

THERE ARE NO GOOD WALKS NEAR ME...

WANT TO BET?!

Ever thought that all the best walks are miles from home? Each month we'll choose a place at random and try to prove otherwise...

#6 LLANDUDNO CONWY

"Wheeeee, we're going to Snowdonia! We're gonna climb Wales' highest peak! We might see some buzzards!" Thus hollers the ill-informed tourist as he whizzes along the A55 on his way to Wales' most famous national park. Oh poor ignoramus. Poor dozy day-tripper. Doesn't he know he's missing Llandudno?

Llan-where?

Llandudno. Well, in fact it's pronounced 'Llan-DID-no'. You were looking for Wales' highest mountain? Pah - here's Wales' biggest holiday resort! Wales' most famous national park? Yawn. We've got the Great Orme Country Park! Buzzards? Don't make us laugh. We've got Kashmiri goats! Ta-da!

Excuse me. Kashmiri goats?

Um, yes. The Great Orme - a massive limestone headland joined to Wales' north coast by a narrow neck of land - is crawling with them. Great long-horned things from Kashmir. Apparently an Edwardian squire had a eureka moment when he encountered a Cashmere scarf and shipped some over.

Queen Vic loved 'em. Now they totter about Great Orme eating the nettles. Very cute. Smell worse than a miner's armpit, though.

Lovely.

Right, well you're clearly focusing on the wrong bit. Malodorous goats aside, Llandudno is a sadly overlooked destination by those fixated on reaching Snowdonia.

Sell it to me...

The town itself has what badly written holiday resort brochures call "faded glamour" and we call "faded glamour". Think Edwardian/Victorian elegance overlaid by seaside kitch and you'll get the picture.

And the walks?

The Great Orme is actually magnificent, with views over Snowdonia one way and the coast the other. It's ringed by cliffs and criss-crossed by grassy footpaths. San Francisco-style trams cruise past while midget cable-cars glide silently above you.

Cable-cars glide above the trails of the Great Orme.



The incomplete Welsh Coast Path is complete here, and circumnavigates the headland for more of those wild views.

So we shouldn't race past?

We rather think not. It's not Snowdonia, not even if you squint, but it's a lovely stop on the way. And if you at least slow down enough to peek, you lessen the chances of a collision with aforementioned goats, so everyone's a winner.



The Great Orme jutting out into Conwy Bay, with Llandudno on the left.

TRY IT YOURSELF

Explore: See Route 18 in this issue.

The map: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL17.

Done that. Where else? If you toddle south of Llandudno, you can pick up the North Wales Path as it traces the shore of the Conwy river. Grab a river taxi from Degawny beach across to Conwy Marina and pick up the wide green track that ascends the wooded spine of Conwy Mountain. Looking back will give you a nice view of Conwy Castle, whose black and forbidding walls bely the fact that it's actually quite a nice place to visit.



No matter where you're planning on walking this month Sprayway have the perfect gear for you. Our garments are designed by a team of enthusiastic walkers in the North West of England, and where better to learn what keeps the British weather out? Perfect for the coming winter are our GORE-TEX® Performance Shell Kenai (mens) and Zao (womens) jackets. Sprayway, made for all walks of life.

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8.5 Distance
8.5km/5¼ miles

3 Time
3 hours

Moderate Grade

Lots of pubs/café Refreshments



Path down to West Shore, which you will descend at Point 5.

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Photo: Richard Jones

The Great Orme is a spectacular limestone headland that overlooks the seaside town of Llandudno and well-deserves the epithet that it 'rises like a dragon's head from the sea'. The Orme provides one of the resort's greatest attractions, with superb views over Llandudno Bay and the North Wales coast on one side, and the mountains of Snowdonia on the other. There is a cable-car and tramway going to the summit, but walkers enjoy the best journey to the top, going over grassy hilltop paths and through lovely farmland, with the delightful gardens of Happy Valley and Haulfre at either end of the route. The Orme is a wildlife haven, with numerous nature trails and a nature reserve, and there are many points of historical interest including an ancient stone circle, a Bronze Age

mine and a 12th-century church. Named after the 6th-century Celtic monk St Tudno, from which Llandudno derives, the church welcomes visitors on most days and can be found at Point 3. There is a popular dry-ski and toboggan run at Point 2, while the summit area forms a country park. Some visitors to the summit complex choose to leave their mark by forming the limestone rocks into names and initials on the hillside. *By Richard Jones.*

1 Start
Walk up road towards Grand Hotel. Immediately after Waverley Hotel, L, turn L up steps to cable-car station. Take lower path opposite cafeteria around field with stone circle, then go up steps through Happy Valley gardens. Follow waymark signs 'l'r copa' (to the summit). Cross narrow

PLAN YOUR ROUTE



ROUTE

Is it for me? Grassy/grit paths, rocky steps, Tarmac; steady climb to summit; steep path down to Point 6. Suitable for regular walkers
Stiles None

START/PARKING

Road parking/pay & display near pier at west end of promenade, Llandudno, grid ref SH782826
Nearest town Llandudno
Refreshments Plenty in town; café/pub at summit
Public toilets Summit; Llandudno
Public transport Llandudno Railway Station, 1km from start

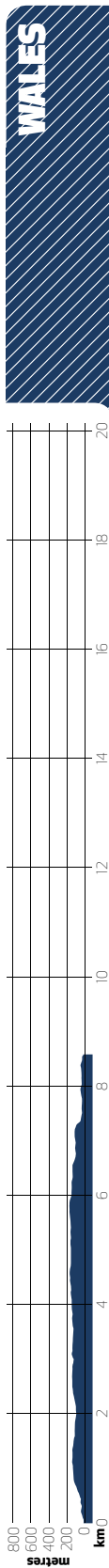
MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer OL17; Landranger 115 & 116

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road and follow gravel/grit path, going up, then down, bearing R to ski centre car park.

2 0.8km/½ mile

Go through gate and around toboggan run, with wall on R. Bear L at top with sea views ahead and follow sign to 'St Tudno's Church', passing farm buildings and fields to road.

3 2.2km/1¼ miles

At church, turn L and go uphill for 300m, bearing R at waymark just past cemetery.

Follow path, with wall L, all the way around country park.

4 5.4km/3¼ miles

At last wall corner, a short diversion can be taken to summit complex with its visitor centre, café and pub. Alternatively, go diagonally across and follow path alongside road, going downhill. Waymark signs now change to 'l'r dref' (to the town). Bear R past Great Orme Bronze Age mine, pass nature reserve and at junction

just past gate, turn R past houses. Look for sign in low rock wall at chapel and follow L down steps to road.

5 6.4km/4 miles

Turn sharp R on to Ty'n y coed road, here ignoring sign going L to town. Follow to end, past houses, and at gate go L, then immediately R along path going down towards West Shore. Taking care on steep rocky steps, follow winding path down to Tarmac.

6 7km/4¼ miles

Turn L and walk along this level path past Haulfre Gardens to arrive at road into town, going L back to start. **CW**

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