



Cwm Rheidol Reservoir, Statkraft Visitor Centre, 'Magic of Life' Butterfly House, hydroelectric powerstation tour, Rheidol Falls and the fish ladder, all in the heart of the Vale of Rheidol.

5 ½ km (3½ miles). About 2 ½ hours walking time, plus visits.

To Rheidol Falls Halt on the 10.30 am train from Aberystwyth. Return on the train from Rheidol Falls Halt at 4.15pm or 4.30pm

This walk starts and finishes with the steep and rather slippery path to the valley floor, but this is a favourite delightful circular, mostly easy walking, with lots to see and do, and plenty of options for leisurely lunch or tea breaks.

1. Leave Rheidol Falls Halt by the gate at the western end of the platform, and descend diagonally on the steep, slippery path, down a few 'rustic' steps onto a level former miners' track. Go straight across this track and continue on the small path in the same descending direction until you come to

a stile near the bottom edge of the woods. Cross the stile, and go left on the grassy path downhill for a very short distance with glimpses of a ruined building below you. Follow the path steeply right beside the forest boundary fence, often made muddy by livestock, and immediately turn right again at the open meadow to pass in front of the ruined building. Follow the wide mess of farm vehicle tracks in the river's 'upstream' direction for a short distance. You will see the green footbridge over the river and you should now descend diagonally to the left to pick up the clear fairly level path again between gorse bushes.

2. Don't be tempted here to go too far downhill to the riverbank. The path arrives at a stile which takes you onto the well-used path which leads to the footbridge to the left.

3. Cross the bridge, stopping to admire the picturesque Rheidol Falls, and walk up to the valley lane alongside the iron handrail. Turn right along the surfaced lane and walk about 100 metres to spot the house sign for 'Ty Poeth' on the left hand side. Go left up this right of way driveway, and through a gate just before the Ty Poeth outhouses. The house itself is off to the left, but this does feel a bit like a private driveway.

4. Find and go through a small gate straight ahead which leads off the gravelled surface onto grass, and then a

second small gate a little further on up the hill which leads into the forest. The path here climbs and zig-zags steeply uphill some way through the forest.

5. When high above the valley floor in a section where the path is bearing round to the right, look out for a stile over a fence to your left. Go over this stile and struggle steeply up a very short distance between trees to reach a good wide forest track. Turn left down the track, and follow its very gentle downhill incline along the valley side in the 'downstream' (westerly) direction.

6. The track provides a lovely easy stroll with flashes of beautiful views of the valley below to the left. There are even one or two seats along the way to make the walk even more leisurely! Eventually you will find yourself in the Statkraft Visitor Centre car park; time for a stop here for refreshments. This is about the half way point of the walk... make sure you have enough time to catch the train back.

Also here, a visit to the 'Magic of Life' Butterfly House (adjacent to the Visitor Centre, but a separate enterprise) can be strongly recommended. The large level playing field/lawn in front of the Centre is a wonderful safe large playing area for children, while parents can keep an eye open from the picnic benches and grassy slope which overlooks it. This is also a favourite spot to watch the Vale of Rheidol train pass by, high above, and maybe even wave to the driver!

7. From the Visitor Centre, walk along the road about ½ km further 'downstream' (west) to where the lane to Aberffrw'd goes off to the left. Walk along the lane for 250 metres, admiring the weir and dam on your left (the landscaping of the weir as part of the CEBB hydroelectric scheme won design awards in the 1960s).

8. Where the lane takes a sharp right turn towards Aberffrw'd, you go through a gate *on the left*, and on to a track which leads along the south bank of the river, which here is widened out to form Cwm Rheidol reservoir. Follow the track which is waymarked in places, climbing to avoid the river's meander, and then gently descending as it approaches Rheidol Falls.

9. Soon the river has narrowed and you see the green painted footbridge at Rheidol Falls ahead. Finding the ruined building and the path up to the Halt should now be straightforward. Allowing plenty of time to catch your train at the top of the long steep path... say 20 minutes, go down towards the footbridge again, as at the beginning of the walk, and maybe have a stop at the picnic table immediately downstream of the falls.

10. Also convenient from here is a visit to the Statkraft hydro-electric power-station. Tours are free, take about 40 minutes and are usually 30 *minutes* past the hour in the afternoon...(on the hour in the morning). To get there, cross the footbridge and turn left down the lane...the power-station is set back

on the right hand side in about 300 metres distance. On the way back to Rheidol Falls Halt, take a look at the fish ladder alongside the falls, if you haven't already.

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