

Newtown Circular Walks – No. 2 Brimmon Wood & Kerry

This walk starts and ends in the centre of Newtown. It is mainly off-road walking with a few short sections on quiet lanes. It affords excellent views over Newtown and the surrounding hills and also over Kerry and the Kerry valley. This flexible walk can be tailored to suit different lengths and adapted as a linear walk in either direction. This route is reasonably easy to follow since most of the gates and stiles are marked with footpath signs, fingerposts or yellow tape on gates. There are, however, a number of areas on the return section that are not very clear and can be very muddy. This walk is rated as moderately difficult with many stiles, some quite high, others rickety, and the occasional fence to climb.

Distance: 5.3 miles for the basic circuit plus 2.5 miles extra for the detour into Kerry.
To Kerry one way is 3.3 miles and the return is 4.5 miles.
Timing: 3 ½ hours, with an extra hour or so for the detour into Kerry.

There is a Tanat Valley bus service (no. 81 to Montgomery and Welshpool) Monday to Saturday, 08.15, 10.50, 13.50 Kerry to Newtown, and 08.45, 11.45, 14.40 and 16.25 Newtown to Kerry if you choose the one-way walk.

Directions

Start under the Town Clock ① at the intersection of Broad St, High St, Severn St. and Shortbridge St. The Cross Buildings, now housing Barclays Bank, was erected by Sarah Brisco to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897. Sarah Brisco, a descendent of the Pryce family of Newtown Hall, presented the clock to the town in 1900. Opposite the clock on Severn Street is the Robert Owen museum and the Robert Owen memorial rooms are over the HSBC on the other corner. Robert Owen, the founder of the cooperative movement, is one of Newtown's most famous sons.

Walk along Shortbridge St passing Market St and the Post Office, both on your right, and the Robert Owen statue in the small park on your left. Cross Pool Road (A483) at the traffic lights and continue on up Old Kerry Road until you reach the Victorian buildings of Agriculture House ahead of you and the Royal Welsh Warehouse on your right. The Royal Welsh Warehouse was the centre of the Pryce Jones mail order business and Agriculture House was the factory supplying goods for the mail order business. At one time there was a footbridge between the two buildings at first floor level.

At Agriculture House cross the road and take the small lane (Brimmon Lane) ② that takes you over the railway tracks near the Newtown station. Turn left and continue up this lane to the road (Heol Treowen). Cross the road to the lane opposite and continue a little way until you reach a cattle grid on your right. Go over the cattle grid then follow the drive over two more grids up to the house and farm buildings ahead. Take the left fork towards the black barn and go through the gate to the left above it into the green lane. Continue along the track with the wood on your left, hedge on the right until you come to a shoulder of the hill, with two adjacent oak trees on your right.

Turn sharp left here up onto a wide path ③ (a large holly bush has been marked with yellow tape) and follow it along the top of the wood. Go through the gate in the top right hand corner and continue in the same direction with the hedge on your left. Go through four further gates until you come to a half timbered house, Shwrwd. Proceed up the drive to the right and continue until you reach the road ④.

Turn right and go up the road until you reach a T junction. Cross the road and go up the bank and over the stile immediately in front of you. Carry straight on in the field with the hedge on your right, go down the dip, through the gate and up the hill following the hedge straight on to another gate visible at the top. Go through the gate and head half left towards a gate across the field under an oak tree. Go through and follow the fence/hedge on your left to the end of the field.

Go through the gate on your left, then immediately turn sharp right ⑤ and through the gate on the right. Go straight on along the track and down through the next right hand gate and then head straight down the dip in the field ahead of you in the direction of the white house on the hill facing you. At the bottom of this field you will reach a fingerpost at the junction of five footpaths. This point, called by us Five Ways ⑥, is where the main circular walk begins the return. This is also the point at which an additional walk into Kerry starts. This alternative is detailed later in this text.

To begin the return, with your back to the Five Ways fingerpost, facing the stile below you, take the upper farm track to your right. Proceed straight ahead following the contours of this large field, and an indistinct sheep track until you reach a fence and a small stand of conifers up slightly to the right and at right angles to your path. Cross the stile and bear left, following the fence on your left. At the next stile carry on ahead, again with a fence on your left until you reach an old copse and a cluster of gorse bushes. Go around these to the right, carrying on at a higher level in the field until you reach another stile near the top corner of the field. Go over the stile and head towards the black corrugated iron barn ahead. The path takes you to the right of this barn and the house, Pen y Wern, Cross another stile and follow the fence on your left parallel to the drive until you can cross a stile onto it. Turn right, go up the drive then through the gate at the top.

Turn left onto the road ⑦ and go through the first gate on the right. In this field bear left towards a large oak and line of conifers. There is a rather magnificent bird box attached to the oak thanks to the Montgomery Barn Owl Group (www.mbog.co.uk). Go through the gate to the right of the oak and follow the old woodland track downhill between the conifers and a hedge. A gate at the bottom brings you into another field with a gate ahead that leads on to a lane. Go down the lane until you reach the road, there is a sign there saying Lower Black Hill. Go through the gate on your right and follow the hedge on your left (skirting the old green lane which is too overgrown to walk down). Head downhill and at the bottom left hand corner of the field you will reach a fence that you need to climb, since the gate has been obstructed. Carry straight on downhill to the stile ahead. Cross the stile and follow the wood on your right, over a stile in the corner and follow the cypress hedge on your left to the fence and road. Some attempt has been made to make the fence climbable but you need to be a bit athletic to get over it onto the road. Turn right. The next part can be a bit muddy in places after a lot of rain and an alternative route would be to follow this road back into Newtown.

Otherwise, go only a very short distance down the road and then turn right off the road ⑧ at the next drive by a bungalow, Hillside, leading through a gate and grassy lane ahead with the

wood on your right. Follow this path, wood on right, fence on left, through another gate, across a small stream and through another gate. Bear slightly right uphill around overgrown holly bushes, proceeding parallel with the fenceline below, then cross a farm track with a gate on your left (don't take this one) and go slightly up to your right and then through the gate ahead. Cross the stream and continue following hedge and fence to your left. Just after you cross another two streams there is a difficult to cross gate/fence on your left, marked with yellow tape, leading into a field. If you look to the left of the fence, a makeshift 'stepover' crossing has been made over the wire fence. Bear right and down across this field to the green lane that descends to the two oak trees where you left it near the beginning of the walk. Retrace your steps to the house and farmyard at Upper Brimmon and back along the paved track over the three cattle grids to the road. Turn left, cross Heol Treowen and back to the railway station and town.

Once on Old Kerry Road you will pass the Railway pub on your left. This old fashioned pub does not serve food but has excellent beer, as certified by CAMRA, and is a nice spot to rehydrate on your way back. They open every daytime, all day on Tuesday (market day), Friday, Saturday and Sunday and till around 3 pm on the other days.

Alternative diversion to Kerry

At the Five Ways signpost, where the main circular walk turns back you can go over the stile ahead and bear left towards the village of Kerry (visible in the distance) to a gate in the bottom corner.

Go through the gate and follow the hedge on your right to another gate on the right, along a short, overgrown green lane on to the road. Turn left here and follow it to the T junction at the main Newtown to Kerry road and turn right over Gilfach bridge and on into the village.

There are two pubs in Kerry, the Kerry Lamb and the Herbert Arms. They are open during the day on Saturday and Sunday. St Michaels Church (<http://www.cpat.demon.co.uk/projects/longer/churches/montgom/16413.htm>) is of interest, being a double-naved structure with a large west tower and a timber-framed belfry. It also has one of only three chained bibles in Wales.

To return, retrace your steps out of the village to Gilfach bridge and left on the side road. Turn right into the green lane where it emerged onto the road and retrace your steps to Five Ways. Follow the return directions from Five Ways.

Walk 2 Brimmon Wood & Kerry

- Ⓞ Gate
- Ⓢ Cattle Grid
- Ⓣ Strife

