

1. THE WYE, THE WELLS AND CILMERY

A valley walk to Prince Llywelyn's Memorial. 6.5 miles. 1.5 hours there; 1 hour back.

Map: Explorer 188. For Public Transport info refer to 1.5

For a short, flat walk under 3 miles follow 1.1, 1.2 & 1.7.

1.1 The Groe -The Rocks

20 mins

The bridge at Builth Wells spans a valuable fording place on the Wye. This has made it a gathering place throughout human history for the clans and extended families that have lived in the hillforts and farmsteads scattered in the surrounding hills.

Our walk begins just above the bridge in The Groe car park. We follow the Wye upstream and come to the mouth of the Irfon, a major tributary which carries the rivers draining Epynt and the Eastern Cambrians. The junction pool is a favourite place for children in the summer. Next comes Rhosferig footbridge over the Irfon. Cross it and regain the Wye. After a couple of fields we cross a small stream and come to Pen-ddol Rocks. This is a favourite swimming place when the river is quiet but it is treacherous in spate - the deepest pool is called HellHole. Nestled in the trees is a fishing lodge, The Rocks.

1.2 The Rocks -Park Wells

15 mins

The track to The Rocks leads us back to the road. Go left towards Builth Wells and then first right to Park Wells. The pool shortly passed on the right is the source of the small stream crossed earlier. At the gate into the Wells (now private) the path diverts to the left and then turns right to follow the boundary of the property. The octagonal building is the well house, the spa rooms are adjacent.

To return to Builth Wells go to 1.7.

1.3 Park Wells - Rhosferig-fawr

15 mins

Follow the boundary past the spa to the stile in the copse beyond. The next stile is across the field slightly to the right. Stiles take us to a crossing on the Heart of Wales railway. To the left up the slope are the chimneys of Rhosferig-fach farm, our next point. The path goes past the house and through a gate. To the right we can see bushes lining an old track between the farms. Follow it down and up to Rhosferig-fawr, entering the farmyard just below the house.

1.4 Rhosferig-fawr - Llanganten Church

20 mins

Turn left down the track and then through the first gate on the right. The path crosses the top of the field but left of the clump of trees. Nice view from here. . Looking from left to right: the quarry above Builth Wells; then Moelfre hill, a spur of the huge Mynydd Epynt which fills the rest of the skyline. The ridge in the middle distance carries the A483 west from Builth Wells through Cilmery.

Between the ridge and Epynt runs the Irfon River. Our walk now comes to a muddy farmyard (when in doubt, the route the cows take is usually shallowest!). Follow the road out to the Chwefru which you can either ford or cross by bridge. This river flows down from the Cambrians and is the last to enter the Irfon.

(See Walk 6 for a walk along the Chwefru).

On the right, set back from the road is the Vicarage. The drive and the field path by the river both lead to Llanganten Church. A full century before St Augustine came to Canterbury and 800 years before Edward slew Llywelyn, a celtic christian monk preached here and the spot became a holy place.

1.5 Llanganten Church - The Memorial

15 mins

At the furthest point of the churchyard, beyond the ancient yew, a stile leads us into some woods, over a field and into the village. Turn right to the pub. The monument is a little further on. In the absence of a pavement please take care. Walk facing the oncoming traffic. The well where they washed Prince Llywelyn's head is over the far side of the enclosure. He was killed 700 years ago in the valley below.

(Public Transport back to Builth Wells: The Builth Wells/Abergwesyn Post Office bus comes through twice a day. The train also stops here. The station is behind the pub. Take it to visit Llandrindod Wells where regular buses connect to Builth Wells.)

1.6 The Memorial - Park Wells

40 mins

Return to Park Wells. Follow the path along the boundary but . . .

1.7 Park Wells - Builth Wells

20 mins

Instead of going back down the drive continue townwards (east) along the boundary to a stile. Cross and continue along the fenceline. Following the edge of the Golf Course the path snakes through the woods to the next stile. Here a bridleway crosses the Golf Course to the road. Over to the right is the Chwefru flowing through the Golf Course and the site of the town's other spa, the Glannau Wells. Left along the road brings us back to the bridge across the Irfon.