



GREAT ORME

historical trails

- Coastal views
- Historical sites
- Close to Llandudno

INTRODUCTION

The archaeology and history of the Great Orme show that, for many thousands of years, the area has attracted the interest of people. From archaeological finds, we can piece together the history of this headland and discover more about the activities of our predecessors from the Stone Age up until recent times. There are currently more than 400 known sites of archaeological and historical interest on the Great Orme. Most of these sites lie within the area which is managed as a Country Park, and several of these sites are of national and international importance.

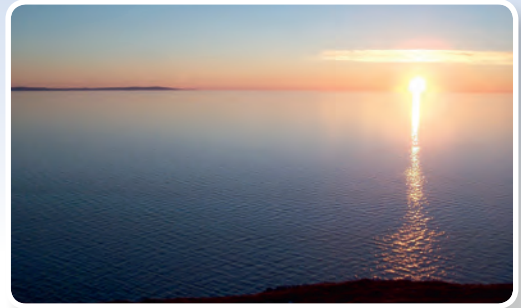
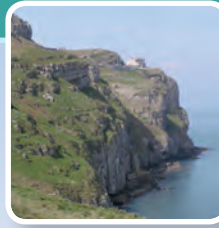
If you are visiting the Great Orme today, you are just one of over half a million visitors that this remarkable headland receives each year. However, it is worth remembering those who lived and worked here before you. While you are walking the historical trails, stop to think about the miners who toiled underground here all that time ago or the many shipwrecks that happened around the coast. You will soon realise what a small part we all play in the history of time.

This is one in a series of leaflets produced by Conwy Countryside Service. For more information on walks in the County Borough of Conwy visit: www.conwy.gov.uk/countryside or phone: 01492 575290 / 01492 575200

⬅️ **Please follow The Countryside Code**
Respect • Protect • Enjoy



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Walk Information

Distances:

Route A – 4.2 miles (6.7 kilometres).

Route B – 3.2 miles (5.2 kilometres).

Route A & B combined – 6.6 miles (10.7 kilometres).

Times: Route A – 2½ hours.

Route B – 2 hours.

Route A and B combined – 4 hours.

Terrain: The ground is uneven, with steep hills (both uphill and downhill) on grassy paths, tracks and roads.

Dogs: Please keep dogs under close control at all times.

Map: Outdoor Leisure 17.

Start and finish grid reference: Great Orme Summit car park
SH765 833.

Refreshments: These are available at the Summit Complex café or at the Rest and Be Thankful café on the Marine Drive. Both are open daily from Easter until the end of October, and on some weekends out of season.

All times and distances are rough estimates.

Be prepared. Wear strong walking shoes or boots. Weather conditions at the summit can be very different from down in the town, so bring warm waterproof clothing, even in summer.

Check the weather at :

www.metoffice.gov.uk

Be aware of changeable weather conditions.



HOW TO GET HERE

By train: For information about trains to Llandudno, please phone the national enquiry line on 08457 484950 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk.

By bus: Services to the summit of the Great Orme depend on what time of year it is. For information on services, please phone Traveline Cymru on 0870 608 2 608 or visit www.traveline-cymru.org.uk.

You can also phone the Public Transport Enquiry Line on 01492 575412.

By tram: The Great Orme Victorian Tramway runs from the foot of the Orme to the summit between March and November. For information, phone 01492 879306 or visit www.greatormetramway.co.uk.

By car: Follow the A470 into the centre of Llandudno. Go up the main street, straight through the roundabout, and follow the brown sign to the copper mines up the narrow street. Continue up this road all the way to the top. There is a pay-and-display car park at the summit.



Looking towards Bishop's Quarry from the summit.

ROUTE

A

Go to the entrance of the summit car park and follow the road down. Keeping the area of heathland to your right, leave the roadside and head in towards the quarry.

1 This is Bishop's Quarry, part of the land granted to the Bishop of Bangor after Edward II became the first Prince of Wales in 1307. The limestone rock you can see here formed from the remains of sea creatures that lived in the Carboniferous period between 300 and 350 million years ago, when what is now North Wales lay beneath a shallow tropical sea. If you look among the loose rocks, you will see the fossils of many of these creatures. You are most likely to find fragments of brachiopods (shelled animals like mussels), but there are also many fossils of crinoids (these were stalked animals related to starfish), and reef-forming corals. As the Great Orme is looked after as a country park and nature reserve, please do not remove or break open any fossils during your visit, but enjoy looking at them.



Ffynnon Gogarth.

Come back out of the quarry and turn left, keeping the bottom of the heathland to your right. Go to the interpretation board at the corner of the stone wall surrounding the farmland.

2 When the copper mines got nearer to sea level, some form of mechanical pumping became necessary. The engine used was known as a Tom and Jerry – it was fed by water from Ffynnon Gogarth, a spring which is just below you. The interpretation board shows how the engine worked. Thomas Jones of Newmarket, Flintshire, the agent of the new mine from 1827, is credited with installing the engine.



Looking down Monk's Path in early summer; the yellow flowers are rock roses.

Follow the wall along for about 600 metres, keeping it to your right, until you come to two nature-trail markers fairly close together. These will direct you downhill. Follow this path down until it joins up with the Marine Drive.

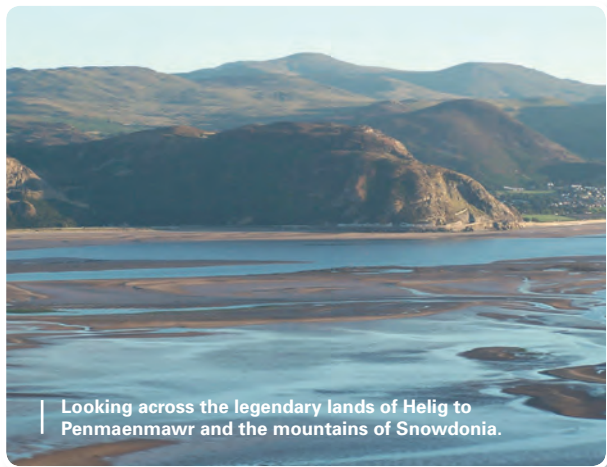
3 This is Monk's Path, which is said to have been used by monks many years ago. It is said that this well-trodden pathway is always a more lush green than its surroundings because of the monks' holy feet and the holy water they spilled along the route.

The land under the sea between the Orme and the mountains may be part of the legendary lands of Helig, Lord of Tyno, which it is thought were flooded in the 6th century. Legend says that Helig's daughter was in love with a commoner. She could not marry him, as he did not wear a gold collar as a nobleman would. One day the young man came across a nobleman and killed him, stealing his gold collar. The daughter ordered him to return and bury the body to hide the evidence of his wicked deed.

As he dug the grave, he heard a voice say, 'Revenge will come!' He told Helig's daughter and she sent him back, saying that if he heard the voice again he must ask when revenge would come. This he did. As he heard the voice once more, he asked, 'When will it come?' It replied, 'In the time of your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.' Hearing this, the daughter said, 'Oh, we shall be dead by then!'

So they married, and lived long enough to see their great-grandchildren. The voice that spoke of revenge had long been forgotten. However, one night when a great feast was being held at Llys Helig, a maid went to the cellar to fetch wine and found the cellar half full of sea water. The maid fled with her sweetheart, and by the morning the whole of Llys Helig had vanished.

Over the years the legend of Llys Helig has inspired many expeditions with the hope of finding some historical evidence.



Looking across the legendary lands of Helig to Penmaenmawr and the mountains of Snowdonia.



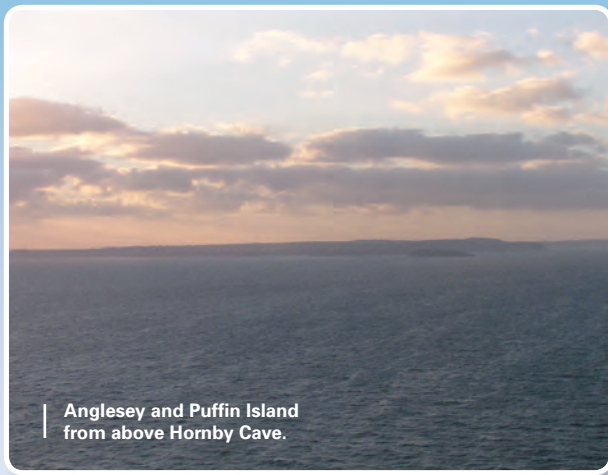
The ruins are all that remain of the Bishop's Palace

When you reach the Marine Drive, turn right, crossing over to the other side to walk on the pavement.

4 You will see many large houses below you. In the grounds of one of the first ones, where the garden meets the beach, there are some ruins covered in ivy. These are the ruins of a building that was probably built by Bishop Anian I in the late 13th century, and may have been a present from Edward I after Anian had christened his son the Prince of Wales. In 1291, the manor was recorded as being worth £4.1s.8d. a year (about £3000 today) and it also included a mill. However, in the survey carried out in 1352 by the Black Prince, son of Edward III, the records say that the windmill was only worth two shillings as it was broken – it would have been worth four shillings if it were repaired! The Bishop's Palace was probably destroyed by fire. This may have happened during Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion in 1402. The Church in Wales sold the land in 1891 and now the ruins stand within privately owned grounds.

Carry on along the Marine Drive, admiring the view of the mountains. Keep an eye on the area below you to the left. Once you have passed the houses, you will be looking down on a part of the Country Park known as the 'Gunsite'. Continue to the interpretation panel overlooking this area.

5 The Gunsite area was used by the Royal Artillery Coastal Artillery School during the Second World War. It was moved from its historic site at Shoeburyness, Essex to the Great Orme after the school had carefully considered many sites on the west coast of Britain. The Great Orme was chosen because there were suitable places to anchor ships not far away in the Menai Straits, and there were good conditions for directing ships by radio. In true military fashion, the layout of the site was planned in only one day, using toy balloons bought from a local shop as site markers. The school transferred in September 1940 and was running from the 24th of that month. As well as a gunnery wing, wireless and searchlight wings were set up in 1940. Officer cadet courses began in 1941 and reached a peak in 1942, when 150 officers, 115 cadets and 445 other ranks could be taken in, and up to 14 courses could be run at any time. At the end of the war, the arms and equipment were removed and the land returned to Mostyn Estates, who owned most of the headland. The buildings became derelict and most were demolished in the mid-1950s. Looking down at this area now, it is hard to imagine gun crews and military trainees going about their work. The most common human activity in this area today seems to be an afternoon stroll.



Anglesey and Puffin Island from above Hornby Cave.

Continue along the Marine Drive, gradually bearing right and leaving the gunsite behind. Soon after the road levels out you will come to a farm gate in the wall – the flat area through the gate is a fine place to rest and admire the views. This is the far north-western point of the Great Orme.

6 Hornby Cave is far below you, named after a ship called the Hornby which was wrecked here on New Year's Day in 1824. The waters killed the whole crew, except for the lookout, Mr John Williams, who was thrown from the rigging to the cliff top. He stayed on the Great Orme and became a Llandudno copper miner, and was a famous local figure who enjoyed telling his tale of survival. The Hornby was just one of many shipwrecks off the coast of the Great Orme.



Mare's Well on Marine Drive.

Continue along the Marine Drive until you see a sign on the right-hand side saying 'Ffynnon Gaseg'.

7 Ffynnon Gaseg translates as Mare's Well, and is one of many wells scattered around the headland. It is not clear how this well got its name, although once Marine Drive was created it was probably used as a drinking trough for horses. The natural springs which feed the wells have provided a constant source of fresh water, and this has been a major factor in attracting people to live on the Orme since Stone Age times.



The view from Pen Trwyn along the east side of Marine Drive.

Continue along the Marine Drive, passing a concrete road on your right. You will return to this later after a detour to see the Great Orme's Head Lighthouse.

8 Before the Marine Drive road, there was a dangerous footpath here called Cust's Path. Reginald Cust, a London barrister and trustee of Mostyn Estate, asked for it to be made in 1856. He charged a penny toll for the upkeep of the path. In 1868, Prime Minister William Gladstone walked the path, and complained that it was so dangerous he had to be blindfolded to be led along some particularly difficult sections. So in April 1869, the town commissioners ordered £10 of ratepayers' money to be spent providing railings along the worst parts. In 1872, the Great Orme's Head Marine Drive Co. Ltd issued their plans for a £14,000 conversion of Cust's Path into the current road. The road was completed in 1878.

The tolls were as follows:

- Pedestrians 1d
- Saddle horses 3d
- Cyclists 2d
- Carriages 6d for each horse

The Marine Drive is still a toll road, now managed by Conwy County Borough Council.



The lighthouse.

Not far beyond the Rest and Be Thankful café you will see the lighthouse on the left below the Marine Drive, a white, square two-storey building.

9 Standing on 300-foot-high cliffs, the Great Orme's Head Lighthouse lamp could be seen far out to sea. It was designed and built by Mr Lyster, the engineer-in-chief to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. The light was first shown on 1st September 1862, using paraffin wick lamps. These lamps were replaced in 1923 by dissolved acetylene mantle lamps, producing a light that was equal to 13,000 candles. It was reported that the light from the lighthouse could be seen from 24 miles away. From March 1985, the lighthouse was no longer used and was put up for auction. Since then it has been used as unique bed and breakfast accommodation. The original optic (lens) was removed and is now on show, still in working order, in the Country Park Visitor Centre near the summit.

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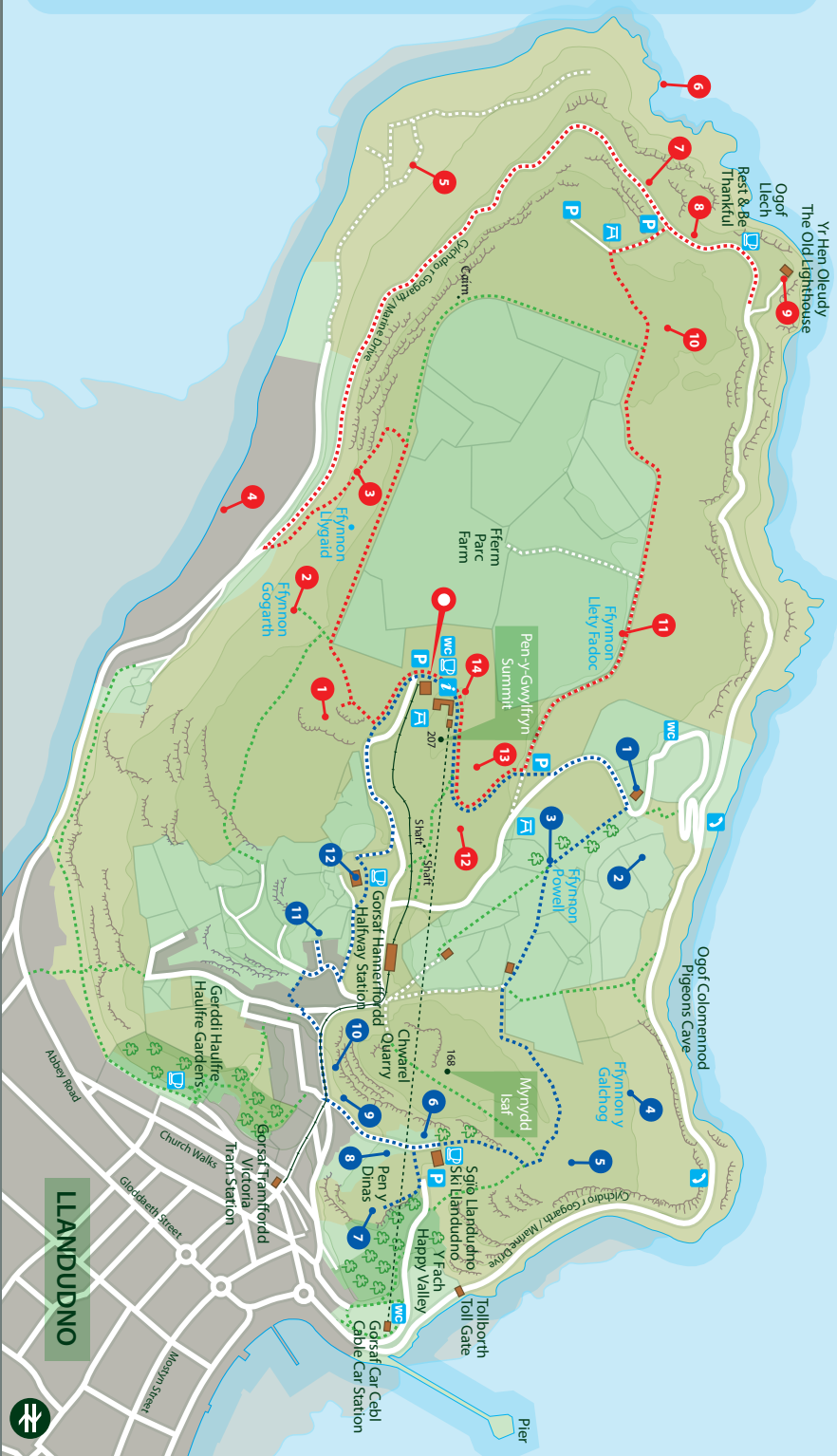
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|--|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Parc Gwladig
Country Park | | Dechrau'r Daith
Start of Walk |
| | Môr
Moor | | Talrh A
Route A |
| | Ynys
Sea | | Talrh B
Route B |
| | Tweed
Sand | | Trafalgar
Way |
| | Caeu
Fields | | Car Cabel
Cable Car |
| | Caeu
Fields | | Canolfan Ymwelwyr
Visitor Centre |
| | Caeu
Fields | | Toiletau
Toilets |
| | Tref
Town | | Safleoedd Picnic
Picnic Sites |
| | Adeliedau
Buildings | | Lunhaeth
Refreshments |
| | Ffordd
Roads | | Ffon Agyrring
Emergency Telephone |
| | Trac
Track | | |
| | Llybryau Eail
Other Footpaths | | |
| | Parco
Parking | | |



500m

1 km

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YR OES CERRIQ
STONE AGE
10,000 - 3000 BC

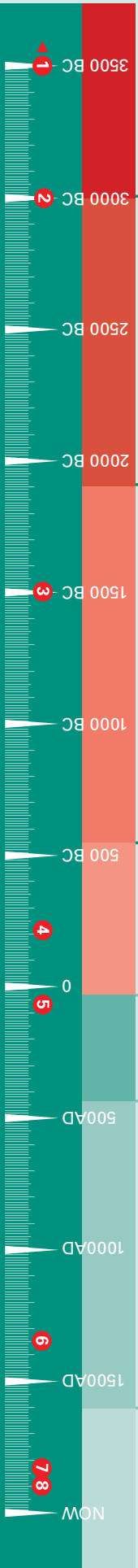
YR OES CERRIQ NEWYDD
NEW STONE AGE
3000 - 1900 BC

YR OES EFYDD
BRONZE AGE
1900 - 550 BC

YR OES
HAEARN
IRON AGE
550 BC - 43 AD

Y CANOL OROEDD
MIDDLE AGES
500 - 1600

AMYR FODERN
MODERN ERA
1600 - TODAY



1 • Yr Oes Ia ddiwethaf i wedd gadael mewn cwmwd rhwngfwr 10,000 mlynedd yn ô
• Last Ice Age left glacial erratics 10,000 years ago

2 • Cornlech
• Cornish

3 • Dechrau mwynpoddio copr
• Copper mining began

4 • Bryngaer Pen Dinas
• Pen Dinas hill fort

5 • Tiro'n a adellidur eglwys gyntaf
• Tiro built the first church

6 • Ffermio canoloesol
• Medieval farming

7 • Adelidau gofudy
• Lighthouse built

8 • Y geifr yn cyrraedd
• Arrival of the goats



Glacial erratic.

Turn around and return to the concrete road you passed a little earlier. Go up this road to the point where it starts to bear right and level out a little, and take the path left through the heathland. Follow this path until you reach the high stone wall surrounding the farmland. Keeping the wall to your right, follow it along. To your left, you will see that the limestone rocks here form some curious shapes.

10 Some of the rocks stand on their points in the ground. Some are sitting on top of another rock. These were left behind by glaciers and are known as erratics. They act as a reminder of the last Ice Age which played a big part in shaping the Orme as we see it today. Some of these rocks have been given names over the years, including the Mother and Daughter and the Free Trade Loaf. The Free Trade Loaf was named because it looks like a small cob loaf, and is thought to have been a place where people may have met to strike bargains in years gone by. This is also an area of the Orme in which many people have reported feeling uneasy, especially after dark!



The view from the track to St Tudno's church.

So pushing on before it becomes dark, follow the path alongside the wall. Go up a small hill to reach a gate – walk around the side of the gate and continue along the track, keeping the wall to your right, until you see a sign on the right saying 'Ffynnon Llety Fadoc/Roman Well'.

11 The Welsh name means 'the well of the abode of Madoc'. Madoc of Gloddaeth and his father Madoc ap Iorwerth Goch of Creuddyn lived during the 13th century, and the Great Orme is thought to have been their deer ranch. The well is known in English as the Roman Well, though there is little evidence that the Romans visited the Great Orme and no remains of a Roman settlement have been found here. However, some Roman coins have been found around the headland, and there is some evidence that the well was used for washing copper ore, possibly in Roman times.

Continue along the track. You will pass an interpretation board which says 'Religion and ritual in the landscape' and has information on the area to your left. Before you reach the road, you will see a wooden waymarker post on your right. At this point you can choose to finish route A and return to the summit or continue to walk route B. If you want to walk route B also, turn to section B and join at directions 'To St Tudno's Church'.

To finish route A, turn off to your right, following the walking man waymarker uphill. Continue to follow the waymarkers, but before you swing right onto a well-walked path to the summit, glance to the land on the left by the foot of the cable-car towers.

12 You should be able to make out an area of hollows in the ground. This area is known as Bryniau Poethion, the hot hills. In 1849, William and Joseph Jones came searching for copper, and found some very close to the surface. When word of their discovery got around, many other prospectors came and dug for copper here, leaving behind the hollows that we see today. This area is sometimes called 'California Cymru' (the Welsh California), as the copper rush here was happening at about the same time as the Californian gold rush, though not on quite the same scale!

The cable car was built in 1969. It takes visitors from the Happy Valley Gardens up to the Orme's summit and is Britain's longest cable-car system.



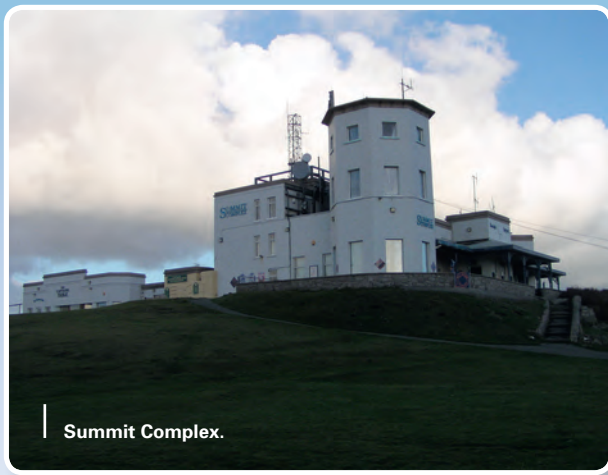
Ridges and furrows.

Follow the waymarkers uphill towards the Summit Complex. Stop for breath at the interpretation board halfway up, and have a look down at the land below you.

13 Along the ground, you should be able to make out ridge and furrow lines, reminders of the early farming communities who ploughed the land in medieval times. See the interpretation board for more information.



The Hot Hills.



Summit Complex.

Continue to the Summit Complex and stand at the entrance to their café. Look out across the farmland within the stone wall, and try to imagine another use for this land.

14 The summit area has had a varied past. In 1840, the Liverpool Dock Trustees built a telegraph station here, one of several built to transmit signals between Holyhead and Liverpool. The keeper of the station, Mr Jones, was said to be very polite to visitors – he and his wife set aside a comfortably furnished room to provide tea, lemonade and soda water for them in the summer months. In 1899, the North Wales Chronicle reported that the Telegraph Inn and the land next to it had been bought ‘to build a good hotel at the summit’. Work began in 1903. The finished building had the appearance of a fortress with one corner tower and a covered veranda, much as you see it today, and provided accommodation for about 30 people. An 18-hole golf course was finished by 1909 on the land within the wall. An advert for the links described it as ‘a sporting and fine all-round course, and very popular in the summer on account of its bracing altitude, fine views and wondrous turf. Terms 3s 6d per day.’



The Great Orme Visitor Centre.

In 1941, the RAF took over the hotel to use it as a radar station. It did not really make the news again until 1952, when it was taken over by Randolph Turpin, the world middleweight boxing champion. The previous year Turpin had beaten Sugar Ray Robinson to win the world title for Britain for the first time in 60 years. Turpin restyled the complex, making it the Summit Hotel, with Randy's Bar, and he used to put on open-air boxing shows outside the hotel. Sadly, in 1966 Turpin committed suicide. Today, the Summit Complex is privately run with a café and gift shops.

As you return to the car park, you will pass the Country Park Visitor Centre, which is open during the spring and summer months. Inside, you can discover more about the Great Orme Country Park and Local Nature Reserve.

End of Route A



ROUTE **B**

The first three points of Route B are the same as part of Route A as described above.

From the car park, walk up to the Summit Complex and stand at the entrance to the café. Look out across the farmland within the stone wall, and try and imagine another use for this land. For historical information at this point, refer to number 14 on Route A.

Walk around the back of the Summit Complex and follow the wooden waymarkers down the path to the left of the cabin lift building. Stop at the interpretation board halfway down to look at the land below you. For historical information at this point, refer to number 13 on Route A.

Follow the wooden waymarkers down to the left, stopping to first look across at the ground by the cable-car tower. For historical information at this point, refer to number 12 on Route A.



St Tudno's church.

When you reach the track, cross it to meet the road and follow the road downhill. Continue down the road until the fence on your left becomes a stone wall. Go through the third stone archway to the church, and take some time to have a look around – the church is normally left open during the summer months.

1 This is St Tudno's Church, named after a Welsh Christian Missionary from the 6th century AD. He was one of seven sons of Seithenin Frenin, Chieftain of Maes Gwyddno in Cardigan Bay. This low-lying cantref (an old division of towns or land) was supposedly submerged by the sea, apparently as punishment for Seithenin's general wickedness to his people. Tudno and three of his brothers survived and became monks. Tudno later came to the Orme, which was then a centre of heathen worship. Nothing is left of his original building, and the oldest part of the current church dates back to the 12th century. During the 15th century the church was made bigger. In 1839, the roof was blown off during a tremendous gale. It continued to be derelict until 1855, when it was re-roofed and repaired. The modern town of Llandudno is named after St Tudno, the name meaning 'lands of the church of Tudno'. In the churchyard you can see the outdoor pulpit and worship areas for summer services. By the top wall the old mounting steps are still present, which were used years ago by those who rode by horse to church, to help mount and dismount.



The old reservoir is now overgrown and surrounded by trees.

Go back out of the churchyard the same way you came in. Opposite you, a wooden fingerpost marks the start of a footpath. Follow the path in the direction of Ski Llandudno. If you look down to the left through the bushes, you will see an old reservoir in the field below.

2 This reservoir was built in the 1860s to provide an extra water supply. Llandudno's population was increasing, and the tourist industry was growing at such a rate that old supplies could not cope with the demand.

Continue along this footpath until you reach a sign on the right saying 'Ffynnon Powell'.

3 It is said that long ago, near this well, there lived a farmer and his family of the name of Powell. One summer there was a severe drought. Not only did the cattle and sheep suffer, but also the family themselves. Because of some past dispute, all the neighbours refused to give them water and threatened them with death if they approached any of the wells on the Great Orme. The family were desperately thirsty, so as religious people, they went to St Tudno's church to pray for water. When they returned home, there was a spring of bubbling water near the door of their house. The well was named after the family, and even during the driest summers it never seems to dry up.

Continue along the footpath between the farm fields and through the gates by Pink Farm, remembering to shut them. Go through the kissing gate in front of the farm and follow the path in the direction of Ski Llandudno as shown on the wooden fingerpost. Keep following the small waymarker posts. Past the boundary of the field on your left is another well, below you and out of sight.

4 The Welsh for lime is calch, so this well, Ffynnon Galchog, may have been named in connection with lime. At one time, many people collected water from this well, as it was believed to help develop good teeth and strong bones in children.

There is an old story linked with this well. A maiden and her brother from the village went to Ffynnon Galchog for water. It was winter and in the twilight of the evening they had filled their cans and were retracing their steps home. All at once they both saw what they believed to be a man coming to meet them. Suddenly he began to whirl around, taking the form of a bundle of hay, which whirled and rolled until at last it rolled over the Orme into the sea. Some time after a great fish was caught in the bay and inside it was a bundle of hay. Many believed it to be the same bundle.



Looking towards Ffynnon Galchog.

Carry on following the waymarkers towards the ski slope. As you do so, keep an eye out for the Orme's well-known goats – the area to the left is a favourite spot for some of them.

5 The goats are free to roam, so they could be anywhere on the headland. One day you may see as many as 30 together, then you may not see any for weeks at a time. They are Kashmir goats and have roamed wild for around 100 years. The herd dates back to 1823, when Mr Christopher Tower of Weald Hall, Essex, shipped two Kashmir goats to his estate to produce cashmere shawls. After winning the gold medal of the Society of Arts for one of his shawls in 1828, he gave two of his goats to the much-impressed King George IV, who kept them on his Windsor Estate. This was the beginning of the Royal Windsor Herd of Kashmir goats, and by the time that Victoria came to the throne, the population had increased dramatically. When Victoria was made Queen in 1837, the Shah of Persia gave her two white Kashmir goats as a present. However, the herd began to suffer from inbreeding and in 1889 a new herd was shipped over from India as a present for the queen.



Nanny goat on a ledge above Llandudno.

During the later part of the 19th century, Major General Sir Savage Mostyn got a pair of these goats and brought them for breeding to nearby Gloddaeth. Once there was a large enough population, he released the goats to roam wild over the Great Orme, and they have done so ever since.



The path past the ski slope to Wyddfyd Cottage.

Once at the top of the ski slope, go down the first few steps then bear right, keeping the wall and the ski slope below you on your left. As you reach the ski buildings, look at the little stone cottage on your right, now the Ski Llandudno office.

6 This is one of the oldest cottages in Llandudno, and was once the home of John and Betty Williams and their large family. They were a well-respected family, especially in religious circles. The cottage is named Wyddfyd meaning 'Honeysuckle' and gives its name to the whole ski-slope area.

Before Ski Llandudno existed there were two pitch-and-putt golf courses in this area – before that, this land was farmland.



Start of the Pen Dinas trail.

Follow the road down and turn into the Ski Llandudno car park. Go down to the interpretation board opposite the bottom of the toboggan run. Follow the waymarked route from this board up the wooded hill to the second board near the summit.

7 This hill is Pen Dinas, and provides splendid views across Llandudno from the summit. Pen Dinas means 'hill of the fort'. An Iron Age hillfort once stood here, with more than 60 round huts. This area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument because of the richness of its archaeological remains. A survey carried out by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust in 1993 found that Pen Dinas had over 200 features of archaeological interest, although many are not immediately obvious when not viewed in detail.

The rocking stone is another feature of interest on Pen Dinas – this is marked by a plaque. Gwalchmai, in his 'Guide to Llandudno', says that this rocking stone may have been used by druids (an ancient Celtic religion) for judging people accused of certain crimes. The blindfolded prisoner would be put on the rock – if the stone rocked the Druids would shout, 'He is innocent.' If the rock didn't move they would shout, 'He is guilty, over the cliff with him!'



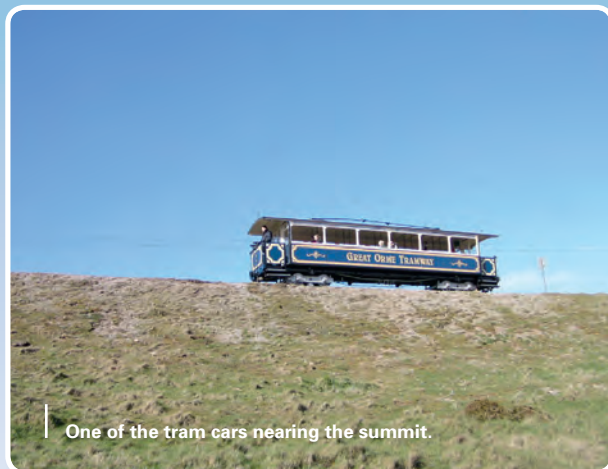
The Little Orme from the summit of Pen Dinas.

Return to the road again and follow it down, passing some houses on the right. On the left side of the road here, you will notice the remains of some old, stone pens.

8 A sheep fair used to be held here on 22nd September every year.

Continue down the road, passing some houses on your left until you reach a junction with traffic lights. This area is referred to by residents as Blackgate.

9 Many years ago, there was a gate across the road at this point to prevent sheep, cattle and horses grazing any lower down the Orme.



One of the tram cars nearing the summit.

At this junction in the road, turn right, following the tram tracks up the hill, until you see Tyn-y-Coed Road joining from the left.

10 The trams are yet another historical feature on the Great Orme. By the second half of the 19th century, Llandudno had become a popular seaside town. Many visitors wanted to explore the Great Orme but the only way to reach the top and explore it was on foot, on horseback or by horse-drawn carriage on a bumpy road. So a group of local businessmen decided to build a new type of transport system – a tramway – to carry people to the top of the Great Orme.

Building began in April 1901. The lower section was opened in 1902 and the upper section in 1903. There are four trams and each one is able to carry up to 48 people. Nearly 150,000 passengers are now carried by the tramway each year.



The cromlech.

Turn left onto Tyn-y-Coed Road for a short distance. By the letter box, cross over the grass area towards the row of terraced houses. Opposite, you will find a footpath marked with a summit trail disc alongside the end house on the left. Follow this up the steps past a converted chapel to a road at the top. When you reach the road, turn right until you reach Cromlech Road joining from the left. Go down it and climb over the stile at the end to see one of the Great Orme's earliest historical features.

11 Here you will find the cromlech (Llety'r Filiast – this may translate as 'lair of the female greyhound'). As the interpretation board tells you, these are the remains of a burial chamber used for burying a group of people during the Neolithic period, between 3,500 and 2,500 BC. These burials were probably reserved for important members of the community or for important families. The panel shows you a reconstruction of what the cromlech may have looked like if it had not been disturbed over the years. The cromlech is a scheduled ancient monument.

Climb back over the stile and return down Cromlech Road, turning left at the end and then left again down Pyllau Road, following the Summit Trail signs. Go past the houses and through the gate and continue around the back of the Great Orme Mines, unless you want to visit the mines and their visitor centre.

12 Archaeological interest in the Great Orme copper mines has not come about recently – since the 18th and 19th centuries, when the miners of the day were breaking into workings that even they considered to be ancient, antiquarians and scholars have had theories about the origins of the industry. They usually concluded that the earliest workings were Roman. However, investigations over the last two decades (with the benefits of modern scientific technology) have shown that the mines were first worked over 3,500 years ago, during the Bronze Age. To find out more about the history of the copper mines, you can have a look around their visitor centre free of charge.

From the copper mines, follow the summit trail waymarkers. You will pass an interpretation board with information about early mining on the Great Orme. When you reach the end of the farm field on your left, you can take a detour into the quarry.

For historical information at this point, refer to number 1 on Route A.

Follow the waymarkers up to the summit. As you return to the car park, you will pass the Country Park Visitor Centre which is open during the spring and summer months. Inside, you can find out more about the Great Orme Country Park and Local Nature Reserve. The Visitor Centre is fully accessible for wheelchairs and is fitted with an induction loop for hearing aid users.



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