

The Hafren (also Day 1 of the Severn Challenge)

Start to CP1 (7.6 miles)

From Rhyd-y-benwch picnic area turn down a path that leads instantly to the Severn, pass a ford and go forward onto a boardwalk signed the cascade trail. Continue on this waymarked route (blue and white banded posts) through the trees to meet a broad stony track. The path then leads to the first bridge crossing of the river then upward to follow a course alongside the Nant Tanllwyth climbing steeply to a forest road.

Cross the road and continue climbing with only white topped posts to guide you crossing another forest road, then turning left then briefly right climbing again until the path emerges onto the top forest road. Turn right and follow a descending track until you reach the Severn once more, leave the track here and walk through a plantation alongside the Severn before emerging at a stile and onto the open hillside of Plynlimon. Continue forward guided by white topped posts. As you near the source the trail becomes a series of flat rocks in the peat to walk on which can become slippery when wet so take care!

At 3.8 miles (G/R 821 899) you will reach the source of the Severn which is marked with a timber post.

Leave the source on the path to re-enter the plantation where the path descends beside a stream and shortly meets another broad trail. Turn left for about 40 yards then leave the trail turning right back into the plantation. Descend beside the Nant Tanllwyth to another broad trail on the edge of a clear felled area. Go forward at this point continuing alongside the Nant Tanllwyth where the trail is now marked by posts banded with white and blue. As you descend beside Nant Tanllwyth be careful as there are several tree roots which can be awkward underfoot and slippery if wet. Cross a cleared area on a narrow footpath to re-join the Severn, continuing to a footbridge which takes you back onto the left bank. Shortly after the river bends to the left you join a broad track, where this forks, branch right and stay beside the Severn to continue with the river.

At 7.5 miles (G/R 856 869) you will join the Hafren boardwalk and at the end of this boardwalk continue left up the path to the Rhyd-y-benwch picnic area which is your Check Point 1.

Navigation difficulty rating: Low, well signed by circular white and blue Severn Way signs and posts. But sometimes signs can be covered with foliage so we recommend using a gpx device.

Course type: boardwalks, stony tracks, some wooded areas

CP1 to CP2 (7.6 miles)

From CP1 re-join the trail signed “Severn-Breaks-its-Neck”. Pass a footbridge and immediately climb left to the edge of a field. Turn right to follow the field edge soon reaching a picnic area overlooking the river. Continue along the path which takes you onto a boardwalk and then into the forest. When exiting the forest, turn immediately right to the right-hand side bank of the Severn, then left onto a broad track.

Continue down this broad track with the river on your left for approximately 300 meters until you see a wooden pedestrian bridge over the river and a waterfall known as “Severn-Breaks-its-Neck” Falls. Take the steep path down to the left off the broad track to the bridge being careful as there are many

loose stones on this path. Cross the bridge and go up the bank to meet a gravel road and turn immediately right to run along this gravel road. After approx. 100 yards, the gravel road turns into a tarmac valley road and is signposted the Severn Way. As you emerge from the forest the valley opens up in front of you and the road takes you down towards Neuadd (Old Hall).

At 3.0 miles (G/R 907 847) you will pass a phone box and a post box situated together on your left and Old Hall Farm. Follow the road past Neuadd down to a junction (G/R 912 847) where you turn right and descend to cross the Severn, then immediately left onto a lane.

At 5.0 miles (G/R 908 845) pass the Old Chapel at Glanhafren and after a cattle grid keep left following a quiet back lane.

At 7.6 miles (G/R 943 838) reach a T-junction on the left which is CP 2.

Navigation difficulty rating: Low, well signed by Severn Way signs. But sometimes signs can be covered with foliage so we recommend using a gpx device.

Course type: Stony paths and tarmac lanes

CP2 to CAMPSITE (10.7 miles)

Cross the Severn again at Felindre Bridge. At the next road turn right and walk towards Llanidloes.

At 0.8 miles (G/R 952 845) you reach the edge of town and turn right over short bridge and then the first turning on the left into Penygraig Street. Leave Llanidloes along Penygraig Street and as you approach the church go left on the path down to the riverside. Turn left over Long Bridge and then left again into Westgate Street. Go uphill and after the SECOND turning into Tan yr Allt leave the road by turning right onto a footpath.

At 1.2 miles (G/R 952 849) continue on footpath climbing into wooded Allt Goch. The ongoing path climbs steeply through the wood before descending to the Trefeglwys road where you turn left. The road bends to the right and above the woodland with views of the Severn valley opening up ahead.

At 2.4 miles (G/R 961 864) reach the highest point in the road and turn right onto a hedged green lane. When you enter a large open field keep along the right-hand boundary to re-join the continuation of the lane and go forward between the hedges. At Cefnmawr Farm turn right past the farm and follow its access to a road and turn left. When the road forks stay right.

At 3.5 miles (G/R 978 867), as the road starts to go downhill turn right onto a broad descending track. At the bottom go through the right hand one of two gates and forward with a fence on your left, to another gate. Beyond this gate go forward then turn right and run with the fence and tree line on your left. Descend with Bontnewydd Farm on your right continuing across the top edge of a sloping field to a farm access and cattle grid.

At 4.1 miles (G/R 982 859) cross the cattle grid and follow the access down and around a horseshoe bend then back up the hill to pass Pentre Farm. Cross an un-named road when you reach it (G/R 987 863) and go forward to Wigdwr Farm where the lane bends left. At this bend go ahead through a gate and onto rising track. Beyond a single gate the track ends and a path now crosses the edge of a small enclosure with a brook at the bottom. On the far side join a Holloway and through another gate, beyond which the holloway rises to a lane (G/R 000 873).

Turn left then immediately right into another lane and when the road surfacing ends, go forward onto a

rough vehicle track. Follow this until it reaches the edge of a woodland, then without entering the wood, turn left along its boundary. In the next field continue beside the woodland boundary to a gate just beyond an access track, go through the gate leaving the ongoing track to strike half left across the field.

Turn left along its boundary to a gate in the dip.

Beyond, go onto a rising grassy path and then forward on a woodland track. Go through a gate and head for the far left of the field to another gate (G/R 017 881). Continue along track going through two gates above Waen Farm. The path then descends to pass along the left edge of Broneirion Wood to a gate, then walk down the right hand edge of the field to Waen Road.

At 7.6 miles (G/R 018 888) reach Waen Road and continue to a T-junction (G/R 019 891). Turn right and shortly where the road bends right, keep left signed Lower Gwerneirin farm. At the farm keep right past the buildings, go through two gates then forward to an old barn and onto a rising track. When it forks branch right onto a level green track leading to another gate and enter a sloping field.

At 8.7 miles (G/R 023 904) turn right through a double gate onto a broad grassy track along the top edge of a sparse woodland and at the far side go through more gates and along a broad sloping field fenced on both sides. Go through a stile at the end of a fenced section before descending to another track.

Turn left at a metal gate which leads to a hedged path continuing past Carnedd Farm and out along a track to cross Afon Cerist. Turn right along a lane to reach the B4569.

At 9.7 miles (G/R 025 918) reach the B4569 and turn right towards Caersws immediately crossing the Afon Carno.

At 9.9 miles (G/R 029 918) cross the railway lines and then soon reach the A470 and turn right.

At 10.2 miles turn right back over the railway lines and onto a track (G/R 031 915). Continue on the track until you reach the A470 (G/R 031 910) then turn left.

At 10.7 miles (G/R 033 911) your campsite which is the Mid Wales Arts Centre on your left.

Navigation difficulty rating: Low, well signed "The Severn Way". But sometimes signs can be covered with foliage so we recommend using a gpx device.

Course type: Stony and grass tracks, fields, tarmac roads

Total day's mileage = 25.9 miles