

Mary Jones Walk

Original walk undertaken in 1800. Distance of this route 28 miles.



Mary Jones



Monument at Tyn-y-Ddôl



Llanyal Faith Heritage Centre



Thomas Charles



When undertaking the walk, we recommend that the guide book is used in conjunction with OS map Explorer OL23 as the guide book map is not drawn to scale.

Map by ©Tim Hutchinson

- 1 Tyn-y-Ddôl in Llanfihangel-y-Pennant
- 2 Nant-yr-Eira (ruined building)
- 3 Coed Maes-y-Pandy (woodland)
- 4 Rhiwogof Farm

- 5 Minffordd
- 6 Cwmrhwyddfor Farm
- 7 Gwerngraig Farm

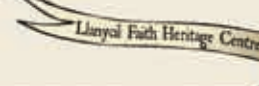
- 8 Cross Foxes Hotel
- 9 Gwanas Farm
- 10 Brithdir Village
- 11 Pont Helygog Bridge

- 12 Pont Rhydygwair Bridge
- Aran Hall and Rhydymain village are notable landmarks which can be seen in the distance. They are not on the actual route.
- 13 Esgairgawr Farm
 - 14 Dolfeili Farm

- 15 Cae Coch Farm
- 16 Pant Clyd Farm
- 17 Drws y Nant Uchaf Farm
- 18 Dwrnudon

- 19 Cefn Gwyn Farm
- 20 Llanuwchllyn Village
- 21 Pont-y-Pandy Bridge
- 22 Ffynnon Gywer Farm

- 23 Pant yr Onnen Farm
- 24 Bala



Bible Society would like to thank Mary Thomas for all her support and dedication in producing this guide book and for pioneering the walk over many years.

Bible verses quoted in the text can be found on the Mary Jones information boards which were prepared by Mary Thomas and other supporters.

An information board for each of the walk's five sections can be found along the route with a final board located in Bala at the end of the walk.

THE WALK

By following this linear route, you will walk 28 miles through the spectacular countryside of the old county of Meirionnydd, from an enchanting valley at the foot of Cadair Idris to the shores of Llyn Tegid. You will cross public paths and paths used with the permission of the landowner, over mountain pastures and through woodlands, along old romantic lanes, country roads and short unavoidable sections on the main road. The splendid views of lakes and mountains will astound you.

Before the journey

To reach Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, leave the A487 Dolgellau/Machynlleth at Minffordd. Take the B4405 for Abergynolwyn – turn right for Castell y Bere, following the sign for Llanfihangel-y-Pennant. Park by the church; no parking is available at Tŷ'n-y-Ddôl.

Please note that Llanfihangel-y-Pennant is remote with no public transport and that mobile phone reception is poor, particularly on the first part of the walk.

Be aware at all times that you are walking on private land

The landowners depend on the fields and animals for their livelihood. If the farmer is working in a pen and obstructing the path, rest for a while until it is convenient for you to pass through. Backup transport can meet walkers by the information boards at the end of every section or on some sections of road. Please do not drive up or park on farm drives as these are private property. Do not disturb livestock. Bulls are dangerous animals and cows with very young calves are even more dangerous. Sheep at lambing time during the spring months should be disturbed as little as possible.

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DIRECT MY FOOTSTEPS ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD – Psalm 119:133 NIV

The journey

- Study the route in detail.
- Match the length of the walk you are planning to your experience level and that of your group. Consider fitness, strength, age and expertise as well as knowledge of the area and the prevailing weather conditions.
- Wear strong walking boots.
- Make sure you have waterproof clothing and extra warm layers.
- Use a rucksack or backpack and carry enough food and water for the whole journey.
- Pack first aid equipment.

Follow the Countryside Code

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.

You start your journey of 5.2 miles from ① **Tŷ'n-y-Ddôl** the ruined cottage in **Llanfihangel-y-Pennant** where Mary Jones was brought up. **A** The cottage is situated on the Afon Cadair at the head of the Cwm Llan valley. Take a moment to savour the peace and tranquillity of this special place before you start your journey. An information board at the side of the cottage gives brief details of Mary's life up to 1800. In this section of the walk, look out for the wild violets which grow in abundance along the lanes in spring and the cormorants which nest on Craig yr Aderyn.

Retrace your steps back to the **B** church in Llanfihangel-y-Pennant over a footbridge and along the road. The grass verges are abundant with wild flowers: violets and primroses in early spring, followed by bluebells then honeysuckle and foxgloves later into summer. When you reach the passing place with 'no parking/no cycling' signs, immediately in front you will see the church and on the hillside above, slightly to your left, is Llechwedd, the home of William Huw. (In 1780 William Huw heard Robert Jones, an eminent Methodist preacher, preaching in the open air service at Abergynolwyn. After this he used to



A

Tŷ'n-y-Ddôl: Mary Jones' home

walk to Bala on Saturday evenings, listen to sermons and return to Llanfihangel on Sunday evenings.) On the skyline, to the right of the church, is Craig yr Aderyn (Bird's Rock) where the cormorants nest. In the wooded hillside between the church and Craig yr Aderyn is Castell y Bere, a Welsh castle built by Llywelyn the Great in the 13th century.

On reaching the church, do stop and go in before you continue your journey. The church is usually open and inside you will find a small exhibition of the Mary Jones story as well as a 3D map of the Dysynni Valley. As you leave, you will be able to see Mary's parents' gravestone. Stand by the door facing the tall tombstone immediately ahead of you. Turn to your right and their grave is marked by a small gravestone in the third row along.

OS 672089 As you exit the church, take the public footpath opposite, signposted beside the postbox. There are public toilets here. Pass Llwyn Celyn on your right. Climb over the ladder stile and go past the ruin of an old chapel. Take the path uphill, more or less following the Nant yr Eira stream. Opposite the waterfall, turn and



B

Llanfihangel-y-Pennant Church

look back down the valley. Continue uphill on the marked path and over a small stile. Here the terrain is rougher, with trees and bracken. At the junction with the track, keep right. Beware of boggy patches, especially after rain. Head towards two large stones with a cleft in the middle. Pass these, turning slightly left.

OS 679089 At the farm track, turn right and cross the ladder stile. Follow the well-defined path. You are heading for ② **Nant yr Eira**, the ruin of a cottage which you will see in the distance at the foot of a hill and slightly to your left. As you approach the cottage, choose your stepping-stones with care to cross the stream, especially after rainy weather. Continue slightly uphill to reach the ruin of Nant yr Eira. The house was built of slate, which is true of many of the walls in this area, as there was a large slate quarrying industry at Abergynolwyn until the 1930s. The cottage has long been derelict, with a rowan tree now growing from its chimney. There are several box and fruit trees in the garden and an old bread oven in the lean-to to the left of the house as a reminder of life long ago.



C

Looking back towards the valley of Cwm Llan



D

Ladder stile at field corner



E

Tal-y-Llyn Lake after passing Rhiwogof Farm

As you climb over the ladder stile, you will leave the valley of **C** Cwm Llan behind you and begin heading for the Tal-y-Llyn valley. Continue on the well-defined path, which you will find is muddy in places, through rough pasture land. Rising up in front you will see Craig Goch with markings from the ice age on the escarpment. Keep to the path. At a slate wall jutting out on the right, continue right following the line of the wall. **D** Cross the ladder stile at the corner of the field. **OS 688083** Once over the stile, follow a shale road down through Coed Cedris, which is mainly oak woodland. Ignore the path signs. Pass through the gate, which is always open, into **3** Coed Maes y Pandy (conifer woodland). Keep to the shale road: forestry tracks may look like motorways but they also have a nasty habit of halting abruptly in the middle of nowhere. Ignore both the forestry track and the overgrown path to the left.

Continue downhill. Take the shale road to the left towards **4** Rhiwogof – permission from the landowner has already been obtained. Climb uphill through the conifers for about a mile. **OS 697086** Don't veer onto the forestry tracks. There is a small intrusion of beech trees,

then the conifers start again. You will know you are nearing the top of the hill when more light breaks through the trees. Again, ignore the forestry track. At the cattle grid with a 'dogs on lead' sign, the track becomes a public right of way. The track continues over the brow of the hill, at which point you will be able to enjoy magnificent views of **Tal-y-Llyn Lake** below, with Ty'n-y-Cornel Hotel to the right. Note the ice age escarpment behind the hotel. Rhiwogof Farm is to your left and Cadair Idris mountain to the far left. Directly in front you will see the Tal-y-Llyn road pass. Section 2 of the Mary Jones route will pass this way. As the road veers left towards a farmhouse, continue along the public path straight ahead and over a ladder stile. Once in the field, you need to take the path to the right that runs alongside the hedge at the top of the field, and ignore the ladder stile to your left. Follow the farm track, keeping the fence/hedge to your left. Again you will be able to see spectacular views of the lake.

The path now descends towards Pentre Farm. At a slight bend, note the view ahead with a small hamlet at the far end of the lake. Tal-y-Llyn Pass is directly in front of you, Corris Valley to your right.

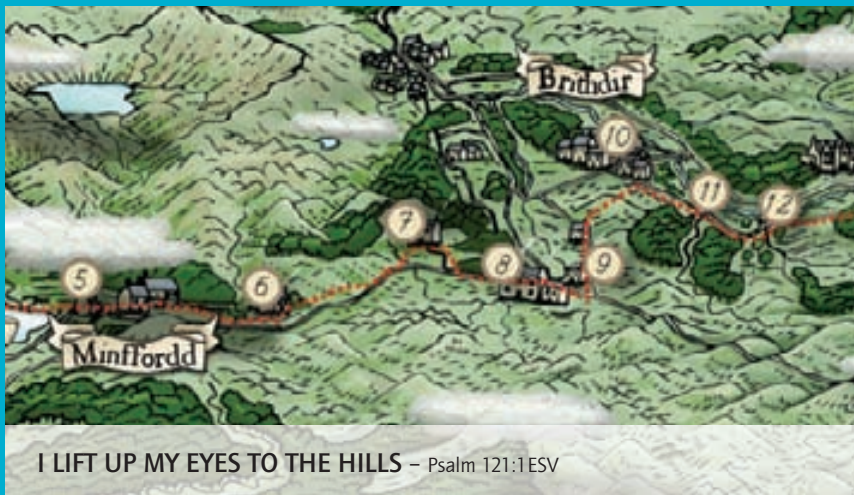
Follow the marked path through the gate. The path continues through rougher pasture land with a small, fenced oak woodland to your right. **E** As you pass the first clump of trees, turn around. Trace the lake shore past Ty'n-y-Cornel Hotel and you will see Tal-y-Llyn Parish Church. It was at this church that Mary Jones married Thomas Lewis Jones on 27 February 1813.

Follow a level track which will eventually turn into a shale track that goes downhill and curves to the right. The track ends opposite an oak tree. Continue downhill, keeping the fence to your left. Turn left through a wooden gate into oak woodland which is spectacular in spring when it becomes a bluebell wood. Follow the path down to the stream, passing either over or around the stile and continue over the wooden bridge. This is an excellent spot for a break, especially in hot weather.

Pass through the gate, taking the path behind Pentre Farm. Continue on this path until you come to the buildings, then pass through the gate and turn left onto an unclassified road which, although very quiet, is regularly used by local traffic. Keep to the road, ignoring the path sign.

Go through the second gate. Up on your far left is Cadair Idris mountain range. Pass the cottage on your left and enter a third gate. Continue by crossing over the wooden bridge or through the ford! Continue on the road to the left.

The gate brings you to the B4405; you will have 0.4 miles to walk on this road. Continue straight ahead on the road past the entrance to Llwyn Dôl Ithel and an old farm building on the left. At the end of this stretch, you will see the redundant Welsh Presbyterian chapel, Capel Ystradgwyn, along with the Dôl Einion Guest House and caravan/camping site. This is a good place to stop and ask if you may fill empty water bottles. Ignore the path sign and keep to the road. After passing the black metal gate on the left, continue along the road. A path follows the top of the wall on your left into an avenue of beech trees. Immediately after a large road sign on the right of the road, turn left into Dôl Idris car park in **5** Minffordd. This is the end of the first section of the walk. There are toilets, but no drinking water, and a Mary Jones information board detailing the next 6 miles of the journey.



I LIFT UP MY EYES TO THE HILLS – Psalm 121:1ESV

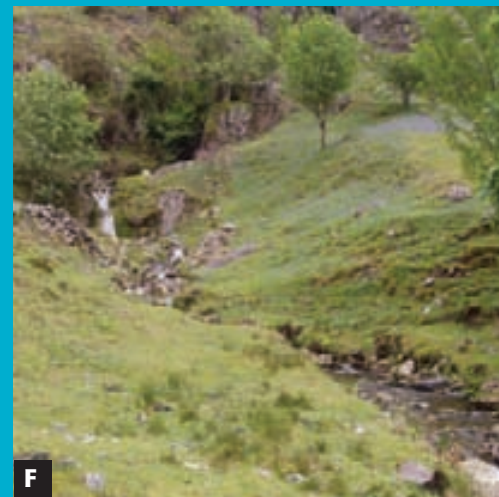
This part of the journey is 6 miles long. There is a Mary Jones information board located on the outside wall of the public toilets, providing local information. During this section of the walk look out for the red kite, which are often spotted in this area, the bluebells which you will see on the route during spring and the yellow irises which you will see during summer.

On leaving Dôl Idris car park in ⑤ **Minffordd**, turn left before the main entrance through the kissing gate. Enter the lay-by, where you will see a bus stop and a telephone kiosk. Take the path to the left as far as Minffordd Hotel, then with great care, walk along the A487 for 0.2 miles (there is no footpath). As you approach the sign for Cwmrhwyddfor Caravan and Camping Site turn left, then left again and down towards ⑥ **Cwmrhwyddfor** farm. Take a sharp right through the narrow gate signposted as a bridleway **OS 737118**.

Follow the bridleway, keeping the stone wall and campsite to your left. Cross over stile/gate. Keep to the path, which may be wet and muddy in places, rather than crossing the walls into the bracken. The mass of rock on your left is

Craig Cwmrhwyddfor. The large white bags you might see on your left, contain stones which are airlifted by helicopter, as required, to repair the Cadair Idris paths. On your right you will see **F** a waterfall. Cross the next ladder stile/gate. Above to your right is the busy A487. The rocky mass, with a small protrusion above right, is known locally as the Devil's Pulpit. Keeping the stone wall and stream to your left, continue to the next ladder stile/gate. On the right is a large stone with a quartz stripe. The wall separating you from the A487 runs to your right as you make the gradual climb.

As the valley and path narrow, the climb begins to get harder and you might find it helps to count the telegraph poles, or to look out for the variety of flowers appearing in spring, or the heather and rowan trees in late summer. At the end of the climb, have a rest on the concrete mound and take in the view. If you look back after walking up **G** Cwmrhwyddfor on the left you will see the Devil's Pulpit – Craig y Llam. On the right is Craig Cwmrhwyddfor – part of the Cadair Idris range. Lake Mwyngul (Taly-Llyn) is below in the valley. The parish church of Taly-Llyn stands on the far shore of the lake where,



Waterfall on the right at Cwmrhwyddfor

on 27 February 1813, Mary Jones married Thomas Lewis Jones.

At this point you can take either the official route – over the stile onto the A487 and continue until you reach the lay-by (0.2 miles) – or the unofficial off-road route, taking the shale path to the left of the concrete mound and follow the sheep track above the road. Follow the path above the lay-by fence. Drop down to the lay-by via the steep steps and stile. At the emergency telephone box, cross the A487 to the ladder stile opposite.

Follow the path on the right of the road through the bracken. Leaving the bracken, keep close to the fence on your left. When you reach the ladder stile, ignore the path sign. Climb down to the A487, taking extreme care. This is a new path which avoids using the A487. Cross the road with care to a small stile, follow the shale path to next stile, then follow the notes in the next paragraph. Turn right and follow the A487 for 0.1 miles over the brow of the hill. Follow the curve of the double white lines until you come to a ladder stile on your left. You have now left the Taly-Llyn valley and are entering **H** Cwm Hafod Oer. In



Walking up Cwmrhwyddfor

1657 George Fox, the first Quaker, travelled over Taly-Llyn Pass to Cwm Hafod Oer. He described how he had a vision that God would 'raise up a people to sit under his teaching'.

Follow the path to your right over the marshland; aim for the yellow-topped post. The path passes between two mounds. Follow the marked path through the bracken, taking care where the path is wet. Rhobell Fawr mountain can be seen directly in front on the skyline; a gas pipeline runs along on the right. As the path veers to the left, Aran Benllyn and Aran Fawddwy mountains will come into view to your far right. Keep to the marked path. Cadair Idris mountain range will be to your left. **OS 756148** Follow the path down to the stream, which you need to cross via the stepping stones. Ignore the public path sign to your left. **PLEASE NOTE: FROM THIS POINT ON TO GWERNGRAIG, THE ROUTE IS WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE LANDOWNER ONLY. Permission from the landowner has already been obtained.** Enter the gate directly in front of you into the sheep pen and then through the next gate. Leave the gates as you find them, be they open or closed.



H

Entering Cwm Hafod Oer



I

Looking back towards Cwm Hafod Oer



J

A glimpse of the Mawddach estuary in the distance

After the third gate you will see a cowshed on your right with an 'ichthus' sign on the wall. The fish sign has been a Christian symbol for almost 2,000 years. From here you can see the expanse of Cwm Hafod Oer valley. Cefn Eclo Farm is down to your right as you reach the fourth gate. On arriving at the farmhouse, keep the buildings to your left and follow the tarmac road to a large ash tree on your right. Turn sharp left over the cattle grid/wooden gate and follow the cycle path 8 below ⑦ **Gwerngraig Farm** and its buildings as far as the next cattle grid/wooden gate.

Continue to the right down the hill to the stream. Cross the footbridge and cattle grid/ wooden gate. Keep to the tarmac path which takes you slightly uphill, and cross a small stream. Cross the next stream, after which the path veers slightly left. Cross the cattle grid/metal gate. Opposite, across the valley, is Hafod Oer Farm. Keep to the path. The trees overhanging the path on both sides make a shady tunnel. The grass verges are filled with wild flowers such as meadowsweet, foxgloves, willow herb, and you will find wild raspberries and blackberries as well as hazel and rowan trees. Pass the small transmitting station behind the cowshed on your left. Continue over two more cattle grids/ wooden gates, then

down a walled section of path towards the cottage situated to your right. Pass through the wooden gate then the metal gate, passing Hafod y Meirch Farm and its buildings on your right.

OS 762160 At the junction, turn right. Take the marked path through a metal gate on to a field. Follow the markers through two further metal gates into woodland. Follow the rough path with the wall/fence to your right. If you stop at the small rowan tree and look back to your right, ■ you will see how far you have come in a short space of time. Follow the path and wall into the woods. Keep going downhill where you will see the remains of a wall on your right. Where the wall ends, the path will veer to the left. Follow the track through the oak and ash woodland. Ignore the paths to both right and left. Pass the gated entry on your right. Choose your path carefully as you cross over marshy ground, on a plastic pipe, to the gate and bridge ahead. Enter the metal gate and walk over the bridge, which can be slippery when wet. Head for the path sign. Follow the farm track to your right, heading back to the A487 over a small stile/metal gate. Enter on to the A487, keeping left on the road. Cross when it is safe to do so and walk along the grass verge for 0.4 miles, passing bus stops on both your left and right,

and a telephone kiosk on your left. You are now in the Tabor area – Quaker country.

At the busy road junction, cross the forecourt of the ⑧ **Cross Foxes Inn** and follow the A470 for 0.2 miles towards Dinas Mawddwy. Keep to the grass verge, passing the entrance to Gwanas Fawr farm on your right. Turn left on to the unclassified road and follow the cycle route 21. Pass ⑨ **Gwanas Farm** on your left – one of the hospices of the Knights Hospitaller Order established before 1338 and referred to in an old Welsh folk song *Hefo Deio i Dywyn* which mentions 'bread and cheese received at Gwanas'. Follow the road uphill. As you pass the entrance to Tyddyn Llwyn Farm on your right and a metal gate into a field on your left, note the magnificent view to your left of Cadair Idris, the third peak along. Continue along the walled road. Note the dry stone walls typical of this area: building them is an art, as no cement is used and the stones are matched like jigsaw pieces. In late spring you will see rhododendron bushes in full bloom. **OS 766177** Head slightly uphill to the white house on your left. As the road veers left, turn right on to the cycle path 21, through the metal gate and continue, passing the cowshed on your left.

You have now left Cwm Hafod Oer and the Tabor area and are entering the Wnion valley. The Wnion river joins the Mawddach river, entering Cardigan Bay at Barmouth along the famous Mawddach estuary. ■ Over the wall to your left, in the distance, you can just glimpse part of the estuary. Continue on the grassy path. Keep looking over the wall as more of the estuary will come into view. Pass through the metal gate and continue downhill. Moel Offrwm (mountain) is directly to your left. The next mass is Rhobell Fawr and Craig y Benglog which can also be seen clearly from Bala. As the path leads through the bracken, the estuary can be seen again to your left. Brithdir Primary School is to your near left. Continue through two metal gates and out onto a tarred road. Passing Tŷ'n Lliidiart on your left, follow the fenced road down into the village of ⑩ **Brithdir**. Pass through the metal gate, passing Cefn y Maes on your right and the Welsh Independent chapel on your left. Turning right on the road, follow the cycle route for 150 yards, at which point you will come to the Mary Jones information board on the right-hand side of the road which will provide instructions for the next 5.25 miles of the walk.

SECTION 3

BRITHDIR TO DOLFEILI
OS 770188/827237

BEFORE THE MOUNTAINS WERE BORN OR YOU BROUGHT FORTH
THE EARTH AND THE WORLD, FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING
YOU ARE GOD – Psalm 90:2 NIV

The journey now continues for a further 5.25 miles. There is a Mary Jones information board in a field on the right of the road before the village hall which will give local information. Along the way you can see foxgloves in spring/summer, hazel trees which grow in abundance and buzzards which are often seen in the area.

At the **10** Brithdir road junction, leave the B4416 (signposted Bala 17) and follow the cycle route 21 along the old Roman road which passes directly in front of the village hall. A telephone kiosk and public toilets can be found here. Continue on this unclassified road for 1.3 miles. Most of the houses you pass will be on your right as you leave the village of Brithdir. You will then pass Henblas, and Llwyn-yr-Helm caravan and camping park on your left, Llety on your right and Garth Uchaf and Y Gadlas on your left. Head uphill past a small house on the left. Enjoy the magnificent views to the left of Drws Ardudwy and Rhobell Fawr. At Craigfryn on the left you may see a cricket match underway on the lawn. The road then takes a sharp left, with Tŷ Newydd Uchaf on your right. At this point leave the road and

continue through the metal gate on to the public path **OS 788194**.

Take the wide track that has open views to the left. Ignore the path sharp right and the gated entrance to the forest. Follow the track downhill through a pleasant wooded area. Continue through **K** a metal gate and over the bridge, **11** Pont Helygog **OS 791196**. Follow the path uphill, ignoring the paths going right and left. Continue uphill on a tree-lined path. This path may become waterlogged in bad weather, in which case, take a detour left around the edge of the field until you come to the metal gate. You will then look across an open vista with the Aran mountains to your right. Ignore the gated entrance to your right and carry on through the next metal gate. Ignore the gate to your right and the rough path to your left, but instead continue on the path you are already on, with a wall to your right and rough pasture land to your left. Here there will be an abundance of bluebells and harebells depending on the season.

Just before the path descends, look down to the left and the hamlet and church of Bryn Coed Ifor may be visible through the trees. You have



Pont Helygog bridge

now left the Brithdir area and are heading for the area of Rhydymain.

Proceed down the tree-lined path through the 'crossroads'. You will see a stone building in the field to your right. A dry stone wall should be to your right, with hazel trees to the left as you head for the bridge **12** Pont Rhydygwair. Once over the bridge, ignore the gated path to your left. Continue uphill through the bluebells or bracken, then through a metal gate. Ignore the metal gates to the left and right. This area is used as sheep pens. Head for the metal gate directly in front, ignoring the metal gate to your right and the track to the left. Keep to the path, passing a cowshed on the left and the farmhouse further down to your left. Ignore the gate to the farm track to your left. Continue on the path and you will come to a walled open section ahead. Note the sheep opening in the left wall in line with the farmhouse. Continue through the wooden gate. At the crossroads continue straight ahead but take the time to look back and enjoy the magnificent views of the Mawddach estuary and Cadair Idris. Enter the second wooden gate. Ignore the opening to the left and the rough grass track to Llwyn-y-Ffynnon



Ruined building on right before entering wood

Farm and buildings. Continue along the tree-lined path, which can be muddy in places, especially after rain. Pass through the wooden gate and follow the tree-lined path uphill. In the field on your left are the ruins of a cowshed. As the trees end, the path becomes grassy. Follow the path uphill. Note the ruined building in the field to the right. **L** Look back for spectacular views.

Continue through the metal gate into the wood. The forestry road can be muddy after rain, so tread carefully and follow in the footprints of previous walkers, sometimes on the left, sometimes on the right. Use the slight detour to the right when the road is completely waterlogged. Cross the tiny stream into the tall conifers which are beautifully tranquil and offer welcoming shade in hot, sunny weather. Hengwrt Hall, now called Aran Hall, can be seen down to the left through the trees.

Continue on the road, which now becomes closed in by trees and shrubs. You will pass through another muddy patch. Cross the small stream and the path becomes brighter again. As you climb slightly, you will have views of **M** Aran Hall and Rhydymain village to your left.



M

Aran Hall and Rhydymain village in the distance



N

Downhill with the valley up to Bala in the distance



O

Bryn Tynoriad

Rhydymain was the location in 1949 for Richard Burton's first film, *The Last Days of Dolwyn*.

At the forestry crossroads ignore the roads to the left and right, continuing instead on the less obvious public path directly ahead of you. Note the ruins of a cowshed in the field to your left. Pass through the wooden gate, continuing over the small stream. As you approach the small stone wall on your left, if the path is waterlogged ahead, take a detour into the field on your left, following the line of the wall directly to your right. Return to the path between the hawthorn trees. Ignore the Tir Cymen path to your left for Llety Wyn **OS 814213**. Ford the stream carefully and continue through the wooden gate. There are magnificent views of Rhobell Fawr and Y Dduallt to the left. The grassy path veers downhill, and you will see a cowshed in the field to your right. The path you will follow here is more like a stream, although perfectly passable. The path passes under a canopy of hazel trees; proceed through the wooden gate. Continue on the path down to your left. You will see a view of Craig y Benglog straight ahead as you descend on to the road.

At the junction with an unclassified road, turn right and head over the cattle grid/metal gate. Keep to the road, passing the entrance on your right to Brith Fryniau and the bungalow on your left. Continue downhill, with Wergawr Farm down to the left. **13 Esgairgawr Farm N** is directly ahead. You will see the valley up to Bala in the far distance.

Cross over the cattle grid/metal gate and across the bridge Pont y Cawr. There are farm buildings on the left. Continue uphill passing the plane engine on your right that was recovered from the Aran, and past the entrance to Esgairgawr Farm, which was built in 1830. Enter the metal gate. If you look back from here, you will have splendid views of Cadair Idris. Aran Benllyn mountain is to the right. Keep to the road, passing the Glan Wnion houses on your left. Opposite 2 Glan Wnion/Bryn Derw, **OS 817227** take the public path to the right, where you will see a white cottage down on your left. Pass through the wooden gate, passing a building your left. Continue and pass through another wooden gate onto a pleasant wooded path, and through another wooden gate out of the woodland.

O Bryn Tynoriad, a ruined cottage, lies to your left. The plaque reads 'This is the birthplace of Evan Jones – Ieuan Gwynedd (1820–1852), Minister, Hymnist, Journalist and Patriot. 'He stood for Christ and his Country'. His mother, Catherine Evans, purchased a Bible from Thomas Charles of Bala, and paid for it in instalments from her meagre wages. It is known as the 'Red Bible' because she wrapped her Bible in red flannel in order to protect it.

Continue on the path, following the low-walled section. Go through a metal gate into the forest. At the forestry crossroads take the first left onto the tarmac road. Follow the road down to **14 Dolfeili** (Dolddeuli on OS maps). Note the high chimney, a particular feature of this district.

On the right at Dolfeili is a Mary Jones information board providing instructions for the next 5.25 miles.

Mary Jones (1784–1864)

- Born December 1784, Mary had a very poor upbringing, and was raised by her widowed mother.
- She walked two miles every week for six years to read the Bible at Penybrynau Mawr farmhouse.
- Mary saved 17 shillings over many years to buy the Bible.
- She walked all Saturday night in order to reach Bala in time for communion on Sunday morning.
- Part of Mary's income came from keeping bees.
- She contributed regularly to the work of Bible Society. In 1854, Mary donated half a sovereign to a special collection to send a million New Testaments to China in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of British and Foreign Bible Society.
- Mary read the Bible received from Thomas Charles from cover to cover four times during her lifetime.
- She was blind when she died in December 1864, aged 80.

SECTION 4

DOLFEILI TO LLANUWCHLLYN
OS 827237/879298



HOW CLEARLY THE SKY REVEALS GOD'S GLORY – Psalm 19:1 GNB

Your journey now continues for a further 5.25 miles. There is a Mary Jones information board opposite 14 **Dolfeili**, on the right side of the road before the bridge, which will provide local information. In spring/summer enjoy the bountiful blooms of the dog roses and throughout the year the oak trees, the gorse and heron which can often be seen in this area.

Head over the bridge onto the farm road and cross over the cattle grid, with the stream of Afon Tŷ Cerrig to your right. Don't be tempted to sit by these still waters for too long as you may never finish your journey! Enter the farmyard of Tŷ Cerrig Farm through the wooden gate on your left, exiting through the metal gate. Continue uphill on the tarmac track, ignoring the path to your left. If you look back, you will have splendid views of Cadair Idris. Below left is a cluster of houses and industrial sheds. This used to be Hufenfa Meirion (dairies) which was a hive of industry between the 1930s and the early 1970s. The majority working there were local people. On the main road is one of the turnpike road toll houses built between 1750 and 1805. Whilst walking to Bala Mary may have seen the Owain Glyndŵr stagecoach as it travelled between Barmouth and Corwen on the toll road below.

Continue uphill for 15 **Cae Coch**, a Welsh longhouse. Enter the farmyard through the double wooden gates, ignoring the path to the left. Exit the farmyard through the metal gate. Enter the wooden gate with an oil tank to your right and follow the open grassy path. The toll house can be seen from here. Look back for a magnificent view of Cadair Idris. Once you enter the forest, Cadair Idris will not come into view again until you are passing Llyn Tegid on your way into Bala. Enter the metal gate into good pasture land and out of the field again through the opening.

Ignore the Tir Gofal path to your right, continuing instead downhill to the left on a grassy path. Cross over a small stream (although this may not be there in dry weather!). Pass through the gate (SNP sign) and follow the path down to the right. At the signposted ladder stile, climb over and follow the wooden handrail to your left until you come to the grassy forestry path **OS 836246**. If the path is overgrown it may be easier to enter this forestry path via the rickety wooden gate before the way marker sign. Follow the grassy path under the overhanging trees. The path opens out after crossing a small stream and



P Looking back towards Cadair Idris

then joins the forestry track. Keep left. You will see naturally-seeded trees such as hazel, rowan, beech and ash edging the conifer forest, as well as wild flowers and heather in particular.

Down to the left below the A494 is Allt y Gwine. Pass the turning point for forestry vehicles. Continue over the stream and head downhill. Keep to the main track, ignoring any of the tracks to your right and left. Cross over the stream then over the ladder stile/wooden gate, leaving the forest for 16 **Pant Clyd Farm**. At Pant Clyd, circle round the house and lawn. At the junction with the farm road, take the path to the right, then head left, keeping the farm buildings on your left. Enter the metal gate, ignoring the first and second metal gates on the right and follow the path along the edge of the field, with a fence and rowan trees to the right. Veer slightly left to the field below and a small stile. Cross over the stile and make your way back over the stones to the field on the right. Continue ahead as if you are entering a dead end. Then continue along a narrow field until you reach a stone wall with a gateway. Follow the path, keeping the stone wall to your left. Cross over the stile/wooden gate, following the stone wall on the left through

a gap into the next field. Head for the farm through the metal gate and over the stream.

At the farm road, turn right up into the farmyard, through the metal gate then the wooden gate, keeping 17 **Drws y Nant farmhouse** on your right. Exit the farmyard through the double wooden gates into the field. Head for the signposted stile as you cross the field. At the stile, turn left along the field boundary. At the bottom hedge, turn right, then climb over the small stile. Cross the stream and follow the edge of the field and the way marker posts. Follow the stream uphill before you come to the fence directly ahead **OS 852266**. Turn left and cross over the stream towards the small marked stile. Cross over the stile, keeping left with the fence to your left.

Pant Gwyn Farm is to the left across the A494. Enter the 'open access' land. Cross the stream and follow the grassy path ahead, ignoring the gate to your left. If it gets too muddy at this point, carefully make a detour to the right of the path and around the cattle feeding area. Keep to the track, crossing over the ladder stile/metal gate. The 'open access' land ends here. Follow the fence and wall to the right, with a fence on



Q

Over the footbridge after 'open access' land

your immediate right. Arennig is the mountain that comes into view on the left. Follow the way-marked post, crossing over the stile/metal gate. Head for the large rowan tree then take the path with a tree on the left **Q** over the footbridge. Cross another small stile/metal gate. Keep walking with the fence to your right. At the corner of the fence, go straight ahead over a small stile wooden gate. From this spot you will get your first glimpse of Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake).

OS 858276 Enter a small forest and join the forestry road, passing Llyn Garneddwen, a favourite place for herons, on your left. As the forestry road veers left, enter the metal gate directly ahead (permission from the landowner has already been obtained). Look at the spectacular views of Llyn Tegid from here, with Arennig to your left and Aran hiding over to your right. Follow the grassy path through open pasture land where you will have splendid views of the lake. You are now leaving the Garneddwen area and entering the Llanuwchllyn area. Continue through the metal gate. Aran Benllyn is now visible to your right. Pass through the marked metal gate, ignoring the road to the white cottage, Llechwedd Fwyalchen. Follow the

obvious path, which may be muddy, and ignore the ladder stile on the right. Cross over the cattle grid and continue downhill. Ignore the Tir Cymen path to your left, passing by a few caravans to your right. Cross the bridge, heading for **18** **Dwrnudson's** buildings and house on the left. At the unclassified road, turn right uphill.

As the road veers right for Cwmonnen and Aran, take the signposted path to your left. Continue on the forestry track. Notice the abundance of wild flowers on the verge. **OS 864284** At Rhos Uchaf Cottage, take the marked shale path to your right. At the end of this path you will enter pasture land through a metal gate. The next footpath marker can be seen ahead on the gate to the left. Follow the path, keeping the fence to your left. Go through the metal gate and veer left through the next signposted metal gate. At Ffridd Lwyd, pass the buildings and cross the stream, entering the gate to the right. Follow the obvious path, but if it is too muddy, ignore the ladder stile on the right, and enter the double metal gates. Enter the farmyard through either of the metal gates, exiting through double metal gates and then through two more metal gates. This area is



R

Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake) and the village of Llanuwchllyn

sometimes in use as sheep pens and you may need to wait until the farmer can let you through.

Keeping **19** **Cefn Gwyn** Farm to your right, follow the obvious farm track downhill with the fence to your right. Cross over the cattle grid and you will see views of **R** Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake) and the **20** **Llanuwchllyn** village below. Keep to the farm road down to the village, passing Cilgellan Farm on your right and Derwengam bungalow on the left after the metal gate. The public path goes down through the field, but if the crops are high or the grass is very wet, the road is just as quick. Cross over the cattle grid, and you will see Garth Isaf Farm on your right. Cross over another cattle grid, following the road to the left down to the village. When joining the main road, opposite the village hall, turn right. Continue along the street until the houses end on the left side of the road. Enter the Snowdonia National Park car park directly before **21** **Pont y Pandy** bridge. You will see the Mary Jones information board which will give you instructions for the final 6.25 mile section of the walk.

Llanycil Faith Heritage Centre

Llanycil Faith Heritage Centre, on the edge of Bala, Gwynedd, is a hidden treasure.

Developed by Bible Society, the centre is on a site which has been a place of Christian worship since the 6th century.

Here, the rich vein of cultural, faith and biblical heritage that has shaped the identity, character and values of modern Wales over 1,500 years can be celebrated,

The new Llanycil Faith Heritage Centre will provide:

- an ongoing opportunity to celebrate Welsh cultural and spiritual heritage.
- an educational centre to develop new and inspiring teaching resources.
- a centre where, by returning to our roots, we shall be able to develop our work in Wales and celebrate the continuing work of Bible Society across the world.

For more information call 01793 418222 or email contactus@biblesociety.org.uk



THE MOUNTAINS AND HILLS WILL BURST INTO SINGING AND THE TREES WILL SHOUT FOR JOY – Isaiah 55:12 GNB

Your journey will end after this section of 6.25 miles. There is a Mary Jones information board in the Snowdonia National Park car park providing local information. In this section of the walk look out for Welsh yellow poppies and heather, at its best in late summer, and the blackthorn which flowers abundantly in this area in spring before the sloes form in autumn.

On leaving the car park, turn left over the **21** Pont y Pandy bridge and Afon Twrch. In 1781 the original bridge was swept away by a deluge. Sally Jones from Bala, later to become the wife of Thomas Charles in 1783, was also almost swept away.

Follow the B4403 for 1.5 miles. Beware of the traffic at all times. On arriving at the top of the hill, you will see below, Llanuwchllyn Station, now a narrow gauge railway, and the wide Dee valley with a vista of the Arennig mountains forming the backdrop. To the far left is a large chapel, Yr Hen Gapel, which was the home of Michael D Jones (1822–1898), minister, teacher, radical, patriot and the pioneer of Welsh freedom. Coed y Pry, the home of Owen M Edwards (1858–1920), writer and patriot,

lecturer, publisher and the Chief Inspector of Schools for Wales, is on the road which turns right.

Continue on the B4403, **S** leaving Llanuwchllyn and heading for Llangywer. On the way you will pass Felindre and Rhyd Fudur on the right. Llyn Tegid and the Urdd (Welsh League of Youth) Centre at Glan-llyn will come into view on the left. Pass the entrance to Pentre Piod/Gwynant on your right. Head downhill past Pentre Piod station on your left, then past Flag Halt. Look for the public path sign to your right.

At this point you have a choice. You can continue on the B4403 through the hamlet of Llangywer and on to Bala. This route is slightly shorter than following the path.

If you want to follow the path instead, follow the path up to **22** Ffynnon Gywer farmhouse **OS 899316**. Proceed through a small gate on the left, continuing on the path through the field. There is a well-trodden green path straight ahead, which has beautiful views of Llyn Tegid and Bala with the backdrop of Moel Emoel, Foel Dryll and Foel Goch. Enter the wooden gate, crossing the



S Leaving Llanuwchllyn heading for Llangywer

unclassified road and following the public path through the gate for Cae Glas. The path passes in front of the farmhouse. Keep the fence to your right. Follow the signposted path to the left, keeping the hedge on your left. Ignore the entrance to the left, instead following the path down to the ladder stile and over the stream. Go uphill to the field, following the marked path straight ahead. When you reach the middle of the field, down to your left you will see the hamlet of Llangywer and **T** St Gywer Church (now closed). Cross over the ladder stile and follow the path down through the field. Turn right, keeping Tŷ Cerrig farmhouse to your left. Proceed through the metal gate and the second metal gate/ladder stile to your right. Climb over the ladder stile/gate. Follow the path ahead, which may be muddy in places, with a ditch to the left. Leave the field over the ladder stile/metal gate. Continue straight ahead, down through the avenue of trees. Cross over the ladder stile and out into the clearing. Ignore the forestry road to the right, turning left instead over the concrete bridge. Follow the markers. Turn left on to an unclassified road and walk down the valley of Glyn Gywer. A glorious view of the Arennig mountains will appear before you.



T St Gywer Church

OS 908321 At the 'no parking day or night' sign, take the path to the right for **23** Pant yr Onnen Farm. Continue along the farm road, with buildings to your left. There are spectacular views over Bala Lake (Llyn Tegid) from here. At the public path sign follow the green path with a house to the left. Pass through the double metal gate and follow the signs through the wooden gate into the woods. Follow the path slightly uphill. Pass by the badger sets and through a small wooden gate into the field, keeping the fence on your right.

At the fence corner, continue straight on along the obvious path. You will see the fence appear on your right again. The marked path veers left downhill, with a stream to the right. cross the stream. Climb up and head directly for the sheep pens. Cross the ladder stile, then cross the stream. Climb up the stone steps and over the stile onto Open Access land **OS 921332**. Follow the path, keeping the pens and fence to your left. After you walk under the overhanging trees the path becomes a clearer, pleasant, stony path through oak woodland. Keep the fence to your right as you cross over a small stream, after which the path becomes grassy. Ignore the ladder stile/metal gate to your left and continue on the grass path. Cross over the



U

Splendid view of Bala

stream and follow the obvious path on your right which then veers left up through the bracken and continues uphill. Cross over the stream and straight on along the upward path. **U** From here there are splendid views of Bala, with the spires of Capel Tegid, built in memory of Thomas Charles, Christ Church and the castle-like Presbyterian Youth Centre, Coleg y Bala. **OS 921332** Cross over the ladder stile, leaving the 'open access' land, turn left and follow the fence to your left downhill and over the next ladder stile. Aim for the path marker.

Cross the unclassified road, following the path through marshland. If you turn and look back you will see the Cadair Idris mountain range to your far left. The path here can be very boggy in places. As the path veers downhill and turns left, Bala becomes very prominent, Llanycil church, Thomas Charles' resting place, now bought by Bible Society with the intention of transforming the building into a Faith Heritage Centre is straight ahead among the trees on the opposite lake shore. Keep to the path as it descends through the bracken. The path veers right over a stile. The path here is well used as it passes through the trees, with a fence to your left. Continue up through the bracken on this path, which is fenced on both sides. Follow the markers, keeping the fence

to your left as the path goes downhill. On the left you will pass Graienyn, the home of Rowland Huw (1714–1802), bard, poetic teacher and hymnist, and also home of Rowland Huw Pritchard (1811–1887), musician and composer of the Welsh hymn tune *Hyfrydol*.

Cross over the stile, where you will pass a countryside code sign, and enter the golf course. Fach Ddeiliog is now owned by the John Lewis Partnership. Although the grounds are private, the public path remains open. Follow the marked path up through the drive. The path passes behind the main building and onto the car park. Continue on the shale road. Go through the small stile/metal gate, where you will see a forestry 'welcome' sign. Pass the house on your left. Ignore the wooden gate to the left and the path to the right **OS 929346**. Take the marked path to the left over the wooden rails/locked wooden gate. As you cross the field keep the fence to your left. There are magnificent views from here of Bala, Bala College, Capel Tegid and Christ Church. Cross the ladder stile/wooden gate and head for the next ladder stile which leads to the old railway bridge. Exit through the Bala Lake Railway path. Pass through the metal kissing gate, cross the B4403 and cross the old bridge directly in front of you.



V

Thomas Charles' home, now Barclays Bank

Continue on the pavement over the bridge Pont Mwnygl y Llyn that crosses the Dee River, head onwards to **24 Bala**. Follow the grass path with benches. On the lake shore look to the left over the lake and you will again see Cadair Idris in the distance and Aran Benllyn appearing to your left. Join the metalled path, taking the obvious path second left. There is a rugby field on the right. Take the first path to the right through the metal kissing gate. Follow the gravel path, ignoring the metal gate to the left. You are now entering Plase, the old part of Bala, where there are public toilets and a car park on your right. Turn left along Heol Aran, with cottages on the left and workshops on the right. Enter the main street opposite Moduron Y Bala garage. Turn right passing Somerfield, Ye Olde Bull's Head and the cenotaph and you will come to the original site of **V** Thomas Charles' home, now Barclays Bank.

Thomas Charles, educator, religious leader, preacher and revivalist, was a hugely significant influence on 19th century Wales. Moved by the thirst for God's Word among so many of his Welsh compatriots, Charles later described the longing for Bibles in Wales. Joseph Hughes' famous response 'If for Wales, why not for the Kingdom;

why not for the whole world?' appears on the final Mary Jones information board which marks the end of your journey.

The information board provides some local information as well as a map outlining the whole journey. You will also see pictures of some of the sites in Bala. A verse of englyn (a form of Welsh poetry, in strict meter) by Robert William, of Pandy, Rhosygwallia celebrating the universality of the Bible's message can be seen alongside the daffodil. Roughly translated, the verse says of the Bible:

Wise book full of wealth – gloriously successful
The sword of the spirit,
And also the word of the God of Heaven
A Bible to all the inhabitants of the world!

Perhaps Mary returned home with her Bible, inspired by the verse that appears on the board which marks the end of the journey.

**YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET,
AND A LIGHT FOR MY PATH**

– Psalm 119: 105 ESV

A HISTORY OF THE WALK

In 1800, when she was 15 years old, Mary Jones walked barefoot from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to Bala to buy a Bible from Reverend Thomas Charles, an influential preacher and pioneer of Sunday Schools during a period of spiritual revival in the 1790s. Mary's story was typical of a widespread thirst for the Bible and Christian teaching. Her walk and the demand for affordable Bibles for ordinary people was part of the inspiration for the foundation of Bible Society in 1804. From its start, the Society was dedicated to Bible work both at home and far beyond the British Isles, and today works in over 200 countries and territories.

Mary's story is well known throughout the world and, although a Bible exists containing Mary's inscription, no details of the route she took have ever been found.

When I was asked to look into the route that Mary may have been from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to Bala in spring/summer 1800, there was very little information available. So, with the intention of celebrating the bicentenary of the walk in 2000, I started off in 1998 with not much more than my local knowledge of people and the countryside, and an OS map.

The late Mrs Margaret Rees of Llanfihangel-y-Pennant was a mine of information, having been a church warden for many years and an unofficial lecturer when groups visited the church or the monument at Llanfihangel-y-Pennant. Although having no knowledge of the actual route, she had heard that Mary went to Bala via Rhiwogof, Cae'r Tyddyn, on the A470, Brithdir, Llanuwchllyn and on to Bala.

As I failed to get any certain proof of the actual route, my aim in the end was to find a likely route from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to Bala. By reading widely, I gathered information and walked all the relevant footpaths in the area. I chose to follow public footpaths, bridleways and unclassified roads, while using the main roads as little as possible and keeping to the rough distance mentioned. I also tried to use paths that are well used and not likely to disappear in undergrowth and also to use paths that cross land which is farmed by landowners who welcome walkers.

My first rough guide was ready by April 1999 and was 'tested out' by the youth of the then Presbyterian Church of Wales East Meirionnydd Presbytery. The route was divided into five parts of roughly five miles each with 20 to 30 youths from five different districts tackling each route. After finishing a particular route, the walkers were transported to within two miles of Bala and we all walked into the town together. The day was a great success and from that time on, after a few adaptations to the routes, it became known as the Mary Jones Walk. I prepared information boards and a leaflet for the walk which were displayed in Bala College, the Presbyterian Youth Centre of Wales, as part of Bible Society's bicentenary celebrations. My sincere thanks go to the staff of Bala College as it is with their co-operation that this route came into existence.

In the guide book the route is in five sections, as it has been developed in recent years

It is a route that I hope many more walkers will discover and enjoy for years to come.

Mary Thomas.

Author