

# Discover Corwen's Countryside

**5 walks** revealing the **beauty, history and wildlife** of Corwen



# Explore

## Corwen's Countryside

Corwen shelters beneath the crags of the Berwyn Mountains, where the wide valley of the River Dee meets the Vale of Edeyrnion before winding its way eastwards towards Llangollen. From oak woodlands to old railways and historic remains, Corwen has something for everyone.

Delving into the history of Corwen finds tales of Owain Glyndwr, a medieval church of All Saints at Llangar, one of the most important Iron Age hillforts and a Christian community first documented in 1222.

An important coaching town on the A5 route from London to Holyhead, Corwen developed slowly until the mid 19th century when the arrival of the railway created a thriving market town. After the railway closed in the mid 20th century Corwen was already established as a strong business centre and popular visitor area. Today it remains a thriving local community nestled in spectacular scenery.

This leaflet has been designed to help you see some of the fascinating history and wildlife in Corwen's Countryside all of which can easily be accessed from convenient locations in and around the town.

**For further information contact Denbighshire Countryside Service**  
☎ 01352 810614 Email: loggerheads.countrypark@denbighshire.gov.uk  
[www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/countryside)

**For more walks in this area please visit [www.deevalleywalks.com](http://www.deevalleywalks.com)**  
For cycling routes visit [www.ridetheclwyds.com](http://www.ridetheclwyds.com) or [www.ridehiraethog.com](http://www.ridehiraethog.com)  
For information on where to stay and things to do visit [www.borderlands.co.uk](http://www.borderlands.co.uk) and [www.corwen.org](http://www.corwen.org)

*Although every effort has been made to make this booklet as accurate as possible, neither the authors or publishers accept any responsibility for resulting consequences.*



This leaflet has been grant funded by the Countryside Council for Wales



## Corwen Location Map



# CLODDIAD **CORWEN** CUTTING

## Corwen Cutting

The old railway line is best accessed from Corwen Leisure Centre. Follow the path down the old railway cutting, continuing across the country lane. The surfaced paths along the top of the railway cutting will take you on a short circuit back to the Leisure Centre.

**Parking:** Leisure Centre off B5437  
(Alternative parking in the Town Centre)

**Length:** 1 mile circular

**Time:** 30 mins

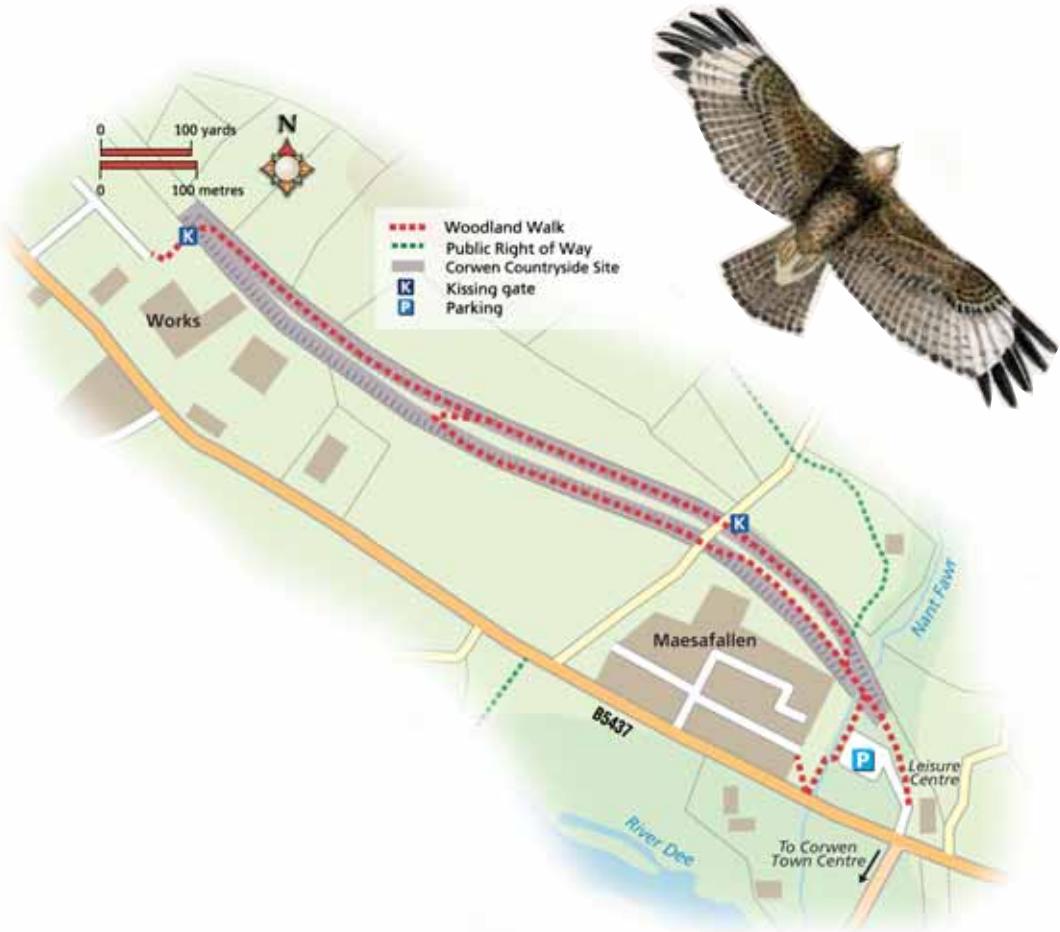
**Nearest facilities:** Leisure Centre

### The Old Railway line

This section of line brought the first train to Corwen, from Ruthin, in August 1864. There is no doubt that the arrival of the railway had a dramatic effect on the town as it brought with it new businesses, allowed farmers to trade with markets much further a field and marked the beginning of the end for the Drovers. In 1891 more than 50 people worked in jobs linked to the railway.



The woodland, mainly oak and willow, is now a haven for wildlife, particularly birds. Look out for linnet, greenfinch and goldcrest. Buzzards can often be seen circling on the warm thermals high above the cutting searching for prey.





# Caer Drewyn

Follow the Hillfort symbol for a 2 mile circular walk taking in Caer Drewyn and Corwen Cutting.

**Parking:** Leisure Centre off B5437  
(Alternative parking in the Town Centre)

**Length:** 2 mile circular

**Time:** 1-2 hours

**Nearest facilities:** Leisure Centre

The Hillfort was built in the Iron Age, sometime between 600 BC and 43AD on a hill overlooking Corwen. Unlike other hillforts in the area, Caer Drewyn doesn't have earthen banks and ditches but a large dry stone wall. Inside the hillfort there are remains of the stone foundations of some of the round houses. Stories

say that a beautiful woman, the sweetheart of the giant, Drewyn, milked her cows here.

The site has not been excavated. This is why there are still so many questions about its history.

*Why are there some mysterious circular 'holes' in some of the walls?*

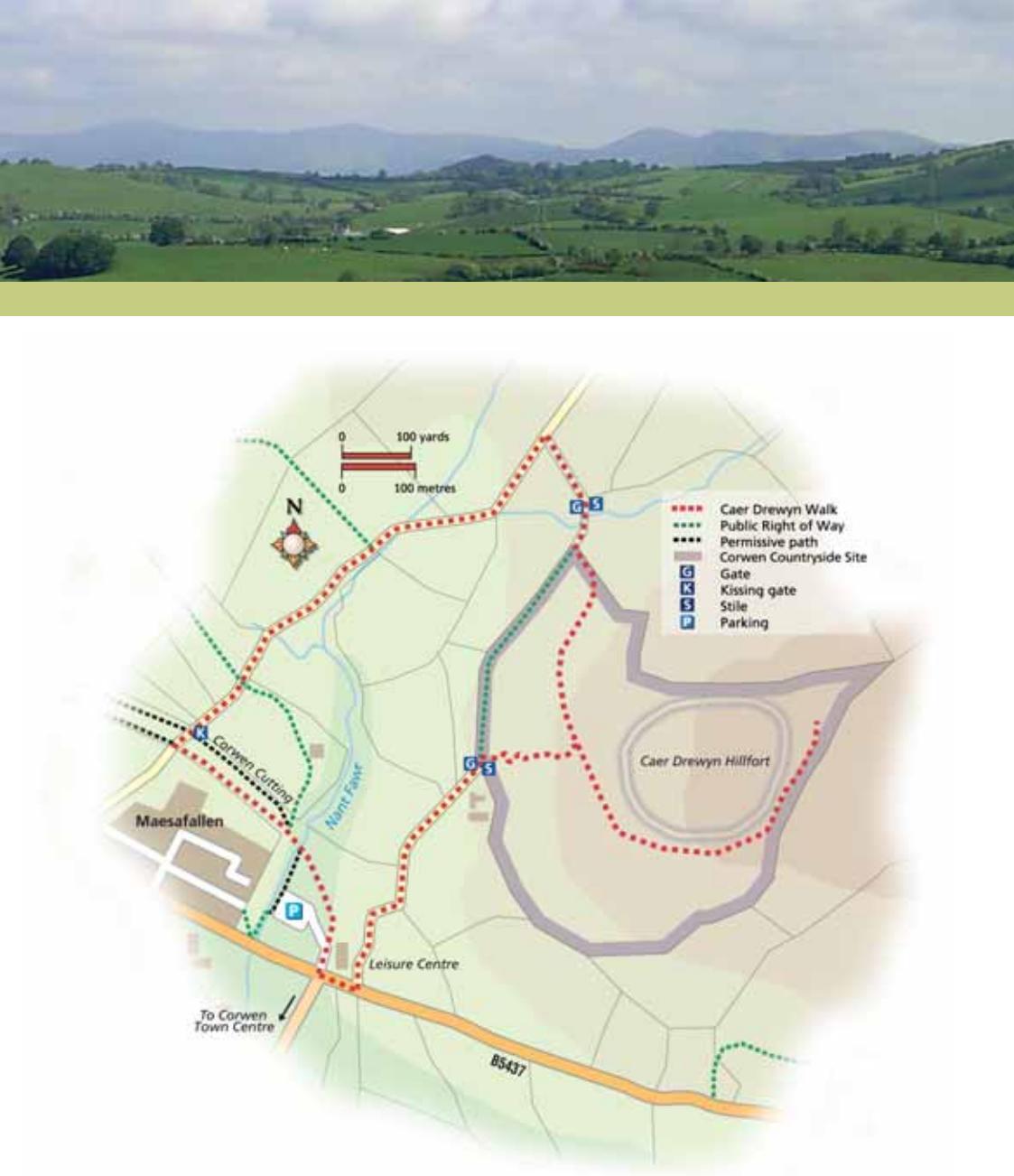
*Where did the stone come from?*

*There are no large quarries in the area and no sign of a ditch yet tons and tons of stone have been used!*

Caer Drewyn is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is protected as being an important archaeological site in Wales.

The stones are covered in places with very rare lichens which have developed over 2000 years on the rocky habitat of the walls.





# Pen y Pigyn

The Church, dedicated to St Mael and St Sulien, is steeped in history, and although it has been considerably reconstructed, there are many fittings from the early medieval period. Look in the grave yard for the unusual kneeling stones at the foot of several graves, the epitaph of an engine driver and the dagger mark in the stone lintel above the south doorway; legend says this was made by a dagger thrown by the Welsh hero Owain Glyndwr.

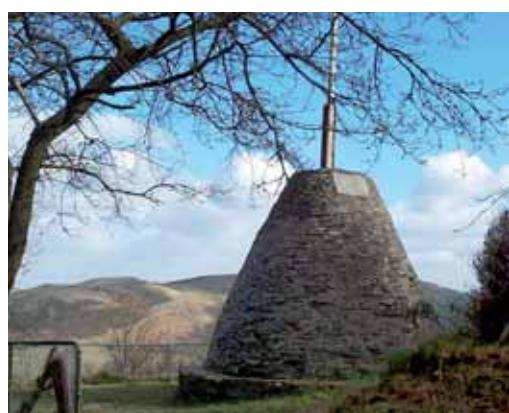
**Parking:** Main car park in Corwen Town. Head to the old manor house or the church to begin the walk.  
**Length:** 2 mile linear or circular walk  
**Time:** 1 - 2 hours  
**Nearest facilities:** Town Centre

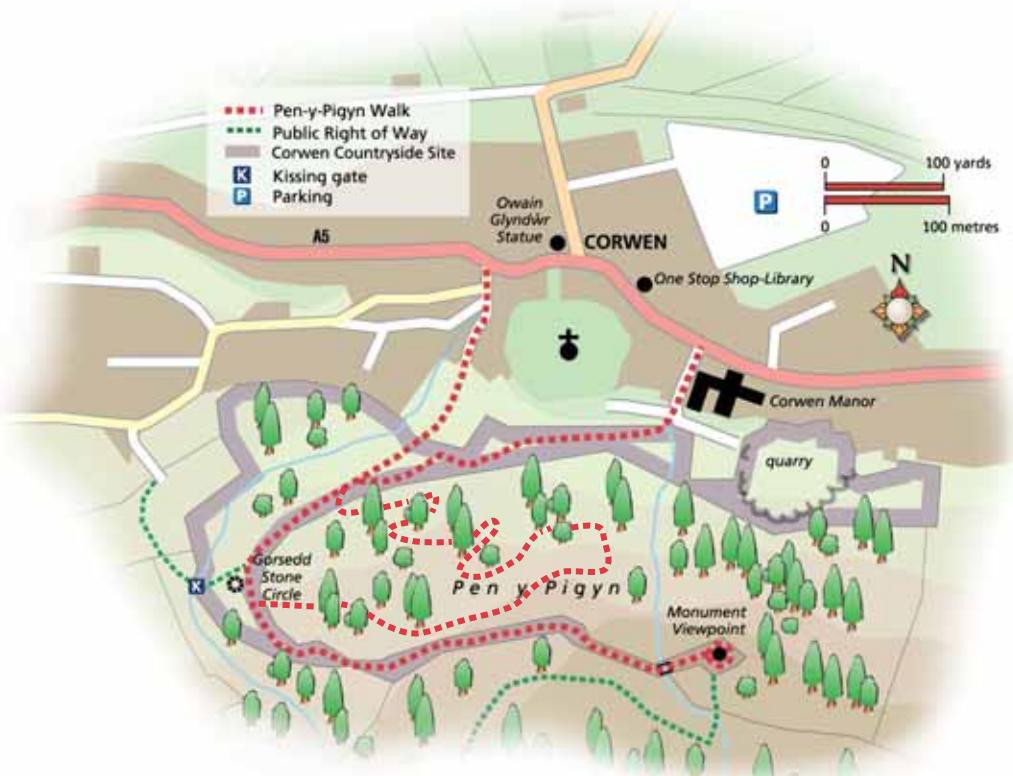
In the woodland, you can see the Gorsedd stone circle, constructed in 1919 for the druid opening ceremony of the National Eisteddfod.

The woodland here is mainly upland oak, which is rare and valuable, supporting a variety of wildlife.

The monument at the top of the woodland was built in 1863 to commemorate the

marriage of the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, and restored in 1911 for the investiture of his grandson. Red squirrel are known to be living in Cynwyd Forest, a couple of miles away, there have also been sightings of Britain's native squirrel here.





Follow the 'Dagger Trail', relax in the picnic area and enjoy the steady climb to the monument for fantastic views of

Corwen, the Dee Valley and the Vale of Clwyd.





# Corwen - Cynwyd Railway Line

Follow the gravel drive from the B4401 through Stamp to the old railway line; turn right to amble along the track bed enjoying the River Dee and ash woodland. You can continue along this path to get to Corwen but please keep to the line of the footpath through the private gardens. When joining the railway from Stamp, you can also turn left to walk to Cynwyd along the North Berwyn Way.

**Parking:** Layby on the B4401 near Stamp. Cross the road to begin the walk.  
**Length:** 2 mile linear  
**Time:** 1 - 2 hours  
**Nearest facilities:** Corwen Town Centre

To visit the inside of the church contact nearby Rug Chapel - also well worth a visit! Rug Chapel is situated 1 mile NW of Corwen off the B4401 and is open from April to September.

## Llangar Church

According to documents of 1730, the original name of the church was Llan-Garw -Gwyn, church of the white deer. The story says that a white deer, disturbed from the site of the church, ran off and its path established the boundaries of the parish.

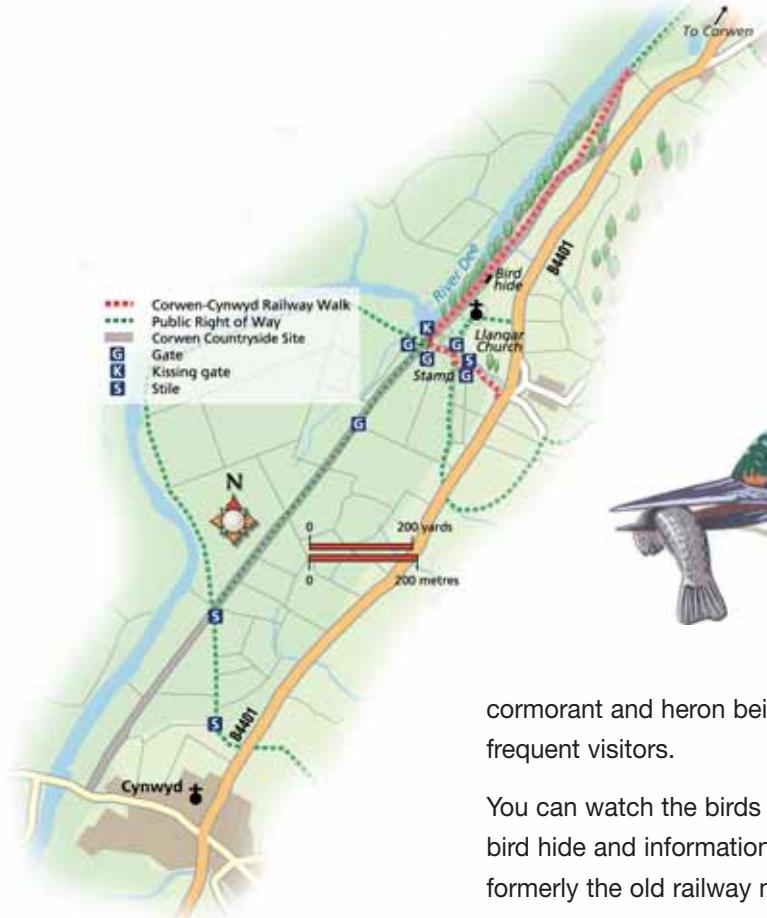
The earliest mention of the church is in 1291. It has been beautifully restored and includes wall paintings from the 14th Century.

## The Old Railway Line

This section of line, which brought the train from Corwen to Barmouth via Cynwyd and Bala, opened in 1866.

## Wildlife

The woodland and grasslands that have been allowed to flourish since the closure of the line in the 1960s now provides an important habitat for a range of wildlife. The River Dee is a home to otters, kingfishers and sandpipers with



cormorant and heron being frequent visitors.

You can watch the birds from the bird hide and information point, formerly the old railway man's hut.



# Gro Isa

An easy, level stroll along a grassy, waymarked path to an unusual area of land on the banks of the River Dee. Surrounded by farm land, Gro Isa's grassland provides a haven for birds, butterflies and small mammals.

**Parking:** Main car park in Corwen Town. Look out for the waymarker near the bowling green marking the beginning of the walk.

**Length:** 1½ mile linear walk

**Time:** 1 hour

**Nearest facilities:** Town Centre

Part of the boundary of Gro Isa is made up of large upright slate slabs - a method peculiar to the Corwen area and in particular the Rhug estate. It may be that this method of fencing was influenced by practices more common in Gwynedd. Imagine how much man power must have gone into the construction of this boundary, the stones are ½ the size again under the ground.

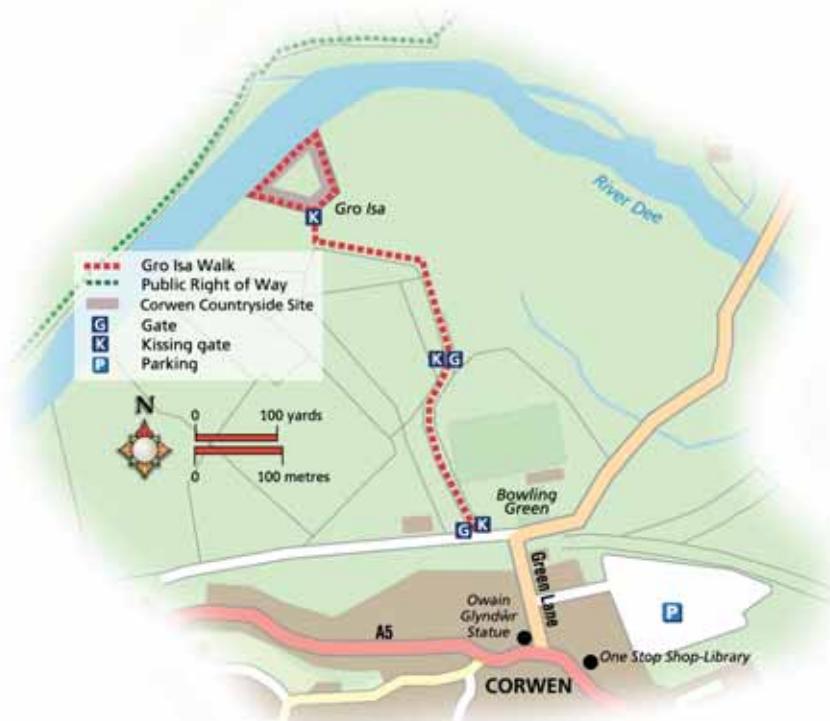
The site is now managed as a meadow

and for public enjoyment. The mix of grassland, trees and shrubs provide a valuable habitat. When in flower the gorse gives off a wonderful coconut scent.

The name Gro Isa refers to the gravel river bed, reflecting the character of this section of the River Dee. The Dee is renowned for salmon, brown trout and



lamprey and is also said to be one of the best rivers in Britain for grayling. Preferring swift running water, with deep currents and gravel beds, the presence



of grayling is a sure sign of clean water. The waters edge provides a home for otter and water vole.

The old refuse tip for Corwen is located

part way along the path behind the sports fields, made obvious by the cinders and interesting old bottles strewn across the trail.



# Corwen through the ages...

**6000 years ago**

Early farmers in the Neolithic period possibly built a Cursus, ceremonial routeway, near the river to the west of Corwen.

**4000 years ago**

Bronze Age people were burying their dead in barrows to the west of Corwen, although, where they were living is a mystery.

**2600 years ago**

The Iron Age hillfort of Caer Drewyn was built. Moel Fodig was used as a settlement at about the same time.

**2000 years ago**

The construction of Corwen Town itself started in the Roman period. To the west of Corwen at Penrhos is a Roman marching camp.

**1500 years ago**

The 'Dark Age' is becoming increasingly 'light' and it is possible that the Church, with its dedication to two 6th Century saints St Mael and St Sulien is a very early church dating before the 10th century AD. By the Medieval period, from about 1200 AD onwards, Corwen grew. There is a 12th Century cross shaft in the churchyard. The Motte in Rhug is medieval as is Ffynnon Sulien well. Plas Uchaf, to the west of Corwen is an important medieval house.

**600 years ago**

Owain Glyndwr was born nearby, taking his name from the village of Llansantffraid Glyndyfrdwy (now Carrog). He was declared Prince of Wales on September 16th 1400 marking the beginning of 15 years of war.

**150 years ago**

Corwen, as we see it today, developed largely from the 18th Century. Rug Chapel, the estate and the workhouse in the town developed as road and rail transport improved.

**Today**

Much of the beautiful countryside, including the archaeology, geology and wildlife which makes up the landscape, is so special that it is protected by law. The countryside around Corwen is home to otters, red squirrel, hundred of species of bird and much more.



- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

visit

[www.deevalleywalks.com](http://www.deevalleywalks.com)  
to download



Rural Walks in Denbighshire  
[www.clwydianrangeonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeonb.org.uk)