

Cross the crude stile and the stream further on via stepping stones then continue along the line of the buried pipeline to gain the track by the ford. Turn left along it as it zigzags in a northerly direction until it meets another. Follow this left (West) and climb gradually along a good track towards Bwlch yr Adwy.

Ignore the turning on your right leading to where a lone sycamore reveals the hidden dwelling of Ffosfudr, nestled in the hillside.

Cam Owen, nearer now on your right (north) was quarried to build the dam and reservoir of Nant y Moch and the Rheidol power station at the end of eight miles of tunnel.

At Bwlch yr Adwy there is a parting of the ways and our route follows the bridleway to the left which leads in south westerly direction, still rising slightly over the shoulder of one hill, through a gate as it traverses the head of the next valley. In thick mist the topography of the ground here - a series of parallel ridges heading westwards towards the sea - is confusing and care is needed. In good weather however a fine vista unfolds of the Dyfi estuary and the hills beyond.

At Bwlch y Maen go through a gate to enter the corner of the field on your right that is bordered by a fine wall. Ahead, look out for the perfectly circular earthwork down below, a prominent reminder of mans' presence in these hillsides thousands of years ago.

Follow the crest of the ridge for a short while then shoulder the hill ahead on its right to descend quickly back to the tarmac road. Turn left through a gate and follow the lane past houses, turf roofed and log out houses, a church a village hall to reach the junction, turn left back down to the river and the start place.

Published by the Ceredigion County Council Tourism Service,
Terrace Road, Aberystwyth SY23 2AG 01970 633063

For further information on holidays in Ceredigion contact:
Aberystwyth Tourist Information Centre, Terrace Road,
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion,
Wales SY23 2AG
Tel: 01970 612125

Email: AberystwythTIC@Ceredigion.gov.uk



Spirit of the Miners Walks

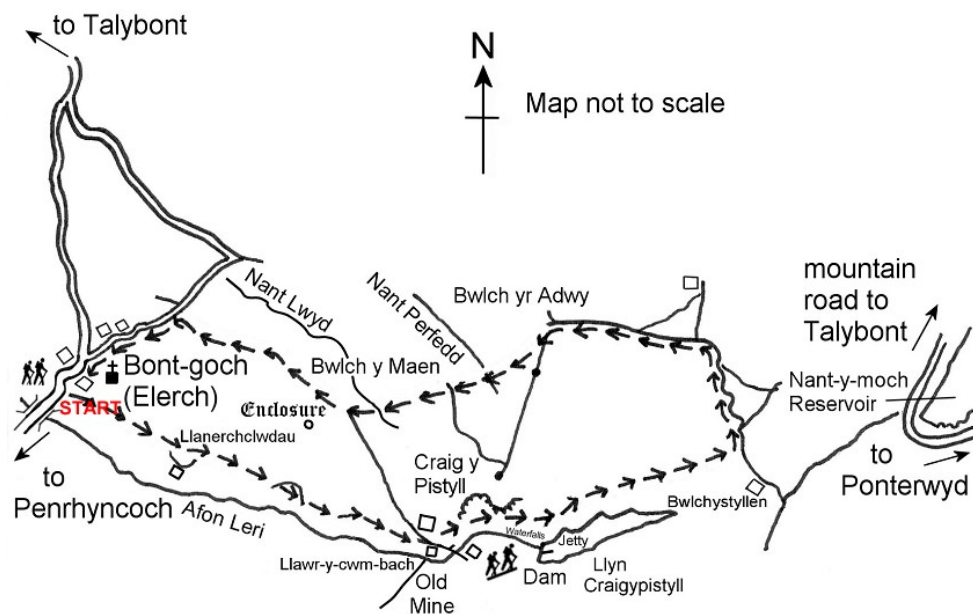


© RD Owen

CIRCULAR WALK: BONTGOCH

Distance & time:	11K / 7miles. 3hours
Terrain:	From a gentle riverside footpath over open fields a steep narrow path leads to remote, wild upland tracks
Suitable for:	Moderately fit walkers, in poor weather the upland plateau is exposed and navigation difficult
Grade:	This is a grade B walk graded according to the following criteria: A Strenuous: Ability to walk on rough terrain for up to 6 hours with a light rucksack B Moderate: Ability to walk on rough terrain for up to 4 hours with a light rucksack C Easy: Ability to walk on rough terrain for up to 2 hours with a light rucksack
Start & finish:	Bontgoch, near the river bridge (SN 684 863)
Refreshments:	None en route
Public Toilets:	None en route
Public transport:	Consult Aberystwyth Tourist Information Centre 01970 612125 or ring Traveline Cymru on 0870 608 2608. OS Explorer 213, Aberystwyth & Cwm Rheidol
Maps:	

CEREDIGION



In the village of Bontgoch (map reference SN 684 863), near the bridge, there is a pull-in near a footpath sign pointing east up a well defined track. Follow this as it corners and passes agricultural buildings and, shortly, a dwelling on the right. The track leads up into the valley following the north bank of the river below.

About 10 min. into the walk the right of way leaves the track and enters the field on the left through a gate and crosses the field, keeping the hedgerow to the left, up through a gate and on to rejoin the track.

Ignore a track off to your left on a crest and continue into the valley, the sides of which become steeper, inducing a feeling of remoteness, a prominent feature of this walk.

The track continues over ribs of Silurian slates which bear traces of mineral ore and evidence of old workings, adits and associated dwellings appear.

At another crest the path once again leaves the track to continue straight ahead, past a lone hawthorn at the base of a boundary, now very close to the river, which meanders along the boggy valley floor. This provides excellent habitat for snipe that probe the moist soil in the cover of the reeds and tussocks. Once again the path joins the track at a gate with a crude stile beside it.

On the left in a crag beside the track, above where the river has cut through one of these rocky ribs, is carved a benchmark. Cut benchmarks were used by the Ordnance Survey to record height, if the exact height of one is known then the exact height of the next can be found by measuring the difference in heights through a process of spirit levelling.

Turn the crest and the dwelling of Llawr-y-Cwm-Bach comes into view.

Continue past the barn taking time to admire the tranquillity and simplicity of the setting. The sycamore trees contrast with the conifer plantation at the head of the valley beyond.

Turn another crest and continue to the right of the ruin to descend carefully on a vague path down to and then along the fence below the spoil heap.

Cross a tiny brook to rejoin the track near a small stone and slate building with dates carved into the door. Note the chain hopefully positioned to protect the loose roof slates from the prevailing south westerly winds that scour the valley.

Make for the house in the forestry ahead, crossing an old leat but turn off left before reaching the footbridge and climb steeply up below the impressive crags overlooking the equally impressive waterfalls.

This prominent notch in the eastern skyline - as viewed from Aberystwyth - is the haunt of peregrine falcons and ravens.

Take care on the climb, the path is narrow and there is a steep drop below. In places it crosses unstable scree slopes. The effort is more than rewarded by the grandeur of the location as the gushing water below gouges relentlessly away at the bedrock, continually deepening the fissure.

It is important to concentrate on one's footing here and resist the temptation to gaze the falls while climbing - better to stop regularly to enjoy the view.

The path emerges onto a plateau and the landscape is now completely different. The summit of Plynlimon, the highest point in Ceredigion, climbs ahead of you.

The modern dam at Llyn Craigypistyll provides water for the population of Aberystwyth. However, glimpses of adits and other mine workings hint at much earlier intrusion by humans into this upland area.

Cradled beneath the summits of Pen Craig y Pistyll and Carn Owen to the north, and Drosgoll, with Llechwedd Mawr, Plynlimon and Y Garn ahead to the east in the distance, then the distinctive peak of Disgwylfa to the south, this sinuous lake boasts a truly remote setting.

The stunted gorse and heather bushes are left behind now and give way to tussocks of molinia grassland, so typical of upland Ceredigion.

Continue eastwards along the northern bank of the lake. Cormorants venture inland to feed here and Canada geese are often seen bobbing on the water. Ahead, beyond the end of the lake a few trees give evidence of a dwelling, this is Bwlichystyllen.