



# upland walk PENMAENMAWR

Broaden your horizons...

- Circular Walk
- Druids' Circle
- Coastal Views



This guide will help you to explore the hidden history of the landscape above Penmaenmawr and identify the abundant birds and wildlife species you may see on your walk. Along the route are five locations of interest. This guide will direct you to each location and provide you with interesting facts about the surrounding area.

## HOW TO GET HERE

**From the train station:** walk up Paradise Road to the crossroads in the centre of the town. Cross the road to Fernbrook Road and the library car park on your right.  
Tel: 08457 48 49 50  
[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**From the bus stop:** walk to the crossroads in the town centre. Turn up Fernbrook Road and to the library car park on your right.  
Tel: Traveline Wales 0871 200 22 33  
[www.traveline-cymru.info](http://www.traveline-cymru.info)

**By Car:** follow the A55 from the west to junction 15a / from the east junction 16 for Penmaenmawr. Follow the main road to the crossroads by the traffic lights in the town centre. Turn up Fernbrook Road and park in the library car park on your right.  
Public Transport Enquiry line: 01492 575412  
(Conwy County Borough Council)

## WALK INFORMATION

**Terrain:** steep ascent and descent.

**Distance:** main route 9km, 5 ½ miles. Optional route: add 1.5 miles.

**Time:** 3 ½ hours. Optional route add 1 hour.

**Paths:** lanes, tracks, grassy paths.

**Dogs:** dogs should be kept under close control at all times.

**Map:** Explorer OL17.

**Start and finish grid reference:** Library car park SH719 763.

**Refreshments:** available in local shops and pubs.

All times and distances are approximate

Check the weather at:

[www.mountainweatherwales.org](http://www.mountainweatherwales.org)

Be aware of changeable weather conditions.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT:

**Stori Pen Cyf**  
[www.storipen.co.uk](http://www.storipen.co.uk) / 01492 623970

**Penmaenmawr**  
[www.penmaenmawr.com](http://www.penmaenmawr.com)

**Snowdonia National Park Authority**  
[eryri-npa.gov.uk](http://eryri-npa.gov.uk) / 01766 770274

**Open access land**  
[www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)



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Respect • Protect • Enjoy



Looking over to Puffin Island and Anglesey from Location 1.

## START OF WALK TO LOCATION 1 JUBILEE PATH - SH 731 759

From the library car park walk up Fernbrook Road, continue around to the left to take the turning on your right up Groesffordd Lane. At the top of the lane cross directly to Mountain Lane. Continue up and over the cattle grid to Location 1 at the two pillars.

These pillars were built in 1888 to mark the opening of the Jubilee Path. This is a circular walk opened for visitors staying at the popular Victorian resort of Penmaenmawr to enjoy the panoramic views of the area.



Penmaenmawr quarries.

## LOCATION 1 TO LOCATION 2 MAEN CRWN - SH 731 749

From Location 1 walk up the track. At the first junction take the track on the right hand side. Continue past a farm to your left and go through a gate.

In front, you will see the mountain Tal-y-fan. To your left is the Pensychnant Upland Walk and behind you, Conwy Mountain. Continue along the track past the turning for the North Wales Path and to a second gate. In the field ahead and to your left you will see 'Maen Crwn'.



Tal-y-fan.

## LOCATION 2 TO LOCATION 3 DRUIDS' CIRCLE - SH 723 746

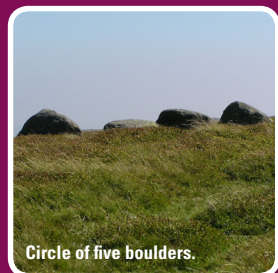
Continue past Bryn Derwydd, on your right, along the tree-lined track. Just before the last tree follow the North Wales Path waymarkers up to the right. Go through the field gate and continue to follow these waymarkers past a signpost and up to the left. To your left you will see a small circle of five boulders and ahead the Druids' Circle.



Maen Crwn

## Why not try a new walk?

For more information on the North Wales Path and other Upland Walks visit:  
[www.conwy.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/countryside)



Circle of five boulders.



The Druids' Circle.

## Did you know?

Puffin Island was originally known by its welsh name - Ynys Seiriol meaning Seiriols Island. Seiriol was a monk who lived there in the 6th century.

## Did you know?

The granite above Penmaenmawr has been quarried since 1830. The old workings on the left have now been landscaped.

## Did you know?

The small circle of five boulders dates from 1300 – 1000 B.C. The surface of the circle was covered in quartz. Can you think of why this was done?

## Did you know?

Meini Hirion is the welsh for long stones. Excavations in 1958 dated the circle to the Bronze age between 1450 – 1400 B.C. This is a thousand years before the Druids came to this area. The circle has nothing to do with druidism! It is a misnomer.

You may think of Meini Hirion as an ancient roundabout. Ancient tracks crossed from the west coast and Llanfairfechan to Bwlch y Ddeufaen and eastwards to the Conwy Valley. In the early bronze age traders brought copper and other metals from Ireland.

## STORY OF THE STONE

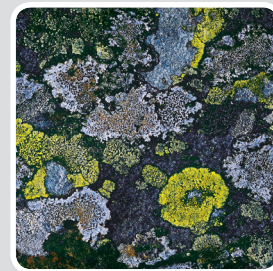
'Maen Crwn' is the welsh for round stone. This boulder has been moved and shaped by a glacier and is therefore called an 'erratic'.

It is thought that people approximately 4000 years ago stood the stone up and used it to mark the ancient track which crossed this valley and went down towards the Conwy Valley.

Behind Maen Crwn you will see the shallow Gyrach Valley. It has been created by a glacier. You may see some of the many 'erratic' boulders which the retreating glacier left behind. These boulders have been used and reused by people.

During the Neolithic and Bronze ages the boulders were used to build ceremonial circles and burial mounds. In the Iron age they were used to build the foundations of round huts. And in the 19th century the boulders were used to build drystone walls.

If you were stood at this point before the 19th century you would have seen two stone circles. These stones have since been reused to build drystone walls.



## AT HOME ON A DRY STONE WALL

### Did You Know?

A variety of insects, spiders, woodlice, millipedes, bees and wasps like to live in dry stone walls. They share their home with toads, slow-worms, voles, field mice and the shrew.

Dry stone walls make good sunbathing areas for reptiles such as the common lizard. They like to bask in the sun during the morning and afternoon.

If you look closely at a drystone wall you will see the lichens on the stones. Lichens are early signs of life. They thrive on the exposed stone surface in a pollution free countryside.





The Druids' Circle with the Great Orme in the background.



Location 4.



Graiglwyd.



Graiglwyd stone axe.

## LOCATION 3 TO LOCATION 4 SH 722 747 STONE CIRCLES

Follow the path around the right hand side of the Druids' Circle. Aim for the 'cairn' stopping at a further stone circle followed by a circular bank of loose stones.

The first circle looks like an untidy collection of boulders but the 1958-9 excavation revealed two three sided cists (burial chambers), that is, stone slabs placed on end forming a cavity. Each contained a cremation burial which in one case was sealed by a layer of quartz pebbles.

Other finds were an oval hearth on which flat stones had been placed as if to extinguish the fire; a circular fire-pit full of charcoal and a Graiglwyd stone axe. The site has been dated around 1130 B.C.

As you walk past the second circle you will see an 8ft. wide circular bank of loose stones. The circle was also excavated between 1958-59. Against the northern inner edge of the circle a hole was found covered by a small slab.

It contained a small decorated urn full of burnt earth but no ashes. There was also burnt earth below and around the urn and a fire had been lit on the covering slab. To the south-east again against the inner edge, the cremated remains of a slightly built adult were found. The bones had been crammed into a small pile of stones the inner kerb and had been sealed up with flakes of stone. The excavators also found an unusual feature.

Stone slabs had been carefully set against the inner kerb in the shape of what looked like a small armchair! The purpose of the structure is unknown but it has been suggested that it was intended "to support the base of a wooden image or totem". The circle has been dated around 1405 B.C.

## LOCATION 4 TO LOCATION 5 GRAIGLWYD - SH 721 750

From the cairn walk ahead and to your right aiming for the stonewall below. At the wall turn right and follow the track to the corner of the wall. At this point turn left off the track to follow the wall down to a kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and over a bridge. At the first fork in the path you have arrived at Location 5.

Above and to your left is Graiglwyd – the grey rock. In Neolithic times people were developing from being hunters and gatherers to being the first farmers. They cleared the land to grow crops. To do this they needed a stone axe. Men would carve stone axes from large blocks of freshly quarried rocks – 'A Stone Axe Factory'.

## Did you know?

About half of the circle has been excavated. In the centre a cist (burial chamber) was discovered. When the capstone was removed a large urn with the remains of a child of about eleven was found.

Nearby in a shallow pit, another urn was found which contained the cremated bones of a child of about twelve years along with a small bronze knife. In another shallow pit thirteen sandstone hones (sharpening stones) were found on which very crumbled cremated human bones were found. The surface of the circle was covered with white quartz.

## Did you know?

The chough is the only member of the crow family to have red legs and beak. It uses its long curved beak to hunt ground insects in grass and heathland.

The male stonechat has a bright orange-red breast with a black head. You may see one perching on gorse bushes, bracken or stone walls. Listen out for the distinct call of the stonechat, it sounds like two stones being rubbed and knocked together.

## Did you know?

Graiglwyd was the site of one of the largest stone axe factories in Britain. These axes and others were made on the hillsides further to the west above Llanfairfechan and were exported all over Britain.

They have been found in South Wales, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire, Yorkshire and at important sites such as Windmill Hill, West Kennet Avenue, and near Woodhenge in Wiltshire.

The stone they used is an igneous (volcanic) rock. It flakes easily so making the axes must have been a difficult and delicate task when the only tool was another stone! This explains why there was huge number of broken and unfinished axes that were found in the 1920s when the site was excavated.

The axes were roughly fashioned at the factory site and then taken elsewhere to be polished and sharpened.

## OPTIONAL JUBILEE WALK AROUND FOEL LUS

**Terrain:** level path. Slight incline.  
**Distance:** 2.3 km, 1.5 miles.  
**Time:** 1 hour.  
**Paths:** Narrow track and grassy paths.

Go through the two pillars and follow the track around Foel Lus. About 2/3 of the way around, by a bench take a path to the right to follow the pylons around Foel Lus.

Continue along this path to re-join the main track. You may turn right and walk back to Location 1 or turn to the left to walk to Location 2. For more information about this walk please see the next page.



Skylark.

Keep a look out for ravens, choughs, stonechats, skylarks and meadow pipits. You may be lucky enough to see a dotterel.

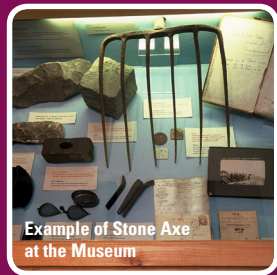
They fly over here from Scotland to the Middle East and North Africa for the winter.



New York Cottages Museum

## LOCATION 5 TO THE LIBRARY CAR PARK

Take the lower path down the hillside to a kissing gate behind Graiglwylf farm. Follow the track around the right hand side of the buildings to Graiglwylf Road. Turn right and follow the road to a turn on the left for Merton Park. Walk down Merton Park and turn left to follow Fernbrook Road to the library car park.



Example of Stone Axe at the Museum

## WHY NOT VISIT NEW YORK COTTAGES MUSEUM?

From the library car park walk towards the town centre and crossroads to turn left onto Bangor Road. Continue until you come to New York Cottages Museum on your left. As you walk around the exhibition housed in one of the quarrymen's cottages you will discover the story of Penmaenmawr during the nineteenth century.

### Why were the cottages built and how did they get their name?

As the quarry thrived, in 1850 the owners of the quarry built the cottages to house an increasing number of quarrymen and their families.

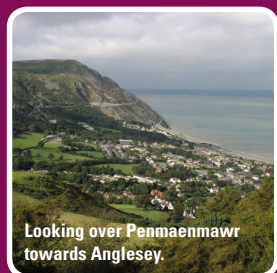
As the cottages were being built a sudden decline in quarrying led to many quarrymen contemplating emigration to the USA. When builders asked what to name the cottages 'New York' was suggested as that was the name on everyone's lips at the time.

**Open:** 1st June-30th September.  
Weds, Thurs and Fri 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

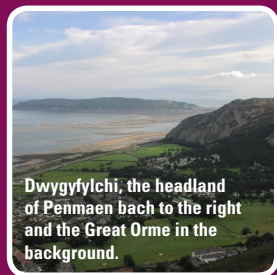
Groups throughout the year by appointment.

Admission free. Fully wheelchair accessible. There is a small car park behind the museum.

**Phone:** 01492 575571



Looking over Penmaenmawr towards Anglesey.



Dwygyfylchi, the headland of Penmaen bach to the right and the Great Orme in the background.

## JUBILEE WALK

### Did you know?

- ❧ The path that you are walking on was dug out of loose scree with nothing more sophisticated than a pick and shovel by contractor Joseph Jones and two assistants.
- ❧ The path was officially opened on June 23rd 1888.
- ❧ Originally it was to be named Foel Lus path, but it became popularly known as Jubilee Path commemorating Queen Victoria's Jubilee of 1887.
- ❧ Lus is Welsh for Bilberry.
- ❧ As you walk around Foel Lus you are approximately 800ft above sea level.
- ❧ It took just four months to create the path and cost £50 plus and extra £5 to build two pillars which mark the entrance.

The path provided an extra leisure amenity in the rapidly growing tourist town of Penmaenmawr, which was visited regularly by W.E. Gladstone, four times Prime Minister of the U.K.

### Can you find the stone with three holes?

Man has drilled these holes. Can you guess why he did this? He was trying to split the stone in half. To split the stone a row of holes called 'pool holes' are drilled. Two strips of metal known as 'feathers' are inserted into each hole. A spike which is called a 'plug' is then inserted into the holes between the two metal strips. The spikes are hammered into each hole splitting the stone. We don't know the reason but this stone hasn't split. You can still see one of the old 'plug and feathers' in the stone.

### The tale of the drowned palace

When the tide is low take a look over Trwyn-yr-Wylfa and towards the sea (see map). It's possible to see rocks in the sand. It is believed that these rocks were the foundations of a palace belonging to a wicked prince named Helyg. One day his wickedness was punished and the sea came in drowning his land and palace. Helyg and his family ran for safety to nearby Trwyn-yr-Wylfa.

About two thirds of the way around Foel Lus you will see a view of Conwy Mountain with the Sychnant pass coming down the centre of the valley.

A packhorse trail originally came down the valley. The present road was opened in 1772 as part of the new turnpike road.

Down at the bottom of the valley is the village of Capeulo. known as Yr Hen Bentre (Old Village). It only dates from 1772. It developed around three inns which were built when the new Sychnant road was opened.



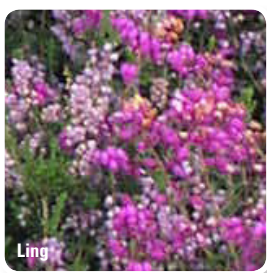
Gorse



Bilberry



Ling



Ling

### Heather, gorse and bilberry you're surrounded!

If you are walking through this upland heath in late summer – early autumn the ground around you will appear as a carpet of mixed pinks and purples with splashes of yellow.

**Bilberry** In July and August black berries are produced. They make a nice jam but are primarily food for heathland birds and small mammals. Scientists believe that bilberries also have visual benefits.

**Gorse** Can you smell coconut? This is what gorse smells like. There are two types of gorse in this area, the western gorse and the common gorse. As the two types flower at different times there is a good chance of seeing gorse flowers all year round.

**Heather** You may see two types of heather in this area:

1. Ling heather. This is a short evergreen plant with tiny pink – purple flowers which form spikes at the top of the stem.
2. Bell heather has flowers that are slightly larger than those of ling they are of a bell shape and are usually darker shades of pink-purple which form clusters at the end of stems.

#### Did you know?

75% of the world's upland heath is found in Britain and Ireland.



