

Monks Trail

Horse Riding Route, Penycae, Wrexham

Although primarily aimed at horse riders, ramblers and mountain bike riders are welcome to use this trail.

The Main Trail of approximately 8.3 miles (13.4 Kms), 6.65 miles (10.7 kms) is described in a clockwise direction starting at Grid Ref. SJ 287 466 on the **Coppi Industrial Estate**, Wrexham. The start/end point on the Wrexham Borough council's route instructions is unsuitable for equestrian use so we suggest you use the Coppi Industrial Estate as your parking spot. There is an opportunity to abbreviate the route by taking a short-cut and an optional extension loop off the main trail around Ty Mawr Reservoir.

Trail Directions

Grid Ref. SJ 287 466

The route begins at Coppi Industrial Estate. Turn left out of the Estate onto Hall Lane. At the T- junction, turn left passing Ty Ganol on your right and a layby on your right, then Yew Tree Isaf Farm on your left. Follow the lane south down the hill, over the stream.

Grid ref SJ 279 455

At the bend at Pentre Farm. Turn right here onto Dark Lane [A], which opens out to an off-road section about 1/3 of the way up, through Yew Tree Dingle. When you meet the tarmac road turn left.

Grid ref SJ 271 456

Take the second turning on the right towards Plas Du ruins [B] and the Top Reservoir [C]. Ignoring the turning on the right to Trefechan Farm. Follow the lane that slopes downward to the left. Here you pass through a gate (smaller access gate to the right of the main locked gate). Continue up the track, past the Top Reservoir on the left to a further [locked] gate with smaller access gate. Pass the gate; stay on the main track to the centre of the woods where it swings right. Climb through the trees and pass the ruins of Newtown hamlet [D] on the left. Then continue amongst the trees, to the mountain gate.

Grid ref SJ 262 463

This opens out onto the open moorland of Ruabon Mountain [E]. The path rises ahead passing an old quarry face [F] on the left. At the top of the rise turn left along the edge of the moor. The path descends to the end of the Bridleway where it joins a minor road.

Grid ref SJ 263 469

At this point you have the choice of staying on the Main Trail or returning to your starting point via a shorter route.

Short route 6.65 miles (10.7 kms)

Turn right into the lane towards Tai-nant, passing Tai-Nant chapel (G) and Pen-y-Lan (H).

Grid ref SJ 269 464

Keep left at the junction doubling back on itself, passing the red Telephone box and post box on the left just

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after the bridge. Tai-nant farm is further on the right. Continue to the T-junction (ignore the no through road). Turn left, and then turn right retracing your way back to your start point off Hall Lane.

Main trail 8.33 miles (13.4kms)

Grid ref SJ 263 469

Continue north

Turn left into the lane. Pant Glas Reservoir (I) is visible on the right, and on the left, over the cattle grid and in the trees, is Mountain Lodge (the Wynnstay Estate gamekeeper's cottage). Continue to follow the lane, passing Plas Drain (J), descending for 1.2 km to Godremynydd (red brick cottages). *At this point the optional Ty Mawr loop leaves the main trail.*

Grid ref SJ 275 471

At Godremynydd follow the lane around to the right, passing Onen Fawr Farm, and turn off next left Hall Lane and back to the start of the trail.

Optional Ty Mawr loop

After passing Godremynydd take a left turn at Onen Fawr farm. After 0.4km turn left (opposite 'New Buildings') onto an unmade track which loops around Ty Mawr Reservoir (K). Follows the track to the right around the reservoir with a spur off to Cae Llwyd Reservoir on the left. Turn right when rejoining the lane to complete the circuit and re-trace the route to Godremynydd. Turn next left into Hall Lane and back to the start point.

How to get here

Use O.S. Explorer Map 256

From the South

Grid ref SJ 291 436 near Plas Madoc from Llangollen.

From the A539 take turn left into Plas Bennion Road, sign posted Pen Y Cae. Turn Left at Wynn Hall onto the B5097, (Copperas Hill). Turn next right onto Afoneitha Road. Take care as it is a bus route.

Continue to the mini roundabout and keep left along Church Street.

Grid ref SJ 291 462

Turn Right at the mini roundabout then left into Queen Street (Garage on left.). At the next Mini roundabout go straight across. Follow the road to the next mini roundabout by the Sun Inn. Keep left (Hall street). The Industrial estate is shortly on the left.

From the North

Grid Ref SJ 309 481

Leave the Wrexham by-pass (A483) at the Rhostyllen exit and take the B5605 off the roundabout signed Johnstown / Rhosllanerchrugog.

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Grid ref SJ 303 475

After 0.4 km turn off right just after the 40mph limit sign (Smithy Lane, signposted Crematorium Scottish power on right) then proceed to the T-junction and turn left onto the A5097, signed Rhosllanerchrugog. After a further 3.2 km, just after the Coach and Horses pub on your right, take the next right turn (Mountain Street). After 50 metres turn right at the T junction opposite the Sun Inn. The Industrial estate is shortly on the left.

Historical notes and places of interest

[A] DARK LANE – This is part of the original road which ran over the moors to Llandegla from Ruabon.

[B] PLAS DU – Originally a monastery, the monks offered overnight shelter here to pilgrims visiting Valle Crucis Abbey if they arrived too late to cross the mountain to Llangollen in daylight.

[C] TOP RESERVOIR – Built in 1902 by the Ruabon Water Company to hold 126 million litres of water to supply their brickworks. Renovation work was carried out in 1990.

[D] NEWTOWN HAMLET – In the centre of the woods are the ruins of the squatters' homes, built on common land under the ancient custom of '*Ty unos*' (one night houses). There had to be smoke coming from the chimney before nightfall to claim the plot.

[E] RUABON MOUNTAIN – Owned by the Wynnstay Estate since 1857, when it was bought from the Crown. There are grouse shoots run by the Estate on the moor and controlled burning of the heather is carried out to provide fresh growth for food and shelter for the birds. The heather was once harvested to make brooms, with fees paid to the Estate for collecting it. A company owned by George Jackson once manufactured and exported the brooms to Europe and America. The Ruabon Brick Company used the heather to pack around its tiles and bricks during transportation. In August 1940 the moor was set on fire by jettisoned bombs which attracted German bombers destined for Liverpool. They dropped a high proportion of the bombs meant for Liverpool here, believing that a munitions factory had been hit.

[F] SANDSTONE QUARRY – Provided stone for many local houses including Tai-Nant Chapel.

[G] TAI-NANT CHAPEL – Built in 1833. It was sold in 1990 and converted to a house.

[H] PEN-Y-LAN – Built in 1728 and originally three cottages, it became one house at the turn of the last century and for some years until the 1970's it was the village shop. On one wall there is a terracotta moulding of a lion's head. This is an old insurance company's symbol, first used from about 1680 as a fire-mark. The firemen or 'watermen' were paid for attending all fires, but the buildings with the symbols were insured.

[I] PLAS GLAS RESERVOIR – It was built in 1935 to hold 18 million litres of water and is linked to Ty Mawr Reservoir by an underground tunnel. It was bombed during World War 2.

[J] PLAS DRAIN – Built in the sixteenth century, this Grade II listed house was sold in 1628 to the Yorke family of Eddig who owned it until 1906.

[K] TY MAWR RESERVOIR – Built in 1902.

[L] CAE LLWYD RESERVOIR – Built in 1860.