

8 sustainable WALKS

DISCOVER RURAL DENBIGHSHIRE BY BUS





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Tourist Information Centres

Children's Village, West Parade, Rhyl LL18 1HZ
01745 355068

Y Capel, Castle Street, Llangollen LL20 8NU
01978 860828



Leave the car at home

Denbighshire is a prime walking destination. It's probably the best way to see our iconic countryside and give yourself the time to truly relax.

It's even more enjoyable without the added stress of traffic and parking – and better for the environment too. It's why we asked travel writer Julie Brominicks to create these walks with our bus services in mind.

Arranged in order with the shortest first, each with its own map, they're accompanied by Julie's typically quirky and evocative descriptions.

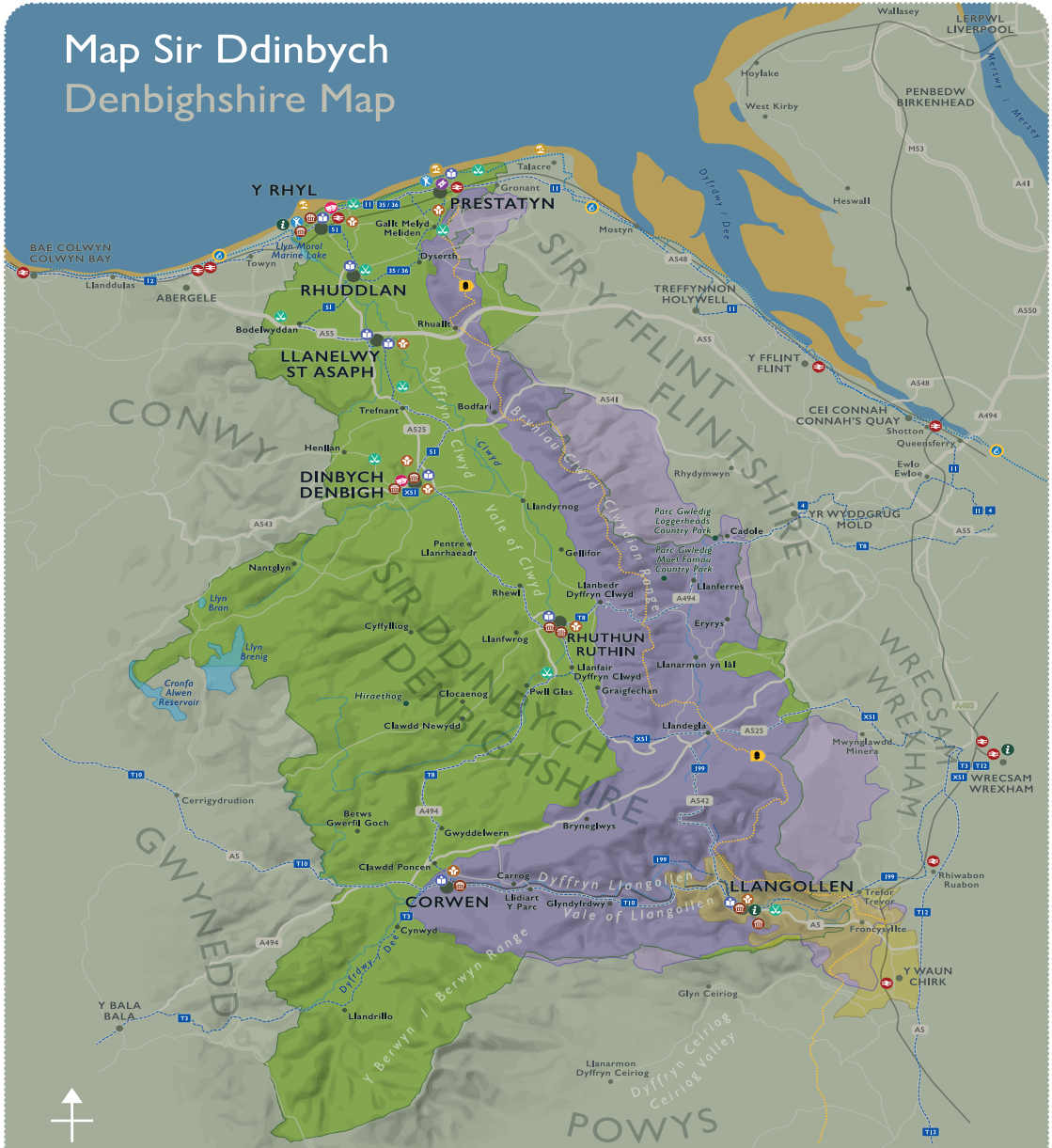
Not only do the walks reveal some of our loveliest landscapes, including the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal World Heritage Site. They also start and finish near a bus stop, so you can leave the car at home.



About the author

Julie Brominicks was an educator at the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth. Her book *The Edge of Cymru*, published by Seren Books, is the story of her walk around Wales in the course of a year. She's regularly published in BBC Countryfile Magazine and blogs at <https://juliebrominicks.wordpress.com>. She lives off grid, in a caravan, in a secluded valley near Machynlleth. Julie believes strongly in using Welsh language place names. The first time each occurs in her walk descriptions, its English name follows in brackets.

Map Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire Map



10 cilomedr / km
5 milltir / miles

sir ddinbych
denbighshire
County Council

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Llywyrl Censwstasthol Clawdd Offa
Offa's Dyke Path National Trail | Llywyrl Arfordir Cymru
Wales Coast Path | Caeffan Gresso
Tourist Information | Traeth
Beach | Gorsaf reilffordd y prif ffeil
Main line railway station | Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire |
| Llywyrl bus
Bus routes | Llywyrl Ffordd
Railway | Caeffan Hamdden
Liaison Centre | Llyfrgell
Library | Caeffan Hamdden
Liaison Complex | Bryniau Clwyd a Dyffryn Dyffryd
Tirwedd Cenedlaethol
Clwyd Range and Dee Valley
National Landscape |
| Rheilffordd
Heritage railway | Theatr
Theatre | Cwrs golf
Golf course | Amgueddfa
Museum | Parhys Iffwrdd Trefodion y Bwl
Trefodion Ddiwr Pentecostyll a'r Gamlas
Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World
Heritage Site buffer zone | |

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All information was accurate at time of publication. But things can change. To avoid disappointment please check all bus routes and other information before you travel.

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Design: White Fox.

Imagery: Billie Charity (author photograph), Fiona Dolben Evans, White Fox, Denbighshire County Council Tourism Team, Pexels.

Route maps: Mapping Company Ltd.

Walk 1:

The Well of St Tegla, Llandegla



You cannot mistake the vibe. The gentle walk prepares you for it, meandering as it does along the banks of Afon Alyn and down sweetly curving lanes on which the only traffic is a quad bike bumping into a field (and an ambush of wrens). At the well is a sense of something quiet and ancient and sacred.

Sequestered by a thicket of thorn, this square of water snares the trees' reflection. For centuries it has shone between these stones built carefully around a spring in an alder grove. Like the church in the village, the well is dedicated to St Tegla. Or Tecla or Thecla.

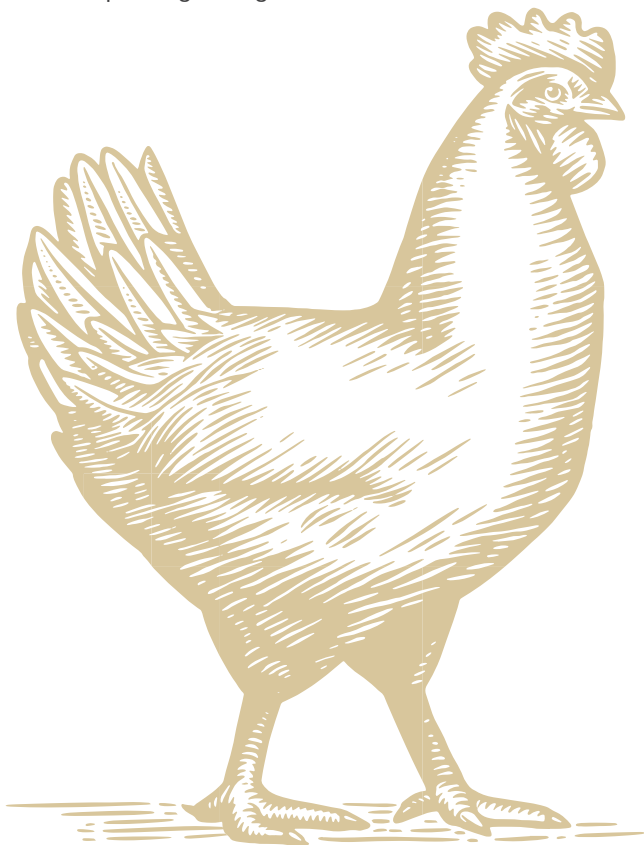
According to the New World Encyclopaedia, Thecla was a follower of St Paul and is mentioned in one of the writings of the New Testament where, it is claimed, her devotion was 'rewarded by miraculous

signs including several dramatic rescues from martyrdom by fire and wild beasts'. Thecla was venerated widely in late antiquity and is recognized today by both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. So how did she end up in Cymru? Another theory (posited by Tristan Gray Hulse) is that this Tegla was a local saint about whom we now know nothing.

We do though have various accounts from more recent centuries that the well was believed to cure epilepsy, and though the accounts varied, they went something like this. The afflicted person would wash in the well, toss in fourpence, then walk around it three times carrying either a hen if they were female or a cockerel if they were male, while reciting the Lord's Prayer. They then walked three times around the church before finally sleeping under the altar with the unfortunate chicken,

to which (if it proceeded to die) the disease was transferred.

It is not quite yet spring. The pink cupcakes on the counter and streamers on the ceiling of the community café are to celebrate the saints Dwynwen and Valentine of January and February rather than Tegla. The fields are primordial swamps. But catkins wobble and tight buds button the hedges. And here beside the well, despite the wet wreck of twigs and last year's alder cones and the sound of corvids being shot at, there is a vibrancy to the air and violet leaves pushing through dark earth.



Bus

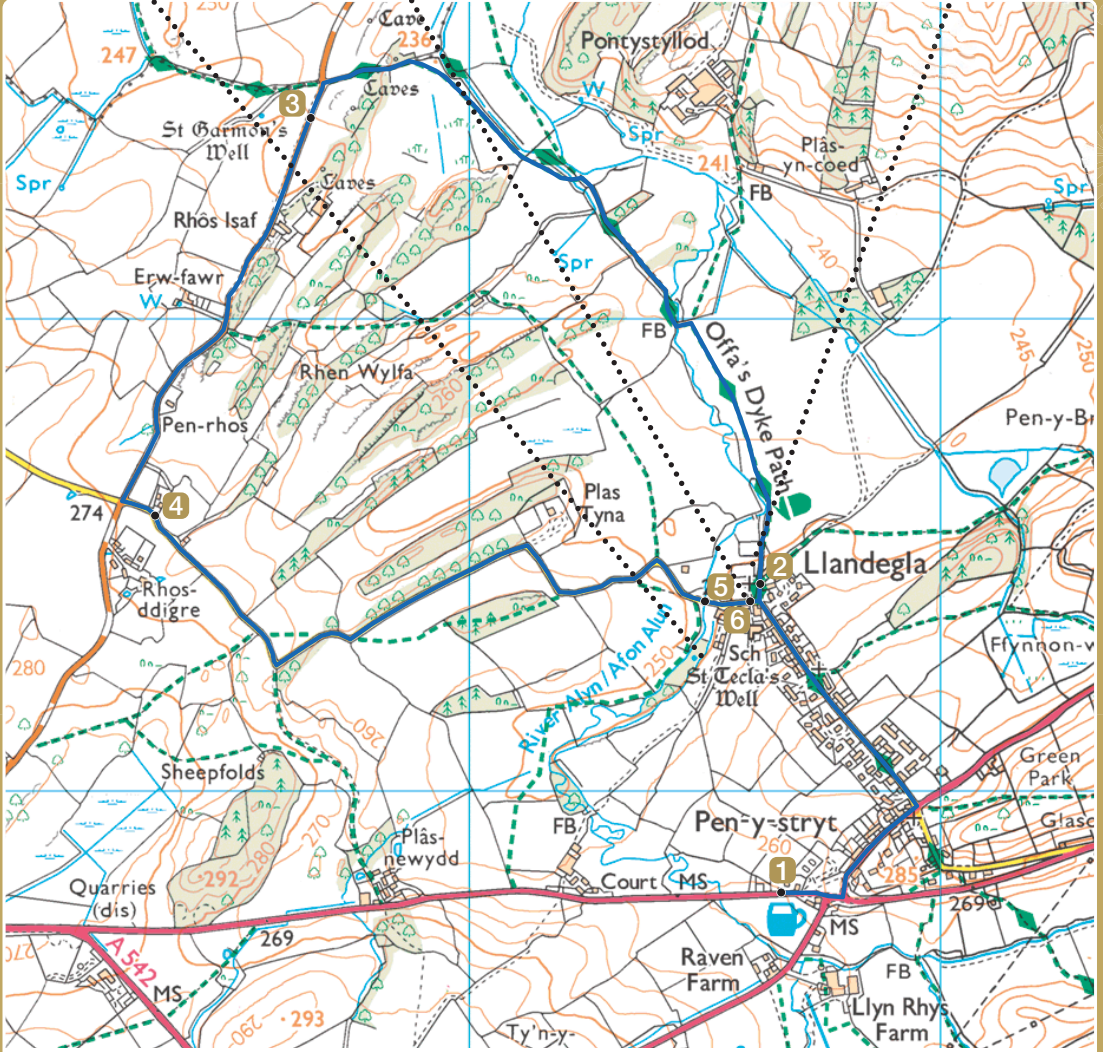
Both the 51 and the X51 between Wreccsam (Wrexham) and Dinbych (Denbigh) stop at The Crown on the A525 at the edge of Llandegla, from where it is a quarter of a mile walk into the village. This service runs roughly once every two hours from Monday to Saturday.

For more information visit www.denbighshire.gov.uk and search for public transport.

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Walk

This is a gentle 3-mile circular walk via the church of St Tegla, along the banks of Afon Alyn on the Llwybr Clawdd Offa (Offa's Dyke Path) and returning to the village and St Tegla's Well along quiet lanes.

In late spring the hedgerows are in leaf, the birds in full throttle and the wildflowers emerging. The lane at Plas Tyna just south of Llandegla is part of the Roadside Nature Reserve project in Sir Ddinbych (Denbighshire). Here you will find ancient species-rich hedgerow plants such as wood avens and giant bellflower, woodland plants like water avens, and among the calcareous grassland plants, early purple orchid and cowslip.

You can make the walk even shorter by making straight for the well from the bus stop – about half a mile. Don't forget to visit the wonderful community shop and café opposite the church. The lanes are quiet and well-used by local walkers but take all the usual precautions for road-walking.

- 1** From the bus stop, follow the signs to the village, noting the Community Shop and Café opposite the church.
- 2** Follow the Llwybr Clawdd Offa signs heading north from the church. Follow this route along Afon Alyn, until it reaches the road.
- 3** Turn left along this quiet hedged lane, noting the escarpments to your left, and enjoying the bird activity, till reaching the crossroads.

- 4** Now turn left towards Llandegla. The lane is divinely tortuous and undulating. This is where you will find wildflowers in the verges.
- 5** On reaching the stone bridge crossing Afon Alyn (where you will also find a community picnic site on the riverbank) turn right into the field, following signs to the well which you will find over a footbridge in an alder grove.
- 6** Continue through the village to the Church of Sant Tecla – which is equipped with tea-making facilities for walkers. Meanwhile the not-to-be-missed Community Shop opposite the church is a great place to wait if you have time to kill. From here return to the bus stop.



Walk 2:

Llanelwy (St Asaph) Cathedral



It smells like spice, this cosy ecclesiastical embrace – no airy vaulted limestone here. Instead, warm red sandstone boasts the full biscuity gamut of autumnal tones from Malted Milk (fine-grained stone from Flint or Talacre) to the almost-purple of a Bourbon, quarried from just two miles away. Silence sings. Candles flicker and lamps above the canopied choir stalls emit a buttery light. The cathedral is generally peaceful nowadays, but it has not always been so.

Dating to the sixth century and associated by legend with saints Kentigern and Asaph, its early structures would have been wooden. These were replaced by the Normans (whose invasion was blessed by the Pope), who brought stone building methods and religious ideas with them. In 1120 they made Llanelwy a diocese (in the care of a bishop) and

incorporated it, with the three other Welsh dioceses, into the Archdiocese of Canterbury and subject to its authority. The Norman invasion met with Welsh resistance. The Normans became Anglo-Normans and eventually, over the centuries, identified as English – just as those who settled in Cymru became Welsh.

By the thirteenth century, violence was so great there was sometimes no congregation at the cathedral. Llanelwy was right in the war zone. Edward I's campaign to colonise Cymru was contested by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd – in 1282 the cathedral was attacked and destroyed first by Welsh then by English soldiers. In 1402 Glyndŵr's army laid it to ruins. And in the seventeenth-century Civil Wars, it was Cromwell's men who smashed the windows and watered their

horses at the font. The peace in this space is hard won and not to be taken for granted.

The bible translated into Cymraeg by William Morgan (a former Bishop) and his colleagues is housed in an illuminated cabinet. Notice boards, chair-stacks and touch-screen displays, all the homely clutter of a modern place of worship, add to the welcome. A gantry obscures the altar. But behind it the stained glass is radiant.



Bus

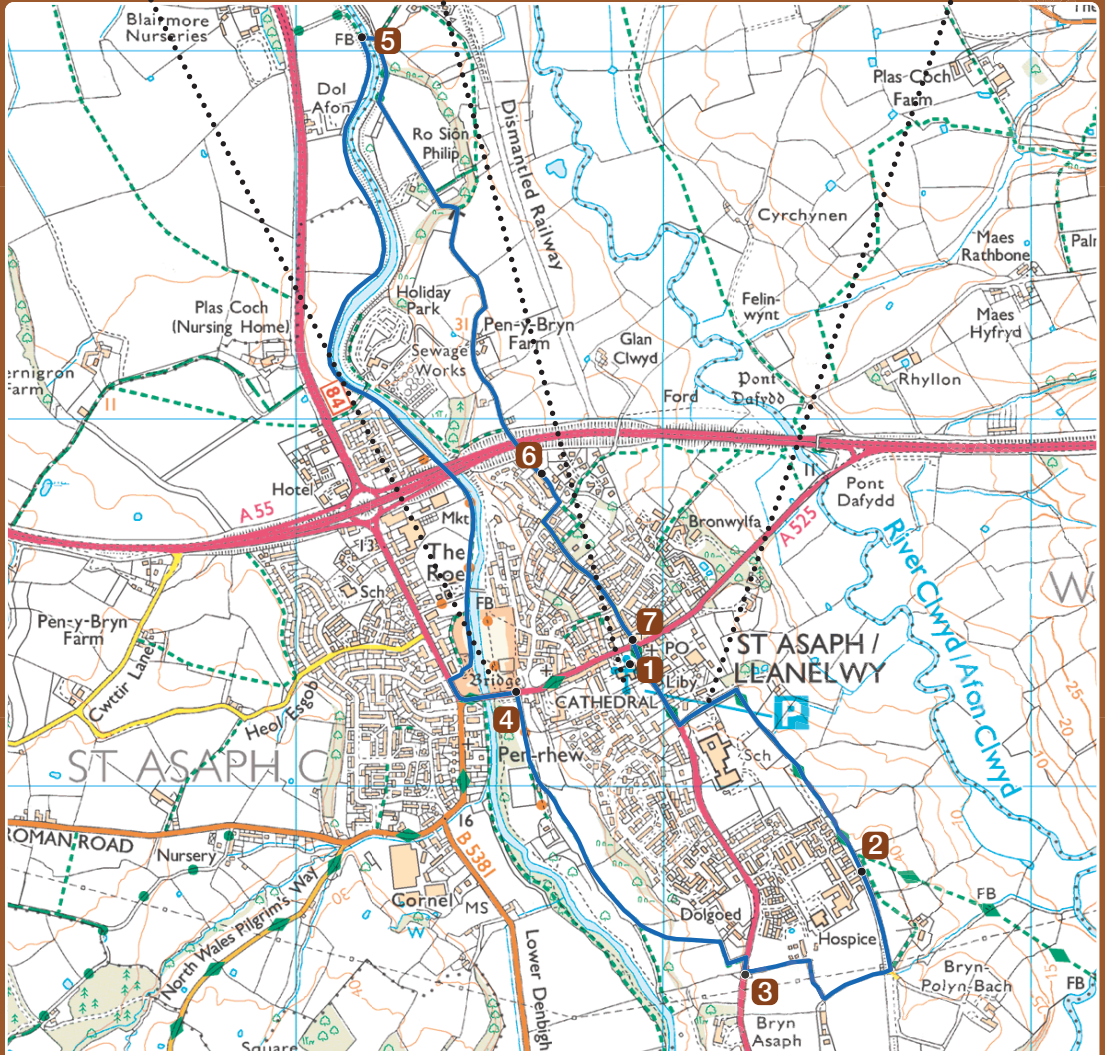
Llanelwly is on the Arriva Cymru services 51, 51b, 51s, 52 and the M&H Coaches number 54, all of which run between Dinbych (Denbigh) and Rhyl. There are services at least twice an hour on weekdays and hourly on Sundays.

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Walk

This easy-grade walk of about 4.5 miles has just one steep but short ascent up a road and one descent down a field.

It follows riverside paths along Afon Elwy, and quiet roads, showcasing the historical and peaceful features of Llanelwy (St Asaph), away from the A525 and A55. There are stiles crossing fields. The wooded lanes, fields and river paths can be muddy after rain but are resplendent in autumn colour. Shop and café opposite the church. The lanes are quiet and well-used by local walkers but take all the usual precautions for road-walking.

- 1** Leaving the cathedral, turn right onto Denbigh Road, and cross it. Follow signs for Taith Clwyd (Clwydian Way) just before Ysgol Glan Clwyd. Keep on this tree-lined track as it passes the school playing fields.
- 2** Leave Taith Clwyd signs and, keeping to lane, turn right at junction and right again towards new houses, then left to return to Denbigh Road. Cross it, and turn right.
- 3** Almost immediately, climb the stile into fields on left, and follow the waymarks that lead you downhill across fields to Afon Elwy. Keep to the riverbank, pass the football ground and reach the road bridge.
- 4** Turn left onto the bridge, cross the river. Then cross the road and turn right to return to the riverbank. Keep to the obvious track – but if

you want to shorten your walk there are two footbridges across the river for a swifter return to Llanelwy.

- 5** Take the third footbridge across the river, and turn right along farm track. Continue as it becomes a quiet road, and up a short steep hairpin bend. Cross the bridge over the A55.
- 6** Continue down Mount Road which turns right onto Lon Derw, which it joins briefly before re-joining Mount Road. Note the cemetery on left.
- 7** You re-emerge onto A525 opposite the cathedral. The lovely Translator's Tearoom Café is behind the cathedral, though you might also be tempted in passing by Jacob's Ladder café, where the welcome is equally warm.



Walk 3:

Moel Tŷ Uchaf, Llandrillo



Crustose, fruticose and foliose, pink, green and gold – each stone is an intricate lichen-scape. The wind has kissed and assaulted these stones for millennia. Yet four thousand years on, they still form a perfect circle on a hill between mountains and valley. Listen. A mechanical grunt lifts and then fades from a farm. Listen now. An argument between buzzard and crow. Listen again – only the wind. An old sound.

The Moel Tŷ Uchaf circle dates to the early Bronze Age when peoples arriving in small boats from the continent integrated with existing Neolithic populations. Gradually, gradually, new ways evolved. Metal axes replaced stone ones. And the old practice of burying many people in one tomb was replaced by cremation – or individual interments for important people. Like this one.

Just eleven metres diameter, these forty-one closely packed stones probably formed the foundations of a round barrow – a covered burial mound containing a cist for a single body. The people who built it enjoyed a mild climate. Among them were leather workers, potters, and carpenters who lived in huts among crops of spelt, rye, oats, and barley, and tended horses, cattle and pigs. They would not have found the oatcakes and cheese I'm picnicking on particularly weird. Perhaps a daughter visited this tomb in the same way that I, three days ago, went to my Dad's grave. Millennia have passed but we are not so different.

The valley farms are currently surrounded by livestock fields. Bear and wolves no longer live in the woods, the landscape being largely deforested, save for the straight-edged spruce plantations.

Fences and walls are straight too. Not so the curvilinear stones, at one with the summits and slopes. The horizon is a ring of mountains – Yr Arenigau, Yr Aran, Y Carneddau, Y Berwyn – lumps and peaks that repeat the shapes of the stones. Above them, a ring of clouds.



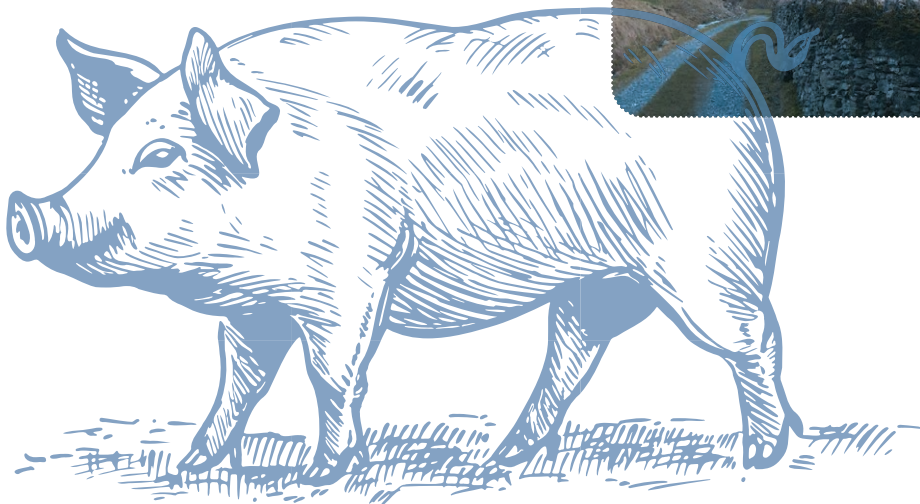
Bus

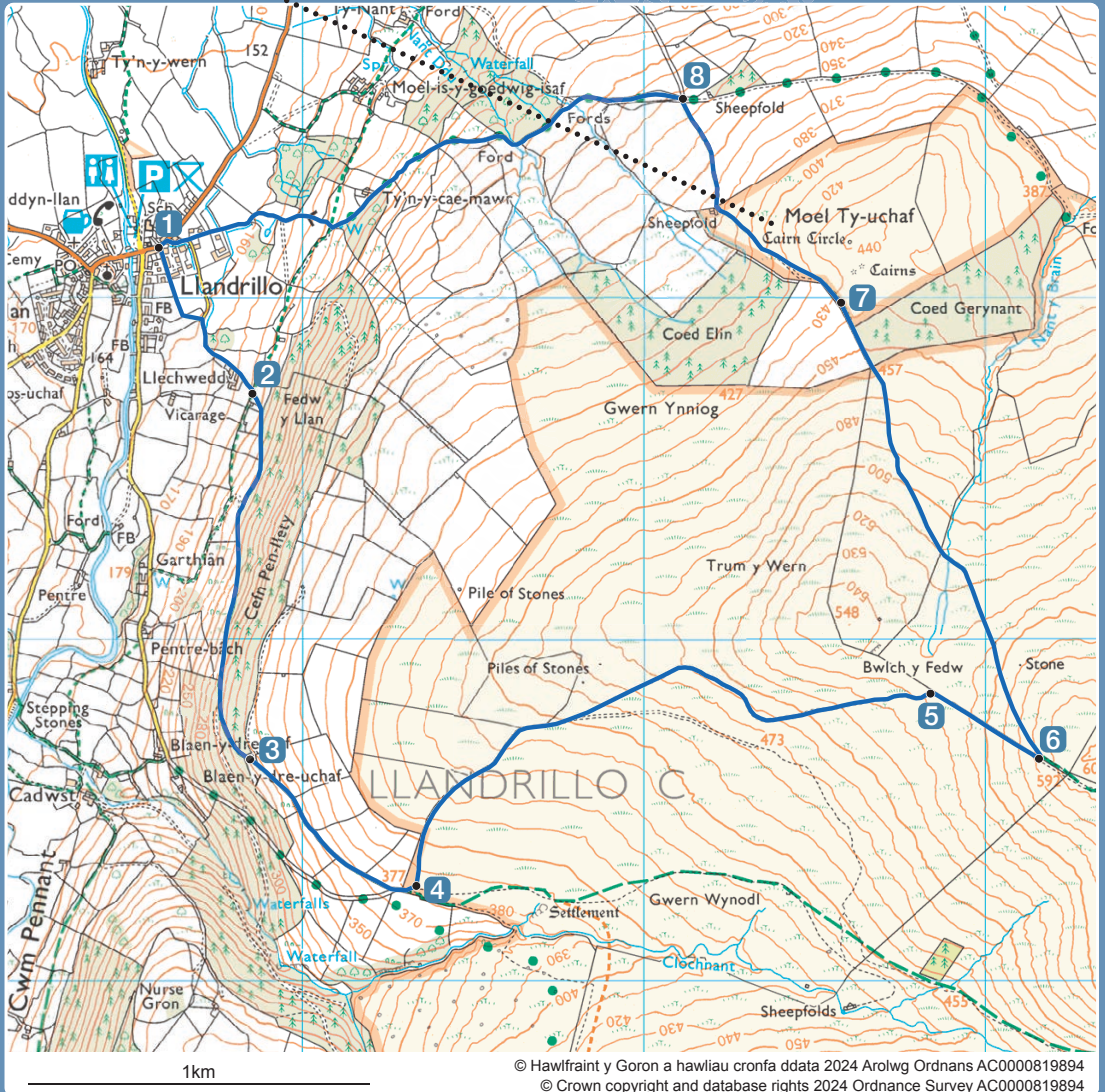
Llandrillo is served by the T3c. Not to be confused with the T3 that runs between Y Bermo (Barmouth) and Wrexham (Wrexham), the T3c is a local variant between Dolgellau and Corwen.

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Walk

The 5-mile circular walk from Llandrillo is moderately strenuous over boggy hill country. Basic map-reading skills are required. Choose a clear forecast – cloud can descend.

On a bright autumn day, the moorland, trees and bracken provide a russet and tawny copper palette, and the silence is golden.

- 1** Opposite the bus shelter take the waymarked path alongside the community centre and across the field to the lane. Turn right and follow it past Llechwedd.
- 2** At the waymark post take the central route bearing uphill through conifer woods with a deciduous edge. Continue on this track, till it brings you clear of the woods.
- 3** Proceed through right-hand gate, continuing along the track as it breasts the hillside till another gate brings you onto the moorland of Y Berwyn National Nature Reserve. Ahead of you rise the mountains – Cadair Bronwen, Cadair Berwyn and Moel Sych.
- 4** Turn immediately left, keeping to the fence, on the farm track that is distinctive but not waymarked. Follow it as it peels away from the fence in a generally easterly direction heading towards and between the two lower hills at the end of the ridge. Reach another fence.
- 5** Turn right and follow the track straight uphill along the fence to the top of Moel Pearce. Go through

gate then immediately turn and head back downhill through the gate on the other side of the wall.

- 6** Follow the path downhill as it bears in a north-westerly direction towards the corner of the conifer plantation. You will soon see Moel Tŷ Uchaf stone circle on a plateau ahead of you.
- 7** Leave the path to reach it.
- 8** Return to path and follow the Taith Tegid (Tegid Way) waymarks back to Llandrillo, along a beautiful track beneath oaks which frame views of the village.



Walk 4: The Nantglyn Yew



Above my head, a flicker of wings between evergreen boughs that filter sunlight the way stained glass windows do. The whistle of a goldcrest and chatter of tits. I am two metres off the ground in the tree but the birds are still so far above me in the crown that to them I'm irrelevant.

With a girth more than seven metres and colossal bushy crown, the Nantglyn Yew is a giant, thriving in the grounds of the church of Sant Iago (St James) which it definitely dwarfs, but only possibly predates, however tempting it might be to presume so. The worship of sacred trees is older than Christianity and it seems that the first churches may have been built on sites of earlier Pagan worship, but yews are difficult to date. Andrew Morton, in his excellent book 'Trees of the Celtic Saints; The Ancient Yews of Wales' explains that the heartwood rots away making

carbon-testing and dendrochronology impossible, while typically chaotic growth makes even girth measurements problematic.

It is many years since the heartwood rotted out of this yew but at some point, slate steps and a lectern were skilfully fitted into the hollow, as legend would have it to allow Methodist leader John Wesley to preach from the tree in 1790. An agile person can haul themselves up 'The Pulpit Yew' by the handrail, into the tree's very heart.

So here in the heart I sit. I hear the clatter of pigeons, inhale the evergreen scent. Touch the rosy smooth bark and the small broom-heads of bushy growth. Several mature stems burst straight from the bole – I count at least seven. They give me the impression of being in a forest. The spaces between them reveal views

veiled by evergreen fronds; slabs of moss on the slate church roof, the adjoining hill field and its hedges. The ground where a mulch of needles gives to mossy grass, graves and violets. These verdant vignettes, the stream song and fragrance conspire to confuse me. How long have I sat in this church of birds? And that is when it hits me – the enormity of time. I have spared maybe an hour to this tree that has lived, sustained and shaded here for centuries.



Bus

Dinbych (Denbigh) has regular services from across the county. The 14 P&O Lloyd Service runs between Dinbych and Yr Wyddgrug (Mold). M&H run the 76 between Dinbych and Rhuthun (Ruthin). Arriva runs the 51 between Rhyl and Dinbych. Note that the 76L (via Llandyrnog) stops right outside St Marcella's Church, while the other 76 services can be caught just a two-minute walk from there.

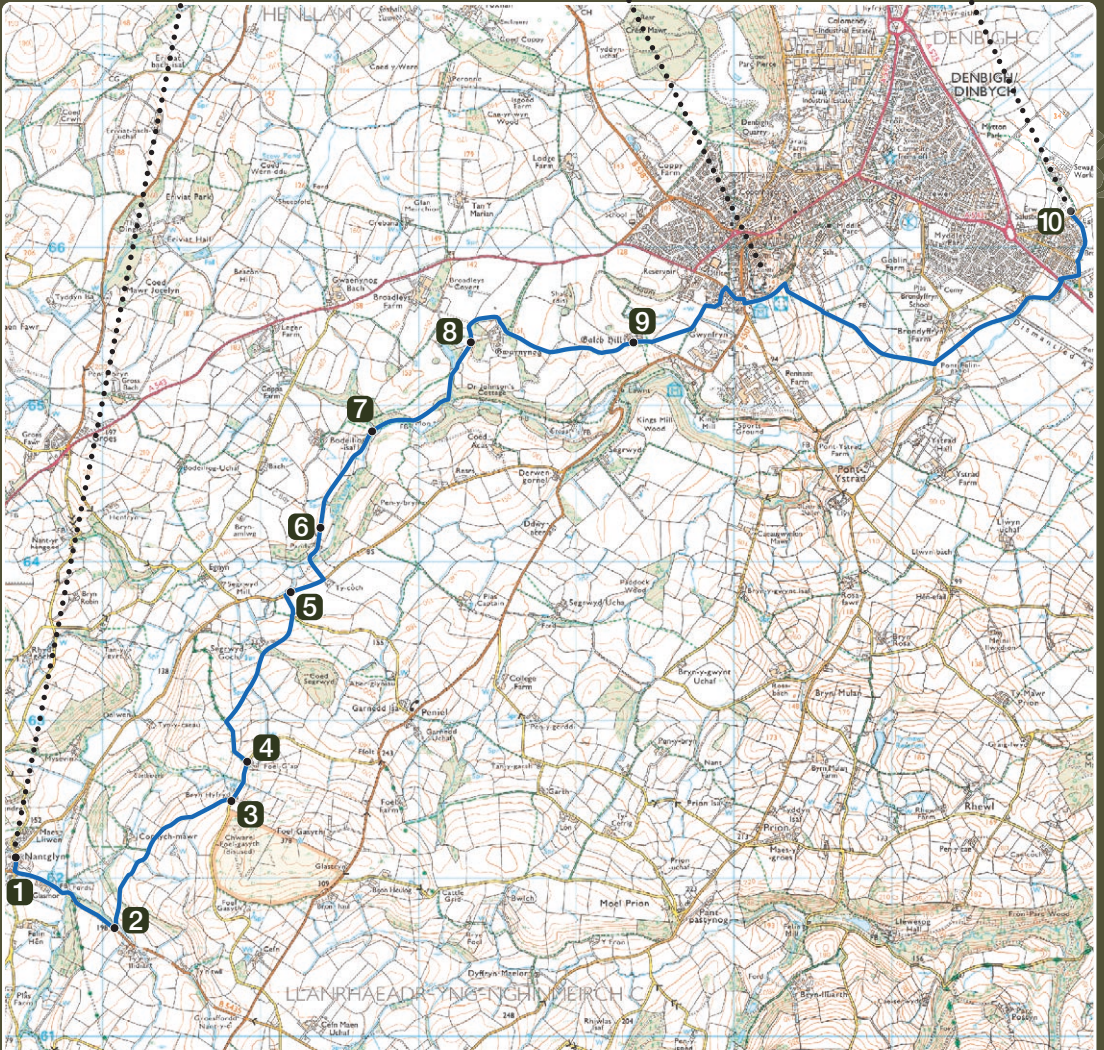
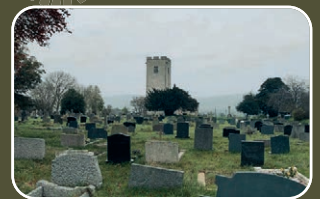
You can reach Nantglyn from Dinbych by 77 Fflecsi bus – it is recommended that you book your journey between one week and one day in advance by downloading the app from [fflecsi.wales](https://www.fflecsi.wales) or calling 0300 234 0300.

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Walk

This is a 7-mile linear walk, leafy in spring, linking waymarked paths across open country with stiles, lanes and fields which can be muddy and a short stretch by road.

The yew and the post-medieval church of Sant Iago (St James) in whose graveyard the yew grows, occupy a peaceful site in the small village of Nantglyn through which a stream sings.

I recommend booking a Fflecsi bus from Dinbych (Denbigh) to Nantglyn and walking back. That should give you plenty of time to also visit St Marcella's Church on the Rhuthun Road (which also has yews) and a peaceful ambience, and is open in daylight hours.

- 1** From the church gate turn right, then left at the crossroads and over the bridge. Keep on the road passing woods on your left, then follow the bridleway sign to your left.
- 2** Keep on the bridleway, crossing a stream and onto a hillside and under an oak copse. Follow it between hedges and standing trees uphill to a lane.
- 3** Turn left onto the lane under Foel Gesych then almost immediately left onto Clifford Byway.
- 4** Follow the byway downhill, on a green scoop of a lane, then leave it to turn right onto a green lane between trees. It will take you down past a house onto a lane – follow the lane to the road.

- 5** Turn right on the road, rising slightly. A short way along look for footpath signs left. Follow the waymarks leading you down fields, then right along a stream which you cross by bridge – avoiding the hole!
- 6** Keep following the waymarked signs across the fields, keeping the wooded stream banks in sight down to your right.
- 7** Eventually the waymarks lead you into the woods and along the stream. You are now on private land, the path is a little slippery but well indicated by signs on trees. When emerging at a new footbridge do not cross it. Keep on left bank of stream, following signs to woodland then up field left along the fence line to join track.
- 8** Turn right onto track and follow it around the quarry and walled garden of private house.
- 9** Keep following the waymarked paths along fields till it joins Taith Clwyd – the Clwydian Way.

You can cut into Dinbych sooner if short on time. Otherwise stick to the well-marked Taith Clywd across fields south of Dinbych, till reaching Brookhouse Farm. From here take the path north and across the road to St Marcella's Church and yew trees – and enjoy the peace.

Walk 5: Eliseg's Pillar



Concenn itaque pronepos Eliseg edificavit hunc lapidem... and so Concenn, Eliseg's great-grandson, built this stone.

Despite its illustrious Latin, Eliseg's Pillar looks a little embarrassed nowadays, restrained as it is by iron palings on a Bronze Age barrow which is itself surrounded by a fence in a sheep field. If you squint you can decipher Valle Crucis Abbey beyond the caravan site but more prominent are the billboards advertising roast dinners at nearby Abbey Grange Hotel across the A542 on which traffic grinds constantly by.

The thirty-one lines of Latin inscriptions have eroded away. Luckily antiquaries like Edward Lhuyd copied the text in 1696, and travel writer Thomas Pennant wrote about it a century later. We know

that Eliseg's Pillar is the remains of what was once a much taller memorial stone that was erected by Cyngen (a local leader) in the ninth century to honour his great-grandfather Eliseg, who had beaten the Anglo-Saxons in a battle and expelled them from this part of Powys. Perhaps the inscriptions were meant as propaganda, to boost spirits, or to be read aloud at a place where leaders were appointed.

The poor old pillar has taken a beating. It was toppled, it is said, by Cromwell's iconoclasts in the 1640s, who broke the cross off the top. Although the damaged pillar was re-erected (following Pennant's visit) by an eighteenth-century landowner atop the Bronze-Age mound, there is no escaping the fact that it now looks more like a phallus.

The wintry walk here restores the monument's dignity. From turbulent Afon Dyfrdwy, I climbed up and over Castell Dinas Brân (in an earlier structure of which, Eliseg probably lived), beneath Cregiau Eglwyseg – the crags which wrap the valley in a limestone embrace, and around Foel Fawr. Without summer tourists and foliage, stone is omnipresent in this landscape, with Eliseg's Pillar at its heart.



Bus

Llangollen is a major stop on the T3 Traws Cymru service which runs between Y Bermo (Barmouth) and Wrexham (Wrexham) several times a day, seven days a week. It is also served by the Sir Ddinbych Council service 192 from Melin-y-Wig via Corwen, running twice a day in each direction, Monday to Friday. And the 64 Tanat Valley service from Llanarmon DC via Glyn Ceiriog, Y Waun (Chirk) and Froncysyllte, which runs six times a day Monday to Saturday.

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1km

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Walk

This 7-mile circular walk includes some road walking and involves stiles and rough ground with one steep ascent and descent of Castell Dinas Brân.

Gorgeous on a crisp wintry day, despite Abaty Glyn y Groes (Valle Crucis Abbey) being closed out of season, and quiet compared to summer, when Llangollen is congested. Best of all, winter brings fieldfares and redwings to flicker in the thorn trees which cling to the scree of Creigiau Eglwyseg as they gorge on the berry feast.

- 1** From the bus stop, head for the bridge. Turbulent Afon Dyfrdwy beneath will hold you captive awhile. Cross the road and follow the waymarks to Castell Dinas Brân.
- 2** If you want to avoid a steep descent, take the path around the bottom of the hill to your left. Otherwise, ascend to the spectacular ruins of this thirteenth-century castle, built for the princes of northern Powys.
- 3** Join Llwybr Clawdd Offa (Offa's Dyke Path) on the quiet road beneath Creigiau Eglwyseg. It was Offa, incidentally, who Eliseg fought off. This is a striking landscape. Note the limestone escarpment winding above and flocks of fieldfares and redwings in the thorn trees.
- 4** Leave Llwybr Clawdd Offa for the road bearing north-west down into the valley. Pass the Eliseg noticeboard.

5 Then take a left onto Taith Clwyd (Clwydian Way) following a stream into the woods. Cross the stream by the footbridge and over fields till Taith Clwyd meets the road. Turn left then right, still following the waymarks and signs for Abaty Glyn y Groes.

6 After passing a conifer plantation beneath old oaks, climb the metal stile in the fence, and take the steep slope down to cross Afon Eglwyseg via footbridge to the right of the caravan park. Keep on this hedged lane till reaching the main road. You can see Eliseg's pillar in your field to the right.

7 On reaching the A542 turn right and take care following the road a very short distance to Eliseg's Pillar. When you are ready, retrace your steps back to Taith Clywd. Note Abaty Glyn y Groes down below the trees to your right – it is not open in winter.

8 Where Taith Clwyd meets the road, turn right to the canal then return to Llangollen along the tow path. If you have time to kill before your bus, Llangollen is bursting with places of interest and wonderful cafés. The Corn Mill has decking overlooking Afon Dyfrdwy.



Walk 6: Coed Clocaenog



Suddenly – hot rich silence. A thick fragrance of needles and moss and the merest kiss of breeze on wet skin. From here – the highest point in Coed Clocaenog – in the west of the county, the views across Dyffryn Clywd to where Bryniau Clwyd rise in the east like an extraordinary suite of skateboard ramps are spectacular.

I am resting against the Pincyn Llys monument which was erected in 1830, not to brag about a battle but to celebrate instead the birth of a conifer forest. Those first trees were felled for trench and coal-mine props in the First World War, after which the forest was re-planted. Land use change often causes heartache and early conifer plantations – when land, homes and farms were requisitioned by the Forestry Commission were no

exception. Wetland and moors were lost.

Meanwhile, different habitats were created and one mammal to have benefitted from Coed Clocaenog has been the red squirrel. The reds moved in during the 1950s to feed on the sitka spruce seeds. A relict population remains, protected somewhat from grey squirrels (which carry pox the reds have no immunity to) by Coed Clocaenog's altitude and remote location, surrounded largely as it is by farmland and moors. A recovering population of pine martens perhaps, which predate happily on ground-feeding greys but find the reds too nimble to catch, might prove helpful. Time will tell.

You are unlikely to see any red squirrels on this walk. Despite the rich silence at the monument (and that you might

possibly on your route via quiet lanes and Coed y Fron Wylt have met no other humans at all) you are merely tickling the edge of a vast forest that extends much further west. The squirrels are secreted further in. But it is comforting to know they are not too far away.



Bus

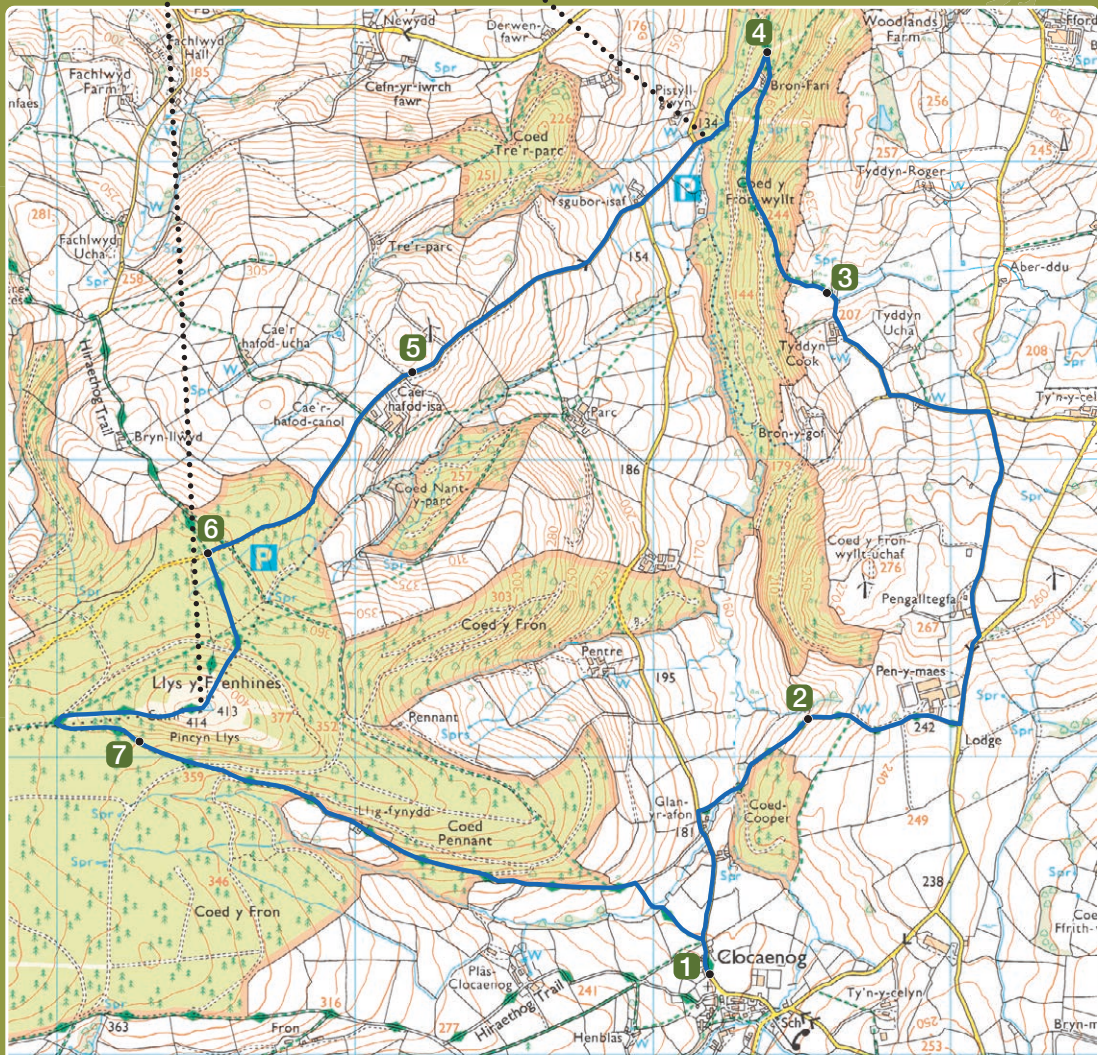
In order to reach the village of Clocaenog you need to book the Fflecsi bus from Rhuthun (Ruthin) in advance. It is available from Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 2.30pm so save this walk for a weekday. Download the app from the Transport for Wales website (www.tfw.wales/flecsi) or call 03002 340300 to book it. Rhuthun is served by the X51 from Dinbych (Denbigh) and the T8 which runs between Chester and Corwen.

For more information visit www.denbighshire.gov.uk and search for public transport.

To plan your bus journey use www.traveline.cymru

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Walk

This is a great walk for summer if you'd like to escape the crowded coast and seek woodland shade – but not advisable in a heat wave because it includes some exposed lanes and a steep climb. It is an 8-mile walk around two contrasting woodlands: the ancient woodland of Coed y Fron Wylt and a conifer plantation at Pincyn Llys Monument.

Both form part of the wider forest of Coed Clocaenog, which will eventually form part of the nationwide Coedwig Cenedlaethol i Gymru (National Forest for Wales). If you want to cut the walk in half, note that the Fflecsi bus also serves Bontuchel at the edge of Coed y Fron Wylt. Both woodlands are connected by quiet Sir Ddinbych (Denbighshire) lanes.

- 1** Alight from the Fflecsi bus at the Clocaenog Village bus stop and take the lane signposted for Bontuchel, passing the school and bearing right at the church. Where a stream flows under the road, pass a house called Swyn yr Afon and turn right onto the lane that skirts the edge of Coed Cooper.
- 2** Leaving the woods behind, keep on the lane, pass the farm on your left and then turn left at the junction. Turn left again when the road splits, passing Pangalltegfa. Keep on the lane, following signs for Tyddyn Cook.
- 3** Having passed Tyddyn Cook, follow signs for the Clifford Byway leading you into Coed Fron y Wylt. This is largely ancient woodland, dense in birdsong and diverse vegetation. If you have time and wish to see

Bontuchel village, continue through and out of the woods.

- 4** Otherwise turn left onto the waymarked track. This is such a pleasant woodland, unless you are pushed for time, it is worth doing the waymarked loop walk along the stream. Otherwise head straight for the car park.
- 5** On leaving the woodland, follow Taith Clwyd (Clwydian Way) up steep quiet farm lanes all the way to the edge of Coed Clocaenog, where you will see signs for the car park.
- 6** Follow signs up to Pincyn Llys Monument from where the views are spectacular. Note that you have now left Taith Clwyd and joined Llwybr Hiraethog (Hiraethog Trail).
- 7** Zigzag down through the conifers on Llwybr Hiraethog, and keep to this trail as it leaves the forest and delivers you back to Clocaenog village.



Walk 7: Pont Dyfrdwy



Swallowing sunlight like beer in a pint glass does but sounding like wine being poured from a bottle (and also a laundrette with all the machines running) there goes Afon Dyfrdwy, scudding under the bridge. The river is a muscular thing, bulging and flexing, forming diamonds on its surface that repeat the shape of the piers as it rushes through the arches.

From its source in Eryri, through Llyn Tegid, to its vast shifting saline north-coast estuary, Afon Dyfrdwy is a designated Special Area of Conservation and a regular companion in Sir Ddinbych (Denbighshire). On this walk between Corwen and Cynwyd, it bubbles fast and clear over a stony bed. Boughs trail their twigs into it, like the fingers of a footballer slapping hands with fans as they circuit the pitch. Birdsong peals in the willow, ash and oak on the banks.

A Natural Resources Wales conservation project (LIFE Dee River) is in the process of restoring the health of Afon Dyfrdwy. Measures include planting trees along the banks, re-seeding the river with endangered freshwater pearl mussels and removing weirs to ease the passage of migratory fish like salmon, sewin, eels, grayling and three species of lamprey – sea, river and brook. Along this stretch between Corwen and Cynwyd, livestock fencing has been installed to reduce nutrients and sediments entering, contaminating and clouding the water.

I like to watch the river from the pedestrian recesses built into the bridges, particularly from Pont Dyfrdwy at Cynwyd. This bridge was probably built in the eighteenth century, possibly earlier – some believe it to be the one Edward Lhuyd the antiquarian described at the

end of the seventeenth century. Its stones secrete tiny grottos; micro-habitats of spiders, ants and bryophytes. I think I am looking at rock then see it is itself a layer of grey lichen. Like tiny cloud-forests, moss seed-heads catch morning dew and water vapour from the singing, dancing river below.



Bus

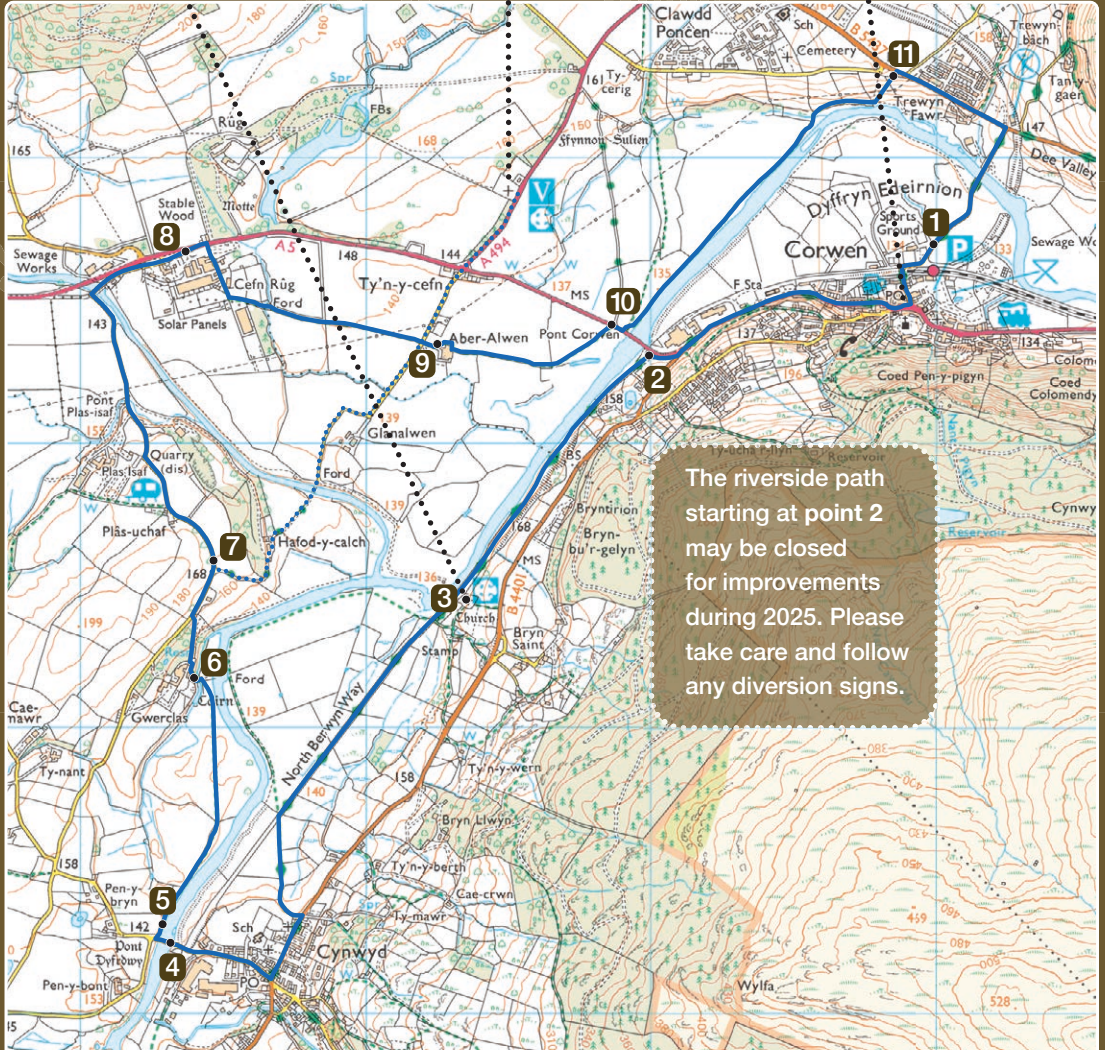
Corwen is a bus hub. The long distance T3 between Y Bermo (Barmouth) and Wrexam (Wrexham) calls every couple of hours. (Its variant the T3c goes via Llanuwchllyn, Llanderfel, Llandrillo and Cynwyd). You can also reach Corwen on regular services from Rhuthun by the 76, from Bangor on the T10 and from Chester on the T8.

For more information visit www.denbighshire.gov.uk and search for public transport.

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1km

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Walk

This 8-mile circular walk is soothing in summer when you crave tree shade and the presence of water. Although easy-grade it includes some stiles – one of which is broken and a bit of a scramble!

The walk takes you south from bustling Corwen to peaceful Cynwyd on the east bank of Afon Dyfrdwy and returns to Corwen on the west bank. To shorten it slightly, in dry weather and if the river is low enough, you can make a ford crossing instead of going via Rhug. The walk is largely wooded and has refreshment stops in Corwen, Cynwyd, and Rhug Organic Farm Shop and Café. If you plan in advance you can visit three magnificent churches. The church of Saints Mael and Sulien in Corwen is open daily. The Old Parish Church at Llangar with its medieval murals is open occasionally and you need to make prior arrangements to visit Capel y Rug (Rug Chapel) just off the route (both www.cadw.gov.wales). Take your time and some drinks, maybe a picnic, and enjoy the river.

- 1** From the bus station, head west through charismatic Corwen.
- 2** Instead of crossing Pont Corwen, leave the road but stay on Taith Clwyd (Clwydian Way) which continues at the edge of town over a stile onto the wooded old railway path.
- 3** Even if the church at Llangar is not open, it is very much worth visiting the graveyard. The name is said to derive from Llan Garw Gwyn – church of the white deer, built where one was seen springing from a thicket.
- 4** Continue along the route which follows the former Great Western

Railway line between Rhiwabon (Ruabon) and Y Bermo (Barmouth) till reaching the village of Cynwyd, cross Pont Dyfrdwy.

- 5** Having crossed the bridge, climb down to follow the path on the west side of the bank, keeping close to the water. Climb over or through the broken stile.
- 6** Make for the trees to your left where you will see a farm gate at Gwerclas. Here you can join the farm track which almost immediately meets a lane which you can either follow to the A5 at Rhug...
- 7** Or, in very dry weather, you can take the first right turning and pass the house of Hafod-y-calch down to the ford. Cross the ford, continue on the lane, then turn right onto Taith Clwyd.
- 8** If you have not crossed the ford keep on the quiet lane to Pont Melin Rhug, then on reaching the A5 keep within the boundaries of Rhug Organic Farm Shop and Café. Follow the waymarked path through the farm, as it passes sheds and bee hives, and joins Taith Clwyd.
- 9** If you have made prior arrangements to visit Capel y Rug turn left where the track meets another.
- 10** Otherwise, keep to Taith Clwyd. When you reach Pont Corwen cross the road and continue along Taith Clwyd as it follows the river bank. This last stretch of the walk takes you between old slate fences and the river. Look out for the ranunculus beds (water crowfoot) flowering in the river here, in early summer.
- 11** Finally, keep to Taith Clwyd as it joins the road, then cross the river by Green Lane Bridge, and return to Corwen bus station.

Walk 8: Penycloddiau



If you lie in a hollow you can avoid the wind's shriek but there's no escaping the sky. What bold blue cupola is this? I can't shake the feeling I'm in a snow globe. Whatever weather cajoles, caresses or chases you here, Penycloddiau – which at 440m, soars above the vale yet is uncrowded by nearby peaks – boasts uninhibited views and a sky that dominates.

With a vantage point like this, little wonder that Bryniau Clwyd – the knobbly spine of hills running north to south down the east of Sir Ddinbych (Denbighshire) – was home in the Iron Age to four hill forts, plus Moel y Gaer in Bodfari and nearby Moel Hiraddug. You can visit them all in one hike but I've plumped for two: steam-pudding-shaped Moel Arthur and Penycloddiau, which at 18.9 hectares is one of the largest in Cymru.

From my snug hollow I am trying to imagine how it was in the Iron Age. To see the ramparts re-clad in timber, to repopulate the round houses whose footprints are just ghosts now, seen from the air in dry weather. To imagine the smell of animals and smoke drifting through thatched roofs, the voices and clink of tools. Yes! I do hear voices. Four hikers from Staffordshire, who coax me out of the hollow to take their photo. "I don't think they actually lived up here," says one, when I tell him what I'm up to. "It would have been a long way to go for firewood," says another.

The deforestation of these hills that began in the Bronze Age continued apace in the Iron Age, when the birch, oak, elm, lime, ash and alder woodland was cleared by these round-house dwellers in order to

grow cereals and provide grazing. But live here they did. Dr Toby Driver (author of *The Hill Forts of Iron Age Wales*) tells me that “firewood may have been an issue but any rural community would have managed their woodland resources and coppiced what they needed for structural timber and firewood. And the valley isn’t far to go if you have oxen to pull up cartloads of wood.” Although it isn’t known, they may also have burned peat – peat bogs having supplanted the cleared woodland.

They must have loved the views. Today I see wind turbines off the north Cymru coast and Liverpool’s grey sprawl. Meanwhile the mountains of Eryri, roaring up in the west beyond a frosted Dyffryn Clwyd, would have been as mighty white then as now.



Bus

Bodfari is frequently served by buses between Dinbych (Denbigh) and Yr Wyddgrug (Mold) – the 14 by P&O Lloyd and the 14D and 14M by Townlynx. The M&H and Arriva Cymru service number 76 between Dinbych and Llangwyfan also calls at Bodfari once a day.

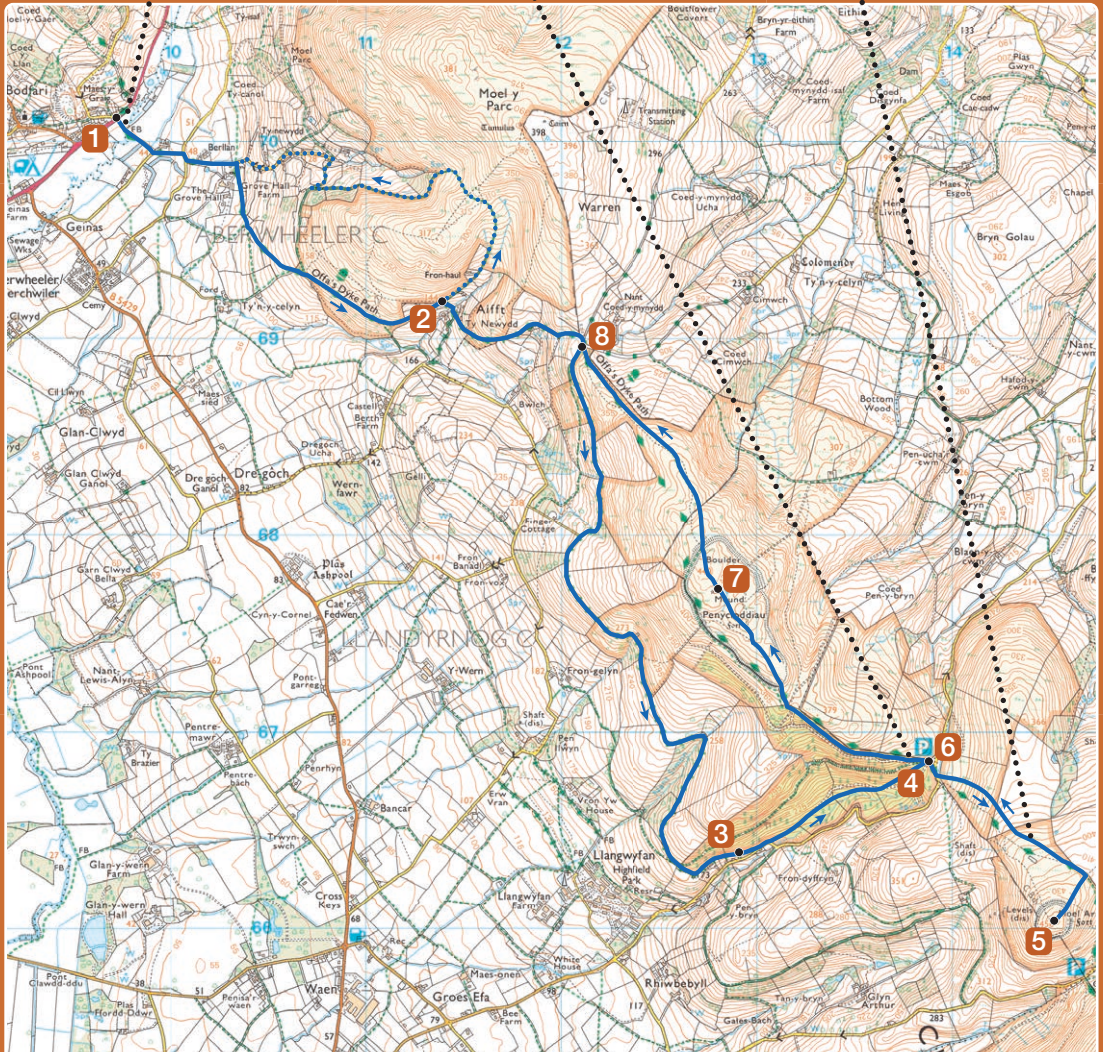
Bodfari is well-placed for hill walks being crossed by Llwybr Clawdd Offa (Offa’s Dyke Path) which gives you multiple route options. And if you have time to wait for your bus, you have St Stephen’s Church to visit, next to which The Dinorben Arms is open all day, seven days a week for food and drink and warmth.

For more information visit www.denbighshire.gov.uk and search for public transport.

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Walk

If winter conjures up crisp cold weather and clear skies, then take to the hills. Bryniau Clwyd is a hill range running south from Prestayn. This 11-mile loop, which combines part of Llwybr Clawdd Offa (Offa's Dyke Path) with other routes, requires a good level of fitness and climbs to 440m.

It follows way-marked paths but as always in hill country, take a map, know how to read it and be prepared for bad weather. There is enough vigorous climbing on this walk to keep you warm – but expect a brutal breeze on the summits. On a clear day the views to Eryri, into England and across the north coast of Cymru are unrivalled.



- 1** Alight at the Victoria Terrace bus stop in Bodfari for Llwybr Clawdd Offa. Begin by following clearly marked Llwybr Clawdd Offa as it heads south. Follow it across Afon Chwiler, and hill fields, climbing steadily.
- 2** At a junction of paths, take the lower of the hill paths (there is a still lower one if you prefer a steadier lane walk) following Taith Clwyd (Clwydian Way) to Coed Llangwyfan.

- 3** You have a choice of routes up through Coed Llangwyfan, a recovering conifer forest now a young mixed woodland.
- 4** At the top car park, re-join Llwybr Clawdd Offa. Follow the signs to Moel Arthur.
- 5** At the stone sign, leave Llwybr Clawdd Offa for the summit path to Moel Arthur, one of several Iron Age hill forts. From here retrace your steps.
- 6** Back at the car park, take north-bound Llwybr Clawdd Offa keeping to the hill tops.
- 7** The path takes you to the summit cairn of Penycloddiau, whose ramparts are still visible.
- 8** Keep on Llwybr Clawdd Offa but on reaching the path junction at Fron Haul you have the option of returning to Bodfari by circumnavigating the hill before rejoining your path back to Bodfari at Grove Hall Farm.



Other day trails

Two epic walking routes pass through Denbighshire – the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. But it's not all long-distance adventure. The following walking trails can be done in a day.

Dee Valley Way

Fairly strenuous hiking trail between the towns of Corwen and Llangollen in the glorious Dee Valley, split into five sections.

North Berwyn Way

Thirteen-mile linear trail climbing the wild North Berwyn Mountains for experienced and well-equipped walkers.



Prestatyn-Dyserth Way

Mostly traffic-free three-mile trail follows the disused railway line to the Talargoch lead mines, now a wildlife corridor.

Community Miles

A series of short circular strolls around Denbighshire's villages, all designed to take about an hour and with handy calorie counters.





Accessible trails

Lots of our walks are suitable for those in wheelchairs or with pushchairs including the promenade at Rhyl and Prestatyn, the riverside trail at Loggerheads Country Park, the Prestatyn-Dyserth Way, Llangollen canal towpath and Rhyl's marine lake.

Sacred trails

Connect special places such as St Asaph Cathedral, our splendid medieval parish churches and ancient holy wells to make a trail with a spiritual dimension.



Town and city trails

Don't forget Denbighshire's thriving market towns and famous seaside resorts. There's no better way to explore them than by following our town trails. There are seven in all – one for every day, plus a city trail around one of Britain's smallest and most historic cities.

The walks are easy but they pack a lot in, so give yourself at least half a day for each tour around Rhyl, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, St Asaph, Denbigh, Ruthin, Corwen and Llangollen.

Pick up a set of our trail leaflets or download them at: www.northeastwales.wales



Be Adventure Smart

Before you venture into our great outdoors, ask yourself three vital questions:

Am I confident I have the knowledge and skills for the day?

Know where you are and where you're going. Use an app AND a paper map.

Plan for the least able member of your group.

Know your limits. It's OK to choose a more suitable route or turn back.

First aid saves lives. Knowing what to do in an emergency can make all the difference.

Do I have the right gear?

Stay warm and dry. Wear walking boots, carry insulating layers and waterproofs.

Make sure your mobile is charged but don't rely on it for navigation and communication.

Carry a torch and whistle. It could save the day if you get caught out by the dark.

Keep your energy levels up. Bring food and drink.

Do I know what the weather will be like?

Check the latest forecast before you set off.

Be flexible – there's no shame in changing your plans.

Don't get cut off by tides. Check the tide times.

Don't forget sunscreen and sun hat if needed.

www.adventuresmart.uk

Follow the Countryside Code

Visitors are assured of a warm welcome and wonderful day out if they follow these simple rules. The mantra is **Respect – Protect – Enjoy**:

Respect everyone

Be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside

Leave gates and property as you find them.

Do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking.

Be nice, say hello, share the space.

Follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available.



Protect the environment

Take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit.

Do not light fires and only have BBQs where signs say you can.

Always keep your dogs under control and in sight.

Dog poo – bag it and bin it in any public waste bin or take it home.

Care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance.

Enjoy the outdoors

Check your route and local conditions.

Plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do.

Enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory.

Car-free trails

Here's how to make your Denbighshire walk truly sustainable:

By bus

The answer isn't always the bus – but it often is. The 1bws ticket gives you access to nearly 200 bus routes across North Wales. Try the demand-led Fflecsi bus service running around the towns and surrounding villages of Ruthin and Denbigh. Download the app or call 0300 234 0300 to book a journey.

www.denbighshire.gov.uk
www.traveline.cymru

By train

Denbighshire is served by a great rail network, with links from London, Holyhead, Chester and Manchester. The nearest stations are Rhyl and Prestatyn on the main North Wales coast line and Chirk on the Chester to Shrewsbury line.

www.tfw.wales
www.nationalrail.co.uk

By canal boat

From Llangollen Wharf, you can take a horse-drawn boat towards the Horseshoe Falls. But you'll need a motor, and a head for heights, to sail over the "stream in the sky" at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

www.horsedrawnboats.co.uk

By cycle and e-bike

The Ride North Wales website is your complete guide to cycling and mountain biking in the region with downloadable maps and route cards and lists of bike shops and places to stay. You could even hire an e-bike to enjoy the countryside without the strain.

www.ridenorthwales.co.uk

By electric vehicle

There are fast-charging points in public car parks across Denbighshire including Corwen, Denbigh, St Asaph, Llangollen, Ruthin, Prestatyn and Rhyl. Rhug Estate Farm Shop near Corwen has a fast-charging station for electric vehicles available 24 hours a day.

