The tranquil and unspoilt Ceiriog Valley
“A haven of Welsh history and culture”
The bubbling torrent falls 1740 feet in its 22 mile journey from source to confluence with the Dee
Remnants of the Glyn Valley Tramway hug the river banks
A valley of great Welsh poets

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Castle Woods and The Aqueduct Walk

The area around Chirk has seen many changes over the centuries. Many hands, from the Celts, Romans, Welsh and English have modified the settlements.

In 1282, when Llewelyn, Prince of Wales was defeated and killed by Edward I, the land around Chirk was confiscated and handed to Roger Mortimer. The creation of a borough charter in 1324 cemented English rule over the area now known as Chirkland, though it always remained within Wales.

Chirkland was sold to Sir Thomas Myddelton at 1324. Telford and Jessop’s canal and aqueduct were built by Brassey’s in 1852. The later Holyhead / London coach road, built by Thomas Telford, also crosses the river at Chirk.

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 millstone. Steps and a stile lead to the main road for the final 5 mins. into the centre of Chirk and the Hand Hotel.

A choice now - you can aim for Chirk via “The Aqueduct Walk” (35 mins); or the shorter 20 mins. “Castle Woods” walk direct to the train station.

1a. The Aqueduct Walk

Chirk Car Park to Pont Faen
Distance 1.5 km. Height gain 20 metres (65 ft). Time 30 mins.

Leave the car park through the ‘No Exit’ way, turning left on to the main street. Continue past the church and begin to go down the hill. About 100 yards after leaving the last building in town, cross the stile on your left. Follow the grassy track to the right downhill, then bear left towards the old mill building. Cross the footbridge over the old mill race, go over the stile and keep ahead to a metal gate. Go through a gap left of the gate and carefully cross the road and through the kissing gate opposite. Continue down the track and follow the river bank, passing under the massive aqueduct and viaduct. Keep to the river bank on your left until you get to a stone bridge. Pass through the kissing gate and turn left onto Pont Faen (Stone Bridge).

England is on the other side! OR

1b. Castle Woods

Chirk Train Station to Pont Faen
Distance 1 km. Height Gain negligible. Time 15 mins.

Leaving the station, turn R, crossing the railway bridge and canal tunnel, ahead for 5 mins. to the impressive castle gates. Turn left onto the sometimes gated tarmac drive. Where the drive bends left into the caravan park, keep ahead. At a T-junction go right, downhill through woodland.

Emerge onto the road, go right for 100 metres, then left onto the delightful old stone bridge, ‘Pont Faen’.

A choice now - you can aim for Chirk via “The Aqueduct Walk” (35 mins); or the shorter 20 mins. “Castle Woods” walk direct to the train station.

There is a Tourist Information point at ‘Home and Wear’ shop (opposite Hand Hotel).

Stage 1

Start the walk from Chirk, either from the car park behind the Hand Hotel (1a) or from the Train Station (1b).

Stage 1

The Aqueduct Walk

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.

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. 200 metres up the path it passes through a low stonewall 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 Centre, keep straight ahead.

Stage 1

The Aqueduct Walk

Pont Faen to Chirk Train Station
Distance 1 km. Height gain 30 metres (100 ft). Time 20 mins.

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Warfare has played a major role in the history of the Ceiriog valley; the number of related features found in the valley demonstrates this fact. The features span the ages, from Roman encampments (Rhyd Park), Offa’s Dyke (Bronygarth), and the imposing Chirk Castle.

Offa’s Dyke consists of a 168 mile long earthen bank, which at times 8 metres high and in places is accompanied by a western ditch. It runs across the Ceiriog Valley and when constructed in the 8th century divided Mercia (Saxon) from the Ceiriog valley; the number of related features found in the valley demonstrates this fact. The English Bit

The English Bit

The design of the castle has been compared to that of Beaumaris, Anglesey. The building and gardens are well worth a visit. This is a National Trust property. Check the opening times.

The castle has had many owners before Sir Thomas Myddelton purchased it in the year 1595 for £5,000. Having survived the English civil war relatively unscathed, the Myddeltons have lived there to this day.

In the area of the fish ponds and the Trout Farm (as you walk through Pentre Wood) you have a good chance of seeing herons.

Footnote: You can take the Dyke path downhill, then a lane steeply down hill to the bus route at Castle Mill.

Distance 2.7 km. Height gain 154 metres (510 ft). Time 1 hour 5 mins.

The bridge turn right onto a riverside lane (we have not joined a section of the Maelor Way). Just past the telephone box go over the stile on right and through a meadow with the river on your right. Follow along to the next stile that leads into woods owned by the woodland Trust. Follow the path along the riverbank, and then up and down the steps, turning left at the bottom of the flight. Continue ahead crossing a stile out of the wood and ahead to another stile onto a track. Pass beneath the huge Black Poplar tree to follow the track to double gates at a house. Continue down the lane to a road at the top. Turn right for just 20 metres then fork left into a green lane which runs down the left side of the old school building. Follow this short lane to its end and climb over a hidden stile beside the gate. Go through a gap in the hedge on your left and cut diagonally across a humpy field with a quarry on your left, through an old hedge line and then a small field to the stile onto a stone track. Turn left uphill on this track for 5 minutes to a crossroads. Turn right still uphill for another 8 or 10 minutes. The track levels out, and your climb is rewarded by magnificent views and a fine stand of beech trees! Arrive at a cutting through the 1200 year old Offa’s Dyke. You are back in Wales!

Distance 2.7 km. Height gain perhaps 5 metres (20 ft). Time 50 mins.

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 and in 4 mins. reach Pont Faen (The Stone Bridge). Cross the bridge back into Wales!

You could catch a bus here, but would miss an attractive last section into Chirk.
**Terraced lanes and pastures**

Much of this section is on hillside quite high above the valley, so affords superb views, especially to the north and east.

The account of the ‘Battle of Crogan’ can be found in the Brut y Tywysogyon (the Chronicle of the Princes). The battle took place in 1165; the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses. It is reputed that the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses. It is reputed that the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses.

The Battle took place in the valley, either near this section of the walk or further up the valley at Tregeiriog. Buildings below our route here are found in the Brut y Tywysogyon (the Chronicle of the Princes). The battle took place in 1165; the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses. It is reputed that the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses. It is reputed that the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses.

Down below our route, just to the Welsh side of the valley, so affords superb views, especially to the north and east. The account of the ‘Battle of Crogan’ can be found in the Brut y Tywysogyon (the Chronicle of the Princes). The battle took place in 1165; the independent Welsh Princes defeating the forces of Henry II. whose exhausted soldiers suffered heavy losses.

From the Post Office, cross the road to the Swan Inn 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.

If you are weary, you could keep on the lane, go right at the first junction, then next left downhill to Castle Mill on the main road for a bus.

The lane swings away left here, but we go ahead up a gated tarmac drive for 2 mins. to its end. Go ahead through the gate and stile, then immediately right through a gap in the hedgerow. Walk quite steeply up the field, keeping to the left hand hedge to reach a stile. Catch your breath, then continue up for just 20 metres to hawthorn trees. On easier ground, walk uphill, straight ahead, ignoring all turns and forks to the left. After 45 minutes on the lane, you reach a river bridge into Pontfadog village.

**Terraced lanes and pastures**

*Offa’s Dyke to Pontfadog*

Facilities in Pontfadog include a Post Office, bus stop, telephone box, old tramway waiting room, a garage and a welcoming pub.

**Distance 3.5 km. Height gain 65 metres (214 ft). Time: 1 hour 5 mins.**

Just 40 metres beyond Offa’s Dyke, as the track widens, take a stile by gate onto fairly level track. Continue, as the track descends to two gates and a stile. Take the stile into a field and drop down for 50 metres. To climb another stile. Go ahead, initially with a fence on your left, and as the fence bears away, keep ahead (just right of a boulder), fairly level, for about 200 metres, then swing gently right to a stile near the field corner. Go ahead, just below hawthorn trees, keeping roughly level, to reach the bottom left corner of the field.

Cross the stile and descend quite steeply, keeping to the right hedge and towards a gate between two buildings, which opens onto a tarmac drive. Follow the drive for 2 mins. to a lane with a large ‘nissen hut’ building opposite. Follow this lane uphill, straight ahead, ignoring all turns and forks to the left. After 45 minutes on the lane, you reach a river bridge into Pontfadog village.
The settlement of Glyn Ceiriog is the largest in the valley. It was dominated for many years by the slate quarries perched just above the village. The Cambrian and Wynne slate quarries employed large numbers of workers from the village and were the centres of many social activities. These groups included debating, choir, horticultural, reading and various bands which competed in local and national Eisteddfods.

The close knit community was on the whole deeply religious and almost exclusively Welsh speaking. This can be seen by the number of churches and chapels dotted throughout Glyn Ceiriog.

The rich cultural heritage culminated in the building of the Ceiriog Memorial Institute in 1911. The building has many uses including a library, women’s parlour, a social institute and local museum, all still used today. Visitors are welcome to view this fascinating building, can be seen by the number of churches and chapels dotted throughout Glyn Ceiriog.

For more information pick up a free "Glyn to Pandy" leaflet at local shops.
The Pandy Hump

Here, dominating the valley, is Pandy Crag, a volcanic tuff formation and an area identified as a possible RIG (Regionally Important Geological) site. The area has a great variety of mineral deposits located close together. Many of these were quarried including slate, granite and china stone which was used to give opacity to porcelain.

If you have chosen to avoid the climb and walk along the road you will pass large flooded caverns, which can be viewed through an iron gate. These were granite and silica workings.

On top of the ridge you are at the highest point of the walk at 350 metres (1165 ft) and have fine views over the Berwyns to the west and Y Foel to the north. Closer at hand, to the south, the land drops steeply to the river Teirw (Bulls), which flows down its steep valley to join the river Ceiriog at Pandy.

The valley was visited by George Borrow (Wild Wales, 1854) who captured the essence of the valley:

“...the valley was wild and solitary to an extraordinary degree, the brook or torrent running in the middle of it, covered with older tree”.

The area is rich in wildlife and you may see birds of prey such as buzzards, kestrels, peregrine falcons, hen harriers and merlins. In spring and summer you may hear the call of the curlew nesting on the high ground. In the woodland you may see flycatchers, jays, yellowhammers and wrens. Watch out for grey wagtails (the yellow ones!), pied wagtails and dippers by the rivers.

If you are very lucky you may see some of the shier mammals of the area which include hares, badgers and foxes, stoats, weasels and the rare polecat.

Stage 5

The Pandy Hump

Glyn Ceiriog to Pandy

Bus stop, shops, Post Office, Trout Farm, and refreshments at Glyn Ceiriog.

Bus stop and summer meals at “The Woolpack” in 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. It may make you puff, but 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 track, 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 the Pandy follow this lane for 1 mile. 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 a derelict building on your left and through a gate ahead. Go right 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, for in wet weather deep mud abunds! Pass right of these buildings to go through a gate, descend the sunken path for 4 mins. 75metres (1.5 mins.) to a road. Go left for 2 mins. to reach the road. Bus stop, shops, Post Office, refreshments at Christian Centre or Pubs, the Trout Farm and The Institute.
Quarry and Tramway

The hamlet of Pandy is named after its fulling mill which is now The Woolpack. The mill may well have been the first of its kind in Wales and was used to transform local woven woollen material into flannel, using fullers earth.

The quarry at Hendre was the largest employer in the valley for many years. Opened in 1873, it provided dolerite, an igneous rock similar to granite, which was used for road construction and as facing stone for prestigious buildings. The quarry was the furthest point of the Glyn Valley Tramway and the National Trust path follows part of the route. As you follow the track look out for the few remaining sleepers and the ruins of many of the former quarry buildings.

The poet Huw ‘Eos’ Morus (1622-1709) lived in Pont y Meibion from the year 1647. This farmhouse is on the main valley road just above the house with a bell. He lived in the days of Cromwell and wrote a range of poetry. He is best remembered for his political poems. As an ardent royalist he attacked the parliamentarians in his verse. He did not condemn them openly, preferring the use of allegory, so avoiding the verse. He did not condemn them openly, preferring the use of allegory, so avoiding the verse. He did not condemn them openly, preferring the use of allegory, so avoiding the verse. He did not condemn them openly, preferring the use of allegory, so avoiding the verse. He did not condemn them openly, preferring the use of allegory, so avoiding the verse. He did not condemn them openly, preferring the use of allegory, so avoiding the verse.

Stage 6

The Quarry and Tramway

Pandy to Tregeiriog

Bus stops at Pontricket and Tregeiriog. Except in winter there are refreshments at the Woolpack.

Distance 3 km. Height gain 20 metres (70 ft). Time 50 mins.

Cross the main road with care and head for the telephone box. Walk down the lane past the row of houses on your right. Go through the gate at the end and turn right to join the National Trust Tramway track.

Continue along this level path for about 10 mins. until you come to a lane which you cross directly to go through a gate by a house with the bell on it. Continue straight ahead along the Tramway crossing a stile and after 1 min. follow the left hand fork uphill. Continue along this track for about 12 mins., passing the entrance to the disused (and dangerous) Hendre Quarry, ignoring all turns to your left or right until you come to the attractive stone buildings of Hendre Farm. Go between the main house and outbuildings and follow the gravel track downhill. At the T-junction turn left up the lane for a minute then turn right through a field gate and then almost immediately over a stile to follow a level track below the hedge line. Continue for a couple of mins. and where the farm track bears left into the field above, continue straight ahead to a stile. Follow the grassy level track along for about 3 mins. until reaching a stream and crossing a stile. Keep right on a permissive path* with the fence line on your right until you come to 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" 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 Woolpack. This is the small hamlet of Pandy.

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

** Should this permissive path be closed at any time the less obvious Definitive footpath runs across the field just below the stone farm house.

(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.).

Pandy has a bus stop, and except in winter, refreshments at the Woolpack.
Down valley

The Pheasant Strut
Tregeregiog to Llanarmon D.C.

Bus stops at Tregeregiog and Llanarmon. Llanarmon has public toilets in summer. Refreshments in plenty!

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

Cross the lane (but not the bridge) and on a minor lane turn the passing station on your right. Go through the road gate ahead and continue for one min. before turning right through a gate into the field. Continue level "along the contour" for 4 or 5 mins. to reach a gate ahead near the bottom of the mixed wood. Go through the gate and follow the level track through this pheasant wood. After about 4 mins. where the main track drops down through a field gate, continue ahead on a grassier track (just inside the wood) with the fence line on your right. After 4 mins. leave the wood through another field gate and continue (much bracken) with the fence still on your right hand side. After 4 mins. pass left of a house (Ty'n y Fedw) reaching in two mins. a slightly boggy area. Slightly right to cross a stream and stile. A sign warns that "path 1 is temporarily closed" but we pass path 2 through the left field gate and straight ahead across the field to cross a stile. Keep straight ahead and as you crest the rise, see an isolated barn ahead. Pass through a gate and keep left of this barn onto a level grassy track. 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 line. 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.

Tregeregiog village has a bus stop and 'phone box. To use them, go over the river bridge and ahead for 5 mins.

The Pheasant Strut
Llanarmon to Tregeregiog

Bus stops at Tregeregiog and Llanarmon. Llanarmon has public toilets in summer and refreshments all the year!

Distance 2 km. Height gain 45 metres (140 ft). Time 40 mins.

Cross the road (but not the bridge) and on a minor lane turn the passing station on your right. Go through the road gate ahead and continue for one min. before turning right through a gate into the field. Continue level "along the contour" for 4 or 5 mins. to reach a gate ahead near the bottom of the mixed wood. Go through the gate and follow the level track through this pheasant wood. After about 4 mins. where the main track drops down through a field gate, continue ahead on a grassier track (just inside the wood) with the fence line on your right. After 4 mins. leave the wood through another field gate and continue (much bracken) with the fence still on your right hand side. After 4 mins. pass left of a house (Ty'n y Fedw) reaching in two mins. a slightly boggy area. Slightly right to cross a stream and stile. A sign warns that "path 1 is temporarily closed" but we pass path 2 through the left field gate and straight ahead across the field to cross a stile. Keep straight ahead and as you crest the rise, see an isolated barn ahead. Pass through a gate and keep left of this barn onto a level grassy track. 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 line. 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.

Llanarmon D.C. was for many centuries a stopping point for drovers on their way to England. See the church of St. Garmon with two yew trees each over 1000 years old. The religious site was established here in the 5th century and the grass mound just inside the gate is believed to have been a "Preaching Mound" which pre-dated any building.

The village name can be translated as Llan (the church land), (G)armon (the French travelling saint who established the Christian Community), Dyffryn (the wide valley of), Ceiriog (the river name). The valley floor at Llanarmon is some 260 metres above sea level, compared with 75 metres at Chirk.

The renowned poet John 'Ceiriog' Hughes (1832-1887) was born in the farm at Pen-Y Bryn, Llanarmon. He began his working life as a farm hand and went on to become one of the greatest Welsh poets. He produced some of the finest lyrics in the Welsh language on themes such as nature, love, and patriotism. Some of the poems such as 'Nant y Mynydd' and 'Alun Mabon' remain popular today.

In 1923, proposals by the Warrington Corporation for the creation of two large reservoirs were submitted to Parliament. The Corporation planned to acquire some 13,000 acres of land which included the villages of Tregeregiog, Llanarmon D.C. and Pentre. The impact of the construction of the two reservoirs would have changed the valley for ever. Fortunately for the inhabitants of the valley, a massive amount of support was received from all corners of Wales. In Parliament Lloyd George condemned the scheme and the whole project was rejected. He described the valley as "A little bit of heaven on earth", and asked "Why should anyone want to flood this exquisite little valley?"

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