

Chirk Circular 2



Route detail

A walk outside the estate surrounding Chirk Castle, with an option to visit the castle from a stretch of the Offa's Dyke Path, finishing with a remarkable viaduct and aqueduct.

Distance:	6.6 miles / 10.6km (with 1 mile / 1.6km extension)
Start location:	Chirk Railway Station
Start Grid Ref:	SJ 28464 37801
Start What3Words:	accent.boards.amounting

Start

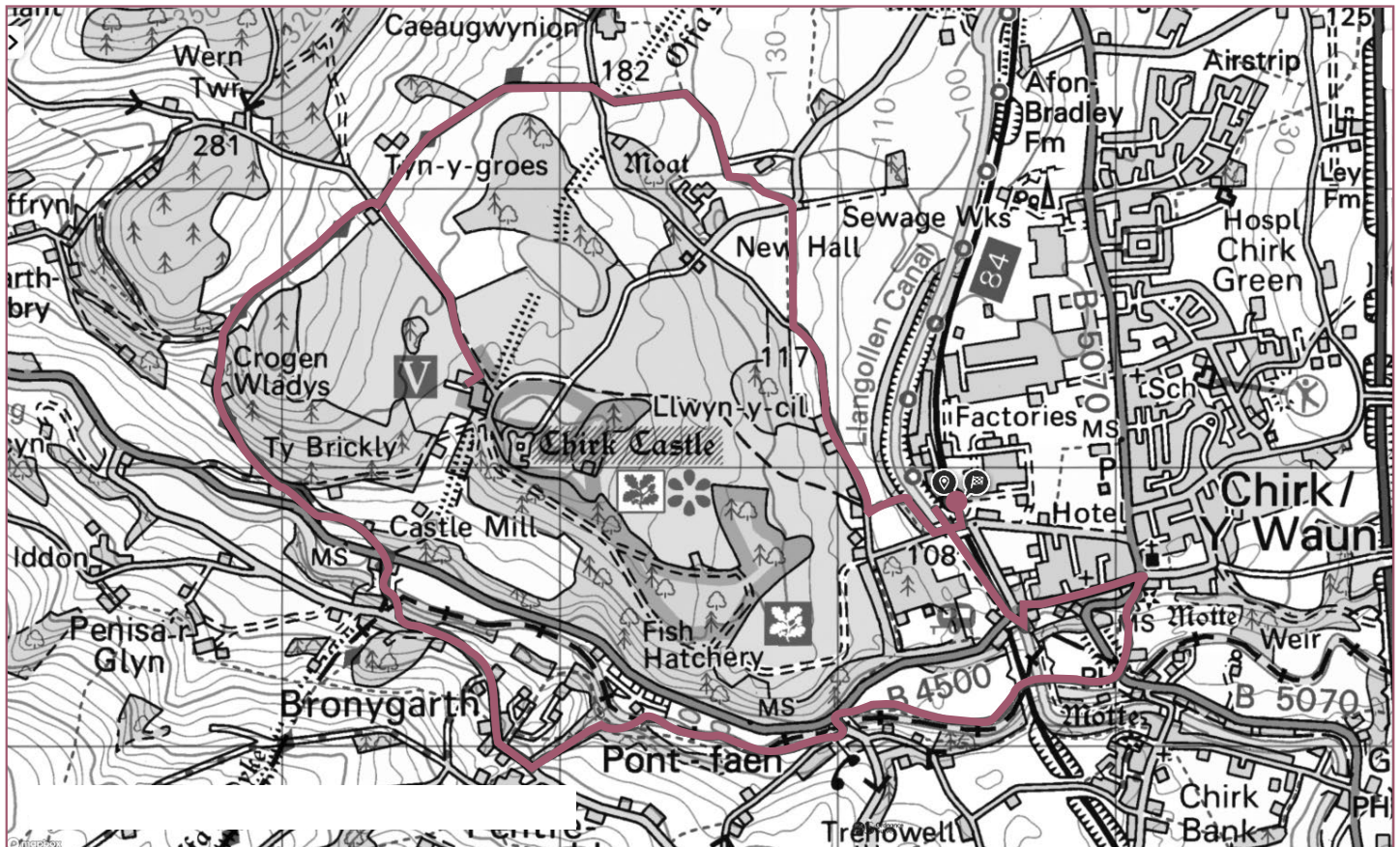
Start at Chirk railway station by crossing the road bridge over the railway as signposted 'Castle'. Pass the access road for Canal Wood Industrial Estate then turn right through a small gate into woodland. (The road continues straight towards an ornate gateway for Chirk Castle.)

Immediately on entering the woodland, turn left as signposted for Chirk Castle and look over a tunnel mouth on the Llangollen Canal. Turn right along a woodland path and note that the path splits and re-joins several times. It is best to keep to the path furthest to the left in order to spot a kissing gate leading into a field, where a path leads straight to a road.

Turn right and follow the road until it climbs steeply. Turn right as indicated by a public footpath signpost, up a bank to cross a step stile. Keep to the right side of a field, cross a step stile and head straight across another field. Cross a step stile to get back onto the road, then cross a step stile on the other side. Walk slightly to the left across the next field, aiming for a step stile on a fence. Cross it and head to the furthest corner of the field to find a track made of concrete slabs. Turn right and follow it, passing through a gate. Walk straight ahead along an old, narrow

Offa's Dyke Path SHORT WALKS

Chirk Circular 2



road flanked by hedgerows. The tarmac surface quickly becomes broken and covered in grass, while hedgerows alongside make it as narrow as a path. At one point the old road crosses Offa's Dyke, but the ancient earthwork isn't easy to spot.

Join a road and turn right, then almost immediately left at a junction. Walk up the road, then look back at a nearby field to see Offa's Dyke more clearly, as an obvious embankment bearing a few trees. Continue walking up the road and a kissing gate will be seen on the right, along with an Offa's Dyke Path signpost and the acorn logos that mark the trail. Don't go through the gate, but stay on the road. Later, there is a map board for Chirk Castle on the left, near some cottages, and at this point it is worth making a detour towards it, returning to this point later.

For the detour – go through a kissing gate and follow a red marker arrow, which indicates a grassy path keeping to the right of fields, passing through gates from one field to another. Later, the path keeps right of a car park to reach a number of buildings. These include a visitor centre and ticket office for Chirk Castle, as well as a place selling food and drinks. Be sure to allow plenty of extra time if visiting Chirk Castle, a National Trust property that was built in 1310, then from 1595 it was the home of the Myddleton family for four centuries. Retrace steps back through the fields to continue.

Offa's Dyke Path signposts point around a corner on the

road, then left through a kissing gate into a field. Walk straight ahead along a track that passes a big oak tree and soon expires, then climb through the field, passing through a kissing gate in a fence. Keep rising gently, taking no notice of an orange marker arrow pointing left for Chirk Castle. Instead, keep walking ahead, through another kissing gate, then go down through a field by the steepest possible route. Go through yet another kissing gate and turn left as signposted down a stony track into woodland. Pass buildings at Crogen Wladys and keep left at a road junction at Ty Bickly. The road rises gently a short way, then keep right at another junction and descend to the B4500 road deep in the valley.

Cross over the road to pass between buildings at Castle Mill, then cross a bridge over the Afon Ceiriog, where a plaque commemorates the Battle of Crogen. (This took place in 1165 when Henry II sent a multi-national force through dense wildwoods at this point, intent on 'the total annihilation of the Welsh race'. There were huge casualties on both sides, but the King's forces were ultimately forced to withdraw.) While climbing a short, steep road, there is an unmarked point at which the border is crossed between Wales (Clwyd) and England (Shropshire). When a road junction is reached, the Offa's Dyke Path climbs straight up a flight of steps, but our route back to Chirk turns left instead, following a road used by the Ceiriog Valley Walk and Shropshire Way. A series of old limekilns are passed, followed by a few houses at Bronygarth. When the road descends, turn left

Offa's Dyke Path SHORT WALKS

Chirk Circular 2

through a gateway in a wall to follow a path down a flight of steps into Pentre Wood, which is a Woodland Trust property.

The path is obvious throughout its descent, with one muddy stretch covered by a boardwalk. Cross a step stile beside a big gate to leave the wood and continue through fields alongside the Afon Ceiriog. The riverside path becomes a track, which in turn leads to a big gate near some houses at Pont-faen. Turn left to cross a narrow, stone-built bridge from England back into Wales, then turn right through a kissing gate. Again, walk alongside the Afon Ceiriog through a field, approaching two remarkable features. First is a tall railway viaduct with ten arches, opened in 1848, closely followed by a shorter, but no less impressive canal aqueduct, again with ten arches, opened in 1801. These will be inspected more closely, but for the time being simply walk beneath them and continue along the riverside until forced up to the busy A5070 road.

Cross the road and start to go down an access road on the other side, but immediately switch to a path on the left. The path crosses an old, overgrown mill race that once served Chirk Mill. Follow the path uphill and it eventually joins the A5070 road close to a junction on the outskirts of Chirk. The plan is to cross the busy road and turn left along Castle Road, but if the traffic makes this difficult, then walk into Chirk and use a pedestrian crossing, then return to follow Castle Road. The road leads to a viewpoint overlooking both the canal and railway viaducts. (For a quick finish to the walk, avoiding Chirk Tunnel, turn right along Station Road to return to Chirk railway station.)

Follow a path down through a patch of woodland to get onto the towpath of the Llangollen Canal. By all means walk across the aqueduct, from Wales to England and back again, but to finish this walk you should follow the towpath into the 770ft (220m) long Chirk Tunnel. Locally, it's known as 'The Darkie' and obviously a torch is required, but the path is in good condition and there is a fence between it and the canal. Note that if a barge comes chugging through, the diesel fumes might be oppressive, but the exit is always in view ahead. After emerging from the tunnel, continue along the towpath a short way then double back sharply to the right to climb above the canal. When a road is reached, simply turn left to finish back at Chirk railway station.

Parking: Limited parking at Chirk railway station, or use a car park off Pwll y Waun in the centre of Chirk.

Bus: TrawsCymru buses serve Chirk from Wrexham, Welshpool and Machynlleth daily, except Sundays. Daily local buses serve Chirk from Wrexham and Oswestry.

Train: Daily trains serve Chirk from Chester and Shrewsbury, as well as long distance services from Cardiff and Holyhead.

