WAINWRIGHT’S SNOWDONIA IN PHOTOS

101 VIEWPOINTS AND WALKS

INTERACTIVE eBOOK AND eGUIDES

MAKE YOUR OWN ROUTE MAPS

Front Cover - 84 Diffwys by Steve Morris

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Enjoy This Sample eBook

Just a few pages from ‘Wainwright’s Snowdonia in Photos’

• A team of top photographers have replicated Wainwright’s original views
• For the first time his ‘Welsh Mountain Drawings’ are shown in glorious colour
• GPS and Map references show you where Wainwright once stood
• Photographer’s notes tell you how to get there
• Links to route planning tools and weather website
• eGuides on how to use a GPS and Snowdonia’s Industrial Heritage

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Alfred Wainwright (1907-1991), much loved by ramblers and fell walkers, will always be remembered for his famous ‘Pictorial Guides, compiled between 1955 and 1984. Mainly known for his works on the Lake District, many people may not be aware of his visits to Snowdonia and in particular his ‘Welsh Mountain Drawings’, first printed in 1981 towards the end of his publishing career. In black and white sketches, he recorded the spectacular mountain views, including aspects of Snowdonia’s rich industrial heritage. Now for the first time, an interactive eGuide has been compiled with full colour photographs of Wainwright’s stunning Snowdonia vistas. A team of landscape photographers have searched for the exact locations of the original viewpoints and recorded digitally the same views some 30 years later. Obviously there will be some differences where trees have grown, boundaries have changed and structures built. But, they have made notes about their findings and recorded their locations using a GPS device. You too can now stand where Wainwright once admired the timeless beauty of Snowdonia. Taking advantage of modern technology, such as this interactive e-Guide with links to e-Maps, GPS data and up-to-date weather forecasts, it is now possible to accurately and safely access the Welsh mountains like never before. Enjoy the beauty, but don’t forget the countryside code.

Michael Mumford - Publisher and Co-author

The Viewpoint Team

Editor and Layout Design: - Steve Morris
Snowdonia and Industrial Heritage Advisor: - Dave Mills
GPS Advisor: - Paul Saunders
Photography Team and Co-authors: - Pierino Algieri, Riccardo Beghini, Van Greaves, Simon Kitchin, Dave Mills, Steve Morris, Michael Mumford, Paul Saunders, Ron and Maggi Tear, Rory Trappe and Charles Twist.
Wainwright’s Snowdonia In Photos - 101 Viewpoints And Walks

INTRODUCTION

THE VIEWPOINTS

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS’ QUEST

The photographers were given the task of trying to find Wainwright’s viewpoints. In other words, armed with the sketches, they attempted to work out exactly where he stood to make his drawings and observe his mountain views. Once a viewpoint was found, the objective was to then capture a photograph that incorporated at least 80% of the view. In theory this sounds a simple enough exercise, in practise it was actually quite difficult. Here are some of the problems the photographers encountered.

Tree growth provided a number of difficulties and in some cases obscured the view altogether, particularly where forests had been planted. There are several viewpoints where the photographer had to find the next best place to observe the same mountain view. In this case the new viewpoints were completely different to Wainwright’s, even though the mountain being photographed was the same.

Distant mountain shapes can look similar over quite a wide area and if foreground elements have changed considerably then finding the exact spot is far from easy. The sort of changes that were observed apart from tree growth, involved boundaries such as stone walls/fences, routes such as roads/paths, the depth of river beds, the construction of buildings and the erosion, removal or addition of boulders.

Wainwright himself may have slightly contributed to the difficulty of locating the exact spot. A number of the photographers felt that he had used a small amount of artistic license in emphasising the relative heights of mountain peaks. Having said that, there was an incredible respect for both the detail and skill that had clearly gone into his drawings. Wainwright was an accomplished artist.

Very occasionally he may even have made a composite drawing or a simple mistake, viewpoint 63 being a good example of this. The slopes of Craig Cwm Silyn (labelled on the sketch) look very similar in both the sketch and photo, but Wainwright names the wrong mountains behind. These mountains look similar on both, but on closer inspection there are differences. The valley in the foreground should be Cwm Dwyfor, but Wainwright labels it Cwm Du! How this occurred remains a mystery.

As explained, the viewpoints may not be correct in some cases, but in most of the photographs the photographers have found the exact location where the famous man once stood to produce his much admired and impressive sketches.
Photography Guide

TIPS FOR BETTER LANDSCAPES

Think about the light before you go out and plan your shoot. What time of day will you be photographing? Where will the sun be? The Photographer’s Ephemeris is a map-centric sun and moon calculator, allowing the photographer to see how the light will fall on the land for any location. Click the icon to go to the website. You can get a desktop, iPhone or iPad version.

Take advantage of the weather. Fluctuations in the weather can provide great photo opportunities. Mist can add mood and atmosphere, the wind can make the sun appear and disappear as the clouds run across the sky, thundery clouds provide much drama and an azure blue sky makes a great mountain backdrop.

Take the right equipment. Spare batteries and memory cards are a must if you’re taking lots of photos. A tripod is essential for good quality low light shots and reducing camera shake. If you have a DSLR then different lenses can help you tackle different types of views. A wide angle lens is obviously the most important for open landscapes and dramatic cloud formations.

Check your camera settings. For landscape scenes which are sharp from front to back, shoot with narrow apertures to increase the depth of field (eg f/10 to f/22). Keep the ‘iso’ as low as possible to get good quality photographs. Check your shutter speed isn’t too low to avoid blurring the photograph with camera shake.

Watch where you focus. To get the sharpest landscape photos, look at your scene through the camera (or on the back lcd) and focus on a point a third of the way up from the bottom of the frame. This is a very rough way to get the maximum depth of field and get sharp focus from near to far - it’s called the Hyperfocal Distance.

Check your photo. Don’t wait until you get home to find out what your shots are like! If you have a digital camera check each photo on the back of the camera after taking each shot. Re-take the shot if the exposure is wrong or if the photo doesn’t look sharp when you zoom in.

Be patient! It’s amazing how some scenes can change in just a matter of minutes. On a windy day for example, a dull mountain can suddenly be illuminated by a gap in the clouds. Line up a beautiful view and take out your flask of coffee while you wait for the magic.
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- The viewpoints are in the same order as in the original sketch book.
- Click the index button to return to the index.
Viewpoint pages explained

Wainwright’s original black and white viewpoint sketch taken from the book, ‘Welsh Mountain Drawings’ (Published by Westmorland Gazette in 1981).

Photographer’s directions to the viewpoint and notes recorded at the time of taking the photograph. The photographer’s name and website are shown at the end.

Viewpoint number shown in Wainwright’s original book of drawings.

Digital photograph of the Wainwright view taken by one of our viewpoint-team photographers.

Location data to help walkers find our viewpoints accurately with either GPS navigators or Ordnance Survey maps.

Links to help you prepare for a walk and find information quickly in the eBook.
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Viewpoint number shown in Wainwright’s original book of drawings.

Digital photograph of the Wainwright view taken by one of our viewpoint-team photographers.

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The Carneddau

Start Point: Near the Youth Hostel at the western end of Llyn Ogwen on the A5.
Take the wide stone path to the left of the Rangers’ station toilet block. Cross over the footbridge and continue until the path turns sharp right. Here, leave the path and continue straight ahead on the initially indistinct track heading towards the Bochlwyd falls in the distance. On reaching the falls, follow the constructed stone path that climbs along its right-side, eventually reaching Llyn Bochlwyd. Cross the stream and follow the uphill path on the left-side of Llyn Bochlwyd. Go over the stone wall ladder at Bwlch Tryfan and continue straight ahead, taking the path that winds up around Cwm Tryfan, until it emerges on the plateau on the east shoulder of Glyder Fach. Turn sharp right to follow the track over the rocks, before reaching the summit, where the route up from Bristly Ridge emerges. From this point, to reach Wainwright’s viewpoint follow the ridge along its edge and the distinct Castell Y Gwynt rocks will come into view. Walk around the rocks to the left and descend to the Bwlch y Ddwy Glyder col where you will find the viewpoint. It is a glorious view from this vantage point. The magnificent Pen yr Ole-wen is straight ahead, the main feature of Wainwright’s sketch. To the right is Carnedd Dafydd and Carnedd Llywelyn, the rest of the Carneddau mountain range. The Carneddau is Welsh for ‘The Cairns’.

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Viewpoint Ordnance Survey 6 Figure Map Reference: SH 652581
Viewpoint Ordnance Survey GB/BNG 10 Figure GPS Reference: SH 65265 58157

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was no wind and not a sound, a seemingly impossible combination for the mind to compute at this height. A most eerie experience considering that Castell y Gwynt means ‘Castle of the wind’ in Welsh. This summit was used in the making of Walt Disney’s, Dragonslayer — a 1981 fantasy movie.

Start Point: Llyn Ogwen, Idwal Cottage public car park.
Follow the footpath to Llyn Bochlwyd. For the best views on your ascent, turn right at the lake until the path shows a ‘T’ junction on your OS map. Carefully continue left along an indistinct path of large rocks forming the ridge of this mountainside in the direction of Y Gribin. Eventually this takes you just to Castell y Gwynt, about 300 metres southwest of the summit. This is a highly stunning and dramatic piece of mountain, with views that will make you dizzy deciding where to look. On your ascent you could be forgiven for thinking it couldn’t get any better. The photograph shows the magical light of dusk that began to descend on the vista. The spires of the mountain punctuated the horizon with giant natural slabs — intensely primeval, raw, pure, and powerful. When this view was photographed there
Snowdonia’s Industrial Heritage

WAINWRIGHT’S NORTH WALES EXPERIENCE

The scars

Alfred Wainwright was very familiar with the hills and mountain country of Cumbria and would no doubt have seen evidence of some of its local industries during his walks. Most of the countryside would have appeared relatively intact and unspoilt by man’s exploits with just a few exceptions such as the slate mines in Honister Pass.

When he visited North Wales and in particular Snowdonia he must have been surprised and most likely horrified at the scars left by man upon this beautiful landscape, they are hard to ignore. A visit to Llanberis and its environs such as Llyn Padarn that lies below the great mountain of Eridir, is perhaps the most naked and unashamed work of man in Snowdonia. Its massive slate workings at the famous Dinorwic Quarries are even more remarkable than the quarries of Blaenau Ffestiniog and Bethesda.

Although slate quarrying and mining may be the most obvious of industries that have taken place here, one must also appreciate the much older and more widespread one of farming, which has been with us for thousands of years and is still being carried out today. In Snowdonia, hill farming generally meant the breeding of sheep or goats, which in turn led to the deforestation of the lower slopes and valleys in order to produce grazing pastures. There can be almost nowhere in Snowdonia that has truly been unchanged by man, except for the most rugged rock faces and the highest mountain peaks.

Water wheels

Quarrying and mining were not just confined to slate extraction, but stone, iron ore, copper, manganese, zinc and even gold has been extracted with varying degrees of success. Mechanical power for driving machinery in the quarries and mines was originally by water-wheels that were driven by the numerous mountain streams. Water-wheels also drove corn mills and fulling mills (Pandy) for the woollen industries

Dinorwic Power station, created within the brutally carved up quarries, is the largest single underground cavern in the world and generates hydro-electricity from the power of the falling head of water from Llyn Marchlyn to Llyn Peris inside the Eridir Mountain. During off-peak demands, excess power from the national electricity grid is used to pump the water from the lower lake back up to the higher one for storage, ready for re-use during high-peak demands. This is therefore a form of hydraulic accumulator. The power station is the last major industrial development of any notable size in the area to date and it’s modern turbines are a high-tech version of the waterwheels of yesterday. Snowdonia has many water-mill remains worthy of exploration. In many instances, only the wheel pits and maybe parts of the mill buildings remain, as wheels have mainly disappeared due to the rotting of the wooden ones or the scrapping of the iron ones (incline winding drum shown opposite).

A handful do still survive in varying states of decay. Perhaps the finest and largest that is in excellent working condition is the the Dinorwic Quarries workshops at Gilfach Ddu, Llanberis, now home of the National Slate Museum. This wheel was built at the De Winton works Caernarfon and is the second largest in the British Isles, being just beaten for size by the famous Lady Isabella wheel at Laxey in the Isle of Man. This Welsh waterwheel is enclosed in an enormous slate-walled structure that is accessible to the public (free of charge) via a staircase and even a modern electric lift!

The National Slate Museum contains predominantly Dinorwic Quarry machinery and artefacts with a smattering of items from other local slate workings. This is a truly fascinating place to visit.

Wind power was never a practical alternative to water power in Snowdonia due to the large amount of readily available and reliable fast flowing water most of the year. It was also cheaper and often simpler to construct waterwheels, compared with the more complex and fragile windmill with its less reliable and fickle source of energy.
• Discover the natural beauty of Snowdonia by reading this eBook and then venture out in the footsteps of Alfred Wainwright

• The eBook is full of well described scenic walks

• Most of the views can be enjoyed by the whole family and some on roads and tracks can be accessed by wheelchair users

• The eBook is full of interactive advice and tools to help you safely explore this outstanding natural countryside

• There are 101 glorious mountain-scapes to be enjoyed by car, cycling or walking

• Why not start here. We’ve opened the gate to begin your Snowdonia voyage of discovery.