

3

River **WYE**

Pont Rhydgaled to source

A tough slog up rough
country but the only way to
follow the Wye to its source

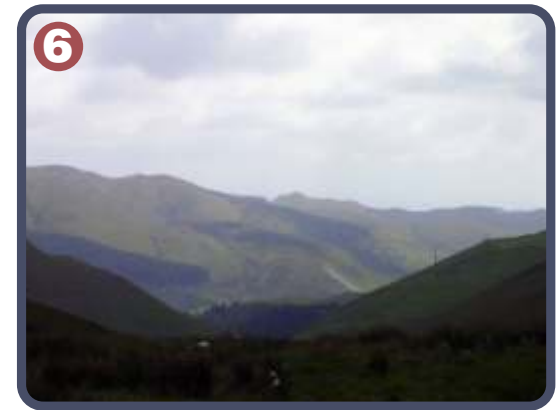
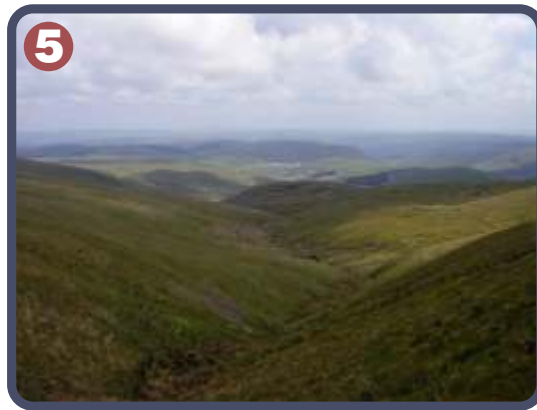
3 River Wye - Pont Rhydgaled to source



	Type	Circular
	Location	Powys
	Maps	OS Explorer 214
	How to get there	A44 from Llangurig
	Start	52°25'47.44"N 3°42'23.40"W
	Length	15.2km
	Duration	5hrs
	Severity	****
	Paths	*
	Stiles	n/a

This walk shouldn't be undertaken if you like organized paths and firm, level ground. Unfortunately, the official Wye Valley Walk doesn't actually go to the source (it veers off to join the Severn Way) so it's worth a bit of a scramble if you want to do the last leg properly. It's Open Access land so take the usual care not to disturb critters. You can park at Pont Rhydgaled.

Cross the A44 and take the track north past a small and slightly incongruous industrial unit. It's well marked as the Wye Valley Walk 1. There are also signs telling you to look out for rally cars – a portent of things to come if you are unlucky. Carry on



north and west through the beautiful if largely treeless valley **2**. You begin to get an idea of the climb ahead as Plynlimon swings into sight.

After 2½km the dirt track turns north, now with the river on your left. On a bad day you should be able to see dust rising and hear cars screeching ahead. The reason for all this activity is a rally driving school slap bang in the middle of the valley. There's lovely. As you approach the old lead mines, keep the rally buildings on your left and follow the signs north.

Another 300m and you see a path directly west, sloping slightly into the valley. When you reach the flumes (concrete water channels) you are leaving civilisation **3**. The path ahead peters out in no time and you have no choice but to trudge ahead through bogs and over scrubby ground. Keep higher up the right bank if you want to find a firmer footing.

By the time you get to the confluence with the Nant Gerrig stream you will probably be fed up with this. I decided to take to the ridge at this point,

crossing to the left bank of the Wye and heading up to where it says "shafts" on the map. It's a bit of a slog.

Where the ridge flattens slightly you come across a strange lunar landscape of banks and craters (hags and groughs) caused by water erosion. The black bits can be very boggy. From here you can see your destination – the source is in the furthestmost of the three gullies at the head of the valley **4**.

Make your way down to the faint sheep path that runs around the contour line at the base of the gullies and start scrambling up the last stretch.

Someone has kindly marked the first free-running water with a piece of wood with "SOURCE OF THE WYE"

scratched on it. A good time for a bit of a sit down and a pasty 5.

You can, of course, return the way you came. If you can't face all that ankle-turning terrain again, head south. You will, however, have a long stretch of busy A road to negotiate.

Follow the line of the fence until you

overlook the dirt track to your left. The views to the east from here are fantastic 6.

Make your way down to the path and follow it down the Nant y Maen valley to Eisteddfa Fach. Left here on the main road and 4.8km will bring you back to your starting point.