

St. Clement's Rhayader to Nantgwilt

(5.2 miles, mostly tarmac, fairly flat)



From the church gate turn right along Church Street past the garage, then turn right down Castle Road to the gate into the park. On your left is the site of Rhayader Castle built of wood in 1177 by Lord Rhys, Prince of Deheubarth. It was finally destroyed in 1231. Go through the gates into the park and follow the path down to the play area. Turn left along the bank of the river. On the opposite bank a waterfall enters the river, 100 yards on you will see the ruins of one of many flannel mills on this stretch of the Wye. Follow the path across a car park, between buildings to the main road. Turn right over Rhayader bridge.

Alternatively, from the church turn right down Church Street and then right down Bridge Street to the bridge passing the Old Police Station (built 1870) and Tabernacle Chapel (originally built 1688) on the left. Peering over the left parapet of the bridge you will see the remains of the waterfall that gave Rhayader its name. Continue through Cwmdauddwr past the old School (1794-1978) next to St Bride's Church on the left. Continue out of the village until you reach the Elan Valley trail (signposted Builth and Aberystwyth) and follow the cycle path all the way to Elan Village. The path follows the route of the railways that delivered provisions during the construction of the Elan Valley dams. On the way you will pass over Rhayader Tunnel nature reserve, home to Brown long eared, Daubenton's and Natterer's bats. Note also the red brick building, one of many built on the Elan Valley pipeline to house valves and maintenance equipment. Further on there is access to the Elan Valley Hotel (1894) on the right. Pass Bethania Baptist chapel (built in 1900 to replace Garreg Ddu Baptist church, submerged under Carreg Ddu reservoir) and four houses on the left.

At this point you may want to detour left down the hill to a footbridge over the river. On the other side, follow the path right to the road and through the village. The school house (now Elan Valley Lodge) and other buildings were all built in 1909 to house estate workers. At the end of the village turn left through a gate (rather than right over the bridge) and follow the path along the river to the turbine house close to the dam. Cross the bridge behind the turbine house to its twin on the opposite bank and then turn right to the visitor centre. After the visitor centre take any path up the hill to the left to rejoin the cycle path to the top of the dam.

Alternatively, after Bethania Chapel, continue along the cycle path to the main road. Turn left towards the Visitor Centre and after 50 metres cross the road and continue along the cycle path to the top of the dam. From here follow the path along the edge of the reservoir to the bridge (really a submerged dam) over the water. Cross the bridge and Nantgwilt chapel is facing you.

Trail -----
Alternative Route

RHAYADER
PARKING/TOILETS/FOOD
ACCOMMODATION