

Borth to Ystwyth Trail Path
DEVIL'S BRIDGE to PONTRHYDYGROES
Section 4 of 6

Ahead there is a fascinating view up into the valley, scarred by man's activity for thousands of years. This celebrated mine has no less than 30 lodes (veins of ore) and 84 surface features (shafts, adits and stopes). Copa Hill, in the distance, was the site of bronze age open cast mining. Take care on the descent. As it reaches the mine buildings the path turn sharply to the right and heads down to the tarmac road beside a large ruined building. Turn right along the road until you reach a cattle grid, with the river Ystwyth on the left. Take the track to the right that climbs below the oaks past spoil heaps and mine workings now overgrown with lichens and mosses. On the hillside opposite the ruins of many miners' cottages and a plethora of tracks and adits can be seen.

Climbing above oaks, the path emerges onto a platform where a ruin commands a fine view point. Descend with the heather banks of Y Glog now on your right, down to the village. At the road, turn left, and proceed downhill to the junction by the farmhouse, turn left here and go past the farm outbuilding and the old post office. Immediately after this turn right down a tarmac road. Soon you will cross a Bailey bridge spanning the gorge. After the bridge turn right along a track past large oak trees. Enter a field on your left and contour right below the woods making for a wooden gate reached after fording a small stream.

Follow the obvious track with large oaks, ash and, particularly, beech trees on your right. The route now enters the Hafod estate. Descend towards Dologau down a pleasant track with larch trees to your right. Cross the stream via a delightful stone arch bridge, turn right, then immediately left, to follow a riverside path. On the opposite bank a fine waterfall can be seen below an old mill. Follow the field edge path then descend to a forest road, follow it left then sweep right passed a delightful pool on a sharp bend in the river to your right. The path then leaves the forest road on the right and follows the water's edge as the valley sides draw in steeper on both sides.

More sheltered now, the walk takes on a different atmosphere as the path crosses rustic bridges. Do not cross the first bridge - the Alpine Bridge, with an old icehouse on the other bank - but continue on the eastern bank. Cross another rustic bridge, beneath picturesque waterfalls, continuing to where the path hugs the river bank. Follow a dry stone wall as the rough path crosses two streams before emerging at a third onto a boardwalk over tussocks. The narrow path weaves its way through trees and traverses a steep bank before passing through a wooden gate in a dry stone wall. Cross the stream with care and leave the garden by a stile on the right. Descend towards the river once more, traversing the slope to emerge at the road beside a bridge, turn left and follow the road, with care, up to the village of Pontrhydygroes (SN 739 725).

Cover image:Autumn in the Upland Forest (© DJG Owen)

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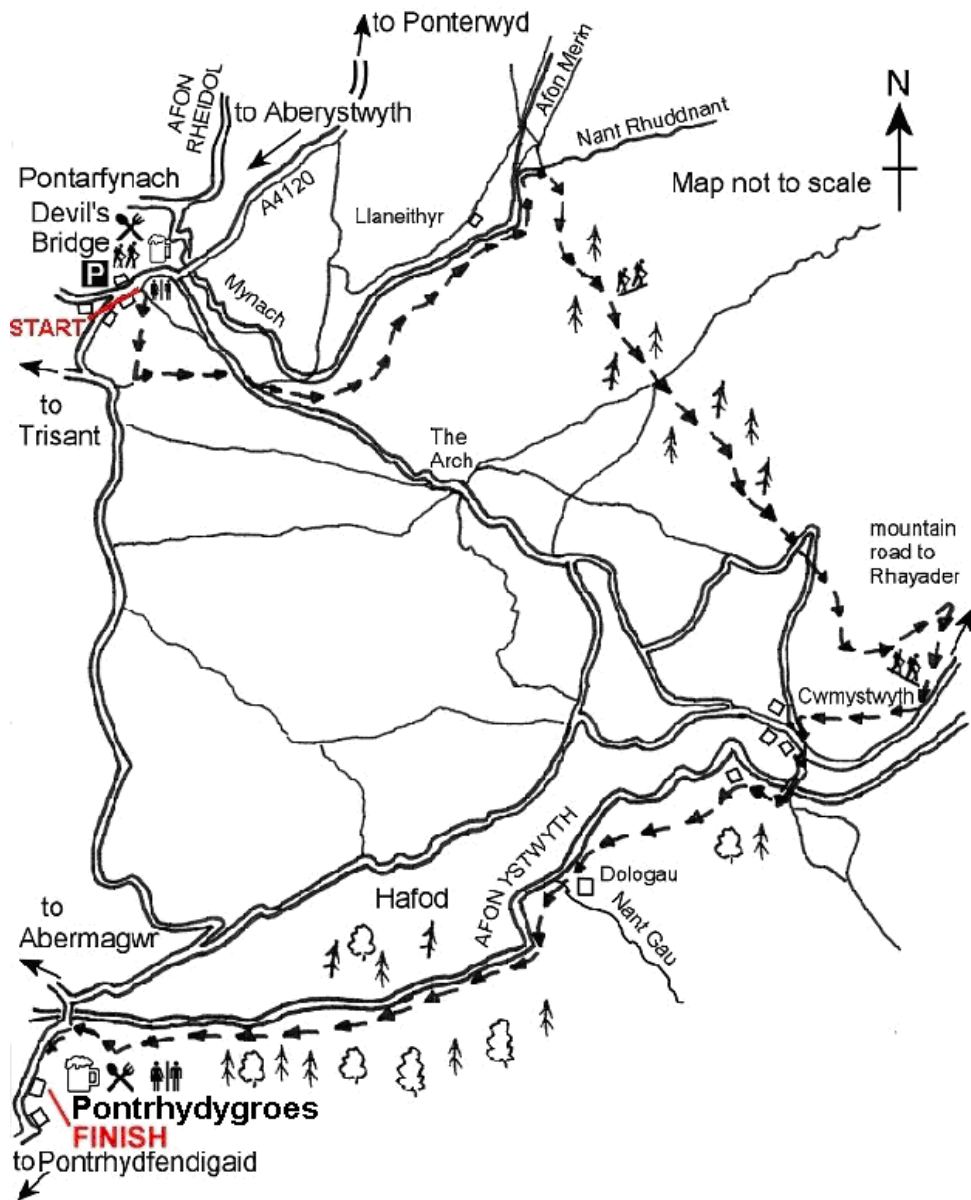


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Distance & time:	18km (11 miles); 5½ hours
Terrain:	Rough tracks, forestry, steep hill paths and riverside walks through mixed woodland
Suitable for:	Fit walkers used to hill walking and able to navigate in poor weather
Grade:	This is a grade A walk graded according to the following criteria: A Strenuous: Ability to walk on rough terrain for up to 6hours with a light rucksack B Moderate: Ability to walk on rough terrain for up to 4hours with a light rucksack C Easy: Ability to walk on rough terrain for up to 2hours with a light rucksack
Start:	Devil's Bridge opposite the station car park (SN 738 767)
Finish:	Pontrhydygroes (SN 739 725) Refreshments: Devil's Bridge and Pontrhydygroes Public Toilets: Devil's Bridge and Pontrhydygroes
Public transport:	☎ Tourist Information Centre; 01970 612125 or ☎ Traveline Cymru on 0870 608 2608.
Maps:	OS Explorer 213, Aberystwyth & Cwm Rheidol.

CEREDIGION



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Opposite the Vale of Rheidol Railway station the signposted footpath divides, take the right hand fork towards the livestock mart. Enter the field on the right and follow the path to the left between Scots pines.

Keeping the wooded bank to your immediate left, gain the lane and turn left along it, (the primary school is at the end of this track to your right). Keep right above a farm and look out for a stile below the track to your left after a bungalow. Go down the steps with care and turn right. Join the road and follow it carefully for about 100 meters. Turn left and follow the bridleway down past Abercoll, ignoring the footpath that descends left from this track immediately after the gate.

After the house, cross a footbridge and follow a lane leading into the valley, bear left to join another track after a gate. Follow this track, underneath power cables, until a fork left leads into a dip - the site of Bodcoll mine. The mine entrance once comprised a splendid masonry portal - of almost rail tunnel proportions - with an inscribed stone tablet. Several hundred tons of galena (lead ore) were raised here. The wind turbines of Cefn Croes can be seen dead ahead. After a rise, opposite Llaneithyr cottage, the track drops down to the river. Follow the riverside path which enters forestry and reaches a ford next to the stone abutments of an old cart bridge. Turn right and follow the river bank to a stile by a footbridge, go up through the conifers to the forestry road. On your right, in the woods, can be seen the ruins of Tŷ Gwyn mine buildings.

A steep climb begins here, go straight across the track and continue up through the larch plantation. Larch, although a conifer, is deciduous and there are fine views as you climb. Ravens nest here in the crags on the left. At the top of the larch plantation the footpath leaves the obvious track and leads off right. The mossy, uneven path continues up through the forestry then descends steeply over rough terrain before a short rise leads onto another forestry road. Continue straight across and follow the path that traverses right and finally emerges onto another forestry road that runs along the crest of a ridge. To the right, a mile away, is the Forestry Commission Wales amenity area at the Arch.

You are now at Coed y Ceuleth, at 450m, the highest point of the walk. Ahead, the upland plateau that stretches over to Elan and beyond, dominates the skyline. The miners' cottages above Cwm Ystwyth can be seen nestled in the hillside. Continue over the forestry road and the footpath divides. Take the left fork and go down into a basin traversing the steep hillside to meet a forestry road. Turn right along this with the stream to your left for about 200 meters then take the track on your left, at a right hand bend, to enter the conifers once more.

Cross a footbridge and continue, through oak trees, to meet another forest road. Enter the dense forestry ahead and continue over three footbridges to cross yet another forest road. The path crosses another footbridge here and eventually leaves the forestry to emerge onto the upland basin. To the right a good track leads ahead to a gate with a stile beside it. Cross the stile and continue over marshy ground over three footbridges to reach the tarmac road at Talwrn. A kissing gate enters a field below the cottage, follow the path - with fine views of the Hafod to the right - to reach the road again. Continue up the bank ahead to gain the track then leave it almost immediately, following another track to the left. This track continues to traverse the hillside - with panoramic views of Hafod again - leading to a "bwllch" behind Y Glog, which is the heather covered hill.

Head for the stone wall and follow it for a short while, below crags, before contouring to the obvious dip in the skyline, fording a stream on the way. Over the pass there is a corner in the wall which has a fence beside it. Descend steeply along the wall for a short while until a vague path leaves it to traverse left down the steep hillside.