

**WALK THROUGH THE EXCITING LANDSCAPE OF THE VALLEYS  
FULL OF HISTORY, LEGEND - AND STUNNING NATURAL BEAUTY!  
Rhos to Pontardawe through CILYBEBYLL**



Looking towards Pontardawe from Cilybebyll village

### **Historic & Geographic Background**

*The Cilybebyll estate was established in the 15th century and after development by various families, by 1838 was recorded as having the largest land holding in the district. The main house, Plas Cilybebyll, was redeveloped in 1840 by Henry Leach, creating a south-facing Victorian facade on the property. His son Frances Edward Leach inherited the estate in 1848, changing his name to Lloyd in 1849 by Royal Charter in order not to forfeit his inheritance. The main house today is a guest house.*


*Like much of South Wales, small-scale coal mining has taken place in the area for many centuries. By 1849 it was producing large quantities of coal, which were readily transported around the world from the docks at Swansea. The dangers of coal mining past and present are highlighted by two disasters in the locality. In 1858, 14 men and boys died as a result of engine fumes being accidentally pumped into the Primrose Colliery.*

*Today, the area is a peaceful haven free from the noise and bustle of modern life and has plentiful bird life and quite stunning scenery.*

## THE WALK

### Route summary and terrain

Your route is initially on local roads with the middle section on footpaths, steep in places before returning on to local roads in Alltwen. The road sections are lightly trafficked and around Cilybebyll, pleasantly scenic and serene.

<b>Start point</b>	Rhos Post Office (GR 738032)
<b>End point</b>	Pontardawe Arts Centre (GR 723040)
<b>Recommended Maps</b>	O.S. Explorer 165 O.S. Landranger 159
<b>Distance</b>	6 kilometres
<b>Estimated net time</b>	3 hours
<b>Grade</b>	Easy to Moderate
<b>Refreshments</b>	Pontardawe Arts Centre ☕ Greggs Café ☕
<b>Toilets</b> 	Pontardawe Herbert St

## THE ROUTE IN DETAIL

From the bus stop at Rhos Post Office (GR 738032), turn right on to Plas Road, marked by the unusual finger post directing you to Cilybebyll (1 mile 1¼ furlongs). Follow this quiet country road for 1.5 kilometres with the attractive landscape of Mynydd March Hywel on your right and passing the entrance to Plas Cilybebyll (served by a private road) until you get to the turning (left) signposted Cilybebyll.

Take this left turn and 200 metres later you will see the ancient church of St John the Evangelist on your right, surrounded by several large houses which make up the tiny village. Opposite the church, you join the Cilybebyll Trail which takes you through the fields on a path variously surfaced and paved with intermittent rough and rocky stretches. This brings you out onto Tramway Road in the village of Gellinudd. Turn right and you will find this leads to the remains of a tramway of which very little is known except that it took coal from small mines in the area to the railway in the valley below.

Follow the course of the tramway and where its earthworks disappear, turn left along a partly way marked trail south westward to come out by Glyndole Farm. The tramroad route is quite steep and rough underfoot and the subsequent footpath can be distinctly muddy. The farm track from here leads to Alltwen and you pass a modern housing estate followed by the shell of the former 'Aladdin Heaters' factory and then above the railway and river on an urban road. Despite being a very prominent landmark, St Catherine's Church does not come into view until this part of the walk. This road comes out at a large roundabout and into Pontardawe crossing the A4067 (which in a previous life was the Midland Railway track and Pontardawe station; sadly no trace whatever remains of the railway now).

From here, turn right at the next roundabout then left into Herbert Street. The bus terminus is just above on the left.

### Notes

All distances are given in metric

GR refers to Ordnance Survey grid reference



Pontardawe Station then (1964)



and (site of) now (2017)

## LOCAL TRANSPORT and PARKING

**Train Station** 

Neath 6 kilometres

**Bus Stops** 

Rhos Post Offices (adjacent)  
Pontardawe Jubilee (200 metres)

**Parking** 

Pontardawe Council Car Park (charged)

**Buses** 

Both ends of the walk are (Pontardawe Jubilee and Rhos Post Office) on the 56 and 256 bus routes Pontardawe-Neath which between them operate twice per hour daytime. There are connecting buses into Pontardawe:  
X50 & X51 from Swansea every half hour Mondays-Saturdays, four per day Sundays  
X51 from Ystradgynlais every hour Mondays to Saturdays only  
First Cymru operate the X50, X51 & 56 and South Wales Transport the 256; tickets are not inter-available

**Tickets**

First Day tickets Swansea Bay or Neath Port Talbot areas give a day's unlimited travel (adult, 16 & under and family options available) and can be purchased from the driver on the bus  
For walkers arriving by train, Neath [Plus Bus](#) tickets for onward travel can be purchased when you buy your train ticket.  
South Wales Transport issue single or return tickets between Neath & Pontardawe via Rhos

[Plan your journey](#)

**GALLERY: portraying the natural beauty and historic interest on this walk**



The unusual finger post at Rhos using miles and furlongs



Looking towards Mynydd March Hywel from the Rhos-Cilybebyll road



The attractive medieval church of St John the Evangelist at Cilybebyll



Start of the former tramway incline at Tramway Road, Cilybebyll



The lower part of the tramway before its final steep descent to the river



The path opens out to become a track above the river at Alltwen



Despite its impressive stature towering over Pontardawe, St Catherine's Church doesn't come into view until just before the end of the walk