

# Taicynhaeaf to Barmouth

9 miles / 6 Hours / difficulty – medium



A lovely walk up alongside the Afon Cwm-mynach, then through the differing countryside that this area has to offer. There are amazing views of the estuary and a finish in the historic seaside resort of Barmouth.

This walk is long but not very difficult. There are steep sections, rocky parts and areas that can be wet and slippery underfoot.

- Start the walk from the George III, go over the wooden toll bridge and continue on the tarmac lane. Cross the main road (Dolgellau to Barmouth A496), continue uphill and look for the footpath sign (Llwybr cyhoeddus) on your left between some hedges, turn left here.
  - Coming down from the New Precipice Walk, as you arrive at the tarmac road, turn left downhill. Look out for a footpath sign (Llwybr cyhoeddus) where you turn right in between some hedges.
- At the end of this path, cross the small bridge and go steep uphill, alongside a small wall. When you reach a larger path at the top, turn right. Continue following this path uphill with the stream, down to your right. Shortly after passing Yr Efail, the ruins of an old smithy, you reach the end of this path.
- Climb the stile ahead and continue on the obvious path around a knoll with old oak trees. Aiming for the gates on the opposite side, go through the field ahead. Pass through the gate and follow the White (Permissive Path) arrow, keeping an old stonewall to your left. You soon see a cottage ahead.
- Go through the gate and enter the garden of the cottage "Garth Gell". Pass between the cottage and barn and follow the grassy track with the yellow marker, uphill. Ignore the next yellow pointer and keep on the grassy track till you reach two gates together.
- Go through the larger of the gates and continue directly, uphill until you get to a post. Follow the direction of the blue arrow, soon arriving at a corner of a stone wall.
- In the wall facing you, climb the stone stile in the corner of the wall and follow the path ahead keeping the wall tight to your right for approx 250 yards. Ignore the first hole in the wall. Go through the second hole with a small grassy path ahead.
- Passing 2 more gaps on the new wall to your right, you soon arrive at a metal gate. Pass through this and 1 more, taking time to enjoy the great views of the Mawddach Estuary ahead of you.
- The path now passes between a large gap in a stone wall. Very shortly after, the path splits, take the right fork and head downhill. Continue down the path, soon arriving at a swing gate. Go through and follow the path downhill soon arriving at a wooden gate.
- This then leads to a metal gate with a tarmac driveway beyond. Ignoring this gate, turn sharp right just before it. 30 yards further on, go through a metal gate onto the tarmac lane.
- When you reach the tarmac country lane, turn right, and walk along till you get to an old stone bridge.  
Pass over this stone bridge, Pont Hirgwm, and continue on the lane that now climbs steadily uphill.

- Continue uphill, ignoring all signs/exits to the left and right, eventually arriving at a cattle grid, cross this. Again, ignoring all signs/exits to the left and right, carry on on the tarmac country lane until you reach a small car park with a yellow pointer and a sign for a bridleway.
- Go through the small gate following the bridleway. This is a bit of a scramble up the stoney / slate path. Don't forget to turn around here to enjoy the magnificent view of Cadair Idris. Where the path splits, keep left of the large standing stone showing direction to Tal y Bont (Harlech is written on the back) and follow the stoney path further uphill.
- Where the path flattens, go through a big rusty gate and continue on the obvious stoney path. Passing through a number of gates you will eventually cross a large stream, over a stone bridge. The path now widens and shows some signs of having been paved as a road.
- Approx. 250 yards, further on to the right, you can see remnants of an old trading post. To the left you pass a plantation. After the plantation, pass through 2 gates and keep on the stoney path heading left (do not go uphill).
- At a grouping of sheep pens take a sharp left, through a gate (could be shut or open) and continue on the same stoney path. Walk ahead on this path until you reach Sylfaen Farm.
- Go through the farm turning right onto the tarmac lane as you exit. There is a great view of the Estuary here. The radio mast up the hill ahead, is where you are heading.
- Continue along the lane going through the small hamlet of Llwynon. After passing the large, converted barn on your right, keep an eye out on the right, for the footpath sign indicating the start of the climb to the mast.
- Turn right uphill. Pass through the metal gate and carry on until you reach an obvious hole in the wall ahead. With the stone wall to your left go ahead and when you see the yellow way marker turn right going uphill past the mast.
- Passing the mast go through a hole in the wall that is in front of you and turn immediately left. Follow the grassy path to a small metal gate. Go through the gate and turn left as directed by the yellow way marker in front of you. The next yellow pointer directs you past the old stone walls of a sheep pen.
- Now go along the flat grass path ahead, with wide open views of the Estuary and Cadair Idris. Walking towards the sea, continue on the narrow path downhill, sometimes between gorse bushes and sometimes over small streams, till you reach a tarmac lane.
- Here you turn right, heading uphill soon arriving at a metal gate. Turn left here and head towards "The Slabs" – a steep wall popular with rock climbers.
- At a yellow finger post, on your left - turn left. Don't continue on the lane but take the path underneath the Slabs. Follow the yellow markers passing through 2 metal gates. You are heading downhill and soon arrive at a stone wall. Down to your left you will see a junction of yellow way marker paths go right here, to a gate in the wall.
- Continue on the path downhill and at the end, where there is a wooden bench with a great view, go straight ahead - with a stone wall to your left.
- Passing the entrances to Cae Fadog and The Frenchman's Grave, you arrive at a black metal gate. Go through and continue downhill zig zagging until you reach stone track at the sign for Dinas Oleu – the National Trust's first site.

Turn right and continue downhill into Barmouth.

## History Etc

1. Dolgellau Bridge called Y Bont Fawr (The big Bridge) was first built in 1638 but has been widened and lengthened since.

2. Afon Wnion is about 12 miles long and is engulfed by the Afon Mawddach close to the Cymer Abbey.

3. Cymer Abbey was founded in 1189 and was dedicated by the Cistercian monks to the Virgin Mary. To emphasise its age The Magna Carta was signed in 1215.

The meeting of the rivers not far from here contributed to the Abbeys name. The translation of the monastery's original Welsh title meant the "meeting of the waters" and part of that translation included Kymer.

4. Llanechtyd Bridge or Pont Llanechtyd is a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century replacement of a much earlier bridge. It spans the Mawddach which is on its way meet the Wnion.

5. Afon Mawddach is 28 miles long and has many significant tributaries, the Wnion being just one. It flows out to sea approximately 9 miles from here between the two seaside towns of Barmouth and Fairbourne.

6. The tramline on the New Precipice was used in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to transport zinc and lead ore to a mill in Cwm Mynach. We will pass this site later.

7. Now walking on old tracks to and from the mill mentioned earlier. We are alongside Afon Cwm Mynach. Cwm Mynach –means the Monks Valley as the monks from Cymer Abbey farmed around here.

8. Wooden handrail leads to the site of the old mill. The rocks, containing lead and zinc from the New Precipice and copper /gold from mines to be passed later, were crushed here. The metal was then separated by mercury contained in buddles. The foundations of 6 buddles are all that is left.

9. Waymarker to Harlech and Talybont – The Harlech route is shorter but higher and would have been used in the summer. The other route via Talybont to Harlech was longer but lower and would have been used in winter.

10. Rhos caerau - Staging post to provide refreshments for passing travellers

11. Frenchmans grave & Dinas Oleu – first property donated to the National Trust, by Mrs Fanny Talbot. She also gave 13 cottages in this area to a close friend. One of his first tennant's was locally known as the Frenchman. He worked hard instructing local people on horticultural matters amongst other things till he died. We have just passed his grave.