



Country Park Walks Leaflet



Wrexham Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Service



Alyn Waters
Country Park
Information
and Walks



Alyn Waters Country Park Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre entrance is situated in Gwersyllt three miles north of Wrexham off the A541 Mold Road. The Llay entrance to the Park is off the B5425 Llay to Wrexham Road

Follow the brown and white country park signs off the A541 Mold Road along a drive to the Visitor Centre.

Buses between Wrexham and Mold stop on the Mold Road near the Gwersyllt entrance to Alyn Waters. There are buses between Wrexham, Llay and Bradley. Gwersyllt railway station is only mile from the Park.

Alyn Waters Country Park

Mold Road, Gwersyllt
Wrexham LL11 4AG

Telephone: 01978 822780

The Visitor Centre and Café open from 9.30am – 4.30pm

The main gates for vehicle access to the Visitor Centre close at 4.45pm every day.

The Park is open daily

Directions to the Llay side of the park (by road)

Turn right at the end of the drive.

Turn right at the Hollybush Pub (Cefn y bedd).

Carry on to the mini roundabout and turn right.

Turn right after the brown sign for 'Country Park'.



Introduction

Alyn Waters is the largest country park in Wrexham and lies on both sides of the River Alyn. On the Gwersyllt side there is a Visitor Centre with a conference room available for hire, a café, trim trail and picnic area.

On the Llay side of the Park there is a children's playground, football pitch, golf driving range and a Local Nature Reserve.

The colour coded walks in this leaflet should suit different interests and abilities and you can take a short stroll to the River Alyn or follow the riverside walks to observe the wildlife. The longer circular walks combine stunning views of the Park and river with the diversity of the natural setting. If you are interested in nature, history, photography or a family day out to get some exercise and fresh air, there is a walk to suit you at Alyn Waters.

Admission

Admission to Alyn Waters is free but donations to the Friends Group are always welcome and used towards the upkeep and improvement of the Park. If you are interested in the Friends Group please ask for details at the Visitor Centre desk.

Dogs

Well behaved dogs are always welcome at Alyn Waters, but must be kept under control at all times. Please remember that failure to pick up dog waste is a serious offence resulting in an on the spot fine. Dog waste bags are on sale in the Visitor Centre and used bags can be disposed of at any of the waste bins around the Park.

Designed by Breda and Butter Design 01978 844482



Getting Active in Alyn Waters Country Park

Walking or cycling around Alyn Waters is completely free and there are many 'access for all' footpaths, cycle ways and calorie mapped walks to explore. Most of the surfaced paths are excellent for pushchairs and wheelchairs. The Park is ideal for dog walkers and families walking or cycling with their children. Event organisers use it as a perfect location for fund raising. It is popular for organised sponsored walks and fun runs.

These activities are ideal forms of exercise with huge benefits for your health; reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. You should feel fitter and it is an excellent way to lose some weight. The exercise equipment on the trim trail, next to the Visitor Centre, is fun and easy to use and has been especially designed to improve strength, stamina, balance and co-ordination. The apparatus can be used by young and old alike. Mountain bikes can be hired on some days. Please ask at the desk or telephone for details.

The Park has a professionally designed orienteering course. The goal is to find your way around set points or 'controls' using a special map. Orienteering can be competitive with teams or individuals racing around the course against the clock, or you can go round as a family just for fun. Please ask at the Visitor Centre desk for more information.



Facilities at Alyn Waters

The Visitor Centre has excellent facilities. The large, airy conference room, which is available for hire, caters for up to 100 people and is ideal for training, events, birthday parties, environmental education and meetings.

It has the benefit of large windows providing natural light and doors which open out directly into the Park. The building has well kept public toilets, including disabled and baby changing facilities. The café is open every day including bank holidays, but not Christmas day, Boxing day or New Years day.

Around the Visitor Centre there are picnic tables where visitors can enjoy relaxing in the pretty surroundings. Throughout the year, including school holidays, visitors can take part in a variety of arts and craft workshops, sports activities, practical volunteer days and guided walks.

The rangers run an exciting outdoor education programme especially for schools. These are linked to the National Curriculum and The Foundation Phase in Wales.

Outdoor learning subjects include: habitats, river/pond dipping, river geography, orienteering, mapping, seasonal walks and forest school.

Teachers who are interested in organising a school trip should contact the rangers.

This leaflet has been produced by the Parks, Countryside and Public Rights of Way Service. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Wrexham County Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any errors in this publication.



The History of Alyn Waters

During the 16th Century the Park was part of a large country estate with Gwersyllt Hall as a focal point. The owners sided with the Royalists during the English Civil War and in 1645 the Hall was severely damaged by pillaging Roundheads. The Park became popular amongst the gentry as a venue for the newly fashionable pastime of archery.



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Gwersyllt Hall was demolished in 1910 due to mining subsidence and in 1953 MacAlpines bought the land to open quarries on the Gwersyllt and



Llay sides of the Park. They dug out the sand and gravel laid down by retreating glaciers thousands of years before and the sand and gravel was used to build the giant Llyn Brenig Dam high on the Denbigh Moor.

Domestic landfill operations took place on some of the former quarried areas but this was closed by the mid 1980 s. Wrexham Maelor Borough Council bought much of the land in 1988 and designated the area as a country park in 1989.

Alyn Waters — The Ice Age



Much of the land in and around Alyn Waters lies on top of sand and gravel formed as a glacier wore away the rocks, during the Ice Age, by gradually moving across the land, trapping stones and sand in the ice. When the glacier melted 13,000 years ago, the resulting streams and rivers separated the sand, clay and gravel into layers.

Pebbles and sand were not the only things to wash out of the glacier! At some point many thousands of years ago, a giant woolly mammoth died on the ice and it lay, undisturbed in the gravel, until 1966, when the Park became a gravel quarry. One of the digger drivers uncovered part of the mammoth's huge tusk which is now in Liverpool Museum.





Biodiversity at Alyn Waters

The sand and gravel quarrying scraped away the rich topsoil but the poor subsoil has allowed the development of a rich meadow habitat full of vetches, grasses, ox eye daisy and yellow rattle. In the summer, the common spotted orchid is an impressive sight as well as bee orchids and helleborines, some of which are quite rare.

The Park is an ideal home for skylarks whose distinctive song was once a common sound high above the countryside, but changes in farming practices have made the bird much rarer.

Each year, when the skylark breeding season ends, some of the grass is cut back by farmers and used for animal winter food. This stops Skylark Meadow and other grassland areas from becoming scrub and eventually woodland, which would mean losing the population of skylarks.

Other areas of grassland, especially around the Visitor Centre and along the paths, are controlled by the large population of rabbits! Some areas are allowed to naturally regenerate with trees such as willow and birch. Woodland management





includes thinning out some of the trees to allow other plants to thrive. This lighter woodland habitat is encouraging smaller plants like wild garlic, lesser celandine and wood anemone to flourish.

Along the River Alyn, the canopy of willow and alder has a semi natural, undisturbed appearance with large areas of pendulous sedge, marsh marigold, golden saxifrage and horsetail, as well as interesting fungi. Grass snakes, adders, smooth newts and the endangered great crested newt have all been recorded at Alyn Waters.

Fish such as bullhead, grayling and brown trout live in the river and

some visitors have been lucky to spot kingfishers and dippers along the riverside.

Buzzards, kestrels and foxes have all been seen and on summer evenings, bats dart along the river hunting for moths and house martins swoop down over the water.

Please try not to disturb the habitat, plants or animals along the river, as they are protected by law



Way marked Trails

Woodland, grassland and riverside trails are way marked to encourage visitors to explore the diversity of the Gwersyllt and Llay sides of the Park.

There are purpose built 'access for all' paths and cycle ways providing safe cycling for all the family. Some paths are wide and tarmaced and offer excellent access for wheelchairs and pushchairs, although there is one steep gradient.

Wooden posts show the selection of coloured footprint walks which suit most peoples abilities.

Coloured Footprint routes on the Gwersyllt side of the park:

The Yellow Trail (3/4 mile)

Follow the path down from the Visitor Centre passed woodland and open wildflower areas where you may see butterflies and moths amongst the rosebay willowherb. This is a pleasant, short walk to the river with benches to rest along the way. You can then return along this path to the Visitor Centre or continue on the orange trail.

The Green Trail (1 mile)

Follow the same route as above but turn right at the signpost. This route goes through grassland and woodland. Eventually you will see Skylark Meadow, where you may spot these endangered birds. This route passes the Park's fascinating 'Metamorphosis' steel sculptures depicting 'Life Cycles'.

The Orange Trail (1 mile)

Follow the path as above but you can carry on along the riverside and enjoy the view from the water's edge. Mature riverside trees include: oak and horse chestnut.



Keep an eye open for the elusive kingfisher and dippers which have been spotted here. Follow the riverside path and cross the boardwalk. During the summer dragonflies and damselflies flit through the surrounding grasses. Follow the steep section up the hill to your right. In autumn, you will see a feast of hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and rowan berries as you walk back to where this route joins the green trail passing the steel sculptures.

Coloured footprint routes on the Llay side of the Park:

The Blue Trail (3/4 mile)

Follow the path from the car park, near the children's play area and continue along the outer boundary next to Llay New road. Bear left around the edge of the willow and birch woodland then left again passing the Cloud Sculpture and back to the car park.

The Red Trail (2 miles)

Follow the same route as above, but then follow a longer path by going right through the woodland Nature Reserve. Turn left at the signpost in the wood through dense

trees and back to the car park passing the beautiful Marble Egg and the Cloud Sculpture. This is a particularly nice route for spotting wildlife such as green and lesser spotted woodpeckers as you walk through the woodland.

The Purple Trail (2 miles)

This path starts at the car park and goes straight ahead to the Cloud Sculpture and straight on through the Nature Reserve. Carry on, ignoring the left turn for the red trail, until you reach the Mining Sculpture and turn sharply back to the left, following this circular route through the woodland, passed the golf course and back to the car park.





Mining Sculpture

Llay Walks



Blue Trail
3/4 mile



Red Trail
2 miles



Purple Trail
2 1/2 miles



Gwersyllt Walks



Thinking Man

Wildlife Pond

Route from Gwersyllt to Llay side

Earth Mound



Yellow Trail
3/4 mile



Green Trail
1 mile



Orange Trail
1 1/2 miles

Alyn Valley Circular Walk (approx. 4.5 miles)

This walk begins at Alyn Waters Visitor Centre and takes you through the village of Gwersyllt, across open farmland, near babbling rivers and streams and through quiet wooded valleys where you can see remnants of the areas diverse history.

The route passes Caer Alyn Iron Age hill fort. The Caer Alyn archaeologists are digging for evidence to prove the existence of an Iron Age hill fort and Bronze Age burial mound at this site.

www.caeralyn.org

The route also joins the Wat s Dyke Way National Trail and circles back to Alyn Waters.

The walk is 4 miles long and takes about 2.5 hours. The route is muddy in places and suitable footwear is recommended. There are also stiles, steep slopes and roads to negotiate so it is not suitable for wheelchairs, buggies or small children.

Details of the walk and a map can be downloaded from
www.wrexham.gov.uk/rightsofway

