

[Cymraeg](#) / English

# A short guide to Castell Dinas Bran

*by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust*

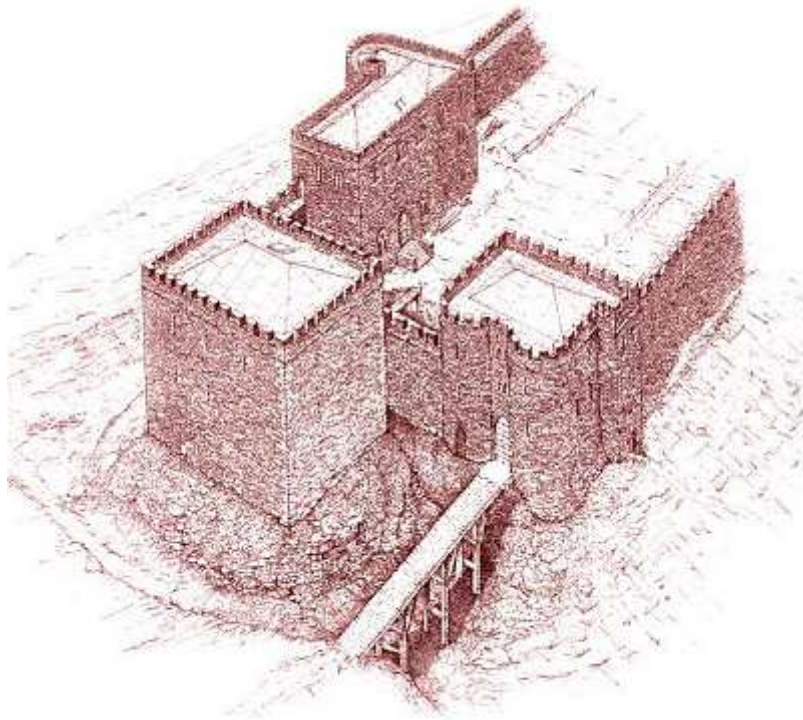
**Castell Dinas Bran** (OS national grid reference SJ222430) is both a hillfort and medieval castle. The Iron Age defences and medieval castle are located high above the valley of the Dee overlooking Llangollen. The castle is sited on a long rectangular platform which may have been artificially levelled. The ground drops away steeply on all sides but particularly to the north with its crags and cliffs. The site is a scheduled ancient monument.



The hillfort has a single bank and ditch enclosing an area of about 1.5 hectares. To the south and west the defences are most considerable being up to 8 metres high in places. The entrance lies in the south-west corner of the fort and is defended by an inward curving bank. To the north the fort is defended by the natural steepness of the land and no earthwork defences were required.

The castle was built towards the later part of the 13th century by the princes of Powys Fadog and was the site of a meeting between the sons of Gryffydd Maelor in 1270 when they granted the lands of Maelor Saesneg for the upkeep of their mother, Emma Audley. During the wars between Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales and Edward I of England the castle was burnt by the Welsh before it was captured in 1277 by Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln. It was not repaired and ceased to be used after the 1280s.

The castle consists of a courtyard with the main buildings being ranged along the east end and with a tower built partway along the south curtain wall. The tower is the most impressive part of the standing remains, originally it protruded south of the curtain wall. A large rectangular building with windows looking southwards lay to the east of the tower. This may have been a hall or chapel. The keep is a large square building set in the south-east part of the castle, only the west wall and part of the south survive to any height. On the outside of the south wall is a wide buttress housing the chutes of a pair of latrines. The original entrance to the keep lies on the west side where the remains of stairs can be seen. The gatehouse is in the north-east corner and is flanked by round towers. The castle is defended by a deep rock-cut ditch on the east and south sides.



*Reconstruction drawing of how Dinas Bran castle may have looked in the Medieval period*  
© Nicholas Dooley

#### *Access and parking*

Access is obtained along a steep, narrow road which can be approached from two directions. One possibility is to turn north off the A539 at Trevor Uchaf (east of Llangollen), there is a public house on the corner, and then climb westward under Eglwyseg Rocks.

Parking is possible for a limited number of cars or a minibus just east of the public footpath which leads up to the castle. The alternative approach is from the A539 west of Llangollen, turning up the minor road at Pentrefelin and then eastwards under Eglwyseg Rocks to the same parking place (NGR SJ 228 433). The road and parking is not suitable for coaches. The approach to the castle and hillfort is via a public footpath which runs off a small lane running south from the minor road. The footpath sign is marked "Castell Dinas Bran", it climbs up the south-east slope of the hill. Good shoes or walking boots are required.

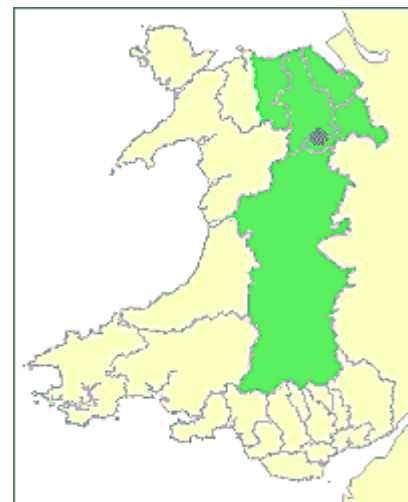
The climb takes about 15 to 25 minutes each way.

A visit to this site could be combined with a geography field trip (Egwyseg Rocks) and/or a visit to Valle Crucis Abbey just west of Llangollen. *Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 117 Chester, Wrexham and surrounding area.*

*The above information comes from the Sites and Monuments Record of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. For further information about the historic environment of this area, contact:-*

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