

Pendre Station Walk

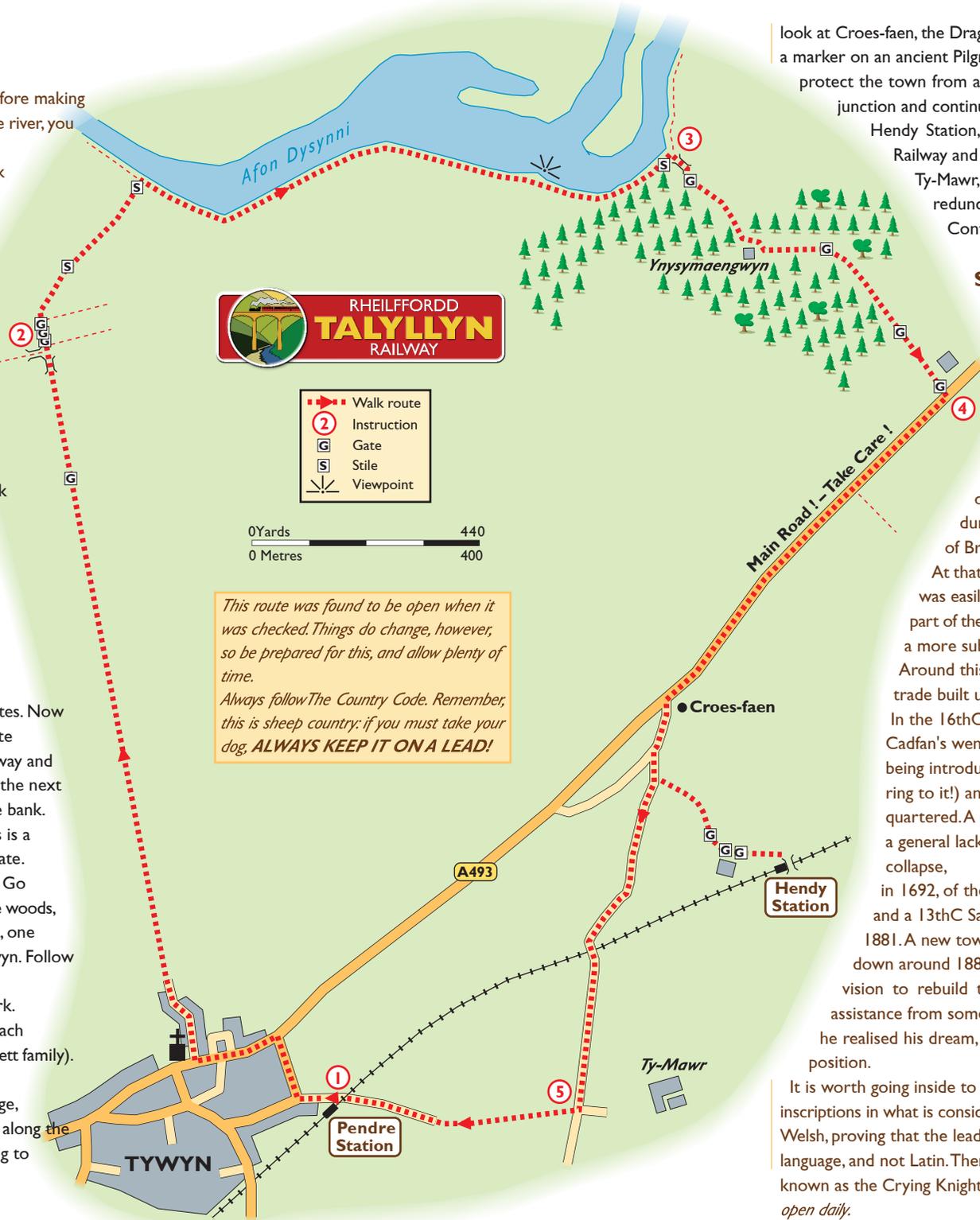
An easy, level walk which visits St Cadfan's church before making a bee-line for the Afon Dysynni. After a walk beside the river, you turn inland, passing a fine dovecot and what remains of Ynysmaengwyn, once a stately home. A short walk along the road brings you to the ancient Croes-faen, where you turn left to either return to the start along quiet lanes, or make a short diversion to Hen-dy Station and a ride back in the train. The walk is less than 4 miles. Allow about 3 hours.

1 Leave Pendre Station and turn LEFT. At the cross roads turn RIGHT along Brook Street. When you reach the main road turn LEFT, passing the Corbett Arms Hotel and the Cinema on your right. Turn RIGHT along Gwalia Road, after visiting the church of St Cadfan. Follow the road, which bends to the right, becomes a single track and continues across flat reclaimed land. Continue ahead when the tarmac ends and the view along the valley begins to open. Go through a gate and continue ahead. Gradually the prominent dark outcrop of Birds' Rock comes into view on your right. You reach a foot-bridge on your left and a gate ahead.

2 Go through kissing-gate ahead, and the next two gates. Now DO NOT turn sharp right, but follow the signed route HALF-RIGHT towards a gateway. You reach the gateway and stile (broken). Go through and veer RIGHT towards the next gateway and (broken) stile. Go through and climb the bank. Turn RIGHT to walk with the water to your left. This is a popular area for local anglers. You reach a stile by a gate.

3 Cross this stile and turn RIGHT over a footbridge. Go through a metal gate and follow the track, initially beside woods, and later beside a wall. You pass a handsome dovecot, one of the few remaining intact buildings of Ynysmaengwyn. Follow the track through ruined farm buildings. Go through a gate and follow the lane ahead, beside a caravan park. Go through gates and finally through metal gates to reach the road (elephant motif on gate-posts – badge of Corbett family).

4 Turn RIGHT, cross the road and walk along the verge, TAKING GREAT CARE on this main road. Continue along the road until you reach a LEFT turn. Follow this, stopping to



look at Croes-faen, the Dragon Stone, just over the hedge. This was once a marker on an ancient Pilgrim's Way: in legend it was placed here to protect the town from a ferocious dragon! Turn LEFT at the next junction and continue. (If you wish, you can turn left to reach Hendy Station, for a train ride back.) Cross the Talyllyn Railway and continue. When you reach the entrance to Ty-Mawr, turn RIGHT beside a handsome, but now redundant, step-stile, and walk along the track. Continue to return to Pendre Station

St Cadfan's Church

A couple of hundred yards north-west of the present St Cadfan's Church, under the floor of a garage, there is an ancient well. It was close to this, in the 6thC, that Cadfan arrived from Llanillyd Fawr to found a school, and follow a simple life of study, hospitality and prayer. This was part of the general growth of the Celtic church during the latter part of the Roman occupation of Britain, and the years which followed.

At that time Cadfan's church was built of wood, and was easily destroyed during Viking raids. Becoming part of the Augustinian order, it was decided to construct a more substantial building during the mid-12thC. Around this building a town slowly grew, and a shipping trade built up.

In the 16thC, during the reformation, a vicar from St Cadfan's went to London to campaign against changes being introduced from Europe (this has a contemporary ring to it!) and was, for his trouble, hung, drawn and quartered. A time of hardship followed the Civil War, and a general lack of cash for maintenance led to the collapse,

in 1692, of the church tower. This buried both the altar and a 13thC Sanctus Bell, which was not recovered until 1881. A new tower was constructed in 1736, but it was taken down around 1880 when the vicar, the Rev. Titus Lewis, had a vision to rebuild the church as it once was. With financial assistance from some rich local families, including the Corbetts, he realised his dream, rebuilding the tower in its original central position.

It is worth going inside to see the Cadfan Stone: on its four faces are inscriptions in what is considered to be some of the oldest written Welsh, proving that the leading families of the time used their native language, and not Latin. There are also fine medieval stone carvings: one, known as the Crying Knight, 'weeps' during wet weather. *The church is open daily.*