction with a mini roundabout). If you wish to go through the canal tunnel go left by a black gate before the end of the road, down to the canal, turn around and go through the tunnel which is 459 yards long. At the end of the tunnel turn right, up to the top of the tunnel entrance, right again onto a footpath. (The alternative route is to go right at the end of Castle Road, to the railway station, left over the railway bridge, and then right towards where the canal exits the tunnel, and immediately turn left onto a footpath).

The path goes through trees above the canal, 140 metres on it turns left, crossing a field to a road. Almost opposite is a footpath to Chirk Castle.

Go across the park following the posts with a white stripe to a wooden kissing gate with a blue and white striped post. Do not go through the gate, but turn around to your left to follow the posts with a blue stripe. The path leads into a wood, where half way through the posts change to a blue and red stripes. Near the end of the woods, turn right at an unmarked junction to go through a wooden gate in front of a red striped post. Turn right and follow the blue and red striped posts, to after a while pass through and bear left at the blue striped gate post. Continue to follow the blue posts until you reach the tarmacked road which you should walk along until the castle walls will loom above you to your right. At the white striped footpath sign, bear right, then turn left to head towards the Car Park. Follow the track to the left of the Car Park to follow the posts with a white stripe. This path leads across pasture to where a lane makes a sharp corner by a house.

Routes now combine

Here you meet the Offa's Dyke Path (ODP), turn left onto this path. You rise up pasture; follow the 'acorn' waymarkers. At the top of the rise you should get some very good views of the surrounding countryside. The path meets a stony track, turn left still following the ODP down to the road at Castle Mill. Before crossing the road bear left a little way to see three display boards describing the

battle of Crogen that took place here in 1165. Now cross the road; be careful as traffic is fast along this stretch. Cross over the bridge into Shropshire, and at the top of the rise is a T junction.

Leave the ODP, turn left along the lane (signposted for the Maelor Way). On your right you will see some old lime kilns. Continue along this lane for nearly half a mile, after you pass "The Old School" turn left down a drive, signposted for the Shropshire Way. This track becomes a footpath. Look out for a very large tree, a rare Black Poplar; this could have been a drovers' track and tall trees were planted to guide the way. Follow the waymarked path, along a steep wooded bank above the river; there are glimpses of a fish farm on the other side. Go over a stile and across a large water meadow, leading to a lane. Turn left and a short distance on left over the Pont Faen bridge. At the end of the bridge turn right onto a footpath across another large meadow, following the river. The railway viaduct and the canal aqueduct loom far ahead. Pass under these magnificent structures, and exit onto a road. Carefully cross the road towards "Divine Dreams", and take the path to the left.

This leads to the road near to the church. At the road turn right, and back into Chirk, and the car park is to the right of the Hand Hotel. Before leaving you may have time for refreshments; there are two tea rooms, the Hotel, and a bakery.