

Ystwyth and Rheidol Bridleway Routes



Route 4: Trawsgoed to Ysbyty Ystwyth

Route overview and terrain:

This is a tough figure of eight exploring the Ystwyth valley and surrounding hillsides.

The Route follows quiet country lanes, forestry roads, remote, occasionally boggy, upland pasture and good tracks past disused mines. Some short sections of exposed bedrock.

There is an optional excursion to the summit of Trawsallt, SN778:704, height 570m, with fine views to Snowdonia, the Black Mountains, the Brecon Beacons, the Carmarthen Fans (Black Mountain), the Preselli Hills, Cardigan Bay and the Llyn peninsular.

The route has been developed primarily for horse riders but is also suitable for mountain bikes and walkers.

Start:

This begins at the Forestry Commission car park at Black Covert, Trawsgoed (SN 668:728)

Distance and approximate timings:

This is a short days ride of approximately 14 miles. Undertaking the optional excursion to Trawsallt will add a further 5 miles (up and down) to the distance and therefore make this into a full days ride.

Maps:

OS Landranger 135 Aberystwyth & Machynlleth

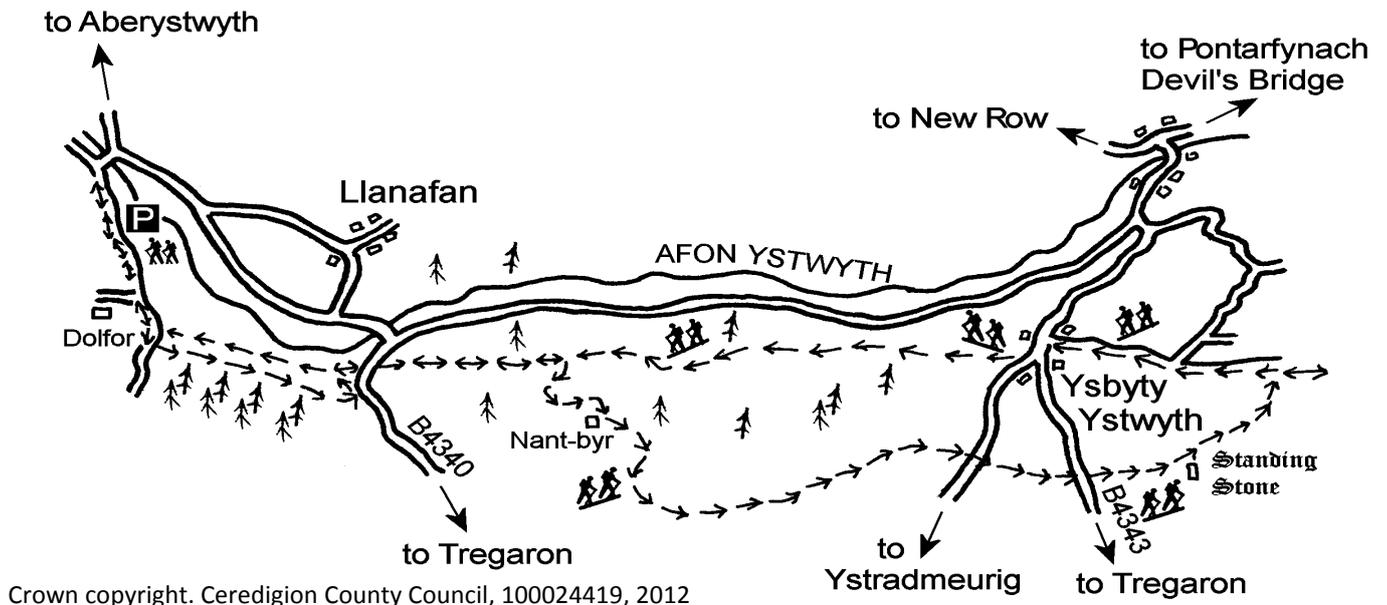
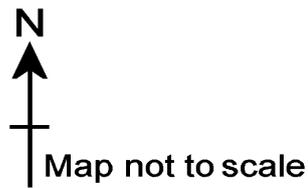
OS Explorer Map 213 Aberystwyth & Cwm Rheidol



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Trawsgoed to Ysbyty Ystwyth Circular Map 4A



Route Description:

Turn left out of the car park at Black Covert and follow the woodland edge at first then on past giant oak trees to a junction below *Dolfor* farm. Turn left, following the blue waymarkers for the Ystwyth Trail.

Follow the road round a corner then steeply up beside the forestry to enter the disused railway line on the left before the bridge. Follow the line through impressive cuttings until required to exit left before the next bridge.

Zig zag down through the woods to the river. Ford this with care and continue past shingle roofed houses, built originally for forestry workers, to the road.

Go straight across with care to enter the old chestnut grove now planted with conifers. The track levels out shortly and there is a choice of routes. Go straight ahead along a good track past lofty Douglas fir trees to meet a forestry road. Continue left along it, passing a pond, to a junction.

Go right to continue along a forestry road that climbs up into the plantation. Ignore another bridleway going off left and continue to a crossroads. Leave the forestry road to go straight ahead further up into the woods. Listen out for the "Quip Quip" call of the crossbill, which may be glimpsed flying around the tree tops.

Route description (cont)

Climb to a sharp bend at a large chestnut tree above the stream, zig zag left then right to double back on a rather dark track that leads towards the stream again then climbs beside it to exit the woodland.

The route continues along the field edge then doubles back at a culvert to reach the farm *Nant-byr-uchaf*. Go through the farmyard to reach a somewhat hidden gate behind the top barn on the left. From this climb to the gate above to enter the forestry once more and climb steeply to reach the forestry road at a junction.

Go straight across then uphill, ignoring a forestry road that joins from the left to continue climbing, crossing a small stream. At a second junction at a crest, the hills beyond Tregaron come into view. Go straight ahead to exit the forestry once again, beside a barrier.

Turn left and follow the forestry edge on a good track with fine views. Climb to a junction at a summit go through a gate and descend, still keeping to the edge of the forestry to pass an ancient cairn.

The track leaves the forest edge at a corner by a dry stone wall to enter an enclosed lane that crosses fields to reach a junction. Go straight ahead, on tarmac now, to reach the road.

There is the option to cut the route short here by turning left. Rejoin where the bridleway goes left just before the row of houses at *Ysbyty Ystwyth*.

Otherwise turn right then left almost immediately on a bridleway that climbs between houses at *Ysguboriau*. Go over the crest then follow the two rows of beech trees which lead to a gate in the corner and enter the enclosed lane.

Follow this rather wet track at first, up to the road and go straight across with care to enter the bridleway opposite. Etched into the bedrock here are the ruts formed by the passage of countless cartwheels. Take care on this initial steep section.

Go on up, passing a disused quarry on the right from which were hewn the great flakes of stone used to form the boundary here. Three giant slabs are also used to cross a leat, which long ago carried water to power mining machinery.

The track joins another at a gate. Go left past a row of twisted hawthorns. On the right a lone *standing stone* marks the summit. Keep to the good track that follows the ridge towards the spoil heaps then traverses left (north) across them then on to a junction at the road end.

From here there is the opportunity to take in the summit of Trawsallt, but only if time and weather conditions permit. See separate route description.

Turn left towards *Ysbyty Ystwyth* below on the tarmac road, continuing left at a junction on the way. On reaching the village turn left, then fork right onto the minor road signposted *Ystrad Meurig*.

Route Description (cont)

At the end of the houses a bridleway goes in right. Go down beside Christmas trees to ford the stream beside a footbridge then follow the woodland edge before entering the plantation at a gate in the corner.

Cross another stream then go left along a path through the woods to emerge onto pasture once more. Follow this rough track with care across the boggy area beside the stream before rising onto drier ground and entering a shallow valley.

Climb up into this quiet sheltered valley with fine views behind of the route taken. There is a quarry up on the hillside to the right, to the left of this a gate leads into the forestry in a corner. Go in and climb to meet a forestry road and follow it right to meet another. Go right again and start descending. Ignore a junction on the left, then go straight on at a crossroads.

Further down, where a track forks left, diagonally into the woods the right of way drops steeply down right from the forestry road beside a stream. Follow this down to join the forestry road once again. Go right, on familiar territory now, to swing left at a sharp bend then on down to a junction and go left past the pond.

Go down right after the pond and return to the road crossing and continue past the forestry houses at Gwel Ystwyth and go down to ford the river once again.

Go right and follow a rather wet but level bridleway along the woodland edge. Emerge onto the road at a corner and turn right, then right once again below *Dolfor* farm and follow the road back to the start point.



Extension of this route to the Summit of Trawsallt 570m(SN 778:704)

The ride to this remote summit is a demanding addition to the circular route described and is achievable only by experienced riders when the days are long. There is the possibility of shortening the circular route to make the summit bid more feasible by using the Forestry Commission car park at Coed Tynybedw (SN 694:715). It has been included because of the fine views and contrasting scenery to that encountered in all the previous routes. It also links with bridleways leading towards Ffair Rhos and Poyrhdfendigaid.

A lone Sycamore stands near the road end, signifying past human habitation at this junction of the ways. From here the route enters wild inhospitable countryside and care should be taken in poor weather conditions.

Turn right to enter open countryside on a good track that follows the fence for a short while before heading off right towards the distant summit cairn.

Route Description (cont)

Keep to the more obvious track that leads towards the summit, passing spoil heaps before reaching a gate in a corner. Once through the gate there is a choice of routes. Keep to the original track, ignoring the wooden gate on the right (this bridleway leads to Blaen Marchnant, Teifi pools and Ffair Rhos).

Enter open access land to contour around a grassy knoll. The summit cairn is plain to see now. Continue to skirt the bog at the foot of steep slopes on the right before crossing the ridge to climb on its southern flank.

The track has been hewn out of the hillside, presumably to allow horse drawn carts to use the route. The gradient is steeper on the final slope leading to the summit. The public right of way divides and spreads in different directions around the summit cairn which is up to the left. For what purpose?

Presumably peat, a valuable slow burning aromatic fuel, was cut and stacked to dry here before being transported to the dwellings below.

The summit cairn is similar to those on the surrounding hills, prominent and permanent. Nearby, other circular mounds, cairns and hollows scatter the hillsides.

To the north and west the skyline is dominated by Plynlimon, The Tarrens, Cadair Idris and the LLeyn Peninsular. To the east the two prominent cairns of Drygarn Fawr can be distinguished. It is beyond this summit that the famed Man v Horse race is held annually from Llanwrtyd Wells. To the left of this in the far distance the Black Mountains can sometimes be seen. Further right the Brecon Beacons and right again, due south, the Carmarthen Fans or Black Mountain. To the south west the Mynydd Preseli catch the eye.

Return by the same route

Any queries concerning this route should be addressed to the Coast and Countryside Section, Penmorfa, Aberaeron SA46 0PA tel.01545 574141

Please remember to follow the Countryside Code.

Ystbyty Ystwyth to Trawsallt Summit Map 4B

