

Rhos-on-Sea *Heritage* Walk

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This booklet is also available in Welsh



Rhos-on-Sea

Heritage Walk

This guide aims to take you on a tour of the attractive village of Rhos-on-Sea and introduce you to its surprisingly rich historic heritage. Rhos has strong associations with an astonishing variety of historical periods and events starting with Roman times, but also including the time of the Celtic saints, the Middle Ages and then Elizabethan times right through to the present day. Use this walk

to discover many fascinating buildings and historic sites and learn about the interesting people who are associated with some of them.

The core of the Walk will take about an hour centred on the promenade. Three optional extensions have been added for those with more time and energy. The complete walk, including the delightful trail to the Bryn Euryn hill fort, (well worth it for the superb views alone) would take between 3 and 3½ hours. As the route is circular, it can be joined at any point. Directions are in blue and points of interest are given a number, so it's easy to follow. There are a number of excellent cafés and teashops in the centre of Rhos, and you will pass some pubs on the walk, all serving food, so rest and refreshment should be readily available. You will also pass several benches if you would like some additional pauses so as to take in the pleasant atmosphere!

There is parking along most of the promenade. There are also two car parks (marked P on the map). Therefore, if you wish you can simply start the walk at the nearest number shown on the map to where you are parked.





Start at St Trillo's Chapel on Marine Drive.

1. St Trillo's Chapel

This fascinating building is thought to be the smallest church in the British Isles, seating only 6 people. It is named after St Trillo, a 6th century Celtic saint who built his cell here. The age of the present building is not known, as it has been heavily repaired over the centuries. St Trillo's original cell is more likely to have been made of wood and wattle, although he may have built a wall of stones gathered from the beach to protect it from the wind.



Go inside the chapel if it is unlocked. It is on the site of an ancient spring. This provided St Trillo with his supply of drinking water and would have been an important factor

in making him pick this site. You can still see the well in front of the altar. For centuries this well supplied the water for baptisms all over the extensive medieval parish of Llandrillo. As well as this, in times gone by it also had a long tradition of being a healing well. Communion services are still held regularly in the Church – it is humbling to think that you are standing on a spot that has been the site of Christian worship for nearly 1500 years!

Celtic monks usually built an enclosure round their cell so that they could farm to feed themselves. This was known as a "Llan." This is how Llandrillo yn Rhos (the original name of Rhos-on-Sea) got its name. Rhos means marsh, so the name means the "Llan of St Trillo by the marsh." The surrounding area would have been marshy, as originally it was an island formed by two branches of the local river.



On leaving the chapel, take the footpath along the seawall towards the centre of Rhos.

2. Rhos Fynach Fishing Weir

Look closely at the shore on your left. At low tide you can see the remains of the foundations of the medieval Rhos Fynach Fishing Weir, one of many once found round the Welsh coastline. There used to be two fishing weirs at Rhos. They consisted of a large V-shaped enclosure made of wicker fencing. At high tide the fish swam into the structure and were then trapped in a pool as the tide went out. Weirs such as these were so effective that by Victorian times they were a danger to fishing stocks, particularly salmon. Therefore in 1861 Parliament passed a law ordering their destruction. As a result the other weir in Rhos was demolished. However the new law granted an exemption where the owner could prove his weir had existed before the time of Magna Carta (i.e. 1215 AD). The owner of this Rhos Fynach weir was able to prove its medieval origins to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, and so it escaped destruction - further evidence of the antiquity of the settlement at Rhos. The weir was amazingly effective and enormous quantities of fish could be caught. For example, in 1850 there was a record catch of 35,000 herrings in a single night! The weir even trapped an 8-foot shark in 1865, which was then put on display in Llandudno market. On another occasion in 1907, 10 tons of mackerel were caught on a single tide (10 tons equals more than 10,000 kilos in today's metric measurements).



The last owner of the weir, one John Parry Evans, trained terrier dogs to retrieve salmon from the weir. The first dog he trained, Jack, was so admired that he was awarded with a silver collar and became a popular tourist attraction.

Unfortunately he died in 1873 after receiving fatal injuries from another shark trapped in the weir! One of his successors called Carlo is shown in the accompanying old photograph, as he proudly trots along with the large salmon in his mouth that he has just retrieved from the weir behind him. This photograph is doubly interesting because it shows clearly the wattle fence construction of the weir. The weir fell into disuse during the First World War, and regrettably its stakes were later removed as a danger to boats.



Carry on until you reach Rhos Point on your left. At the time of writing this had become derelict pending redevelopment.

3. Original Pier Ticket Office

4. Steamship Wreckage

This area was originally the Pierhead and the octagonal stone building which should still be there was the original Pier Ticket Office. Rhos once had a very substantial pier 1500 feet long (bought second hand from Douglas in the Isle of Man in 1895!). The "Colwyn Bay & Liverpool Steamship Co" operated a regular passenger steamship service for many years between Liverpool and Holyhead and used this pier to set down passengers for Rhos and Colwyn Bay.



In 1908 a steamship called the Rhos Neigr sank while trying to dock at the pier to pick up 75 passengers. Some of the steamship wreckage can still be seen at very low tides a few hundred yards out to sea and to the left of the original Pierhead (marked by a blue buoy). In the Second World War the Home Guard removed many of the planks from the pier, so that any invading German soldiers using the pier for a night-time invasion would fall through the holes!



Look across the road (to the left of the junction with Abbey Road and behind some modern buildings and a "crazy golf" attraction), and you will see the Rhos Fynach Public House and restaurant.

5. Rhos Fynach

Six Roman coins in excellent condition dating from the time of Constantine the Great were found in an old stone drain in the garden here, so this ancient site must have links back to Roman times. In the Middle Ages the site is thought by many to have been an outpost of the large Cistercian monastery at Maenan in the Conwy Valley known as Aberconwy Abbey. If so, the monks responsible for collecting the fish from the ancient fishing weir we have just passed would have used it as an overnight stop. (There is a tradition that a monk wearing a brown habit and white cloak still haunts the buildings!) What is certain is that a charter of Llewellyn the Great dated in the year 1230 records that all rights in the land of "Ros Veneych" were bought by his chief adviser, Ednyfed Fychan "on condition that he paid a rent of 2 shillings each year (10p in modern money!) to pay for lamps in the parish church at Easter". Ednyfed was a very important figure in Welsh history. He also owned a manor house at the foot of Bryn

Euryn, the hill at the back of Rhos (see **17. Llys Euryn** on extension B of this walk). We also know from a charter that Rhos Fynach, together with its lands and fishing rights (i.e. the weir we have just passed), was granted to a certain Captain Henry Morgan in 1575 by the Earl of Leicester for the princely sum of 6 pence! These favourable terms were granted "in recognition of his services rendered at sea in connection with the Queen's enemies". In other words Captain Morgan was a sea rover in the Francis Drake tradition, a privateer who was probably not too particular whether England was technically at war or not with the ships he attacked. Sadly, he was not the notorious pirate Captain Morgan (the one the well-known rum is named after), despite rumours to the contrary.



Continue along the promenade.

6. Cayley Flyer

The small harbour to your left was formed relatively recently when the breakwater was built to stop the houses on the front from being flooded.

Continue to the Cayley Flyer. Take a look at the picture on the outside wall of this pub. This shows there is a genuine link for Rhos with a world first in aviation. The Cayleys were prominent local landowners who left their mark in many of the local street names, including the Cayley Promenade (with its attractive green bank) to your left. This pub painting commemorates one of their ancestors, Sir George Cayley of Brompton by Sawley in Yorkshire, an eminent inventor and arguably the true pioneer of aviation. He discovered the key principles of aeronautics and this enabled him to design a practical flying machine

50 years before the Wright brothers. As long ago as 1853 Sir George managed to build a machine that could carry the weight of a man. This glider was called the "Cayley Flyer" (but almost certainly a different design to the picture on the pub wall) and it paved the way for the Wright brothers' powered flight in 1903, a debt the Wright brothers fully acknowledged. The Cayley Flyer flew for about 900 feet across Brompton Dale before crash-landing. This was the first recorded flight in history in a fixed wing aircraft, so it is fair to describe Sir George Cayley as the true inventor of the aeroplane. Interestingly Sir George did not take the risk of actually flying the plane himself (in fairness he was 80 at the time). Instead he ordered his unfortunate coachman (John Daley) to fly it for him. Understandably John Daley was not too impressed by this great scientific breakthrough, but was more concerned about the danger he was put in as pilot. After undergoing his record breaking but alarming experience of air travel, he proceeded to resign on the spot, reputedly with the words "Please, Sir George, I wish to give my notice. I was hired to drive, not to fly" – a not unreasonable reaction! It is surprising how little recognition is given to Sir George in Britain for his great breakthrough – he is far better known in America. However, in Rhos at least he gets some recognition in the name of this public house and in the local street names.



Continue along the promenade.

Note the old fishermen's cottages on your right, with their attractive gardens. Observe how low these buildings are, showing how the ground was raised in Victorian times to build the Promenade.



Continue along the promenade. Just after the attractive flower gardens, notice on your right the Memorial to Rev W Venables Williams.

7. Memorial to Rev W Venables Williams

This monument was erected by public subscription "in recognition of the many public services" he rendered to the area. He was vicar of the parish of Llandrillo yn Rhos for 31 years, and prominent in many of the developments of both Rhos and Colwyn Bay. However, he was also a controversial figure. For example, he resisted the demands of local farmers for relief from tithes during the bitter "tithe

wars" in the area. These were so serious that the troops were called in to suppress the riots in the nearby village of Mochdre. Rioters burnt down the Venable Williams mission church in Colwyn Bay and he even received an anonymous letter threatening to blow up his vicarage if he did not agree to a reduction in the tithes! He also tried to stop the new resort of Colwyn Bay from splitting away from his large parish of Llandrillo yn Rhos in 1893. He even went to the extent of petitioning parliament, and personally wrote to Queen Victoria in his efforts to try and stop Colwyn Bay escaping from his control!



Carefully cross over the road and continue along the pavement to the old stone building with 3 prominent chimney stacks.

8. Old Stone Building (Aberhod)

Formerly called the Aberhod, it has been converted fairly sympathetically into housing, so the core building has been preserved, although the additional modern housing units have been squeezed rather tightly onto the site. This fine building is one of the oldest buildings in Rhos being based on a 17th century farmhouse. On a map from 1763 it was well back from the sea, showing how the sea has encroached on the shoreline of the bay in recent centuries.



Look in the yard to the left of the Aberhod.

9. Harlequin Puppet Theatre

Opened in 1958, this attractive building was the first ever purpose-built puppet theatre in Britain. It continues to put on regular marionette shows of a very high standard. Over the years its owners also created many puppet programmes for BBC Children's TV.

If you have the opportunity, the productions are well worth attending, especially if you have children to entertain. The interior is modelled on a traditional theatre and is an eccentric but delightful mix of gold and red plush, combined with italianate frescoes and ornate plasterwork. A gold proscenium arch frames a stage where productions using 60cm marionettes are performed. Forward of this there is also a large apron stage which is used to present cabaret-style marionettes, the most famous being the Harlequin. It is well worth a visit.



Continue along the pavement up the slope. At the corner of the Mount Stewart Hotel carefully cross Whitehall Road (noting the old stone horse-trough at the foot of the slope). Look back at the large frontage of the Mount Stewart Hotel.



In the second World War this hotel, together with all the other many hotels which existed in Rhos at the time, was commandeered by the Ministry of Food. The Ministry of Food was critical to the survival of Britain in the war. It coordinated the distribution of food supplies,

implemented rationing and promoted propaganda on alternative ways of cooking to enable people to eke out their very limited food stocks. Its headquarters, together with its 5,000 civil servants, were moved from London to Colwyn Bay. It was centred on the Colwyn Bay Hotel a few hundred yards further down the Promenade, although this has unfortunately now been demolished and replaced by flats.

You should be able to learn more about Colwyn Bay Hotel and its history, together with other interesting aspects of historic features of the Promenade from a new Augmented Reality Trail covering Colwyn Bay Promenade which was in the course of preparation at the time of writing this trail.

Obviously Colwyn Bay Hotel could not accommodate 5,000 civil servants by itself, so all the other local hotels were taken over, including those in Rhos, like the Mount Stewart. This hotel is where the "Cereal Products" and "Bacon and Ham" divisions were run from. Similarly the nearby Mount Royal Hotel (now converted into apartments) hosted the "Welfare Food" and "Tea" divisions.



Now walk along the top of the Cayley Promenade, with its fine views over the sea. Stop outside Moryn.



10. Moryn

The eminent architect Sidney Colwyn Foulkes designed this impressive house for himself. (It has recently had major extensions to the front in a different style.) He designed a number of important buildings in Colwyn Bay and Rhos-

on-Sea, usually with a neo Georgian idiom like this one. Notice the stone pineapples on the roof on the right of the house, a theme we shall return to later in the walk. He also designed the elegant pair of bungalows to the right.



Admire the view of the bay.

About two miles away to the east, beyond Porth Eirias, you can see a headland at the end of the Bay, with a semi-circular bridge at its foot. This is PENMAENHEAD. This was the site of a major historical event of national importance. The headland used to extend right to the seashore until quarried away in more recent years and was extremely difficult to cross. Although little known locally, it

was here that the Plantagenet line of English kings was effectively brought to an end when in 1399 King Richard II was ambushed. Richard had taken an army to campaign in Ireland. While he was away, Henry Bolingbroke (later to become Henry IV) led a revolt in England. Richard's army was mustered at nearby Conwy, but very foolishly Richard



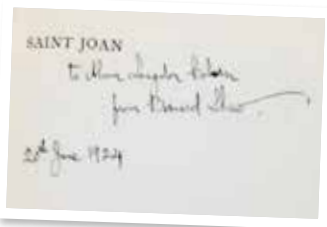
delayed in Dublin. His army got fed up waiting for him and dispersed. By the time Richard did land at Conwy, there were very few troops left. Therefore he barricaded himself in Conwy castle, which was considered impregnable. The Earl of Northumberland tricked Richard into leaving the castle with a promise of peace. Unknown to Richard, Northumberland had hidden his cavalry at Penmaenhead. Richard had only 23 followers with him and, as his party navigated the difficult path over Penmaenhead, Northumberland's troops ambushed them. He was taken as a prisoner to Flint castle, where he later met Bolingbroke and was forced to abdicate. The next year he died in suspicious circumstances in the dungeons of Pontefract castle, which was very convenient for Henry IV.



Retrace your steps and turn left into Eberston Road. Pause at the junction with Kenelm Road and look across at Awen.

11. Awen

This house was the home of Alvin Langdon Coburn for the last 19 years of his life, until his death in 1966. He was a pioneer photographer, and extremely eminent in his day. He was a friend of Lloyd George, who made him a welcome guest at 10 Downing Street. He took photographic portraits of many famous people, such as H G Wells, Mark Twain, George Bernard Shaw, Charles Dodson (Lewis Carroll), Sibelius and Holst. Colwyn Bay library contains his papers, including autographed books and testimonies from many of these famous people. Shaw, for example, called him "one of the most sensitive artist-photographers now living."



Turn right up Kenelm Road and walk to its end. Look across Whitehall Road to Cliffe House on the left-hand corner of St Georges Road.

12. Cliffe House

This Victorian villa has the claim to fame of being the first retirement home for vegetarians in Wales. Interestingly, Colwyn Bay was quite an active centre for the vegetarian cause in late Victorian times. The house is also noteworthy because Leonora Cohen lived here. She was a prominent suffragette, who achieved national fame in 1913 when she succeeded in smashing one of the jewel cases in the Tower of London as part of the campaign to win votes for women.

YOU NOW HAVE A CHOICE – TO RETURN TO THE START OR TO WALK EXTENSION A (see page 15).



To return to the start of the walk turn right down Whitehall Road to the seafront and then turn left. On reaching the Rhos Fynach again (5), walk along the left-hand side of the pub to inspect the old buildings more closely. Then go straight ahead to walk through the pleasant little park (This was once the site of a flourishing open-air swimming pool). Leave the park at its right-hand corner and turn left up Abbey Road. Stop just before you reach the corner of Trillo Avenue.



Look up to your left and you will see a prominent hill rising behind the built-up area of Rhos. This is Bryn Euryn. This commands splendid views in all directions and was the site of both a

Romano-British fort and also of the medieval palace of Ednyfed Fychan, chief adviser to Llewellyn the Great. If you are not

walking extension B of this walk, you can find out about the interesting history associated with this hill by reading sections 17 and 18 in this guide.



Now turn right into Trillo Avenue and on your right pause outside 4 & 6 Trillo Avenue.

13. Numbers 4 & 6 Trillo Avenue

These listed buildings are both fine examples of the Arts and Crafts style. This movement marked a reaction against the extravagances and ornamentation of much Victorian architecture and aimed to return to the traditional designs of rural craftsmen. This can be seen in the simple style of these two houses, with their rough cast render exterior, the small paned windows, the roofs made of Llanberris slate and the interestingly shaped chimneys. They were designed by North and Padmore, an architectural partnership from Llanfairfechan. Cadw refer to Herbert Luck North as the "outstanding Arts and Crafts architect of his age in Wales".



Turn left into Marine drive. You are now back at St Trillo's chapel. If you are feeling energetic, you could walk extension C (see page 27).



TO WALK EXTENSION A, turn left into Whitehall Road, and cross the road.

14. The Well

Note the well in the front garden of number 9A. Although the house and the wall round the well are modern, the well itself is much older – possibly even medieval.



Cross the roundabout and walk up Ebberston Road West.

This road is on the site of a lane that led to a Bath House on the seashore in the days before Rhos was built.



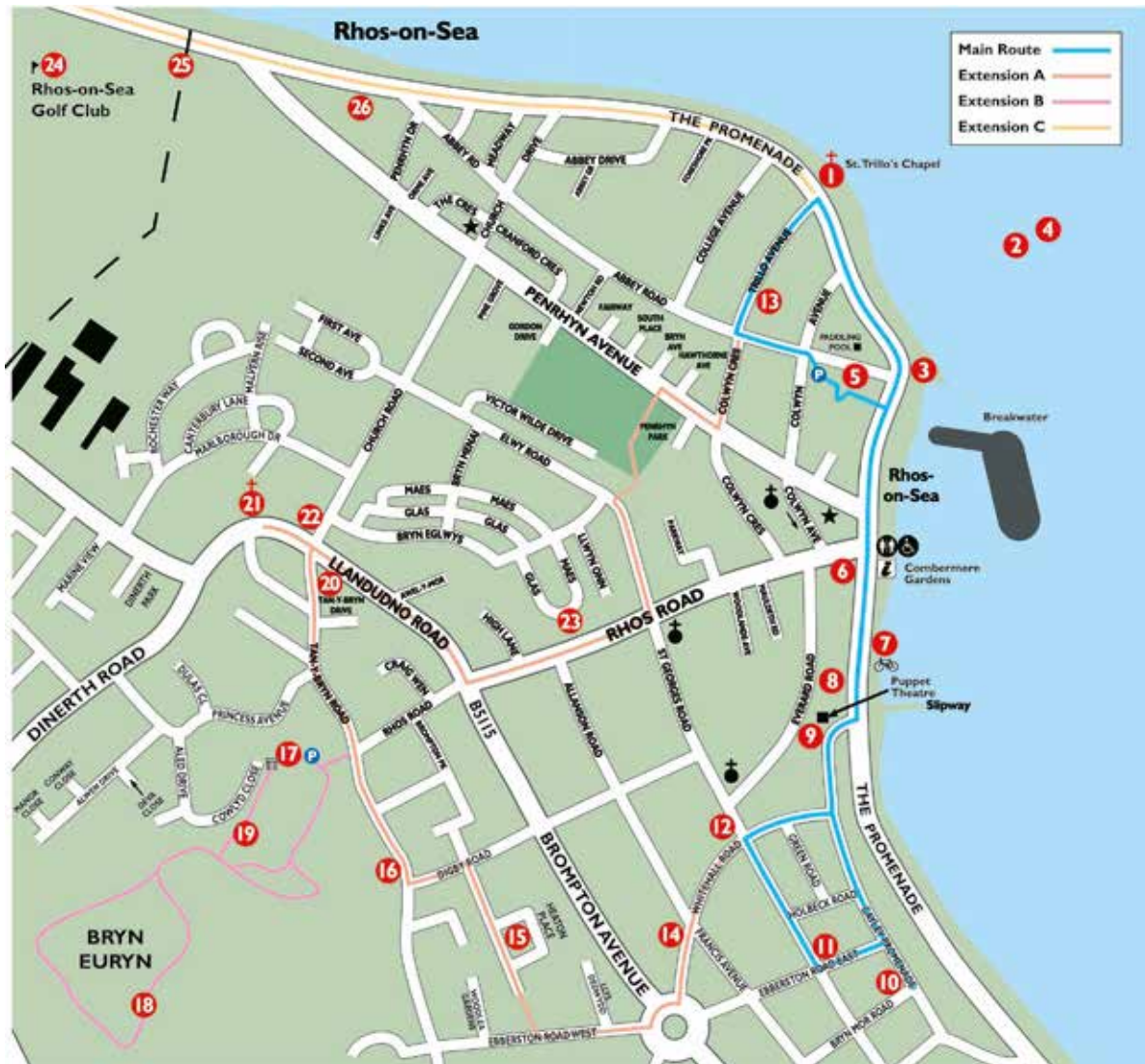
Halfway up the road, turn right along the private footpath leading to Heaton Place.

15. Heaton Place

Note the two pineapples on the entrance pillars similar to those you saw earlier on the house on the Cayley Promenade (10) that the eminent local architect Colwyn Foulkes designed for himself. This gives us a clue that this delightful estate was also designed by Colwyn Foulkes. It was built in the years after the war out of public donations to provide housing for elderly local residents who had themselves served the community over the years. Although the buildings look so similar, examination of the plaques at their ends shows that they were in fact built over quite an extended period, as funds were gradually raised. As you leave the estate, notice two more of the tell-tale pineapples crowning the pillars!



Rhos-on-Sea *Heritage Walk*





Turn left into Digby road, then right into Tan-y-Bryn Road.

16. Woodside Grange

Notice Woodside Grange opposite you (now a residential care home). This is a good example of the large late Victorian houses that once lined this road, although most have now been demolished. They were usually built by successful businessmen from Manchester and Liverpool. There were special “club trains” that ran daily from Colwyn Bay station to Manchester and Liverpool to take such residents to their work in the style and comfort they felt appropriate to their wealth!



Although now blocked to vehicles at one end, Tan-y-Bryn Road was once an important thoroughfare and is one of the old medieval tracks that ran through the area long before Rhos-on-Sea was built. Indeed the track may even be much older, since two separate finds of Roman coins have been made close by, as well as a remarkably well-preserved 1st century Roman Amphora. This is a large Roman storage jar about a metre high, with a pointed base and twin handles used to transport wine and olive oil. An amphora such as this is quite rare, as few complete examples have been found in Britain. It was found buried deep down in the ground in 1960 when a new bungalow was being built. Unaware of its antiquity, its new owners made it part of their garden display for 25 years! Amazingly it remained undamaged through this period of neglect until its true identity was discovered. It is now owned by Conwy County Borough Council.



Opposite Rhos Road, there is a trackway signposted Bryn Euryn Nature Reserve. **THIS LEADS TO EXTENSION B.** This is a way-marked circular trail (the "Summit Trail") about one mile in length. The Council have prepared an excellent separate leaflet on this walk (called "Bryn Euryn Local Nature Reserve") available online. The trail climbs about 100 metres to the summit of the hill and does have some steep climbs and descents, which can be slippery after rain. However the walk is well worth the effort, and will lead you past the remains of the medieval mansion of Llys Euryn, through woodland and grassland, to the sixth century hill fort at the summit with its panoramic views, before returning to its starting point. There are also some benches on the way up, to provide resting spots, if needed!



TO STAY ON THE MAIN ROUTE, CONTINUE STRAIGHT ON TAN-Y-BRYN ROAD AND MOVE TO SITE NUMBER 20 ON PAGE 23



If taking this extension, walk along the track way for about 25 yards, then turn right following the signpost for the Summit Trail (with the green arrow) up some steps. Follow the path until you come to the ruins of Llys Euryn Mansion.

17. The Ruins of Llys Euryn Mansion

This is the site of the fortified manor house built by Ednyfed Fychan in the 13th century, unfortunately now in ruins. There is a helpful display board provided by Conwy Council giving details of the history of the site. In his day, Ednyfed was one of the most important men in Wales, acting as the right-hand man and chief adviser to Llewellyn the Great. One of his direct descendants was Owain Tudor, grandfather to Henry VII, giving Rhos another link into national history. The original building was probably burnt down by Owain Glendower in 1409, but then rebuilt. Despite this mishap, it seems that it flourished again after it was rebuilt and passed into the hands of the Conway family. A Welsh bard writing in the 15th century describes North Wales as the "land of ale, mead, and wine", but also goes on to give the useful tip that "the house of Hugh Conway is the place to which the indigent minstrel should resort" so clearly it was renowned for its generous hospitality in that period. It is difficult to imagine such scenes of medieval banqueting looking at today's ruins!



Continue along the Walk past the ruins, noting the disused quarry below you on your left. At a house, turn right and follow the green arrows for the Summit Trail. After about 100 yards bear left at the green arrow signposting the Summit Trail. Follow this trail as it winds through the attractive woods. After about 10 minutes you will come to a bench, shortly followed by a second bench. Pause here to admire the view (and possibly have a rest!).

The narrow valley below you forms a natural communications route from England to Conwy and Anglesey beyond. From your vantage point you can see how both the railway and the A55 Expressway run along it. The downside of this is that it also made a natural route for invading armies. This gives the hill a strategic importance that made its summit the natural site for a fort in the Dark Ages. Earlier, in AD61, the invading Roman legions marched this way on their way to suppress the druids in their stronghold in Anglesey. However they were ambushed in the valley below you, and their second in command, Sempronius, was killed in the battle. To this day the valley is still known as Nant Sempyr, a name which still reminds us of the site of his death.



Continue to follow the path until you reach the summit of the hill, Bryn Euryn.

18. Bryn Euryn

The summit is marked by a concrete "trig point", part of the nationwide network built by the Ordnance Survey to create their maps of the UK in the days before computers. For such a small hill (only 131 metres above sea level), the views are quite magnificent. Look out over the sea to see the sweep of Colwyn Bay. Then look above the town of Colwyn Bay to see the ancient woodland of Pwllcrochan Woods. Then gradually turn clockwise for a panorama of Snowdonia, Conwy mountain, Anglesey and Puffin Island, the Great Orme and the Little Orme. You also have a birds-eye view of Rhos-on-Sea with its distinctive breakwater and little harbour at your feet. A large windfarm is also clearly visible, rather dominating the skyline, but adding a modern touch to the seascape.

Excavations have proved that this hilltop was also the site of a Romano British hill fort. (You can still make out the remains of the walls if you look carefully). This was built in the 5th or 6th century by one of the local "kings" who sprang up after the Romans left – probably one Cynlas the Red. Cynlas was not a particularly savoury character – he abandoned his wife to marry her sister, whom he dragged from her nunnery. The monk and historian Gildas, writing in the 6th century, describes Cynlas as "the Bear, red butcher and charioteer of Din Arth" (Bear's Den). This description has led some to link this fort with King Arthur,

although Cynlas' lifestyle hardly fits in with the Arthurian image! However the medieval parish in which the fort lies was called "Dineirth" in the middle ages, giving some very slight support to the Arthurian tradition. Again there is a helpful display board, which gives further information, and shows a reconstruction of the fort.



The hill became a military site again in 1940 when it became an observation post and wireless station to detect German bombers heading to Liverpool, thus again demonstrating its natural strategic importance. The remains of the concrete floor of this W/W2 outpost are still clearly visible at the summit.



From the trig point walk straight ahead for about 30 yards towards the sea to the trail marker and follow the circular waymarked trail downhill back to its start. As you descend the side of the hill, note the medieval parish church in its prominent position below you. We will be visiting this shortly. Also notice the low-lying golf course and the stream running across it below you. If you are not going to walk extension C, refer now to the notes on the golf course (24) and Prince Madoc Cove (25) to learn about the historical events that unfolded beneath your feet.

At the house, carry on through the gate. You can then take your pick. The right fork is gentler, but slightly longer. The left is quicker, going down some steps.

19. Abandoned Quarry

Note the abandoned quarry on your left at the foot of the hill. This was started in the 1840's, and had a horse drawn railway to take the stone to a small jetty on the seafront in Rhos, going down Rhos Road in front of you.



Turn left at the end of the track and continue along Tan-y-Bryn Road until you reach Hickory's on your right.

20. Hickory's

Hickory's was recently rebranded from its traditional name of "The Ship Inn". This attractive building opposite the church was built by Whitehall Dod - see (23). The original Ship Inn had been built in 1736 and stood on the other side of the road until he had it demolished and moved to its present position in 1874.



Turn left into Llandudno Road, cross over and enter the churchyard of Llandrillo Parish Church through the attractive 17th century lych-gate.

21. Llandrillo Parish Church

There has been a church on this site since at least the 13th Century, when the Pope granted Ednyfed Fychan (see **17. Llys Euryn** above) a licence to build a private chapel here, so that "masses could be sung for his soul after his death for evermore." Some parts of this 13th century chapel can still be traced in the present building, most of which dates from the early 16th century. The medieval font is also of great age – possibly dating from Norman

times. This church was once the centre of a vast parish, but now just serves Rhos. The Church was whitewashed, to serve as a prominent landmark for sailors at sea. The tower is of considerable interest. As you can see, it is an unusual shape (there is only one other like it in Wales.) It was rebuilt in 1552 and commands extensive views from Anglesey in the West to Point of Ayr in the East. Note the square turret in the Southwest corner. This is known locally as "the Rector's chair". This acted as a lookout and signalling post. It is difficult to imagine now, but attacks by pirates were a serious problem for this part of the coast in the 17th century (particularly corsairs from North Africa!). The church tower formed part of a chain of signal towers that were built along this part of the coast to warn of pirate attacks.



There are a number of interesting graves in the churchyard. Perhaps the most famous is that of HAROLD LOWE – the heroic officer on the Titanic in charge of the only lifeboat that returned to try and save the drowning passengers. (To find his gravestone, turn right out of the attractive 17th century lych-gate, then re-enter the graveyard by the next gate, turn left and walk about twenty-five yards. His grave is on the right, next to the path.)



Turn left out of the graveyard and walk back along Llandudno Road. On your left, the substantial Vicarage is next to the church.

22. Vicarage

The vicarage is at least the third one on this site. Protesters threatened to blow up the previous vicarage during the "tithe wars", as the vicar, William Venable Williams refused to reduce the tithes. We saw his memorial earlier on the walk on the seafront (7). Interestingly a large stone lined well (63 feet deep) was found just behind the vicarage when new houses were being built in 1964, but nothing is known of its history.



Continue to walk along Llandudno Road.

On your left note the HOUSING ESTATE. This was built between 1952 and 1956 and again was designed by Colwyn Foulkes. It is famous for its "light-hearted porches" with their sculptures of characters from Alice in Wonderland.



Turn left into Rhos Road and walk back towards the sea.

This is one of the oldest roads in Rhos. It is clearly marked as a lane on a map of 1763. It is probable that there was an old quay and small harbour at its foot at one time and this road was built to connect it to Llys Euryn (see 16 above).



Pause outside numbers 60-64.

23. Stone Cottages

These interesting stone cottages were built in 1857 to serve the quarry which we saw at Bryn Euryn (see 19), and other of his estate workers. The initials carved on the front

of the cottages are those of Whitehall Dod, who owned all the surrounding estate at the time and whose name lives on in a local road name. The first railway in Rhos once ran behind these houses – a primitive track with trucks pulled by ponies taking stone from the quarry at Bryn Euryn to a 19th Century quay on the seafront. The remains of the railway embankment still exist in the back gardens of some of the houses on Rhos Road, and residents have found numerous old horseshoes along the route.



Carry on to numbers 56 and 58.

These slightly more functional stone cottages also date back to the days before most of Rhos was built. They were originally tied cottages for farm workers at the Aberhod (see 8 above), in the days when it was still a farm. The surrounding area was still all open fields. This was reflected in the terms of the lease to the tenants. Technically they are still allowed to keep 2 pigs, and to fish in the sea! – Useful perks to their inhabitants in the 19th Century, but perhaps of more limited value now!



Turn left into Elwy Road. Where the road bends slightly left, cross over and enter the park by a flat-roofed house (built in the modernist style). Through the trees on your left, you can just see the Colwyn Bay Cricket Club.

Opened in 1924, the cricket club still plays an important part in the life of the local community. It continues to host important matches such as the regular county match between Glamorgan and Lancashire. It hosted the touring West Indies side in 1984.



Follow the path down past the tennis courts to the road.

If you look around, you will be able to sense that you are in a small river valley. This is the riverbed of the Afon Ganol (now diverted). It used to run into the sea in Rhos, and there is evidence that there used to be a small dock and boatyard in its mouth in earlier centuries.



Turn right into Penrhyn Avenue.

The old tramway to Llandudno used to run along this road. As you pass the flats called Penrhyn Park, look closely under the hedge by the pavement and you will see the metal base of one of the old pillars used to support the overhead tram wires – all that now remains of the tramway.



Take the first left into Colwyn Crescent. Continue straight ahead into Trillo Avenue. Note NUMBERS 4 & 6 ON YOUR RIGHT (13) - see notes above.



Continue down the road, back to St Trillo's Chapel, your starting point. If you wish, and are feeling fit, you can turn left to walk EXTENSION C (approx. 40 minutes). Cross over, so that you can walk on the path below the road, by the sea. This gives attractive views across to the Little Orme.

You can see how the end of the Little Orme has been quarried away to provide limestone, some of it for building Rhos-on-Sea. Mostyn Estates (who owned the site) insisted that the quarrying was all done on the Rhos side of the Little Orme. They imposed this condition to ensure that

the view of the Little Orme from Llandudno (most of which they also owned) was not damaged. Presumably the view from the Rhos-on-Sea side did not concern them!

The Little Orme has a surprising amount of interesting history attached to it. In 1891 the skeleton of a Neolithic woman 5,500 years old was found in a fissure in the rock (uncovered by the quarrying which was then taking place) showing that the area was inhabited in the stone age. The skeleton is now on display in Llandudno Museum.

Similarly there is evidence of the presence of the Romans. In 1873 an earthenware jar containing 5,000 bronze Roman coins was found at nearby Penrhyn Old Hall, whilst in 1907 a further small hoard of 550 Roman coins was found on the Little Orme itself.

Intriguingly, a remote cave on the Little Orme was the site of a secret Catholic printing press in Queen Elizabeth's reign. It was set up in 1587 in a remote cave by a clandestine Jesuit missionary, aided by the local Catholic squire living in nearby Penrhyn Old Hall. This press was used to print copies of a small book called "Y Drych Cristionogawl" (The Christian Mirror) – amazingly, this was actually the first book in Welsh to be printed in Wales – quite a first for the remote Little Orme!

The site was discovered by the authorities in 1587, but all those involved escaped by sea (presumably warned by local sympathisers), just leaving some lead type dropped on the seashore during their flight.

The Little Orme also featured in the Second World War as the site of an artillery battery. This was used as a practice camp by the Coastal Artillery School which was based nearby on Llandudno's West Shore. Some of the Royal Artillerymen are shown on this Little Orme site in the contemporary photo on the right.





Cross over the road at the start of the golf course and look across the golf links.

24. Landing Site of First Aeroplane to land in North Wales

The golf club dates from 1899, but its real claim to fame is that it was the landing site of the first aeroplane to land in North Wales. The plane, a Farmer Racer biplane, landed on Rhos-on-Sea golf course just 100 yards from the club house (possibly by accident) on August 10 1910 much to the amazement and delight of local people. An aviation pioneer called Robert Lorraine piloted it. He had taken off from Blackpool air show to establish two records for the time – the longest over-sea flight (63 miles), and the first aircraft to land in Wales. He had planned to land at Holyhead, and then try and cross the Irish Sea, but bad weather forced him down here, thus putting Rhos-on-Sea into the history books.



Turn back towards Rhos, but note the prominent new block of luxury flats, hopefully named "PRINCE MADOC COVE".

25. Prince Madoc Cove

At the time of writing, these flats were still being built but, if completed to the design promised by the developer, outside no. 3 there should be a slate plaque, a bench, cave and possibly an information display board, all to mark "MADOC'S QUAY" This is because it is from this site that according to legend Prince Madoc sailed with his two ships (called Gorn Gwynant and Pedr Sant) in 1170 to discover America 322 years before Columbus!

Certainly the present-day stream you can see on the golf course would have been considerably larger in the Middle Ages, and navigable for ships. There is evidence that there was a small harbour and ancient quay here, where the river entered the sea. The stone remains of this jetty were unfortunately used to build the rockery of the house that previously stood on the site of the new flats.

Tradition tells us that Prince Madoc returned some years later to tell of his discovery of a new land. He then collected a fleet of 10 ships loaded with colonists but was never seen again. Although the legend cannot be proved, a commemorative stone in Alabama does mark the place where he is claimed to have settled. It is doubtful if the truth of the legend will ever be proved conclusively one way or another, but it is amazing to think that this spot might have been witness to such major firsts for Wales – a pioneering navigator who discovered America, and a pioneering aviator who landed the first plane in North Wales!



Continue along the pavement, until you come to the Old Budget Gate (147 Marine Drive).

26. The Old Budget Gate (147 Marine Drive)

This is a visually appealing house in its own right. Note, for example, the attractively designed porch. However the special interest of the house lies in the fascinating (and true) story behind its name. In 1909 Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a particularly radical budget, nicknamed “The People’s Budget”.

Amongst a raft of major changes, the budget introduced state pensions for the elderly for the first time in Britain – a truly radical social reform. To pay for these measures he implemented a tax on land values aimed at the better off. This provoked much indignation and opposition from landowners across the UK and a Mr. Horton, who owned most of the land in Rhos-on-Sea at the time including this road, erected a toll gate here on the Promenade in protest to raise money to pay for his new tax burden, and called it “The Budget Toll Gate” to emphasise his point – hence the name of the house. He sold the road and its tollgate to the Tram Company in 1911 when they built their new tramway. However the tram Company continued to charge

a toll to cars using the road, until they became bankrupt in 1961. The toll was only abolished in 1963, when the Council bought the road and gave it its first proper surface. Cars were being charged a shilling (5p) and (perambulators a penny!) at the time of its closure. The photograph below shows the original toll gate.



Continue along Marine Drive. After crossing over Abbey Road, look to your right for a fine view of Llandrillo parish church and Bryn Euryn, which you recently visited.

From this viewpoint, you can appreciate what a prominent landmark the whitewashed church would have been to sailors in earlier centuries.



Carry on along Marine Drive until you return to your original starting point at St. Trillo's Chapel. You have earned a rest, so why not continue into Rhos for a cup of tea at one of the many pleasant cafés, if you have not done so already.

About the Group

The Colwyn Bay Heritage Group is made up of volunteers and representatives from local organisations. The group was formed for the purpose of engaging with all generations within the community of Colwyn Bay and is working towards making the heritage of the town more accessible.

In addition to Heritage Walks and, as part of an ongoing Oral History project, the Group is gathering and recording peoples' memories of Colwyn Bay. Some of these memories are available in an e-book. In addition a Children's Activity pack has been produced and a web based Timeline is also being developed.

Please visit the group's website at www.colwynbayheritage.org.uk or Colwyn Bay Library in Woodland Road West if you would like to find out more.

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Imagine Trail App

These booklets have inspired the development of the Imagine Trail app. Accessible through your smart phone this exciting Augmented Reality experience brings the past to life with stories, visuals and sound creating a unique, immersive and interactive adventure into local heritage. You will also be able to access 'audio tour' versions of the booklets through the app. Find out more at www.imagnetrail.com or scan the QR code to begin to explore.



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