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Hyddgen Walk

Last updated: 24 November 2005

The 1401 Battle of Hyddgen in the wilds of Pumlumon marked a turning point in Owain Glyndwr's rebellion. Find out more in this article by **John Morgan** of Aberystwyth Ramblers who's led guided walks of this historic site.



“ The effect of Glyndwr's victory at Hyddgen in the summer of 1401 was to establish him as a person of importance in Wales as a whole rather than being just a local rebel.

The Hyddgen area is just below and to the west of Pumlumon Fawr. Little is known of the battle except that Glyndwr gained a victory against what seems to have been potentially overwhelming odds.

His opponents were mainly from the original Flemish stock who settled in Pembrokeshire. Excepting the modern forestry plantations the area today is probably not very different in vegetation to that at the time of Glyndwr.

Other than it being 'at Hyddgen', the precise location of the battle is not known. It is worth walking this remote locality to see the possibilities.

The nearest vehicular approach to Hyddgen is at Maes Nant (map reference SN 776880 - use the Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 213 and 214 or the OS Landranger Map 145 to follow this text). At this point, you will be on a track going South-North which may well indicate the general line of approach for the force coming up from Pembrokeshire.

Two quartz blocks (map reference SN783897) are marked on the map as Cerrig Cyfamod Glyndwr ('Glyndwr's Covenant Stones'). They can be reached by going left from the track and crossing the stream and fence. Some say that the stones mark the site of the battle but given the boggy nature of the area - probably not much changed from the fifteenth century - it seems unlikely.

The river would not have been helpful to an attacking force. A defensive force could easily have been outflanked if they were to the west of the river and they would have left the north-south track open to the attackers to proceed further north to Glyndwr's reputed camp at Siambwr Trawsfynydd.

A better defensive position is where the track passes through a short defile at map reference SN783908. Here, Glyndwr's men would have the advantage of being above their opponents - perhaps hiding on the reverse slope of the ridge, only revealing themselves at the last moment.

The hillock to the left of the road could have been a strong point commanding the road (the defile itself is thought to be a glacial overflow channel where water eroded a channel

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during late glacial times).

There is a tradition that the dead of the battle were buried further north at Esgair y Ffordd and marked by a cairn. This location for the encounter makes sense in that Glyndwr's camp is reputed to have been at Siambr Trawfynydd (map reference SN795929) which is only about 800 yards to the north. If Glyndwr really was outnumbered, why would he have chosen to give battle to a superior force unless his camp was threatened?

In English Esgair Ffordd can be interpreted as the "ridge of the road". From the pathways there today, it is quite possible to envisage an east-west route crossing the north-south track.

The way to the east would have been used by Glyndwr for his well-attested raids into Radnorshire and elsewhere. Thus the ridge with its tracks might also have had a strategic significance which required defending.

Finally it is worth visiting Siambr Trawsfynydd, Glyndwr's likely base camp. Though affected by modern forestry and forest roads it is easy to imagine this small stream valley as suitable hideaway in the hills with room for shelters and grazing for horses and perhaps stolen cattle. ”

Written by John Morgan of Aberystwyth Ramblers

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your comments

Amy Cremona from Erdington

I never knew there was this much to Owain Glyndwr and Hyddgen Walk
Mon Mar 29 09:11:30 2010

Dylan Gordon

i did the walk with my mum. it was a very hard walk and took us around 5 hours but was an amazing scenary i just hope glyndwrs mum didnt go with her she was well annoying. Glyndwr is a ledgend :-)
Tue Nov 24 10:43:15 2009

Fred Steadman Jones from Chester

An excellent way to find out about Owain Glyndwr is to buy Chris Barber's (Newport bred man) book, available in local bookshops all over Wales. Pictures galore and all the facts you need to bring the man alive.
Sun Aug 9 17:15:30 2009

Martienus Thomas Aberystwyth

I walked i this area with 2 good friends on the 15th June. To start with not sure where we were going after parking at Nant Yr Moch.We climbed a mountain which had one tour of stones and from a short distance spotted two towers about 100m apart. Researching it we walked in Owain Glyndwrs footsteps. One proud Welshman to another.Fantastic Place - Beautiful
Sun Jun 21 22:38:57 2009

keith wilson aberystwyth

We camped at hyddgen one night,a very atmospheric

place. We felt as though we were being watched by someone, only later did I realise the significance of this site. Does Sarn Helen pass anywhere near this spot?

Fri Sep 26 14:33:42 2008

Jim Dunckley

Hyddgen is a site of national importance to us here in Wales - which is why I'm concerned that there are proposals afoot to build a new powerline in this area - will it be across Hyddgen?

Thu Jul 24 13:46:46 2008

Sion Conlin, Maesyrrhandir, Newtown

Let Hyddgen be a lesson to all invaders who would defile our sacred land. Cymru am byth!

Tue Jul 15 16:42:36 2008

Eiddwen Jones from pwlleli

Me and my boyfriend Bobby are going to Glyndwr day and we will have a good time. Last year we had a great time but a seagull stole his hat and we spent 27 hours trying to get it, but we eventually did by throwing a Frisbee at it.

Mon Sep 18 12:05:31 2006

Lawrie Johnson - Bury

Only one stone seems to be visible at present (3 trips but no close up investigation in 2006).

Mon Sep 4 14:15:50 2006

paul richards from newport

More of Glyndwr's historic battles please. Exciting stuff and some location maps please

Tue Feb 14 21:40:00 2006

Joanne Carey from Blackwood

Great bit of history would love to hear more of the Welsh heroes and martyrs.

Wed Nov 10 16:04:02 2004

nigel davis from coventry

Very interesting, more of the same please.

Thu Nov 4 16:29:10 2004

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