



# Pen Llŷn Walks

the collection

by Julie Brominicks



# Pen Llyn Walks

## the collection

© Brook Cottage Shepherd Huts and Julie Brominicks 2024  
All right reserved.

# Introduction

Not only does Pen Llŷn boast a network of paths along a coast that takes in mountains, cliffs, coastal farmland and beaches, it also has a richness of winding lanes. Many of these lanes and footpaths that criss-cross the peninsular are bordered by cloddiau (hedgebanks), on which grow beautiful communities of flowers, ferns, mosses and lichens. The labyrinthine lanes are best explored by bike or on foot. Walking is not only good for the soul, but also increases your chances of experiencing a myriad of diverse wildlife along the way.

These walking routes are guides only - do feel free to deviate from them and devise your own adventures. Nevertheless we hope they will give you a taste of this beautiful area and a glimpse into the lives of those pilgrims, saints, farmers and fishermen in whose footsteps you will be treading.



# The Walks



## Tre'r Ceiri

‘Roman occupation of Cymru was mainly military except for ... in the southeast, where the élite lived in villas and corn was grown. Most people still had subsistence settlements, and in remote areas, Iron Age forts and roundhouses remained occupied by British speakers of Celtic languages. ... Roman collapse had less impact in Cymru than in England, where Latin language and Roman culture had been assimilated. In Cymru, Brittany, Cornwall and Scotland, the Brittonic language remained dominant with just a smattering of Latin terms. And Pen Llŷn and Sir Benfro had been largely outside Roman influence. Wolf, wild boar, wildcat, and deer still roamed.’

excerpt from *The Edge of Cymru*

The climate was milder than it is today, when Tre'r Ceiri was occupied and certainly less prone to the storms we now have. Yet still, when the clouds majestically roll down off Yr Eifl, you wonder what it must have been like to live up here. Atmospheric at the very least. But cosy too, in these densely packed huts, where wood or peat fires burned. The foundations of a significant colony of 150 round and oblong homes are still discernible.

Stones everywhere you look. Ramparts and hut foundations emerging from heaps of collapsed structures scattered on rocks and outcrops. A whole summit of stones, as if the mountain has exploded to expose its shattered bones.

Tre'r Ceiri is one of the best preserved Iron Age defended hillforts in Britain. Its round (and oblong) houses were enclosed by a formidable four-metre high rampart. Visitors were presumably channelled through two major gateways, while residents used three less imposing entrances; one which was for fetching water from the spring.

Tre'r Ceiri was constructed in the latter part of the Iron Age, as the climate improved after a few cold wet centuries had forced people from summits to slopes. And it remained inhabited during the Roman occupation, despite being a stone's throw from Caernarfon, where the Roman fort of Segontium was built. Occupation ceased in the fourth century as the climate deteriorated once more (and the Romans too, withdrew to Europe).

The view from here is spectacular! Iced light kaleidoscopes around the valley, spotlighting bright white Llanaelhaearn in a bed of green hills. The sky is alive; swift clouds, purple, white, black and grey are shifting at pace over purple crags and red bracken slopes, while Eryri is a theatre of rock. Meanwhile at my feet, radiant moss cushions the stones and frogspawn has been delivered onto a wet tussock – I transfer it into a nearby pool.

# The Route

## The Bus

No. 12 between Y Ffor and Llanalhaearn (destination Caernarfon).

Check times with [www.traveline.cymru/](http://www.traveline.cymru/)

## The Walk

9km (6 miles) Approx 3 hours

This involves some steep ascents and rocky terrain. Weather can change quickly, so be prepared for low visibility, rain and strong wind.

For hill-walkers this is a delightfully brisk romp. The ascent of Tre'r Ceiri (485 metres) involves a short stretch of road from Llanaelhaearn, after which you're in tussocky hill country. Path-finding is relatively easy, but as always at altitude, be prepared for rapidly changing conditions.

As if the hill-fort itself is not impressive enough, the hills around Yr Eifl are prone to radiant light, particularly on a crisp dry day.

1) After alighting from the bus, take a left turn to the church (admiring views from the graveyard) then left onto the road and follow it uphill, ignoring the first footpath. Tre'r Ceiri is the hill above you to your right, and Mynydd Carnguwch is to your left.

2) At the second layby you will find a gate, an information board, and waymarked path to Tre'r Ceiri. You need only follow the waymarks up the steep hillside, which can be boggy underfoot when wet.

3) When you can see the stone wall on your left with a gate (which you will go through later) turn right onto the path. Use this path for ascending to and descending from Tre'r Ceiri. When you've explored the wonders of the fort retrace steps to the drystone wall.



4) Follow the path leading towards Llithfaen, visible in the valley to your left. (If ambushed by bad weather, Llithfaen has a shop, a pub, and a bus service.) Several paths strike off to your right – the first goes up and over Yr Eifl. If you don't fancy that, keep on the path till the land levels out.

5) Bear right across fairly level common land. You should be able to see the carpark down to your left. Keep on the path until it meets the Wales Coast Path, which is a much wider path.

6) Turn right and keep to the Wales Coast Path. Note the village of Nant Gwrtheyrn down steep slopes at sea level, the former quarry-workers' village, which is now also home to the Welsh language learning centre. Note quarries to your left – granite to pave cities and Scottish hurling stones was excavated here. Keep an eye open for the resident mountain goats.

7) Keep on the Wales Coast Path as it becomes a narrower track till you reach a gate in a stone wall. The waymarked path is easy to follow along the wall as it traces a route around the bottom of the cliffs.

8) When the path joins the road, follow it back to Llanaelhaearn.

Before your return bus pop into Pantri Beti, the community-run shop. Pick up some groceries, support the local community and practise your Cymraeg at the same time.



# The Map





## Ffynnon Cybi (St Cybi's Well)

'Christians travelled between Cymru, Ireland, Brittany, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and parts of Scotland. From at least the mid-sixth century, missionaries from Ireland and Brittany revitalised dispersed pockets of Christianity in Cymru. ...The monks and missionaries were often referred to as saints. ... I thought them brave activists pitching up in their wooden boats. It was their penchant for wild and lonely places I liked, and their gentleness.'

excerpt from *The Edge of Cymru*

Garn Pentyrch is a leaky sponge on which stonewalls, scree and a trig point dissolve in cloud. The bracken is singing in the rain. Water soaks the slopes, gurgles through a greedy pasture of beech trees which entreat the clouds for still more of the sacred drink. They are one – the cloud, the rain, the hill, the trees, the well, the pool - all connected.

The well is possibly pre-Christian, but its simple flagstone structure dates to the sixth century, and it is dedicated to Sant Cybi, who is believed to have lived in the area for some time before ending his days on Ynys Môn. Not to be confused with the larger bathing pool, the small quiet square of well-water gleams discreetly behind the eighteenth-century buildings. These buildings (a room containing the bathing pool and another for convalescents) were built when the water's alleged healing properties drew crowds of people seeking cures for warts, lameness, blindness, scrofula, scurvy and rheumatism.

Even these relatively modern structures have yielded to the surroundings. Moss and lichen splatter the stone, epiphytes grow on the walls and navelwort in the cracks, while candles and flowers are still sometimes left on the ledges.

Rain drops into the bathing pool forming bubbles and silver rings, which are invited along with the occasional beech leaf to join the gentle current as the water passes from the well and through an outlet to the stream.

As you pick your way back along the tree-lined path and pause at the little bridge beneath which the well-water is gushing, you get a rich sense of pilgrimage and passage and just how major a route this once was. Moss-clad trees bend to Afon Erch, as if to drink from the healing waters, which are now making their way to the sea.

# The Route

## The Bus

This walk does not involve a bus.

## The Walk

18km (11 miles) Approx 5 hours

Excepting the well and the hill this walk is along roads - so prepare your feet for a pounding! After passing through Y Ffor by footpath along the A499 the lanes are quiet, save for farm vehicles.

By walking to the well you are engaging in an ancient practise. Pilgrims would have visited en route to Ynys Enlli, but Ffynnon Gybi was also very much a destination in its own right. Roads evolve on well-used footpaths and each one tells a story. These lanes with their leafy cloddiau (hedgebanks) and silver water gleaming in ditches, are particularly charming.

- 1) From Brook Cottage Shepherd Huts make your way up to the main road and turn left. Continue through Y Ffor till the pavement runs out. (If you need a picnic stock up in the garage or Londis).
- 2) Take the first right and keep on this road, crossing the stone bridge (Pont Y Felin) and continue all the way to Llangybi.
- 3) Turn left off the road following signs to the well, along the stream and fields.
- 4) After visiting the well follow the footpath uphill behind the buildings. This will take you to a secluded beautiful beech copse and Garn Pentrych with great views.. Be warned – visibility can be poor if the cloud is very low. Return the same way to the well and the road.

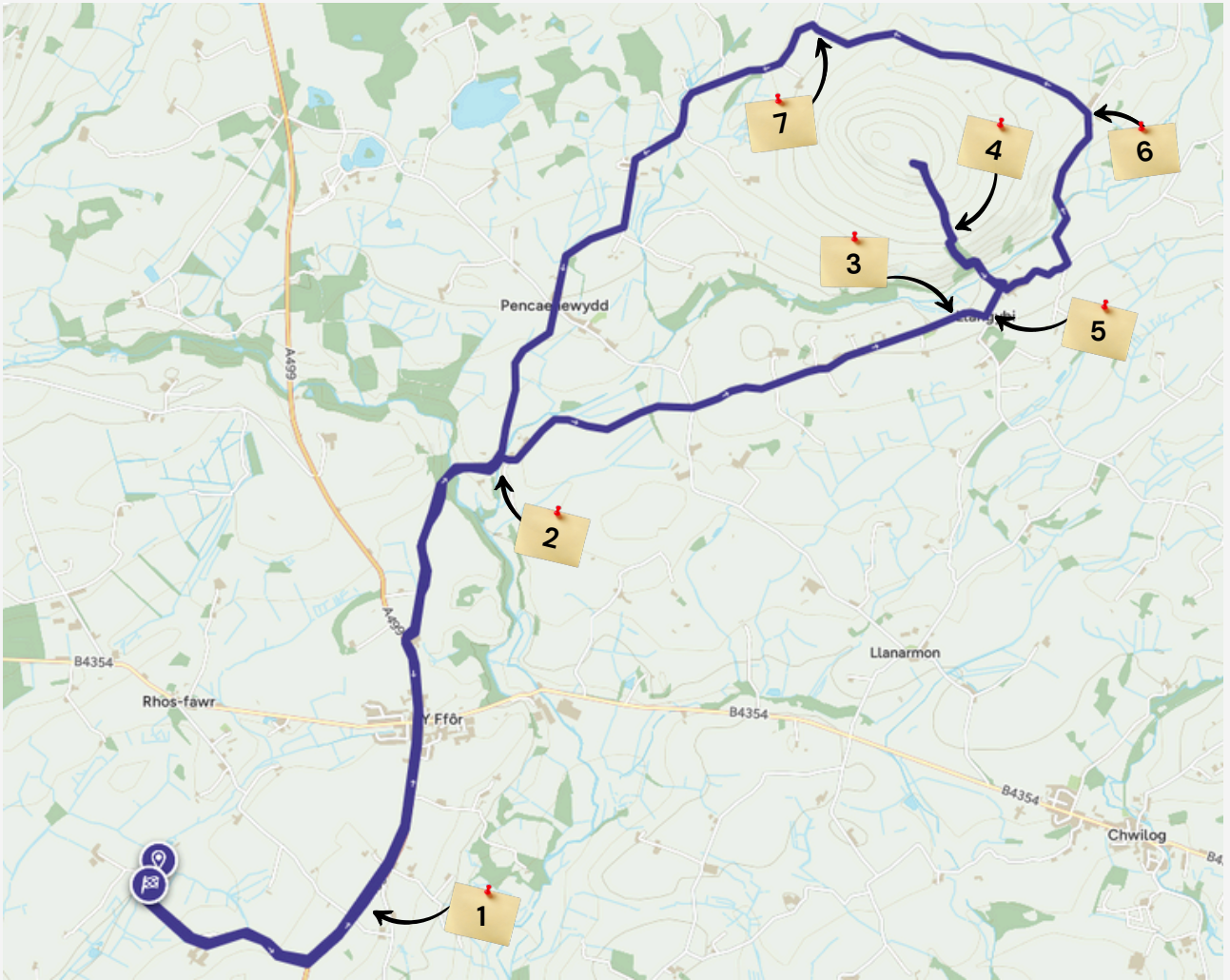
5) Turn left, passing through the village of Llangybi, noting the church of St Cybi on your left, then keeping left and follow the lovely lanes.

6) On reaching Pentyrch-uchaf turn left onto the farm track. It negotiates the perimeter of Garn Bentyrch before emerging onto a quiet road.

7) Turn left and follow the road all the way back to Pont y Felin, then retrace your steps back to base.



# The Map





## Eglwys Sant Bueno (St Beuno's Church)

'I boiled tea and eggs behind a drystone wall. It was the kind of weather that looked miserable from indoors but my eyes had adjusted to the dying heather and breaking bracken, transformed now by water vapour into subtly gleaming auburns and purples. The gentle rain was uplifting till I lost the waymarks. Only then did I notice my rucksack was heavy and that I was sweating inside my waterproofs. My feet were wet in my old cracked boots, as I trudged up and down the hedgerow and stared for a long time at a herd of ginger cows and distant pink cottage at the foot of a dark mountain. The scene was elegiac yet I was pathetic, getting lost on a coast path.'

excerpt from *The Edge of Cymru*



Fear not! The waymarks are much clearer these days, so you won't get lost on this walk. Having said that the occasional hardship en route does make you extra appreciative of the destination. Struggle is an important element of pilgrimage; which is an internal as well as an external journey. But whatever frame of mind you arrive in, you will find Eglwys Sant Bueno restful and wondrous.

Even approaching the gate of this small walled enclosure overlooking the sea, you know this is somewhere special. Particularly as you negotiate the latch of the ancient wooden door and enter - almost holding your breath. Perhaps it is the very tangibility of wood and stone. There is something immediately grounding about natural materials in a world of plastic.

You push open the door and feel that all is well here, all is calm. The church is a place of shelter. It harbours a comforting kind of darkness, with daylight falling softly through the deep-set leaded windows onto the herbs and rushes in the aisle.

While the font dates to the eleventh century, the church (with the exception of some twelfth-century remnants) mostly dates from the fifteenth century, though was likely built on much earlier foundations and is dedicated to Sant Bueno who was locally active in the sixth century. In the Middle Ages it was an important place for pilgrims to rest en route to Ynys Enlli. Services are still held monthly. The fishpond also survives. Its overflow feeds the stream whose banks are so steep only the canopies of the enormous ivy-clad trees protrude above them.

Inside, a little moss adorns the walls as if a footnote to the eroding red ochre wall painting. I can hear robins singing outside, the waves, and the wind, which occasionally rattles the latch through which a pinprick of light penetrates. But inside nothing stirs. Fresh tulips bend to the soft light. And the herbs and rushes, which are regularly strewn in the aisle as they have been for centuries, exude a fragrance not unlike that of a manger.

# The Route

## The Bus

No.12 between Y Ffor and Pwllheli.

No.8 between Pwllheli and Nefyn (destination Tudweiliog).

Check times with [www.traveline.cymru/](http://www.traveline.cymru/)

## The Walk

7.5km (4.5 miles) Approx 2.5 hours

This path is perfect for a dry breezy day when the church is a buffer to the wind. The path is not difficult or steep but there are some rocky steps and rough terrain.

This walk makes use of the Wales Coast Path, via a route which would also have been used by pilgrims and quarrymen. It gives you a taste of green watery lanes, coastal fields and quarried granite. The final stretch is by a quiet lane with steep rich hedge banks.

1) Follow the signs to Llŷn Maritime Museum. You'll find the Wales Coast Path wriggling behind it, alongside green ditches and then beneath a gorsy hillside approaching the quarries. (Note Ffynnon John Morgan – this may or may not have been a holy well and it is not known who exactly John Morgan was; though he may have held shares in 'Ocean Maid' a ship built in Nefyn).

2) Keep on the Wales Coast Path as the terrain becomes stony beneath Carreg Lefain and Gwylwyr from where granite was quarried in the 19th century to pave cities, such as Liverpool and Manchester. (Note the reclamation of the scree by plants such as stonecrop).

3) A quick zigzag over the road and you're now following the Wales Coast Path over coastal farmland.

4) Arrive at Pistyll and Eglwys Sant Beuno.

5) To return, retrace your steps (or try following any of the paths around the hills.)

6) If you want a little variety, break off from the Wales Coast Path left to follow a path along field edges then turn left onto a wider track till it meets the road.

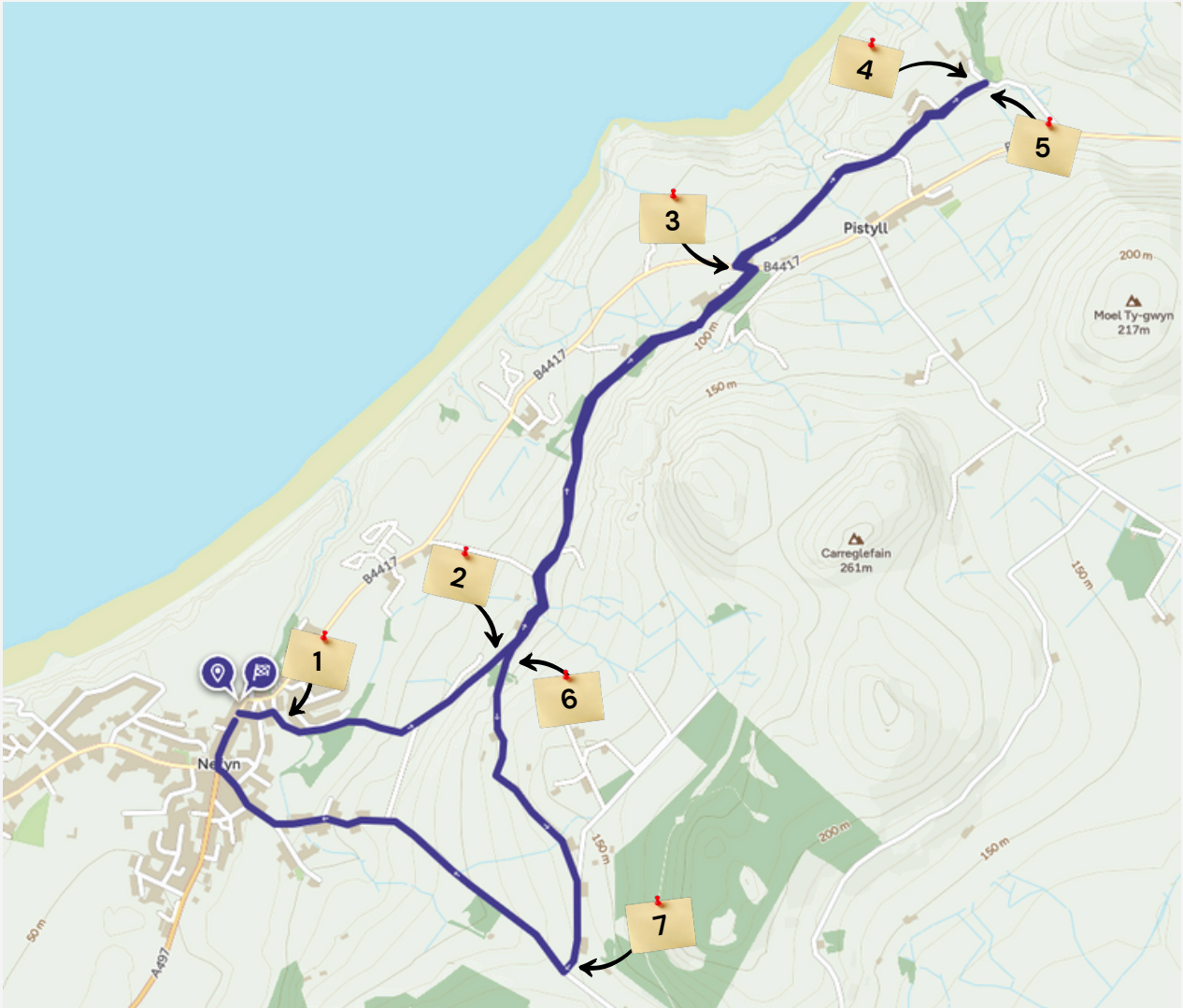
7) Now turn right onto the quiet lane for views which pack a punch between rich verdant cloddiau (hedge banks atop stone walls) and a steep descent to Nefyn.

Before your return bus Nefyn is home to the Llŷn Maritime Museum <https://www.llyn-maritime-museum.co.uk/eng/>

Also the community-run pub Yr Heliwr <https://www.yrheliwr.cymru/en> and Tŷ Coffi by Spar opposite the bus stop.



# The Map





## Bedd Lloyd George (Lloyd George's Grave)

'Gran said one rainy afternoon she and Grandpa had driven out of Cricieth and nearly knocked over an elderly gentleman with an umbrella stepping out of a gate. "Do you know who it was?" she'd said. "Lloyd George!" I'd never heard of him. David Lloyd George, Prime Minister for the Liberal Party during the First World War, was brought up in Llanystumdwy and had later ... lived at Tŷ Newydd. ... The gate opened onto a quiet lane above which squirrels traversed the beeches with stealthy grace. I felt odd standing there, imagining Gran and Grandpa in a motor car, and a startled man with an umbrella.'

excerpt from *The Edge of Cymru*

Grand yet graceful, this grave is an entirely appropriate resting place for David Lloyd George. It has the gravitas you would expect for a Prime Minister. Yet it is also characteristic of other designs by Clough Williams-Ellis in that it melts into the surroundings. (After all, Clough created Portmeirion to prove that new developments could enhance rather than destroy a landscape). Now moss encroaches upon the oval bed of pebbles. Leaves collect on the boulder. As if the landscape is incrementally reclaiming one of its own.

Lloyd George's father died when Lloyd was a baby in Manchester, so his mother returned to her childhood home to raise her children in Llanystumdwy. Lloyd George made his name as a young solicitor, winning his case against an Anglican Reverend who'd refused to allow a Methodist parishioner to be buried next to his daughter in Llanfrothen. His victory symbolized the liberation of the Welsh from the Anglican Church, fuelled the Methodist Revival, and bolstered enthusiasm for the Welsh Liberal Party.

He became Secretary of State for War and Prime Minister for the Liberal Party in 1916. In 1919 his Coalition government (with the Conservatives) introduced the Treaty of Versailles which established the League of Nations and the war reparations settlement. He introduced the Welsh Church Act which separated Wales from the Church of England and ensured the construction of the National Library of Wales and the National Museum of Wales.

He was responsible for the Old Age Pensions Act and the National Health Insurance Act. He introduced the vote for women, protected tenants from exorbitant rent increases, improved employment insurance, raised the school leaving age to fourteen and banned children from working in railways and transport, building, engineering, factories and mines. He introduced taxes on land and luxuries and reduced the vetoing power of the House of Lords.

By 1922 he had lost support of the Conservatives and the coalition government collapsed following a scandal in which he was accused of selling knighthoods and peerages, which (along with 'womanising') tarnished his reputation. But we have Lloyd George to thank for the social reforms that laid the foundations for the welfare state.

Lloyd George died on 26th March 1945 aged 82 years.

The passerines in the beeches and oaks have plenty to say one way or another, their voices ringing out through the sparkling air. The summer breeze responds by ruffling the woodrush. Then the river chimes in, gliding and tumbling over its stony bed, its chatter muted by leaves.



# The Route

## The Bus

No.12 between Y Ffor and Pwllheli.

No.3 (or train) between Pwllheli and Cricieth (destination Porthmadog)

Check times with [www.traveline.cymru/](http://www.traveline.cymru/)

## The Walk

11km (7 miles) Approx 3 hours

This path is perfect for a dry breezy day when the church is a buffer to the wind. The path is not difficult or steep but there are some rocky steps and rough terrain.

This is a gentle walk with one short ascent, and crosses a range of terrains. Beginning with quiet lanes it traverses farmland, takes in a wooded riverside walk and a coastpath.

Perfect for a hot summer's day when you could do with some shade and escaping the beach crowds, this route has everything. The path along bubbling Afon Dwyfor is one of most beguiling river trails I know, through glorious mixed woodland as it is. There is Llanystumdwy. And the return to the charming seaside town of Cricieth is along an exceedingly easy stretch of the Wales Coast Path.

1) Head west along the road and at the crossroads turn right onto a quiet lane heading uphill. At Penybryn take the lane heading left and pass the turning to Bron Eifion fishing lakes.

2) Turn right off the lane up the drive towards a couple of houses at Cefn y Maen. The footpath is to the right of the house on your left, running left of the greenhouse. Go through the gate into the field where you will find two paths. Take the left path keeping the hedge to your left and head towards big barns.



3) Keeping the barns left, exit farm and turn right onto a straight track between mossy stone walls. You can hear the river now.

4) A stone arch on your left is your gateway into beautiful broadleaf woodland. The path is easy to follow along Afon Dwyfor as it chases over a stony bed.

5) Lloyd George's grave is at the end of the path at Llanystumdwy where you will also find the Lloyd George Museum (<https://lloydgeorge.net/>) and the cracking Tafarn y Plu, which opens after 3pm.

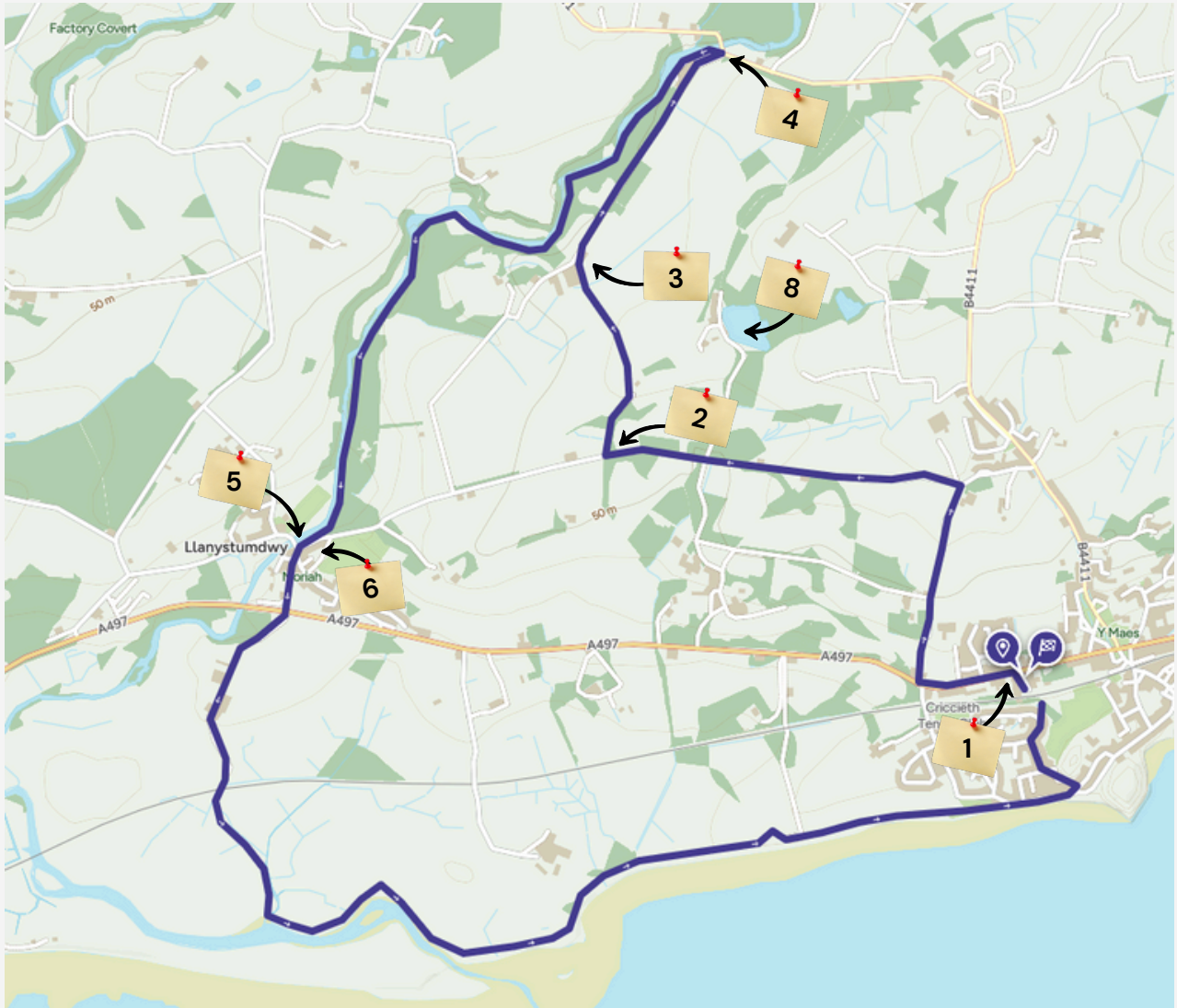
6) Follow the Wales Coast Path across the A497 and neat farmland. You won't recognise Afon Dwyfor when you meet it again, so calmly now does it flow between the boardwalk and the beach. Watch for swans and goosander, and curlew and oystercatchers on the shore.

7) Keep on the coast path, heading for Cricieth whose castle broods on the horizon (<https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/places-to-visit/castell-cricieth>)

Cricieth is crammed with good places to eat and drink. Cadwaladers do great ice cream and my current favourite coffee place is No.46.



# The Map





## Porth Ysgaden

‘The cliffs were black and lower now, with flat fields stretching to their edge. Land and water birds mingled. Wheatears and fulmars, linnets and gannets. Curlews and swallows shared beaches and fields, while pied wagtails, stonechats and rock pipits bounced over rocks. The wind was strong. At Penllech it hurled black sand across a backdrop of white sea, and blew my stove so fiercely I had to top up the burner.’

excerpt from *The Edge of Cymru*

Herring fishing was prolific around Cymru, but particularly on this stretch of coast. Nefyn, a couple of miles to the east was known as 'Nefyn the Fish.' Nefyn residents were known as 'herrings' and elsewhere herrings were called 'Nefyn Beef'.

Herring fishing was seasonal, so farmers fished to supplement their income. But by the turn of the twentieth century the steam trawlers that had ousted the sailing ships had stripped the seas. By the 1970s herring fishing was banned. The ban was lifted in 1981, but stocks have not yet recovered and the enormous schools that once foraged around the coast feeding on plankton are sadly no more.

The Porth Ysgaden peninsula (Ysgaden means 'herring') has two beaches. The deep sheltered cove is a natural harbour. A rusty iron mooring ring bears witness to the port's once busy past. Black-backed and herring gulls bob on the surface of the sea. On retreat the tide exposes laver and wrack and tiny yellow sea snails grazing the sea wall like tiny cows. It feels like being in a rock pool. Limpets and periwinkles inch over the pebbles. The sea, creeping in and out of this tiny cove, is quiet.

But it used to be bustling, and not only on account of the herrings. At this tiny harbour, boats arrived with iron, sugar, tea, salt, molasses, clothing, tobacco, coal, lime, tar, crockery, bricks, slates, empty barrels (for the herrings) and Dublin soap-factory waste mixed with street dung for the fields. Meanwhile local butter, eggs, potatoes and (of course) salted herrings were exported. It would have been an active little place. In fact it was so busy, a customs officer lived in the house whose gable end survives on the clifftop.

The more exposed adjacent beach is a real treasure. Here, the old fishing huts are still wedged into the steep coastal slope, an aesthetic hotchpotch of corrugated sheds and rusting winches. One is now a bothy; a glorious outpost of linoleum and salted wood. A poetic reminder of a bygone age.

# The Route

## The Bus

No.12 between Y Ffor and Pwllheli.

No.8 between Pwllheli and Tudweiliog.

Check times with [www.traveline.cymru/](http://www.traveline.cymru/)

## The Walk

12km (7.5 miles) Approx 3.5 hours

This makes for easy walking down quiet farm lanes and over largely level coast path (which can be muddy).

You may wish to head directly to the coast path, but if like me, you are interested in what happens just inland of the beautiful cliffs and beaches, stick with the suggested route. These rural lanes grant you a glimpse of the largely grazed farmland before turning to the beach at Penllech. If the suspense is too great and you simply must see the sea sooner, there are plenty of opportunities to get to the coast path earlier.

This walk is quite exposed so ideal on a warm autumnal day when the ground is dry, a gentle breeze blows and the lowering sun gives the coast a rosy tint. This is also the best season to see Atlantic grey seals, as they come ashore in September to give birth to white furry pups. Keep a distance if you see them, so as not to cause stress.

1) If you've forgotten a picnic, you'll find what you need in Tudweiliog's wonderful Post Office Shop. Come out of the shop turn left and left again onto a waymarked path and take the left fork.

2) On reaching the lane turn left and keep on it as it zigzags between fields running parallel with the coast.

3) On reaching a small parking area, follow the waymarks to Traeth Penllech and note the waterfalls alongside the field, coursing to the beach.

4) High tides cut off most of Penllech so if you want to spend time on the beach here check the tides in advance. Continuing along the coast path keep a look out for Atlantic grey seals.

5) Porth Ysgaden is indicated by the gable end of the customs house on the clifftop. There are two beaches off the headland here – the sheltered cove and the fishing huts beach.

6) Keep to the Wales Coast Path as far as Porth Towyn, where you will find a path alongside the campsite back to Tudweiliog.

Before your return bus Cwt Tatws is a 'lifestyle' shop with a café at PorthTowyn <https://www.cwt-tatws.co.uk/the-shop/> whereas in Tudweiliog itself you've got The Lion Hotel <https://lionhoteltudweiliog.co.uk/> open for coffee right next to the bus stop.



# The Map





## About the author

By sharing her passion for the landscape, people, wildlife, culture and languages she encounters on the road, Julie aims to reinvigorate an excitement for slow and sustainable travel. Her writing is also informed by her previous work in sustainability education.

She is the author of *The Edge of Cymru* (Seren Books, 2022) and regularly contributes to various publications, including BBC Countryfile Magazine and Nation Cymru.

Follow Julie's Instagram at [@juliebrominicks](https://www.instagram.com/juliebrominicks)







01758 701551

[@brookcottageshepherdhuts](https://www.instagram.com/brookcottageshepherdhuts)  
[info@luxuryglampingwales.co.uk](mailto:info@luxuryglampingwales.co.uk)  
[www.luxuryglampingwales.co.uk](http://www.luxuryglampingwales.co.uk)