

Brecon Circular (via Y Gaer, Battle and Pen-y-crug)			Priory Groves Woodland Gorge Extension		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check	1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
04 th May 2018	16 th July 2020		07 th May 2018	16 th July 2020	
Current status	Document last updated Saturday, 10 th May 2023				
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Brecon Circular (via Y Gaer, Battle and Pen-y-crug)

Start & Finish: Brecon Bus Interchange.

Brecon Bus Interchange, map reference SO 047 285, is 227 km west northwest of Charing Cross, 136m above sea level and in **Powys, Wales**.

Length: 18.1 km (11.3 mi), of which 6.8 km (4.2 mi) are on tarmac or concrete.

Cumulative ascent/descent: 484m. For a shorter or longer walk, see *below* **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 5 out of 10

Time: 4 ½ hours walking time.

Transport: Brecon Bus Interchange is served by lines T4 (Cardiff – Pontypridd – Merthyr Tydfil – Brecon – Newtown), with up to 9 buses a day Mon-Sat and 5 on Sundays and Bank Holidays; T6 (Swansea – Neath – Ystradgynlais – Brecon), with 7 buses a day Mon-Fri and up to 7 on Saturdays; T14 (Cardiff – Merthyr Tydfil – Brecon – Hay-on-Wye – Hereford), with 13 buses a day Mon-Sat and 5 on Sundays and Bank Holidays and 43/X43 (Abergavenny – Brecon) with 12 buses a day Mon-Sat and 5 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Saturday Walkers' Club: This walk is doable as a daywalk from London, especially if you have motorised transport, but also if taking trains to Cardiff, Abergavenny or Neath/Swansea to connect to above buses.

OS Landranger Map: 160 (Brecon Beacons)

OS Explorer Map: OL12 (Brecon Beacons National Park)

Walk Notes:

This short excursion from the heart of the busy market town of Brecon leads out along the Promenade along the Usk River and then through fields and woods to the remains of Y Gaer (CICVCIVM Roman Fort), built around AD 75 and established as a Roman cavalry base for the conquest of Wales. Rebuilt in stone during the 2nd half of the 2nd century AD, it still features interesting remains of walls, gatehouses and turrets.

Follow the Ysgir River north up the valley and onto Battle Hill, a modest grassy ridge from where you nevertheless have extensive views of all the spectacular mountain areas around Brecon.

A descent through woods and across pastures leads to the remains of Pen-y-crug Iron Age hillfort, with its up to five surviving ramparts, located on The Crug (*pronounced cree-g*), a hill overlooking Brecon.

Despite its modest height, it has extensive views of the central Brecon Beacons, and also views to a number of neighbouring hillforts.

En route back down to Brecon and past the cathedral and Norman castle remains, you pass the covered well of Ffynnon Maen-du, one of several springs on the slopes of Pen-y-crug.

A shortcut cuts the long ascent to Battle Hill and the remaining short walk still provides an interesting introduction to the area with its rivers, woods and views from the Pen-y-crug hillfort site.

An extension through the Priory Groves Woodland Gorge, starting from the cathedral, and going up the Honddu valley, is a fascinating excursion up this lovely gorge, which – in parts – is almost alpine in character, despite being only a stone's throw from the town centre. This can also be done as a (very short but rewarding) standalone walk.

Walk Options:

A Shortcut from Battle to Pen-y-crug (entirely on tarmac) cuts out 4.7 km/2.9 mi and 156m ascent/descent (rated **3/10**).

An Extension at the end through the Priory Grove Woodland Gorge and along the River Honddu adds 4.3 km/2.7 mi (rated 7/10). **This can also be walked as a standalone short loop** from the centre of Brecon (you just have to find your way to the cathedral churchyard's lychgate and pick up the text there).

Lunch

Picnic.

Tea (details last updated 01/04/2019)

Pilgrims Tearooms Cathedral Close, Brecon, Powys, LD3 9DP (01874 610 610, <http://pilgrimstearooms.com/>). Pilgrims Tearooms is situated within the tranquil grounds of Brecon Cathedral. Open in summer 09.00-17.00 Mon-Sat (-16.00 Sun); in winter: 10.00-16.00 daily.

Brecon Castle Hotel and Restaurant Castle Square, Brecon, Powys, LD3 9DB (01874 624 611, <http://www.breconcastle.co.uk/>).

Dugan's Patisserie Pegasus Lane, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7BH (01874 623 113, <http://www.dugans.co.uk/>). Open Mon-Sat to 17.00.

Chang Thai Cuisine 50 High Street, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7AP (01874 622 330, <http://www.changthaicuisine.co.uk/>). Open daily 17.00-22.30.

Coffee #1 3 High Street, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7AG (01874 625 925, <https://www.coffee1.co.uk/locations/brecon/>). Open daily 08.00-18.00 Mon-Sat and 09.00-17.00 Sun.

The Wellington Hotel The Bulwark, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7AD (01874 625 225, <https://www.sabrain.com/pubs-and-hotels/mid-west-wales/powys/wellington-hotel/>).

The Brecon Tap 6 The Bulwark, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7LB (01874 623888, <http://www.breconinns.co.uk/>). Owned by the Brecon Brewing Company. Open to 23.00 daily. Food served 12.00-15.00 and 18.00-21.00.

The Clarence Inn 25 The Watton, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7ED (01874 622 810, <http://clarenceinn.co.uk/>). Food served 12.00-14.30 daily and 19.00-21.00 Thu-Tue.

Gurkha Corner 12 Glamorgan Street, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7DW (01874 610 871, <http://gurkhacorner.co.uk/>). Closed Mon.

Bank Bar & Kitchen 37 The Watton, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7EG (01874 623 997, <http://www.thebankbarbrecon.co.uk/>). A modern gastro pub.

Welsh Glossary

aber: estuary, confluence, river mouth; afon: river; allt: hillside, cliff; aran: high place; ban/fan/bannau (pl): peak, beacon, crest, hill, mountain; big: peak; blaen: source of river, head of valley; bod: dwelling; bre: hill; bron: hill-breast; bryn: hill; bwlch: gap, col, pass; cadair: chair; cae: field; caer/gaer: stronghold, fort; capel: chapel; carn/garn/carnedd/garnedd: cairn/heap of stones, tumulus; carreg/garreg: stone, rock; castell: castle; cefn: ridge, hillside; celli: grove, copse; cerwyn: pot-hole; cist: chest; clwyd: hurdle, gate; clog/clogwyn: cliff; clun: meadow; clydach: torrent; coch/goch: red; coed: wood; craig/graig: rock; crib/cribyn: crest, ridge, summit; crug: mound; cul: narrow; cwm: hanging valley, corrie, bowl, dale; cyfrwy: ridge between two summits (saddle); ddinas: fort; dibyn: steep slope, precipice; diffwys: precipice, abyss; dim: no; din: hill-fortress; disgwylfa: place of observation, look-out point; dôl: meadow; du/ddu: black, dark; dwfr/dŵr: water; dyffryn: valley; -dyn: fortified enclosure; eglwys: church; eira: snow; eisteddfod: meeting-place, assembly; esgair: ridge; fach/bach: small; fawr/mawr: large; fechan: smaller; ffald: sheep-fold, pound, pen, run; ffordd: way, road; ffridd: pasture; ffrwd: stream, torrent; ffynnon: spring, well; gallt: wooded hill; ganol: middle; garth: promontory, hill, enclosure; glan/lan: river-bank, hillock; glas: green, when referring to grass, pasture or leaves; or blue, when relating to the sea or air; glyn: deep valley, glen; gors: bog; gorsedd: tumulus, barrow, hillock; gwyddfa: mound, tumulus; gwyllfa: look-out point; gwyn/gwen: white; gwynt: wind; hafn: gorge, ravine; hafod: summer dwelling; hen: old; hendre(f): winter dwelling, old home, permanent abode; heol: road; hesgyn: bog; hir: long; is: below, lower; llan: church, monastery; llawr: level area, floor of valley; llech: slab, stone, rock, rock; llther: slope; lluest: shieling, cottage, hut; llwch: lake, dust; llwybr: path; llwyd: grey, brown; llwyn: bush, grove; llyn: lake; llynwyn: pool, puddle, moat; isa(f): lower, lowest; maen: stone; maes: open field, plain; mawn: peat; mawnog: peat-bog; melyn: yellow; merthyr: burial place, church; moel/foel: bare, bald/bare hill; mynydd: mountain, moorland; nant: brook, stream, dingle, glen; neuadd: hall; newydd: new; ogof/gogof: cave; pant: hollow; parc: park, field, enclosure; pen: head, top, end, edge; penrhyn: promontory; pentre(f): homestead, village; perfedd: middle; perth: bush, brake, hedge; plas: hall, mansion; pont/bont: bridge; porth: gate, gateway, harbour, bay, landing-place, ferry; pwll: pit, pool; rhiw: hill, slope; rhos: moor, promontory; rhudd: red, crimson; rhyd: ford; sarn: causeway; sgwd/rhaeadr: waterfall; sticill: stile; sych: dry; tafarn: tavern; tâl: end, top; talar: headland (of field); tan/dan: below; tarren/darren: escarpment; tir: land, territory; tor: break, gap; tre/tref: settlement, hamlet, town; twlch: tump, knoll; twll: hole, pit; tŵr: tower; tŷ: house; twyn: hill; uchaf: upper, highest; uwch: above, over; waun/gwaun: moorland, meadow; wen/wyn: white; y, yr, 'r: the; ynys: island, holm, river-meadow; ysgol: ladder, formation on mountain-side/school; ysgwydd: shoulder (of mountain); ystafell: chamber, hiding-place; ystrad: wide valley, holm, river-meadow.

Notes:

Brecon (Aberhonddu)

Brecon (Aberhonddu in Welsh, i.e.: mouth of the Honddu River, which meets the River Usk near the town centre), is a market town in Powys, Mid Wales. Historically it was known as Brecknock and the county town of Brecknockshire, and is now the third-largest town in Powys. It lies north of the Brecon Beacons mountain range, but is just within the Brecon Beacons National Park. The original Welsh name of the kingdom in whose territory Brecon stands was "Brycheiniog" (later anglicised to Brecknock or Brecon), and probably derives from Brychan, the eponymous founder of the kingdom.

Before the building of the bridge over the Usk, Brecon was one of the few places where the river could be forded. In Roman Britain Y Gaer, Brecon (*Cicucium*) was established as a Roman cavalry base for the conquest of Roman Wales and Brecon was first established as a military base. The confluence of the Honddu and the Usk also made for a valuable defensive position for the Norman castle which overlooks the town.

River Usk (Afon Wysg)

The River Usk (Afon Wysg in Welsh) rises on the northern slopes of The Black Mountain (Y Mynydd Du in Welsh), in the westernmost part of the Brecon Beacons National Park, initially forming the boundary between Carmarthenshire and Powys. It flows north into Usk Reservoir, then east by Sennybridge to Brecon before turning southeast to flow by Talybont-on-Usk, Crickhowell and Abergavenny after which it takes a more southerly course. Beyond the eponymous town of Usk it passes the Roman legionary fortress of Caerleon to flow through the heart of the city of Newport and into the Severn estuary at Uskmouth at Newport Wetlands. Its total length is 102 km/63 mi.

The name of the river derives from a Common Brittonic word meaning "abounding in fish" or "water", which also appears in other river names such as Exe, Axe, Esk and other variants.

The whole river downstream of Usk Reservoir has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and has long been a noted salmon and trout fishing river.

Honddu River

The Afon Honddu (pronounced [hɔnðɪ] i.e. *hon-thee*) rises on Mynydd Epynt (as does the Afon Ysgir, see below) and flows southwards to join the River Usk at Brecon (Welsh: *Aberhonddu*). The river has no major tributaries but acquires numerous streams during its 18 km course. For the last 2.4 km (1.5 mi) of its course, it lies partly or wholly within Brecon Beacons National Park and Fforest Fawr Geopark.

Y Gaer/Brecon Gaer (CICVCIVM Roman Fort)

Y Gaer was built around AD 75 with defensive banks of clay on a cobbled surface on a crossroads of Roman roads in the valley of the River Usk at a strategic point in Roman Wales, linking South Wales and Mid Wales. It was part of a chain of similar forts, such as Gobannium at Abergavenny, a day's march away down the Usk valley, and larger bases, such as Isca Augusta, Caerleon, the main base for the Roman legion locally. The fort was built for a contingent of up to 500 cavalrymen, recruited originally in Spain from the Vettones, and their cavalry would have played a significant part in the conquest of the area held by the Silures. It lies on private farmland and no signposting is provided to the site, which lies on the further side of some farm buildings at the end of an approach lane.

The fort was rebuilt in stone during the 2nd half of the 2nd century AD and visitors can see: remnants of stone walls in parts to some 3 metres in height and parts of three gatehouses and corner guard towers. Beyond the wall the fort was protected by a ditch up to 9m wide and 1m deep. Several artefacts have been removed to local museums, such as a tombstone of a young cavalryman, held at Brecknock Museum.

Afon Ysgir/Ysgir River

The Afon Ysgir is a river which rises on the southern slopes of Mynydd Epynt (as does the Afon Honddu, see above). The tributaries known as Ysgir Fawr and Ysgir Fechan combine at Pont-faen and continue past the village of Battle to join the River Usk at Aberyscir. Near its mouth is a motte, the historic church at Aberyscir and, east of the river, the Roman fort of CICVCIVM or Y Gaer.

Pen-y-crug/Ffynnon Maen-du Well

The remains of Pen-y-crug hillfort can be found on The Crug (*pronounced cree-g*), a hill northwest of Brecon, at a height of 331m. Its ramparts, which today are rounded earthwork banks and ditches, would once have been impressive stone and earth revetments with a wooden defensive palisade built on top. The hill has extensive views of the central Brecon Beacons, and also views to a number of neighbouring hillforts. The hillfort remains that are visible today date back to the Iron Age (c.800BC to 75AD), although there is some evidence of possible earlier occupation on the site. There are up to five surviving ramparts. The covered well of Ffynnon Maen-du is one of several springs on the slopes of Pen-y-crug.

Brecon Beacons National Park

Home to spectacular landscapes, a rich variety of wildlife and fascinating cultural and geological heritage, the Brecon Beacons National Park in Mid-Wales boasts a magnificent array of Old Red Sandstone peaks, open moorland and green valleys, spanning 1,344 km² (520 mi²). Pen y Fan within the Central Beacons is perhaps the best-known summit but there are many others in the five distinct parts of the National Park (Black Mountain (Y Mynydd Du) in the far west, Fforest Fawr, Central Beacons, the Llangattock and Llangynidr Hills, and the Black Mountains to the east).

WALK DIRECTIONS

From **Brecon Bus Interchange**, facing the bus stands with a metal railing behind you, a road running behind them and a brick building at the left end of the row of stands, *turn left* along the bus stands and to the right of the brick building along **Heol Gouesnou** (road), in a north westerly direction. **[!]** *Turn down left* immediately at a four-way junction with some traffic lights along **Free Street**. In 100m ignore **Little Free Street** on the left and in 50m *veer right* across **Bulwark** (street) at a T-junction and *turn right* along some metal railings on the left towards the Grade II*-listed colonnaded **Brecknock Shire Hall** (a museum, library and cultural hub).

At the end of the railings in 15m **[!]** *turn left* on a dog leg *in front of* the museum and walk along a tarmac path ('**The Captain's Walk**', an explanatory slate plaque used to be displayed 150m further along on a wall on the right, but was taken off after concerns about the Captain's slave owning past), with **Danygaer** (road) running parallel below on the left. You pass **Dan-Y-Gaer mill** on the left across the road and then descend with the path where the wall curves to the right and in 25m you *turn right* at a T-junction with another tarmac path. In 70m the path *veers right* and you have **The Usk River** (**Afon Wysg** in Welsh) on your left, and in 200m *turn right* with the path through a metal gate and up some steps onto **Bridge Street**. Cross the street at a set of lights and briefly *turn right* along the opposite pavement and *turn left* immediately along **Watergate** (road).

In 40m you pass a Baptist Chapel and cross the **Afon Honddu/Honddu River** that gives Brecon its Welsh name (**Aber-honddu**) on the road bridge (and with the picturesque ruin of **Brecon Castle** above on the right) and *turn left* immediately afterwards along a tarmac path back towards the Usk River. In 20m the path turns right along the river and you follow it for 830m. **In more detail:** In 350m *curve right* with the path, then *turn left* at a T-junction, pass a weir and in 130m from the left *turn fork left* back down to the river bank (ignore a broader path to a road); in 150m pass a café and a car park on the right and at the end of it continue in the same direction with a signpost 'Fennifach – path liable to flooding'.

In 50m at a hedge corner on the right **[!]** *turn right* along a tarmac path, which curves to the left along the fringe of a grassy area with a bandstand in the middle. In 150m *turn right* through a metal gate and then *turn right* to a road through a metal field gate and cross the road (**Fenni-fach Road** on the OS map) and *turn left* along a bridleway opposite. **This can be very muddy** in winter **and overgrown** in summer though, so it is usually worth *turning up right* over a stile in a hedge into a pasture and **following a footpath** parallel to the bridleway below through grassy fields for the next 800m. This involves going through a few gates and over a few stiles though.

Leave the 5th field after 120m by *turning left* over a stile onto the bridleway below and continue in the same direction along it. The path continues between hedges and in 400m dips down to a stream, which you ford in another 90m (or cross it over a plank bridge to the right) and then go through a wooden field gate or over a stile to the left of it. You have a streamlet running to the left of the path and a larger stream away to the right. After 100m you pass through a notoriously muddy stretch and in another 300m walk through a wooden field gate. In 330m cross a track leading to a lake on the right below (by a house on the left: **Coed** on the OS map) and continue through the wood.

The wooded hill on the left is the site of **Coed Fenni-fach**, an Iron Age hill fort site. In 400m you go over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate to leave the wood and continue along a grassy track with the wood on the left and a sloping pasture on the right and **Cradoc** and **Battle** villages and **Battle Hill** opposite. In 190m go over a stile to the right of a wooden field gate into a pasture and continue along its right hand

boundary fence. In 250m leave the field over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a car wide track between hedges. In 300m you start to gently descend and in 440m you go through a metal field gate and reach a T-junction with a tarmac drive.

You have a farm house on the left ('Y Gaer') and a metal field gate on the right leading into a pasture by a signpost ('Pont-ar-Ysgir'). The walk will continue through the metal field gate on the right. **But first** continue ahead along the tarmac drive and follow it around to the left to in another 80m go through a metal field gate into a farm yard and in 50m at the far corner of a barn on the left, *turn left* through a set of metal field gates into a grassy field and *bear right* towards the wall remnants of **Y Gaer (Cicucium Roman Fort)**. The best views of the rectangular site are from the remnants of the turret in the far right corner. Afterwards retrace your steps to the metal field gate on the tarmac drive and *turn left* through it.

You go through the pasture on a bearing of 350° towards its far left corner and in 200m go over a stile and continue along a left hand field fence and in 40m enter a wooded strip with the **Afon Ysgir/Ysgir River** down below on the left and continue in the same direction downhill. In 25m you go over a stile into a pasture and head for its far left corner. In 140m cross a stile and go up some steps by a footpath signpost and cross a road with **Pont-ar-Yscir** (bridge) on the left, and continue in the same direction along a grassy path, still next to the river. You go through a wooden gate with a bridleyway signpost in 30m and in 100m pass a weir (with remnants of an old railway bridge). In 250m by a house (**Glanrhyd** on the OS map), cross a tarmac lane that leads to the river on the left. The tarmac soon peters out and the grass path slowly rises up from the valley floor and in 340m turns right, away from the Afon Ysgir and up through an attractive woodland.

In 430m, by a narrow path turning left into the trees and 25m before a T-junction with a road at the top of Battle village, **you have a choice:**

For a Shortcut, you continue to the road and *turn right* down through Battle village, in 1.0 km *turn left* in **Cradoc** at a T-junction, in 70m ignore a right turn to Brecon, and in 1.2 km where a footpath joins from the left over a stile, you *turn up right* along a signposted bridleyway and pick up the directions at the asterisk ***)** below.

For the Main Walk, you *turn left* along the narrow path through the trees and in 60m continue up along a road away from Battle. You now follow the road for 2.2 km in broadly the same direction up to the top of the obvious ridge ahead.

But in more detail: You get occasional views on the left through hedge breaks up into the Ysgir valley and back to the Usk valley and the Beacons beyond. The lane rises gently to then go through a dip; here (after 450m along the road) you ignore a left fork to **Battle End Farm** (with its large walled garden and several ponds in the valley bottom on the left, fed by some springs in the slope on the right and left of the road). In 400m *bear right* (signed 'Battle Hill') off the main road, which continues curving left to Merthyr Cynog (4 ½).

The **backviews** to the Beacons get better as you ascend the ridge (105 height metres over 1.3 km) and it pays to occasionally turn around to admire them. You pass the **Battle MX** off-road motorbike track and eventually reach a well weathered signpost on the left near the top of the rise, indicating a left turning bridleyway, by a locked metal field gate on the right. Ignore these and continue for another 20m and *turn right* through another metal field gate with a bridleyway signpost into a pasture, slightly uphill. In 25m *turn right* through a metal gate with a bridleyway marker into a larger pasture and follow the direction of the marker (135°), ignoring a pile of rocks on the left.

You head for the far right corner of this field 220m away (in 40m passing a bridleway marker post), with a real 'top of the world'-feeling, with fantastic views all around: on the right of the **Black Mountain** and the **Brecon Beacons** out to **Waun Rydd**, and ahead of the totality of the **Black Mountains** and the **Usk Valley**. *Turn right* through a metal gate in the corner and *turn left* through a metal field gate 20m away into another pasture to continue in the previous direction. You now follow the left hand boundaries of three fields (150m, 230m and 210m long respectively) and leave the third field in its far left corner through a metal field gate and *bear left* along a gravel car wide farm track.

You walk through another metal field gate and continue along tarmac, soon passing **LLwyncelyn Farm** on the right (on the OS map). [!] In 250m you *veer right* towards a wooden field gate inscribed **Coed Cadw** (Welsh for 'Woodland Trust'). Walk through a wooden kissing gate to the left of the wooden field gate into the **Open Access** land of the **Coed Dyfodol Sarnau** and *turn right* (140°, so not quite along the right hand boundary) through an open area towards a wooden field gate visible through some trees. In 150m walk through a wooden kissing gate to the left of the gate and follow a clear path through a wood.

The path widens in about 130m just before it curves to the right and in 50m you pass a bench on the right. Continue downhill with a line of trees on the right and a new plantation on the left and in 210m cross a muddy area at the bottom of the drop and then in 20m a wooden bridge over a stream. *Turn right* to a stile 10m away and *turn left* over the stile (leaving the Open Access area) to follow an (initially not very clear) path uphill along the right hand boundary of the wood. In 150m continue in the same direction at a fence corner on the right where a grassy farm track joins from the right and in 120m emerge on a tarmac lane leading to some cottages on the right (**Llannerchwen** on the OS map).

Turn hard right with a footpath signpost along the tarmac drive [!] and in 30m [!] *turn left* up a driveway and in 20m continue up a grassy area **to the right of the house** and *turn left* at the back of the house past its rear windows and *turn right* through a wooden gate into a pasture. Cross the grassy area (with more houses on the right behind a fence) up towards its top left corner in a clump of trees to the left of a wooden shed (215°). In 120m leave the field over a stile and continue in the same direction through another field, still gently uphill.

You now have the first views of **Pen-y-crug**, the Iron Age hill fort site this side of Brecon, and in 90m walk over a stile 10m to the left of a rusty metal field gate and *veer left* to follow the right-hand side boundary of the field downhill. In 230m walk through a metal field gate and continue along the right hand boundary of the next field. In 160m leave the field through a metal field gate onto a farm track by **Pentwyn Farm** and continue along the track through the farm yard. In 120m on the other side of the farm you *turn left* at a bend in another farm track. Pass a couple of sheds and in 100m *turn left* through a metal field gate 30m away into a pasture and *turn right* along its right-hand boundary. In 80m in the right-hand corner *turn right* through a metal field gate and *turn left* immediately to *turn left* again through another metal field gate into the adjacent field and cross it on a bearing of 60° in the direction of a couple of electricity poles 50m away, and then towards the wood another 250m away.

Enter **Coed Gwenffrwd** over a stile and continue along a clear path, gently descending through this beautiful wood (ignore a right turn in 35m). Leave the wood in about 300m onto a tarmac lane and *turn right* along it, immediately ignoring a left turning tarmac drive to **Sychpant** farm (on the OS map), with the **Honddu Valley** on the left below. In 280m where the lane turns down to the left, you *turn right* up some steps and over a stile by a footpath signpost. *Turn right* along a grassy slope with the wood now on your

right. In 320m you pass over a stile into the next field and continue towards its top right corner 100m away, but leave it 30m lower down by *turning right* through a metal field gate and immediately *turning left* through another metal field gate to *turn left* down the next field, along its left hand boundary.

You *veer away from the boundary* to in 100m leave the field 30m to the right of the left corner over a stile to then ford – or jump across – a stream and enter a steep pasture on the other side over another stile. Ascend the field a little to the right towards the right of a solitary tall old tree at its top (170°) and in 170m go over a stile, cross a road and continue up a signposted bridleway.

***)** In 250m you walk through a wooden gate into **Open Access Land** on **Pen-y-Crug** and continue along a wide grassy track curving up to the left through the bracken and gorse covered hillside. In 300m, where the track nearly levels out, *turn right* off the track (215°) up to the summit and in 100m go through the earth ramparts. There is a trig point at the far side of the plateau (at 331m above sea). The views from here encompass, at 250°: **Fan Brycheiniog/Fan Hir** (The Black Mountain); 235°: **Fan Gyhirych**; 210°: **Fan Fawr**, 195°: **Corn Du/Pen y Fan**, 180°: **Cribyn**; 170°: **Fan y Big** and **Waun Rydd**, 90°: **Mynydd Troed**; 70°: **Hay Bluff**, the northerly end of **The Black Mountains**.

The small hill on the left immediately behind Brecon on a bearing of 120° is **Slwch Tump** (246m above sea), another hill fort site. Half right, in a south westerly direction, you see **Coed Fenni-fach**, the wooded hill fort site walked along earlier (290m above sea). From the trig point you *turn left* (100°) and follow a clear grassy path down through the ramparts in 50m. In another 130m *bear right* with the path (120°). In 120m continue in the same direction, ignoring a right fork, (hollows, some flooded, to the side are marks left of **brick and tile works**) and in 120m go over a stile by a marker post into a pasture and continue in the same direction for 700m through a sequence of pastures towards Brecon, using stiles in hedges to progress from one field to the next.

Coming out of the last field over a stile you enter a grassy area with a housing estate on the other side of it. **[!]** *Turn left* towards a small wood and in 30m you find the **Ffynnon Maen-du Well**, covered by a stone vaulted building. *Turn right* from the previous direction along a clear path along the channel carrying the water away from the well and go past a pond to leave the wood in 30m back onto the grassy area and *bear left* towards a road. Cross the road, and continue through a car park area on a residential road (**Maes-Y-Ffynnon**) and then *turn left* along a tarmac path through an estate.

You have a wooden garden fence on your left and in 70m you *turn right* along another tarmac path with a wooden fence on the right. In 50m continue along a tarmac drive and in 30m you cross **Bron-Y-Crug** (road) and *turn left* along its opposite pavement. The road turns down to the right after 40m and in another 200m at a T-junction you cross a road and continue a little to the left along a tarmac footpath. This continues as a lane in 30m and in another 30m at a bend as **Peppercorn Lane**, soon with the first views of the **Cathedral's** tower. In 140m *turn right* along **Pendre** (the B 4520). In 80m cross the road by a set of lights and in 30m *turn left* towards the Cathedral by a wooden signpost on the left ('Priory Groves, The Struet').

Here you have a choice:

For an extension through the Priory Groves Woodland Gorge and along the River Honddu, you continue in the same direction through the lychgate into the churchyard (there is a chance here to visit the cathedral first by entering through the north

entrance) and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Priory Groves Woodland Gorge Extension**.

For the Main Walk, you *bear right* through the gate into the **Cathedral Close** (open 09.00-18.00, if closed, follow the road to the right of the wall) and in 25m *turn left* towards the main cathedral entrance. After a visit, *turn left* out of the cathedral past the **Pilgrims Tearooms** and in 60m leave the cathedral district through a metal gate back onto the road (now called **Priory Hill**). Cross it carefully and *turn left* down the opposite pavement into Brecon. In 70m *turn right* along **Postern** (named after the postern gate of the Norman castle) past some very old houses and then past the stone abutments of the long-dismantled Brecon to Neath railway. In 170m you get to the back of the castle ruins seen much earlier from the other side.

The road turns up to the right as Castle Square to the **Brecon Castle Hotel and Restaurant**, but *turn down to the left* to cross the **Honddu River** on a footbridge (which incorporates parts of the castle's drawbridge). On the other side carefully cross **Market Street** and walk up **Castle Street**. In 70m *turn right* along **High Street Superior** (the Priory Groves Woodland Gorge Extension joins from the left).

******) In 35m ignore a left fork (Lion Street) and a pedestrianised lane forking right (which leads to **Dugan's Patisserie**) and in 40m the road continues as **High Street** and you pass **Chang Thai Cuisine** on the right hand side. In 70m at the corner of the **Guildhall** (with **Coffee #1** just ahead and **The Wellington Hotel** and Pub/ Restaurant on the right and the recommended **Brecon Tap** another 60m ahead on your left), **[!]** *turn left* and in 30m cross **Lion Street**, and continue through a pedestrianised shopping area (**Bethel Square**) and then a car park to in 180m *turn right* in front of the (now closed) **Tourist Information Centre**.

Follow a paved path through a superstore car park and then around to the left of the superstore building itself to eventually *turn left* onto **Heol Gouesnou** (road), where you *turn right* to the **Brecon Bus Interchange**, 80m away across a four-way junction.

Priory Groves Woodland Gorge Extension (add 4.3 km/2.7 mi)

In 100m leave the churchyard through a metal gate and continue along a tarmac path between high stone walls. In 40m *turn left* at a T-junction of tarmac paths with the **Honddu River** audible steeply down below on the right. In 125m you *fork right* with a wooden railing on the right, ignoring a left turn towards some houses. In 40m you have a grassy meadow on the left behind some trees and **Pen-y-crug** rising in the near distance and in another 40m a gravel path joins from the left, as you continue along gravel. In 50m by a three-way signpost on the right, you *curve right* signed 'Forge Bridge, Anod Bridge', ignoring a left turn up some steps. Ignore a path steeply down to the right and continue on the level with a wooden railing on the right.

In 400m you pass a two-way signpost, still continuing towards 'Forge Bridge, Anod Bridge', ignoring a left fork up through the trees towards some more houses. In 230m you go through a dip crossing a stream on an earth bridge and in another 40m *turn right* at a T-junction, signed 'Anod Bridge'. In 40m *fork right* along the lower path and in 20m a path joins from the right and in 35m ignore a left fork back up to a higher level to gently descend towards the river bank. In 60m *turn left* at a T-junction with the

riverside path by **The Forge** on the other side of the river, and in 20m pass **Forge Bridge** on the right to continue in the same direction along the left-hand side of the Honddu by a three-way signpost towards Anod Bridge.

In 220m the path forks left up an earth bank and at the top you *turn right* with it (a more minor path joins from the left) and in 50m you cross a tributary stream – which falls over series of small cascades – over a two-railed plank bridge and proceed up a stepped path to a higher level above the gorge. In 100m *turn right* at a two-way signpost towards **Anod Bridge** (ignore the continuation towards 'Brecon' ahead). In 40m you have an open field on the left behind the trees and **Pen-y-crug** rising behind it and you continue along this narrow path with a steep drop to the right, at times with care where tree roots make progress difficult.

In 400m you leave the wood over a stile into a pasture and *turn down to the right* along its right-hand boundary towards its bottom right hand corner. Once you reach the river bank, you *turn left* with the curving river and leave the field in the far-left corner of its narrow end over a stile with a yellow marker and *turn right* along a tarmac lane with a footpath signpost on the right. You **cross the Honddu on Anod Bridge** ('Pont Cwm Anod' in Welsh) and on the other side ignore a left fork up an incline. Pass a cottage to your right and cross a stream (the **Cwm Anod**) on the lane to then immediately *turn right* through a metal gate by a two-way signpost with a sign for 'Brecon' (ignore the continuation towards 'Llanddew').

You have the Cwm Anod and the Honddu on the right and in 25m ascend steeply up a wooded bank. In 75m the path levels out by the confluence of stream and river below and you have a pasture to the left at a slightly higher level. In 50m walk through a metal gate and continue through the wood and in 75m leave the wood into a sloping pasture to curve left through it with the river to the right below. In 150m walk through a gap in a line of trees into the next pasture. In 170m ascend through some trees and in 30m go over a stile into the next field. In 150m walk through a metal field gate and continue in the same direction through another pasture towards a white cottage in the near distance. Leave the field in 120m through a metal field gate into one last pasture which you leave after 110m at its far-left corner over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and *turn right* at a T-junction with an earthen path.

In 30m cross the metal-railed arched brick **Forge Bridge** and *turn left* on the other side along the riverbank, signposted 'Brecon'. In 20m ignore a right fork uphill (you descended here earlier in the walk) and in 130m ignore a path joining from the right. Now keep the river on your left for the next 750m, ignoring all ways off to the right, crossing a few tributary streams and walking through a gate or two along the way (the path forks close to the end of this stretch: take either fork, either into a meadow on the left or continue between fences). Eventually you get to a T-junction with a path coming down from the right and *turn left* along it.

In 30m cross another stream on a two-railed wooden plank bridge and in 150m pass a large info panel on the right by a three-way signpost at a T-junction (the path down from the right comes from the Cathedral). *Turn left* towards **The Struet** between stone walls and in 35m *turn left* with the path across the Honddu on a steel bridge and turn right along **The Struet**, a busy road. In 40m *turn left* across the road by a passing place and continue along the opposite pavement. In 150m cross **Market Street/Heol Gouesnau** at a set of lights and in another 70m **Castle Street** joins from the right and with it the Main Walk.

You continue in the same direction along **High Street Superior** and pick up the directions in the main text at the double asterisk **).