

Bwlch Circular (via Mynydd Troed and Llangorse Lake)			Bwlch Circular (via Pen Tir and Cefn Moel)		
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## Bwlch Circular (via Mynydd Troed and Llangorse Lake)

**Start & Finish:** Bwlch (All Saints Church/New Inn) Bus Stop.

Bwlch (All Saints Church/New Inn) Bus Stop, map reference SO 148 220, is 219 km west northwest of Charing Cross, 223m above sea level and in **Powys, Wales**.

**Length:** 21.6 km (13.4 mi), of which 5.5 km (3.4 mi) are on tarmac or concrete.

**Cumulative ascent/descent:** 837/841m. For a shorter or longer walk, see *below* **Walk Options**.

**Toughness:** 7 out of 10

**Time:** 6 hours walking time.

**Transport:** Bwlch is served by line X43 (Abergavenny – Brecon) with 7-8 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 a train to Abergavenny to connect to above bus service.

**OS Landranger Map:** 160 (Brecon Beacons)

**OS Explorer Map:** OL13 (Brecon Beacons National Park East)

### Walk Notes:

This is a varied walk from the small settlement of Bwlch ('pass' in Welsh), starting from a low col high above the Usk Valley onto the rolling moorlands of Cefn Moel and Mynydd Llangorse. The following long ridge walk along good grass paths across this outlying peak's plateau – and the subsequent optional ascent to Mynydd Troed – command panoramic views across to many of the much higher giants of the Brecon Beacons National Park: across the Rhiangoll valley to the south-western flanks of the Black Mountains massif, west to the Central Beacons and south to Mynydd Llangynidr and Mynydd Llangattock.

A road descent leads to Llangorse village for lunch and around its iconic lake, of glacial origin and the largest natural lake in South Wales, with its watersports centre – and the only crannog outside of Scotland and Ireland. This is a busy touristic site in season.

Leave the crowds behind to further circumvent the large lake through pastures to a remote bird hide and an even more remote church-with-views in Llangasty-Tallyllyn and then up the Allt yr Esgair ('wooded slope of the ridge' in Welsh). It is crowned by an Iron Age hillfort and a Roman road and overlooks the valley of the River Usk to the west and south and Llangorse Lake and the Black Mountains to the northeast.

You then follow the Roman Road back down to Bwlch.

## Walk Options:

**Cut out the steep ascent to Mynydd Troed** (2.2 km/1.3 mi and 260m ascent/descent) for a **6/10** walk. **Cut out the ascent to the Allt yr Esgair Iron Age Hill Fort site** near the end by contouring around the hill's flank.

**An easterly route from the summit of Mynydd Troed** along the ridge and down into the Cwm Sorgwm and back up over Pen Tir to the Cefn Moel and to Bwlch adds 800m distance and 245m ascent (**8/10**).

## Lunch (details last updated 19/08/2022)

**The Castle Inn** B 4560, *Llangors, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7UB (01874 658 819)*. The Castle is located 11.9 km/7.4 mi into the walk.

**The Red Lion** B 4560, *Llangors, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7TY (01874 658 825)*. The Red Lion is located 12.0 km/7.4 mi into the walk.

## Tea (details last updated 19/08/2022)

**Lythic Brewing** Tynewydd Farm, *Llangors, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7UA (07542 425 408, <http://lithicbrewing.com/>)*. Lythic Brewing is located 12.1 km/7.5 mi into the walk.

**Lakeside Bar & The Lake Café** Llangorse Lake, *Llangors, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7UA (01874 658 170)*. The Bar and Café are located 12.7 km/7.9 mi into the walk. Bar open from: 16.00 Mon-Fri, 14.00 Sat and 12.00 Sun. Café open daily but closed end November to early March.

**The New Inn** Bwlch, *Brecon, Powys, LD3 7RQ (01874 730 215, <https://www.beaconsbackpackers.co.uk/>)*. Open 17.00-23.00 Wed-Fri, 14.00-23.00 Sat & 12.00-21.00 Sun. Dinner served Wed-Sat 18.00-21.00.

## Tea (Pen Tir Route) (details last updated 19/08/2022)

**Mynydd Ddu Tea Rooms** Cwmdu, *Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1RU (01874 730 289)*. Open 08.30-16.30 Thu-Mon. The Tea Rooms are located 5.8 km/3.6 mi from the end of the walk.

**The Farmers Arms** Cwmdu, *Crickhowell, Powys, NP8 1RU (01874 202 132, <http://www.the-farmers-arms.com/>)*. Open 17.00-23.00 Tue-Fri, 12.00-24.00 Sat and 12.00-20.00 Sun. Food served 17.00-20.30 Tue-Sat and 12.30-15.00 & 17.00-20.00 Sun. The Farmers Arms (a community-owned pub) is located 5.8 km/3.6 mi from the end of the walk.

**The New Inn** As above.

## 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; gwylfa: 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:

### Bwlch

Bwlch ('pass' in Welsh) is a small settlement strung out along the A 40 which crosses a low col above the Usk Valley at this point between Brecon and Crickhowell. The village is situated 2 km north of the River Usk and about 100m above the valley floor, so that various parts of the village command panoramic views across the Rhiangoll valley to the south-western flanks of the Black Mountains, west to the Brecon Beacons and south to Mynydd Llangynidr and Mynydd Llangattock. The 'pass' separates the rolling moorlands of Cefn Moel and Mynydd Llangorse in the northeast from Buckland Hill to the southwest. Nearby on the slopes of Cefn Moel is a defensive enclosure from prehistoric times as well as a Roman auxiliary fort at Pen-y-gaer.

### Beacons Way

The Beacons Way is a 152 km (95 mi) linear waymarked long-distance footpath running east to west across the Brecon Beacons National Park. It passes many of the most important landmarks and mountain peaks in the range, but has limited waymarking, especially on open hill and moorland sections, meaning navigation skills are essential. First established in 2005, the route was revised in 2016.

### The Black Mountains/Y Mynyddoedd Duon

The Black Mountains (Welsh: *Y Mynyddoedd Duon*) are a group of hills spread across parts of Powys and Monmouthshire, and extending across the border into Herefordshire. They are the easternmost of the four hill ranges that comprise the Brecon Beacons National Park. The Black Mountains may be roughly defined as those hills contained within a triangle defined by the towns of Abergavenny in the southeast, Hay-on-Wye in the north and the village of Llangors in the west. Other gateway towns to the Black Mountains include Talgarth and Crickhowell. The highest mountain in the group is Waun Fach at a height of 811m above sea.

### Usk Valley/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.

### Llangorse Lake

Llangorse Lake (Welsh: *Llyn Syfaddon*, variant: *Llyn Syfaddan*) is the largest natural lake in South Wales, and famous for its coarse fishing (particularly pike), watersports, the afanc (a lake monster from Welsh mythology, nicknamed 'Gorsey') and has the only example of a crannog in Wales (a small artificial island about 40m from the north shore). Llangorse Lake is one of the most mentioned sites in Welsh folklore. It is a eutrophic (meaning "well-nourished") glacial lake with an 8 km circumference covering an area of 1.32 km<sup>2</sup>. The lake is sited between the basins of the River Wye to the north and the River Usk to the south, and occupies a glacially scoured rock basin partly enhanced by morainic debris. The Afon Llynfi provides the main input of water into the lake (from the direction of Bwlch) and continues as the lake overflow stream north to The Wye. The lake has a maximum depth of 7.5m.

### Allt yr Esgair

Allt yr Esgair is a hill in the Brecon Beacons National Park, commonly referred to locally as simply 'The Allt'. The Welsh name signifies 'wooded slope of the ridge'. It takes the form of a northwest-southeast aligned ridge which rises to a height of 393m (and qualifies as a Marilyn with its prominence of 205m).

It overlooks the valley of the River Usk to the west and south and Llangorse Lake and the Black Mountains to the northeast. There is a viewfinder on the summit erected as a monument to a local Labour Politician. A number of small sandstone quarries, now disused, adorn the slopes. The hill probably stood out above the Usk Valley glacier ice during the ice age. Allt yr Esgair's summit is crowned by an Iron Age hillfort and the Roman road between the Roman fort of CICVICVM at Y Gaer, Brecon and Gobannium at Abergavenny runs along the ridge and is followed by a modern-day bridleway.

### 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 km<sup>2</sup> (520 mi<sup>2</sup>). 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

Alight from the bus at the New Inn stop in the centre of **Bwlch** (Welsh for 'pass') and start the walk by the former 'Central Stores' (a house with a wooden veranda and a bench) on the northerly side of the road through the village, i.e.: by the bus stop in the direction coming from Brecon, with **The New Inn** 60m away on the opposite side of the road. Turn back a few metres and at the corner of the veranda-ed house, *turn right* up a tarmac lane between houses (20°). In 70m *turn right* with the lane at a T-junction, ignoring a signposted footpath to the left over a stile in a drystone wall into a pasture. In 100m ignore a signposted footpath up from the right (the **Beacons Way** joins along it) and in another 20m **[!]** *turn left* along a signposted bridleway with a Beacons Way marker on it, steadily uphill along a drive between hedges (25°). Another marker signs this as a 'Mountain Bike Route /Llwybr Beicio Mynydd'.

You will now walk in broadly the same direction for the next 6.6 km (4.0 mi), ascending the broad ridge ahead (**Cefn Moel**) and following it up to **Mynydd Llangorse** and then dip down at the other end to a pass between the ridge and **Mynydd Troed**.

**In more detail:** in 140m pass a house and in 20m go through a metal field gate with a bridleway marker on it ('Lwybr Cefyll' in Welsh) into **Access Land**. You ascend more steeply with a drystone wall on the right and in 70m by the corner of the wall on the right, reach an open area. In 80m the gradient eases a little and you have first views on the right across the **Rhiangoll Valley** to the south westerly part of **The Black Mountains/Y Mynyddoedd Duon**. The hills closest by are (from the right): Sugar Loaf/Y Fâl by Abergavenny, Pen Cerrig-calch and Pen Allt-mawr. Behind you can see the cliffs of the **Llangynidr Hills** and the **Waun Rydd**, the easterly end of the **Central Brecon Beacons**, out to **Cribyn and Pen y Fan** (due W). You now continue on this tiered ascent, with inclines followed by flatter stretches, with a drystone wall on your left and with the views progressively improving.

In 250m you have far views down the **Usk Valley** past Crickhowell and Abergavenny, with the **Llangattock Hills** to the right of the valley, and in another 100m – up another tier – you have more complete views of the mountain range on the right. Over the wall on the left, you also have first part-views of the **Llangorse Lake**, walked around later, and – half-right ahead on 40° – **Waun Fach and Pen y Gadair Fawr**, the highest ground in the BlackMountains. In 140m you reach the next tier up with now fuller views of the lake on the left and in 120m you pass a cairn on your right. In 300m ignore a bridleway turning left through a metal gate and continue in the same direction with the wall on your left. In 140m where the wall and path veer left, a bridleway joins from the right behind. In 400m, another track joins from the right behind through the bracken.

In another 60m you continue in the same direction by a two-way signpost where a footpath joins from the left through a metal field gate in the drystone wall and a bridleway turns right across the plateau. In 270m at a staggered four-way junction and where the drystone wall finishes, ignore a right forking bridleway (unsigned) as well as a signposted footpath turning left over a stile. You now have a barbed wire fence on the left and continue gently uphill. In 700m you pass an unnamed top (spot height 430m on the OS map) on its left and in another 270m continue in the same direction at a stone cairn at a signposted four-way bridleway junction by a corner of the fence on the left. In 150m ignore a right fork and *veer left* (345°) on the broader track up towards the obvious hilltop ahead (the southern, subsidiary top of **Mynydd Llangorse**).

**[!]** In 550m you *fork left* off the wide grassy track (which skirts the top) to commence up to the top along a narrower path on a bearing of 345° initially. In 350m you pass the trig point at 506m above sea and continue in the same direction along the flat ridge. In 600m you reach the true summit of **Mynydd Llangorse** at 515m above sea. On the

half right you have the **Cwm Sorgwm** (valley) and the broad ridge of **Mynydd Troed** across it, and – behind and higher – some of the higher peaks of The Black Mountains.

Continue in the same direction and in 75m pass a cairn at a cross paths. In 500m you pass a lone boulder and in 75m a path joins from the right behind (this is the continuation of the path you left earlier, which has skirted the top of the ridge). In another 90m, where the track bears left and down, **[!]** *fork right* along a narrow track to a fantastic viewpoint 20m away from where you look down into and along the **Cwm Sorgwm** (valley). Continue the descent to the obvious road 1.0 km away, which runs through the pass between Mynydd Llangorse and Mynydd Troed. This can be steep and slippery in places, and do fork right where there is a fork, as the views are better away to the right. **Eventually you reach the road** by a signpost.

**Here you have a choice:**

**For a shortcut**, *turn left* down the road towards Llangors village.

**For the recommended route up to Mynydd Troed** (and also for the easterly ending via the Mynydd Troed ridge, the Cwm Sorgwm and Pen Tir) walk through a metal field gate opposite and follow an obvious track up to the trig point 1.1 km away and 254 height metres up. There are a few forks in the path, where you can generally take either fork (or take one route on the way up, the other one on the way down), but the aim is always clear. From the top at 609m above sea continue for 50m or so to the north easterly edge of the top for the best views yet of the northerly end of **The Black Mountains** range: **Pen y Gadair Fawr**, **Waun Fach**, **Twyn Talycefn** and **Twmpa** (a.k.a. Lord Hereford's Knob), as well as of the **Wye Valley** beyond it, and therefore the Welsh/English borderlands and **Herefordshire**.

**Back at the trig point you have a choice:**

**For an easterly, more strenuous return route** (picnic lunch, add 800m and 245m ascent), *turn right* (from the direction of ascent) along the ridge on a bearing of 150° and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Pen Tir and Cefn Moel Route**.

**For the Main Walk**, return to the road and *turn down to the right* along it towards Llangors village. In 140m you go over a cattle grid to the right of a metal field gate and in 280m *turn left* with the lane, where another lane joins from the right. In 170m another minor lane joins from the right by some farm buildings and in 110m you pass **Capel** (farmhouse). In 230m **[!]** *turn down to the right* with the main road between trees and hedges where another road joins from the left. Soon a break in the growth on the left by a double metal field gate gives an opportunity to look back up to the ridge just walked. You follow the road now for 1.75 km, along the way ignoring a couple of footpaths joining from the left and a tarmac lane from the right, to a T-junction by a small raised triangular green with a hexagonal bench wrapped around a tree, on the fringes of **Llangors**. *Turn right* along the right-hand side pavement of the **B4560**.

In 100m you pass a converted chapel (**Ty Capel**) and in another 100m **The Castle Inn**. In another 30m, where the road turns right further into the village, a signposted footpath turns left through a metal gate and along a narrow path between houses. Around the corner to the right you have **St. Paulinus Church, Llangors** and an info panel and also **The Red Lion** pub on the other side of a stream, which are all worth a look. **[!]** But to continue with the walk, *turn left* to cross the road and continue along the footpath (210°). In 50m go through a metal gate into a pasture and *veer right* (240°) through it towards the left corner of a large farm building (**Tynewydd Farm**, home to **Lithic Brewing**), in 80m crossing a farm track by a lonely gate post and cattle trough. In 90m walk through a metal field gate with a yellow marker and continue in the

same direction through the next pasture, initially cutting its corner, then following a fence line to its far end.

In 230m you cross a two-railed wooden plank bridge over a stream (the **Nant Cwy**) and *veer a little to the right* from the previous direction (265°) through the next field, in 35m passing some redundant wooden gate posts. In another 180m leave the field over a stile to the right of a metal field gate into the **Access Land of Llangors Common** (with a toilet block away to the left) and proceed to a pair of info panels 30m away by a tarmac drive with a two-way footpath signpost on the other side. You have the reception centre of Llangorse Lake's Campsite and its shop and the **Lakeside Bar** on the right with **The Lake Café** 70m away at the far end of the building, and if you'd follow the tarmac drive to the left to the lake's shore, you'd have an opportunity to spot the **only known crannog outside of Scotland and Ireland**.

But continue in the same direction across the common with the signpost and in 280m you get to a raised two-railed concrete bridge across the **Afon Llynfi**, the Lake's main feed (from near Bwlch) and here also its outflow.

**The area on the other side is liable to flooding**, so if the onwards route (half left across the meadow) is impassable, try the obvious **Flood Diversion I**: continue in the same direction along the right-hand side boundary of the meadow and follow the route as shown on the route map. This adds 600m. If Flood Diversion I is impassable as well, you have to go back across the common to the info panels and *turn left* along the tarmac drive and pick up the route of **Flood Diversion II** as shown on the route map. This adds 3.7 km! **Note:** for both Flood Diversions, the final climb out of the last field back onto the walk route uses very-difficult-to-spot metal steps rammed into the large old oak tree in the field corner. Pick up the text at the end of the next paragraph.

**Else bear half left** (215°) across the meadow and in 260m leave the meadow through a metal kissing gate and continue in the same direction through the next grassy field, which you leave in 250m through a metal kissing gate by a yellow-topped pole at the right end of a crumbling drystone wall. You *veer left* ever so slightly (205°) through the next field to the far field corner (with **Waun Rydd** [240°], **Cribyn** [250°] and **Pen y Fan** visible on the half right in the far distance, and the wooded Iron Age Hill Fort Site of **Allt yr Esgair** on the half left in the near distance), in 250m passing two very old oak trees (one hollow), reputedly planted in the reign of **QE I**. In another 120m the **Flood Diversions join** from the right over a fence by another very old oak tree.

Leave the field over a gated two-railed wooden plank bridge across a stream with a wooden kissing gate and **an audio station** on the other side and *veer left* into the next field. Follow a clear path (135°) through the field and in 200m follow a boardwalk over a streamlet and go through a wooden gate and along another boardwalk into the next field. The boardwalk veers to the right and you pass a footpath marker post: *turn left* at the end of the boardwalk along the left-hand boundary of this pasture (i.e.: just above the line of the reed beds), with **Tymawr Farm** away up on the right. In 190m go through a metal gate and over a boardwalk to continue in the same direction through the next field, with **a large bird hide on stilts** visible to the left of the trees ahead, and in 250m go through a metal kissing gate to the right of a wooden field gate and *turn left* through another wooden gate for a short out-and-back to the **bird hide, a bench and a fine viewpoint** 75m away.

Afterwards continue in the previous easterly direction through a wooden field gate into another sloping pasture and follow a gravel path along a left-hand lower field boundary, with trees on the left and the lake behind. In 60m *turn left* with the path along a hedge on the left and in 50m *curve right* with it. In 70m go through a metal kissing gate into trees, soon crossing a stream. You emerge through a metal kissing gate into another

pasture and follow its lower left-hand boundary and in 140m leave it through a metal gate. You are now heading somewhat to the left of a church tower ahead, while the trees on the left soon end, revealing fine views of **Mynydd Troed and the Mynydd Llangorse ridge**. In 300m leave the field through a metal gate with a footpath signpost on the other side ('Llangors 3 km') and *turn left* for 30m to a last rest- and viewpoint on the lake (and an info panel). Afterwards return here and continue up the (initially) gravel car wide lane between hedges.

In 30m the lane continues as tarmac as you pass the (usually open) Grade II\*-listed **St. Gastyn's Church, Llangasty-Talyllyn** (in the parish of Llyn Safaddan), its Celtic predecessor on the site having been **founded around AD 420**. You follow the lane uphill for 850m to a T-junction, ignoring a couple of footpaths joining along the way and passing the entrance to the **Llangasty Retreat House**, an ecumenical Christian centre. At the T-junction *turn right*, signposted '**Pennorth 1**', more gently ascending. In 320m a drive from **Tymawr Farm** joins on the right and in another 60m **[!]** you *turn up to the left* along a signposted bridleway up a car wide concrete track (this is also signposted '**Neuadd Bentref**', meaning village hall, which is what you pass on your right). Walk through a wooden field gate with a bridleway marker and continue up an often-muddy track between hedges to ascend the **Allt yr Esgair**. In 300m at a waymarked bridleway T-junction, *turn left* between earth banks and in 50m *curve right* with the track and in another 50m walk through a metal gate. In 150m you walk through a metal gate at a T-junction with a gravel track.

### Here you have a choice:

**For a lower level route**, skirting around the top (it is another 115m height to the plateau) and past the **Paragon Tower** folly, you *turn right* and in 10m by a bridleway marker post, *turn left* towards another marker post 15m away. At the post **[!]** *fork right* with a bridleway marker, *ignoring* the left fork along the tree line ('Pedestrians Only'). Follow a clear path uphill through the grass, veering away from the trees on the left (200°). In about 150m the path levels out and you continue contouring through the steep pasture (185°), towards a wooded area on the far side of the field. In 200m go through a wooden gate (with a bridleway marker) halfway up the field into the wood and follow a clear if narrow path through it. In 110m **[!]** *fork left* gently uphill through the wood along another narrow path, which in 80m leads you to the large ruined folly, the **Paragon Tower**.

Pass it to the right with a Permissive Footpath marker post (white arrow on black) and in 120m re-join the earlier path at the end of a fence on the right. In 60m go through a metal field gate, still in the wood, but now with a pasture on the right below. In 240m *bear left* uphill at a four-way track junction by a three-way bridleway signpost, your direction 135° ('Roman Road'). In 230m pass a bridleway marker post on the right and continue uphill and in 30m *bear right* through a wooden gate with a blue marker to continue on the level through trees (140°). In 70m go through a wooden gate to the right of some drystone wall remnants and in 400m leave the wood through a wooden field gate into the open hillside. In 30m cross a path at an oblique four-way junction towards a wooden field gate 40m away and pick up the text below at the asterisk \*).

**For the main walk over the top plateau**, you *turn left* and follow a drystone wall on your left further uphill. You ascend mainly between trees, but occasional breaks provide for good views to the left. You *bear left* along the way at a track junction and after a total of 500m since the split of routes, you walk through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along the wall on your left (ignore a permissive footpath turning left over a stile into a field and steeply downhill, to 'Home Farm'). In another 380m you reach the top of the hill on a distinct raised rocky outcrop of the plateau, at 393m above sea, a former Iron Age Hill Fort site.

You have superior views on the right up the **Usk Valley from Talybont-on-Usk to Brecon**. Continue in the same direction and in 20m pass an info panel about **The Black Mountains** on view on the other side and in 250m go through a metal field gate in a drystone wall to continue along a clear track down the hill. Keep to the left-hand boundary of this sloping field and in 500m in the far-left corner you reach a metal field gate with a bridleway marker on it (i.e.: ignore the gap away to the right in the right-hand corner). The low-level route skirting the top has joined from the right behind 40m before the field corner.

**\*)** You go through the field gate and follow the drystone wall on your left down the next pasture (on the line of the **Old Roman Road** over the top) and in 200m pick up a row of trees to follow it further downhill in the same direction. In 170m pass a metal field gate and a ruined farm building and in 80m *turn left* through a wooden field gate and continue downhill between a hedge and a row of trees. Continue downhill in a straight line (it's a Roman road after all), in 140m ignoring a right turn through a wooden field gate, and in 1.0 km walk through a metal gate to emerge at a bend of a tarmac lane, where a tarmac drive joins it from the hard left behind. The drive on the left leads – in 600m – to the **Welsh Venison Centre** with its **Beacons Farm Shop**.

You continue in the same direction along the tarmac lane towards the audible **A40** and in 200m *turn left* along the grassy margin (it seems better to initially walk along the left-hand side, then cross over to the right-hand side) until in 200m there is a narrow pavement on the left-hand side. You pass a bus stop in 280m just before the **B4560** (from Llangors) joins from the left by a war memorial and a village store (a former toll house on the gap road: **The Gate Shop**, 7 days, warm drinks) and continue in the same direction, uphill into **Bwlch**. Walk through the name-giving pass and descend on the other side and eventually reach the starting point of the walk, **the bus stop** on the left-hand side of the road, **for services to Abergavenny**.

**The bus stop for services to Brecon** is another 30m along on the right-hand side of the road. And you'll find **The New Inn** pub in another 30m in the same direction.

## **Pen Tir and Cefn Moel Route (add 800m distance and 245m ascent/descent)**

You are following a clear grass or earth path along the top of this whaleback ridge, gently descending through the bracken and heather ground – without any defined routes off it, broadly heading in the direction of the table top mountain on the other side of the **Rhiangoll Valley**. This is **Pen Allt-mawr**. You pass signs of a multi-day bracken and grass fire, which burned in July 2018. After about 2.2 km the path bears to the right to continue along a narrower spur of the ridge, steadying out on a bearing of 160°, initially through heather then grass. You have grand **views back up the Cwm Sorgwm** on the right **and across the Rhiangoll** on the left.

The path veers right in about 500m (at about spot height 425m) and then curves further to the right, while still descending. In 100m you *turn right* with the path (345°), now on a grassy ledge. In 35m the path continues in the same direction as a narrow earthen track to descend towards a fence corner down on the left. In 200m follow the fence and in 120m at the far fence corner, you cross a stream to the right of a fallen tree and *turn hard left* on the other side back across the stream to follow the fence, parallel to the stream. In 270m in the bottom left corner of the fenced field, go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate, with a rusty metal field gate to the right of it all (leaving the **Access Land** in the process). Go downhill on a bearing of 195° along a car wide bridleway with a wire fence on the left and trees on the right (can be overgrown, then go through the pasture to the right of it).

In 300m go through a wooden gate with a **Tir Gofal** waymarker (this translates as 'Care of the Land' and was a 1999 UK and EU-funded scheme to encourage environmentally friendly agriculture and public access to the countryside, preceding the CRoW-Act, which only came into effect in 2005) onto a tarmac lane and *turn left* along it. In 40m *turn hard right* downhill along a tarmac drive between hedges. In 160m at the bottom of the drop you cross a stream by a confluence of two streams and then follow the left-hand stream steeply uphill along the drive. In 130m go through some farm buildings (**Blaenau-draw** on the OS map) and continue in the same direction further uphill, in 40m going through a metal field gate. In 400m you reach a T-junction and *turn right* along a car wide gravel track. [Note: the rights-of-way in this area are marked differently on the ground than on the OS map.]

In 60m go through a rusty metal field gate **into Access Land** by a bridleway signpost and *turn left* with the direction of the signpost along the fence and a streamlet on the left. In 75m at the fence corner *turn left* along the fence, ignoring the steep path in the same direction going uphill the flank of the hill ahead. In 40m *fork right* away from the fence, gently uphill following a zigzagging path up through more burnt ground, now with fine views back to Mynydd Troed. Halfway up the ascent you pass a bridleway marker post pointing down to the left and in 15m *turn hard right* with the path. In 140m the path turns hard left and in 50m it turns right. You are now on the grassy **saddle between Mynydd Llangorse on the right and Pen Tir on the left** and in 150m reach the **prehistoric Mynydd Llangorse Cairn**. 50m away is a bridleway marker post by a path T-junction: a right turn at that T-junction links up in about 15 minutes with the outbound route along Mynydd Llangorse, and is therefore **an easy shortcut**).

At the cairn *turn left* from the previous direction (130°) and follow the ridge gently **uphill Pen Tir**, in 80m continuing along the path joining from the right behind from the marker post. In 110m continue in the same direction along the more prominent path, ignoring a faint right fork, and in another 330m *fork left* again along the broader of two paths (105°), seemingly heading straight for the mountain across the valley. In 120m you pass a large cairn on a round platform on the right, that is the **Pen Tir Ring Cairn and Ritual Platform**, a Scheduled Monument. In 180m ignore a right fork and in

another 70m you reach the largest of a couple of ponds in the area and *turn right* in front of it. In 20m *bear right* along a path on a bearing of 175°.

In 40m a path joins from the right and in 50m you pass the first of a couple of smaller ponds (may be seasonal). In 220m *bear left* at a T-junction with another path through the heathery plateau (140°). In 250m the heather discontinues and you continue in the same direction through bracken. In 450m you pass what looks like a ruined cottage 60m away on the right. In another 60m walk through a couple of trees and soon *veer right* with the path, still along the bracken covered ridge, which here falls away steeply to both sides. Ignore all ways off and in 500m at the bottom of the drop, *turn right* along the boundary of the fenced Access Land. In the field on the left a low earthbank with some trees on top demarcates the remains of a small univallate earthwork enclosure: **Coed y Gaer** (on the OS map).

In 100m *turn left* to and then through a metal field gate 25m away and thence out of the **Access Land**. Continue downhill with a bridleway marker along a car wide track between a drystone wall on the left and trees on the right. In 300m *turn left* along a tarmac lane at a T-junction between steep earth banks and in 350m where the lane bears to the right, you *turn left* through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate with a footpath signpost and follow a left-hand field boundary downhill. [Note: to avoid Cwmdu and the recommended tea stops, just continue along the lane and *turn right* (due W) along a tarmac lane in 300m, signed 'Ty-Gwellt'. Pick up the text two paragraphs below at "In 30m you..."]

In 25m you can see the church tower in **Cwmdu** village down below and in 250m go over a stile in the field corner with a **Beacons Way** marker and *bear right* towards a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate about 40m to the left of the bottom-right corner of this field and in 75m go through the gate onto a tarmac lane and *turn left* along it. In 30m *turn right* on the lane to cross the **Rhiangoll River** (which rises on the western slopes of Waun Fach, the highest top in the Black Mountains) and in 40m reach a T-junction with the **A 479**, the main road up the valley and across to Talgarth, with the **Mynydd Ddu Tea Rooms** away to the right and opposite **The Farmers Arms**.

Re-trace your steps from the pub across **The Rhiangoll** and *turn right* through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate into a pasture, but *turn left* along the left-hand field boundary and in 30m go through a metal field gate with a footpath marker and *bear right* through a large pasture on a bearing of 225°, keeping to the left of a stream. In 250m in the far corner go over a stile in the fence about 30m to the right of the field corner and *bear left* across the pasture in a continuation of the previous direction (230°) and in 190m go through a metal field gate onto a tarmac lane at a three-way junction. Cross the lane and go uphill along the lane opposite, signed 'Ty-Gwellt'. In 30m you cross the **Clarach Brook** on the lane and ascend gently. In 140m *turn right* at a three-way junction of tarmac lanes, to the right of **Llwynaumaur Farm**. In 80m the lane turns to the left and gets steeper and in 400m you ignore a left turning car wide bridleway and continue along the tarmac lane, signed 'Ty-Gwellt', gently ascending (in 10m through a metal field gate, often open). In 90m ignore a right turn (by a milestone 'Brecon 12') to Ty-Gwellt. You go through a couple more metal field gates in 25m and in 60m and continue towards some farm buildings.

At the **Cilfaenor Farm**, you stay to the right with a footpath signpost, forking off the farm drive and following a grassy track along the drystone wall on your left past the farm buildings. In 75m ford a stream and go over a stile to the right of two metal field gates into a pasture and follow its upper left-hand boundary. You have **Mynydd Llangorse ahead** and **Pen Tir**, whose ridge you descended along, on your right. In 90m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and *veer left* in the next pasture and in another 90m go over a stile in the boundary hedge into the next pasture. *Veer a little*

*to the right* in the field and leave it in 100m over a stile, ford a stream in boggy ground and follow the upper left-hand boundary of the next field.

In 120m leave the field and *bear left* up another pasture, towards a long-ruined farm building amongst trees. In 120m at the ruin, *turn right* with a marker post along the upper field boundary along the remnants of a farm track, with a farm house visible on the right below (**Clwydygraig** on the OS map). In 30m go over a stepless stile with a weathered marker on it into a bracken-covered hillside with a stream on the other side of the stile. This is **Access Land**. *Turn left* uphill and in 20m at a clear T-junction, *turn left* along a grass path. In 40m go through a wooden gate with footpath and bridleway markers to leave the Access Land and continue gently uphill along a grassy path with remnants of a drystone wall on the left on a bearing of 175°.

In 90m go through a wooden gate and pass a ruined farmstead (**Pen-y-graig** on the OS map) and continue with a wire fence on the left. In 140m *fork up to the right* away from the fence along a grass path (210°), with views to the Usk Valley and the hills beyond it on your left. In 100m you go through a rusty metal field gate back into **Access Land** and continue uphill along the left-hand boundary fence. In 50m continue in the same direction (255°) where the fence bears left and in 50m cross a track. In 80m, where a grassy path joins from the right, you *turn left* to cross a stream along the path and *turn right* uphill on the other side (you have forded that stream earlier, lower down the hill, by Cilfearnor Farm).

In 25m *bear left* with the path (250°) further uphill the **Cefn Moel**. In 80m you cross a path and in another 20m a wider track (on the OS map) as the terrain substantially levels out. You get views of Mynydd Llangynidr and Tor Y Foel, Waun Rydd and the Central Beacons. You continue on the clear path through heather, bracken and gorse and in another 480m meet a drystone wall at a path T-junction with a footpath signpost and a stile about 30m away to the right. This is **the outbound route** and you *turn left* along the path along the wall.

Ignore all ways off to the left and right and follow the wall **back to Bwlch**. In 2 kilometres leave the Access Land through a metal gate and descend a drive to a road. In 150m *turn right* along the road and in 25m *turn left* with a footpath signpost and Beacons Way marker along a grassy path. In 100m go through a metal kissing gate and follow the path through a graveyard down to the A 40, where you *turn right* to **The New Inn** and the **bus stops** (to Brecon on the left, to Abergavenny on the right).