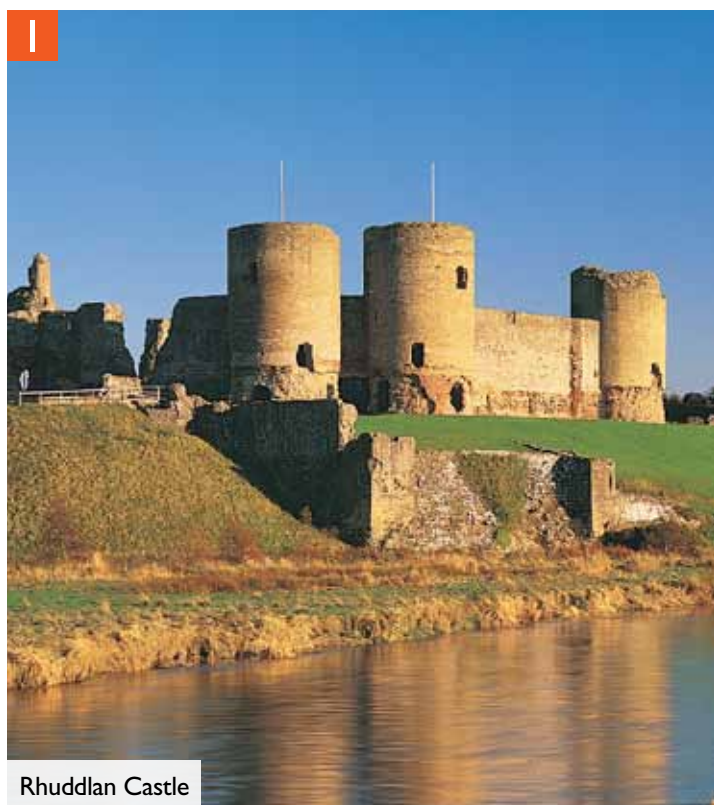




North-east Wales itinerary: the riches of the north-east of Wales

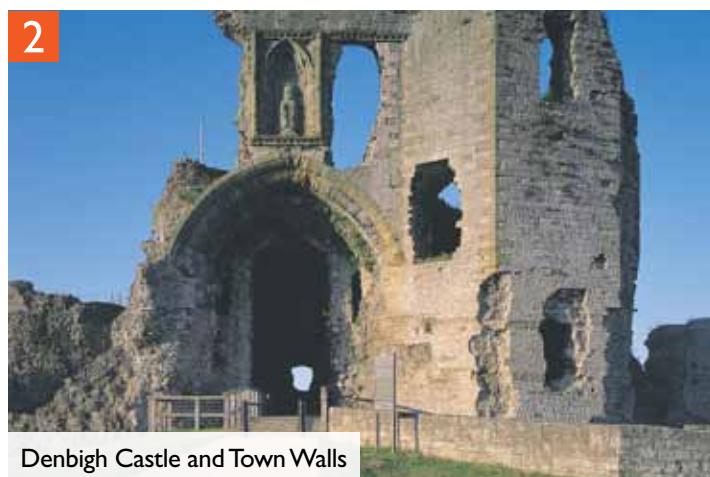
In north east Wales a collection of major mighty monuments are waiting to be explored, and all just a short distance from each other.

Along the north coastline near Rhyl you'll find the ingenious **Rhuddlan Castle** which was one of the strongest of Edward I's castles. Just a 20 minute drive inland from here **Denbigh Castle and Town Walls** crown the summit of a prominent outcrop overlooking the Vale of Clwyd. Continue south and you'll soon come across the glorious **Rug Chapel** and **Llangar Old Parish Church**, and travel a bit further east to reach the stunning **Valle Crucis Abbey**.



Rhuddlan Castle

Guarding the ancient ford of the river Clwyd, **Rhuddlan Castle** was the strongest of Edward I's castles in north-east Wales. Linked to the sea by an astonishing deep water channel nearly three miles long, it still proclaims the innovative genius of its architect. For centuries, Rhuddlan had been a fiercely contested strategic location leading to much bloodshed. Edward's power triumphed long enough to build a muscle-bound symmetrical castle, showcasing the latest in 'walls-within-walls' technology. The castle also played a seminal role in Welsh history: it was here that a new system of English government was established over much of Wales by the Statute of Rhuddlan (1284) – a settlement that lasted until the Act of Union in 1536. After the Civil War the castle was rendered untenable – hence its present condition.



Denbigh Castle and Town Walls

Crowning the summit of a prominent outcrop overlooking the Vale of Clwyd, the principal feature of the spectacular **Denbigh Castle and Town Walls** is the triple-towered great gatehouse dating back to the thirteenth-century. Along with over half a mile of town walls, Denbigh Castle is a classic fortress of Edwardian proportions. Henry de Lacy, one of the king's loyal commanders, was given control of the area and had the task of building the new castle. He couldn't go far wrong with the king's master mason, James of St George, at his side. It wasn't all plain sailing however: A Welsh rebellion, led by Madog ap Llywelyn, captured the partly-built castle in 1294, but Edward's dominance and the castle-building programme were soon restored. You can see for yourself the two phases of building work. The post-rebellion work is marked by different colour stone, thicker curtain walls and a hint of Caernarfon-style angular towers. Also, don't miss Leicester's Church, Denbigh Friary and the Burgess Gate.



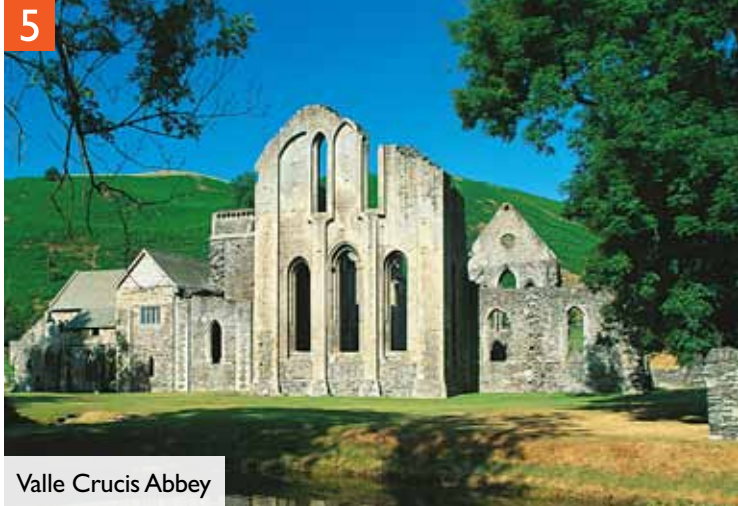
Rug Chapel



Llangar Old Parish Church

Prettily set in a wooded landscape, **Rug Chapel's** exterior gives little hint of the highly decorative and colourful wonders within. Never judge a chapel by its exterior! Step inside this seventeenth-century building and prepare to be wowed by its decorative flourishes. **Llangar Old Parish Church**, a mile or so away, is a few centuries older and retains its charming early Georgian furnishings and an important series of wall paintings.

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Valle Crucis Abbey

Set in a beautiful valley location, a visit to the fascinating **Valle Crucis Abbey** evokes the lives of the Cistercian monks. The best-preserved medieval monastery in north Wales, enhanced by the only surviving monastic fish pond in Wales, the remote yet magical location must have raised a smile or two amongst the serious-minded monks. The history of this fascinating site is brought to life at the summer house interpretation centre, which includes an animated tour of the abbey as it was in the 1400s.

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The journey time from Rhuddlan – Denbigh is approx. 20 minutes, Denbigh - Rug and Llangar is approx. 35 minutes and Rug - Valle Crucis Abbey is 20 minutes.