

The Clydach Gorge (Brynmawr to Abergavenny)			The Clydach Gorge (Abergavenny to Brynmawr)		
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The Clydach Gorge (Brynmawr to Abergavenny or vice versa)

Start: Brynmawr Bus Station or Abergavenny Station

Finish: Abergavenny Station or Brynmawr Bus Station

Brynmawr Bus Station, map reference SO 191 116, is 11 km west southwest of Abergavenny, 213 km west northwest of Charing Cross, 351m above sea level and in **Blaenau Gwent, Wales**.

Abergavenny Station, map reference SO 305 136, is 30 km south east of Brecon, 202 km west northwest of Charing Cross, 75m above sea level and in **Monmouthshire, Wales**.

Length: 17.9 km (11.1 mi) or 18.0 km (11.2 mi).

Cumulative ascent/descent: 368/644m or 656m/380m. For a shorter walk, see below **Walk Options**.

Toughness: 4 out of 10 or 6 out of 10

Time: 4 ½ hours or 5 ¼ hours walking time.

Transport: Brynmawr Bus Station is linked to train stations by several lines: X1 from Cwmbran, X4 from Merthyr Tydfil and Abergavenny, X15 from Newport and the 3 from Abergavenny. All operate Mon-Sat only. Abergavenny Station is served by the Welsh Marches Line (Newport – Hereford), connecting at Newport to Paddington, with mostly two trains per hour (total journey time from 135 mins).

Saturday Walkers' Club: This walk is doable as a daywalk from London. Take a train no later than 09.45.

OS Landranger Map: 161 (The Black Mountains)

OS Explorer Map: OL 13 (Brecon Beacons NP East)

Walk Notes:

The Clydach, a short and fast river on the boundary of the Brecon Beacons National Park, flows off the southern slopes of the Mynydd Llangatwg through a wooded valley to the Usk River. For about 3 km the valley forms the Clydach Gorge/Cwm Clydach, containing waterfalls, cascades, fast-flowing waters and a few caves as well as some ancient beechwoods. The gorge is not only little-visited, but – despite the presence of the A465 Heads of the Valleys dual-carriageway, which also travels along the valley – also wild, dramatic and unspoilt.

The valley was a centre of early industry and remnants of limestone quarries, mines, an ironworks and several tramroad inclines are either passed or walked along, while a dismantled railway line provides an airy high-level walk route in the upper valley.

The steepness of the terrain and the narrow rock walls prevent a continuous path along the gorge, but three out-and-backs along good paths into the gorge, to waterfalls or caves, are described.

In the Lower Clydach Valley, you follow the rushing river closely through woods, then leave the Clydach to follow the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal for a while, before heading to Abergavenny through lush pastures with views across the Usk Valley to the Black Mountains.

The walk is written up in both directions, down or up the valley, and bus stops nearby enable shorter walks.

Walk Options:

A start/finish at Abergavenny Bus Station cuts 750m distance, and 30m ascent – if at the end of the walk. **The three out-and-back routes into the Clydach Gorge can be omitted**, they are (from west to east):

- **Upper Clydach Falls and Ogof Clogwyn**, 580m distance, 40m ascent;
- **Devil's Bridge and Pwll-y-Cwn**, 540m distance, 70m ascent;
- **Lower Clydach Falls**, from 600m to 960m distance, negligible ascent.

Bus Lines 3 (Abergavenny – Brynmawr, Mon-Sat, 3 buses a day) **and X4** (Merthyr Tydfil – Abergavenny, Mon-Sat, hourly) **travel along the Clydach Valley**, calling on the A465 outside Clydach, in Clydach (not the X4), Gilwern and Govilon, enabling shorter versions of the route. Check the route map for the locations of the bus stops and make your way onto the route to join the text at the respective asterisks.

Lunch: Picnic.

Tea Abergavenny Ending (Details last updated 17/04/24)

The Beaufort Arms 22 Main Road, *Gilwern, Abergavenny, NP7 0AR (01873 832 235)*. The Beaufort is located 180m off route, 7.8 km from the end of the walk.

The Towpath Inn 49 Main Road, *Gilwern, Abergavenny, NP7 0AU (<https://thetowpathinn.co.uk/>)*. The Towpath is located 7.6 km from the end of the walk and owned by Felinfoel Brewery.

Tafarn y Bont (formerly Bridgend Inn) Church Lane, *Govilon, Abergavenny, NP7 9RP (01873 830 720)*. The Tafarn Inn is located 5.4 km from the end of the walk.

The Bridge Inn Merthyr Road, *Llanfoist, Abergavenny, NP7 9LH (01873 854 831, <https://www.thebridgeinnllanfoist.co.uk/>)*. The Bridge Inn is located 2.2 km from the end of the walk.

Plenty of places in Abergavenny's Town Centre. See the walk directions for details.

Tea Brynmawr Ending (Details last updated 17/04/24)

The Hobby Horse 30 Greenland Rd, *Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale NP23 4DT (01495 312 881)*.

The Gwesty 1 Clarence Street, *Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale NP23 4EH (07860 355 571, <https://www.simonatthegwesty.co.uk/>)*.

The Talisman 9 Market Square, *Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale NP23 4AJ (01495 312 138, <https://www.thetalismanbrynmawr.co.uk/>)*. Open all day every day.

The Coffi Stop 17-18 Market Square, *Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale NP23 4AJ (01495 848 158)*. Open daily to 15.30.

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; dâl: 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:

Brynmawr

Brynmawr (meaning 'big hill') is a market town in Blaenau Gwent. The town, sometimes cited as the highest in Wales, is situated at the head of the South Wales Valleys. It grew into a prosperous town during the Industrial Revolution in the early 19th century out of the small village Gwaun Helygen, with the development of the coal mining and iron industries and the subsequent expansion of the Nantyglo, Clydach and Beaufort Ironworks. Until the reorganisation of local authorities in 1974, Brynmawr was administered as part of Brecknockshire.

Clydach River, Clydach Gorge, Cwm Clydach National Nature Reserve

The River Clydach is a short, steep and fast-flowing river crossing from the county borough of Blaenau Gwent into Monmouthshire in the Brecon Beacons National Park and on the edge of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site. It is around 10 km in length. The river rises on the southern slopes of Mynydd Llangatwg, then heads southeast through Clydach Dingle past Brynmawr. It then enters the spectacular Clydach Gorge, dropping about 300m over 5.6 km to Gilwern and its confluence with the River Usk.

'Clydach' is a common name for watercourses in south Wales and is thought to derive from an old Welsh word for 'swift' or possibly 'stony', both of which would apply to the Clydach River.

The Gorge was one of the first locations in the region to be industrialised though it still retains its natural environment. It includes Smart's Bridge, an early cast iron bridge now Grade II*-listed, the remains of a late 18th century ironworks which are now a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as well as some limeworks.

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).

Merthyr, Tredegar and Abergavenny Railway

The M, T & A, also known as the Heads of the Valleys line, was a railway line operating between 1860 and 1958 between Abergavenny and Merthyr Tydfil. It purchased Bailey's Tramroad which ran from Nantyglo Ironworks to Govilon Wharf, and even before the first section was opened in 1862 it was leased by the LNWR who were seeking to capitalise on the expanding heavy industry in the region. Construction of this railway line was judged to be a significant engineering feat as it had to climb the Clydach Gorge and the gradient was such that special locomotives had to be designed. The railway closed in 1958 and is now a public footpath and cycleway.

Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (The Mon & Brec)

The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal/Camlas Sir Fynwy a Brycheiniog is a small network of canals following the line of the Usk Valley through the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is currently navigable for 56 km and with only 6 locks (5 of them in Llangynidr). Its rural character and tranquillity belie its original purpose as an industrial corridor for coal and iron, brought to the canal by a network of tramways and/or railroads.

The "*Mon and Brec*" was originally two independent canals – the Monmouthshire Canal from Newport to Pontymoile Basin and the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal from Pontymoile to Brecon, before joining in 1812. Both canals were abandoned in 1962, but the Brecknock and Abergavenny route and a small section of the Monmouthshire route have been reopened since 1970. Much of the rest of the original Monmouthshire Canal is the subject of a restoration plan, which includes the construction of a marina at Newport.

Usk Valley Walk/Llwybr Dyffryn Wysg

The Usk Valley Walk is a linear 78 km (48 mi) waymarked Long-Distance Path starting in the south from Caerleon and following the Usk (and the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal) upstream to Brecon.

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.

Usk Bridge (or Abergavenny Bridge/Pont y Fenni)

The bridge crosses the River Usk at the boundary between Abergavenny and Llanfoist, carrying the A4143. It is probably of mid-15th century origin but was substantially reconstructed in the 19th century, to support a tramroad, and again when the two bridges were combined. The tramway, which originally ran parallel to the bridge, carried the horse-drawn Llanvihangel Railway from the Monmouth & Brecon canal at Llanfoist. The bridge was the subject of two paintings by JMW Turner dating from the 1790s. The first, *Abergavenny Bridge, Monmouthshire, Clearing Up after a Showery Day*, is held in the collection of the V&A and the second (*Abergavenny Bridge*) by The Tate. It is a Grade II* listed building and a Scheduled Monument.

Abergavenny/Y Fenni, Abergavenny Castle/Castell y Fenni

Abergavenny (Welsh: *Y Fenni*, archaically *Abergafenni* meaning "Mouth of the River Gavenny") is a market town in Monmouthshire, Wales, about 10 km from the border with England. It is located at the confluence of the River Usk and a tributary stream, the Gavenny and on the A40 trunk road and the A465 Heads of the Valleys road and is promoted as a Gateway to Wales.

Originally it was the site of a Roman fort, Gobannium (after Gobannia, Brythonic for "river of the blacksmiths"). Abergavenny is almost entirely surrounded by mountains and hills: the Bloreng, the Sugar Loaf, The Skirrid/Ysgyryd Fawr and Fach, Deri, Rholben and Mynydd Llanwenarth, with Sugar Loaf being the highest. During September the town holds the Abergavenny Food Festival.

Abergavenny Castle (Welsh: *Castell y Fenni*) is a ruined castle, established by the Norman lord Hamelin de Balun ca. 1087 to overlook the River Usk and its valley, and so guard against incursions into the lowland areas south and east of the town by the Welsh from the hills to the north and west. It was the site of a massacre of Welsh noblemen in 1175, and was attacked during the early 15th century Glyndŵr Rising. The high, formidable curtain wall, dating from the 12th century, is now the most impressive part of the ruin. A lodge was built on the top of the motte in the 19th century and now houses the town's Museum (open daily except Wednesdays).

WALK DIRECTIONS

Brynmawr to Abergavenny Version (Down the Valley)

Leave **Brynmawr Bus Station** to the nearby main road (Market Square) by **The Talisman** pub on the right and **The Coffi Stop** away on the left on the opposite side of the road, and *turn right* along the road. In 70m you pass **Brynmawr Library** on the left and in a further 50m by the **Brynmawr and District Museum** on the left and **The Gwesty** pub just ahead, you **[!]** *turn right* along **Clarence Street/Stryd Clarence**. The hill visible ahead is **Mulfran** (rising to 524m above sea level). Ignore a first right turn (Gladstone Street) but in 150m *turn right* at a T-junction with **Factory Road**. In 15m *turn left* along **Greenland Road**, ignoring a tarmac drive ahead. You pass **The Hobby Horse** pub and in 100m *turn right* up **Old Blaenavon Road** and in 80m at the top, go up a footbridge and cross the **A467 Darren-felen Road** on the bridge.

On the other side follow the path and in 30m *turn right* with a **National Cycle Network Route 46** signpost along a cul-de-sac (still Old Blaenavon Road). In 140m *turn left* at a T-junction with a NCN 46 signpost, past a new housing estate on the left, and in 170m *veer right* across the road to go through a horse-squeeze gate to the right of a metal field gate with a NCN 46 and NCN 492 signpost. You follow a broad tarmac path gently uphill and in 75m go through a metal gate between a cattle grid and a field gate. After 15m at a three-way tarmac junction, *turn right* with the NCNs 46, 49 and 492 ('Y Fenni/Abergavenny 9') and follow a wide tarmac path between fences across the upland plateau of the **Mynydd Rheinallt**. Near the brow, you have views on the left to the top of the **Clydach Valley** and the four-way A road junction, where the **A465 Heads of the Valleys**-road turns right in a cutting further up the Clydach Valley. In good weather, you can see the tops of **Pen y Fan and Corn Du** in the far distance.

Along this stretch you are entering the **Brecon Beacons National Park**, with **Mulfran** away on the right. In good weather you can see ahead to **The Skirrid**, well beyond Abergavenny (SWC Walk 347). In a good 600m *turn left* with a NCN 46 signpost ('Abergavenny 9 ½') through a horse-squeeze gate to the left of a metal field gate, ignoring the continuation of the NCN 492. In 300m go through a metal field gate or a horse-squeeze gate to the left of it and in 40m *bear right* with a NCN 46 marker along a tarmac lane. In 30m pass **Blaencwm Cottage** on the left and **[!]** in another 50m by the pebble-dash **Old School House** on the left, **[!]** *turn left* along a grass path and in 20m go through a metal gate and steeply downhill between hedges. You pass a ruined cottage and go through a wooden gate to keep descending steeply and then emerge on a tarmac lane.

Turn left along the lane, in 80m crossing a stream. Ignore footpaths to the right and left either side of the stream, just before passing **Ty Rheinallt Farm** on the left and in 50m meet the course of the long-dismantled **Merthyr, Tredegar and Abergavenny Railway** at a T-junction, with the **Clydach Valley** below. *Turn right* through a metal kissing gate along the railway (a footpath shared with NCN Route 46). You pass a cottage on the right and in 250m go under a HV pylon line. In 70m pass a yellow-topped pipeline marker pole and in 50m a small corrugated iron shack, then in 80m a red brick hut on the right (the former **Gelli Felen Halt** railway station). Continue along the dismantled railway line and in 120m you reach an abandoned light green building (Tal-y-Sarn) by the old **Gelly Siding**.

Here you have a choice:

- **either** follow the left-hand turn just before the building through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate for a steep 580m out-and-back (with 40m height gain on the re-ascent) through the **Coed Fedw-ddu** to the **Upper Clydach Falls** and the **Ogof Clogwyn** cave and in 30m pass a map of the **Cwm Clydach National Nature**

Reserve; in about 180m *curve left* with the path to a set of railed steps in 20m and a sign explaining that '3 anchor points have been installed to attach ropes' to ease the coming **steep bits of descent** (these are not necessary for experienced walkers though); you reach the falls and a cave by the riverbank in approximately 100m, with a **small but pretty waterfall** gushing out of the cave; the cave can be explored "relatively easily" for about the first 300m of its depth and is known for the thin parallel ridges along its sides, called '**phreatic shelving**';

- **or cut out that out-and-back** and continue in the same direction along the lane.

In 75m you find – hidden behind trees on the right – the railway entering the twin-bore **Gelli-Felen Tunnel** (one line is blocked up now but the other can be walked through, in principle at least: there are no lights and it doesn't lead where the route needs you to go). Just before the tunnel on the right up a narrow path up a steep bank, you'll find a stream discharging from an old mine that has left **photogenic orange deposits** along its course. But *do not go through the tunnel* and *turn left* with the lane, curving around a rocky promontory, the **Gellifelen**. In 70m continue in the same direction along a tarmac path with a NCN 46 marker post, where a road forks up to the right.

In 90m, just before Rivendell cottage on the left, you have a choice:

- **either** follow the left-hand turn ('Puck's Valley/Cwm Pwca') steeply downhill past an info panel in 35m for a 540m out-and-back (with 70m height gain on the re-ascent) to the **Devil's Bridge and the Pwll-y-Cwn** waterfall and plunge pool just to the right of the bridge (the river upstream of the bridge can easily be explored for a short stretch up to a small tributary from the left);
- **or cut out that out-and-back** and continue in the same direction along the lane.

In 60m continue in the same direction, where a lane forks up to the right and in 15m pass a wooden NCN 46 signpost on the right ('Brynmawr 2' back and 'Llanfoist 6, Clydach 1 ½' ahead) and in 20m go through a metal gate. In 25m pass a **Danger! Falling Rocks-**warning by another **Cwm Clydach National Nature Reserve** map and in 130m cross a stream on a two-railed plank bridge with a waterfall on the right. In 50m pass a marker post on the right and in 25m you **[!]** *turn left* with the tarmac cycleway by the easterly entrance to the railway tunnels, now back on the dismantled railway line.

In 35m cross the stream down the **Cwm Llam-march**, a tributary valley – and a footpath shadowing it – on the railway. In 20m you pass a wooden bench on the right and curve around the tributary valley and then under a steep cliff, the **Darrenfelen**. In 200m, at the end of the fence on the left and with an area of rockfall and slag heaps on the left, you *turn left* off the railway along a minor path through a grassy bank and continue to the right of a slag heap and in 50m *turn left* at a T-junction along a narrow path into trees (marked as a public footpath on the OS map).

In 30m *turn right* with the path down some steps and in 50m the path curves to the right as it winds its way through some **ancient beechwoods**. In 240m you can see the railway viaduct up on the right. In 80m you can see the **Sugar Loaf/Y Fâl** (SWC Walk 334) on the left through the trees and in 120m you go up some steps. In another 30m emerge from the trees in a grassy area to the side of **Quarry Road**, by a sign backwards for the **Beech and Railway Walk** (0.8 km/20 mins), with the **Llannelly Quarry** on the right (worth exploring if the gateway is not blocked; there is an interesting info panel up on the dismantled railway track) beyond the raised course of the railway and the **Lower Clydach Valley** on the left below. Continue along the road's grassy verge with the steep flanks of **Mynydd Llangatwg** (SWC Walk 370) on the other side of the valley. You pass a layby and *turn left* ('Danycoed') steeply downhill through the **Coed Ffyddlwn** along a former tramroad incline (from the quarry to the ironworks passed soon enough).

At the bottom of the drop, by a left turning path and a two-railed bridge over the **Sychnant** stream on the right and the **Clydach River** below, **you have a choice:**

- **either** follow the left turn for a 600 to 960m level out-and-back to the **Lower Clydach Falls/Pwll Crochan** with the **Clydach Gorge Heritage Trail (CGHT)** and the **Leat, River and Waterfall Trail**; the leat that was built to feed the Clydach Ironworks runs to the left of the path and in 250m you get first views of the falls with its two sets of cascades; it's another 50m to the far end of the falls (the river can usually be crossed here for a better view of them); and a walkable path exists for another 180m or so to another (smaller) cascade (some fallen trees need to be negotiated);
- **or cut out that out-and-back** entirely.

Turn right from the previous direction across the bridge and ignore a wooden gate on the right and a path into the wood and in 30m go under a pylon line. You have a steep wood on the right and in 30m fork either way and in 50m the paths re-join. You emerge in a grassy area on the outskirts of **Clydach village**. In 40m, by a two-way footpath signpost, ignore a right turn out of the grassy area into a turning circle in a residential road and follow the signpost ahead ('Clydach Ironworks'). In 140m at a T-junction with a tarmac path (the left turn leads up **towards the A465 and a bus stop**), you *turn right* into a residential cul-de-sac.

***) (Start here if coming off the bus on the A465 outside Clydach village)**

In 100m *turn left* at a T-junction with **Dan-y-coed** (road) and in 40m ignore the right turning **Llwyn Melin**. In 160m you reach a T-junction with **Quarry Road** down from the right, with a signposted tarmac footpath rising on the right through bike barriers ('Clydach Station') and a public footpath down to the left, signed 'Gwaith Haearn Clydach/Clydach Ironworks'.

*****) (Start here if coming off the bus in Clydach village)**

Turn left with the footpath, in 25m going steeply downhill along another former tramroad incline and in 100m *turn briefly right* for a top-down view of the **Clydach Ironworks** ruins and then commence the descent down the gravel path for another 20m. You find an info panel right in front of the fenced and part-overgrown ruined ironworks, looking to all intents like a ruined castle. Identifiable are two of the blast furnaces and two of the charging houses and a stump of a third blast furnace. *Turn left* away from the fenced ruins across a grassy area to in 20m stay to the right of a pylon and pass another info panel, then a Monmouthshire/Sir Finwy – **Clydach Ironworks/Gwaith haearn Clydach** sign. Cross the Clydach River on **Smart's Bridge**, a cast iron bridge built in 1824 for a tramroad, one of the oldest such bridges in the country, and *turn right* along a car wide track, ignoring a wooden field gate on the left (with a 'Private' sign).

In 75m go through a metal field gate with a signpost for '**Clydach Ironworks and Puck's Valley/Cwm Pwca**' with a '**Corridor to the Past/Llwybr i'r Gorffennol**' marker on top of the CGHT marker and ignore a right running bridge over the river as well as a signposted bridleway ahead along the river. *Fork left* along a fenced gravel path, slowly ascending to the level of the A465 roaring above. After a while, you can spot a waterfall below on the right and in 150m cross the A465 on a **corten steel footbridge**, with fine views on the right to **Sugar Loaf**. On the other side, *turn right* down a road (with a pavement) and in 350m continue in the same direction along a minor road ('**Maesygartha 1/4**', without a pavement), where the main road turns right to the A465. After 200m along this road through the outskirts of **Maesygartha**, you continue in the same direction along a minor residential road, where the more prominent one turns up to the left.

In 200m go through a metal field gate by **Forge House** with a footpath signpost on the right and continue along a tarmac drive with some houses on the right, immediately ignoring a left forking footpath uphill. In 120m you leave the houses behind and continue along an earthen path. In 50m walk close to the river and in 220m you pass the **Forgehammer** sewage pumping station where a signposted right turning footpath ('A465') provides a vantage point from a bridge for views of the river and **a waterfall**. Continue in the same direction to the left of the river and in 30m at a signposted three-way footpath junction (with a **CGHT** marker) *bear right*. You continue on the level, with the always audible and often visible river initially still close by, but as it is steep and fast-flowing, the height differential increases quickly, and eventually the river is quite a bit below on the right. The path narrows and you emerge from the wood at a T-junction with a tarmac drive by a footpath signpost and a cottage on the right.

Turn right along the drive. In 30m pass **Aqueduct Cottage** and in another 40m ignore a steeply descending concrete drive and a path to the right and continue in the same direction, with the **Clydach on the right** below, through a tunnel under the **Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal** above. On the far side *turn hard right* back on yourself up some railed steps onto the canal towpath, by a canal wharf and narrowboat hire business across the canal, and *turn left* along the canal, joining the **Usk Valley Walk** long-distance footpath. You follow it for 2.1 km along the canal to **Govilon** village.

In more detail: in 70m, *turn sharply to the left* with the towpath by an info panel on **the building in 1797 of the Canal crossing** over the Clydach, ignoring the left turning public footpath (the **Clydach Gorge Heritage Trail** [CGHT]). You have a dropping wood on the left and **The Clydach River** unseen at the bottom of it and the A465 above on the right. In 130m you rise with the towpath to the **A4077** and cross it carefully to continue along the canal, with **Gilwern's** village centre on the left, including **The Towpath Inn** (just to the left), a **bus stop for services to Brynmawr** (by the Towpath Inn) and one for **Abergavenny** (130m away by the Post Office) and **The Beaufort Arms** (110m away).

*****) (Start here if coming off the bus in Gilwern)**

You are now walking to the rear of the houses in **Gilwern**; in 800m go under **Canal Bridge #102** and *turn sharply right* with the canal and in 50m go under the Heads of the Valleys Road by **Canal Bridge #101A** and continue with the A465 on the left for a while; go under **Canal Bridge #101** and under a first pylon line 125m before the canal curves to the left and goes under another pylon line; you pass **Canal Bridge #100** (a public footpath crosses here) and in 170m, just before going under **Canal Bridge #99**, you pass some **Stop Planks** (or Stanking Planks) stacked up on the left (used to wedge into slots at pinch points of the canal to create temporary dams (stanks) and enable dewatering of a canal stretch either for repairs or in case of an existing breach to control water loss).

[!] 20m after the bridge **[!]** *turn left* over a stone step stile, leaving the canal towpath and the Usk Valley Way and *turn right* in a field, parallel to the canal. In 25m go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and follow a large field's upper right-hand boundary, parallel to the canal behind trees and with open views on the left across the **Usk Valley to Sugar Loaf**. In 250m leave the field over a stone slab stile by a footpath signpost into a car park (there is a 'Govilon Heritage' info panel on the right by the canal aqueduct) and *turn left* along **Church Lane** down into **Govilon**. In 80m pass the **Tafarn y Bont/ Bridgend Inn** and in another 40m you reach the B4246 at a bend in the centre of the village. The **village store** is away on the right and **bus stops for services from Abergavenny and Brynmawr** are 50m to the left.

******) (Start here if coming off the bus in Govilon)**

Cross the B road and continue gently downhill along **Mill Lane** (a narrow one-way street with traffic coming from behind), in 120m you cross the **Cwm Shenkin Brook/Nant Cwm Shencyn**, running ultimately down out of the **Cwm Llanwenarth** and including the waters out of the Keeper's Pond on the western flank of Blorenge (passed on SWC Walk 372). In 220m at a bend in the road, continue in the same direction through some bike barriers and down some steps to go through a subway under the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road (on the far side notice the plaque up on the left commemorating **Rose Cottage**, which was demolished for the building of the road). Cross a tarmac lane a little to the left by a cottage on the left under some pylon lines and continue down a tarmac lane between hedges.

The lane curves to the right and in 400m continues as a gravel drive by **Glan-y-cafn** on the right. Ignore the waymarked right turning footpath and in 70m go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and in 90m go over a stile to the right of a rusty metal field gate into a large pasture by an abandoned farm building on the left. Aim for the far-right field corner (105°), en route converging with the right-hand boundary (an unmarked public footpath joins from the right along it), and leave the field through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate. You ford a stream (mysteriously running along the top of a field, rather than the bottom) and descend a grassy slope, with the large **Cadfor Farm** up on the right. In 110m go through a metal gate and follow a left-hand field boundary and in 180m go through a metal gate and continue in the same direction along another left-hand field boundary, now with **Lower Cadvor Farm** up on the right.

In 130m a track ascends from a metal field gate on the left behind and in 80m you go through a set of metal gates either side of a track and continue in the same direction. In 80m go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate and continue along a left-hand field boundary. In 150m go over a stile in the far-left field corner and continue in the same direction along another pasture to the left of its boundary fence. The area to the left below is shown as a pond on the OS map, but seems to be seasonally wet only. In 100m *turn right* over a stile into the field on the right and *turn left* along its left-hand boundary, i.e.: continue in the previous direction. Descend for 75m to a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate and in 30m *turn right* through another metal gate to continue along the **Usk River**. In 90m continue in the same direction (110°) where the river bears to the left and in 150m leave the pasture over a stile to the left of a metal field gate.

You cross a stream on a bridge and in 40m pass a cottage on the left and continue along a car wide drive, gently uphill. In 125m (by a **Standing Stone** in the field on the right), where the drive levels out, you ignore a right turning public footpath through a gap to the right of a metal field gate (the route of SWC Walk 372 The Blorenge) and continue in the same direction along the lane. In 40m you have **Llanfoist Cemetery** on the right. In 75m the lane starts to descend and in 70m you pass the car gate into the cemetery, and in 60m its lychgate. In 50m you pass the **Cemetery Lodge** on the right and in 40m go through some abutments of the former **Llanfoist Viaduct**, before reaching the **A4143** at a T-junction by **Usk Bridge** on the left.

The Bridge Inn is away on the right, but you cross the busy road and *turn left* across Usk Bridge into **Abergavenny** and at the far end *turn right* through a metal kissing gate and down some steps into the **Castle Meadows**. Go through a wooden kissing gate and continue in the same direction along a grassy path (70°), i.e. *do not bear right* along the paved path along the river! In 150m you can see some fine coloured cottages on the left and in 40m go through a belt of trees and continue in the same direction along a clear path. In 220m at a junction of gravel paths, you pass a side entrance to the **Linda Vista Gardens** (well worth a circuit through it if still open; leave through the main entrance away to the right to pick up the route there).

In another 50m go through a wooden kissing gate and *veer left* along the wall on the left to the left of a car park at a higher level. In 90m you pass the main entrance to the **Linda Vista Gardens** and cross the car park exit and entrance lanes a little to the right to continue up a railed tarmac path to a higher level. In 50m *turn right* through another, smaller, car park and in 30m at a T-junction with a main road, *turn right* along it. In 30m by the corner of **The King's Arms**, you *turn left* along **Nevill Street**. You pass **Coffee Pot**, **Gurkha Corner** and **Coffee No. 1**, before reaching the **High Street**.

The route continues to the right, but you find many tea stops away to the left along High Street: **Annette's Café and Diner** (down Lewis's Lane on the left), **Portico Lounge Café Bar** and **The Coliseum** (Wetherspoon) on the right, then **The Little Treat**, **Café Nero**, **Mezze Me**, the **Victorian Tea Rooms** and **Casa Bianca** and **Amo's Restaurant**. **The Grofield Inn** is down Baker Street on the left and further down Frogmore Street you have **Nicholls' Restaurant**, **The Codfather** Fish Bar & Café, **Tapas Twist** (currently closed) and **Auberge** Bar & Lounge Restaurant.

Turn right along **High Street** to pass a **Costa Coffee**. **The Hen & Chickens** pub is away in a side street on the right and in a further 160m you continue along **Cross Street**: pass **The Art Shop & Chapel** and **Bean & Bread** (down the left along Market Street), **Cwtch Café**, **Kings Head Hotel**, **Luigi's** Café Ristorante and **The Angel Restaurant & Bar**, with its **Angel Bakery** opposite. Continue in the same direction along **Monmouth Road** to pass a **Thai Restaurant**, **The Coach & Horses**, **Cinnamon Tree** and **Anatolian Meze Bar**. In 220m pass the **Bus Station**. **The Abergavenny Hotel** with its bar is just beyond the Gavenny river on the right, as you continue along the **A40 Monmouth Road**. In 230m, just after **The Belmond**, *turn left* along Belmont Road and in 30m *turn right* along **Belmont Close**. In 80m continue in the same direction along a residential tarmac lane where the road turns left and in 70m *turn left* uphill along **Station Road**. You pass **The Great Western** en route to **Abergavenny Train Station**.

Newport bound trains depart from the far platform, across the overbridge.

Abergavenny to Brynmawr Version (Up the Valley)

Leave the station in **Abergavenny** in the **Usk Valley** on the fringes of **The Brecon Beacons National Park** through the station building (past the **Whistle Stop Café**) or to the left of it out to the top end of **Station Road** and *turn right* along it with a sign for **Canol y dref/Town centre 1 ¼**. You have the platforms and the railway line on your right and in 60m continue through a small industrial yard, also used as a car park and in 40m along a tarmac path with views ahead of **Sugar Loaf/Y Fâl** (SWC Walk 334). In 50m continue along a cul-de-sac residential road with some of the church towers in the town centre visible ahead to the left. In 30m *turn right* with the road, to the right of a small green strip between it and another road. In 60m you *curve left* with the road and continue along **Holywell Crescent** and in 75m reach the top of this gentle rise.

Ignore all ways off and descend into the valley of the **Gavenny River**, soon with views on the left to the **Blorengue/Blorens** (SWC Walk 372). In 200m at the bottom of the drop at a T-junction, *turn left* along **Holywell Road**. In 130m *turn right* at a T-junction with the **A40 Monmouth Road** and cross the Gavenny. In 40m by a set of lights, ignore a path bearing right past a bollard into **Abergavenny Bus Station** unless you want to go to the **Oasis Sandwich Bar** 40m away. Continue towards the town, along the **A40**, using a pedestrian crossing to cross both the access road to the bus station and a drive to a car park and *turn left* across the busy road at a convenient point. In 50m **[!]** *turn left* along **Mill Street** to continue along its right-hand pavement. In 80m *turn up some steps to the right* and continue ascending with the high stone curtain wall around **Abergavenny Castle/Castell y Fenni** to your right. In 65m *turn right* with the wall and tarmac path with a steep wooded drop on the left. In 25m you have fine views ahead to **Sugar Loaf** and in 30m on the left to **Blorengue**.

In 50m, by a metal field gate and where the wall turns to the right, you *turn hard left* almost back on yourself, downhill along a gravel path (part of the National Cycle Network 42). In 80m continue in the same direction at a metal NCN 42 three-way signpost ('Brynmawr 9 mi'), in 15m passing another metal signpost ('Llan-ffwyst 1 ½'), while ignoring a wooden gate on the right into a small nature reserve as well as a left fork. In 20m go through a wooden kissing gate into the **Castle Meadows/Dolydd y Castell**, a floodplain of the **River Usk**, and continue in the same direction along a paved path through the meadows towards the river. In 130m *turn right* at a T-junction of paths, now with the river on the left behind trees. Abergavenny's town centre can be distinguished on the right by the **Town Hall's** tower above the tree tops. **Deri**, one of the hills flanking Sugar Loaf, rises behind the town. About 2/3 down the meadow, you have good views on the right behind over the shoulder to **The Skirrid/ Ysgryd Fawr** (SWC Walk 347).

Just before leaving the meadows through a wooden kissing gate and up some steps onto the road leading to the left across **Usk Bridge**, you pass an info panel about the meadows, including details of the **Llanvihangel Railway** (or Tramway) that until 1962 used to run, initially above and to the side and later along, the bridge. *Turn left* across Usk Bridge (or Abergavenny Bridge/Pont y Fenni) along the A4143's left-hand narrow pavement and on the other side enter **Llanfoist/Llan-ffwyst**. Just after crossing the bridge *turn right* across the busy road and follow a tarmac lane, signposted 'Llanfoist Cemetery', through some abutments of the former **Llanfoist Viaduct**. In 40m you pass the **Cemetery Lodge** on the left and in 50m the lychgate into the burial ground and in 60m the car gate. You keep ascending with the lane and in 70m continue on the level between trees. In 75m at the end of the cemetery, allotments take over on the left and in 65m you ignore a left turning public footpath through a gap to the right of a metal field gate (SWC Walk 372 Blorengue turns that way) and continue in the same direction along the lane.

In 125m you pass a cottage on the right and in 40m cross a stream on a bridge and go over a stile to the right of a metal field gate into a pasture and *veer right* towards the bank of the Usk and *turn left* along the river. You follow the river around to the right and in 90m leave the field through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate in the far-right corner. *Bear left* with a signpost and a marker and in 30m go through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate and follow a right-hand field boundary uphill to the top-right field corner. *Turn right* over a stile just before the corner, and *turn left* along the fence, i.e.: continue in the previous direction. The area to the right below is shown as a pond on the OS map, but seems to be seasonally wet only. You ascend gently and in 100m go over a stile and continue in the same direction through another pasture along its right-hand boundary.

Leave it in the bottom-right corner in 150m through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate and continue with **Lower Cadvor Farm** up on the left. In 80m go through a set of metal gates either side of a farm track and in the next two-tiered field stay in the higher part of the field, i.e.: in 80m by a track coming down from the left, cross it and stay to the left of the track (which descends to a metal field gate down on the right) and in 130m go through a late-revealed metal gate and continue in the same direction to the far-right corner of the next field. In 170m go through a metal gate and continue in the same direction towards a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate, now with the large **Cadfor Farm** up on the left. In 110m, having gone up a little rise, you ford a stream (mysteriously running along the top of a field rather than the bottom) and go through that metal gate.

You now follow a left-hand boundary and in 100m where that veers to the left (and where the map shows a public footpath fork), you continue in the same direction across the field towards the left of an abandoned farm building 250m away. Go over a stile to the left of a rusty metal field gate and in 70m go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate to continue along a car wide gravel track, in 60m passing a row of cottages on the left (**Glan-y-cafn**, ignore the left turning footpath). The track continues as a tarmac lane and you gently ascend between hedges with the lane curving to the left and in 400m at a T-junction with a tarmac lane, by a cottage on the right and right under some HV pylon lines, you cross the lane a little to the left and go through a subway under the **A465 Heads of the Valleys Road** (notice the plaque up on the right commemorating Rose Cottage, which was demolished for the building of the road).

On the far side *turn right* up some steps and emerge through bike barriers on the fringes of **Govilon** village at a bend in a residential road. *Turn right* along the road (**Mill Lane**, a narrow one-way in the other direction), gently uphill, and in 220m you cross the **Cwm Shenkin Brook/Nant Cwm Shencyn**, running ultimately down out of the **Cwm Llanwenarth** and including the waters out of the Keeper's Pond on the western flank of Blorenge (passed on SWC Walk 372) and in 120m reach the **B4246** at a bend in the centre of the village. The **village store** is away on the left and some **bus stops for services from Abergavenny and Brynmawr** are 50m to the right.

***) (Start here if coming off the bus in Govilon)**

Cross the B road and continue uphill along **Church Lane**, in 40m passing the **Tafarn y Bont/Bridgend Inn**. In another 80m, by a car park area on the right just before an aqueduct of the **Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal** (there is a 'Govilon Heritage' info panel at the far end of the car park), **[!]** you *veer right* and up some stone steps by a footpath signpost to a higher level pasture and follow its upper left hand boundary, parallel to the canal behind trees and with open views on the right across the Usk Valley. In 250m leave the field over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and **[!]** in 25m *turn left* over a stone step stile onto the canal towpath and *turn right* along it (i.e.: if you find yourself following a track across the canal, you have missed the left turn out of the field).

You are walking under **Canal Bridge #99** and immediately pass some **Stop Planks** (or Stanking Planks) stacked up on the right (used to wedge into slots at pinch points of the canal to create temporary dams (stanks) and enable dewatering of a canal stretch either for repairs or in case of an existing breach to control water loss). You have joined the **Usk Valley Walk** long-distance footpath and will follow it for 2.1 km along the canal into **Gilwern** village and to the crossing of the **Clydach Gorge**.

In more detail: in 170m you pass **Canal Bridge #100** (a public footpath crosses here); go under a pylon line and cross a stream just before the canal curves to the right; go under another pylon line and **Canal Bridge #101** and eventually you have the **A465** to the right; you go under the Heads of the Valleys Road by **Canal Bridge #101A** and in 50m *turn sharply left* with the canal; after **Canal Bridge #102**, you are walking just to the rear of the houses in **Gilwern**; in 800m you rise with the towpath to the **A4077** and cross it carefully to continue along the canal, with the village centre on the right, including **The Towpath Inn** (just to the right), a **bus stop for services to Brynmawr** (by the Towpath Inn) and one for **Abergavenny** (130m away by the Post Office) and **The Beaufort Arms** (110m away).

**** (Start here if coming off the bus in Gilwern)**

You have a dropping wood on the right and **The Clydach River** unseen at the bottom of it and the A465 above on the left. In 130m *turn sharply to the right* with the towpath by an info panel on **the building in 1797 of the Canal crossing** over the Clydach, ignoring the right forking public footpath (the **Clydach Gorge Heritage Trail [CGHT]**). In 70m, by a canal wharf and narrowboat hire business on the left across the canal, **[!]** *turn hard right* down some railed steps into the **Clydach Gorge**. At the bottom of the steps *turn hard left* back on yourself and through a tunnel under the canal above. On the far side ignore a steeply descending concrete drive and a path to the left and continue in the same direction with the **Clydach on the left** below. In 50m you pass **Aqueduct Cottage** to its right.

In 30m, after a second cottage on the left, *fork left* along a signposted public footpath into a wooded area, ignoring the tarmac path to the right. The path widens after a while and you continue on the level, with the always audible and often visible river initially quite a bit below on the left, but as it is steep and fast-flowing, the height differential reduces quickly. In about 600m at a T-junction with a signposted footpath (also with a **CGHT** marker) from the right, you are near the first of many waterfalls. *Bear left*, briefly along tarmac, to stay along the river and in 30m a signposted left turning footpath ('A465') provides a vantage point from a bridge for views of the river and the **waterfall**. Continue in the same direction to the right of the river ('Forge Row') past **Forgehammer** sewage pumping station and continue along an earthen path, now almost level with the river. In 220m the path veers away from the river and in 50m you pass a house on the left and continue along a tarmac drive and in 120m go through a metal field gate and continue in the same direction along a residential road at a bend through **Maesygartha**.

In 200m continue in the same direction along a road down from the right (without a pavement) and in another 200m you continue in the same direction, ignoring a left turn to the A465, now with a pavement. In 20m ignore a signposted bridleway forking to the left (this is a less interesting alternative to the route chosen) and in 320m *turn left* to cross the A465 on a **new corten steel footbridge**, with fine views on the left to **Sugar Loaf** and to a waterfall below. On the other side of the footbridge, you descend gently along a fenced gravel path from the road level to the river level and in 150m reach a path T-junction by a bridge over the river where the bridleway re-joins from the left. Some large info panels are visible some way ahead by a car park area. *Turn right* without crossing the river, through a metal field gate with a signpost for '**Clydach Ironworks** and **Puck's Valley/Cwm Pwca**' with a '**Corridor to the Past/Llwybr i'r Gorffennol**' marker on top of the **CGHT** marker.

*****) (Start here if coming off the bus in Clydach village)**

In 75m by a wooden field gate with a 'Private' sign, *turn left* across **Smart's Bridge** over the river, a cast iron bridge built in 1824 for a tramroad, one of the oldest such bridges in the country. Go towards an electricity pylon and a Monmouthshire/Sir Finwy – **Clydach Ironworks/ Gwaith haearn Clydach** sign and then an info panel. Keep to the left of the pylon and in 20m find another info panel in front of the fenced and part-overgrown ruined ironworks, looking to all intents like a ruined castle. Identifiable are two of the blast furnaces and two of the charging houses and a stump of a third blast furnace. Continue by *turning right* along the fenced ruins and *turning left* uphill along a public footpath, signed 'Cwm Clydach/Clydach Gorge'.

Walk uphill for just 20m to *turn briefly left* for a top-down view of the ironworks ruins and then commence the ascent up the gravel path. In 100m you pass a footpath signpost and reach a T-junction with **Quarry Road** where a residential road turns right, and with a signposted tarmac footpath rising opposite through bike barriers ('Clydach Station'). *Turn right* along **Dan y-coed**, the residential road ('leading to Llwyn Melin'). In 160m ignore the left turning Llwyn Melin and in 40m *turn right* towards the A465, cross the river and at the end of the cul-de-sac, where a tarmac path leads up **towards the A465 and a bus stop**, you [!] *turn left* along a signposted footpath to the right of some garden fences.

******) (Start here if coming off the bus on the A465 outside Clydach village)**

In 140m pass a two-way footpath signpost by a turning circle at the end of Dan-y-coed road on the left and in 40m fork either way and in 50m the paths re-join. You have a steep wood on the left and in 30m go under a pylon line. In 30m ignore a wooden gate on the left and a path into the wood and cross the **Sychnant** stream on a two-railed wooden bridge.

At the following fork,

- **either** follow the right-hand fork in the same direction for a 600 to 960m level out-and-back to the **Lower Clydach Falls/Pwll Crochan** with the **Clydach Gorge Heritage Trail** (CGHT) and the **Leat, River and Waterfall Trail**; the leat that was built to feed the Clydach Ironworks runs to the left of the path and in 250m you get first views of the falls with its two sets of cascades; it's another 50m to the far end of the falls (the river can usually be crossed here for a better view of them); and a walkable path exists for another 180m or so to another (smaller) cascade (some fallen trees need to be negotiated);
- **or cut out that out-and-back** entirely.

Fork left ('Llannelly Hill') from the previous direction, steeply uphill through the **Coed Ffyddlwn** along a former tramroad incline (from a quarry above to the ironworks just passed) and in 300m emerge from the trees in a grassy area on **Quarry Road**, by a layby on the right and with the **Llannelly Quarry** opposite (worth exploring if the gateway is not blocked; with an interesting info panel at the level of the dismantled railway line) beyond the raised course of the long-dismantled **Merthyr, Tredegar and Abergavenny Railway**. *Turn right* along the grassy verge. On the other side of the valley you have the steep flanks of **Mynydd Llangatwg** (SWC Walk 370). You pass a sign for the **Beech and Railway Walk** (0.8 km/20 mins) and follow a path into trees for a loop through some **ancient beechwoods** (this is marked as a public footpath on the OS map).

In 30m go down some steps and soon after re-ascend on the path. In 200m you can see the railway viaduct looming above on the left and in 240m you *turn left* with the path. In 50m go up some steps and *turn left* with the path and [!] in 30m *turn right* away from the path and continue to the left of a slag heap and in 50m, up a grassy bank, you join the dismantled railway line and *turn right* along it. The railway (which is also **National Cycle**

Network Route 46) here runs under a steep cliff, the **Darrenfelen**, and then curves around a tributary valley, the **Cwm Llam-march**.

In 200m pass a wooden bench on the left and in 20m cross the stream down the Cwm – and a footpath shadowing it – on the railway. In 35m, where the railway enters the twin-bore **Gelli-Felen Tunnels** (one line is blocked up now but the other can be walked through, in principle at least: there are no lights and it doesn't lead where the route needs you to go), you **[!]** *turn right* with the tarmac cycleway around the rocky promontory, the **Gellifelen**. In 25m pass a marker post on the left (**Danger! Falling Rocks**-warning, Puck's Valley Walk marker). In 50m cross a stream on a two-railed plank bridge with a **waterfall** on the left and continue with a wire fence on the right. In 130m you pass a **Cwm Clydach National Nature Reserve** map and in 25m go through a metal gate. In 20m pass a wooden NCN 46 signpost on the left ('Brynmawr 2' ahead and 'Llanfoist 6, Clydach 1 ½' back) and in 15m continue in the same direction past some cottages, where a lane descends from the left.

In 60m, at a right turn just after Rivendell cottage, you have a choice:

- **either** follow the right-hand turn ('Puck's Valley/Cwm Pwca') steeply downhill past an info panel in 35m for a 540m out-and-back (with 70m height gain on the re-ascent) to the **Devil's Bridge and the Pwll-y-Cwn** waterfall and plunge pool just to the right of the bridge (the river upstream of the bridge can be explored for a short stretch up to a small tributary from the left);
- **or cut out that out-and-back** entirely.

Continue in the same direction along the lane and in 90m continue along a lane joining from the left and in 70m *turn right* with the lane, where the westerly railway tunnels are hidden behind trees on the left. Just before the tunnel on the left up a narrow path up a steep bank, you'll find a stream discharging from an old mine that has left **photogenic orange deposits** along its course. But *do not go through the tunnel* and *turn right* with the lane. In 75m pass an abandoned light green building (Tal-y-Sarn) by the old **Gelly Siding**.

Here you have a choice:

- **either** follow the right-hand turn through a metal gate to the right of a metal field gate for a steep 580m out-and-back (with 40m height gain on the re-ascent) through the **Coed Fedw-ddu** to the **Upper Clydach Falls** and the **Ogof Clogwyn** cave and in 30m pass another map of the NNR; in about 180m *curve left* with the path to a set of railed steps in 20m and a sign explaining that '3 anchor points have been installed to attach ropes' to ease the coming **steep bits of descent** (these are not necessary for experienced walkers though); you reach the falls and a cave by the riverbank in approximately 100m, with a **small but pretty waterfall** gushing out of the cave; the cave can be explored "relatively easily" for about the first 300m of its depth and is known for the thin parallel ridges along its sides, called '**phreatic shelving**';
- **or cut out that out-and-back** entirely.

You continue along the tarmac track along the dismantled railway line and in 120m pass a red brick hut on the left (the former **Gelli Felen Halt** railway station) and in 80m a small corrugated iron shack. In 50m pass a yellow-topped pipeline marker pole and in 70m go under a HV pylon line. In 250m you pass a cottage on the left and go through a metal kissing gate. **[!]** *Turn left* with the NCN 46 signpost, away from the railway, ignoring the continuation of it through a metal field gate and a right forking public bridleway ('A465 subway'). In 50m you pass **Ty Rheinalt Farm** on the right and ignore footpaths to the right and left immediately after while crossing a stream on the lane.

In another 80m [!] *turn right* along another signposted footpath up a steep grassy incline. You go through a wooden gate and pass a ruined cottage and keep rising steeply with the grassy path to go through a metal gate by a house and onto a lane at a T-junction by the pebble-dash **Old School House** on the left and *turn right* along it. In 50m you pass **Blaencwm Cottage** and in another 30m *bear left* with NCN 46 signs through a metal field gate or a horse-squeeze gate to the right of it and follow a wide track across the upland plateau of the **Mynydd Rheinallt**. In 300m you *veer right* where NCN Route 492 joins from the left and along the following stretch you **leave the Brecon Beacons National Park** about where you have the top of **Mulfran** away on the left (rising to 524m above sea level).

You have good views on the right to the **top of the Clydach Valley** and the four-way A road junction on the fringes of **Brynmawr**, where the Heads of the Valleys Road turns right in a cutting a little bit further up the valley, and – in good weather – to the tops of **Pen y Fan and Corn Du** in the far distance. In 600m at a three-way tarmac junction, *turn left* with the NCN 46 ('Brynmawr ½') and in 15m go through a metal gate between a cattle grid and a field gate. You descend gently and in 75m go through a horse-squeeze gate to the left of a metal field gate and *veer right* to continue along a tarmac lane through an industrial estate. Ignore a residential road (Milfraen View) into a new estate on the right and in 170m *turn right* along **Old Blaenavon Road** and in 140m, at the end of this cul-de-sac, *turn left* to continue along a tarmac path.

In 30m you go up a footbridge and cross the **A467 Darren-felen Road** on the bridge. On the other side go downhill along a residential road (still Old Blaenavon Road) and in 80m *turn left* along **Greenland Road** at a T-junction. You pass **The Hobby Horse** pub and in 100m *turn right* along **Factory Road**. In 15m *turn left* along **Clarence Street/Stryd Clarence**. Ignore a left turn (Gladstone Street) and in 150m you reach **Market Square** at a T-junction, opposite the **Brynmawr and District Museum** and by **The Gwesty** pub on the right. *Turn left* along the road and in 50m pass **Brynmawr Library** on the right. In 70m you pass the recommended tea stop, **The Talisman**. A bit further along and on the opposite side of the road you will find **The Coffi Stop**.

Turn left to **Brynmawr Bus Station**. Abergavenny bound buses leave from Stand 2.