

## Old Station Tintern and riverside

**Distance and time** Various options; the shortest walk is 1.2 km (30 minutes), the longest walk is 4km there and back (1.5 hours).

### **Brief description of the walk and path conditions**

This is a short easy access walk (600m in each direction) along a broad gravel path, formerly part of the Wye Valley Railway, leading to a narrow riverside meadow overlooking Brockweir village on the opposite bank. *A barrier free path then follows the riverbank along a grassy and sometimes uneven path downstream to St Michael's Church, on the outskirts of Tintern village, 1500m further to the south. The riverside path can be soft, muddy and spongy and may even be impassable when the river in spate or at times of high spring tides. Persons able to negotiate steps can follow the riverside footpath away from Brockweir bridge and take a short cut back to Old Station by turning right just after the leaving the first field in 400m. Alternatively they can continue through the second field to pass below the high retaining wall of the old railway abutment (850m) and turn right up a flight of concrete steps to return to the picnic area.*

*Please note that in wet conditions paths with natural surfaces can become more uneven and difficult to negotiate.*

### **Start point for the walk and facilities**

Start the walk at The Old Station which is situated off the main Chepstow to Monmouth road (A466), nearly a mile north of Tintern on the right. The site provides car parking (pay and display), toilets, including disabled WC, and information centre, shop and small exhibition area in two converted railway carriages and a café serving light refreshments in the Station building. The old signal box is used for temporary exhibitions and displays with local artists and craftspeople rotating on a monthly basis. There are steps up to the signal box. The site includes picnic and barbecue facilities and a programme of activities during the visitor season, with miniature train rides being offered on a regular basis.

Leave your vehicle in the small car park close to the railway coaches and station building. If this area is full, an overflow car park is available beyond the railway coaches on the area once used as the station goods yard with a large stone goods shed, cattle and sheep pens and railway sidings. There are picnic benches and large timber sculpture figures close by.

A mobility scooter and a manual wheelchair are available for loan on the site. Persons wishing to use these should speak to the site manager or receptionist to arrange the loan. It is recommended that you book in advance by contacting the site Tel 01291 689566 or email [johnsterry@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:johnsterry@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

### **Relevant OS Maps**

Explorer OL14 – Wye Valley and Forest of Dean

Outdoor Leisure 162 – Gloucester and the Forest of Dean

### **Detailed Walk description**

Start the walk on the tarmac platform area in front of the station building. Go down the shallow brick paved ramp on to the grassy picnic area which occupies the area formerly used for two railway tracks and an island platform. Turn left passing the picnic tables and walk down the grass ramp at the end of the platform with a restored railway signal on the right. You are now on the original track bed of the railway. A children's play area is located just beyond the old water tower on the left. Continue along the track for 500m, where it ends in a flight of steps leading up on to Brockweir Bridge. There is a seat on the left before the steps.

To continue the walk bear right off the end of the track down a gravel path to pass through a small gate into the riverside meadow and onto an earth path which may be rough in places and muddy.

The quiet village of Brockweir can be seen across the river. Before the railway was opened in 1876, the River Wye was the most reliable route for transport of goods up and down the valley. The river was navigable for sea going vessels as far up stream as Brockweir which

developed into a small port with a quayside, shipbuilding and ship repair facilities. Cargo for towns further up the river had to be offloaded onto barges which were suitable for shallow waters. These barges were hauled by teams of men and horses using towpaths along the river bank. Looking across the river beneath the lattice girder road bridge you will see Brockweir Quay.

A short distance below the bridge, the white painted Moravian Church stands on the site of a cock-fighting pit. Brockweir had developed a reputation for lawlessness, gambling and debauchery and the Moravians were a religious community anxious to save sinners. After the church was built, the local congregation grew, and a school was established.

Those wishing to continue the walk should follow the grass path along the riverbank, reaching a gateway leading into a second, larger meadow after 400m. This field is being managed by Monmouthshire County Council so that a traditional hay meadow may be created in the years ahead. At this point you can turn right through a willow tunnel to return up a flight of steps to the railway station, or if you prefer, continue the walk along the riverbank for a further 450m to reach a high stone wall on the right. This is the abutment of the lattice girder railway bridge which crossed the river at this point. On the opposite bank the railway went immediately through a tunnel, before emerging above the river opposite Tintern Abbey. The bridge was removed shortly after the railway closed in 1964, but a new pedestrian and cyclist suspension bridge is to be constructed in the near future, with the aid of Lottery funding. Turn right immediately after the abutment wall to return, up a long flight of concrete steps, to the picnic site and car park.

The walk can be continued along the river bank to St Michael's Church (500m distant). Please note that the path can be narrow, muddy and slippery in places. There are no facilities at St Michael's Church.