

Rhayader Town Trail



Beginning from the Smithfield Market the walk will take about an hour at a leisurely pace allowing for time to stop and look. It is all accessible for wheel chairs and push chairs although there is a steep 50m climb in Waun Capel Parc.

1. The Smithfield Market: where regular sales of sheep, cattle and ponies take place throughout the year. Pleasure fairs are still held here in May, a legacy of the old hiring May Fair where workers sought new Masters, advertising their skills by wearing or carrying a token of their trade e.g. a shepherd would sport a wisp of sheep's wool. Contracts were sealed by giving the workers a shilling and then they went off to enjoy the amusements.

Walk down North Street to



2. The Town Clock: built on the site of the Old Market Hall, the clock is a War Memorial for the two world wars.

North face: a mother and child with ivy for sympathy, clasped hands for friendship.

East Face: Welsh Dragon fighting the Prussian Eagle and the old Coat of Arms of the district flanked by leeks, national emblems of Wales.

West face: soldier and Welsh Dragon

South face: angel placing a victory wreath. The palm branch an emblem of peace and on the shield the Trinity and Cross signifying the Great Sacrifice.

Please beware of traffic at the Town Clock crossroads. On the corner of East Street and South Street is

3. Ye Old Corner Shoppe: a grade II, 17th Century, listed, black and white timber framed building with stone tiled roof. Originally a private dwelling it became business premises in 1794.

Continue along East Street to see

4. Bank House – “New” Market Hall: formerly the North Wales and South Wales Bank and a market hall. From 1930 to 1974 it was the town fire station and then it housed the old museum.

5. HSBC Bank: built of Ruabon brick and originally the Kington and Radnor Bank.

Turn right down by the Post Office and follow Caeh Herbert Lane to where it meets South Street and from where you can see

6. Bryniago House: built in the 1880s with distinctive red tile shingles.



7. Penrally House: a dignified Georgian dwelling. The simple spearhead iron railings and the pineapples incorporated into them are symbols of hospitality.

8. The Tollhouse: these had been set up on all the main entries to the town, with gates across the road, to collect road taxes. In the 1840s this led to The Rebecca Riots, where men disguised as women tried to destroy the tollhouses.

9. Greenfields: A late Georgian house and fine example of local hand cut and dressed stone.

To avoid walking along the narrow part of South Street there is an alternative route back along Caeh Herbert Lane and left up Martin's Way footpath to the HSBC

Bank Building in East Street.

Pick up the trail again from the town clock and follow West Street to see



10. The Old Swan: with its crooked chimneys, the gargoyle above and the large window. Carved on the left of the frame and protected by glass is the date 1683. This was originally the porch of The Old Swan Inn.

11. The Arches: once the Crown Post Office and Telephone Exchange, purpose built in the early 1900s of Ruabon brick, it now houses the community support offices, telecentre and information touch screen facility.

12. The Lion Royal Hotel: known for around 250 years as the Red Lion, this was the main coaching inn. The gates in the archway came from the old Market Hall. The archway opposite still has some of the original wooden cobbles which muffled the sound of the horses' hooves.



13. The Cwmdauddwr Arms: probably early 17th Century it is listed as a good example of local style building – mixing stone and weatherboarding.



14. The Old Police Station and Courthouse: built about 1870 with courts sitting until the mid 1990s. The distinctive porches have studded, pointed arch doors.

15. The Tabernacle Chapel: One of the first Congregational Chapels in Radnorshire and reputedly built on the site of the town prison, its 300th anniversary was celebrated in 1988. According to local folklore a tunnel led from the chapel to Tower House opposite.

16. Tower House also reputedly stands on the site of the defended entrance to Rhayader Castle and a passage allegedly connected it with the castle. A one time Inn and seat of the Court Leet, the date 1766 is carved on an oak beam inside. A well, now buried under the kitchen floor, supplied pure water.

Just by the Chapel you may like to take a detour down

17. Water Lane: once called Mill Street as both a grist mill and woollen mill operated here, as did the old forge. At the bottom lies the ancient river ford and from here you can follow the riverside walk round to South Street. Across the river is the Gro park (Gro meaning gravel or pebbles) and above it is the 16th Century Triangle Inn, once called Tafarn-y-Rhyd – the Tavern on the Ford.

Proceed over the bridge to Cwmdeuddwr

18. The Bridge: joining the two parishes of Rhayader and Cwmdeuddwr. Halfway across is an interesting plaque to read. Just below the bridge clothes were once washed and the cottagers who lived around the Gro had the right to erect clothes lines.

19. Motte and Bailey Castle: behind the old wall at the back of the Cwmdeuddwr car park, see on site information board.

20. The Old School: endowed in 1794 it educated the infants of the district up to 1978. On the left stood the village pound where stray animals were impounded awaiting collection by their owners. The next door cottage was once the Bell Inn.



21. St Brides Church: the parish of Cwmdeuddwr, where in 1746 Rev. John Wesley preached. Traditionally Cwmdeuddwr families were buried on one side of the path and Elan Valley families on the other.

Return from Cwmdeuddwr back over the bridge and turn left down

22. Gasworks Lane: not sign-posted, but leading down to what was a grocery store, but before had several uses including that of the town's cinema. The open picnic area beside the river was the site of the town's first electricity works, powered by water, and also the site of the gas works and saw mills.

Follow the path alongside the river around below the

23. Site of Rhayader Castle: the remains of its dry moat can still be seen. On the river bank opposite the castle can be seen the ruins of a mill, one of many corn mills and flannel mills of the district.

Again you may wish to take a detour on through Waun Capel Parc and over the footbridge to enjoy the riverside walk, but to continue the town trail walk up to the top of the park to view the castle mound.

The castle, of 1177 – 1231, was a wooden structure built by the Welsh Prince Rhys ap Gruffudd to defend the first major crossing on the River Wye, but was destroyed by Llewellyn the Great in his fight against the Mortimers. There is an on site information board explaining its full history.

From Castle Road turn left into Church Street to



24. St Clements Church: the parish church of Rhayader, formerly St. Cynllo. It is said to stand on the site of the old Garrison Church of the castle. Whilst foundations of a new tower were being dug, several skeletons were discovered laid neatly in a mass grave. One was of enormous size with a thighbone longer than a metre. It is generally agreed that these were soldiers of the garrison of Rhayader Castle who had been slain by Llewellyn the Great and that the "giant" was the Castle Commander.

Across the main road from the church is

25. Tanners Row: where lodged many of the labourers working on the Elan Valley dams. Their roistering on a Saturday night gave it the nickname of Hell Fire Square. Also site of Rhayader Parish pound where stray animals were impounded awaiting collection by their owners.

KEY

7 Town Trail Buildings of Interest

--- Footpaths

P Parking

♿♿ Toilets

i Information

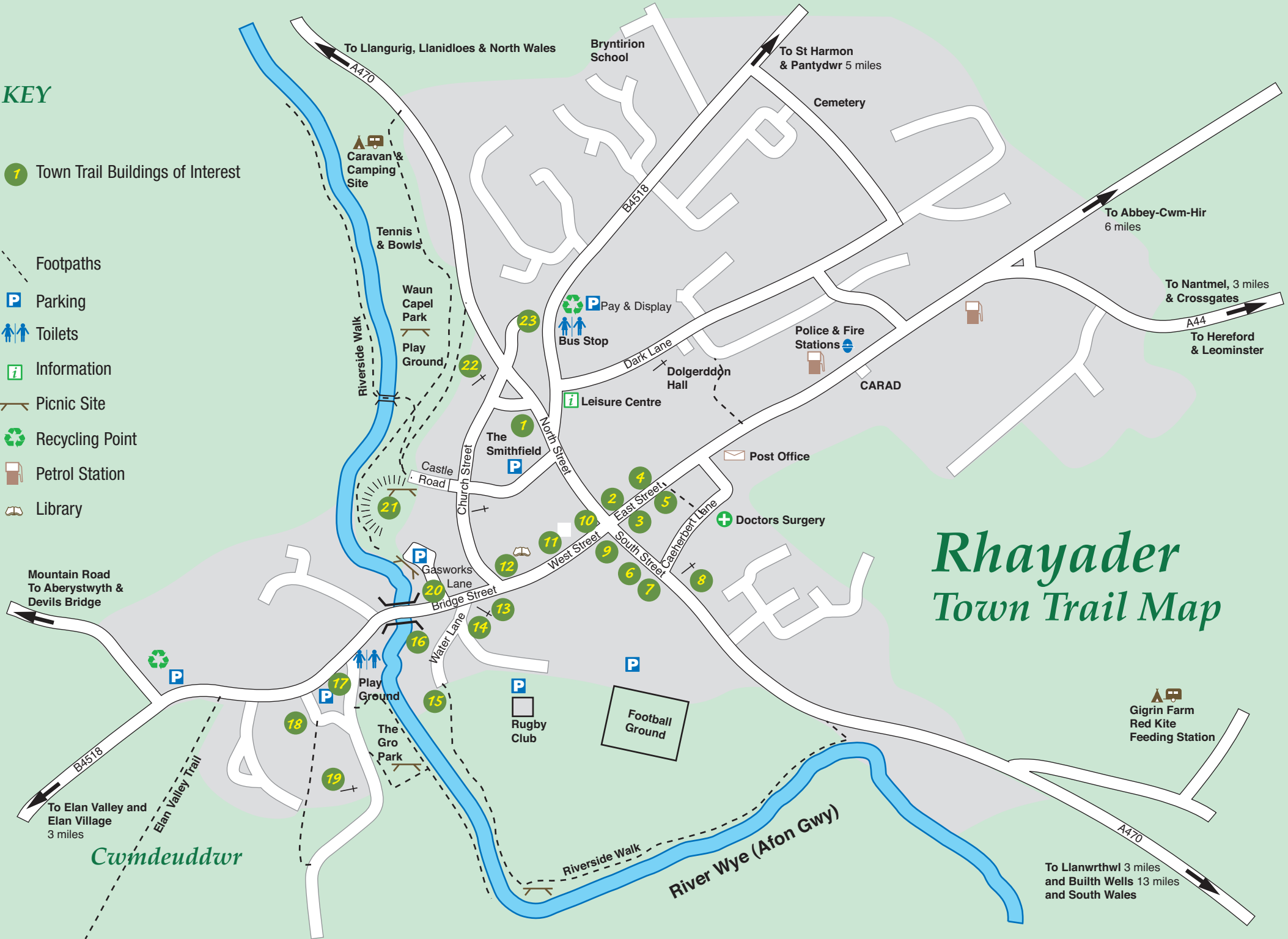
--- Picnic Site

♻️ Recycling Point

🛢️ Petrol Station

📖 Library

Rhayader Town Trail Map



To Llangurig, Llanidloes & North Wales

Bryntirion School

To St Harmon & Pantydwr 5 miles

Cemetery

Caravan & Camping Site

Tennis & Bowls

Waun Capel Park

Play Ground

23

Pay & Display

Bus Stop

Dolgerddon Hall

Police & Fire Stations

CARAD

To Abbey-Cwm-Hir 6 miles

To Nantmel, 3 miles & Crossgates

To Hereford & Leominster

Leisure Centre

The Smithfield

Post Office

Doctors Surgery

Mountain Road To Aberystwyth & Devils Bridge

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Play Ground

The Gro Park

Rugby Club

Football Ground

Gigrin Farm Red Kite Feeding Station

Cwmdeuddwr

Riverside Walk

River Wye (Afon Gwy)

To Llanwrthwl 3 miles and Builth Wells 13 miles and South Wales

A470

BA518

Elan Valley Trail

To Elan Valley and Elan Village 3 miles

Castle Road

Churon Street

North Street

West Street

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