



**Chris Scott's** first big walking adventure took him along the Pennine Way in the hot summer of 1976. It's all been downhill since then, but he did manage to update previous editions of Trailblazer's *Coast to Coast* and *Pennine Way* guides. He also writes about the Sahara, vehicle overlanding and packboats.

## Glyndŵr's Way

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### A request

The author and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. Nevertheless, things do change. If you notice any changes or omissions for the next edition, please contact us at Trailblazer (✉ [info@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:info@trailblazer-guides.com)). A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

### Warning: hill walking can be dangerous

Please read the notes on when to go (pp14-16) and health and safety (pp76-82 & p173).

Every effort has been made by the author and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

**Updated information on:** ✉ [trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:trailblazer-guides.com)

**Photos – Front cover and this page:** Below Foel Fadian,  
near the highest point on the walk (505m, Map 27)

**Previous page:** Clywedog Reservoir, from the trail on the way to Hafren Forest (Map 23)

**Overleaf:** On the Pumlumon (Plynlimon) Fawr Horseshoe (see pp173-80)

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK



This guidebook contains all the information you need to undertake all or parts of the Glyndwr's Way so you can plan your trip without having to consult numerous websites and other books and maps. When you're ready to go, there's comprehensive public transport information to get you to and from the trail and detailed maps (1:20,000) to help you find your way along it.

- Reviews of campsites, hostels, B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels
- Walking companies if you want an organised tour or your luggage carried
- Itineraries for all levels of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when is the best time to walk, how hard is it, what to pack and the approximate cost of the trip
- Walking times and how to use GPS tracklogs as a back-up to navigation
- Cafés, pubs, tea-shops, restaurants, and shops/supermarkets along the route
- Rail, bus and taxi information for the towns and villages on or near the Way
- Street maps of the main towns and villages
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

Note that this edition of the guide is liable to more change than usual. Some of the B&Bs, hotels, pubs, restaurants and tourist attractions may not survive the hardships caused by rising fuel prices, inflation and staff shortages. Do forgive us where your experience on the ground contradicts what is written in the book; please email us – [info@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:info@trailblazer-guides.com) so we can add your information to the updates page on the website.

### ☐ MINIMUM IMPACT FOR MAXIMUM INSIGHT

*Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you and storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.* **John Muir** (one of the world's first and most influential environmentalists, born in 1838)

Why is walking in wild and solitary places so satisfying? Partly it is the sheer physical pleasure: sometimes pitting one's strength against the elements and the lie of the land. The beauty and wonder of the natural world and the fresh air restore our sense of proportion and the stresses and strains of everyday life slip away. Whatever the character of the countryside, walking in it benefits us mentally and physically, inducing a sense of well-being, an enrichment of life and an enhanced awareness of what lies around us. All this the countryside gives us and the least we can do is to safeguard it by supporting rural economies, local businesses, and low-impact methods of farming and land-management, and by using environmentally sensitive forms of transport – walking being pre-eminent.

# INTRODUCTION

The 'Hidden Heartland of Wales' is how National Trail promotional postcards describe the Glyndŵr's Way, and they're not wrong. Looping off Offa's Dyke for **134.5 miles (216.5km)** across the width of Powys and back to the English border at Welshpool, 'the Forgotten Path' might be another name for this overlooked National Trail. The walk straddles a sparsely populated 'No-Man's Land' between the sometimes over-run tourist enclaves of Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons. Once on the walk, if you do meet another soul, it's more likely to be a working local than a fellow hiker.

**The trail threads a tenuous link between places associated with Glyndŵr's 15th century rebellion against the English**

Some mystery surrounds the founding of the walk in the mid-1970s (see p10) which commemorates **Owain Glyndŵr**, a 15th-century Welsh 'Braveheart' little known beyond Wales. The trail threads a tenuous link between places associated with Glyndŵr's rebellion against the English, though once you're underway there's little evidence of his deeds which spanned the entire country. None of that detracts from your ramble across the eerie moors, upland sheep pastures, old droving roads, river valleys, woodlands and forests of mid-Wales.

Obviously you can walk Glyndŵr's Way in

Owain Glyndŵr statue, Corwen





Looking down on Machynlleth, near the halfway point, a perfect place to break your walk.

On our maps you'll also find out-of-town **benches** for a bit of a sit down, as well as indications where **short-cuts** along backroads might shorten your walk at either end of the day if you're running late or have had enough.

**Machynlleth** is one of only two towns along the actual route, the site of Owain Glyndŵr's short-lived 1404 parliament and crowning as the last native Prince of Wales. The other is Llanidloes. With Welshpool and Knighton at either end, they are referred to as the 'four towns'.

## Origins of the Glyndŵr's Way trail

*A lack of places of refreshment is more than compensated for by the splendid isolation of central Wales and there can be but few paths where in fairly regular Saturday [day] walks, no other walkers were met...*

**Peter Weetman**, ODA Newsletter, 1983

The idea for a 'Glyndŵr's Way' was proposed by an as-yet unidentified individual as a Powys County Council (PCC) initiative. According to a 1983 walker's report for the Offa's Dyke Association (ODA; quoted above), a long-distance path signposted as 'Glyndŵr's Way' existed as early as 1978. At this time both the Pembrokeshire Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path had been National Trails since 1970 and 1971 respectively, so there may have been a momentum to establish more such trails in Wales.

The project made use of the Manpower Services Commission, a training and job creation scheme established by the government in 1973 to tackle unemployment,



**Left:** The Market Hall, Llanidloes (see p111) dates from the early 1600s.



**Above and below:** Lake Vyrnwy with its stone dam wall and iconic tower was built in the 1880s to supply Liverpool with clean water.

By 1990 plans were afoot to upgrade the route to a National Trail, with PCC appointing a Glyndŵr's Way Project Officer in 1993. The plan was duly approved and public funds were allocated to upgrade the path to the required standards, which included a somewhat subjective 'scenic' rating that's been successfully achieved. When you think of the decades it took for the Pennine Way (Britain's first National Trail), or even Alfred Wainwright's more popular Coast to Coast (due 2025) to be similarly beatified by the hal-lowed acorn icon, the ascent of Glyndŵr's Way occurred in record time.

In 1995 the Glyndŵr's Way Project Report was submitted to the Countryside Council for Wales (today: Natural Resources Wales, see p57), the latest body which was funding the route. It stressed the need for environmental sustainability as well as tangible economic benefits to local communities. Subsequently, further route refinements were negotiated with relevant parties and landowners; today's sometimes tortuous routing may be a result of those delicate negotiations, rightly driven by the wish to avoid tarmac roads. Some landowners may have been uncomfortable with new footpaths cutting across their land, as well as the projected '3000 walkers per year' – about the number who walk Offa's Dyke Path or the Pennine Way which have had to tackle localised path erosion. The 'nimbys' needn't have worried; it's doubtful if annual usage has ever exceeded a few hundred, even after the first independent guidebook by Richard Sale was published in 1985.

The turn of the millennium coincided with the 600th anniversary of Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion and just two years after the founding of a devolved Welsh Assembly (now known as the *Senedd Cymru* or Welsh Parliament). That year a much improved and officially '135-mile' (217km) **Glyndŵr's Way (Llwybr Glyndŵr) National Trail** was announced but officially







The church at Abbeycwmhir with its neo-Byzantine tower. The ruins of the Cistercian abbey (see p104) are also in the village.



Several of the 1865 slate county boundary stones that marked the border between Powys and Dyfed can still be seen on the Pumlumon Fawr Horseshoe side trip (see pp173-80).

**transport links**, or indeed much traffic at all along country lanes. Some villages list one bus a week so you're very much **on your own**.

If you're unsure you can manage 15 miles day for well over a week, consider shorter daily averages (see boxes pp34-5), although this then creates further challenges with reaching your accommodation. A much better idea is to **break the walk** at Machynlleth more or less halfway, where you might take a day off or head home to return at leisure. Otherwise, walking at least 134 miles non-stop in nine days may put you at risk of injury or drop you into a spell of miserable weather because you had to book your lodgings weeks or months ago and can't get off the ride. And remember that these days, bad weather for walking might include exceedingly hot days. In July 2022 Machynlleth hit a record 35°C, at which point some locals swear they saw the long-dormant town clock twitch for a few magical seconds.

## How long do you need?

The established timeframe to walk Glyndŵr's Way is **nine days**, in clearly defined stages which occasionally feel as though they meander around the countryside until they reach a place with lodgings. This book adopts that well-proven staging but also suggests alternatives for **longer** and **shorter** durations

**See p34-7 for some suggested itineraries covering different walking speeds**

(see boxes pp34-7). However, unlike other long-distance walks in the UK, note that these alternative schedules can end some distance from the scant lodging options, which requires either back-up transport or wild camping (see p22). Though most aspire to walk the whole Glyndŵr's Way in one go, you don't

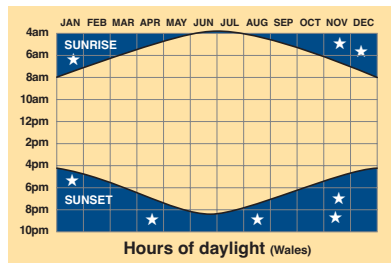
**Opposite:** On the trail between Llanidloes and Dylife.

makes it one of the best times to tackle the trail. There's also something to be said for the trail not being overgrown, as it can be in high summer.

**Summer** July and August are the busier holiday months and though the conditions are usually ideal for walking, with a greater likelihood of long periods of warm settled weather and many hours of daylight, the popularity of mid-Wales means accommodation options may be lean, even if the chance of meeting fellow walkers on the actual trail is still rare.

**Autumn** Late September and October are a good time to be on the trail to appreciate the full benefit of the autumn colours in the woodland. Although the air temperature can remain relatively mild, October can see the first frosts, and rain is an ever-present misery, intensifying as the year draws to its close. Nevertheless, many connoisseurs consider autumn the best time of year for walking.

**Winter** Even though they're becoming milder and snow is now rare, only the hardiest of souls will attempt the walk in winter. **Short days** mean you'll want to be at your day's end by 4-5pm. Colder days, wind and driving rain will make conditions tough although you can hit lulls when the sun comes out.



## DAYLIGHT HOURS

If walking in autumn, winter and early spring, you must take account of how far you can walk in the available daylight. The table (left) gives the sunrise and sunset times (Greenwich Mean Time) for the middle of each month at latitude 52.5° North which runs through Hafren Forest (Map 24), giving a reasonably accurate picture of daylight hours. Depending on the weather, you should get a further 30-45 minutes of usable light before sunrise and after sunset.

**Below:** It's well worth taking the Pumlumon Fawr Horseshoe side trip (see pp173-80).



# PLANNING YOUR WALK

# 1

## Practical information for the walker

### ROUTE FINDING



Once you get in tune with where to look and what to expect, you'll find the trail very well way-marked. A typical marker post may have a thick plastic yellow cap and up to **three roundels**: the white-on-black National Trail **acorn icon**; the gold-on-white 'Llwybr Glyndŵr' Welsh dragon roundel (Owain Glyndŵr's battle standard), although the gold fill is often faded, leaving only the red dragon's outline; and most of the time a **yellow-on-black arrow** with a boot-print showing the way ahead. Often it's **blue-on-yellow** with a horse-shoe, indicating a cycleable bridleway (see pp181-2). These arrows indicating the direction of the trail ahead aren't always well aligned.

Without referring to this book's maps for orientation, **posts** are often the only way of knowing where to go. They can be full height and topped with the yellow plastic cap, but for some reason **knee-high posts** are also used which can disappear into in full summer bloom. Tall or short, a few of these have fallen down over the years – we re-erected a couple where possible but otherwise where this has happened, crossing a pathless field or hillside can be a shot in the dark. Time to refer to your compass alongside our maps or a GPS

#### 📅 ANNUAL EVENTS

The following events may need to be considered when planning your walk as accommodation in the area is often booked up months in advance.

- **Machynlleth Comedy Festival** ([📄 machcomedyfest.co.uk](http://machcomedyfest.co.uk)) Around the first weekend in May; live comedy in interesting performance spaces.
- **Llanidloes Carnival** (**fb**) Second Saturday of July; bands, processions, a children's workshop and floats and more.
- **Welshpool Country & Western Show** ([📄 countrywestern.org.uk](http://countrywestern.org.uk)). In mid-July.
- **Guilfield Show** ([📄 guilfieldshow.com](http://guilfieldshow.com)) Second weekend in August; a community-run event including horses, dogs, horticulture, cookery, photography, floristry, arts and crafts and much more.
- **Knighton Show** ([📄 knightontc.wales/knighton-carnival](http://knightontc.wales/knighton-carnival), **fb**) Last Saturday in Aug; horticultural exhibitions, old cars, food stalls and dogs.
- **Gŵyl Machynlleth Festival** ([📄 moma.cymru/en/about/festival](http://moma.cymru/en/about/festival)) End of August; a celebration of Welsh and international music and culture.



tracklog on your electronic device. Gadgets not your style? Even if you decide to simply blunder on in a likely direction, chances are you'll soon pick up the next post or waymarked gate. These posts are supplemented with weather-garbled **finger posts**. Alongside a clear trail they may feel redundant but occasionally they do point with the precision of a Welsh archer over the brow of trackless field to a small gate hidden in the brush. Aided by the waymarking and following the trail maps in this book, the alert walker is unlikely to lose their orientation for more than a few minutes and will soon get a feel for where and how frequently a waymark ought to appear.

## ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION AIDS AND MAPPING APPS

### GPS on your smartphone

These days individuals who don't routinely clutch a **smartphone** every waking hour are regarded as eccentric. But not all devoted users appreciate that a modern mobile can receive a **GPS** signal from space as well as estimate your position often as accurately using **mobile data** signals from hilltop masts. These signals are two different things: GPS comes free from American, Russian or European satellites and is everywhere all the time but works best outdoors. Much stronger 4- or 5G mobile signals (some say too strong!) beam off towers up 40 miles away and are what you pay the phone company for.

Accessing an online map with mobile data (internet via your phone signal, not wi-fi), your position can be pinpointed with great accuracy, but only if you have a good signal, which is not the case in most of mid-Wales. Locals suggest '3' or EE are the least bad, but even some villages lack a mobile signal.

Unless you happen to own one with a decent-sized colour screen, there's little benefit in buying a **handheld GPS** device except that *with decent maps*

#### ❑ WAYWARD WAYMARKERS: A MYSTERY

*'Why are farmers purposely ripping out direction stickers [sic]. Let's get lost around their farms!'*

This was the irate Sharpie message scrawled across the yellow cap on a post near Dylife. Chatting with a couple at the Clywedog café earlier that day, we'd been warned that the often-useful yellow arrow post roundels had been prised off or even unscrewed, leaving only the NT acorn and red Llwybr Glyndŵr dragon roundels. After being caught out and blundering across pathless fields, initially we too assumed a hacked-off farmer had sabotaged the posts, but to what benefit? Why would they want you staggering around their land, upsetting the ewes?

Next morning walking back up to join the trail from Dylife, we chatted with a local sheep farmer and son coming down the track on a quad. He explained that he'd long since given up trying to fathom the minds and actions of some walkers, and we concluded it must be some kind of targeted vandalism by persons unknown. Later visits revealed arrow roundels missing from just a mile out of Llanidloes which supports this theory – it was not a single farmer. Reporting the phenomenon and locations went unacknowledged, and returning a few months later roundels were still missing and some useful posts had fallen over too. This can be one occasion where having a tracklog (see opposite) on your device is helpful.

Stepping back a bit, we're on the Glyndŵr's Way, not the Tibetan plateau, so in clear conditions you'll rarely need to refer to your digital gadget for navigation. By and large the waymarking is crystal clear; often so is the track below your feet, and this book's hand-drawn maps show what lies ahead. 'Big picture' paper maps will help too (see p42). Without a phone and tracklog, aligning our maps with a magnetic compass will identify a bearing to take across pathless fields until the next gate or post becomes visible (usually a minute or two).

Whatever your navigation method, it does pay to **regularly keep track of your position** so when you go wrong you can tell where you've veered off. You're most likely to make a mistake due to fallen or otherwise obscured posts or waymarkers, or while chatting away. Backtracking usually solves that.

## ACCOMMODATION

The Covid pandemic and subsequent crises have shaken up the range of lodgings along the Glyndŵr's Way. Traditional, retiree-run B&Bs and some pubs fell by the wayside. Of those that remain, some now require **two-night minimum** bookings, or have switched to self-catering by the week, all making less work between changeovers.

For the one-night wayfarer this leaves scant options away from the four towns; often a choice of just a couple of places which might add up to less than half a dozen beds. A comprehensive selection of places to stay along the full length of the trail is given in each section of the route guide, Part 4.

Although the interactive map on the National Trails Glyndŵr's page ([https://nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/glyndwrs-way/trail-information](https://nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/glyndwrs-way/trail-information)) lists lodgings, these appear to be user-generated with no verification and are often hopelessly out-of-date. The LDWA (see box p43) offers a similar database but results seem even sketchier. To save you hours of internet searching and trawling through room-booking websites, we've done it all for you and more besides, so our list starting from p85 is as complete and up-to-date as could be at the time of going to press. Campsites apart, **wi-fi** is now ubiquitous so is only highlighted when it's not available.

Sifting through the options may choke your finely honed spirit of spontaneity because, outside of the cooler months you'll have to **book your accommodation** weeks ahead to secure a *full run* of lodgings for the entire ten nights in one sweep. Route finding being relatively straightforward, this is the primary challenge in the planning stage. At any time you'll be juggling ever-shrinking availability with a weather forecast or your own free time. One solution is to carry **lightweight camping gear** to fill the gaps; a tent, mat and sleeping bag fit for a cold night can weigh as little as 3.5kg (7.7lbs), and if it's just for a couple of nights, you can send it to a village post office or the previous night's planned lodgings for collection, then send it onward or back home from the next one.

## Camping


On the Glyndŵr's Way, depending on your schedule, you'll find places to pitch your tent on most nights. These range from full-on campsites with ablution

understand the needs of a weary pilgrim clad in muddy boots and sodden water-proofs. They may have a **sitting room** (lounge) exclusively for guest use, a real bonus at the end of a day when retiring to your room instead of relaxing in a comfy chair can seem something of an anti-climax. It also gives you the opportunity to chat with the host or other guests.

● **Pubs and inns** Although you won't have far to hobble from your room downstairs to the restaurant, or have to risk the eccentricities of B&B hosts, bear in mind that a room above the bar on a Friday or Saturday night might be quite noisy. So unless you're getting stuck into the footie-loving melée, on these nights ask for a quiet room if possible.

● **Hotels** Some walkers are reluctant to pay hotel prices and have an outdated belief that grubby walkers aren't welcome in the genteel surroundings. The Lake Vyrnwy Hotel (see p156) might be an exception, but this is mid-Wales, not Portofino, and in the four towns the hotels are mostly pubs rather than spa retreats, with prices that compare well with other options. Check whether the rate includes breakfast.

### Airbnb

Airbnb ( [airbnb.co.uk](http://airbnb.co.uk)) has arrived in mid-Wales and it's always worth checking the website; you might find a gem or a £25 bargain unlisted elsewhere. Because contact details and even locations are hidden and property details are vague, we rarely include them in this guide, though many of the lodgings we do list are also on Airbnb. However, we have checked to see what's generally available for the one-nighters at given points.

Airbnb was originally intended to offer 'unique stays and experiences' for guests to connect with locals and communities, envisaged as a bed for the night in the host's private home and breakfast in the morning. While this is still the case for some listings, you might also find anything from luxury self-catering apartments, with no local host in sight, to rooms in a pub (such as the *Whistling Badger* in Llanidloes) and rates may or may not include breakfast.

Remember that Airbnbs aren't all officially registered or accredited so standards (and prices) may vary widely. The best are indistinguishable from a regular B&B and will offer evening meals as well as packed lunches for the day ahead. The key to success is to read the listing details carefully so you are clear what is on offer and to message the property owner before booking if you need to clarify anything.

## FOOD AND DRINK

### Breakfast and lunch

A fry-up of bacon, eggs and sausages used to be considered a normal breakfast by many walkers, but remember when in Wales ask for a 'full Welsh' rather than a 'full English' if you're to avoid a punch in the face. (The main difference is laverbread, see box opposite). If the novelty of a fat-laden fry-up wears off, something lighter will almost always be available. Literally or metaphorically, once you spice it up, porridge is a healthier way of filling up each morning.

## ❏ BUDGETING

Your budget will depend largely on the type of accommodation you use and your eating habits as well as your travel costs to and from your walk.

See **Accommodation** (pp21-24) for details of campsite charges and room rates.

Your next biggest outlay will be for food. If you camp and cook your own meals you'll keep costs to a minimum. These escalate as you go up the lodging and dining scales but broadly speaking, a cooked breakfast is £7-9pp, a packed lunch prepared by your B&B around £8pp, and a main dish in a pub starts from around £12pp (plus drinks), although you could get a takeaway (in towns) for less.

In summary, including accommodation, per person per day as a **minimum**:

<b>Camping (self catering)</b>	£15-25
<b>Camping (eating out)</b>	£25-40
<b>Bunkhouse/Pod (self catering)</b>	£30-35
<b>Bunkhouse/Pod (eating out)</b>	£35-50
<b>B&amp;B/Guesthouse</b>	£65-80
<b>Pub/Hotel</b>	£75-90

Don't forget to also set aside some money for bus fares, taxis, baggage transfer, beer, teas and coffees, snacks, ice cream, laundry and, rather more crucially, any changes of plan.

## WALKING COMPANIES

For walkers wanting to make their holiday as easy as possible there are several outfits offering a range of services from 'route planning' to baggage carrying and/or accommodation booking for self-guided tours. Because of the scarcity of lodgings at many points, some of these itineraries will include a taxi collection either from a road-accessible point somewhere along a stage, or at the end of a stage, possibly back to your previous night's lodgings.

### Baggage transfer


It might only weigh a few kilos, but the thought of carrying a backpack puts a lot of people off walking long-distance trails, even if they're not camping. Let the purists scoff; a baggage-carrying service can deliver your bags to your night's accommodation leaving you free to walk unencumbered. The costs are obviously much lower if walking in a group.

Note that unlike elsewhere in Britain, in just about all cases the companies on p30 simply **hire local taxis** with whom they've struck a deal, rather than run their own fleet of vans. You might try to do the same. If you're having problems carrying your bags for a day or two some of your B&B hosts may also be happy to do the transporting for a small charge. Likewise some of the taxi firms listed (see Part 4) can provide a similar service within a local area. Prices vary, depending on the mileage involved and the individual concerned, but for the most part you can expect to pay a minimum of £15.

People do walk the trail with dogs (one couple we met resorted to shuttling a motorhome and a car, day by day) but it's extremely important that dogs and their owners **behave in a responsible manner**, the exact meaning of which seems to vary among individuals. Dogs should always be **kept on leads** while on the footpath to avoid disturbing wildlife, livestock and other walkers. With that in mind, you and your dog may wonder what's the point of being out in the open countryside if they can't run around freely?

Like you, your dog also needs to be pretty fit to complete this walk while being unaware of what lies ahead. You may not believe it as you watch it haring around the fields but like you, dogs have a finite amount of energy, so consider whether yours really is up to walking 15 miles a day. It would be embarrassing to have to call in mountain rescue to retrieve your prematurely pooped pooch, as happened near the summit of Ben Nevis in 2022. See also pp183-4 for more on long-distance walking with a canine companion.

## DISABLED ACCESS

It's the same old story: just about the only parts of the trail which are accessible to wheelchair and scooter users are sections where the path follows roads and country lanes. For more on access for the disabled, contact the Disabled Ramblers ( [disabledramblers.co.uk](mailto:disabledramblers.co.uk)).

## Itineraries

### PLANNING

Some walkers like to walk non-stop. Others amble along, stopping to admire the vistas or catalogue the flowers (see p62-4). You may want to walk Glyndŵr's Way in one go, tackle it in a series of long weekends, or use the trail for a series of linear day walks. All is possible but this guide has been divided up into the nine well-established stages between settlements on roads with lodgings. All stages include at least one point during the day which is accessible by road.

The planning map opposite the inside back cover and table of village and town facilities on pp32-3 summarise the essential information for you to make a plan. Look for suggestions on p35-8 for how to experience the best of the Way over a day or a weekend.

Having made a rough plan, turn to Part 4 where you'll find summaries of the route, full descriptions of lodgings, places to eat and other services in each town and village, along with detailed trail maps.



● **Lake Vyrnwy to Meifod** (Maps 45-50; 14¼ miles/22.9km; 7-8 hrs) Some say it's the last good day on the trail, as you leave the wilds of mid-Wales and follow the Vyrnwy river via pretty villages and pastures back to the tidy gardens of Meifod in the lowland Marches. See also pp157-64.

### Weekend walks

● **Knighton to Abbeycwmhir** (Maps 1-13; 30¾ miles/49.4km) Two of the walk's best days lined up one after the other. A great taster for what lies ahead. To get back it's six miles south to Pen y Bont train station which is five stops from Knighton. See also pp88-103.

● **Felindre to Llanidloes** (Maps 7-20; 30¾ miles/49.6km) Chances are you'll see no other walkers on this 30-miler to Llani where good transport links reach back to the outside world. It's 24 miles by road back to Felindre. See also pp97-116.

● **Llanidloes to Machynlleth** (Maps 20-31, 28½ miles/46.1km) Another auspicious alignment of consecutive traildays up and over the Cambrian mountains. Less than 20 miles apart by road, this is a great weekender with relatively straightforward transport logistics. See also pp117-36.

● **Lake Vyrnwy to Welshpool** (Maps 45-54; 25½ miles/41.1km) From the dam wall follow the banks of the Vyrnwy river as it spills down towards the English border. By road it's about 20 miles. See also pp157-172.

## What to take

Knowing what gear you'll need takes experience; the more you know the less you need. And the more money you spend wisely the lighter and more compact and durable your gear can all be. For those new to long-distance walking the suggestions below will help you strike a balance between comfort, expense and minimal weight.

### KEEP YOUR LUGGAGE LIGHT

One of the pleasures of hiking is discovering how little we actually need to be comfortable on the trail, especially if we have overnight lodgings and meals taken care of. It's all too easy to pile things in 'just in case', then risk paying the price with a higher risk of injury, plain misery, or literally paying someone to transport your bags for you when you've had enough.

### THE PACK ON YOUR BACK

If camping you'll need a pack of around **70 litres**. It's vital a pack this size has a **stiffened back system** (most do) so the weight is resting on a thickly padded hip belt, not hanging from your shoulders. An adjustable sternum or **chest strap**

plus background information. Published in 2014 and also costing £8.95, it would complement this guidebook, especially if using a bike and mixing routes up a bit. Harvey's also sell this map as a download for £20.49, but that rather misses the point of getting the bigger picture.

Enthusiastic map buyers can reduce the expense if they're members of the Backpackers Club (see box p43) who sell them at a significant discount. Public libraries may also have OS maps that can be borrowed free by members.

OS offers a custom-made map service where you choose the centre of the map and pick the scale and format and they print it up. You can even design the cover. This service costs over twice as much as their standard maps and the three Landrangers listed above manage to cover the Glyndŵr's Way nearly completely. 'For personal use' the remaining sliver of sheet 135 could be printed off from an online screenshot.


## RECOMMENDED READING


### Flora and fauna field guides

Any good guide will be fine; the range of field guides published by Collins is unfailingly practical.

- *Collins Bird Guide, 3rd edition* by Lars Svensson et al (Collins, 2023)
- *Collins Complete Guide to British Wild Flowers* by Paul Sterry (Collins, 2008) or *Collins Wild Flower Guide* by David Streeter et al (Collins 2016)
- *Collins Complete Guide to British Insects* by Michael Chinery (Collins, 2009)
- *The Mammals of Britain and Europe* by David Macdonald and Priscilla Barrett (Collins, 2005)
- *Collins British Tree Guide* by Owen Johnson (Collins 2015) or the much more user friendly *What's that Tree?* by Tony Russell with the RSPB (DK, 2013) which is available in Kindle format.

Also in the RSPB's series of *What's that* pocket guides for beginners are *What's That Bird?* (2012); *What's That Flower?* (2013) and *What's That Butterfly?* (2014) with useful visual comparisons.

There are also several field guide apps for smartphones, including those that can identify birds by their song and appearance. One to consider is  [merlin.allaboutbirds.org](http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org).

A similar app for identifying trees will be found at the  [woodlandtrust.org](http://woodlandtrust.org). Of course there is no app if you have no signal which is why a pocket book or e-book may be more useful on Glyndŵr's Way.

### General reading

- *Owain Glyndŵr* by Glanmor Williams (University of Wales Press, 2005) Written by an eminent Welsh historian, this is said to be the definitive account of Wales' last native prince.
- *Wild Wales* by George Borrow (Bridge Books, 2009) Quirky, opinionated yet irrepressible account of the author's visit to Wales in the mid-19th century. Free download on Amazon Kindle.

## Getting to and from the Glyndŵr's Way

Both Knighton and Welshpool, at either end of the trail, are easily reached by train, bus or National Express coach and of course, road. You can even walk there along the Offa's Dyke. In addition, trains serve Machynlleth (the same line as Welshpool) and buses will reach down to Llanidloes. Elsewhere, away from trunk roads, local buses might come just once a week. If you're doing the walk in sections, it's easiest to plan breaks in Llanidloes and Machynlleth.

### NATIONAL TRANSPORT

#### By rail

There are two rail routes which intersect with the walk. The **Heart of Wales Line** ([heart-of-wales.co.uk](http://heart-of-wales.co.uk)), modestly comprising just two carriages, links Shrewsbury with Swansea and stops at **Knighton** (Trefyclo) and nearby

#### ✏ GETTING TO BRITAIN

● **By air** Most international airlines serve London Heathrow ([heathrow.com](http://heathrow.com)) and London Gatwick ([gatwickairport.com](http://gatwickairport.com)). A number of budget airlines fly from many of Europe's major cities to the other London terminals at Stansted ([stanstedairport.com](http://stanstedairport.com)) and Luton ([london-luton.co.uk](http://london-luton.co.uk)).

There are also flights from Europe to **Bristol** ([bristolairport.co.uk](http://bristolairport.co.uk)), **Cardiff** ([cardiff-airport.com](http://cardiff-airport.com)) and **Birmingham** ([birminghamairport.co.uk](http://birminghamairport.co.uk)) which are closer to Glyndŵr's Way than London. For details of airlines and destinations served visit the website for the relevant airport.

● **From Europe by train** Eurostar ([eurostar.com](http://eurostar.com)) operates a high-speed passenger service between Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam (and some other cities) and London. In London trains arrive and depart from St Pancras International. St Pancras has connections to the London Underground and to all other main railway stations in London. For more information about rail services from Europe contact your national rail operator, or Railteam ([railteam.eu](http://railteam.eu)).

● **From Europe by coach** Eurolines ([eurolines.eu](http://eurolines.eu)) works with a huge network of long-distance coach operators connecting many cities in mainland Europe with London, where it links in with the British National Express network (see opposite). Flixbus ([flixbus.com](http://flixbus.com)) also provides services from destinations in mainland Europe to London.

● **From Europe by ferry** (with or without a car) Numerous ferry companies operate routes between the major North Sea and Channel ports of mainland Europe and the ports on Britain's eastern and southern coasts as well as from Ireland to both Wales and England. A useful website for further information is [directferries.com](http://directferries.com).

● **From Europe by car** LeShuttle (formerly Eurotunnel; [eurotunnel.com](http://eurotunnel.com)) operates a shuttle train service between Calais and Folkestone, taking one hour between the motorway in France and the motorway in Britain.

### ❑ PUBLIC TRANSPORT – BUS SERVICES

**Notes** The details below were correct at the time of writing but services and operators change so it is essential to check before travelling. Many of the services listed operate year-round; however, they may operate less frequently in the winter months (generally November to March/April). Services operate with the same frequency in the opposite direction. Note that **not all stops are listed**.

**Bus Times** (☐ bustimes.org) is a very useful website for finding bus stops.

**Celtic Travel** (☎ 01686-412231, ☐ celtic-travel.co.uk)

**X47§** Llandrindod Wells to Aberystwyth via **Llanidloes**, Mon-Sat 2-3/day

**X75** **Llanidloes** to Shrewsbury via Newtown and **Welshpool**, Mon-Sat 6/day.

**Lloyds Coaches** (☎ 01654-702100, ☐ lloydscoaches.com)

**T2** Aberystwyth to Bangor via **Machynlleth** & Dolgellau, Mon-Sat 9/day (Change at Dolgellau for T3 to Wrexham)

**T12** **Machynlleth** to Wrexham via **Penegeos**, **Glantwyn/Cemmaes Rd**, **Llanbrynmair**, Newtown and **Welshpool**, Mon-Sat 6-7/day

**X29** **Machynlleth** to Tywyn via Pennal & Aberdyfi, Mon-Sat 9/day, Sun 2-3/day

**33/36§** **Machynlleth** to Dinas Mawddwy via **Penegeos** & **Glantwymyn/Cemmaes Rd**, Mon-Sat 5/day (3/day continue to Dolgellau)

**T36 Dyfi Valley BwcaBus** (Note: must be prebooked by calling ☎ 01654-702100 at least 2hrs ahead)

**Machynlleth** to **Glantwymyn/Cemmaes Rd** via **Penegeos**, Mon-Fri 5/day

**T37 Cadfarch BwcaBus** (Note: must be prebooked by calling ☎ 01654-702100 at least 2hrs ahead)

**Machynlleth** to Aberhosan via **Penegeos** & **Abercegir**, Mon-Fri 2/day

**Minsterley Motors** (☎ 01743 791208, ☐ minsterleymotors.co.uk)

**738/740** **Knighoton** to Ludlow, Mon-Sat 4/day

**Owen's Travelmaster** (☎ 01691-652126, ☐ owenstravel.co.uk)

**76A** Dolanog to **Welshpool** via **Pontrobert** & **Meifod**, Mon only 1/day

**Oswestry Community Action (Qube)** ☐ qube-oca.org.uk/dial-a-ride (Must be prebooked on ☎ 01691 671571 at least 2 hrs ahead)

**T82§** **Lake Vyrnwy Dam** to Oswestry via **Abertridwr** Garage, Wed only 1/day

**Tanat Valley Coaches** (☎ 01691-780212, ☐ tanat.co.uk)

**76/76B** Llanfyllin to **Welshpool** via **Meifod**, Mon-Sat 3-4/day

§ School/shopping bus so usually runs one way early morning with return journey mid/late afternoon.

# HISTORY, ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

## History of the Welsh rebellion

“*Cruell [were the] lawes against Welshmen made by Henrie the ffourth*”

**Owen of Henllys**, 16th-century Welsh historian

It seems it was a neighbours' dispute exacerbated by an ill-timed change of monarch which set off the most protracted and initially successful of Welsh rebellions that cost so much and went on to achieve so little. Visualising the sweep and dates of these events is a lot easier on the video map animation linked from the Owain Glyn Dŵr Society's website: [owain-glyndwr.wales](http://owain-glyndwr.wales) (see box p45).

### OWAIN GLYNDŴR'S EARLY LIFE

Owain Glyndŵr was born in the mid 1350s into the Welsh landed gentry in Sycharth (see box p52), north of Welshpool. He professed descent via Llywelyn the Great and the three great kingdoms of Cymru: Gwynedd, Powys and Deheubarth (southwest Wales) which had been briefly united under Rhodri Mawr in 872. The assassination of Owain Lawgoch in 1378 while planning an invasion from France saw the extinction of Gwynedd's powerful House of Aberffraw and so the bards and soothsayers sought a new rebel king with a lineage descended from Rhodri Mawr. For some, Owain Glyndŵr fitted that profile and around 1390 the celebrated Welsh bard, Iolo Goch, composed the praise poem *Owain Glyndŵr's Court*. In it he extolled the hospitality of ‘*the Light of Powys*’, the splendour of his Sycharth estate (likened to Westminster Abbey and even a Neapolitan villa) while describing his many children as ‘*a fine nestful of chieftains*’.

Benefitting from a nobleman's education in London, Glyndŵr learned Latin, French and English and went on to become squire to the Earl of Arundel and maybe even to Henry Bolingbroke himself, future usurper and Glyndŵr's later nemesis. He honed his martial skills fighting with the English against the Scots and French and at some point married a teenage bride, Margaret of Hanmer, who bore some of his many children. Towards the end of the century he settled



The south of the country which, as far back as the 9th century had sought Alfred of Wessex's protection against the belligerent northern kingdoms, was now controlled by Marcher lords or were enclaves of English support. But the upland north and west, like mountainous Gwynedd, Anglesey, and the hills of Powys, were known as *Pura Wallia* which only begrudgingly accepted the English yoke based out of *Marchia Wallia* in the east and south. In most cases a tribute was paid for the continued permission of the ruling elite to capitalise from their feudal fiefdoms.

## THE RIGHTFUL PRINCE OF WALES

This was the brutal medieval world of dynastic rivalries into which Owain Glyndŵr was born. At this time the Black Death had nearly halved Britain's population, causing social upheavals which threat-

*These signs have marked me extraordinary  
And all the courses of my life do show  
I am not in the roll of common men.*

Owen Glyndower in *Henry IV, Part I*,

**William Shakespeare**

ened to disrupt the ancient feudal order. Wat Tyler's Peasant Revolt of 1381 was eventually crushed by the teenage Richard II with the chilling threat '*For as long as we live we will strive to suppress you, and your misery will be an example in the eyes of posterity*'. The increasingly tyrannical king was deeply unpopular among his English barons and parliament, but did have the support of influential Welsh landowners like Anglesey's Tudur ap Goronway (a close relative of Glyndŵr). Returning from making war in Ireland, in 1399 Richard II was ambushed in North Wales, forcibly deposed, imprisoned and starved to death once plots for his restoration were uncovered. Though not the heir presumptive, Bolingbroke (Richard's cousin) convoluted a rightful claim and stepped on to the throne as Henry IV with his own network of allegiances. Less well disposed towards the upstart Celtic princes, it was to signal the end of Owain Glyndŵr's comfortable position.

The fuse of Glyndŵr's rebellion was lit following an earlier land-grab by neighbouring Marcher lord, Reginald Grey of Ruthin, who was now a member of the elite King's Council. Glyndŵr had dutifully followed legal protocols for such disputes, but with Grey's closer ties, Glyndŵr's claim on the land was rejected with the scathing jibe '*what care we for Welsh dogs?*'

Despite being now well into middle age and with years of service for the English, this slight to Glyndŵr was compounded when Grey deliberately delayed notifying him of a royal summons to provide men for the new king's Scottish wars. Glyndŵr's apparent failure to comply was a treasonous act and Glyndŵr's estates were deemed forfeit until he could prove his loyalty.

Forced into a corner, on September 16th 1400 the hitherto dependable Glyndŵr proclaimed himself the rightful 'Prince of Wales' – 'Tywysog Cymru'. That done, he first struck north against Grey at Ruthin, then swept in a clockwise arc through the Marches, sacking Denbigh, Flint and Oswestry among

Since that time, among the Welsh Glyndŵr's reputation has grown massively, particularly as calls for greater autonomy from England mounted in the latter half of the 20th century. Meanwhile, on the death of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, a flying royal visit to Wales by the new King Charles III fell, probably coincidentally, on September 16th, Owain Glyndŵr Day. A few days earlier the palace had announced the title of Prince of Wales had passed to William, Charles's son and heir, though this latest Prince of Wales very soon made it clear he had no plans for any kind of lavish investiture ceremony.

## The environment & nature

Frequently we are made aware that interests from construction, development and the transport infrastructure make demands on our woods and fields, replacing them with concrete and brick. There are plenty of organisations determined to slow this pace of development, some of them listed on p59. Thanks to the efforts of these groups, many of them voluntary, the fight-back is holding its own.

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, SCHEMES & GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS

In 2013 the Countryside Council for Wales (who funded the Way's upgrading to a National Trail in the late 1990s) was renamed Natural Resources Wales (NRW; [naturalresources.wales](http://naturalresources.wales)); the government body responsible for conservation and landscape protection in Wales. NRW has also taken over the functions of Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, and is also responsible for drawing up and reviewing the quality standards for National Trails in Wales. NRW and other agencies aim to give protection from modern development and to maintain the countryside in its present state. As in England, one of its roles is to designate national trails, national parks, national landscapes (the new name for AONBs – areas of outstanding natural beauty), sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), and national nature reserves (NNRs), and to enforce regulations relating to all these sites.

### National parks

National park status is the highest level of landscape protection available in Britain and recognises the importance of the area in terms of landscape, biodiversity and as a recreational resource. As in the US, some might say these places have become victims of their own success, sucking in sometimes unsustainable crowds with associated congestion, while nearby areas are overlooked. There are three national parks in Wales (Snowdonia, Pembrokeshire Coast and Brecon Beacons), covering around one-fifth of the country's total land area. For better or worse, Glyndŵr's Way does not pass through any of them which may explain its continued obscurity.

all, and should not just be left to government agencies. What is emerging is the most powerful lobbying group of all: an informed electorate.

## Flora and fauna

Like many of Britain's National Trails, Glyndŵr's Way passes through a diversity of landscapes and habitats that play host to a rich and varied wildlife. The path leads you through wooded ravines to sweeping hillsides and the expanse of the Cambrian Mountains. It offers the chance for seeing a wide range of wildlife and wild flowers, both familiar and unfamiliar. It would take a considerable library to do justice to the flora and fauna you might encounter on the way, so this can serve only as a brief introduction to the trail's most common species. Many of the B&Bs along the trail have field guides and environmental magazines that you can read at the end of the day's walk, while for additional input, the list of field guides on p144 should point you in the right direction.

In order to understand an environment it is important to appreciate the interactions between the plants and animals that inhabit it – and the impact of man on this relationship. If a greater awareness of these issues leads to an improvement in the way that we as walkers treat the countryside, and thus to our attitudes to conservation, that can only be a good thing.

### TREES

The wide diversity of mature trees thriving alongside Glyndŵr's Way is one of the walk's highlights and efforts are being made to replant cleared plantations with local broadleaved species. On a less positive note, where felling takes place

#### ❑ ASH DIEBACK

Described by The Tree Council as 'the most damaging tree disease since Dutch elm', Chalara ash dieback is caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* which is native to eastern Asia. It was first identified in England in 2012 and initially causes blackening and wilting of leaves and shoots in mid- to late-summer, progressing from the leaves into the twigs, branches and eventually the trunk of the tree. It is now present in most parts of the UK, potentially leading to the decline and possible death of the majority of ash trees in the country. See [treecouncil.org.uk](http://treecouncil.org.uk) for more information about the action plan, known as the Ash Dieback Toolkit, to help deal with the problem.

ASH (WITH SEEDS)





Common Vetch  
*Vicia sativa*



Harebell  
*Campanula rotundifolia*



Red Campion  
*Silene dioica*



Lousewort  
*Pedicularis sylvatica*



Germander Speedwell  
*Veronica chamaedrys*



Common Dog Violet  
*Viola riviniana*



Common Fumitory  
*Fumaria officinalis*



Heather (Ling)  
*Calluna vulgaris*



Bell Heather  
*Erica cinerea*



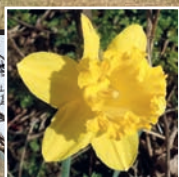
Foxglove  
*Digitalis purpurea*



Rosebay Willowherb  
*Epilobium angustifolium*



Early Purple Orchid  
*Orchis mascula*



**Top:** Most of the walk is through farmland and hills; you'll see far more sheep than other walkers. **Centre:** Flowering from late February to April Wales's national flower, the daffodil, is also abundant. **Bottom:** On some hills you'll find groups of horses roaming free.

in February. Unlike rabbits they are protected by law. There is, however, some suggestion that cattle can catch the TB virus through contact with badgers which has led to them being culled in some areas.

**Red foxes** (*Vulpes vulpes*) are becoming common in spite of occasional persecution by man. Readily identifiable by their colour and bushy tail, foxes are shy animals that come out mainly at night to hunt for food; in fact you've more chance seeing one sniffing out the rubbish in cities than on the Glyndŵr's Way. Their habit of killing all the hens in a coop and taking only one is apparently not the result of animal cruelty but done to take advantage of abundance while it is available to compensate for times when food is scarce.

The **red squirrel** (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is the only squirrel indigenous to the British Isles and is protected by law. There are only a few thousand left in Wales, primarily in coniferous woodland. The species is threatened with extinction for a number of reasons, including disease, loss of habitat and the dominance of the grey squirrel. Active during the day, the red squirrel is recognised by its colour which varies from deep brown to chestnut to grey brown but its

#### SHEEP

Since sheep are the one animal you'll see every single day of your walk (and probably in your nightly dreams, too) it's worth trying to recognise the diverse breeds that graze across northern Powys. Most animals you'll see will be cross-breeds, usually referred to as mules, and reared for their meat. Fleeces no longer command a worthwhile price in today's markets and sheep reared solely for their wool are a rarity.

Among the different varieties which may be noticed look out for the following:

- **Black Welsh Mountain** Small, black sheep with no wool on their face or legs below their knee and hock. Rams are typically horned and ewes hornless. The meat obtained is much prized.
- **Balwen Welsh Mountain** Black with a white blaze on its face, white feet and a white tail, the Balwen is said to have been placed as a landmark on the hills in order to help the farmer to recognise his flock. It's a small, hardy breed which can get by on very little when food is scarce.
- **Welsh Mountain Badger Faced** Ancient breed, once common, it has a distinctive broad stripe on its face with a black band from its jaw extending under the belly to the tail. The fleece is used mainly for the carpet industry.
- **Kerry Hill** A well-balanced, sturdy sheep with ears set high and free from wool, a black nose and sharply defined black and white markings on its head and legs. The ewe is a perfect mother, adaptable and a good forager producing strong, lean lambs. One of Wales's oldest drovers' roads passes through the village of Kerry, north of Felindre.
- **Shropshire** A sheep with a gentle disposition, the Shropshire has a white fleece and black face with wool on its head. The lambs are hardy, vigorous and meaty and the ewes make wonderful mothers.
- **Hill Radnor** A hill or mountain breed found in Powys and Gwent; a hardy sheep with a grey aquiline nose and a tan face and legs. Rams have long curved horns and ewes are hornless.

### Open farmland and upland areas

The two birds you're most likely to see are the **wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), the male of which has a steel grey back and crown and often bows and flicks its tail and perches on walls or rocks, and the **stonechat** (*Saxicola torquata*), much smaller and darker in plumage and identifiable by its call, a single sharp 'teck'.

Among the smaller birds seen on open moorland are the **meadow pipit** (*Anthus pratensis*) and the **skylark** (*Alauda arvensis*), which is often heard long before it is seen, its clear song delivered as it soars overhead. You may also see the **ring ouzel** (*Turdus torquatus*) which looks like a blackbird but with a white bib. In autumn huge flocks of **redwings** (*Turdus iliacus*) and **fieldfares** (*Turdus pilaris*) fly over from Scandinavia to feed on the berries.

**Pheasants** (*Phasianus colchicus*), **partridges** (*Perdix perdix*) and **lapwings** (*Vanellus vanellus*) are likely to be seen practically everywhere. In summer in upland areas the bird whose bubbling call will first alert you before you spot its characteristic flight is Britain's largest wader, the **curlew** (*Numenius arquata*), a large brown bird with a long down-curved bill that is as at home in moorland as on the coast.

The **oystercatcher** (*Haematopus ostralegus*) is another perhaps surprising wader that is quite common in the breeding season, with its distinctive black-

#### RED KITE

L: 650MM/25"



#### THE RED KITE

Centuries ago red kites were common throughout Britain and were known to scavenge the streets of London, but since were shot, trapped or poisoned to such an extent that by the end of the 19th century they'd retreated to a tiny colony in Wales. They were saved from extinction by a dedicated group of conservationists and, with the help of the Nature Conservancy Council, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the RSPB, they were re-introduced to avian society from 1989 onwards. This project has been one of Britain's greatest conservation successes and the latest figures we have are that there are now a very healthy 4400 breeding pairs in the UK.

Although it is commonly believed that kites feed on lambs, they don't have the strength to tear the carcass of a lamb, let alone kill a live animal. They'll feed on scraps left by ravens and buzzards but wait their turn, knowing better than to get involved with these fiercer birds. Kites' main prey are small mammals, insects and earthworms: it's been estimated that a growing kite consumes the equivalent of a small rabbit each day.

Glyndŵrists will have no trouble spotting a kite – they're quite numerous in the skies above Clywedog. The main problem is actually distinguishing them from the common buzzards, a similar bird that looks heavier and is less graceful in flight. Get a close enough view of the kite and you'll also be able to spot its deeply forked tail and the reddish-brown-to-dull-orange plumage.

For further information see [welshkitertrust.wales](http://welshkitertrust.wales).

# MINIMUM IMPACT & OUTDOOR SAFETY

## Minimum impact walking

As more and more people enjoy the freedom of the countryside so the land comes under increasing pressure and the potential for conflict with other land-users is heightened. Everyone has a right to this natural heritage, but with it comes a responsibility to care for it too. By following some simple guidelines while walking you can have a positive impact, not just on your own well-being but also on local communities and the environment, thereby becoming part of the solution.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

By choosing a walking holiday you have already made a positive step towards minimising your impact on the wider environment. Following these suggestions you can also tread lightly along the path.

#### Use public transport whenever possible

Using public transport rather than private cars benefits both visitors and locals, as well as the environment. Unfortunately, away from the four towns, infrequent local buses (see pp48-9) serve some of the villages through which you pass. To fill in the gaps, local taxi firms and some B&B proprietors are happy to ferry walkers and/or their luggage around, though the latter is an avoidable and less environmentally acceptable option even if it helps the local economy.

#### Never leave litter

Leaving litter shows a disrespect for the natural world and others coming after you. As well as being unsightly, litter can harm wildlife, pollute the environment and be dangerous to farm animals. Please dispose of your rubbish in a bin in the next village and pick up litter left by others too.

- **Is it OK if it's biodegradable?** Not really. Apple cores, banana skins, orange peel are all unsightly, encourage flies and wasps and ruin the spot for others.

- **The lasting impact of litter** A piece of orange peel left on the ground takes six months to decompose; silver foil 18 months; a plastic bag 10 years; clothes 15 years and a fizzy drink can 85 years.



and a brighter green tint for forest, all enclosed with an orangey-brown band. Full details are on [naturalresources.wales/days-out](http://naturalresources.wales/days-out) (search Open Access land), along with zoomable OS mapping.

## Health and outdoor safety

### HEALTH

#### Preventative measures

● **Water and dehydration** You need to drink at least two litres a day depending on the weather. If you're feeling drained, lethargic or just out of sorts it may be that you haven't drunk enough. **Thirst is not a reliable indicator** of how much you should drink. The frequency and colour of your urine is better; follow the maxim, 'a happy mountaineer always pees clear', that is to say, a pale colour to the urine. Dark yellow urine is more concentrated with the toxins it's trying to flush out and implies insufficient water intake.

● **Sunburn** Even on overcast days, the Welsh sun still has the power to burn. Not everyone likes slathering themselves in greasy sunscreen, so covering up and wearing a **hat** will do the same job.

### BLISTERS AND SORE FEET

*Blisters are primarily caused by friction, pressure, moisture, heat and bone movement.*

We've pinched that fun fact from [blisterhelp.co.uk](http://blisterhelp.co.uk) which, while hoping to sell you socks and foot care kits, also gives loads of good advice on avoiding the long distance walker's scourge. Blisters are your body's response to reduce persistent pressure or friction by producing a lubricant. Given time, the fluid will be reabsorbed into the body and the lifted skin either reform or dry up and peel off.

You can prevent blisters by wearing **worn-in, comfortable boots**. Many people set out on a big walk in new boots and soon regret it. But many others will suffer the same agonies simply by virtue of walking 15 miles a day for over a week. Now that we're no longer lithe hunter gatherers, long-distance walking can be tough on our underused, 21st-century bodies.

Above all, **look after your feet**. They're all you have to get you to the end of the trail. Today's ubiquitous use of miracle membranes in hiking footwear means feet get **hot and sweaty** despite claims of breathability. **Air your feet** at lunchtime while giving them a **darn good rub**. Pull your socks off inside out and give them an airing too. Take your time to **readjust laces** as the terrain or your feet require – usually soon after setting off. With proper hiking boots this is an easy, low-friction affair. Keep your feet clean and endeavour to change your socks daily.

# ROUTE GUIDE & MAPS

# 4

## Using this guide

In this guide the trail has been divided into nine stages, each roughly corresponding to a day's walk, although this is not the only way to plan your trek.

On pp34-37 are tables to help you plan an itinerary. To provide further help, practical information is presented on the trail maps, including walking times, places to stay, camp and eat, as well as shops where you can buy supplies, taps (for drinking water) and public toilets. Further service details are given in the text under the entry for each settlement. See also the colour maps (with profile charts) at the back of the book.

### TRAIL MAPS [see key map inside cover; symbols key p191]

#### Direction

See p32 for a discussion of the pros and cons of walking south to north (clockwise) or north to south (anti-clockwise). In the text and maps that follow, look for the **Welshpool direction arrow symbol** which indicates information for those walking



**north/clockwise from Knighton to Welshpool** and the



**Knighton direction arrow symbol** with shaded text (also on the maps) for those walking **south/anti-clockwise from**

**Welshpool to Knighton.**

#### Scale and walking times

The trail maps are to a scale of just under 1:20,000 (1cm = 200m; 3/8 inches = one mile). Walking times are given along the edge of each map and the arrow shows the direction to which the time refers. The black triangles indicate the points between which the times have been taken. **See box on walking times below.**

#### ❏ IMPORTANT NOTE – WALKING TIMES

Unless otherwise specified, **all times in this book refer only to the time spent walking.** You will need to add 20-30% to allow for rests, photography, checking the map, drinking water etc, not to mention time to simply stand and stare. Also remember to factor in any additional distance to reach your accommodation for the night.



The time-bars are a tool and are not there to judge your walking ability. There are so many variables that affect walking speed, from the weather conditions to the weight of the pack you're carrying, the state of your feet and how many beers you drank the previous evening. After the first hour or two of walking you will be able to see how your speed relates to the timings on the maps.

### Up or down?

The trail is shown as a red dashed line. An arrow across the trail indicates the slope; two arrows show that it is steep. Note that the arrow points towards the higher part of the trail. If, for example, you are walking from A (at 80m) to B (at 200m) and the trail between the two is short and steep, it would be shown thus: A --- >> --- B. Reversed arrow heads indicate a downward gradient.

### Accommodation

Accommodation marked on the map is either on or within easy reach of the path. If arranged in advance, some B&B proprietors based a mile or two off the trail will collect walkers from the nearest point on the trail and take them back the next morning (charges may apply).

For **B&B-style accommodation** the number and type of rooms is given after each entry: **S** = single room (one single bed), **T** = twin room (two single beds), **D** = double room (one double bed), **Tr** = triple room and **Qd** = quad. Note that many of the triple/quad rooms have a double bed and either one/two single beds, or bunk beds, thus in a group of three or four, two people would have to share the double bed, but it also means the room can be used as a double or twin.

Unless stated otherwise, **rates** quoted for B&B-style accommodation are **per person (pp) based on two people sharing a room for a one-night stay**; rates are sometimes discounted for longer stays. Where a single room (**sgl**) is available the rate for that is quoted if different from the rate per person. The rate for single occupancy (**sgl occ**) of a double/twin may be higher and the per person rate for three/four sharing a triple/quad may be lower. At some places, generally chain hotels, the only option is a **room rate**; this will be the same whether one or two people (or more if permissible) use the room. Unless specified, rates are for **bed and breakfast**. See p23 for more information on rates. Some, but not all, B&Bs and campsites accept **credit/debit cards** but most guesthouses and nearly all hotels and hostels do.

Rooms either have **en suite** (bath or shower) facilities, or **private** or **shared** facilities just outside the bedroom. Most of these have only a shower. In the text **☺** signifies that at least one room has a bathroom with a **bath**, or access to a bath, for those who prefer a relaxed soak at the end of the day.

Nowadays almost all places to stay or eat, including many campsites, have **wi-fi** which is free unless otherwise stated. If a business has a Facebook page (**fb**) it can be useful to check this for updates to opening times, especially for small and seasonal businesses. The text indicates if **dogs** (🐕 – see also p30 and pp183-4) are welcome in at least one room (subject to prior arrangement, additional charge may apply). And finally it shows if **packed lunches** (🍱) can be prepared, again subject to prior arrangement.




## Other features

Features are marked on the map when pertinent to navigation. In order to avoid cluttering the maps and making them unusable not all features have been marked each time they occur.

### KNIGHTON (TREF Y CLAWDD)


[see map p87]

Situated just over the English border since the 1535 Act of Union, 'Tref y Clawydd', the Welsh name for Knighton ( visit [knighton.co.uk](http://knighton.co.uk), **fb**) means 'the town on the Dyke', which is literally true: the town bestrides Offa's Dyke as well as the River Teme, an ancient Brittonic name sharing roots with the better known Thames and Tamar rivers. Knighton has been a strategic border town since Saxon and even Roman times, when local 1st-century AD hero King Caratacus (Caradog), a proto Glyndŵr figure, harried the invaders then, once defeated and captured, managed to talk his way into a pardon in front of Claudius in Rome.

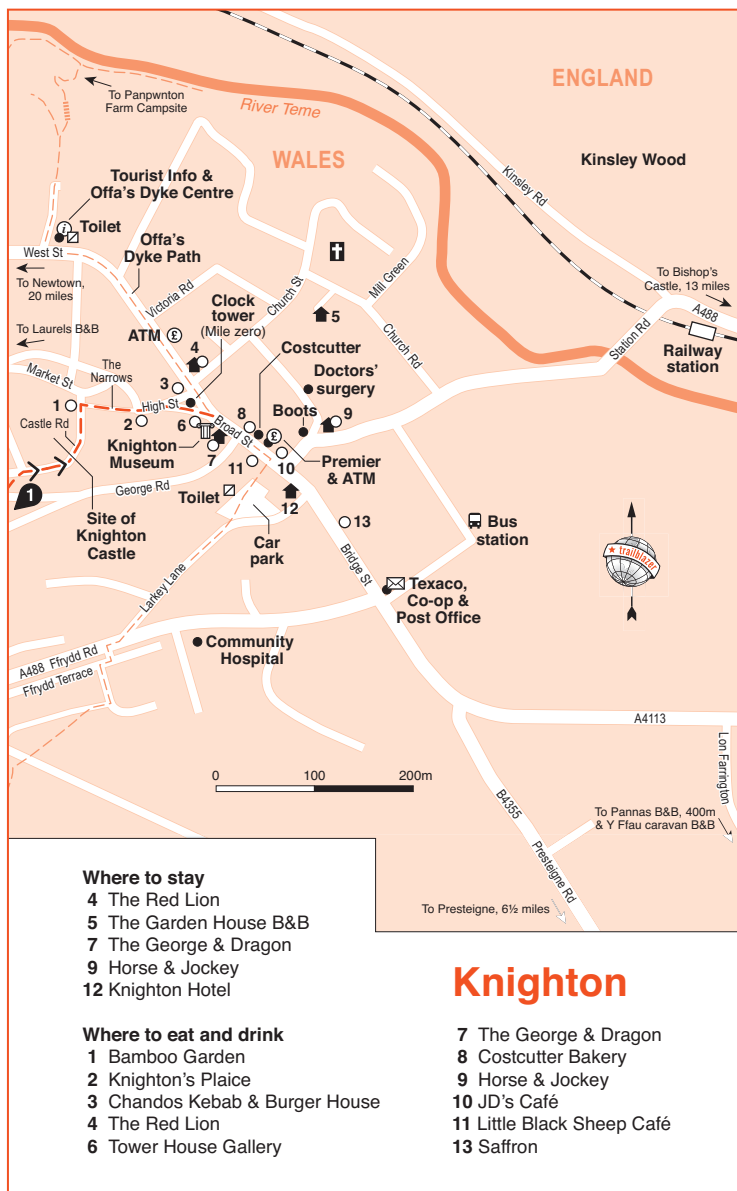
Apart from the handy train link, one reason the walk might start here is that one of Glyndŵr's most decisive victories against the English took place at the Battle of Bryn Glas in 1402, near the village of Pilleth, three miles south-west of town. At the same time Knighton's Norman castle, occupied by the well-connected Mortimer family (see p54), was reduced to rubble. You'll pass close to the site as you walk down Castle Road on the way out of town. The Mortimers were amongst the 'Marcher lords' invested by the English king to guard the border or **Welsh Marches**, as this part of the country has since become known.

Besides the **Offa's Dyke Centre** (see Services p86), the attractions of Knighton

### THE HINDWELL ENCLOSURE – A SUPERSIZED STONEHENGE

Though there's precious little to actually marvel at, just seven miles south of Knighton is the site of what is currently western Europe's largest known timber Neolithic structure. Flying over farmland in certain conditions revealed vestiges of ancient works, in this case part of a broad arc resembling a ditch showed a series of huge, closely dug post holes. The arc was a small section of a huge oval ring composed of some 1400 oak trunks weighing up to four tons each. They produced a palisade (wall) some 6m (20') high with a diameter of 880m by 580m, with a second smaller double-walled palisade at the southern end. Later the site was used as a fort on a Roman road. The remnants of such **hengés** are commonly found around Britain and western Europe, but none on this scale. The site is thought to date back to 2700BC, some three centuries after work on the similar but much smaller Stonehenge was believed to have started and which spanned several centuries. Like Stonehenge, it's thought the site would have been used for ceremonial or religious purposes. Read more at  [coflein.gov.uk/en/site/309366/](http://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/309366/).

Wales is densely packed with many other remains of ancient sites, from the late Neolithic to medieval times. Megalithic structures like cromlechs (tombs) are particularly prolific in the peninsular west: Anglesey, Llyn and the west coast down to Pembrokeshire, as these would have been the first re-inhabitable areas when the ice sheet started retreating 10,000 years ago, while the mountainous interior remained largely icebound. Larger Iron Age hill forts became more numerous on the eastern side of the country and later were commonly adopted or repurposed as defensive structures by or against those that followed (Romans, Saxons, Normans), just as sites of pagan worship would become churches and cathedrals. Wales has more castles per square mile than any other country, with 400 still standing or in ruins.




If it's a caffeine shot you're after, **JD's Café** (☎ 01547-528218; Wed-Sun 8.30am-2pm) is a coffee shop serving breakfasts, lunches and takeaways. A more traditional option is the **Little Black Sheep Café** (☎ 01547-520224; **fb**; daily 8.30am-3.30pm) over the road, with gluten-free and vegan options on the menu. Further up the hill, **Tower House Gallery** (☎ 01547-529530, ☐ galleryknighton.co.uk, **fb**; Tue-Sat 10am-4pm) is said to do the best tea and coffee in town, with sandwiches and cakes too.


The guilty pleasure of **fast food** can be satiated at **Knighon's Plaice** (☎ 01547-520943, **fb**; Mon-Wed noon-2pm & 4.30-10pm, Thur-Sat 11.30am-2pm & 4.30-10pm) up the Narrows, which has fresh pizzas on offer as well as fish and chips.

There's also **Chandos Kebab & Burger House** (☎ 01547-528085; ☐ chandoskebab.co.uk; Wed-Mon 3-11pm) behind the clock. For Indian food to eat in or take away it's got to be **Saffron** (☎ 01547-528510; ☐ saffronknighton.com; Tue-Sun 6-11pm) on Bridge St, and there's Chinese to go at the **Bamboo Garden** (☎ 01547-520010; Wed-Sun 5-10pm) at the top of The Narrows, right next to your very first Glyndŵr's Way sign leading out of town.

It is now time to get stuck into your walk so early risers make your way to **Costcutters bakery** (Mon-Sat 7am-4.45pm, Sun 9am-3pm) for hot *oggies* (pasties) and other baked delicacies to fuel the full day's walk to Felindre.

## The route guide

 If you're doing this walk in an **northerly/clockwise direction** (from south to north starting in Knighton and ending at Welshpool), follow the maps in an ascending order (from 1 to 54) and the text as below, looking for the **Welshpool direction arrow symbol** on overview text and on map borders.

 If you're walking in a **southerly/anticlockwise direction** (Welshpool to Knighton) follow the maps in a descending order (from 54 to 1) and the text with a **red background**, looking for the **Knighon direction arrow symbol** on overview text and on map borders. **Turn to p172 to start your walk in this direction.**

### **KNIGHTON TO FELINDRE**

[MAPS 1-7]

What for most is their first day on the Way of Glyndŵr turns out to be a superb hike that sets the pace for the typical daily distance, but with relatively few gates. Allow at least 8 hours with **no prospect of resupply or any other services** directly on the Way, other than whatever you can trap. So, with your time-keeping device synchronised with Knighton's pre-atomic town clock and a hearty cry of 'God for Owain, Cymru and St David!' strike forth out of town.

**Distance** 15¼ miles (24.5km)  
**Ascent** 2536ft (773m)  
**Time** 8 hours  
**WALKING TIME ONLY**  
 SEE P83 – ADD 20-30%

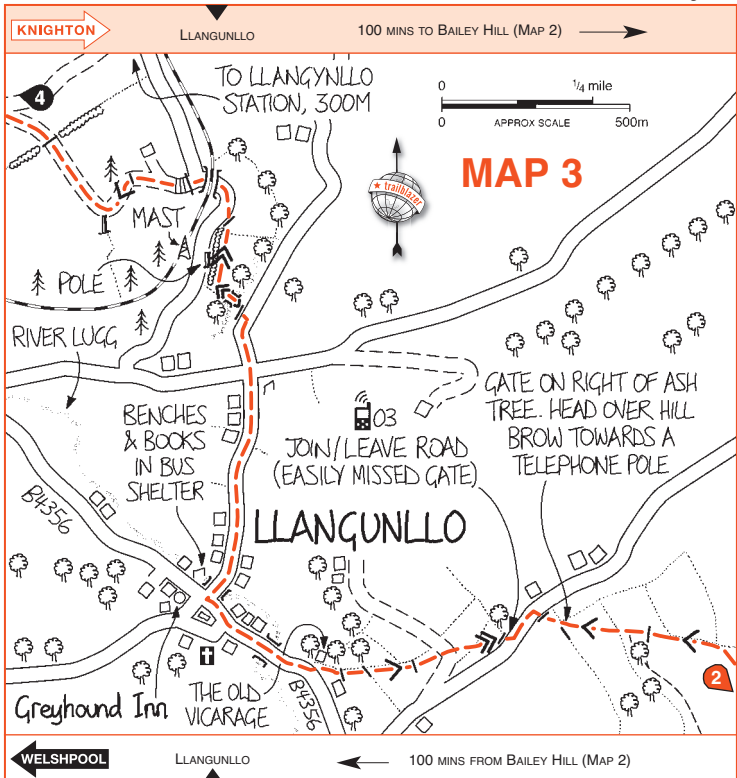
**Bailey Hill** (Map 2) Once up the Narrows, from Castle Road cast one last view south-east over the town spread across the Teme valley and the now uncontested English border before back lanes squirrelling between the houses bring you

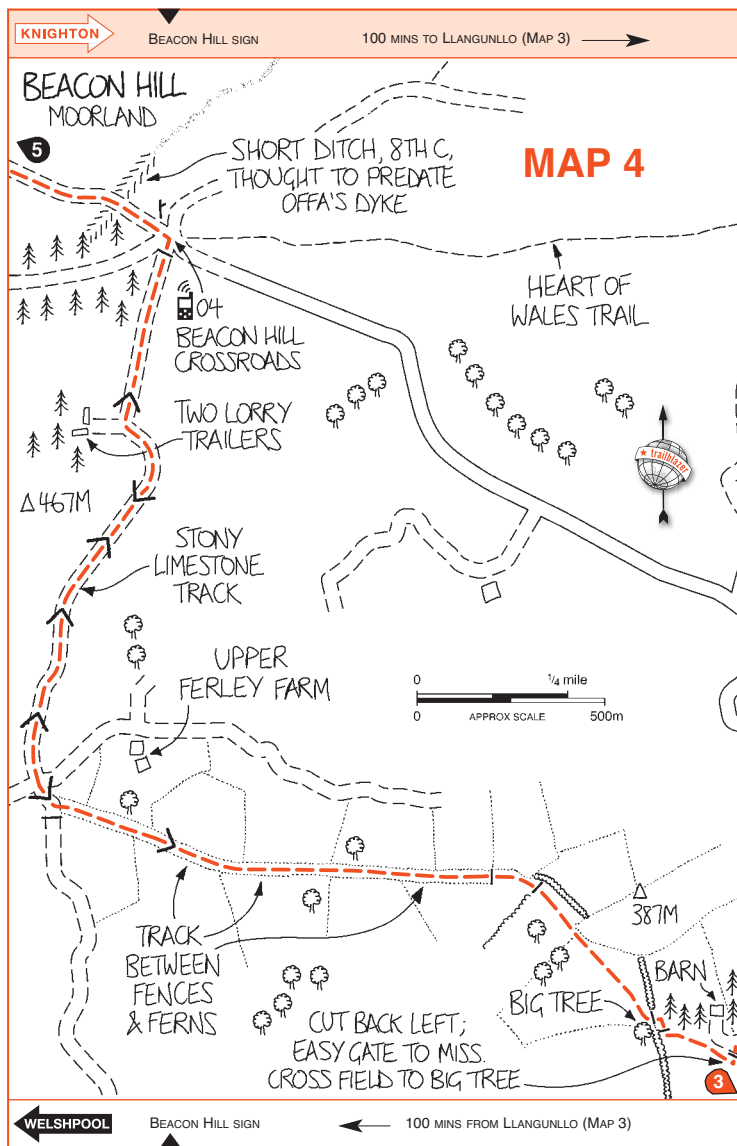
to the wooded northern flanks of Garth Hill. A road stage follows with an irksome climb up a quiet country lane delivering you to the airy ovine expanse leading to **Bailey Hill**, already at over 1300ft (400m).

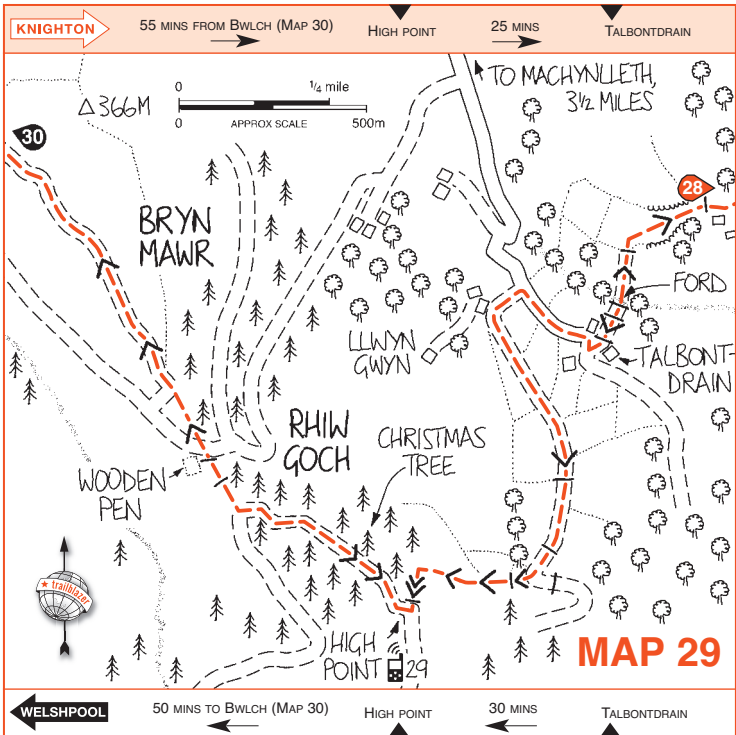
Dropping down past a motorsports track to Cefnysuran Farm, by late morning you amble into seemingly deserted **Llangunllo**.

**Llangunllo** (Map 3) Here at the drinks-only **Greyhound Inn** (☎ 01547-550400, fb; Wed-Fri 5-11pm; Sat & Sun 2-11pm), the nearest you'll get to Soup of the Day is 'whisky with ice croutons'. Chances are the pub is closed anyway, so unless your visit coincides with a 'Big Breakfast' social at the village hall (📧 llangunllo.co.uk/events) you might settle for a sit-down by the old bus-shelter-cum-village-book-exchange before crossing over the infant River Lugg which rises on Beacon Hill and, after recrossing a tributary (nice lunch spot), you rejoin a road to pass under the **Heart of Wales** rail line.

If you've had enough already, Llangunllo (also known as Llangynllo) **train**  
[cont'd on p94]







## MACHYNLLETH

[Map 31, p131 & map p135

*With its organic, wholefood cafés, shops selling lunar calendars, crystals and incense and dreadlocked residents on bicycles, Machynlleth is certainly not your typical Welsh market town.* **The Guardian**

Marking the walk's **lowest elevation** at just 60ft/18m and less than 2 miles (3km) from the Irish Sea's tidal reach up the River Dyfi, **Machynlleth** ('Ma'huntleth'; visitmid wales.co.uk) or 'Mach' (pronounced 'Mac'), also marks your walk's putative halfway point. Whichever direction you're walking, Mach is ideally located to divide your walk in two or enjoy a day off. At this point you change direction back towards the English

borderlands: either 60 miles (96.4km) to Welshpool, or 74½ miles (120km) to Knighton, give or take.

Entering via a park, you'll pass Y Plas (Map 31), the former ancestral seat of the Marquesses of Londonderry and now a community centre with the **Owain Glyndŵr Monument** (see box p133) on the lawn opposite.

Rebel trekkers passing through Mach are required to make the pilgrimage to the site of Owain Glyndŵr's **Parliament House** ( canolfanowainglyndwr.org; Wed, Fri & Sat 10.30am-3.30pm; free) or *Senedd* in Welsh, right where the path joins the Maengwyn 'high' Street.

[cont'd on p132]

# MAP 30

90 MINS FROM MACHYNLLETH (MAP 31)

85 MINS TO MACHYNLLETH (MAP 31)



KEEP RIGHT ALONGSIDE  
FENCE. DENSE  
SUMMER BRACKEN

BWLCH

GATE AT  
FOREST EDGE

VERY DARK  
FOREST

MYNYDD  
BACH

FORD



ROUTE GUIDE AND MAPS

55 MINS TO HIGH POINT (MAP 29)

50 MINS FROM HIGH POINT (MAP 29)

KNIGHTON

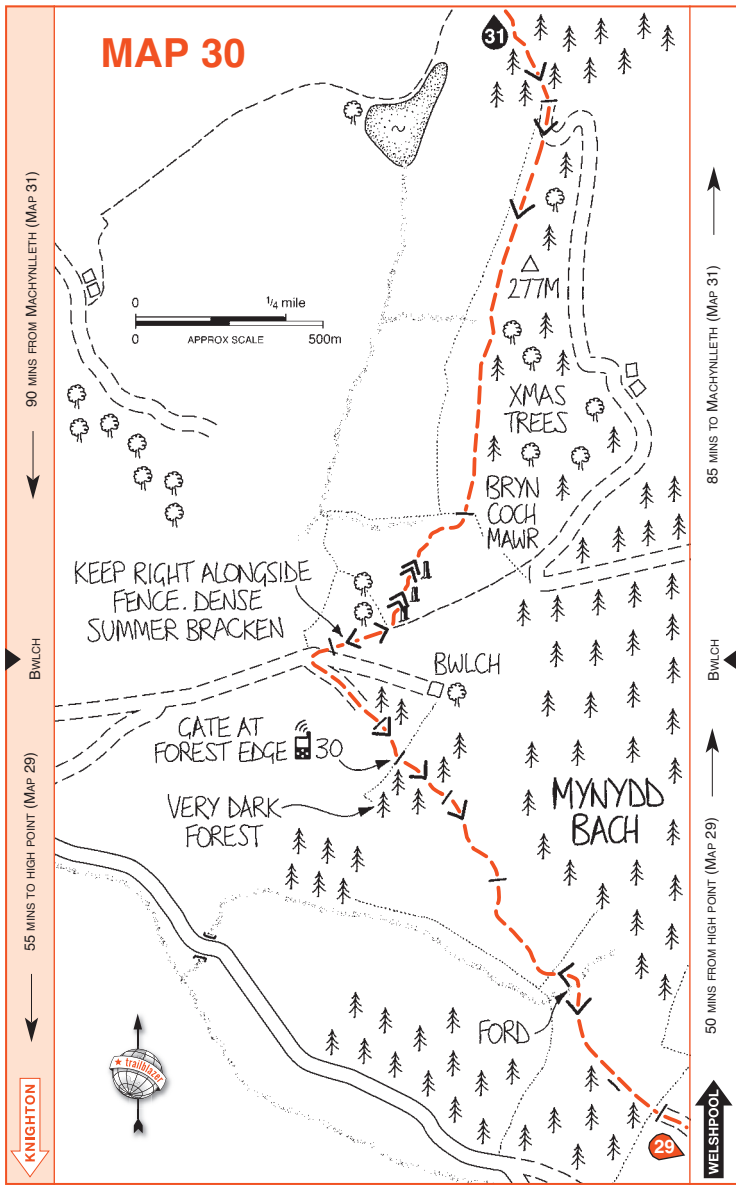
WELSHPOOL

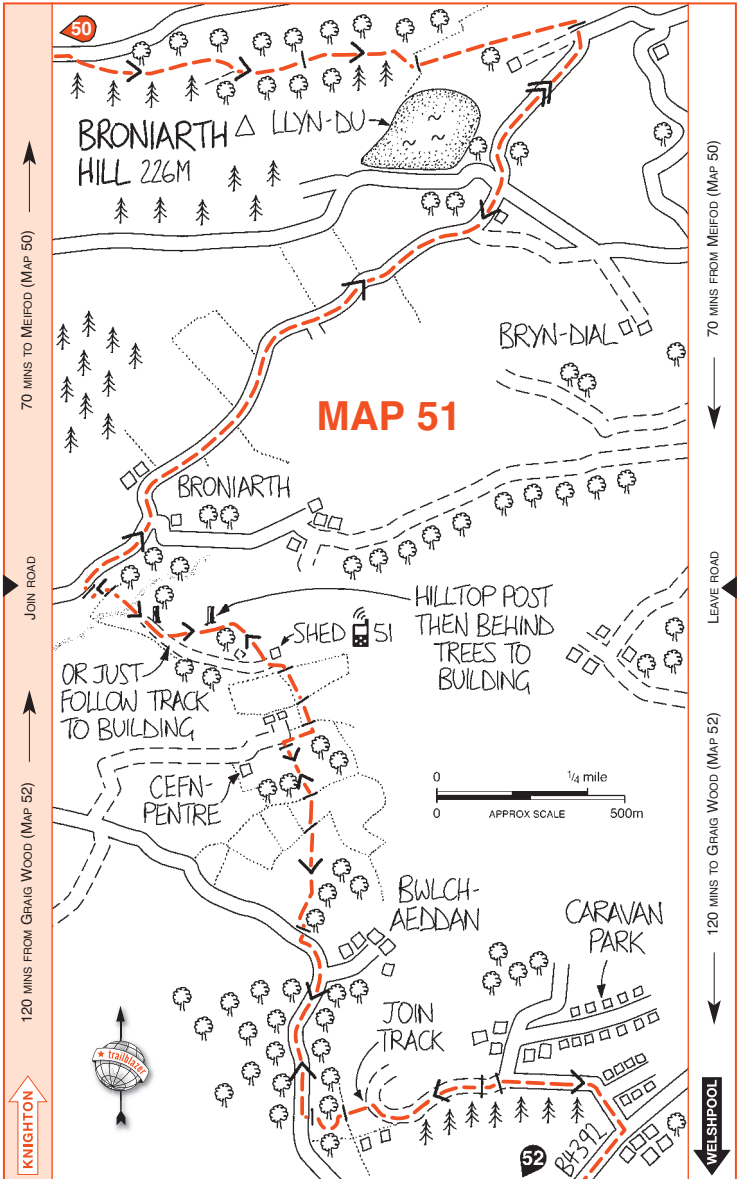
31

29

277M

XMAS  
TREES  
BRYN  
COCH  
MAWR








**MEIFOD TO WELSHPOOL**
**[MAPS 50-54]**

You might fancy a lie-in before the comparatively modest final stretch to Welshpool, but it may not end up the easy day suggested by the mileage. The Glyndŵr's Way finds a way to meander from field to field and hill to hill with no villages or services along the way, so stock up in Meifod before you set off.

**Distance** 11¼ miles (18.2km)  
**Ascent** 1880ft (573m)  
**Time** 5-6 hours  
**WALKING TIME ONLY – ADD 20-30%**

**Broniarth Hill** (Map 51) After crossing the Vyrnwy, the day starts with a climb up Broniarth Hill before switching back along a country lane and your penultimate views westwards to the now distant Cambrians. Twenty miles (32km) to the west-north-west the twin humps of the near 3000-foot (905m) Aran Fawddaw might catch your eye.

**Figyn Wood & Y Golfa hill** (Map 52) Thereafter, field follows gate follows copse follows gate. After an unfairly brutal haul up through **Figyn Wood**, for most Glyndŵrists the day's well earned highlight will be a defiant clamber up to the 1119ft/341m trig point atop **Y Golfa hill** set, coincidentally it seems, on the edge of a golf course. Looking back west one last time and with a sonorous hoot of the Welshpool-Llanfair Light Railway far below, this feels like the climax of your Glyndŵr's adventure, even if it's still a straightforward 90 minutes down to **Welshpool**.

**The end/start of Glyndŵr's Way** The official **terminus of Glyndŵr's Way** is a small green space called **Pont Howell Park** alongside the 200-year-old Montgomery Canal at the south end of the main high street. Once here, all that remains is to get someone to snap a commemorative photo of you by the polished granite obelisk inscribed with the trusty NT acorn and 'Llwybr Glyndŵr's Way'. Well done you!

### WELSHPOOL (Y TRALLWNG)

[MAP 54, p170]

The border town gained the 'Welsh-' prefix to distinguish it from the like-named Poole in Dorset and, you may be pleased to see, is a fair bit livelier than Knighton, just two days walk to the south. Over the canal from Pont Howell Park the **Y Lanfa Powysland Museum** ([en.powys.gov.uk](http://en.powys.gov.uk); open Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat from 9.30am, closes Mon 6.30pm, Tue & Fri 5pm; Wed & Sat 1pm; free) is displayed across the first floor above the library in a restored canal-side warehouse. If you have a couple of hours before catching a train, expand your regional knowledge by investigating some well

laid out exhibits on regional archaeology, history and geology as well as the origins of the Welsh hat. There's bound to be something here of interest and there's also **free internet** downstairs on a full-sized keyboard and screen.

Other points of interest include the site of a motte and bailey castle dating from the Norman era; now a bowling green. It's said that at one point in Wales' medieval past, you were never more than 12 miles from a castle of some sort. And just off Broad St is the old **cockpit**, a finely restored red-brick building that takes its name from the days when cock-fighting was how Welshpoolians spent their free time and money.



With some of that to spare yourself, consider a visit to **Powis Castle & Garden** (see box below).

### Transport

[See pp46-50] With an early start out of Meifod, it's easy to catch a **train** to Shrewsbury (one stop; 22 mins; up to 5 daily) for connections to Birmingham, Manchester, South Wales (via Knighton) or back to Aberystwyth, via Machynlleth.

National Express' NX409 **coach** service will take you all the way to London (6 hours).

Celtic Travel's No X75 **bus** serves Llanidloes or Shrewsbury, and Lloyds Coaches' No T12 also stops here up to seven times a day between Machynlleth and Wrexham.

For a **taxi** call Wright Taxis ☎ 01938-552531 or Amber Cabs ☎ 01938-556611.

### Services

The **Tourist Information Centre** (☎ 01938 552043; Tue-Sun 9.30am- 4.30pm; 📧 [welshpooltowncouncil.gov.uk/services/tourist-office](http://welshpooltowncouncil.gov.uk/services/tourist-office)) is by a small park on Church St where you can **buy train tickets** (the station is unmanned) as well as maps and guidebooks for Glyndŵr's Way. They can help with accommodation too.

There are no longer any banks in

Welshpool so for an **ATM** head to one of the big **supermarkets**: there's a Tesco (Smithfield Rd; Mon-Sat 6am-midnight, Sun 10am-4pm) near the station; and a Morrison's (Berriew St; Mon-Sat 7am-9pm, Sun 10am-4pm) behind the museum. For groceries there's also Aldi (Mon-Sat 8am-10pm, Sun 10am-4pm) on Mill Lane, along with a couple of convenience stores on Broad St, including Premier (Mon-Fri 6am-8pm, Sat & Sun 7am-8pm) which also houses the **post office**.

There's a **laundrette** next to the neo-classical former town hall on the High St. If you're setting off on the walk and have forgotten some item of **camping gear**, see what Alexander's's (☎ 01938-552329; 📧 [alexandersofwelshpool.co.uk](mailto:alexandersofwelshpool.co.uk); Mon-Sat 8am-5.30pm) at 29 Broad Street can do for you.

### Where to stay

Coming into town, in an effort to confuse centuries of marauders the main street's name switches from Raven- to Mount- to High- then Broad Street and finally Severn Street in less than a mile. There isn't a huge range of lodging options here so take a peak on 📧 [airbnb.co.uk](http://airbnb.co.uk) too.

At 49 Mount St you'll pass **The Stone House B&B** (☎ 01938-691039; **fb**; 1D/1Tr both en suite) with rooms from £40pp (sgl occ £60).

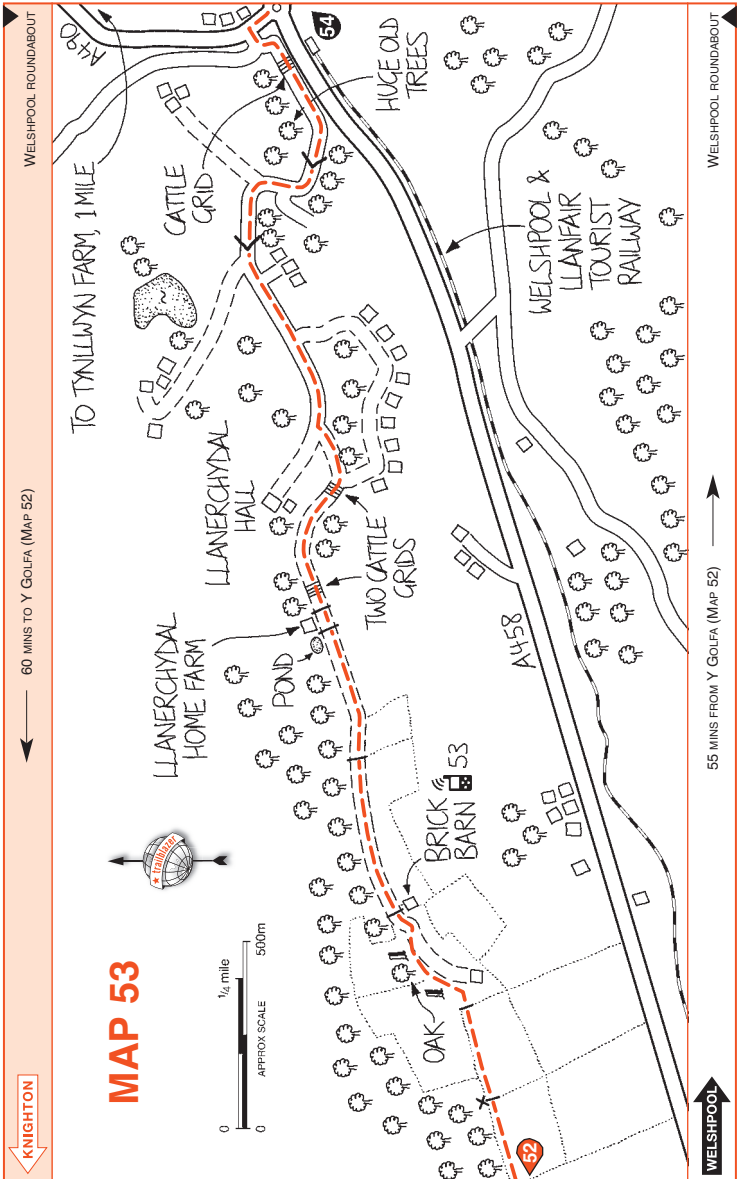
### 📍 POWIS CASTLE & GARDEN

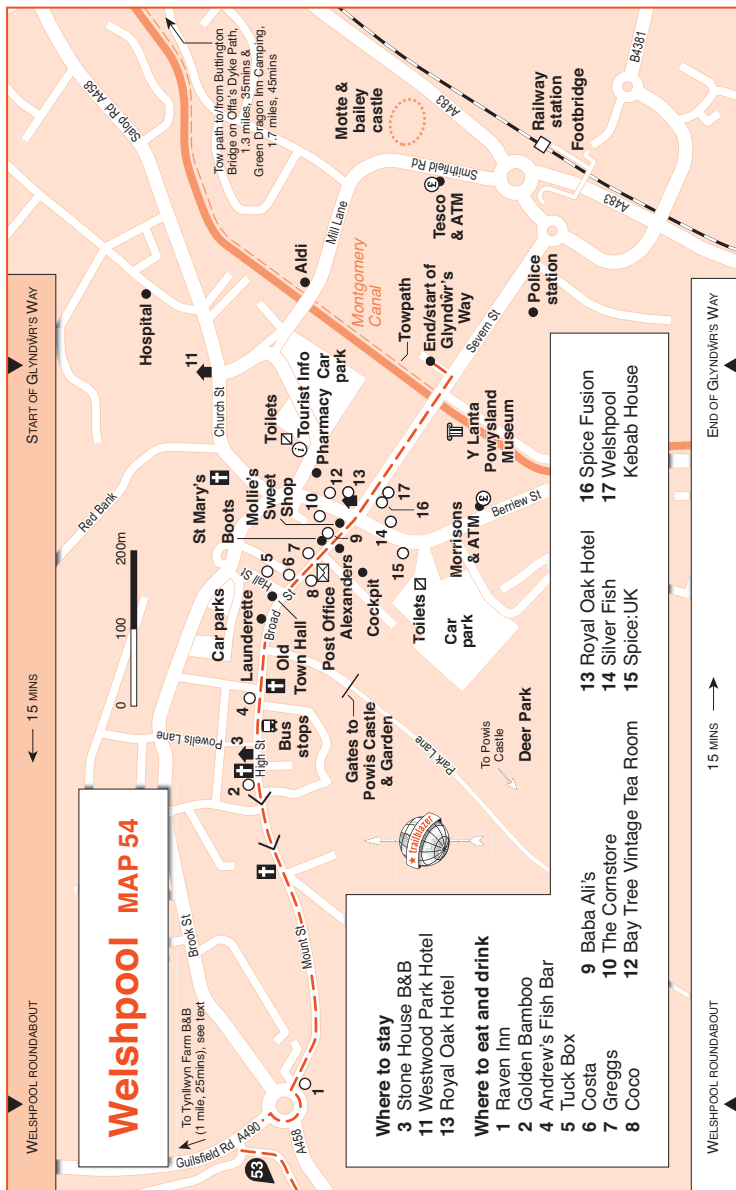
[off Map 54, p170]

📧 [nationaltrust.org.uk/powis-castle-and-garden](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/powis-castle-and-garden); garden daily 10am-5pm, castle noon-4pm; £15)

Less than a mile south-west of town, medieval Powis Castle looms dramatically over an Italianate garden. A hill fort since the Dark Ages, it later became a seat of the princes of Powys but was sacked in the early weeks of Glyndŵr's rebellion.

Today's castle is notable for housing the Clive Collection, treasures amassed by the controversial 18th-century figure, **Robert Clive** ('of India'), a Shropshire lad who, after a lucrative spell leading campaigns with the rapacious East India Company (EIC), ended up the richest self-made man in Europe. He bought himself a seat as an MP but in 1774, disgraced by parliamentary revelations of the EIC's conduct in India, and battling opium addiction, depression and other health issues, Clive took his own life aged just 49. A decade later, his oldest son Edward, who also served in India, married into the local Herbert family who occupied Powis castle at that time. Access to the Clive family's vast fortune helped fund the castle's heavy restoration in the Edwardian era.





At the town centre crossroads is the upmarket **Royal Oak Hotel** (☎ 01938-552217; 📧 royaloakwelshpool.co.uk; 4D/2T/1S/1Tr; 🍷) with rooms from £66pp (sgl occ £116).

Five minutes walk from the centre is the **Westwood Park Hotel** (☎ 01938 553474; 📧 westwoodparkhotel.co.uk; 2D/2T en suite, 3T shared bathroom; 🍷) on Salop Road, with rooms from £30-35pp (sgl occ £60). They can also arrange luggage transfer for walkers. Although they don't serve food (other than breakfast for guests), they will provide plates and cutlery for you to eat your own takeaway or snack food in their dining room.

Before you walk into town, a mile north of the Raven Square roundabout leads to **Tynllwyn Farm B&B** (off Map 54; ☎ 01938-553175; 📧 tynllwynfarm.co.uk; 3D/2T all en suite) from £45pp (sgl occ £60). Evening meals are available by prior arrangement and they can also do luggage transfer. Call in advance for a pick-up as the short walk along the narrow A490 looks a bit dicey.

Your nearest **campsite** is the **Green Dragon Inn** (off Map 54; ☎ 01938-553076; **fb**) in **Buttington**, 2 miles (3.2km) north-east of town between the A458 and a railway line and close to Offa's Dyke. It's £19 per tent, and they also have camping **pods** (sleeps 2, from £50) and a bell tent (1D, £80, bedding not provided). They serve **food** every day (noon-9pm).

### Where to eat and drink

While Welshpool may not be blessed with the finest eateries known to humanity, you do have a pretty good spread of the usuals short of a live Mongolian barbecue.

Just by the old town hall on Broad St there's a **Costa** (Mon-Sat 8am-5.30pm, Sun 8am-4.30pm) while early birds will gather at **Greggs** (Mon-Sat 6.30am-6pm, Sun 7.30am-5pm) nearby, or the **Coco Coffee House** (☎ 01938 552366; **fb**; Mon-Sat 7.30am-5pm, Sun 8am-4pm) over the road, with food including vegan options, to takeaway or eat in. Otherwise, grab a sandwich from the **Tuck Box** (**fb**; 8am-2.30pm) round the corner, or see what's just come

out of the oven at **The Little Welsh Bakery** (01938-552616; 📧 thelittlewelshbakery.co.uk; **fb**; Mon-Sat 8.30am-4pm) at 39 Broad St. If you've come from Knighton you may have already sampled their wares at their sister shop in Llanidloes all those days ago.

On Church St **The Cornstore** (☎ 01938-554614; **fb**; Thur-Sat noon-2.30pm & 5:30-10pm; Sun noon-3.30pm) restaurant seems a better-than-average joint, with a great range of home-cooked lunch and dinner options. Nearby another popular spot is the **Bay Tree Vintage Tearoom** (☎ 01938-555456; **fb**; Mon-Thur 9am-5pm, Fri & Sat 9am-midnight) for indulgent cakes by day and burgers, steaks and cocktails on weekend evenings.

The **Royal Oak Hotel** (see Where to stay; **fb**) has a good restaurant with seasonal mains such as pan fried fillet of seabass (£20.95) and also does bar meals (daily noon-9pm) and afternoon teas (2-6pm, booking essential).

There are several other **pubs** along the main road all the way to the **Raven Inn** (☎ 01938-553101; 📧 theraveninn.net; **fb**; 🍷; food daily noon-9.30pm) where they take 'dog-friendly' to another level with a menu of 'Dog's Dinners' especially for your four-legged companion! Humans can choose from a good selection of pub classics from £14.50.

You'd hope Robert Clive would be thrilled to learn Welshpool has two Indian restaurants: **Spice:UK** (☎ 01938 553431; 📧 spice-uk.com; Sun-Thur 5-10.30pm, Fri & Sat 5-11.30pm) at 13 Berriew St, and **Spice Fusion** (☎ 01938 556669; Sun-Thur 5-11.30pm, Fri & Sat 5pm-1am) at 29 Severn St, both of which also do takeaway.

Next door the **Welshpool Kebab House** (☎ 01938-556215; 📧 welshpoolkebab.com; Mon-Thur 3-10.30pm, Fri noon-10.50pm, Sat 2.30-11pm, Sun 2.15-10.30pm) also serves pizzas and burgers.

For fish & chips it's **Silver Fish** (☎ 01938-553107; **fb**; Mon-Sat 11.30am-9pm) at 6 Berriew St or **Andrew's Fish Bar** (☎ 01938-522635; **fb**; Mon-Sat 11.30am-2.30pm & 4.30-9pm) at 32 High St.

You'll get Chinese food to go from **The Golden Bamboo** (☎ 01938-553570;

Wed-Mon 5-11pm) at 46 Mount St.

And finally, walkers of a certain age will find themselves drooling over the sugary delights inside *Mollie's Sweet Shop*

opposite the Royal Oak; it's the sort of guilty pleasure you only find in provincial towns and includes those long-forgotten Pez dispensers.

## Starting from Welshpool

Start here if you're walking Glyndŵr's Way from Welshpool to Knighton. Look for the **Knighton direction arrow symbol** with shaded overview text (as below) and follow the timings text with this symbol on one edge of each map, working back through the book. The shaded route summaries below describe the trail between significant places and are written for walking the path anti-clockwise (from north to south). For map profiles see the overview maps at the end of the book. For an overview of this information see the Village & town facilities table on pp32-3 and the Itineraries on pp34-7.

### WELSHPOOL TO MEIFOD

[MAPS 54-50]

It's a relatively short start to your big adventure, with a gradual ascent out of Welshpool to **Y Golfa hill** where you can excitedly scan what lies ahead. From here onwards you'll have a chance to get used to the trail's meanderings through Craig Wood and **Figyn Wood**, across the hills and fields, along backroads and through woods before alighting in **Meifod** on the River Vyrnwy. Better days lie ahead.

Note that there are **no villages, shops or services** on this stage so stock up in Welshpool before you set off.

<b>Distance</b>	<b>11¼ miles (18.2km)</b>
<b>Ascent</b>	<b>1903ft (580m)</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>5-6 hours</b>
	<b>WALKING TIME ONLY</b>
	<b>SEE P83 – ADD 20-30%</b>

[Next route overview p164]

---

## APPENDIX A: THE PUMLUMON (PLYNLIMON) FAWR HORSESHOE

---

### THE PUMLUMON FAWR HORSESHOE

[Maps A-E, pp175-9]

**Distance** 12 miles (19.3km)  
**Ascent** 2087ft (636m)  
**Time** 7-8 hours  
WALKING TIME ONLY – ADD 20-30%

It's unclear how the original there-and-back excursion to the 2467ft (752m) summit of **Pumlumon Fawr** became attached to the Glyndŵr's Way. It seems Richard Sale's pre-National Trail 1992 guidebook (see p45) was the first to blithely throw

out the suggestion in a couple of lines. A 1999 report on the imminent National Trail considered adding a circular route to the site of the **Battle of Mynydd Hyddgen** (off Map D) where in 1401 Glyndŵr's army beat off a much larger force of English settlers and Flemish mercenaries, all of which helped bolster his campaign's Goliath-slaying reputation.

Whatever its origins, we've developed that idea into a satisfying **12 mile (19.3km) horseshoe circuit** with the clockwise return leg passing close to the undefined site of the battle. The tougher and initially pathless outbound section traverses **Open Access Land** (see p75) to the sources of the **River Severn** (Afon Hafron) and the **River Wye** – Wales' best-known rivers.

### Navigation and terrain

Both ends of the horseshoe connect with the Glyndŵr's Way less than half a mile apart east of **Glaslyn** (Map 26). Distance-wise, the loop adds a mile over the backtracking option, but it's worth repeating that, until you reach the Severn's source (after 4 miles/6km), the eastern leg (outbound for clockwise walkers) traverses **barely walkable**, knee-high tussocks of heather and grass as well clumps of rushes concealing saturated sphagnum **bogs**. This is terrain which even lowly sheep are smart enough to avoid, while navigation is largely along fence lines. Apart from the summit cairn mounds, the only **waymarks** of any kind are a pair of white-topped posts near Pen Pumlumon Arwystli (see below). The western (return) leg is entirely unwaymarked but the unbroken paths and their forks are mostly clearer. Note that rights of way as shown on OS maps may not represent a navigable path on the ground.

For your walking pleasure we've published an edited **tracklog** on [wiki](#) locs.org, search: 'Pumlumon Glyndŵr's Horseshoe'.

### Planning

This is a **challenging** walk. Unless you're engaged in some sort of SAS selection march, this is not a route to tackle with anything more than a **small day-pack** and a forecast of **fine weather**. If it was closer to a town things would be easier, but starting and ending as it does in the middle of nowhere, we advise thinking carefully before breaking the hitherto steady rhythm of an uninterrupted Glyndŵr's traverse to grapple with this moorland outing.

On top of this you need to factor in that either end of our horseshoe is an hour's walk from the nearest lodgings at Dylife (see p124) so this excursion may end up covering more like **18 miles** (29km; 9-10hrs), door-to-door.





There'll be times when, even if you could ride up in the lowest gear, the energy expended will be much greater than simply hopping off and pushing.

A couple of descents, like westbound off Foel Fadian (see Map 27), are initially **too steep** and loose to ride safely on a loaded bike, certainly alone. Anyway, at times it's more relaxing to walk along, pushing the bike and enjoy the scenery. Realistically, the hundreds of **gates** will slow you right down, so consistently covering two walking stages in one day – about 30 miles – will be on the limit unless you're very fit. And because of those gates, we found sprung **dropper seat posts** are very much not just another MTB gimmick. Hills notwithstanding, much will depend on the proportion of easily rideable tracks and asphalted lanes on a given day (elevation gains are broadly similar). In dry conditions the tracks and trails are never rough enough to warrant full suspension (fat tyres help of course), but in high summer patches of impenetrable bracken will be an effort to ride through, and forests of tall, dense thistles will pound your knuckles and shins.

We've cycled Glyndŵr's Way on both a conventional hardtail MTB as well as a top-of-the-range full suspension e-MTB. For more, follow the link from the Glyndŵr's page on [trailblazer-guides.com](http://trailblazer-guides.com) or see our video review on [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) (search eBikepacking Glyndwr's Way).

## APPENDIX C – GLOSSARY OF WELSH WORDS

<i>aber</i>	river mouth	<i>dinas</i>	hill-fortress, city	<i>mynach</i>	monk
<i>afon</i>	river	<i>disgwydfa</i>	viewpoint,	<i>mynydd</i>	mountain
<i>allt</i>	steep hillside		lookout	<i>nant</i>	brook
<i>bach</i>	little	<i>dol, dolau</i>	meadow	<i>newydd</i>	new
<i>betws</i>	church	<i>ffin</i>	boundary	<i>pandy</i>	fulling mill
<i>blaen</i>	head, source	<i>ffridd</i>	lower part of hill	<i>pen</i>	head, top
<i>bran</i>	crow	<i>ffynnon</i>	spring	<i>pentre</i>	village
<i>bryn</i>	hillside	<i>gwaun</i>	moorland, pasture	<i>plas</i>	hall, mansion
<i>bwlch</i>	pass	<i>hafod</i>	summer dwelling	<i>pont</i>	bridge
<i>cae</i>	field	<i>hen</i>	old	<i>porth</i>	gateway
<i>caer</i>	fortress	<i>hendre</i>	winter dwelling	<i>pwll</i>	pool
<i>carreg</i>	stone, rock	<i>heol</i>	road or street	<i>rhos</i>	moorland
<i>castell</i>	castle	<i>isaf</i>	lower	<i>rhed</i>	ford
<i>cefn</i>	ridge	<i>llan</i>	enclosure, church	<i>tref</i>	homestead, hamlet
<i>celli</i>	grove, copse	<i>llanerch</i>	glade	<i>twyn</i>	hillock
<i>clawdd</i>	dyke, bank, hedge	<i>llech</i>	slab, stone	<i>ty</i>	house
<i>coch</i>	red	<i>llwyd</i>	grey or brown	<i>tyddyn</i>	smallholding
<i>coed</i>	wood	<i>maes</i>	field	<i>uchaf</i>	higher, upper
<i>cwm</i>	valley	<i>mawr</i>	great	<i>ynys</i>	island
<i>cwrt</i>	court	<i>moel</i>	bare hill	<i>ystrad</i>	vale, valley

---

## APPENDIX D – TAKING A DOG

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### TAKING A DOG ALONG THE WAY

Many are the rewards that await those prepared to make the extra effort required to bring their best friend along the trail. You shouldn't underestimate the amount of work involved, though. Indeed, just about every decision you make will be influenced by the fact that you've got a dog: how you plan to travel to the start of the trail, where you're going to stay, how far you're going to walk each day, where you're going to rest and where you're going to eat in the evening etc.

If you're also sure your dog can cope with (and, just as importantly, will enjoy) walking 10 miles or more a day for several days in a row, you need to start preparing accordingly. Extra thought also needs to go into your itinerary. The best starting point is to study the village and town facilities table on pp32-3 (and the advice on pp30-1), and plan where to stop and where to buy food.

#### Looking after your dog

To begin with, you need to make sure that your own dog is fully **inoculated** against the usual doggy illnesses, and also up to date with regard to **worm pills** (eg Drontal) and **flea preventatives** such as Frontline – they are, after all, following in the pawprints of many a dog before them, some of whom may well have left fleas or other parasites on the trail that now lie in wait for their next meal to arrive. **Pet insurance** is also a very good idea; if you've already got insurance, do check that it will cover a trip such as this.

On the subject of looking after your dog's health, perhaps the most important implement you can take with you is the **plastic tick remover**, available from vets for a couple of quid. These removers, while fiddly, help you to remove the tick safely (ie without leaving its head behind buried under the dog's skin).

Being in unfamiliar territory also makes it more likely that you and your dog could become separated. For this reason, make sure your dog has a **tag with your contact details on it** (a mobile phone number would be best if you are carrying one with you); you could also consider having it **microchipped** for further security.

#### When to keep your dog on a lead

● **On mountain tops** It's a sad fact that, every year, a few dogs lose their lives falling over the edge of steep slopes.

● **When crossing farmland**, particularly in the lambing season (around May) when your dog can scare the sheep, causing them to lose their young. Farmers are allowed by law to shoot at and kill any dogs that they consider are worrying their sheep. During lambing, most farmers would prefer it if you didn't bring your dog at all. The exception is if your dog is being attacked by cows. A couple of years ago there were three deaths in the UK caused by walkers being trampled as they tried to rescue their dogs from the attentions of cattle. The advice in this instance is to let go of the lead, head speedily to a position of safety (usually the other side of the field gate or stile) and call your dog to you.

● **Around ground-nesting birds** It's important to keep your dog under control when crossing an area where certain species of birds nest on the ground. Most dogs love foraging around in the woods but make sure you have permission to do so; some woods are used as 'nurseries' for game birds and dogs are only allowed through them if they are on a lead.

WPT	OS GRID REF	WHAT3WORDS	DESCRIPTION
37	52.61635, -3.60499	///refer.trickling.lawfully	Stile
38	52.62865, -3.59946	///minute.rules.paraded	At post leave track
39	52.64662, -3.56207	///executive.stuck.enlighten	Gated footbridge over bog
40	52.64749, -3.53268	///twinkling.plea.object	Bench by chapel
41	52.66555, -3.49696	///frown.chosen.intestine	OS maps diverge from way-marked route
42	52.67819, -3.47657	///paces.scuba.gossip	Gate to woodland boardwalks
43	52.68904, -3.45850	///exact.majors.fishery	Gate off driveway
44	52.72115, -3.47718	///physics.ironic.usages	Leave track down path
45	52.75328, -3.46174	///wharfs.pots.reefs	High point
45b	52.74530, -3.43948	///interlude.routine.mastering	Steps up to woods
46	52.73296, -3.44404	///pampering.other.horns	After new steps: right, gate sharp left
47	52.71723, -3.38599	///efficient.combines.storyline	Ann Griffiths plaque
48	52.71089, -3.36507	///escalated.unto.fattest	Ruin in meadow
49	52.70251, -3.30093	///cassettes.remarking.mysteries	Gate between fields
50	52.70636, -3.27015	///impulse.irrigate.kindest	Indistinct post
51	52.69497, -3.23488	///broadens.tall.arranged	Shed
52	52.67127, -3.21588	///head.crab.submitted	Top of Figyn Woods
53	52.65761, -3.19344	///streetcar.cutaway.grudges	Brick barn

#### ***Pumlumon Fawr Horseshoe side trip***

P1	52.52341, -3.71894	///eventful.flashing.predict	Leave GW at fork
P2	52.49481, -3.73972	///lance.racetrack.outreach	Stile by Severn source
P3	52.47484, -3.74600	///tucked.lushly.doctors	Crater cairns Arwystli
P4	52.48630, -3.79081	///tamed.universally.reinvest	Walled copse
P5	52.49941, -3.76722	///difficult.neatly.narrating	Gap in fence

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## Map key

Where to stay	Library/bookstore	Other
Where to eat and drink	Internet	Car park
Campsite	Museum/gallery	Bus station/stop
Post Office	Church/cathedral	Rail line & station
Bank/ATM	Public telephone	Park
Tourist Information	Public toilet	082 GPS waypoint
	Building	

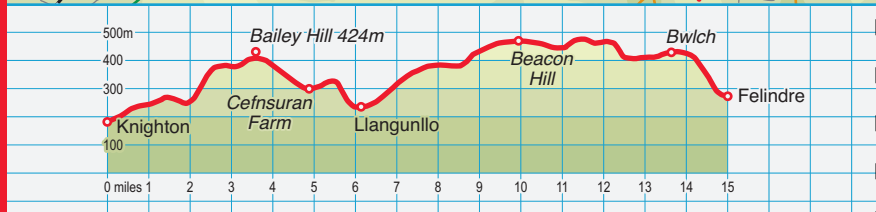
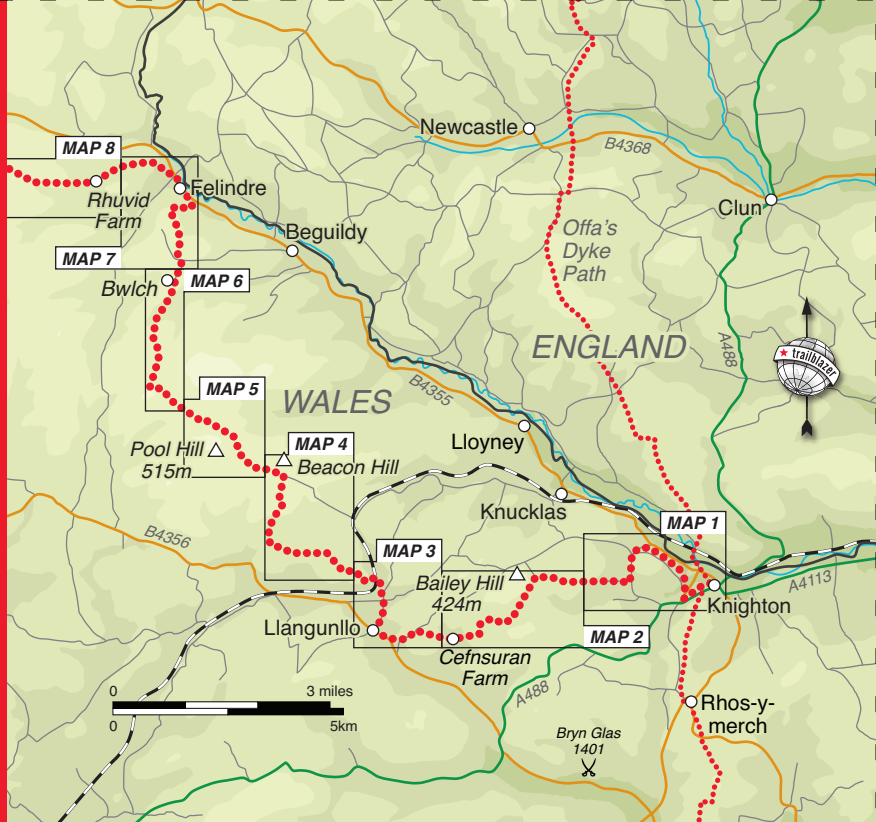
Glyndŵr's Way	Gate	Water
Other path	Stile	Trees/forest
4 x 4 track	Kissing gate	Trig point
Road	Bridge	Guide post
Steps	Hedge	Car park
Slope/steep slope	Fence	Map continuation (black = clockwise red = anti-clockwise)

### Symbols used in text

Bathtub in at least one room	packed lunch available if requested in advance
fb indicates a Facebook page	Dogs allowed subject to prior arrangement

### Direction indicators on map side bars

WELSHPOOL	Walking clockwise from Knighton to Welshpool	5	Route to Welshpool continues on Map 5
KNIGHTON	Walking anti-clockwise from Welshpool to Knighton	8	Route to Knighton continues on Map 8



## Maps 1 ↔ 7, Knighton ↔ Felindre

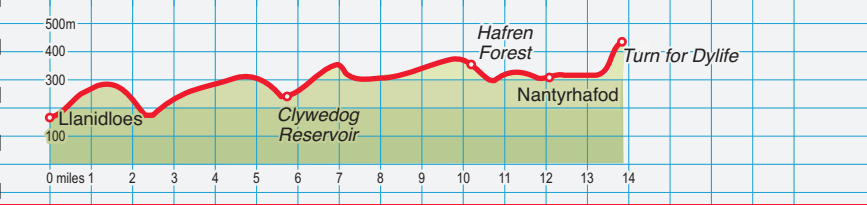
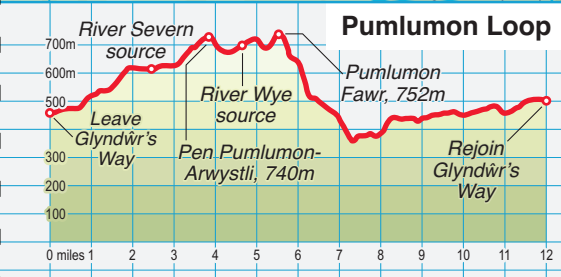
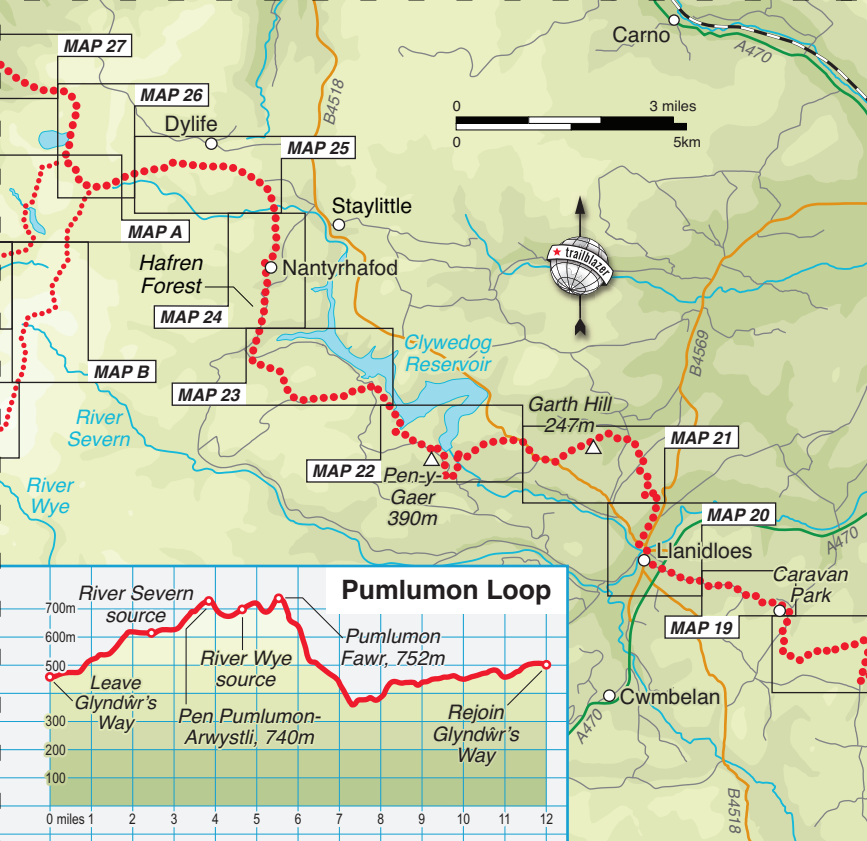
15¼ miles/24.5km

← WELSHPOOL 8hrs

KNIGHTON → 8hrs



Note: Add 20-30% to these times for stops



**Maps 20 ↔ 25, Llanidloes ↔ Dylife**

**13 1/4 miles/21.4km**

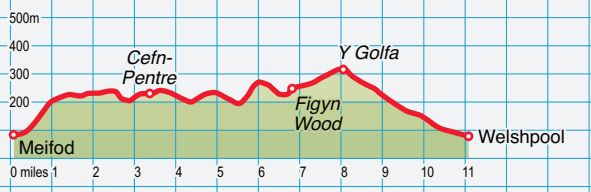
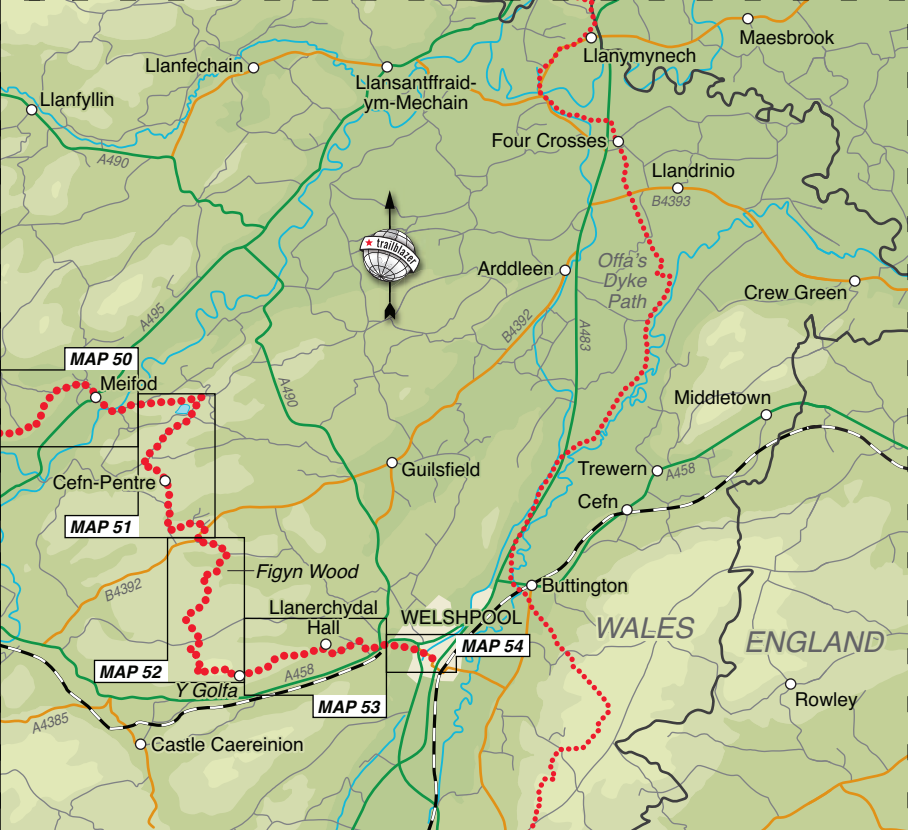
← **WELSHPOOL** 6-7hrs

**KNIGHTON** → 5 1/2-6 1/2hrs



**Note: Add 20-30% to these times for stops**





## Maps 50 ↔ 54, Meifod ↔ Welshpool

11¼ miles/18.2km

← WELSHPOOL 5-6hrs

KNIGHTON → 5-6hrs

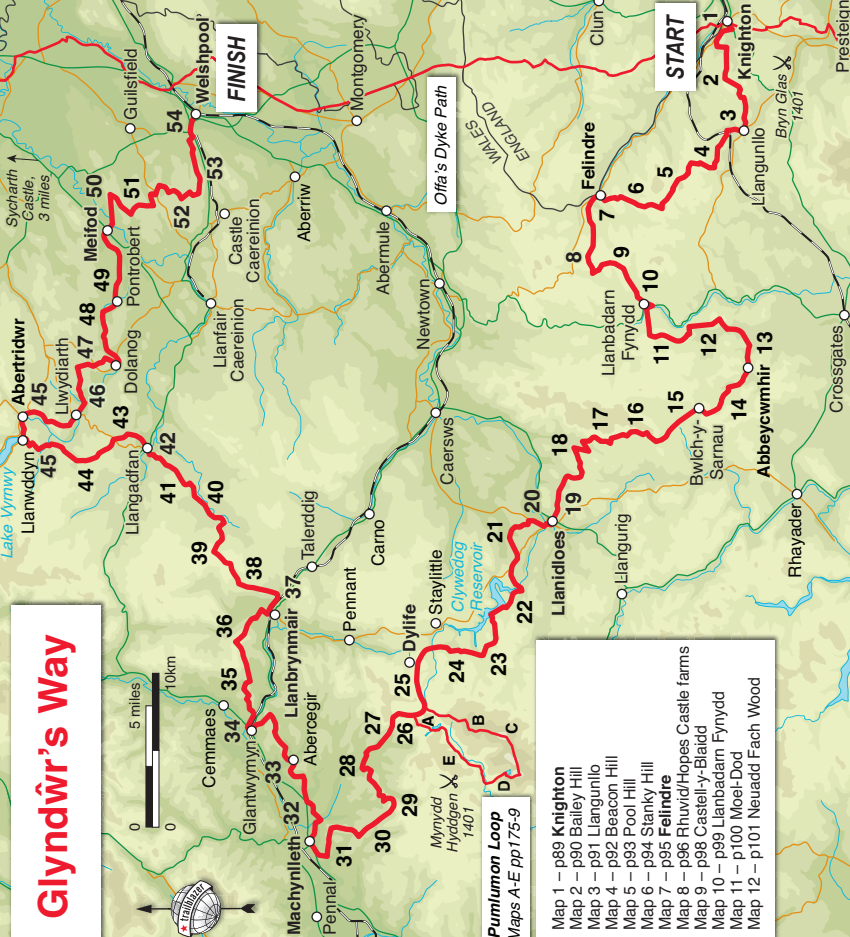
Note: Add 20-30% to these times for stops



# Glyndŵr's Way



- Map 13 – p102 **Abbeycwmhir**
- Map 14 – p105 Upper Esgair Hill
- Map 15 – p106 Bwlich-y-Sarnau
- Map 16 – p107 Pistyll
- Map 17 – p108 Pegwyn Bach
- Map 18 – p109 Moelfre
- Map 19 – p111 Gorn Road
- Map 20 – p113 **Llanidloes**
- Map 21 – p118 Garth Hill
- Map 22 – p119 Clywedog Reservoir
- Map 23 – p120 Banc-y-Groes
- Map 24 – p121 Hafren Forest
- Map 25 – p123 **Dylife**
- Map 26 – p126 Glasyn
- Map 27 – p127 Foel Fadian
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- Map 29 – p129 Bryn Mawr
- Map 30 – p130 Mynydd Bach
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- Map 45 – p154 Llanwddyn & **Abertridwr**
- Map 46 – p158 Llywydriarth (Pont Llogel)
- Map 47 – p159 Dolanog
- Map 48 – p161 Gwern-Fawr
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- Map 51 – p165 Broniarth Hill
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- Map 54 – p170 **Weishpool**



**FINISH**

**START**

**Pumlumon Loop**  
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- Map 2 – p90 Bailey Hill
- Map 3 – p91 Llangunllo
- Map 4 – p92 Beacon Hill
- Map 5 – p93 Pool Hill
- Map 6 – p94 Stanky Hill
- Map 7 – p95 **Felindre**
- Map 8 – p96 Rhuivid/Hopes Castle farms
- Map 9 – p98 Castell-y-Blaidd
- Map 10 – p99 Llanbadarn Fynydd
- Map 11 – p100 Moel-Dod
- Map 12 – p101 Neuadd Fach Wood



**1**  
EDN

*'...the Trailblazer series stands head, shoulders, waist and ankles above the rest. They are particularly strong on mapping...'*

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

**includes accommodation, pubs and restaurants in detailed guides to 20 towns and villages from Knighton to Welshpool**

**Includes 62 detailed walking maps: the largest-scale maps available** - At just under 1:20,000 (8cm or 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches to 1 mile) these are bigger than even the most detailed walking maps currently available in the shops

**Unique mapping features** - walking times, directions, tricky junctions, places to stay, places to eat, points of interest. These are not general-purpose maps but fully edited maps drawn by walkers for walkers

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