

The Ann Griffiths Walk

7 or 16 mile options



Duration: 4 hours (linear walk)
Distance: 7 or 16 miles
Difficulty: Easy walking surfaces

Contact Ed & Jenny Matthews on edjenny.miller@btinternet.com Tel: 01691 870 626

Llwydiarth

Pont Llogel



Capel Coffa Ann Griffiths
Memorial Chapel

Dolanog

Threardf/Waterfall

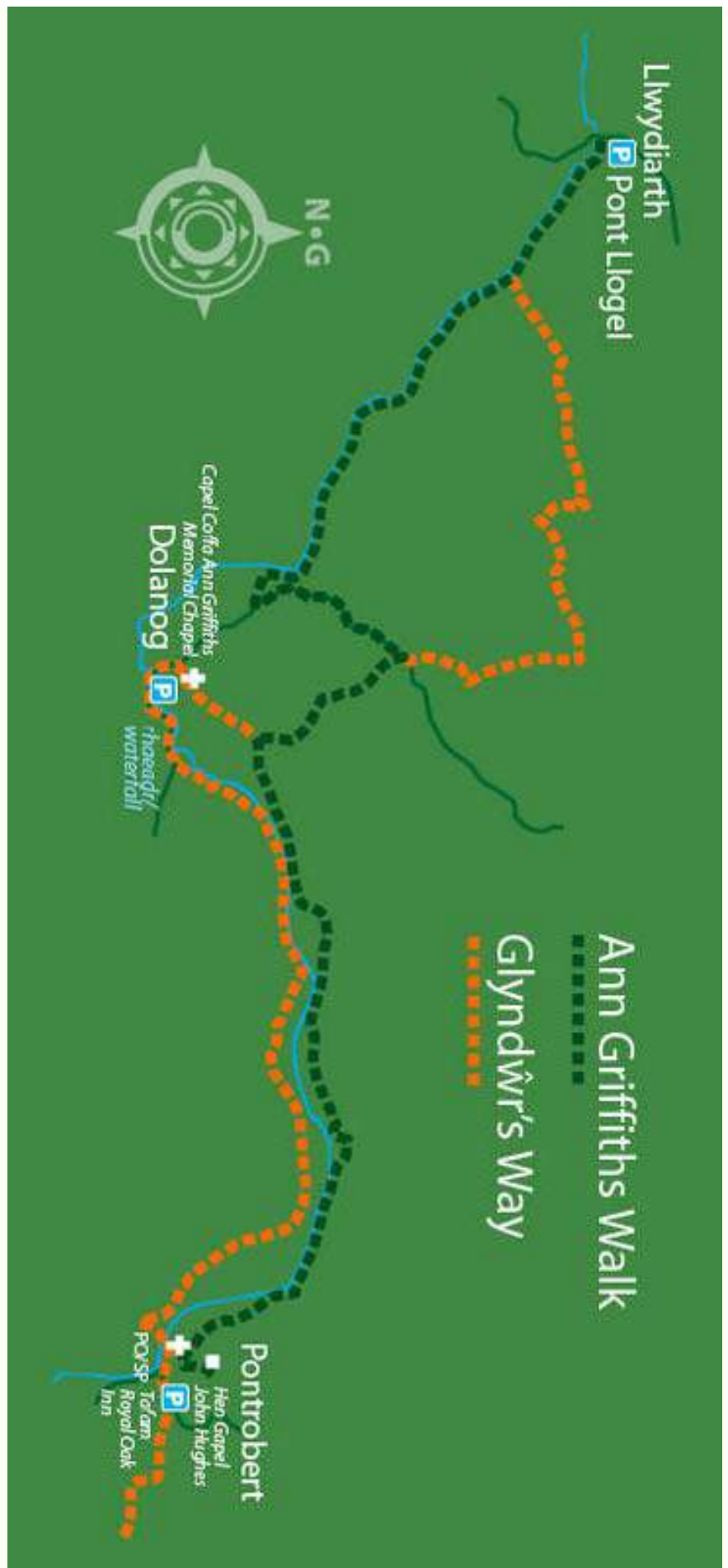
Ann Griffiths Walk

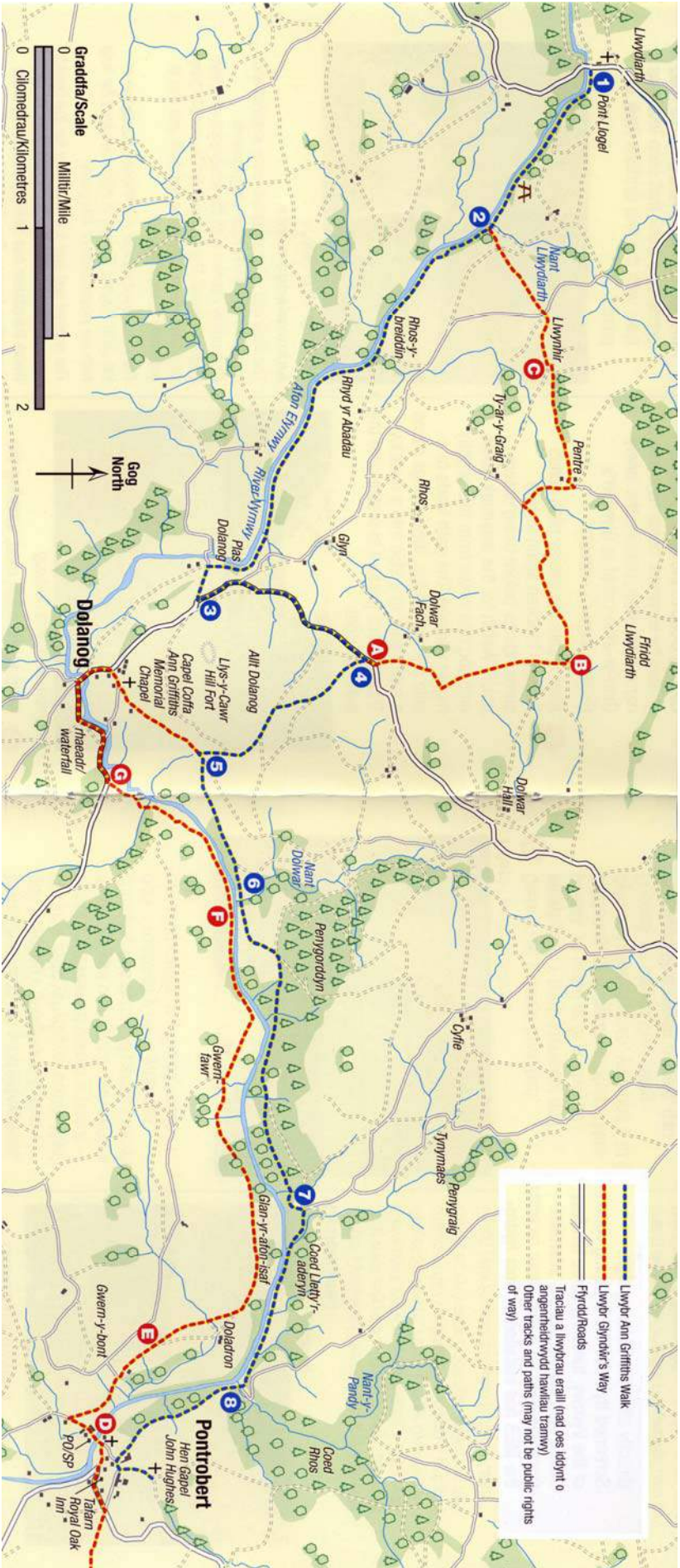
Glyndŵr's Way

Pontrobert

Hen Gappel
John Hughes

Tŷcarn
Royal Oak Inn





Introduction

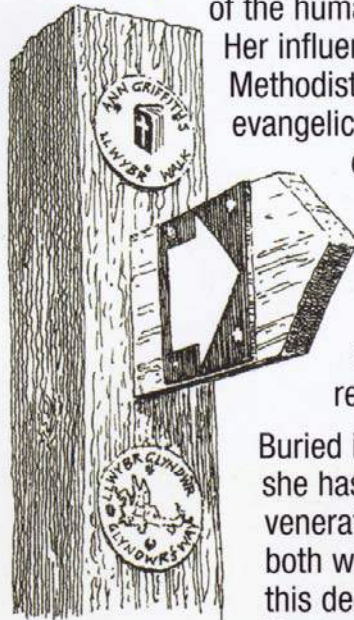
'Something has happened in the little house at Dolwar Fach which makes of that place a spot memorable for more than one age and for more than one people'.

A. M. Allchin



The Ann Griffiths Walk is 7 miles long and links places associated with this prolific 18th century hymn-writer. The route explores a variety of landscapes that perhaps inspired her work, from river valley and gorge, meadow and woodland to open hilltop and sheep walks.

Located amidst some of the most tranquil and beautiful countryside in mid Wales, this linear (one-way) walk closely follows the River Vyrnwy for much of its length. It runs close to (and in part shares) the route of Glyndŵr's Way, the long distance National Trail that traces the activities of the 15th century partisan, Owain Glyndŵr in Powys. Combinations of the two routes can offer excellent loop walks, which are outlined in this booklet.



ANN GRIFFITHS, nee Thomas, who lived from 1776-1805, was extraordinary. She bequeathed 70 hymns and 8 letters which reveal an astounding vision and awareness of the human experience and spirituality. Her influence was the Calvinistic Methodist movement, with its evangelical emphasis and

characteristic shared worship and experience. John Hughes who lived at Hen Gapel, was a Methodist preacher who became Ann's spiritual mentor and the recorder of her hymns.

Buried in Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa, she has long been the object of great veneration and people come from both within and without Wales to this deeply rural corner of old Montgomeryshire to visit the places associated with her brief, though hugely influential, life.



The walk at Nant Dolwar



Hen Gapel John Hughes

The Ann Griffiths Walk

DISTANCE: 7 miles

TIME: 4 hours (for linear walk)

START: Pont Llogel, GR SJ032155

FINISH: Pontrobert GR SJ109130

MAP: Ordnance Survey Explorer 239

Llyn Efyrrwy & Llanfyllin

REFRESHMENTS: Available at village shops in Pont Llogel and Pontrobert also pub in Pontrobert

Scenic secrets can be hard to keep, sometimes it is better they are shared, especially with discerning visitors - hence this guide. The Ann Griffiths Walk winds an enchanting course down the Vyrnwy valley from Pont Llogel at Llwydiarth to Pontrobert (some 11 miles west of Welshpool). In some sections, the waymarked path shares the route of the Glyndŵr's Way National Trail, giving walkers four options - to simply trace the main linear walk, enjoy one of two loop walks, of almost equal distance, from Pont Llogel and Pontrobert, or indulge in a grand 16 mile figure-of-eight excursion from Pont Llogel, Dolanog or Pontrobert by combining the two loops.



The view downstream at Dolanog



All options are described. The numbered and lettered paragraphs in the text refer to points indicated on the map in the centre pages. Numbers relate to the Ann Griffiths Walk and letters to the sections of the Glyndŵr's Way used for the loop walks.

The Walk is suitable for the moderately fit. Sensible walking shoes and appropriate clothing is recommended. Dogs must be kept under close control, as livestock graze the land on most of the walk. As well as being an area of exceptional beauty, this is a locality where people live and work and we ask that you please follow the Country Code at all times.

The Walks

The main Ann Griffiths Walk is waymarked by the distinctive 'open bible' logo on waymark discs. On sections common with Glyndŵr's Way National Trail, particularly on the loop walks, discs showing the 'dragon' symbol are used.

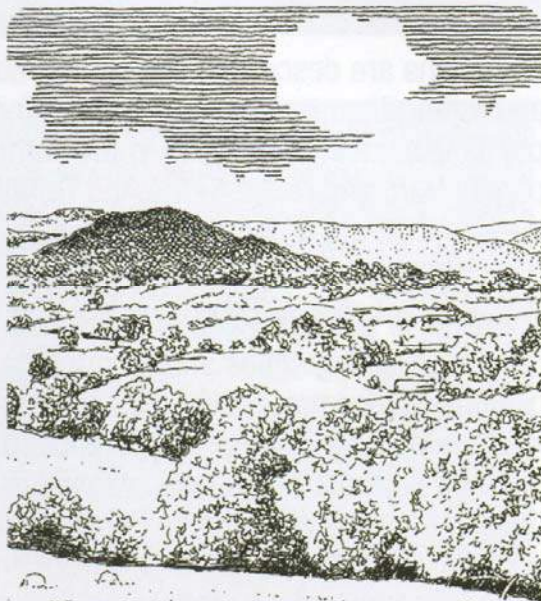


Ann Griffiths Walk

- 1 The walk starts from the Forest Enterprise riverside picnic site at Pont Llogel, Llwydiarth, within the broader community of Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa.

Upstream, the river Vyrnwy is surrounded by the extensive and, from many aspects, very beautiful Dyfnant Forest, leading to and embracing Llyn Vyrnwy Reservoir, which lies just three miles as the crow flies from Pont Llogel and supplies Merseyside with the very best of Berwyn mountain water.

There is an additional car park with a public telephone and toilets at a minor road junction 250 yards uphill and past St Mary's Church, close to the



Looking west from Ffrith Llwydiarth



Pont Llogel woods

1 continued

garage and post office shop at Llwydiarth. A waymarked path links the two car parks, or simply use the roadside pavement.

In the lower car park, find the first waymarks for both the Ann Griffiths Walk and Glyndŵr's Way. Pont Llogel is a variant of Llogail meaning 'pleated (or wicker) bridge', an intriguing concept over such a rushing watercourse. A loosely surfaced path, ideal for wheelchair users (with assistance), runs downstream alongside the turbulent waters of the Vyrnwy.

The immediate hillside was cleared of conifers in 1996, allowing native species such as oak, ash, hazel and birch to become established. Growing beneath these is a rainbow of wildflowers; heather, scabious, trefoil,



Accessible Riverside Path at Pont Llogel

1 *continued*

knapweed and betony to name but a few. This sunny bank is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and visitors intent only in a short stroll can walk down to the picnic spot, returning by a higher, stepped path (colour-coded with waymark posts). Whatever your indulgence, the work of the Forestry Commission in creating this area is rewarding for all, giving fascinating wildlife insights as the seasons unfold.



The Vyrnwy near Nant Llwydiarth

1 *continued*

Tables beside the river mark the end of the graded path, the footpath soon passing a gate/stile to enter sheep pasture. The walk continues across a gated footbridge over the Nant Llwydiarth, a key location, as the PONT LLOGEL LOOP WALK will return to this spot via the Glyndŵr's Way National Trail that is signposted ahead (see page 7).



Allt Dolanog

- 2** You, however, should bear right along the Ann Griffiths Walk, stepping across the little stream just above the water's dancing cascade into the Vyrnwy. Follow what is little more than a sheep path just above the riverside woods, then over a stile and through an open larch grove into a series of long meadows accompanying the river, which runs through several attractive rocky constrictions and over low falls. Off to the left is an idyllic cottage, whilst ahead is the distinctive hilltop of Allt Dolanog. On reaching the far end of the meadows, look left for a stile and gate. Ignore the cottage's access track; instead turn right, cross the footbridge and in a further 150 yards, a stile and bridlegate, dropping to regain the riverside walk.

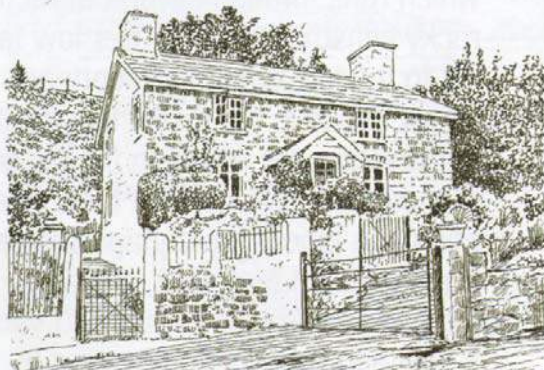
2 *continued*

The route passes the site of *Rhyd yr Abadau*, 'The Abbot's Ford'; the name would suggest a significant crossing on an old pilgrim's route or monastic drove-way. The land rising on the far bank, known as *Cyffin*, has monastic connections - *Caemynach*, immediately south of *Pont Llogel*, means the 'monk's field'. Birds such as kingfishers, dippers and wagtails make the river their home; in the skies look for buzzard, in the woodlands listen for the laughing cry of green woodpeckers.



Plas Dolanog

The path traces the high, tree-lined riverbank, threading via gates and stiles to cross another footbridge, shortly entering woodland via a stile. The path soon rises up steps and overlooks a fine sweep of the river.



Dolwar Fach

2 *continued*

Crossing a stile part way up, the route contours out of the woodland, passing left of sheep pens to a gate onto a farm lane. Opposite stands the farmyard and half-timbered farmhouse of *Plas Dolanog*, a fine period vernacular structure, built by the *Watkin Williams Wynne* family in 1664. Go left up to the road junction; a right turn would bring you quickly down into *Dolanog*, but hasten not; *Allt Dolanog* is one of the scenic highpoints of this walk and fully merits inclusion in anyone's itinerary.

- 3 The *Ann Griffiths Walk* (marked by fingerposts) turns left, following the *B4382* northwards (keep right at the next fork) until the white and black gateway of the lane to *Dolwar Fach* comes into view. The now-combined waymarked routes (*Ann Griffiths Walk & Glyndŵr's Way*) leave the road to the right at a stile/gate onto the open common.



The Ann Griffiths Walk turns onto Allt Dolanog

Should you wish to gain a glimpse of Ann Griffiths' home, then make the short spur diversion down the metalled drive to Dolwar Fach, now the home of the Jones family, who have been here since the Thomas' vacated the farm early in the 19th century. Although they appreciate any genuine interest, do

3 *continued*

respect their privacy, especially if you glance into the old yard below the charming little farmhouse (rebuilt since her lifetime).

Pont Llogel loop walk

A The PONT LLOGEL LOOP WALK returns to the start by taking the driveway from the B4382 towards Dolwar Fach along Glyndŵr's Way. At the left-bend, climb the stile up to the right and bisect the steep pasture to a corner beneath ash trees. Keep ahead over the stile, tracing the hedge-line (left) up to a waymarked stile just beyond a field gate. Take this and keep the fence on your left, crossing another stile. In a dip, pass through the gateway and continue uphill, an old hedge on your right, to climb a further stile.

B Turn left within a gated green lane, revealing fine views north to the Berwyns from the crest. Meeting a minor road, go right, then left into the farmyard at Pentre Farm. Sweep right behind the timber and stone barn, passing through sheep pens. Look left for the waymarked Glyndŵr's Way, running along a hazel-enclosed track and then below fir trees down to Llwynhir Farm.

C Pass between the buildings and house and then along the approach lane. Cross directly over the minor road,



C *continued*

continuing via stiles and a gated corner across a brook to rejoin the outward route at the Nant Llwydiarth footbridge. Cross this to return to the start, half-a-mile distant.



Allt Dolanog

4 The main Ann Griffiths Walk enters Allt Dolanog's open pasture from the road (see plaque by stile), ascending a rutted track to a waymark post at the brow, from where it is guided right. A series of fingerposts and low waymark posts take the route gradually right. Passing through a marshy depression, keep left at the fork, rising easily to a fingerpost near a hillcrest rocky outcrop.



From this section pause and look back for a magnificent panorama of Cadair Berwyn, Arans Fawddwy and Benllyn, Maesglase and distant Cadair Idris, revealed along the northern and western skylines. Immediately beside you, the rolling summit of Allt Dolanog carries the twin ramparts of the Iron Age hill-fort Llys-y-cawr (the giant's court).

4 *continued*

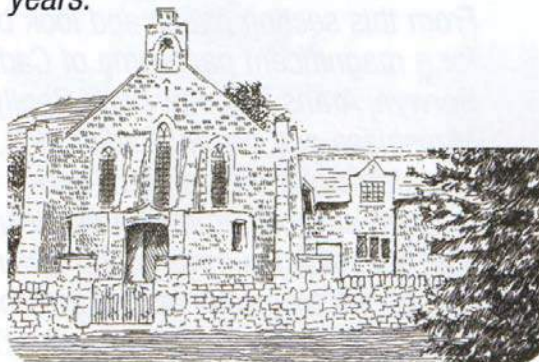
Fork right at this fingerpost, shortly passing to the left of a stand of ash trees. The wide, well-waymarked path descends the steep bracken-smothered bank to reach a sunken track; a fingerpost here directs the Ann Griffiths Walk sharp left.



Ann Griffiths Memorial Chapel

- 5 A short detour right is recommended, however, along the track to Dolanog village.

The village has toilets, car park, and most important of all, the Ann Griffiths Memorial Chapel. The Chapel was built in 1903; the interior furnishings are uniformly simple Art Nouveau. The qualities of the Arts and Crafts Movement shine through most emphatically in the beautiful corbel heads, of which Ann Griffiths' is most serene, her youthful features faithful, as she died in childbirth aged just 29 years.



Memorial Chapel

5 *continued*

Retrace your steps back up the lane/track to the fingerpost to continue her Bible Walk.



Nant Dolwar

Shortly the track passes through a gate, continuing in a shallow hollow-way in pasture. Watch for the waymarking guiding more steeply right to reach a charming footbridge over the Nant Dolwar; the dingle above is similarly enchanting.





Hollow way

- 6** The path rises beyond, sweeping up left as a hollow-way above a pasture to a track junction. A signpost directs right, beneath the mature conifer woodland, eventually passing through a gate. Hereafter the track progresses within woodland well above the river, emerging onto a track beside a wooden garden chalet.



The path through the woods

- 7** Continue to the road and bear right towards Pontrobert. The first dingle, Coed Lletty'r-aderyn, appropriately means 'the wood of the birds lodging'; all around are oak woods ringing with bird song. The next stretch beside a long meadow offers glimpses down upon a lively passage of the River Vyrnwy.



The road to Pontrobert

- 8** Rising over a bluff the road crosses Nant y Pandy which cascades impressively into the river. The walk duly enters the village; go left at the first junction and left again up the lane to Hen Gapel John Hughes, where ends the Ann Griffiths Walk.



Pontrobert



The view from the bridge in Pontrobert

THE JOHN HUGHES CENTRE for Christian Unity and Renewal, opened in 1995, (extended in 1998), is unique in Wales as being both non-denominational, and run by trustees and a management committee who are all laymen. The Centre welcomes seekers for retreat from all traditions for day workshops. The custodian, Nia Rhosier, welcomes parties on the Ann Griffiths Pilgrimage, giving them both an insight into the Chapel building, the spiritual lives of Ann Griffiths and John and Ruth Hughes, while providing time for shared prayers and open forum discussions. She sees the Centre as a vision for the future, a coming together of Christians and those of other faiths, influenced by her roots within the Celtic tradition.

Elsewhere in the village is a post office shop, telephone, and the Royal Oak Inn



Hen Gapel

(open for refreshments all day from noon, most days of the year).



Hen Gapel

Pontrobert loop walk

- D** The PONTROBERT LOOP WALK follows Glyndŵr's Way back to Dolanog. Leave Pontrobert by crossing the bridge south and ascend the road, turning right opposite the village community centre and school. At the next left-hand bend follow the lane on the right towards Doladron Farm via a cattle-grid. Descending, keep forward where the farm lane bears off right.
- E** The track leads on through open woodland, advancing as a lane towards Gwern-fawr; enviably isolated, with beautifully wooded hillsides and open pastures gracing the view. Shortly before reaching the house, cross the stile on the right and follow the fence around to the left to join the farm track beyond, descending past a



E *continued*

small planted enclosure on the bank. Beneath the bank is a reed fringed pool, a remnant ox-bow lake. Reaching a stile by sheep pens the path winds on through bracken and into woodland coming close to the river. The path guided by waymark posts runs into a narrow meadow, passing the lonely Glan-yr-afon-uchaf (a Glyndŵr's Fishery angler's retreat).

- F** After a stile the grassy path winds through bracken again in wild surroundings before being drawn uphill. Watch for the waymark posts, enjoying fine views from this slightly higher vantage. The path leads to a stile and footbridge, then swings round a rocky bluff to a stile into a meadow. Traverse this pasture to a stile onto the road; go right.



The route back into Dolanog

- G** Keep to the main road, ignoring the inviting, but private farm-bridge directly after the Dolanog sign. Screened by trees the crashing waters of the Vyrnwy, tumbling some ten feet over a rock barrier, excites attention. Once dammed for a mill, more recently the MEB has installed a minor hydro-electric works. Cross the old Pont

G *continued*

Dolanog road bridge, passing the parish church of St John the Evangelist, descending into the tiny village of Dolanog. Turn right at the bus depot and rise up the hill past the Memorial Chapel. At a gate the road becomes a track that soon levels as it links with the Ann Griffiths Walk at point 5.



Old Bridge at Dolanog

Acknowledgements

The Walk and original leaflets were inspired and produced by Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa Community Council with the assistance of Powys County Council. The Community Council still plays an active role in supporting the Walk and this is gratefully acknowledged.

The kind assistance of Nia Rhosier, custodian of the John Hughes Centre, is acknowledged for help with the preparation of this guide.

The original text and line drawings for this booklet were produced by writer and artist Mark Richards. Welsh translation has been carried out by Meta Translation Agency. The artwork, additional photography, map and revised text for this edition is by Neil Coates and Simon Holt.

Powys County Council would also like to acknowledge the continued support of the Countryside Council for Wales towards the management of this trail.



**Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales**

