

Country Walks Around Wrexham

Route 3 – Coedpoeth- Nant Mill to Bronwylfa (3.5 miles)

Plas Power Woods – Aberoer – Bronwylfa- Fron-dêg

Parking: Cars can be parked at Nant Mill, Coedpoeth, grid ref. 289501. This is a public car park and picnic site (always open) with a small shop & visitor centre (open Easter to September daily 10.30am - 4.30pm; October to Easter weekends only).

Public Transport: Arriva or George Edwards' go through Coedpoeth village where walkers should alight and walk down Park Road and Nant Road to Nant Mill.

Walk Directions

Starting at **Nant Mill (1)** pass the visitor centre and walk up the lane to Bersham Road and turn right. **Nant Bridge (2)** is 75 metres down the hill. Cross the bridge and walk up the road past well-stocked **woodlands (3)**.

At the top of the hill, turn right into a small triangle of woodland. Keep to the straight path passing western hemlock trees on your right.

Cross the road and walk up the farm track to Plas Buckley Farm, pass all the buildings, then bear right following the waymarked route through the gates to the farm lane.

Just after the stream go through the gate into the field on the right and walk diagonally across to the far corner keeping the pylons to your left. There is a stile here partly concealed by the hedgerow. Perhaps the only point of interest in this field is the view of five different designs of pylon taking power through Legacy Electricity Sub-Station!

From here the path stays alongside the hedge on your right until you reach a stile at the roadside.

Cross the road and take the path over the stile slightly to your right. The path leads straight across two fields to the left of the house, cross the stile on your right onto the road.

Turn left and after 130 metres your route continues over a stile on the right, at the point where the road bends round to the left.

Head for the field gate more or less straight across the field, there is a stile alongside. Follow the path across the next field to the hedge and go through two kissing-gates, the first of metal and the second made of oak. Between the two gates, you'll catch a glimpse of Bronwylfa Hall over to the right.

At the roadside, to your right you'll see two lanes. Choose the slightly wider left fork – stone bridge parapets are visible a few metres along it. (Check the map to ensure you're going the right way.)

Go over the bridge, pass the driveway to **Bronwylfa Hall (4)** and in about 30 metres, before reaching another driveway, find on your right the beginning of a fascinating footpath. It leads you through a tunnel (mind your head!) and around the lower part of Bronwylfa's gardens.

The path is public but the grounds are private - do not stray from the waymarked route! Cross the concrete bridge and climb to a stile. Go straight across the field to the stile by the road.

Take the path opposite to reach a stile below the farm known as Cae Glas, and proceed alongside the hedge until you reach a stile with a boardwalk on the left. Cross this then turn right, around the field edge for 20 metres to the next stile by the water trough. Once over this stile, head only slightly left of straight, across an open field to the far corner, passing a protruding field corner on your left.

Now follow the path over two more stiles to the road. **Lapwings (5)** are frequently seen on these fields in spring. **Tan-y-Rhiw (6)** is on your right. Go straight across the next three fields and then turn left to find the next stile in front of you. Once over this stile you should turn right and follow the boundary across another two stiles.

After the second stile you should bear left heading to the left of Hafod-Wen farm. Once past the farm, head right of the two seven bar metal farm gates to a stile taking you onto the lane.

Turn right onto the lane and follow it round to the T-junction. Turn right at the junction, follow the road around to the left and go over the stile on the left by the farm gate.

Cut across the first loop of the field and then follow the field boundaries on your left alongside the beech wood, part of The Woodland Trust's Nant Mill Wood. The stile is tucked away in the bottom left corner of the field. Once over it, keep following the hedge line over two more stiles.

In the third field, slightly left of straight ahead, there are some old ruins in the trees. Stay just to the right of them and at the rear you will find an old track. Go right along the track to reach a stile.

Follow the metalled lane down the hill past the site of the **Churn Mill (7)** to the ford. Both dippers and grey wagtails frequent the river in this area. Across the footbridge is Nant Mill car park.

Places Of Interest

(1) NANT MILL - The early history of the mill is obscure, but the meagre information gleaned suggests that a fulling mill (or pandy) originally occupied the site. Fulling mills were used to clean, shrink and thicken woollen cloth. The basic process consisted of beating the cloth underwater with wooden hammers powered by the mill's water-wheel. After fulling, the cloth had to be stretched and dried in a 'tenter's field' or 'fuller's yard'. The small flat field which lies between Nant Mill and the River Clywedog would have been ideal for this purpose. By 1770 a map depicting Nant Mill suggests it was working as a corn mill.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries the mill had five tenants and was in use for all but a few years. In 1973 the mill and adjacent fields were purchased by Wrexham Rural District Council. The succeeding Borough Council then landscaped the area in front of the mill to

provide a picnic site for visitors. NANT HOUSE was the residence of the miller and his family from at least the early 19th century. The ruins can still be seen on the other side of the river.

(2) NANT BRIDGE was built from local sandstone. One face of the stone is cut to a pattern that is prevalent in all the houses built in Coedpoeth in the 1850's.

Much of the land was bought from the Crown around that date and consisted of enclosures from the common ground. A typical price for a plot of building land was about 12 shillings, mining and hunting rights being retained by the Crown.

Before the 1850's uncut stone seems to have been utilised, with perhaps cut stone being used just at the corners of the buildings.

Just above the bridge we can see the wall around Plas Power Park, home of the Fitzhugh family for 200 years. This is built in three courses and partially surrounds over a square mile of the estate -it is mortared and topped with copingstones to resemble castle battlements.

(3) PLAS POWER WOOD - This wood of 34 hectares (83 acres) stretches for nearly 2km along the River Clywedog. Now owned by the Woodland Trust, it is planned to restore this section to predominantly native woodland through successive thinning of the larch, western hemlock, sycamore and beech.

Early in the year the hazel produces its winter flowers, long hanging sheep's-tails of yellow male catkins and tiny cerise female flowers.

In the spring wood anemones grow in profusion, on the woodland floor. It is a small pink or white flower of the Ranunculus family. This is followed by the bluebell, transforming the woodland into a magical place of light subtle colour, with white-flowered five-petalled wood sorrel growing on the acid soil between the trees.

Later on, the ground is covered with rosebay willow herb and bracken although yellow archangel, a flower only common in the south of Britain, can be found in May and June, and wild raspberry can be

seen alongside the road. Wild rhododendron flowers during the late spring. In autumn the sycamore plantation is lit by scarlet maple whose leaves turn through all shades of red and purple and make this an area of outstanding beauty.

(4) BRONWYLFA (the watch-place on the brow of the hill) was formerly a small farm of 28 acres (11 ha.) belonging to Samuel Egerton who died in 1780. It was sold in March 1805 for £940 to John Beardsworth of Wrexham. Edward Evans of Rockferry bought the property in 1871, and enlarged the estate. He also practically rebuilt the house in a Gothic style and extended it to take full advantage of the well-appointed site. It is now surrounded by beautiful lawns, gardens and plantations.

(5) LAPWING, or Peewit (*Vanellus vanellus*), appears in these fields every spring. It is easily recognised by its mating display. This consists of a tumbling flight creating a lapping sound accompanied by the "peewit" call. Once protected by a special Act of Parliament, the birds are advantageous near crops as they devour harmful insects. These days, in common with most other birds, they are protected by the Protection of Birds' Acts.

(6) TAN-Y-RHIW is the small building to the rear of the converted barn. This has been constructed to look like a 16th century house by using a framework of old beams and diamond patterned windows. It is, however, only used for penning sheep.

(7) CHURN MILL - about 50 metres before the footbridge there remains the foundation of a small building. This supported a mill, which drove a butter churn in the dairy across the road.

We are short of photographs taken on this route. Please send us your digital images. See website for details.

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