

The Ceiriog Trail

Route description

Explained in a clockwise direction starting at Spring Hill Farm at Grid Reference SJ 210 346 (Lat 52.903464 Long -3.175237).

All distances and heights are approximate.

Assuming a start from Spring Hill, turn left towards Oswestry. At Llechrydau, follow stone track on right keeping farm buildings on left. After 100 yards take left-hand track heading up field with hedge on right-hand side. After one mile at junction of grass tracks, carry straight on along main path and downhill on a stony track through a ford and uphill into farmyard (Bwlchydonge). Carry on through yard up the drive to road.

At road turn right for a third of a mile. Ignore stone track on right opposite a bungalow, but fork right up next stone track (bridleway). After gate turn right and follow track uphill passing through conifer plantation. Keep to main track and go through gateway. Turn left onto stone track keeping reservoir on right, carry straight on, past bridge on right, through forest on main track until gate out of forest.

Once out of forest follow rutted track through field (take care – deep ruts) to bridleway on right. Turn right following bridleway until through gate into field with mast. Turn left and carry on along fence until gate in corner, do not go through gate but follow track on right back across field marked with reflector posts. Follow towards road. 50 yards before road, turn left onto stony track going downhill. At fork take right-hand fork, keep on track until it becomes a tarmac lane near bottom of hill. Just before bridge over the River Ceiriog, turn right onto the old Tramway. **(Note: The Tramway is a permissive bridleway, if closed follow road to B4500. Turn right, continue until turning on left opposite the Pandy Mill Gallery)**. Follow tramway and immediately after crossing bridge over river, take tarmac lane into Pandy with Pandy Mill Gallery on the left-hand side.

Cross here taking care as it can be very busy, taking tarmac lane signposted 'No Through Road'. After approximately 3/4 mile the lane starts to descend, take the track going uphill on right. Carry on up a steep stone track through conifer plantation until gate on right after stream. Go through gate following an old packhorse route that went across the Berwyns. At T-junction turn right and after 100 yards carry straight on uphill ignoring major track as it bears left.

At tarmac road go straight over and up a lane until T-Junction. Turn right and follow lane for 3 miles without turning off. After an initial stretch of going

downhill, you will be rising constantly up onto a ridge road. **(Note: at Grid Ref. SJ 215 394 [Lat 52.946677 Long -3.168966] is the start of the "Central Link")**. 3/4 mile after the Central Link, and 200 yards beyond a cross roads, turn left through metal gate on to track. Follow track downhill (the views of the Vale of Llangollen are magnificent on a clear day) going through a conifer plantation. 100 yards after leaving forest, take stone track on right uphill. Follow for a mile until tarmac road at top of hill.

Take the middle lane of the 3 lanes, straight ahead for one mile and then turn right. After 75 yards take left hand fork along stony track. (Refer to section in notes on 'Safety' for further information about this section). At next fork take track going downhill past 'The White House' around sharp bend. 50 yards past bend take track that effectively doubles back on left. Follow uphill past house on left and through wood, watching out for pheasants! At cross roads, turn right downhill. Carry on passing Crogen Wladys (Grid Ref. SJ 258 384 [Lat 52.946677 Long -3.168966]) to major road at bottom of hill. **Take great care at this point, traffic travels at high speed.** Cross straight over and follow road over river bridge and uphill until T-junction. Turn left and follow for 1/2 mile passing some disused lime kilns. These kilns were built around 1770 to process the lime from the extensive quarries of the area. Opposite the marking in the road reading **SLOW**, turn right up gravel/grass track for 300 yards until tarmac road.

Do not go along road, but turn right onto grass track and follow uphill for 3/4 mile to tarmac road. Continue straight on passing 3 turnings to the right until you reach a T-junction. Turn left here and after 100 yards, take road on right. Follow uphill to fork in road. Take right-hand fork for 1 mile passing forest on left, until cross-tracks. Turn left, go through forest and pass left through gate alongside cattle grid. Follow until Llechrydau. Turn right on to tarmac road and follow back to Spring Hill Farm.

Central Link

Explained from where it leaves the Main Trail and heads in a southerly direction. The Northern end is at Grid Ref. SJ 215 394 (Lat 52.946677 Long -3.168966).

From Main Trail go through a metal gate into field. This bridleway is not clearly defined so keep close to hedge on left hand side. Go through several gates to lane.

Here turn right and follow for 200 yards. Turn left through wooden bridle-gate on to bridleway. This path has magnificent views throughout its entire length. Follow main track keeping a stone wall and sheep pen on your right and through 3 more wooden bridle-gates until road.

Turn left following road (look to right for a view of Chirk Castle) and at T-junction

turn right. Just beyond telephone box, turn right following road downhill. After 160 yards turn right through field gate onto another bridleway bearing right. Cross the stream and then follow marker posts. Path is narrow in places. Go through 2 gates to farm drive. Turn left going downhill to metalled road. At road turn right and within 50 yards take first turning on right through farmyard. At end of green lane bear left opposite bungalow down to main Chirk / Glyn Ceiriog road.

Cross road with care – traffic travels fast and follow sign for Llwynmawr. Continue on road uphill passing the Golden Pheasant Hotel on left. 100 yards beyond the turning to the right, turn left up bridleway. Path crosses Selattyn / Glyn Ceiriog road before going into farmyard. Turn left and then almost immediately right through gate and uphill. Turn left after gate with farm on right. Carry straight on past farm buildings, going through 2 gates and turning left at road. Go along road for approximately one mile (ignoring left turn) until rejoining the Main trail shortly after Spring Hill Farm.

This Trail is part of a series of equestrian leaflets. A section of this route overlaps with the 'Upper Ceiriog Trail' which is also available.

Parking

This is available at the Swan Inn in Pontfadog, tel. 01691 718273. It is essential that you ring to book. Although the route description starts and ends at Spring Hill Farm, it is also possible to 'park and start' at other points. These are shown on the map marked P.

Distance

The outer circle of the trail is 23 miles long and should take from 4 to 6 hours to complete on horseback. There are two shorter routes marked. The map shows all the minor roads and bridleways, just in case you wish to work out a route yourself. For walkers, the routes also link with an excellent network of footpaths.

Conditions

Both routes (inner and outer) follow unclassified county roads, minor roads and bridleways, Some of the route is rutted and uses narrow paths so take extra care.

Safety

Both circuits cross the busy B4500 road – take extra care when crossing at these points. On the map between the points marked X and Y, between the 1st

November and 31st January, there are a series of Estate Shoots – please take care!

Waymarking

Both routes are marked at every junction by a symbol (see route map key). The route is described in a clockwise direction from the start / finish; All the rights of way are well waymarked and signposted.

Maps

For the general area, use Landranger sheets 117, 125 and 126. For more detail, see Explorer Map no. 255. All published by Ordnance Survey.

Refreshments

There are public houses in Pontfadog (Swan Inn), Llwynmawr (Golden Pheasant), Glyn Ceiriog (various hotels and a shop) and Chirk (various hotels and shops).

Accommodation

There is a range of accommodation in the Ceiriog Valley. Refer to enclosed leaflet for further details.

The Ceiriog Valley Country Code

Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
Guard against all risk of fire
Keep open gates open and closed gates closed
Please keep dogs on leads at all times
Keep to public rights of way
Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
Take your litter home
Help to keep all water clean
Protect wildlife, plants and trees
Take special care on country roads
Make no unnecessary noise
A cow with calf can be dangerous
Take extra care at Lambing time (locally March & April)

Mobile Phones

Due to the terrain of the area, transmission and reception are not usually possible

Reporting problems with Rights of Way

Please contact Wrexham County Borough Council's Rights of Way Department on 01978 292000

Background Information

Original leaflet produced by the Chirk and Ceiriog Valley Partnership and the Wrexham and District Bridleways Association with valued assistance from volunteers, Wrexham County Borough Council and Groundwork Wrexham.

Text by Andrew Kelly

Some local history notes

Along much of the valley lies flat meadowland bounded by steep tree-covered hillsides. At the head of the valley the river flows through open heather moorland amongst hills which rise to a respectable 610 meters (2000 feet).

"I climbed the mountain south of the town (Llangollen) to Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog, frequently arrested in my way to the magnificent scenery". Edward Pugh 1816 *Cambria Depicta*

Chirk Castle was built between 1295 and 1310 on a site overlooking the Ceiriog Valley, 1.5 miles west of Chirk. The ground on the southern side where it is steeper but still capable of being attacked. It is the only Border Castle that has been continuously lived in ever since its erection. The overall construction is simple, massive and impressive. The dungeons are built into the bedrock in the Southwest tower. The Myddletons started to live here during the 16th Century and descendants of the family occupy the castle to this day, although it is now managed by the National Trust

In 1165 it is thought that Henry II crossed the Ceiriog Valley at Tregeiriog and marched along Ffordd Saeson (Saxon Way) to the bleak open moorland west of Nantyr. Here the ground is boggy and offered no shelter or fuel. He fought a rearguard action with the Welsh at Offa's Dyke at a spot now called Tir y Beddau (Land of the Graves).

The main London to Holyhead Road (A5) was built between 1817 and 1826 and passed through Chirk. Along this road ran the daily mail coach at a speed of 9mph. Four horses pulled the coach and they were changed every 10 to 15 miles. Locally this change was made at Oswestry and Llangollen and 1.25 hours were given to travel over this 13 mile stretch, which included a change-over which took between 2 and 5 minutes

The Glyn Valley Tramway took nine months to construct and became operational in April 1873. In the beginning it was a horse tramway and ran from Glyn Ceiriog to the Shropshire Union Canal at Gledrid. It was only after conversion to steam power that operations were extended to start at Chirk. In 1875 traffic increased after the opening of the quarries in Hendre

Passengers started to use the line on 5th March 1891, a service that ran almost without interruption until its closure. 1925 saw the best transportation figures when it carried 37, 000 tons of minerals and recorded almost 48, 000 train miles. Much of the mineral traffic was lost to the roads and in 1933 passengers were no longer carried due to the introduction of a bus service. The line finally closed in 1935 and the rolling stock was scrapped, except one carriage which survives and runs on the Talylyn Railway

"There are plenty of desolate moorlands in Wales which could be the gathering ground for water for Warrington or any other town. Why should they pick out the exquisite little valley of the Ceiriog?". David Lloyd George speaking at the second reading of the Warrington Corporation Water Bill in 1923.

"A very deep valley consisting of fertile meadows watered by the brook of the Ceiriog and finely bounded by lofty wooded banks". Thomas Pennant 1978.



Ceiriog Trail



→ Direction of travel



Busy road



Miles covered



Parking

Main route

Shortcut

Scale 1 km
1/2 mile

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