**SUMMARY**

A circular trail, generally on level, firm surfaces (including grass which may be wet or muddy), suitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters (RADAR key), pushchairs etc unless very wet. There are views of the lake, rivers and mountains around Bala. Near fast flowing rivers with rapidly changing water levels and crossing/along busy roads, children must be supervised.

Other Trails are available which explore the history of Bala in more detail. Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association have checked the information given in this leaflet but changes may occur. You must be responsible for your own safety, please heed warnings, follow the Country Code & see Safety and Conduct information at www.GoBala.org (information/safety).

**Plan your Trip**

**Distance** 3.2 km (2 miles)

**Time** 1 - 1½ hours

**Map** OS OL23 or OL18

**Terrain** Paths with firm surface (grass may be muddy), High Street of Bala

**Start / Finish** Leisure Centre, Pensarn Rd., Bala, LL23 7SR SH922355

**Parking** At start (Pay & Display)

**Toilets** Leisure Centre and in Bala

**Refreshments** Leisure Centre Cafe and in Bala

**Public Transport** Wrexham-Bala-Barmouth bus service www.GoBala.org (Information/Public-transport)

**Important** Near fast flowing water, slippery slopes and crossing/along busy roads, children must be supervised

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**The Trail**

1. **START** Leave Leisure Centre through the covered way towards lake **A** & left onto elevated path (flood bank). NB ramp to flood bank is to the right.

2. Right onto minor road (NB ramp on left, through car park), then right to join main road B4391.

3. After 50m cross road and take waymarked path on flood bank with River Dee on right. **B**

4. Pass the confluence of Rivers Dee & Tryweryn, keep on waymarked path (flood bank) **C** **D** **E** to road bridge now with River Tryweryn **F** on right to road bridge (A494).

5. At bridge (Pont y Bala) turn left and follow the High Street (A494) **G** to **L** to the Leisure Centre. **FINISH**

Alternatively return using the same route or finish at this point.

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**Tourist Information:** www.VisitBala.org or www.visitsnowdonia.info

**Trails Information:** www.GoBala.org

**www.GoBala.org**
Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake), is the largest natural lake in Wales, approx. 3½ miles long and 150ft deep, lies on the Bala – Talyllyn geological fault-line. The basin was probably created by glacial erosion during the Ice Age. The Gwyniad, a survivor of the Ice-Age, is a species of fish similar in features to a herring, is unique to the lake.

Local legend relates that the lake was formed as punishment for the misdemeanours of Tegid Foel (Tegid the Bald) - a local prince. His mansion, with all its occupants, were reputedly drowned one night during a drunken orgy, after guards neglected replacing the cover on a magic well which would otherwise overflow at night. Only one survived – an itinerant harpist who was led out of danger by a small bird calling repeatedly, “Vengeance has come…”. When he awoke on the hillside in the morning he saw a huge lake filling the valley with his harp floating on its surface! More recent tales exist about a monster lurking in the dark depths of the lake. In 1995 a Japanese mini submarine conducted a survey beneath the waters but did not find a monster!

The name Bala means “the outlet point of a lake” and the Dee in Welsh is Dyfrdwy meaning “Holy Waters”. It was named in Celtic times when rivers and lakes were worshipped.

In 1805, Thomas Telford constructed a set of sluices immediately downstream of the lake to control the lake level and supply water to the Llengollen Canal for the Pontcysyllte Aquaduct. Although the sluices have been replaced the principle of low flow regulation, still applies, and water is abstracted from the river Dee as far as Chester, to 3 million people daily.

In the 50's the Bala Lake Scheme was built lowering the natural lake outlet by 1.5 m significantly reducing the flooding that affected Bala. A new road bridge was constructed and the old multi-arched bridge now stands high and dry. The flood-banks which form part of the walk also assist in alleviating flooding.

The piers of the old railway bridge can be seen where the Bala - Blaenau Ffestiniog branch line crossed the River Dee. Downstream are the sluice gates which are the control part of the Dee Regulation Scheme where water is released from Bala Lake, and supported by releases from Llyn Celyn (via the Afon Tryweryn). The water that you see in the Tryweryn may of already been used to generate electricity (hydro-power), used recreationally for fishing, canoeing, rafting and water safety training.

Weir Y as named during construction of the Bala Lake Scheme and refurbished in 2012 - the centre section is to assist fish to move upstream for spawning. If you are lucky especially during the autumn you may see salmon jumping in this area.

Going through 2 gates you cross the old railway line, now the access road to Bala Sluices, you will also see the diverted section of the Afon Tryweryn. In periods of heavy rainfall flood water is allowed to flow over another Weir known as Z. (Not visible from here.)

Along the flood bank is Weir X, also refurbished in 2012. On the opposite bank you can see the measurement hut, from here river level data is sent to the Dee Regulation telemetry system.

The Green Car park - was the site of the Bala railway station on the Blaenau Ffestiniog branch line.

The River Tryweryn was host to the International White Water Canoe Championships in both 1981 and 1995 - now the National Whitewater Centre is located upstream, near Frongoch.

Plas-yn-Dre (The Town Mansion) now a restaurant was a home to an influential family descending from the Lloyds of Rhiwaedog and Rhirid Flaidd. Betsi Cadwaladr worked here as a young maid. She, eventually, became a nurse at Balaclava in the Crimean War (the Welsh Florence Nightingale). Her name has been adopted for the North Wales' Hospital Trust.

Statue of Thomas Edward Ellis, son of a tenant farmer, elected Liberal MP for Merioneth and was influential in introducing Land Reform Bills in Parliament.

Y Cwrt (The Court) now a restaurant, was formerly The Town Hall, Magistrate and County Courts (note the splendid clock tower)

White Lion Royal Hotel was visited by Queen Victoria, hence the name. She stayed at Palé Hall, Llandderfel.

Barclay’s Bank - this was the home of the Reverend Thomas Charles and where he held a Sunday School. Mary Jones of Llanfihangel y Flanwyn walked 26 miles to this house, in 1800, to buy a Bible. See the commemorative plaques on the wall and Mary Jones Walk Trail.

Ye Olde Bull's Head where the Eisteddfod was held in 1760.

Neuadd Buddug (or Victoria Hall in English) now a cinema was named in honour of Queen Victoria.