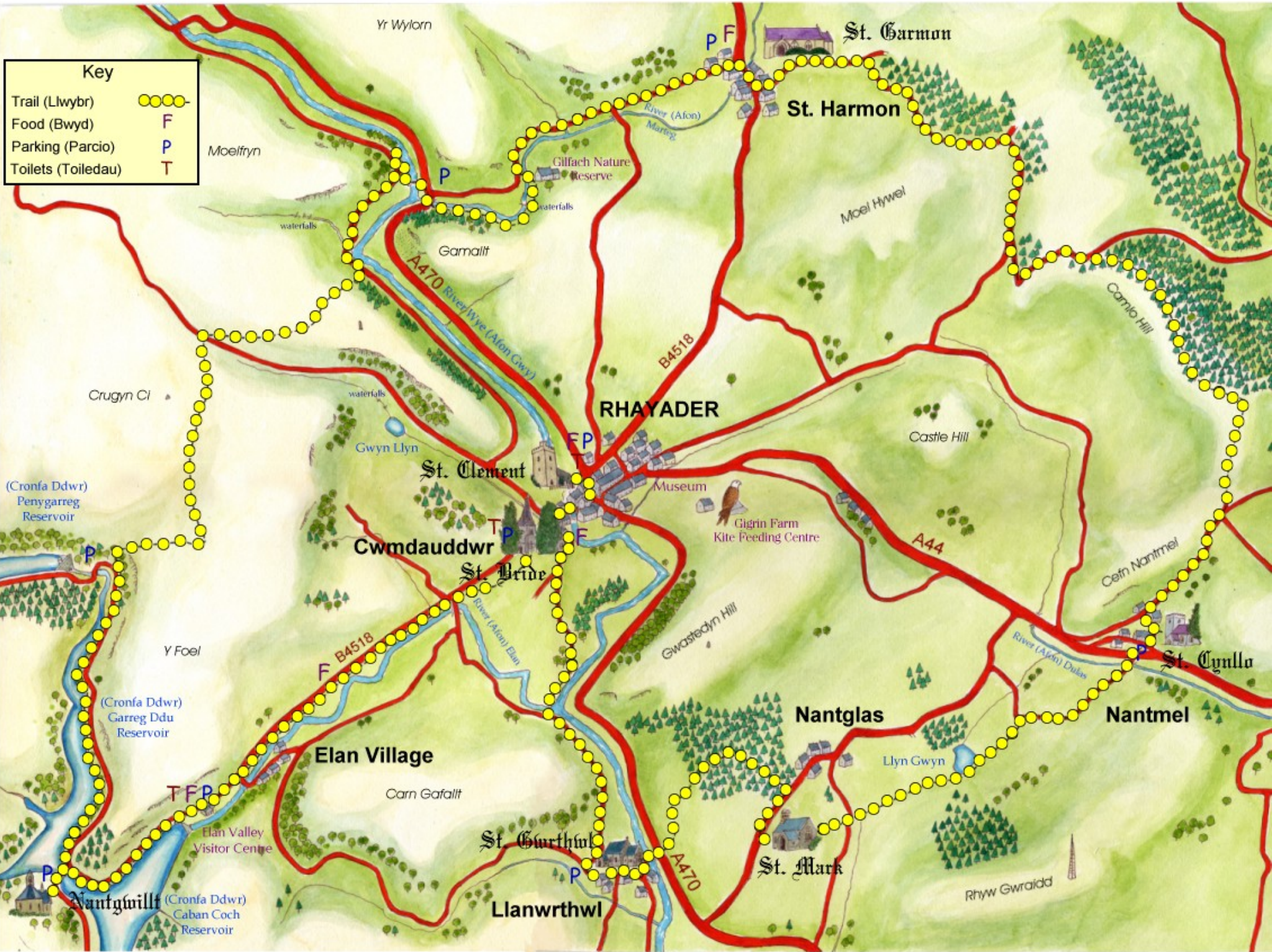


Key	
Trail (Llwybr)	
Food (Bwyd)	F
Parking (Parcio)	P
Toilets (Toiletau)	T



St. Clement's Rhayader to Nantgwiltt

(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 Nantgwiltt chapel is facing you.

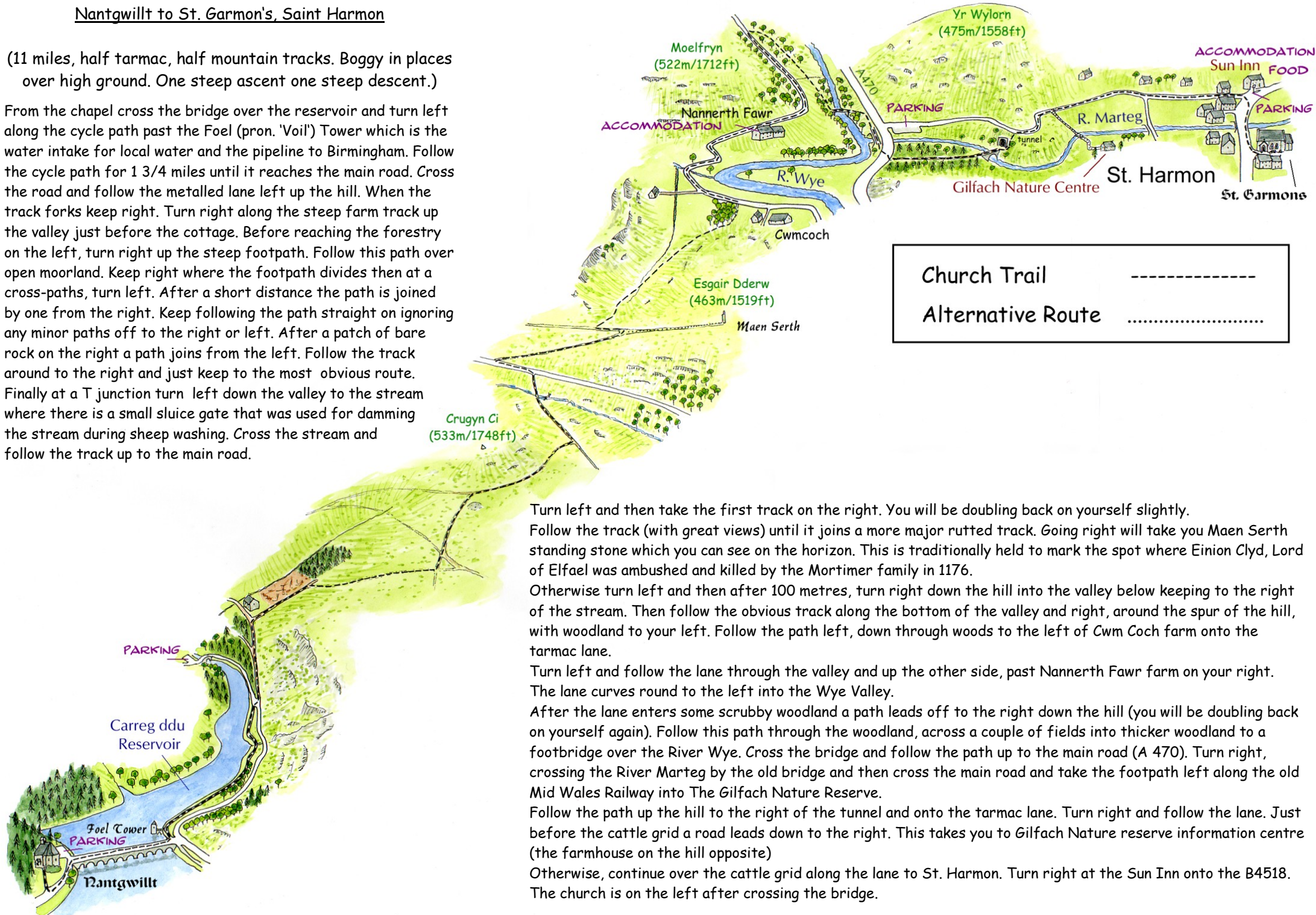
Trail -----
Alternative Route

RHAYADER
PARKING/TOILETS/FOOD
ACCOMMODATION

Nantgwilt to St. Garmon's, Saint Harmon

(11 miles, half tarmac, half mountain tracks. Buggy in places over high ground. One steep ascent one steep descent.)

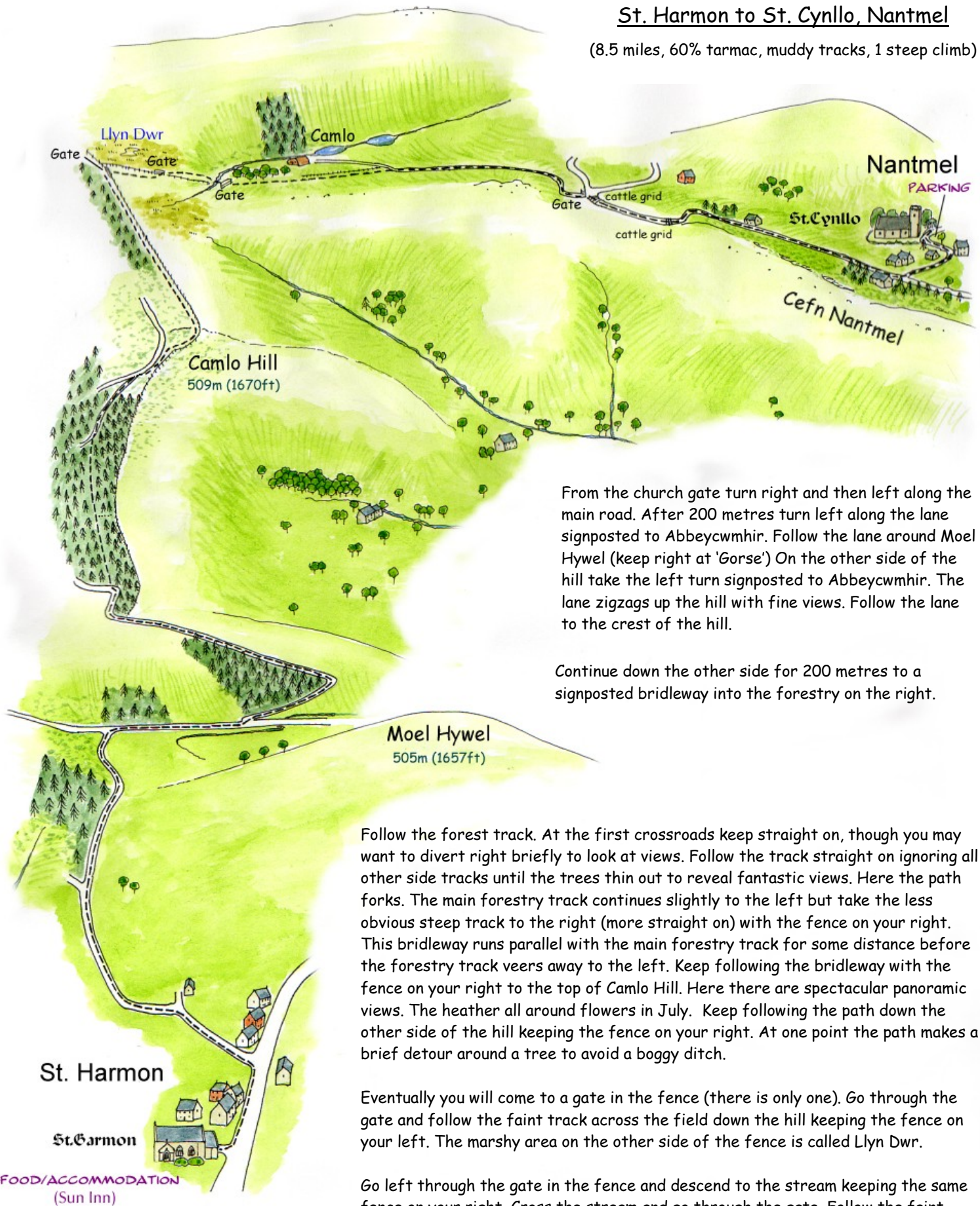
From the chapel cross the bridge over the reservoir and turn left along the cycle path past the Foel (pron. 'Voil') Tower which is the water intake for local water and the pipeline to Birmingham. Follow the cycle path for 1 3/4 miles until it reaches the main road. Cross the road and follow the metalled lane left up the hill. When the track forks keep right. Turn right along the steep farm track up the valley just before the cottage. Before reaching the forestry on the left, turn right up the steep footpath. Follow this path over open moorland. Keep right where the footpath divides then at a cross-paths, turn left. After a short distance the path is joined by one from the right. Keep following the path straight on ignoring any minor paths off to the right or left. After a patch of bare rock on the right a path joins from the left. Follow the track around to the right and just keep to the most obvious route. Finally at a T junction turn left down the valley to the stream where there is a small sluice gate that was used for damming the stream during sheep washing. Cross the stream and follow the track up to the main road.



Turn left and then take the first track on the right. You will be doubling back on yourself slightly. Follow the track (with great views) until it joins a more major rutted track. Going right will take you Maen Serth standing stone which you can see on the horizon. This is traditionally held to mark the spot where Einion Clyd, Lord of Elfael was ambushed and killed by the Mortimer family in 1176. Otherwise turn left and then after 100 metres, turn right down the hill into the valley below keeping to the right of the stream. Then follow the obvious track along the bottom of the valley and right, around the spur of the hill, with woodland to your left. Follow the path left, down through woods to the left of Cwm Coch farm onto the tarmac lane. Turn left and follow the lane through the valley and up the other side, past Nannerth Fawr farm on your right. The lane curves round to the left into the Wye Valley. After the lane enters some scrubby woodland a path leads off to the right down the hill (you will be doubling back on yourself again). Follow this path through the woodland, across a couple of fields into thicker woodland to a footbridge over the River Wye. Cross the bridge and follow the path up to the main road (A 470). Turn right, crossing the River Marteg by the old bridge and then cross the main road and take the footpath left along the old Mid Wales Railway into The Gilfach Nature Reserve. Follow the path up the hill to the right of the tunnel and onto the tarmac lane. Turn right and follow the lane. Just before the cattle grid a road leads down to the right. This takes you to Gilfach Nature reserve information centre (the farmhouse on the hill opposite) Otherwise, continue over the cattle grid along the lane to St. Harmon. Turn right at the Sun Inn onto the B4518. The church is on the left after crossing the bridge.

St. Harmon to St. Cynllo, Nantmel

(8.5 miles, 60% tarmac, muddy tracks, 1 steep climb)



From the church gate turn right and then left along the main road. After 200 metres turn left along the lane signposted to Abbeycwmhir. Follow the lane around Moel Hywel (keep right at 'Gorse') On the other side of the hill take the left turn signposted to Abbeycwmhir. The lane zigzags up the hill with fine views. Follow the lane to the crest of the hill.

Continue down the other side for 200 metres to a signposted bridleway into the forestry on the right.

Follow the forest track. At the first crossroads keep straight on, though you may want to divert right briefly to look at views. Follow the track straight on ignoring all other side tracks until the trees thin out to reveal fantastic views. Here the path forks. The main forestry track continues slightly to the left but take the less obvious steep track to the right (more straight on) with the fence on your right. This bridleway runs parallel with the main forestry track for some distance before the forestry track veers away to the left. Keep following the bridleway with the fence on your right to the top of Camlo Hill. Here there are spectacular panoramic views. The heather all around flowers in July. Keep following the path down the other side of the hill keeping the fence on your right. At one point the path makes a brief detour around a tree to avoid a boggy ditch.

Eventually you will come to a gate in the fence (there is only one). Go through the gate and follow the faint track across the field down the hill keeping the fence on your left. The marshy area on the other side of the fence is called Llyn Dwr.

Go left through the gate in the fence and descend to the stream keeping the same fence on your right. Cross the stream and go through the gate. Follow the faint track skirting the woodland on your left. Your route stretches away in front of you along the side of the ridge. The track gradually improves and eventually you will descend the hill through a gate to the tarmac road. Turn right over the cattle grid.

Follow the unfenced lane along the ridge, over another cattle grid and then down the hill to Nantmel. Just after the first bungalow on the right (Brynawelon) take the lane to the left down a steep hill. After quarter of a mile you will come to the church.

Trail

FOOD/ACCOMMODATION
(Sun Inn)

St. Cynllo's, Nantmel to St. Mark's, Ysfa

(3.75 miles, 30% tarmac, fairly flat, a few boggy bits)

From the church lychgate turn left down a steep hill. Halfway down the hill on the bend there are steps either side of the lane marking the course of the pipeline carrying water from the Elan Valley to Birmingham. An impressive aqueduct can be seen behind the school.

At the bottom of the hill you will see the school on the left and the red brick building on the right was originally the Post Office. The old pub led the church to be described as the closest to heaven due to it being sited above the 'Seven Stars'. The Seven Stars is no longer a pub but does offer self catering accommodation. Cross the car park opposite passing the war memorial on the left. Climb down the shallow bank to the main road. Cross the main road and turn right. Turn left along the lane after 60 metres. Follow the lane for about a mile (keep right, down the hill where the lane forks) until you reach a triangle of grass in the middle of the road.

Turn left to Cefn Llyn farm. Pass in front of the farmhouse and follow the farm track through a gate into a field. The right of way hugs the hedge on the left and crosses the field by the telegraph pole to the gate in the far corner. However, you may prefer to follow the farm track past the static caravan which goes to the same gate.

From the gate follow the left hedge line, through another gateway down towards Llyn Gwyn lake. The track skirts the edge of the lake and ends at a gate in an area of rocks and boulders. There is a legend that says this is the dwelling place of Gwyn ap Nudd, the king of the fairies. It was also said that during an argument with a fellow saint St Patrick turned some local Welsh people into fishes here. In truth Mediaeval monks from Abbey-cwm-hir stocked the lake with carp the descendants of which still live in the lake today, though there is another legend that says they will croak in abhorrence of King Henry VIII when caught. There are earthworks at the head of the lake that may be associated with Mediaeval times. The lake which is 55ft deep is also stocked with Rainbow and Brown trout.

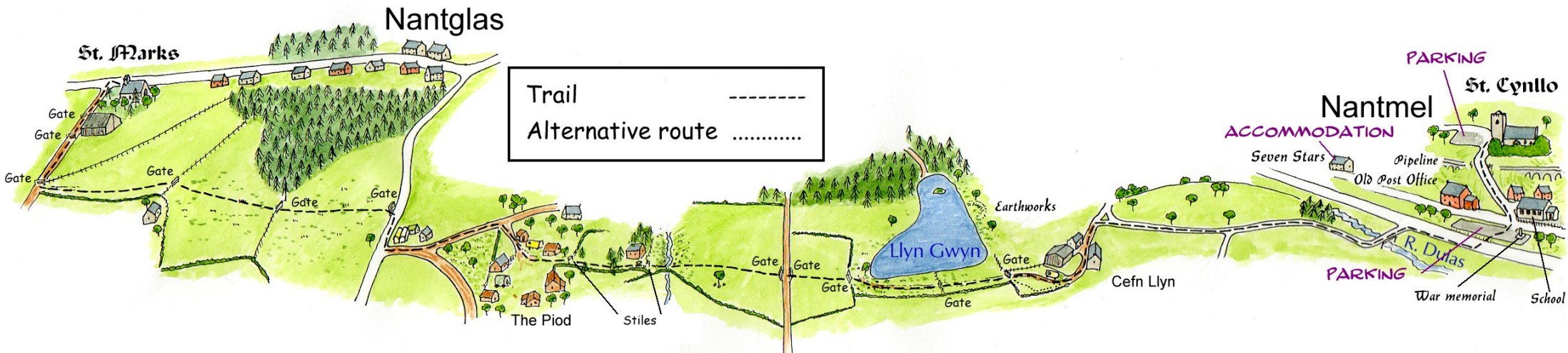
Go through the gate and cross the middle of the field to a gate on the other side. Cross the farm track and go through another gate opposite into the next field. Cross this field passing a tree with boulders under it on your left. Cross the stream with the hedge roughly to your left. Take care as this is quite a boggy and rock strewn area. Climb the bank on the other side of the stream. In front of you in the trees you will see a wooden house. To the left of the house is a way-marked stile. Climb the stile and follow the path past a small pond and the wooden house on your right. Keep following the path through some woodland and over another stile.

The path opens into a clearing with static caravans and other wooden dwellings. This community is known as the Piod (Magpies). The right of way is blocked by temporary structures here so it is best to veer to the right onto the un-gated farm track leading out of the settlement. There is only one exit. If you go through a gate you've gone the wrong way!

Follow the farm track round to the left at the first junction and then keep right at the next junction. Eventually you will come out on a tarmac lane.

Turn right along the lane and then climb the first (currently red) gate on the left into the field. Aim for the edge of the forestry to the right on the horizon. Here you will find a gateway into the next field. Head across this field aiming slightly to the right of the cottage in the distance. You will come to another gateway. Follow the track through the gate and then follow the track, keeping the hedge roughly to your left.

Eventually you will reach a more substantial farm track. Turn right, through a gate and follow the farm track through two more gates with farm sheds on your right, (and the side of the churchyard) to the main road. Turn right at the main road and the church entrance is immediately on your right.



St. Mark's Ysfa to St. Gwrthwl's, Llanwrthwl

(2.5 miles, mostly forest and farm tracks, fairly flat, muddy in places)

From the church gate turn right along the main road. At the edge of the forestry on the left is a footpath. Either take this path until it joins the main forestry track (where you turn left), or continue along the main road until you reach the main entrance into the Caerhyddwen forest on the left.

Follow the forest track down hill to a stream and up the other side. After another stream the track curves round to the left with a lagoon on the left and on the right some stone walling which is all that remains of Caerhyddwen Farm.

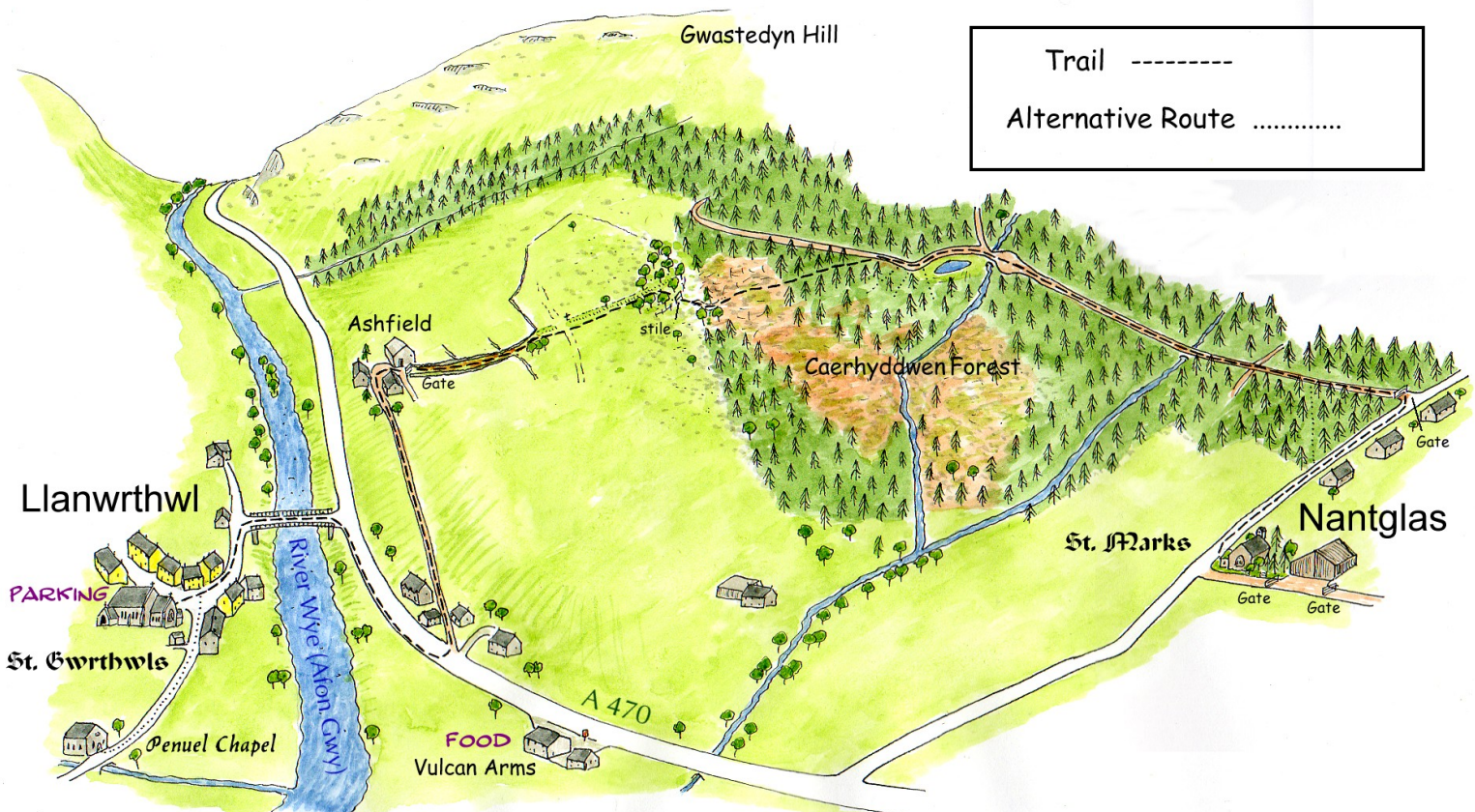
The track starts to climb again. Ignore three footpath signs on the left (marked with a footprint) until you come to the bridleway on the left marked with a hoofprint (the bridleway is approx 100 metres after the lagoon). Follow the bridleway through the forest into an area cleared of trees and then into some scrubby woodland.

Go through the way-marked gate in front of you. At this point the footpath disappears amongst the stunted trees, rocks and a small stream. Locate the remains of a field boundary on your right. This is no more than a low grass and stone ridge about a foot high. Keep this boundary on your right and follow it out of the wood and across a field of rough grass. There is a 'gateway' with two bits of wood in the shape of a cross by it. Ignore the faint track through the gateway leading down the hill and continue to follow the boundary until it reaches the corner of the hedge that juts into the field. There is a footpath way-marker on this corner.

Follow the hedge line until it becomes a green lane (more of a brown lane as this can be very muddy!) through a gate into Ashfield farmyard. Go through the farmyard and follow the track down to the main road (A470).

Cross the road and turn right. (If you want refreshments, turn left instead. There is a shop at the garage a quarter of a mile away and also a pub called the Vulcan Arms.)

Turn left into Llanwrthwl, crossing the bridge over the River Wye. Follow the road around to the left and the church is on the corner by a lane to the left signposted to Hodrid. The Hodrid road leads to Penuel Chapel (1852) after less than a quarter of a mile if you are interested in a short diversion.



Cwmduddwr

PARKING
Triangle Inn
St Brides

TOILETS
FOOD

Trail -----
Alternative Route

St. Gwrthwl's, Llanwrthwl to St Brides, Cwmduddwr

(3 miles, mostly tarmac, fairly flat, one moderate hill)

From the church turn left through the village, past the old school (now community centre) on the right and ignore the turning on the left to Penrhos.

50 yards further on, take the bridleway on the right up the hill.

At the tarmac road, turn right.

Follow the lane for 3/4 mile until you pass a house called Bach Y Graig on the left.

A short distance after the road veers around to the left but follow a bridleway that leads straight on down to the river.

Go through the gate and follow the path to the riverside. In the middle distance you can see a bridge over the Wye carrying the Mid Wales railway, closed in 1966. This is an ideal place for a paddle and if the river is low you can take off socks and shoes and wade to the other side. However, the proper footpath turns left and crosses the river by a rather scary looking suspension bridge. Despite the way it swings about a bit, this bridge is perfectly safe!

Follow the footpath through a gate to Glyn Farm.

Turn right onto the tarmac lane and follow the lane all the way to Cwmduddwr past Cwmduddwr Park on the right.

Fork left at the Triangle Inn, a 16th Century drover's Inn, and the church is on the left.

Alternatively, from the farm follow the tarmac lane as far as a patch of woodland on the left.

Take the farm track left and then at some farm buildings, turn right around the buildings and right again to take you back onto the tarmac lane after 1/2 mile and then left to Cwmduddwr.

Llanwrthwl

St Gwrthwls

PARKING

