



Yr Hen Felin Outdoor Activity Centre

WALES



Cubs at Yr Hen Felin

Yr Hen Felin ("The Old Mill") is an activity centre owned by Northampton District Scouts located in the Dee Valley, North Wales. It makes a great location for a Cub weekend/week away, with some of the UK's most spectacular scenery and a wide range of outdoor activities which you can tailor to suit your Cub pack. 1st Wootton Cubs recently spent a bank-holiday weekend there, and these notes will give you an idea of what we did, why we did it and what else we could have done if we'd had the time/budget. Things change over time, so make sure you check any details you are relying on for updates.

Availability, cost and booking

<https://www.northamptonscouts.org.uk/campsites-facilities/yr-hen-felin>

Location

Yr Hen Felin
Cynwyd Activity and Mountain Centre
Cynwyd
LL21 0LW



Getting there

It's about a 3-hour drive from Northampton on a clear day, plus stops. For the Cubs, the journey is part of the adventure, especially if it's broken up a bit with a couple of stops. As long as there aren't any hold ups, taking the M6 Toll makes hardly any difference to the journey time.

Yr Hen Felin

Yr Hen Felin sleeps up to 30 people, with individual rooms sleeping 10, 8, 6, 4 and 2 respectively. There is a kitchen, an open plan dining/living room, toilets and showering facilities. Cooking and dining equipment is provided. There is a small sloping lawn area out back, and the centre is located next to a stream in a residential area, close to open countryside.

Cynwyd ('Cun-wid')

Yr Hen Felin is situated in the village of Cynwyd in North Wales. The village also contains:

- [Spar General Store and Post Office](#) (currently open 7am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun)
- Bus stop – [T3C](#) stops here with routes to Bala, Corwen, Llangollen and Wrexham.
- Access to several public foot paths, including a walk along the River Dee towards Corwen.

If you are heading up to the area for a 'reccy', there are a couple of B&Bs in the village, including [The Blue Lion](#) (a traditional Welsh pub, B&B and restaurant - see their web page for bar and restaurant opening times).

Corwen

The small town of Corwen is 2 miles away and can also be reached by a scenic riverside walk along the Dee.

The main points of interest in Corwen are:

- Corwen Station – board a steam or vintage diesel train on the heritage [Llangollen Railway](#),
- a mixture of free and Pay & Display parking
- Children's playground (more space to play games than the garden at Yr Hen Felin, if needed)
- [Leisure centre](#) (including swimming pool)
- Nisa Convenience Store
- Paryy's Plaice (01490 412346) - chip shop, burgers, pizzas. Closed Mon; open Fri/Sat 4pm-10pm; Sun/Tue/Wed/Thu 4pm-9pm
- Corwen Kebab House (01490 412221)
- China Garden (01490 412243) – Chinese takeaway, closed Tuesdays
- Assorted B&B and the [Crown Hotel](#) (01490 412544) – bar, restaurant
- Short hike from the town centre through Coed Pen-y-Pign (Pen-y-Pign Woods) to a spectacular viewpoint over Corwen and the Dee valley (see hike details later).



Llangollen

Llangollen is larger than Corwen and a popular tourist destination. It has most things you'd expect, including:

- supermarkets
- petrol station
- Nemo chip shop (01978 861146)
- Castell Dinas Bran ruins, up the hill
- Llangollen Railway
- Llangollen canal
- souvenir/ice cream shops
- Riverside Park, including:
 - picnic tables
 - open ground
 - five-a-side astroturf pitch
 - 'crazy' golf
 - playground



Nearest A&E

Wrexham Maelor Hospital, LL13 7TD – 18 miles

Things to Do

Here are just some examples of activities and providers to give you an idea of what's available.

On the journey

- British Ironwork Centre and Sculpture Park
Located just outside Oswestry and around an hour from Yr Hen Felin, this is a great place to stop and stretch everyone's legs on the way up or back. There is a massive ironwork sculpture of a Transformer on the roadside which the Cubs won't miss if you drive past during the day! Best to book your arrival with them in advance. Check website for costs. Currently, group rates not available on a Saturday. Facilities include:
 - toilets
 - room to wander
 - an amazing collection of massive, popular culture 'sculptures' made from scrap metal: dinosaurs, superheroes, safari animals, monsters, Minions and sometimes The Knife Angel. Lots of team photos!

- No picnics allowed, so eat in the minibus once parked up.
- currently closed Sundays and Mondays - check their website.

In the area

- Hikes and navigation – see examples to follow below. The three hikes mentioned are all [Terrain Zero](#). Check your own hikes to make sure that they are T0, as many hills in this area are T1 or above and would require a relevant permit holder as part of the leader team.
- The [Llangollen Railway](#) runs a heritage service with vintage steam and diesel trains operating between Corwen and Llangollen at various times of year. The journey takes about 45 mins each way. Check the linked website for operating days, train times and special services. Group discounts for leaders and Cubs are available, but you'll need to book in advance for the best rates. This is a heritage railway run by volunteers, so be sure to plan your day around the limited timetable. There is a pay and display car park suitable for minibuses immediately next to Corwen station.
- A range of canal boat activities operate from [Llangollen Wharf](#), including trips across the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.
- Horseshoe Falls(LL20 8BS) – a dam constructed to provide a constant water supply for the canal. Beautiful with car park. Good place to stretch legs.
- Rock climbing/abseiling – a great opportunity to get them using real rockfaces with [Whitewater Active](#)
- Take to the water on Lake Bala with sessions run by [Bala Adventure and Watersports Centre](#).
- www.sas4schools.co.uk/activities provide a range of adventurous activities for youth groups.
- Parks and playgrounds in Corwen and Llangollen.

Emergency indoor entertainment

- Nearest swimming pool: [Canolfan Hamdden Huw Jones](#), Corwen (2 miles)
- Nearest cinema: [Odeon Wrexham](#) (22 miles)
- [Llangollen Railway](#) (1½ hour round trip in train, plus time in Llangollen – check timetable first!)
- [Tenpin](#) Bowling, Wrexham

Why not teach the Cubs a bit of Welsh they can use in the local shops?

Diolch – thank you

(pronounced dee-olch, with the 'ch' bit soft, from the back of the throat)

Our programme

We went on a bank holiday weekend, heading off first thing on the Saturday morning and arriving back Monday early evening. We also made a concerted effort to keep the cost to a minimum because we had other events running that term and we wanted as many as possible to be able to do both. It was tight, but we managed to do it for a Cub cost of £85/head (May 2026). Our aim was to improve the Cubs' map-reading skills across three very different hikes and it worked really well. The outline programme was as follows (key activities in bold):

Saturday

Meet 10:00am, depart 10:30am

Route: M1, M6, M54, A5

Loo stop at Corley services (M6) after 1 hour

Drive another hour to **British Ironworks Sculpture Park** outside Oswestry

Lunch, stretch legs, loos, look around (1 hour)

Another hour's drive to arrive at Yr Hen Felin

Cubs settle in whilst leaders make tea

Drive 2 miles to Corwen

Coed Pen-y-Pign hike – 3.5km

Film, supper, bed.

Sunday

Breakfast, room inspection, Cubs make packed lunches

Drive to Corwen to catch **train to Llangollen**

Arrive Llangollen

Castell Dinas Bran hike – 1 hour to top

Lunch

Back down to Llangollen

1/2 hour looking around **souvenir/ice cream shops**

Train back to Corwen

Tea

Assorted 'board games'

Film, snack, bed.

Monday

Breakfast, pack, leave

Ty Mawr Country Park

Hike to Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

Stone skimming on the River Dee

Mid-hike lunch

Walk back to Ty Mawr Country Park

Drive home, loo stop at Corley

Refuel, return the minibus (1st Blisworth Scout Group)

Hikes

Coed Pen-y-Pign – 3.5km

This hike can be started from the centre of Corwen and makes a good evening hike after a long drive up, or morning hike before you return home.

The 'legends' section below tells the tale of the Corwen giant, and the route up to Coed Pen-y-Pign is 'littered' with oversized objects that have fallen from the giant's pockets for the Cubs to spot, adding a bit of magic to the hike.

The route is a moderately steep climb through ancient woodlands to an impressive viewpoint looking out over Corwen and the Dee valley (grid ref 080432). We used the viewpoint to show the Cubs how the real-world looks on an OS map. You can see a meandering river, prominent hills, masts, churches, chapels, railway lines and stations, a cemetery, a sewage farm and tourist symbols for pubs, car parks and heritage railways. It's like an OS version of 'I Spy' or 'Where's Wally'. On the way back down, turn left at the stone circle to a gate in a wall where you can cross a little stream using stepping stones before descending back down into Corwen.

The legend of the Corwen giant

Legend has it that the path up to [Coed Pen-y-Pign](#) is the route that the kindly Corwen giant, Drewyn, used to take when visiting his sweetheart. She was a milkmaid, and he built her a hillfort on a nearby hill (Caer Drewyn – grid ref 086445) so that she could keep her cattle safe.

You could walk this from Yr Hen Felin by combining it with a walk into and back from Corwen for a much more challenging 10km round trip.

Castell Dinas Bran – 3.5km



The remains of Castell Dinas Bran lie to the north-east of Llangollen town centre, at the top of a big old hill (grid ref 222431). It's a challenging climb for Cubs, but they can absolutely do it, as evidenced by the number of families you'll see at the top. Blisters are a possibility, so tell them what to expect and catch it early.

There's plenty of room to sit down for a packed lunch among the ruins in spectacular surroundings, but you'll need

The legend of Castell Dinas Bran

Local legend tells of an arrogant French knight, called Payn Peveril, who hears that evil spirits haunt the castle, and no one dares to stay the night in its ruins.

Payn decides HE will spend the night there to show everyone how brave he is. Just in case, he takes 15 of his followers with him. Overnight, a storm blows up and an evil, club-wielding giant called Gogmagog, appears. Payn defends his men against the attacks of the giant with his shield and his cross, then stabs Gogmagog with his sword.

As the giant lies dying, it tells Payn about King Brân who'd built the castle many years ago to defend the surrounding lands from its attacks. Despite King Brân's bravery, Gogmagog had proved too strong for him and the King had been forced to flee, leaving his castle in ruins behind him. Ever since, Gogmagog continued to terrorise the area.

In its last breaths, the giant also told Payn of a great hoard of treasure buried at Dinas Brân - including a huge golden ox - but it dies before it can tell Payn exactly where.

The climb up can take up to an hour in good conditions, depending on Cub (and leader!) fitness levels, coming down about half that. Allow a couple of hours in total to include a lunch stop at the top. You'll also need a contingency plan in case a Cub needs to give up. Our Cubs loved it and were very proud of themselves - and each other - for making it all the way up and back.

This hike works well as part of a day trip to Llangollen on the heritage railway. Check the train timings – you'll need about 3 hours in Llangollen if you also want to let them hit the souvenir/ice cream shops, over the river from the station on the right.

Ty Mawr Country Park to Pontcysyllte Aqueduct – 6km

[Ty Mawr Country Park](#) is about 45 minutes from Yr Hen Felin on the route from/to Northampton, so it makes it a good place to stop on the way home (LL14 3PE, grid ref 282414). There is space to eat a packed lunch at either end of the hike or en-route depending on your timings. Ty Mawr has toilets, a picnic area, a small playground, some farm animals, an ice-cream hut, a coffee barn and relatively cheap parking (£1 when we did it) – all very useful. I'd allow 2 hours for the hike, but you could easily spend 4 hours here if you add in playground/animals/lunch/mid walk stop by the river.

Although this is a longer walk than the previous two, it's largely on the flat, following the River Dee for 3km west, until it reaches the magnificent [Pontcysyllte Aqueduct](#). On the way, there is a pebble 'beach' on a bend of the river, and our Cubs spent the best part of 45mins learning how to skim stones here. They loved it!

Once at the aqueduct, there's a flight of steps leading up to the canal. There you'll find public toilets, a shop selling ice creams/drinks etc and the canal basin. The highlight is the aqueduct itself though – it's an aerial canal with a footpath and railing to one side, and a sheer drop to the river below on the other side of the canal. It's high – so high that some Cubs might be a little nervous, but the views from up here have to be seen to be believed. They'll never forget it. We divided the Cubs into small groups, with a leader accompanying each group across in turn. Once over, turn around, come back over and head back to Ty Mawr the way you came.



It's about a two-and-a-half-hour journey back from Ty Mawr on a clear day, with a loo stop at maybe Corley services an hour from home

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct - facts

- pronounced (pronounced **Pont – ker – sull – ter**).
- one of the first major feats of engineering undertaken by Thomas Telford in 1805
- the longest aqueduct in Great Britain
- the highest canal aqueduct in the world
- now a World Heritage site

