



# upland walk PENSYCHNANT

Broaden your horizons...

- **Circular Walk**
- **Coastal/Valley Views**
- **Medieval Sites**
- **Close to Conwy town**



## HOW TO GET HERE

### By Public Transport

From the train station: at Conwy or Penmaenmawr catch a no. 75 bus from the bus stop right outside the train station and request a stop at the National Park Car Park just after Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre. (This is a rural service and may change; please call the Public Transport Enquiry Line noted below to confirm). Follow the track to the car park. You are now at the start of the walk.

By Car: Leave the A55 at junction 18 to follow A547 signposts for Conwy. As you pass the castle bear right at a mini roundabout. Follow the one-way system through the arch to turn immediately left up Mount Pleasant. Turn right onto Sychnant Pass Road. Continue up the road for approx 2.5 miles. On the left just after the sign for Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre you will see a car park and National Park sign. Turn in here. You are now at the start of the walk.

### Public Transport Enquiry Line:

01492 575412 (Conwy County Borough Council)

Tel: Traveline Wales 0870 608 2 60  
www.traveline-cymru.org.uk

Please follow The Countryside Code  
Respect • Protect • Enjoy

## Walk information

A circular walk from the top of the Sychnant Pass taking you over open access land for spectacular views of the Conwy Valley, Carneddau mountain range, the Great Orme headland and the coast. Explore a landscape rich in archaeological features from stone circles to medieval hafotai (summer houses).

**Terrain:** hill walking with some moderate to steep climbs.

**Distance:** 7.2km, 4½ miles.

**Time:** 3½ hours.

**Paths:** rough stone and grassy tracks that follow public rights of way; 1 gate and 1 stile.

**Dogs:** on open access land dogs must always be kept on a short lead between 1st March and 31st July and when close to farm animals. Dogs should be kept under close control at all times.

**Map:** Explorer OL17.

**Start and finish grid reference:** SH 755 769. National Park Car Park.

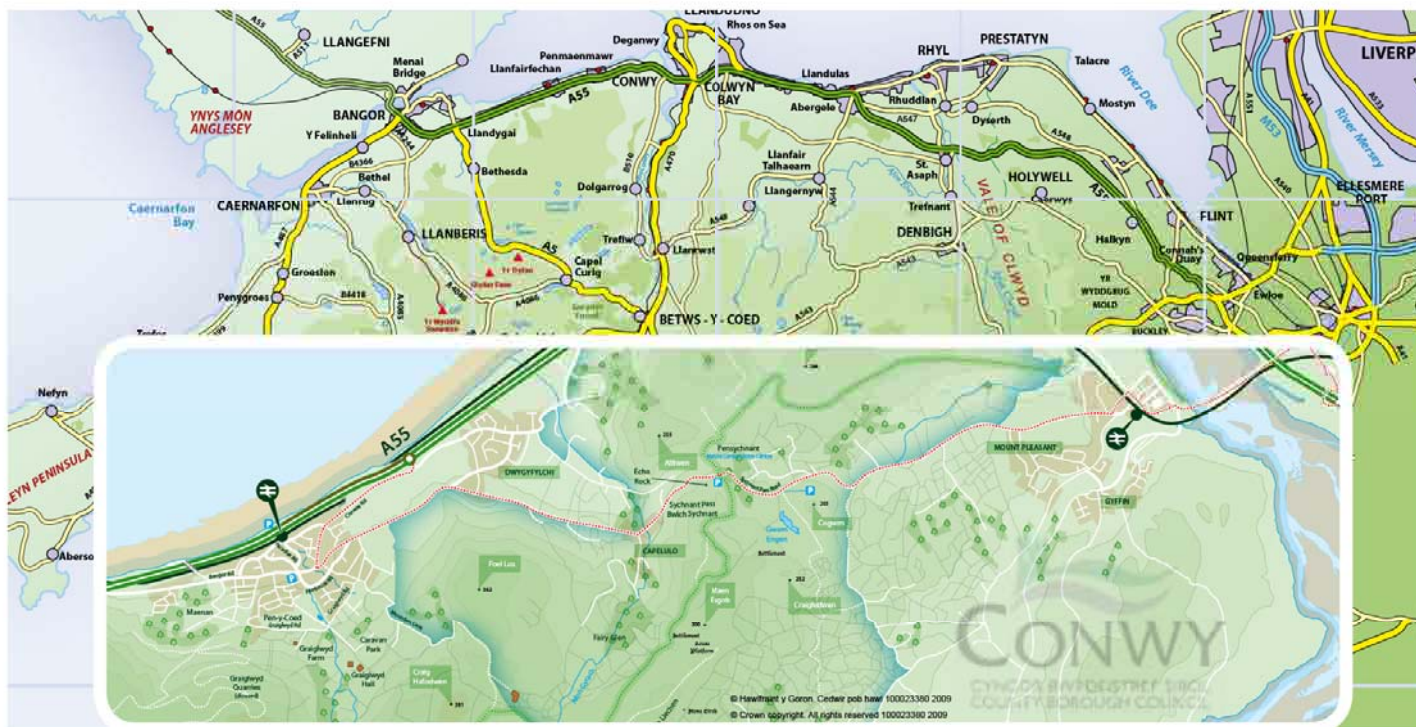
**Refreshments:** available in Dwygyfylchi, Penmaenmawr and Conwy.

All times and distances are approximate.

Be Prepared. Wear strong walking boots. Take warm, waterproof clothing and a packed lunch with you.

For more information on open access land:

www.ccw.gov.uk





Walking from the car park towards Location 1.

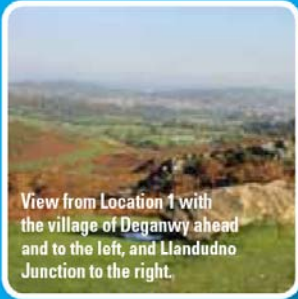
## START OF WALK TO LOCATION 1 CRAIG Y FEDWEN SH 755 763

Follow the track away from the main road and towards the farm buildings. Just before the buildings follow the track around to the right, keeping right to join a rougher track.

Continue to wind up the main track past a left turn until you are level with the hills on either side. You will see a small boulder on your right at a junction with a footpath. This is Location 1.

If you turn around, you will see from left to right; the long flat ridge of Conwy Mountain dropping down to the Little Orme in the distance. Continue to look to the right to see the hill of Nant y Gamar with Penrhyn Bay on the far coast and Deganwy to the forefront.

Conwy Castle is to the right with Llandudno Junction followed by Bryn Pydew behind. Colwyn Heights appears in the distance surrounded by rural Conwy.



View from Location 1 with the village of Deganwy ahead and to the left, and Llandudno Junction to the right.



Dry stone walls can provide good shelter against the weather for livestock.

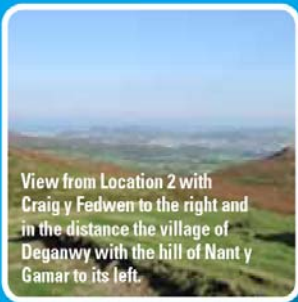
## LOCATION 1 TO LOCATION 2 MAEN ESGOB SH 752 762

Continue along the track until you are close to the wall and arrive at a junction with a fainter track. Pause here, this is Location 2.

The wall on your left marks the boundary of the enclosed land and the open moorland. It was built, like other upland enclosure walls of rounded boulders collected from the hillside, during the clearing of newly created fields. Much of the work was completed by the end of the 18th century. The walls are remarkable examples of the skills of the stone-wallers of the past. Today the skill has been revived as farmers are given the opportunity to rebuild the dry stone walls on their land through countryside stewardship schemes such as Tir Gofal in this area.

### An even better view (if it's not misty!)

Turn around to see the following additions to your panorama at Location 1: to your left the Great Orme summit and to your right the village of Glan Conwy with the Conwy River in front surrounded by the agricultural landscape of the Conwy Valley.



View from Location 2 with Craig y Fedwen to the right and in the distance the village of Deganwy with the hill of Nant y Gamar to its left.



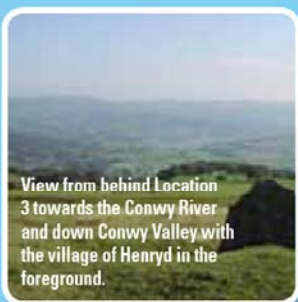
Walking to Location 3 with Cerrig y Ddinas to the left rising to Tal y Fan to the right.

## LOCATION 2 TO LOCATION 3 HAFOTY SH 751 759

Follow the fainter track that is closest to the wall. The track will depart from the wall for a short distance. As the track and wall become closer again you will see a gate to your left.

Just after this gate and to your right is a triangular shaped stone embedded in the ground. This is Location 3.

This stone marks the site of a medieval 'hafodty' (summer house). Until the end of the 18th century it was the practice of farmers to accompany their cattle and sheep to the uplands during the summer months. As the cattle needed milking daily their owners had to live on the higher ground in basic summer dwellings (hafodtai). As winter approached the animals were moved back to the lowland winter quarters ('hendy'). This annual movement was called transhumance. As sheep replaced cattle and with the final enclosure of the hills towards the end of the 18th century, the 'hafodty' and 'transhumance' became redundant. The foundations of these summer dwellings are common on the upper slopes, especially near Llangelynnin Church which can just be seen on the slopes of Cerrig y Ddinas.



View from behind Location 3 towards the Conwy River and down Conwy Valley with the village of Henryd in the foreground.

### Did you know?

During the Ice Ages a large glacier once covered the Conwy Valley and surrounding area. The steep sided hollow ahead was formed by the rushing waters from a melting, localized ice cap which was retreating in the direction you will be walking in.

Craig y Fedwen, to your left, is made up of hard rhyolite, a volcanic rock striped with quartz.

### Did you know?

Insects, spiders, woodlice, millipedes, bees, wasps and birds such as the pied wagtail and wren like to live in dry stone walls. They share their home with toads, slow-worms, voles, field mice and shrews.

Dry stone walls make good sunbathing areas for reptiles such as common lizards. They like to bask in the sun during the morning and afternoon.

If you look closely at a dry stone wall you will see the lichens on the stones. Lichens are early signs of life. They thrive on the exposed stone surface in a pollution free countryside.

### Did you know?

Sheep like to nibble the fresh new shoots of gorse bushes. This is why the gorse bushes around you look as if they have been pruned into dome shapes by a gardener.

### Did you know?

There has been a dramatic decline in skylarks in recent decades (down 54% between 1973 and 1998: BTO figures).

Meadow pipits are the most common bird in these uplands in the summer. Their parachuting song flight is characteristic.



Location 4 looking towards the stone circle with Tal y Fan in the background.

### LOCATION 3 TO LOCATION 4 STONE CIRCLE SH 747 753

Continue along the track close to the wall until you come to the remains of a circle of large standing stones. You have arrived at Location 4.

Today, three standing stones and three fallen stones remain on the circumference of a circle ten metres in diameter. The spacing between the stones suggests that three others have disappeared.

This stone circle is thought to be 3,500 years old, dating from the Bronze Age. It could have been a temple to the gods.

The circle stands on an ancient trackway which begins/ends on the coast near Llanfairfechan and crosses the moorlands to the Conwy Valley. Its route can be traced by following a number of stone circles e.g. Meini Hirion (Druids' Circle), cairns and standing stones between here and the North coast

The boulders used to build the circle and many of the stone walls you see originate from the higher slopes of Snowdonia. During the last Ice Age a glacier 'grew' to cover the Conwy Valley and moved and smoothed many boulders with it. At the end of the Ice Age the glacier began to melt and retreat and boulders were left in this area.

Why not visit the Druids' Circle on the 'Penmaenmawr Upland Walk'?



Looking at the standing stone from Location 5 with Conwy Valley in the background.



As you walk you may see semi-wild (feral) ponies. Once a year they are rounded up by local farmers and divided up so some can go to sale.

Who needs clothes when you've got fur? The ponies have a double-layered winter coat. This prevents heat loss and is waterproof. Snow can lie on the ponies' backs for a considerable amount of time without them getting wet or cold.



Looking at Location 5 where the wall is closest to the track followed by a hollow.

### LOCATION 4 TO LOCATION 5 PANT Y CYTIAU SH 746 751

Resume your journey along the track until the wall to your left meets the track at a corner which is followed by a small hollow. This is Location 5. If you turn your back to the wall and walk along the shallow valley (Pant y Cytiau) ahead of you, (for approx. 200m) you will come across the remains of several buildings on your left. Retrace your footsteps to return to the track. Just before you rejoin the track you will see in the fields in front of you a standing stone. Turn right to continue along the track.

Pant y Cytiau – valley of the huts. This is a medieval settlement and could be associated with the slope ahead of you, which was ploughed in the Middle Ages.

The standing stone is a 'cairn' on the ancient trackway, mentioned earlier at Location 4, that runs from the coast and down the Conwy Valley.

Keep an eye out for meadow pipits, skylarks, stonechats, coughts, ravens and if you're lucky, dotterels.

### LOCATION 5 TO LOCATION 6 TYDDYN GRASOD SH 744 747

Continue along the track to a T-junction and the corner of the wall you've been following.

Turn left towards a gate. Tyddyn Grasod is to your left and the 'multi-cellular' sheepfold to your right. This is Location 6.

Sheep belonging to many different owners can become mixed up while grazing the uplands. In June they are collected to these sheep pens, driven to the large central fold and sorted by ownership into the smaller outer pens.

In the distance woods can be seen clothing the lower slopes of a hill called Cerrig y Ddinas (Rock of the Fort). A settlement from the Iron Age can be found here.

The ridge leads on to Craig Celynnin (Celynnin's Rock), which refers to the Church of Celynnin (Llangelynnin) which sits in the hollow that divides the ridge. The ridge continues up to Tal y Fan at 610 metres.



View over Tyddyn Grasod.

### LOCATION 6 TO LOCATION 7 WAEN GYRACH SH 740 749

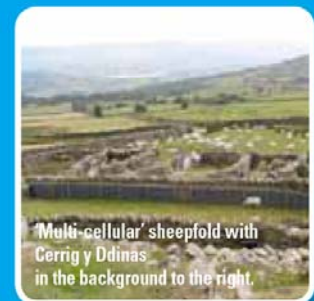
Turn around to have the sheep pens to your left and Tyddyn Grasod to your right. Retrace your steps to follow the track ahead of you. Continue along this track to take the left fork of the track. Cross over a well-used track to follow a fainter track/path down to the ruins of a homestead - Waen Gyrach. Keeping the remains of the homestead to your left, walk down as far as the trees and a North Wales Path waymarker. Turn right onto the North Wales Path. This is Location 7.



The trees ahead mark the turning for Location 7.



Walking towards Waen Gyrach with Moel Lus ahead.



'Multi-cellular' sheepfold with Cerrig y Ddinas in the background to the right.



Looking across the dip with Location 8 at the top left corner.

## LOCATION 7 TO LOCATION 8 IRON AGE FARMSTEAD SH 746 758

Continue along the North Wales Path past a glacial erratic.

Continue under a power line to walk down, around and up a hollow, once again crossing under a power line. Between the next two telegraph poles and to your right is Location 8.

At the second telegraph pole the trail passes through a group of six circular huts. They are up to 2,000 years old. These Iron Age huts do not constitute a village but a 'farmstead'.

There are no visible signs of ploughing or field systems that could be associated with the hut group. The occupants were probably pastoralists tending their cattle on the moorlands in the warmer seasons.

As you left Location 7 you walked through a sea of green bracken (in the summer) or as it dies down in the winter its strong orange colour dominates the landscape.



Location 9.

## LOCATION 8 TO LOCATION 9 MIEVEAL LONG HUTS SH 750 767

Carry on up the track and over the stile straddling the wall of Pensychnant Nature Reserve. At a junction follow the North Wales Path to the right and past a wall. Continue down a clear path following the North Wales Path waymarkers. (you will pass under the power lines twice).

At a T-junction with a waymarker post turn left. Just below the slope to your left, in the bracken is Location 9.

Between Location 8 and Location 9 there are numerous remains of medieval longhouses and huts. The best example can be seen at Location 9. If you wish to look for the others they are marked on the map.

Beneath the bracken are the foundations of two medieval long huts in good condition. You will see that they have been set side-by-side, end-on into the hillside which has been cut away.

The bank protected the houses from the prevailing westerly winds and driving rain

### How the huts were built

Three foot thick walls with orthostatic faces (stones set on edge) with a core of small stones and earth created the foundations. The walls of the huts were dry built with roughly coursed faces. Even when intact the walls would not have been much higher than what you see today. The roof was made of branches covered with turf. It would have been very low, while a hearth was placed in the centre of the hut.

## LOCATION 9 TO LOCATION 10 PENSYCHNANT SH 754 766

Continue down the North Wales Path, through a grassy area, under the power lines to a T-junction. Turn right leaving the North Wales Path to follow the footpath to a stile. This is Location 10.

This is the boundary wall of the Pensychnant Conservation Centre and Nature Reserve, which is located across the road from the car park.

Pensychnant was the country home of Abraham Henthorn Stott, architect of the Lancashire cotton mills. Stott and sons built about a fifth of the mills in Oldham at a time when Oldham did one eighth of the world's cotton spinning.

In 1989, Brian Stott set up the Pensychnant Foundation, a registered charity, to protect the history and natural history of Sychnant, and to foster the public's appreciation and understanding of nature and nature conservation. The house is now the venue for many wildlife lectures, guided walks and exhibitions.

## LOCATION 10 TO THE CAR PARK

Go over the stile to follow the footpath past the lake to turn left and rejoin the track you started walking on, back to the car park.



### Did you know?

The North Wales Path that you are now joining runs for 60 miles from Bangor to Prestatyn.

During the Middle Ages this whole area was ploughed, with farmsteads hugging the upper slopes. Decades of ploughing impoverished the soil, resulting in the upland fields being abandoned and left for bracken, gorse, bilberry and heather to encroach. With the introduction of sheep on a large scale two centuries ago the above plants began to dominate the area as sheep tended to eat grasses in preference.

Underneath the bracken that surrounds you today are the ridges and furrows created through ploughing, and the dwellings of the families who did the work.

### Did you know?

Gyrach is Irish for swamp or marsh and Waen is Welsh for meadow or moor.

### Did you know?

Bracken can take over an area rapidly. It has the potential to expand its area by 1-3% a year. It typically grows in moorland, hill pasture and other habitats with acidic soil.

Although it dominates over other vegetation and suppresses farm grazing it can support a mixture of plants. These are typically woodland plants as the bracken acts as a substitute woodland canopy. You may see bluebells and violets.

### Why not visit Pensychnant Conservation Centre and discover...

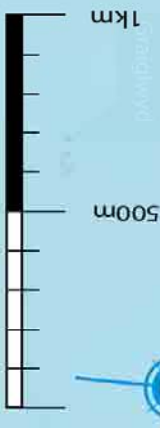
A house originally built in 1690 but later modified to the house you see today which has a strong character dating from the Victorian era. A 120 acre estate managed as a nature reserve.

**Pensychnant,  
Sychnant Pass Road, Conwy  
Tel: 01492-592595**

[www.pensychnant.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.pensychnant.fsnet.co.uk)

# Allwedd | Key

	Môr Sea		Pensychnant Canolfan Gwarchod Natur Nature Conservation Centre
	Tywod Sand		Cychwyn y Dailh Start of Walk
	Coed Trees		Safle Location
	Afon River		A55
	Caeau Fields		Ffyrdd Roads
	Maes Parcïo Car Park		Traec Track
	Tref Town		Llwybr y Gogledd North Wales Path
	Adelaidau Buildings		Llwybrau Eraill Other Footpaths
	Ffin Tir Mynediad Agored		Pffil Llwybr Main Route
	Open Access		
	Boundary		



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