

Walk No.1 Wenvoe – “The Warlow Walk”

Wenvoe - Dinas Powys Circular

When walking this Circular, it is hard to believe that one is little more than 3 miles from the centre of Cardiff. Away from the two settlements that it links, the walk is absolutely rural in character, almost entirely made up of fields and attractive woods. Rather surprisingly the walk's total ascent just exceeds 900 feet. Don't be put off by this, for there are no really hard climbs. Conditions underfoot are good with well marked paths, tracks and short sections of country roads. The route commentary below starts at Wenvoe though obviously it could have started at Dinas Powys.

Distance 6¼ miles.

Map OS Explorer 151 Cardiff and Bridgend.

Parking Street parking at Wenvoe near Wenvoe Arms. A small car park area at Dinas Powys opposite Millbrook Rd.

Public Transport Cardiff - Barry train and bus services to Dinas Powys. Bus service 96 & 96A to Wenvoe.

Refreshments Good facilities at hostleries in both Wenvoe and Dinas Powys.

Toilets Public toilets are linked with refreshment points.

START Near Wenvoe Arms NGR ST122728 or in Dinas Powys at parking area NGR ST154716 or nearer golf course NGR ST151714.

This route was reviewed in October 2020, all direction notes were correct at that time. Continuous improvement of the footpath network may lead to changes in the footpath furniture and to minor changes to the described route.

The full route for this Circular Walk continues through the woodland along the floor of this valley. Continue along the tree-lined path with its occasional gates to a point where the main path bears left. You now diverge and swing right on a narrower path through two kissing gates (there are glasshouses over to your left). The path ascends a short, fairly steep hill to lead you into Dinas Powys golf course.

Follow the Right of Way that is fairly well signposted. Essentially you skirt the edge of the golf course keeping the hedge on your left. (Those starting the walk at Dinas Powys will join the route here.) Go past the club house and continue towards the houses along the side of the course before turning right round the third tee. The way marked route passes between the third and fourth holes and you climb up, bearing left, to pass the seventh tee and reach the eighth tee at a minor road. Now turn right and almost immediately you arrive at the One O'Clock Gate and its notice board. Follow this usually quiet road for over a mile to pass Beauville Farm on your left. Proceed down a stony track that bears to the right to reach Wrinstone House on your right. At the top of the hill turn left on the track to Wrinstone Farm 7.

*Pass the farmhouses to a gate in the far corner between two buildings. Once over the gate follow the waymarked direction downhill, to the metal gate in the field's bottom right-hand corner. *This field is still known as Church Field - testimony to the fact that through it ran the parish road at the side of which stood a church.* Beyond the next gate the field entrance is often flooded and muddy. Now bear right to cross the field towards a wide gap in the hedge; the Wenvoe transmitter aerial is a good sight line. Take the stile just to the left of the gap. Continue in the same direction to pass under a line of pylons and reach a stile. Cross it; and then three others in quick succession. Turn left over the bridge and take footpath straight ahead to another stile and continue along the left-hand side of the next field to a gate in its corner. Within 50 yards you reach another gate and once over this the path kinks left as you cross a brook. You then turn right and with the brook now on your right, walk on towards the main road, A4050, evidence of which you will soon see and hear. Ignore the rather prominent stile that you will see forward left but continue to the field's bottom right-hand corner. Here you turn right negotiating two stiles and a simple bridge before turning left into a short subway. This leads you, via Vennwood Close, into the heart of the village and your starting point. Note the ground surface can be slippery at the exit from the subway.

PLACES OF INTEREST

1 The disused railway line

This line, which ran from the Rhondda valley to Barry, was opened in 1888 and closed to passenger traffic in 1962. At its peak it carried a fully loaded coal train every 16 minutes. It was also the line that excited Sunday school valley youngsters to Barry Island on their annual seaside outing.

2 Cwrt yr Ala

Reputedly this house, or rather a former version, for there have been at least four houses on this site, had links with the Raleigh family, pre-Sir Walter Raleigh's days. Hence its name that is a Welsh version of Court of Raleigh. A fine Italianate villa version was built in 1805 by Robert Rous. In 1937 the property was bought by Sir Herbert Merrett, Chairman of Powell Duffryn and of Cardiff City. He demolished the villa and built the current house in 1939.

3 The Salmon Leaps

This attractive sequence of weir dammed ponds and their mini cascades along the Wrinstone Brook was developed by the Rous family in the 19th century.

4 Michaelston le Pit

During the late 1940s when Cardiff City FC was a club on the rise, some of its best-known players, such as Alf Sherwood, were housed here by Sir Herbert Merrett. It must have seemed to them that they were in the depths of the countryside, yet as the crow flies, they were barely 2 miles from Ninian Park.

5 Cwm George

This steep-sided valley, with extensive woodland, is managed by the Woodland Trust. Shaped by melt water at the end of the last Ice Age, the gorge has an Iron Age hill fort on the hill to the east, which was occupied up until the early medieval period.

6 Dinas Powys Castle

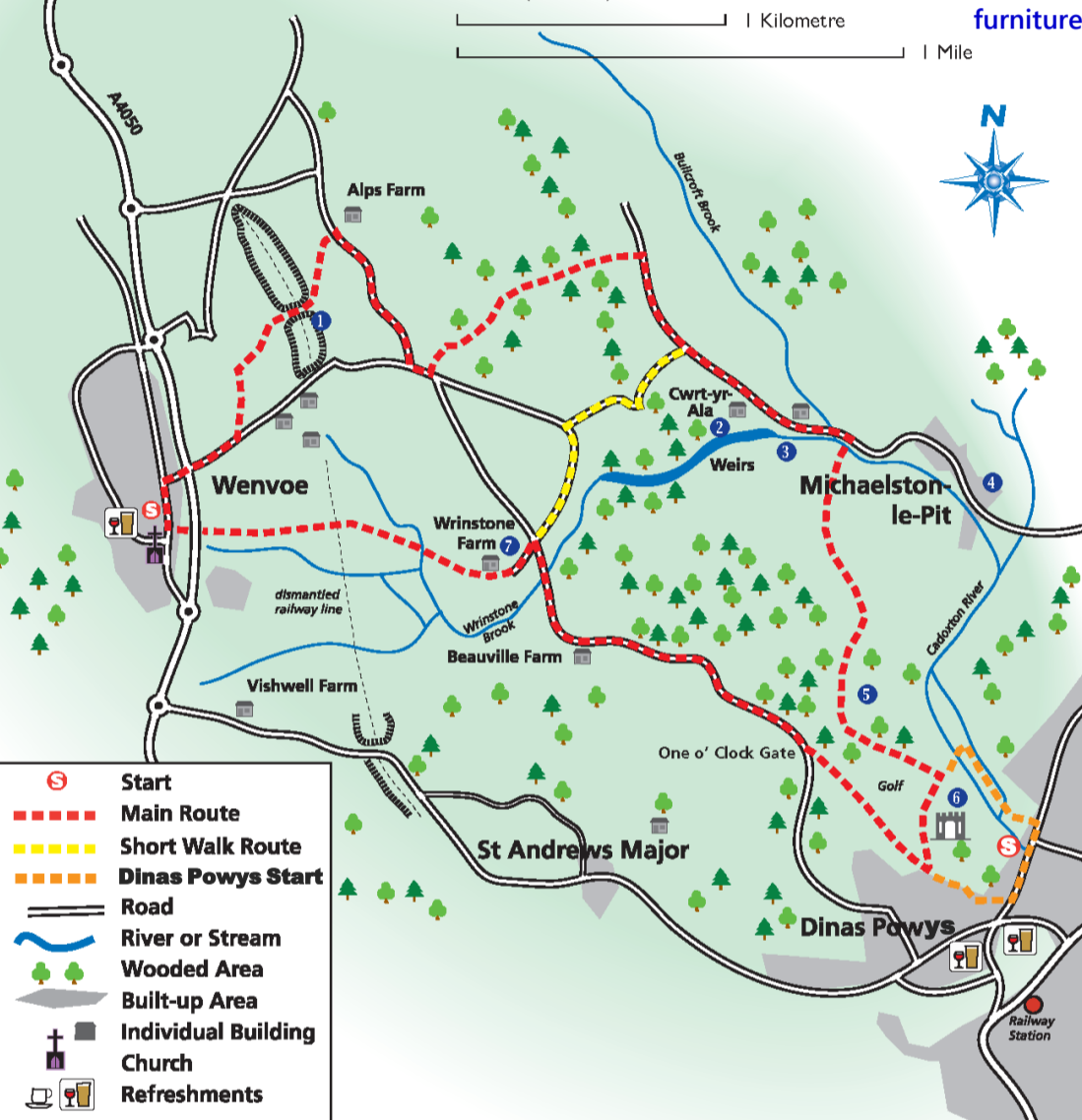
Much of this castle is in a ruinous state. There is some evidence of the early Norman Keep and Curtain Wall of the 12th century.

7 Wrinstone Farm

This 18th century building occupies the site of a 12th century hamlet. This comprised a manor house, chapel and up to 20 houses. By 1878 all had disappeared except the farm house.

Culverhouse Cross

SCALE (APPROX):



THE ROUTE

With the Wenvoe Arms on your left walk northwards and turn right into Station Road West. Take the footbridge over the busy main road to enter Station Road East. Proceed along this road until just past Springfield House. Here turn left off the road to cross a stone stile that takes you into a field. Bear right in this field to reach a wooden stile. Cross it and continue, with a hedge on your immediate right, to reach another wooden stile. Turn right over this and cross the ensuing field towards a stile that stands out in the far corner. Now turn right over an old railway bridge 1, through a gate and then bear left, gently uphill, to a way-marked gap in a field boundary. At this point, walk uphill to a stile you will see just to the right of a building (Alps Farm).

This stile gives on to a quiet road. Turn right and walk along it for about ½ mile, gradually downhill, to a road junction. Bearing left, you soon reach a stile on your left (just beyond a line of pylons). Cross it and continue, gently uphill, with woodland on either side, along a grassy track. Keep on in the same direction, broadly following the line of pylons, through a gate, over a stile, and as you start to descend on a clear path through a stretch of deciduous woodland. This takes you to a third stile where you emerge on to the green pastures of the Bullcroft valley. You quickly reach a track running at right angles to the path you are on. Turn right and continue

along this track, which soon becomes a surfaced minor road, for nearly ¾ mile. (A short walk variant (4 miles long) to the full walk: En route you will pass a track coming in from the right. Take this track and follow it to reach a Y junction after just under ½ mile. Here you turn left. The track will now lead you to Wrinstone Farm. Once you reach Wrinstone Farm follow the directions given after the asterisk* below to return to Wenvoe.)

Continuing on the full walk you will pass on your right, in sequence, Court House, Cwrt yr Ala 2, and as you walk downhill the Salmon Leaps on Wrinstone Brook 3. As the slope bottoms out you turn right over a bridge crossing what has become the Cadoxton River. (Don't turn right but carry straight on if you wish to explore the village of Michaelston le Pit 4. It is less than ½ mile along the road.)

You now follow a well-defined track between open fields for almost ½ mile to enter the wooded area of Cwm George 5. The woods are now under the aegis of the Woodland Trust and numerous walks have been created in them. These are shown on notice boards that you pass. (Should you wish to take a shortcut up the valley side on your right, using one of these walks, to reach the so-called 'One O'Clock Gate', consult the Information Board route map.)