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Tales of the Teifi Valley

A self-guided walk around Strata Florida in mid Wales



Discover the stunning landscape of the Teifi Valley in Ceredigion
Follow a winding river shaped by ice and water
Explore the picturesque ruins of the Strata Florida Abbey
Find out how people lived and worked in the area over the centuries

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the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





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Cover image: Aerial view of The Teifi Pools
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Tales of the Teifi Valley

Make your pilgrimage to Pontrhydfendigaid in mid Wales

The lush Teifi Valley is nestled within the Cambrian Mountains, a remote and unspoilt upland area of mid Wales. The valley nestles between its better-known neighbours Snowdonia (to the north) and the Brecon Beacons (to the south).

The Cambrians are the source of several Welsh rivers, including the Teifi. This walk explores the valley carved out by the River Teifi which is home to the dramatic ruins of Strata Florida Abbey. The Abbey has dominated the landscape, shaping the area's geography and history by drawing pilgrims from far and wide.



This walk also explores hidden stories of the valley, from lead miners 'one night houses' to the site of Iron Age hillforts.

Find out about a miraculous floating railway that used sheep's wool to carry trains across a dangerous bog and visit the simple grave of Wales' greatest medieval poet.



A wooden sculpture of a pilgrim dominates the skyline for part of the route. Make your own pilgrimage to the Teifi Valley and discover its stories for yourself.

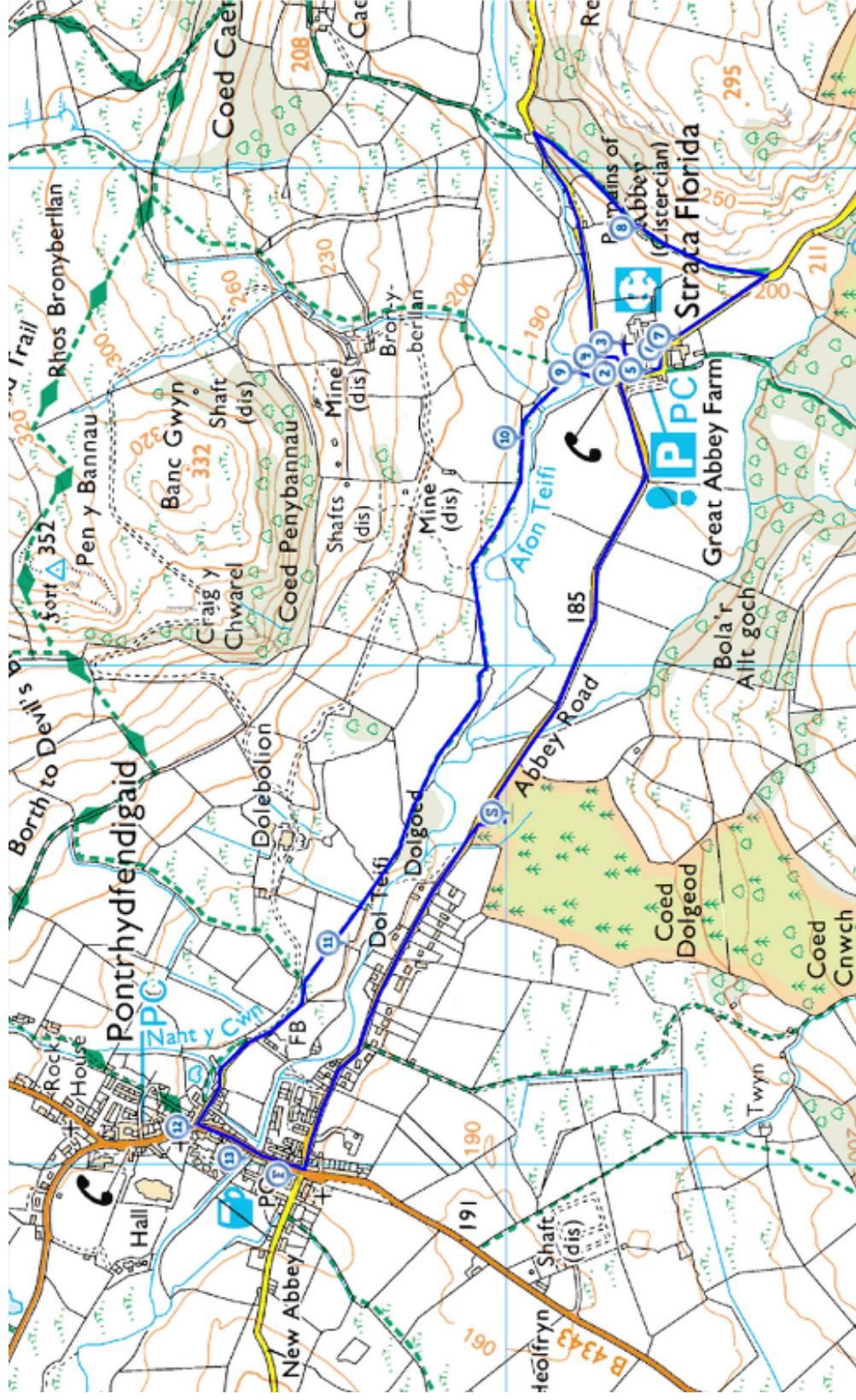
Top: Strata Florida Abbey entrance arch © William M Connolley, Wikimedia Commons (CCL)
Bottom: Pilgrim sculpture © Glen Morris

Practical information

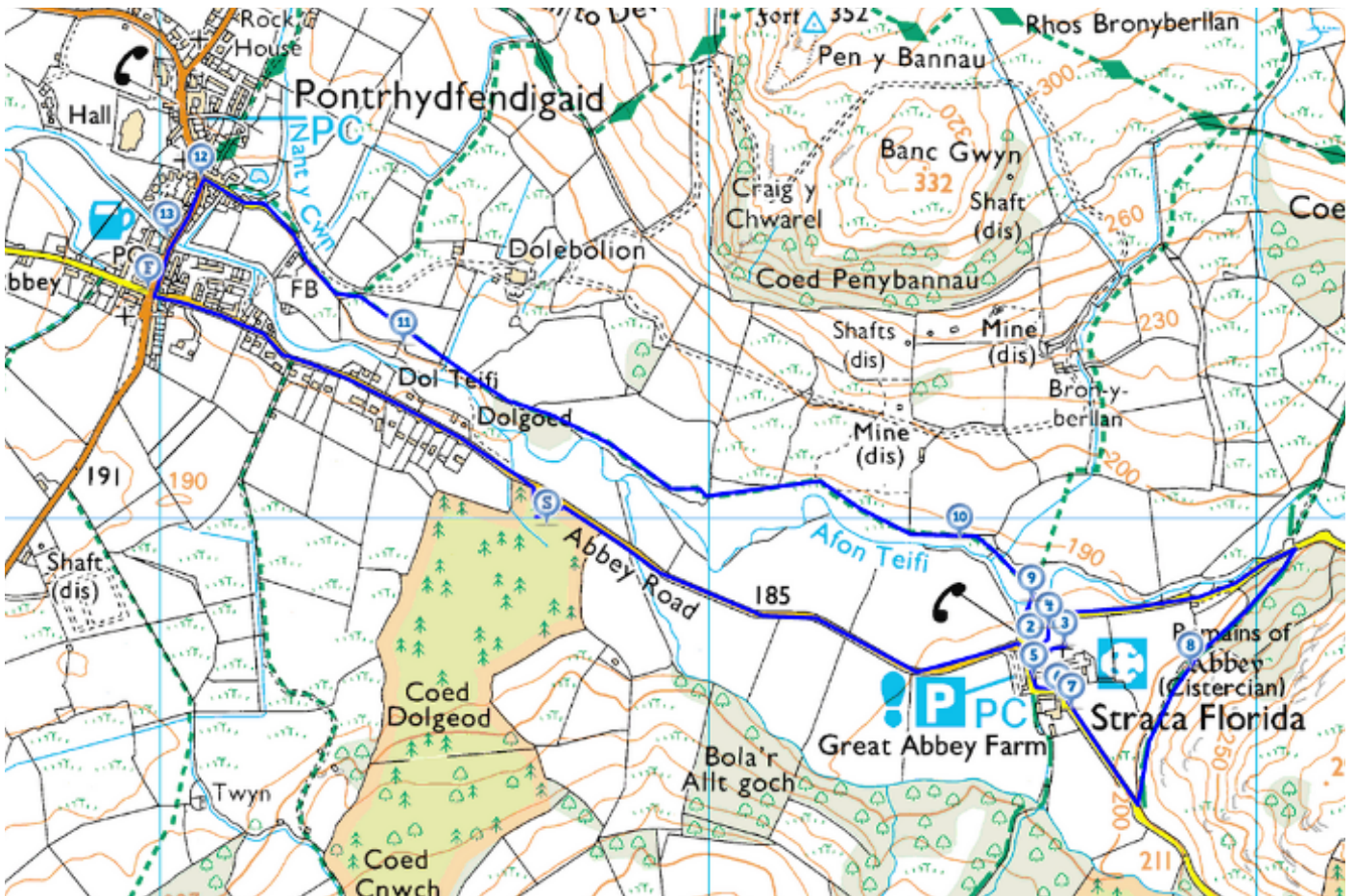
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|---------------------------|---|
| Location | Strata Florida Abbey, Pontrhydfendigaid, Ceredigion, Wales |
| Start & finish | Coed Dolgoed car park, Abbey Road, Pontrhydfendigaid SY25 6ER |
| Getting there | <p>Car – Pontrhydfendigaid is located on the B4340 and B4343 roads from Tregaron/Lampeter (south), Aberystwyth (north) and Ponterwyd (east).</p> <p>Coed Dolgoed car park is approximately 1 mile from Pontrhydfendigaid on the right hand side of the B4343 following signs for the Abbey. If this car park is full the Abbey car park is open from 10am to 5pm, April to October.</p> <p>Train - The nearest railway station is Aberystwyth (12 miles away)</p> <p>Bus - The route number T21 (Tregaron–Aberystwyth service) stops at Pontrhydfendigaid on Mondays to Fridays, except Bank Holidays. For more information visit Traveline Cymru's website www.traveline-cymru.info or telephone 0871 200 22 33.</p> <p>Bicycle - National Cycle Route number 82 (Trawsfynydd to Tywyn) passes 1½ miles away from Pontrhydfendigaid.</p> |
| Walk distance | 3½ miles |
| Level | Gentle – a mostly flat rural route with some stiles to cross |
| Terrain | Mainly on footpaths and pavements by quiet roads, a small area of rough track included. |
| Conditions | <p>The footpath along the River Teifi can be muddy after rain so take suitable footwear.</p> <p>Please be vigilant of farm animals. You will be walking through sections where sheep, horses and cows graze. Do not disturb them, keep dogs on a short lead and be wary of cows particularly when they have calves with them.</p> |

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| Suitable for | <p>Families – plenty of sights for all ages including the Abbey and The Pilgrim sculpture</p> <p>Dogs – must be kept on a short lead and away from farm animals</p> |
| Refreshments | <p>The Abbey Shop (by Stop 5) is open from April to September. The Black Lion and The Red Lion pubs in the village of Pontrhydfendigaid both serve hot food (near Stop 12).</p> |
| Toilets | <p>Toilets are available at the Abbey car park and in Pontrhydfendigaid.</p> |
| Places to visit | <p>Strata Florida Abbey (Stop 5) is open daily from 10am to 4pm (winter) / 5pm (summer). The shop and café are open from April to October when entry charges apply to the site (adult £3.50, child/conc £2.65, family £10.50). From November to March entry is free. For more information contact Cadw. Tel: 01443 336000. Email: cadw@cymru.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Cors Caron 2,000-acre nature reserve is home to a range of wildlife, birds and flowers all year round. The site also includes a free boardwalk trail around the Tregaron Bog.</p> <p>Tregaron Kite Centre & Museum is 5 miles south of Pontrhydfendigaid. Displays on Tregaron Bog, local history, the Red kite and other birds. Café, shop, free entry and parking (donations welcome). Tel: 01974 298977</p> <p>Penglais Nature Park is 15 miles away in Aberystwyth. A woodland nature reserve, the 11 hectare site is ideal for walks and picnics. Famous for views over Aberystwyth and spring bluebells. Free entry.</p> <p>Vale of Rheidol Railway is a heritage steam train line that runs through stunning scenery between Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge. For tickets and timetable information visit www.rheidolrailway.co.uk or Tel: 01970 625819</p> <p>The nearest is Aberystwyth Tourist Information Centre, Terrace Road, Aberystwyth, SY23 2AG. Open every day 10am to 5pm during the summer and Bank Holidays. Closed on Sundays during the winter. Tel: 01970 612125 Email: AberystwythTIC@Ceredigion.gov.uk</p> |
| Tourist information | |

Route overview



Route map

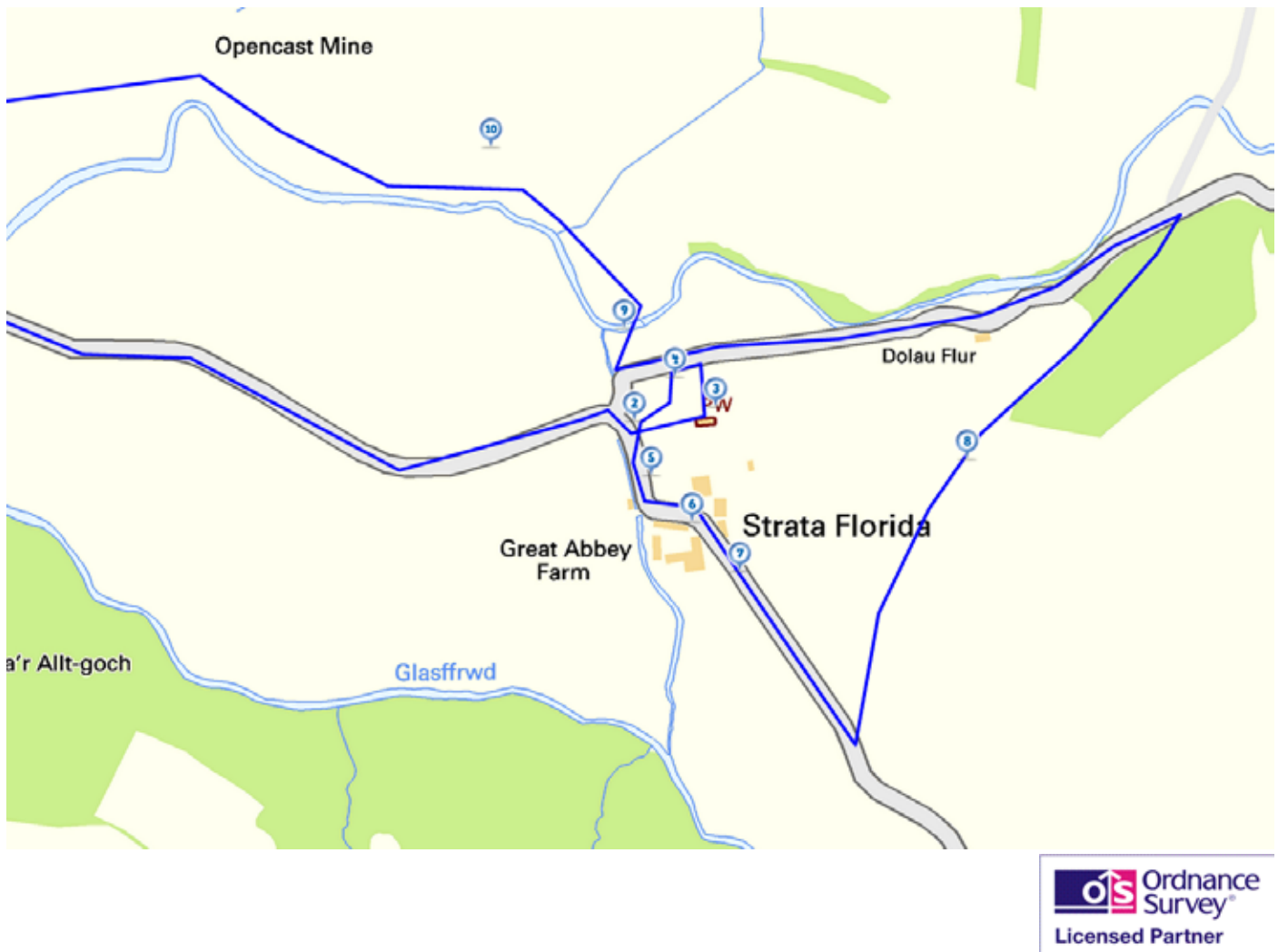


Stopping points

Start Coed Dolgoed car park, Abbey Road, Pontrhydfendigaid

- 2.** Display case, Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary cemetery
 - 3.** Yew tree beside Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary cemetery
 - 4.** 'Unknown' gravestone, north wall of Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary cemetery
 - 5.** Entrance to Strata Florida Abbey
 - 6.** Great Abbey farmhouse, Abbey Road
 - 7.** View of the Pilgrim sculpture, just past Great Abbey farmhouse
 - 8.** View of Strata Florida from information board
 - 9.** Bridge over the River Teifi by Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary cemetery
 - 10.** River path parallel with Bron-y-Berllan mine buildings
 - 11.** River path parallel with white farmhouse
 - 12.** Strata House, Pontrhydfendigaid
 - 13.** Bridge by The Red Lion Hotel, Pontrhydfendigaid
 - 14.** Mural on the corner house, Bridge Street, Pontrhydfendigaid
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Detail of the Abbey section of the route



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- 10.** Footpath parallel with Bron-y-Berllan mine buildings

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to the Teifi Valley

Coed Dolgoed car park, Abbey Road

Directions 1

Turn right out of the car park and walk along the road to the entrance of St Mary's Church cemetery. Enter the cemetery through the main lych-gate and take a look at the wooden display case on your right. Listen to Track 2.

2. The last shepherd

Display case, Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary cemetery

Directions 2

Continue along the path veering to the left of the church. Stop when you reach the large yew tree on your left. Listen to Track 3.

3. The poet and the prized ram

Yew tree beside Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary

Directions 3

Stand with your back to the church and facing the yew tree. Follow the sunken path left leading away from the church towards the stone wall. Follow the wall to the left and stop under the trees where you will find a flat gravestone that reads 'Unknown'. Listen here to Track 4.

4. Where princes also sleep

'Unknown' gravestone, Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary cemetery

Directions 4

Exit the churchyard through the main gate you came in by. Turn left and walk as far as the next set of gates, which is the entrance to the Strata Florida Abbey. Listen here to Track 5.

5. The Vale of Flowers

Entrance to Strata Florida Abbey

Directions 5

Either exit the Abbey complex or continue along the road towards the stone barn. Follow the road around to the left until you are facing the large stone house. Listen to Track 6.

6. A preacher and a teacher

Mynachlog Fawr stone farmhouse, Abbey Road

Directions 6

Carry on past the farmhouse, stopping just after a bend in the road by a telegraph pole and look up between the trees towards the crest of a hill where you should notice a figure 'walking' along the skyline. Listen to Track 7.

7. Pilgrim's progress

View of Pilgrim sculpture, past Great Abbey farmhouse

Directions 7

Continue up the road as it goes uphill and bends to the left, until you reach a bridle way sign pointing to the left. Go through the gate and follow the footpath through the ferns, keeping the fence on your left until you reach an information board by a low stone wall. Listen to Track 8.

8. A floating railway

View of Strata Florida from information board

Directions 8

Continue along the path keeping the outer wall of the abbey on your left until you reach a fork in the path by a large oak tree. Follow the blue bridle way signs to the right until you rejoin a road via a bridleway gate. Turn left and walk along the road for about half a kilometre. You will reach a stile on the right by the cemetery wall. Climb over the stile and walk to the bridge on the right. Listen to Track 9.

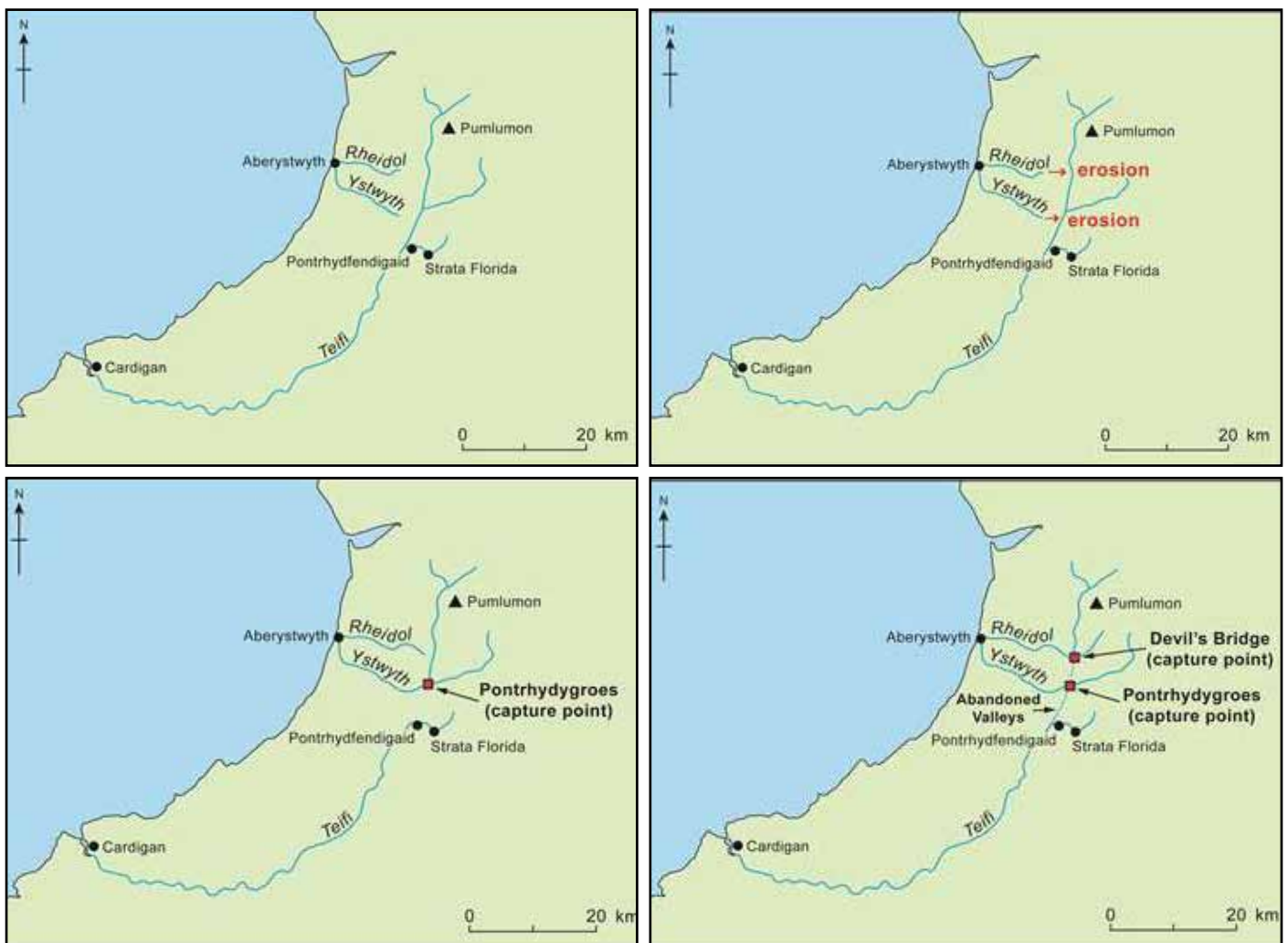
9. A stolen river

Bridge over the Teifi by Ystrad Fflur Church of St Mary

Directions 9

After the bridge, head across the field towards the stile and cross over the fence. Walk for around 50 metres until you see a gap in the trees on your right. Look up towards the two disused stone buildings on the hillside. Listen here to Track 10.

Diagram for Stop 9 showing the shortening of the River Teifi



© Antony Smith, University of Aberystwyth

10. Mining history

River path by with Bron-y-Berllan mine buildings

Directions 10

Follow the rough pathway along the Teifi River (following the walking route signs) over a stile. Head towards the corner of the fence on your right, noticing the face of a quarry on your right. Continue across the field keeping the river on your left and just left of the line of telegraph wires and mounds of stone.

At the bottom of the field, near a large tree, cross over the stile into the next field. Cross over the next stile and notice the confluence of the rivers Teifi and Glasffrwd on your left. Follow the walking route signs over three more stiles, before stopping along the path when you are parallel to the white farmhouse and farm buildings on the hillside on your right. Listen to Track 11.

11. One-night houses and hill forts

River path parallel with white farmhouse

Directions 11

Head diagonally across the field along an opening between the rushes. Climb a stile to the road, turn left and walk to the village of Pontrhydfendigaid, crossing Nant y Cwn (The Dogs' Stream) by The Black Lion pub. Turn right on the main road (B4343) and walk 5 metres until you get to 'Strata House' on your right. Listen to Track 12.

12. The first post

Strata House, Pontrhydfendigaid

Directions 12

Facing Strata House, turn right and walk along Bridge Street (on the pavement where possible). When you get to the main bridge just past the Red Lion Hotel, cross the grass to the riverside area near the picnic bench. Listen to Track 13.

13. Boggy botany

Bridge by The Red Lion Hotel, Pontrhydfendigaid

Directions 13

Cross the bridge, being careful of traffic at all times, and notice the initials carved into the stone by generations of local children. Continue walking along Bridge Street for 100 metres until you reach a junction with a large yellow house on your right next to the post office. Look up to see the mural on the gable end wall of the house. Listen to Track 14.

14. Miners, monkeys and elephants

Mural on the corner house, Bridge Street

Directions 14

Facing the mural, turn right and follow the sign for the abbey. Walk the Abbey Road – along the River Teifi – back towards the car park at Coed Dolgoed to complete the walk.

Further information

Strata Florida Abbey

<http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/daysout/strata-florida-abbey>

Cambrian Mountains Initiative

<http://cambrianmountains.co.uk>

Cambrian Mountains Society

<http://cambrian-mountains.co.uk>

Ceredigion Museum

www.ceredigion.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=197

Discover Ceredigion

www.discoverceredigion.co.uk

Glenn Morris

www.glennmorris.co.uk

Penglais Nature Park

www.aberystwyth.org.uk/attractions/parc-penglais-reserve.shtml

The Strata Florida Project

www.strataflorida.org.uk

The Teifi Rivers Trust

www.teifiriverstrust.com

Tregaron Kite Centre and Museum

www.medwynsmuseums.co.uk/ceredigion/tregaron.php

Vale of Rheidol Railway

www.rheidolrailway.co.uk

Credits

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