

Maes Hiraddug

2.7 miles (4.3 km)

2 hours

OS Maps: Landranger 116; Explorer 264, 265

This walk involves some significant ascent and descent, though this can be curtailed for a gentler stroll. Walking boots and waterproofs recommended.

The walk, mainly in the Clwydian range AONB, incorporates the Wildlife Trust reserve Maes Hiraddug, SSSI neutral grassland, and Graig Fawr, a prominent SSSI limestone hill managed by the National Trust, noted for its flora.

Start at the council car park at the south end of the Prestatyn-Dyserth walkway, off the A5151 on the eastern side of Dyserth (SJ 063 792).

1. Descend following the public footpath (to the left of the Prestatyn-Dyserth walkway), turning left along the bank of the Afon Ffyddion, passing abundant hart's tongue fern.

2. Where the path meets Pandy Lane, descend the steps and turn to the right, following the lane over the river, before ascending with woodland on both sides.

3. At a crossing of footpaths, climb the metal steps on the right and enter the Wildlife Trust reserve through a kissing gate. The reserve includes a hectare of unimproved grassland, which has never been ploughed or treated with fertiliser, and is surrounded by a small woodland. Plants and grasses on the meadow include adders tongue, agrimony, common knapweed, common spotted orchid, common twayblade, common centaury, cowslips, quaking grass, self heal, sweet vernal, timothy, and yellow-wort. On sunny days in June and July you might see butterflies including common blue, holly blue, small copper, and small skipper, and look out for ant hills all year round.

4. Pass over the bridge spanning the former railway (now the Prestatyn-Dyserth walkway), pass through a kissing gate, follow the 'Dyserth Circular' sign post and continue across the meadow, veer to the left following a round yellow arrow sign, through a metal kissing gate, and cross a small wooden footbridge.

5. Take the track to the left, and keeping left, head towards a field gate. Before the gate, turn to your right with the hedge to your left. As you continue along this gentle ascent magnificent views of the Clwydian Valley, Carneddau Mountains, and both of the Ormes, open out to the left. Pause to take your breath, behind is a view of Dyserth village and Moel Hiraddug, Dyserth's own mountain which once boasted a hill fort. As the gradient evens out, cross two stiles, the second brings you out onto another lane.

6. Turn left, taking care of any traffic as you continue along this steep banked lane, lined with hazel and hawthorn dominated hedgerows, covered in ivy. Passing the top of Pandy Lane on your left, you soon come to the National Trust car park for Graig Fawr. (The walk may be shortened to exclude Graig Fawr, by descending the lane (Allt-Y-Graig) by the car park, and joining the Prestatyn-Dyserth walkway at an earlier point).

7. Negotiate a tight kissing gate, a path leads directly towards a summit with a trig point, giving superb views of the North Wales coast, and towards the Wirral and Liverpool. Graig Fawr hosts a number of rare plants including spiked speedwell, dark-red helleborine, hoary rock-rose, spring sandwort, and Nottingham catchfly. There are also limestone loving plants such as common rock-rose and common bird's foot trefoil, which feed the caterpillars of the silver studded blue butterfly.

8. Head east down the hill, keeping well back from the craggy edges with the coast to your left. Rejoin the Dyserth 'Circular Path', keeping left to descend steeply down steps. Cherry trees line the path at the bottom of the steps. Keep left and continue your descent through woodland. At the bottom of the hill you come out of the woods by a stone built former railway goods shed. This is the edge of the village of Meliden and where you join the Prestatyn-Dyserth walkway.

9. Head left along the walkway; the remainder of the walk is along easy gradients. There is a sharp left bend at the foot of a limestone face, this is an excellent location to observe butterflies during the summer months. The walkway route takes you past the boundaries of Maes Hiraddug. You can access the reserve again by going left up the steps by the railway bridge and turning left over the bridge (at 4). Alternatively continue along the walkway, which takes you back to the car park. Just before you reach the car park you will cross the Afon Ffyddion, a good spot to look out for the dipper.

Find further walks and local history in the Dyserth area on the village website www.dyserth.com



Dipper



Common spotted orchid



Yellow wort



Dark red helleborine



Silver studded blue

