

The Way of Our Lady of the Valleys A Pilgrim Way for the Archdiocese of Cardiff - Menevia

Overview

A Pilgrim Way from the Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral of St David in Cardiff to the Shrines to Our Lady at Penrhys and Abercynon via Llandaff Anglican Cathedral.

The Shrine at Penrhys was important in medieval times and an important pilgrimage site. It was destroyed at the Reformation but reinstated in 1953. In contrast the Shrine at Abercynon was built by unemployed coal miners in 1926.

Between Llandaff Cathedral and Penrhys the Way follows the well-established and waymarked *Penrhys Pilgrimage Way* (more details below). The Hearts in Search of God project is grateful for the encouragement and collaboration of the Penrhys Pilgrimage Way team.

From Penrhys the Way descends to the Rhondda Valley and crosses the hills through the St Gwynno Forest to reach the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes and the adjacent open-air Stations of the Cross in the grounds of the Church of St Thomas, Abercynon.

The Outer Way

Total distance: 30 miles, Total walking hours: 14 hours



Total ascent: 3,547 ft, Route: Moderate



Stages: route, food & drink, accommodation and public transport

NB the numbering of the stages matches those of the Penrhys Pilgrimage Way.

- **The Cathedral Way: St David's Cathedral, Cardiff to Llandaff Cathedral: 3.0 miles**
The route passes Cardiff Castle and follows the Cambrian Way beside the River Taff through the pleasant Bute Park almost to Llandaff Cathedral. There are plenty of shops, pubs, restaurants and accommodation in central Cardiff as well as coach and railway stations. In Llandaff there are shops, cafés, pubs and restaurants in the High Street. There are buses back to central Cardiff from the Black Lion stop near the junction of Llandaff High Street with Cardiff Road.

1. Llandaff Cathedral to Radyr: 2.5 miles

From Llandaff Cathedral the path is through woodland to reach the village of Radyr. In Radyr there are shops and cafés in Station Road, Windsor Gardens and Park Road. There may be Airbnb accommodation in the village. There is a railway station with regular trains back to Cardiff.

2. Radyr to Groesfaen: 4.6 miles

The Way follows lanes to cross the M4 but then is on paths through gentle, rolling countryside. There is a pub in Creigiau and a small supermarket in Cardiff Rd. There is also a pub in Groesfaen. There are buses to Cardiff from outside the Babel Chapel in Groesfaen.

3. Groesfaen to Llantrisant: 3.8 miles

The Way is gentle on paths and lanes before a short but steep final ascent to Llantrisant. There is a hotel and restaurant on the main road near Llantrisant and shops, pubs and cafés in the village. There are buses to Cardiff from Southgate, Llantrisant.

4. Llantrisant to Tonyrefail: 3.9 miles

A delightful walk through quiet countryside. *NB There is a temporary deviation along the old railway line path (see notes).* The Countryman Inn is no longer a pub but does provide b&b accommodation. The route reaches an estate on the outskirts of the former mining village of Tonyrefail. From the end of the route for all facilities continue along Investiture Place (which becomes Concorde Drive) to the main road. Then walk down the hill and take the first R turn into a pedestrianised road that leads to the High St with shops, cafés and pubs. There may be Airbnb accommodation in Tonyrefail. There are buses from the Leisure Centre to Pontyclun station for trains to Cardiff.

5. Tonyrefail to Dinas Rhondda station: 3.6 miles

The route rises and becomes wilder between the villages. In Trebanog there is a pub (closed August 2023) and a general store on Rhiwgarn Rd. There are buses from Trebanog to Llandaff on the main road. There is a railway station in Dinas. (**NB** in August 2023 the railway line through Dinas was being rebuilt and there was a rail replacement bus service. To reach the bus stops from the railway bridge, walk L up Station Rd. At the junction the stop for buses going north is just to the L on the near side of the road. For buses going south cross the road. There is a small store near the N bound bus stop.)

6. Dinas Rhondda station to Our Lady of Penrhys: 1.9 miles

There is a stiff climb from Dinas, then an exhilarating ridge walk with great views on all sides. In Dinas there is a shop on Nile Rd. In Penrhys estate there is a shop, a fish & chip shop and a community café at Llanfair Uniting Church (not open every day). To reach them cross to the other side of the roundabout and follow a footpath up the hill until you see community facilities on your R. There is an open invitation to walkers to call into the Church to rest if it is open. If you need a toilet ask anyone local and they will phone someone will open the church facilities for you. For buses to Cardiff descend to the valley (see instructions in the next section) but at the roundabout do not cross the river, but TL into the centre of the village.

- **The Abercynon Way: Our Lady of Penrhys to Abercynon: 6.7 miles**

The final section involves 3 strenuous climbs but is well worth it. There is a mix of open country, forestry and woodland. There are buses from Rock Terrace in Mynachdy back to Cardiff. In Abercynon there are cafés and a railway station for trains to Cardiff. **NB** If you wish to light a candle at the Abercynon shrine you will need to bring your own tea lights and matches.

Public transport links

Trains: <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Coaches: <https://www.nationalexpress.com>

Buses: <https://www.traveline.info/>

<https://www.cardiffbus.com/>

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/south-wales/rhondda-valleys>

The Inner Way

The Penrhys Pilgrimage Way

Pilgrimage grew in popularity in Wales in the C5&6 with the emergence of native saints such as St David and St Teilo. After the arrival of the Normans in Wales at the end of the C11, sites associated with many of these saints were developed into major pilgrimage centres, some of which claimed international fame. By the C15, the most popular pilgrimage site in south-east Wales was Penrhys where a statue of the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared in the branches of an oak tree near a holy well called Ffynnon Mair (St Mary's Well). The Shrine chapel was in the care of the Cistercian Abbey of Llantarnam, which benefited from pilgrim offerings. Stone crosses marked the pilgrim route to the Shrine and several Welsh poets composed works praising the Virgin and her Shrine at Penrhys.

By 1538 the Shrine was so popular that Thomas Cromwell ordered that the statue be secretly removed, taken to London and burned with the statues of Our Lady of Walsingham and Our Lady of Ipswich. Although the practice of pilgrimage was banned after the Reformation, the footpaths between Cardiff and Penrhys survived, as did the holy well. In 1953, the Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff installed a new statue of Mary on the site of the Cistercian chapel carved from Portland stone. Pilgrimages and open-air Masses are held.

In 2018 the Penrhys Pilgrimage Project was established to improve the old pilgrimage way from Llandaff to Penrhys and to promote its use. The route is now waymarked and there are several information boards. Details are available at: <http://www.penrhyspilgrimageway.wales/>

The Metropolitan Cathedral of St David, Cardiff

During penal times Catholics in Glamorgan were served by priests resident at Llanarth Court, Monmouthshire, and by itinerant priests, mostly Jesuit. Many recusants were imprisoned or died in Cardiff gaol. In the C18 Catholics were served from Pyle, then Bristol and Usk. By 1830 the Catholic population of Cardiff had grown and in 1842 a church was opened on Bute Terrace.

In 1882 a new church dedicated to St David was built on Charles Street to designs by Pugin & Pugin. It was built without aisles or a chancel arch, to afford an unobstructed view of the high altar and reredos. In 1897 the interior walls were painted with murals and new stained-glass windows installed. In 1920 St David's became the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Cardiff, created in 1916.

In 1941 the Cathedral was badly damaged by incendiary bombs and was not reconstructed until 1953. Pugin & Pugin's original designs for the bell stage of the tower were realised and the Cathedral was restored and refitted in a plainer modern style. Many of these furnishings did not survive later reordering but there is a fine ceramic Stations of the Cross and good late C19 & early C20 stained glass.

In 2022 Pope Francis announced that the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Menevia would be united. The Archdiocese of Cardiff – Menevia was formed and the Metropolitan Cathedral became Co-Cathedral with St Joseph's Cathedral in Swansea.

Llandaff Cathedral

Llandaff Cathedral is the seat of the Anglican Bishop of Llandaff. It is dedicated to SS Peter & Paul, and three Welsh saints: Dubricius (Welsh: Dyfrig), Teilo and Oudoceus (Welsh: Euddogwy). A Norman cathedral was constructed on the site of an earlier church. Severe damage was done in 1400 during the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr, during the English Civil War when it was overrun by Parliamentary troops, and again during a storm of 1703.

In 1734 work began on a new cathedral, designed with an Italian temple style edifice for the eastern portion of the building, while leaving the remaining western half in ruins. All trace of this was removed by reconstruction after 1841. Some of the redecoration was done by Pre-Raphaelite artists: there is a triptych painted by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, stained-glass windows by Ford Madox Brown and William Morris, and porcelain panels of the *Six Days of Creation* by Edward Burne-Jones.

In 1941 the Cathedral was severely damaged by a parachute mine. Much of the reconstruction has been done in concrete and sandstone. There is a statue of *Christ in Majesty* by Jacob Epstein raised above the nave on a concrete arch.

[The Shrine of Our Lady of Penrhys](#)

As described above during the medieval period Penrhys was one of Britain's major pilgrimage sites. In 1912 excavations revealed the location of the original shrine chapel. At the same time Miss M. M. Davies of Llantrisant, a Catholic convert, provided funds for the construction of a church dedicated to Our Lady of Penrhys at Ferndale, about six miles north of Tonypany. Miss Davies obtained a carved oak re-creation of the original shrine statue believed to date from the 1860s. In 1936 the parish priest at Ferndale re-established pilgrimages to Penrhys and in 1939 the local authority preserved the Wellhouse and erected railings around it. In 1953 Archbishop McGrath of Cardiff blessed the current Portland stone statue on the site of the original shrine. The design was an enlarged version of the original one, based on surviving descriptions. Over 20,000 people attended the first pilgrimage after its unveiling. Pilgrimages continue from parishes across the Archdiocese.

The Ferndale church closed in 2010 and the oak statue of Our Lady of Penrhys was transferred to the [Church of SS Gabriel and Raphael](#) in Tonypany.

[The Shrine to Our Lady at Abercynon & Church of St Thomas the Apostle](#)

The Cynon district first began to be served by a priest from Aberdare around 1874. Around 1910 the population of Abercynon began to increase as Irish and Italian miners moved in to find work in the local coalmines. In 1921 a fund for a Catholic church was started, in 1925 a site was acquired, and work was completed in September 1927.

In 1926 a 3-year-old local boy called Gerald O'Shea fell into the River Taff. On returning home he told his mother that he had been rescued by a lady in blue, the same lady that was shown on his religious medallion. The boy stuck firmly to his story and the tale of the Virgin Mary rescuing a boy from drowning began to spread. It was the Great Depression and a time of mass local unemployment. The parish priest Fr Carroll-Baillie organised a group of volunteers, including many unemployed miners, to build a Lourdes grotto and shrine at the rear of the site, overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Cynon and Taff. Three local wells were diverted into one and were dedicated as a Holy Well. Following stories of cures and blessings the site became a popular place of pilgrimage, known as 'the Welsh Lourdes'.

At the peak of its popularity around 10,000 pilgrims a year visited but in later decades the grotto fell into disrepair. Following a fundraising campaign launched in 2011 it is once again restored.

Please use the QR code below to access www.pilgrimways.org.uk



Hearts in Search of God

www.pilgrimways.org.uk

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Key

Dundry	Place name in bold	DUNDRY	Signs in capitals
L	Left	R	Right
TL	Turn left	TR	Turn right
LHS	Left hand side	RHS	Right hand side
FPS	Public foot path sign	PBS	Public Bridleway Sign
X-roads	Cross-roads		

The Cathedral Way: St David's Cathedral, Cardiff to Llandaff Cathedral: 3.0 miles

NB Walkers do so at their own risk. Every effort has been made to make the directions accurate. Please let the Project Lead know of any changes. Please read and follow the [Countryside Code](#), preparation tips from the [Long Distance Walkers' Association](#) and the [Ramblers' Association safety advice](#). Check public transport timetables and opening times before setting off.

MOST IMPORTANTLY TAKE GREAT CARE WHEN CROSSING ROADS AND FIELDS WITH CATTLE.

Distance from start	Direction
0	<p>On leaving St David's Cathedral TL to pass between shops and at a T-junction TL again on Queen's St. Pass a statue of the great Welsh politician Aneurin Bevan and cross the road to walk with the wall of Cardiff Castle on RHS with animal statues on top. TR into Bute Park to join the Cambrian Way. With a tree statue ahead veer L to follow the River Taff on LHS. Pass a footbridge on LHS and keep ahead. With a Visitor Centre on RHS take the L fork on a track through woodland. Ignore minor turns to R&L and follow the way mark posts along a path diversion.</p>
	<p>In 1947 the 5th Marquess of Bute gave Cardiff Castle and Bute Park to the City of Cardiff, with the proviso that the Catholic community should be allowed to build a new cathedral in the park. In 1980 the philanthropist Julian Hodge offered to underwrite the cost and designs were prepared. It was hoped that a foundation stone would be blessed by Pope St John Paul II on his visit to Cardiff in 1982, but the new cathedral proposal proved controversial and has not been pursued.</p>

1.7	Join a concrete drive, pass a weir and second footbridge on LHS and continue through a metal gate on a woodland track. On reaching the main road climb steps, TL and cross the river. Continue with the main road on RHS to a pedestrian bridge. Cross this, then TL and soon TR along an enclosed path with playing fields on LHS. Reach a track with the graveyard ahead and TL through a car park. TR through a gap in the wall into the Cathedral precincts and keep the Cathedral on RHS.
3.0	Arrive at the West Front and main entrance of Llandaff Cathedral .

Stage 1: Llandaff Cathedral to Radyr: 2.5 miles

3.0	From the West Door of Llandaff Cathedral , go up the first flight of steps and TR along the lane. Go past the white building, Prebendal House on RHS. After about 100 yds TL along a track. After about 100 yds there is a seat cut into the wall, followed by another one. Climb a bank and then TL at the first sign (LLANDAFF NORTH). On RHS you can see the Llandaff weir. After 160 yds the path bends sharply L alongside the boundary of the Llandaff Rowing Club . TR when you reach Bridge Road . Immediately after the turning to the Rowing Club , TR again and follow the path along the riverbank. Continue along the path, passing two benches and returning to Bridge Road . On reaching the road, TR.
3.6	Cross the road to enter Radyr Court Road . (To do so safely, continue over the river bridge and TR down steps to an underpass. Emerge, TR to reach the road and TR again to recross the river and TR into Radyr Court Road). When the road curves to the L (Gerddi Taf) after about 650 yds, continue on, with the riverbank on RHS. Continue under the bridge, going (slightly) L up a slope. Walk up the hill past Ty Isaf . TR into a FP just before the motorcycle barrier. Continue for about 0.5 mi At a crossroad of paths with houses on LHS keep ahead on the main track. The path enters De Braose Close . Almost immediately, TR up some steps (the road goes straight on) and continue on at the next metal gate ignoring all L turns. You will enter the Hermit Wood Local Nature Reserve . At a Y-shaped junction, veer L up the slope and continue L by a bench.
4.9	Reach RADYR WOODS information board. Go ahead through a metal gate to a road turning point and TR into Woodfield Avenue . At the end, cross the road (Heol Isaf) and walk up Radyr Farm Road . Continue straight for 200 yds, crossing Clos Parc Radyr . TR on a FP just before a gate and stile. Cross the road and go L along Plas-y-Mynach . Enter Llantarnum Drive and immediately TR into Drovers Way and follow it until it bends sharp L and take the FP on the R between houses.
5.5	Reach Windsor Road in Radyr .

Stage 2: Radyr to Groesfaen: 4.6 miles

5.5	<p>TL to follow Windsor Road uphill to the junction with Drysgol Road and TL to carry on up the hill passing Radyr Golf Club on LHS. Pass two roads into Dan-y-Bryn Avenue on RHS. Pass Ffordd Las on LHS and continue straight on into Bryn Derwen and then TL into Pant Tawel Lane, which crosses over the M4 motorway. <i>(NB the section after the M4 can be very muddy: if so there is a footpath just before the M4 bridge on the LHS that will take you across fields to Church Road. TR and walk along the lane to re-join the route as it comes in from Pant Tawel on your RHS.)</i> If the path is ok, continue ahead over the M4, veering L and then R, and crossing a disused railway line. Continue into woodland, on the fringe of Coedcae Fawr. The road becomes a track and divides for a short distance. Take the lower track (a new higher path has been made which is drier to walk on, but if you choose to walk it, keep close to the lower track). After passing a stile on RHS the path forks. Take the L track and continue uphill, ignoring footpaths to R&L to emerge on a lane. Go straight on, descending, with views south to the Bristol Channel.</p>
7.3	<p>Reaching a road junction TR on Church Road. Keep straight on, looking out for traffic until you reach Llys y Coed. If you wish to visit St Catwg's Church in Pentyrch, it is further up Church Road. Otherwise, TL along a track just after Llys y Coed and continue straight along this enclosed track, through a metal gate, to a road (Heol y Parc). TR up Heol y Parc past the PENTYRCH village sign and TL through a gate after about 80 yds. Follow a fence by a house on RHS, go through a gate and descend a few steps. Continue with the fence on RHS. Go straight on through a gate and uphill into a field, keeping a fence on RHS. Keep straight on along the edge of the field <i>(NB do not go through the metal gate)</i>. There is a view across to the Vale of Glamorgan. At the end of the field, go through a gate onto a road, Heol Pant-y-Gored.</p>
8.2	<p>Cross with care and go L for about 50 yds. TR into a field through a kissing-gate (1, the first in a series). Head downhill, going slightly to your L, to reach a kissing gate (2) in the hedge. Go through the gate. Keep straight on, with the hedge on RHS, and go through another kissing gate (3). Continue L downhill, the hedge still on RHS, through a field and another kissing gate (4). Go L downhill, through another kissing gate (5) and then go straight on, with trees and a fence on RHS. Go to the corner of the field, and through another kissing gate (6) behind some houses. The path bears slightly to the R, reaches a marker post on the brow and then heads downhill to reach another kissing gate (7). Continue downhill, with bracken on each side, to a metal kissing gate (8) and a road (Heol Pant-y-Gored).</p>
8.9	<p>TR at the road and after 50 yds you will see a PENTYRCH CIRCUAR WALK information board. Shortly beyond this is a large rock, by the CREIGIAU village sign, with the Recreation Ground on RHS. Follow a path with a SUSTRANS marker between the rock and the road. Cross the entrance to the Recreation Ground and follow the track. Cross over the road to another track, which also has a SUSTRANS marker, and boulders either side. Follow the track passing railway arches on LHS. TL at a high green/grey fence and soon TR on to Station Road. TR to walk down Station Road to reach the Creigiau Inn. Cross Cardiff Road. Do not take the footpath alongside the telephone box. Walk L for about 12 yds along the pavement and then take the</p>

	lane on the R along a tarmac footpath to enter a cul-de-sac (Parc-y-Coed) on the L. Walk along this road and take the first turn on the R.
	(If you want to view the old Castell y Mynach farmhouse (Grade 2* listed), which was associated with the pilgrims, instead of going R, continue straight on until you reach Ffordd Dinefwr . TR and take the 2 nd R into Maes-y-Gollen . On the R you will see the old farmhouse. Retrace your steps to Parc-y-Coed .)
	Parc-y-Coed ends at a turning circle, but there is a footpath between the fences on the R. Follow this to emerge on a green. Veer L to pass benches and the frog pond on RHS. TR on to Ffordd Dinefwr to reach Tŷ Nant Road , which runs from Groesfaen to Creigiau . Cross this road and follow the FP (a wide track) opposite. Cross a stile and go through a gate. The ruins of Maes Mawr are ahead of you. Bear R and continue past the ruins, towards another gate with a PFS beside it. Go through a gate and TL into a lane. This takes you past Redgate Terrace .
10.1	Reach the A4119 which runs through Groesfaen and where this section of the route ends. The Dynevor Arms is almost directly opposite with St David's Church a little further to the L. If you wish to visit the Church , then, from the neighbouring Dynevor Arms , cross the A4119 with care to join the footpath on the east side of the main road.
	The Church of St David was consecrated in 1892. You can see the base of a stone cross outside the Church door which is believed to be one of the medieval pilgrimage route markers.

Stage 3: Groesfaen to Llantrisant: 3.8 miles

10.1	From the end of the last stage, TL to pass Groesfaen Babell Chapel and stay on the pavement, continuing over two R turns (Y Parc and Pen y Groes). TR into an unnamed road, towards a house. Before the house, TL and go through a kissing gate into a field. Follow the path along the edge of the field, close by the hedge, and go through the kissing gate near the corner of the field. Continue through the field and cross the next stile metal kissing gate. Follow the track, passing a pond on the LHS to join a track and cross a stream. TL at the junction near the entry to Llwynsaer Farm and follow the track to a junction. You are now close to Mwyndy Cross where there would have been a Pilgrim's Cross. After an S-bend, the track forks, creating an island. Take the R fork and continue along a lane to a T-junction.
11.3	TR, over a cattle grid and on to a tarmac road. You will pass a derelict house. Leave the road when it bends R and continue ahead onto a grassy track. After 200 yds, through woods, go through a gate into the field and immediately TL. Follow the tree line on LHS and head to the stile in the bottom corner of the field. Cross the stile metal gate. Go straight ahead downhill through the field and cross the bridge over the River Clun . From the bridge follow the path straight on, through a kissing gate, and across a field for about 110 yds to another kissing gate.

12.0	Emerge on to Rhiwsaeson Rd. TR and walk along the road for about 275 yds and take the lane on LHS of the drive to the house called Little Foxes . Follow this path – a sunken lane which passes under a disused railway arch, and contours around the west side of Caerau , an Iron Age hillfort. If you want to climb to the top of the hillfort, with its splendid views in all directions, go slightly R and then head on up the hill. Otherwise, when you reach a track, bear L between a barn and the farmhouse (Gwern-y-Moel Uchaf). Continue as the path turns into a wider track and then a road. Bear L along the road to cross the A473 .
12.6	TL along the footpath immediately after the bridge (signposted CROSS INN and LLANTRISANT). Continue along this Community Route. Immediately after the arch under a disused railway line, TR and head uphill, ignoring the new path to L. Go through the kissing gate and follow the track which bears L. Cross the opening to a track that comes in from the RHS and continue up the hill. The track bears R and continues to climb upwards. At the top of the incline, go through a kissing gate and follow the path L towards Old Llantrisant . The path joins a road (Erw Hir) by a RIDGEWAY WALK sign. Bear L and keep straight on until you come to a T-junction with the road (High Street) heading up to Old Llantrisant and beyond. Cross this road with care, TR and after about 20 yds TL up some steps. Follow the path through a kissing gate until you reach the railings at the base of Llantrisant Castle . Go up the steps to R. You are now on Castle Green , with the ruined Raven Tower on LHS. Follow the path across the Green , passing the stocks. Pass the old Guildhall on RHS and TR into George Street , a cobbled street, and continue down the hill.
13.9	Arrive in the Bull Ring with the Model House, war memorial and statue of William Price. William Price (1800 – 1893) was a Welsh medical doctor and activist known for his support of Welsh nationalism, Chartism, and his involvement with the Neo-Druidic religious movement.

Stage 4: Llantrisant to Tonyrefail: 3.9 miles

13.9	From the statue in the Bull Ring bear L and cross Swan Street . Continue downhill along Heol-y-Sarn to reach Llantrisant Common and cross the cattle grid. Take the R fork (a narrow, metalled road) across the Common . Follow this for just over a mile, crossing over a disused railway and ignoring footpath signs to R&L, until you reach an old boundary stone on LHS. TL over the footbridge to cross the stream. Head straight on up the track to the pylon and continue to the corner of the field. TR and follow the field boundary on LHS climbing slightly. At the corner of the field veer L downhill. When the opportunity arises, go L through a gate across a field towards another gate (note this area is under development, so fences and gates may differ). Go through the gate and with the wooden fence line on LHS, continue ahead to reach a metal gate in the L corner of the field and emerge onto a country road.
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15.7	<p>TL on to the road (Heol Ddu), looking out for traffic. Pass the Countryman Inn on LHS. After about 220 yds TR along the lane marked Treferig Cottage Farm and Treferig Isha Farm. Treferig is the site of a C19 former Quaker Meeting House. Follow the lane to a stone bridge. Go over this and immediately cross the stile on your LHS. Do not take the track to L just beyond the stile. Join an old railway track alongside a stream (Nant Muchudd) and continue along this to reach a road and TL.</p> <p>NB There are temporary problems with this old railway track. Look out for a broken stump on RHS after 0.5 mile. TR on a short path to a stile. Cross the stile. TL, stay close to the boundary. Cross the next stile. Head for a patch of tarmac and some containers. As you get closer, you see the way onto a farm road. Follow the farm road till you reach a gate with a smaller gate, that takes you on to the road. TL, cross the stream and continue with the directions below.</p>
17.2	<p>After about 0.25 miles TR to cross a stile (<i>August 2023 the stile has gone, but there are wooden pallets</i>) by a gate on RHS. Immediately TL and follow the path, with trees on LHS. Cross over a lane (stiles on each side) and continue along a gravel track with Oaklands house on LHS. Cross another stile by a gate and continue straight on to another gate, where you meet Llantrisant Road. Immediately on LHS there is a stone tablet, dated 1909, marking the spot where King Edward II is said to have been captured in 1326. TR and follow the road through the hamlet of Pant-y-Brâd (Hollow of Treason).</p>
17.8	<p>After passing three large houses at the end of the hamlet, TR down a track. Keep straight on, cross a stream and pass through double gates and approach Treboeth Farm. Pass the large house on RHS to follow the stream on LHS on a narrow path to reach and cross a bridge over the stream and go through another gate. TR uphill and after about 30 yds TL over a metal stile. Follow the enclosed path to the end, passing through a green kissing gate. Go R and soon meet a paved path. Keeping the green railings on RHS, follow this path up some steps as far as lamppost 59. TL along the short lane between houses. At the junction, go R up the hill and follow the road to a grassy bank on RHS, just after the last house.</p>

Stage 5: Tonyrefail to Dinas Rhondda station: 3.6 miles

17.8	<p>Go up the short grassy bank on the north side of Concorde Drive just before some houses (with a sign 4-6 CONCORDE DRIVE) and pass through a green metal gate in a fence. Join a tarmac track and TR. Follow this as it bends L for about 350 yds until you see a path branching off to L. Take this path, going NW, until you meet another, and branch R. You will see some white houses at Trebanog in the distance. Continue along this path, taking a L fork where it divides, with bracken on each side. Bear R at any forks, follow this path until it begins to climb to R. At this point fork L along a narrower track to reach the end of a cul-de-sac and houses (Pen-y-Dre). At the end of the road, you will see Waun Wen Community Centre. TL, passing a General Stores, and follow the road (Rhiwgarn Road) downhill to the A4233 and the Trebanog Arms (closed August 2023).</p>
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19.8	Cross this main road and go straight on along Brocks Terrace . TR by a bus stop after about 200 yds up Trem-y-Glyn . Take the first L and go straight on to the Common , climbing steadily uphill. Keep to the main path, ignoring the fork R downhill. Cross the fence by a stile with a gate on RHS and bear R downhill for about 85 yds to cross a stile over the fence immediately in front of you. From this position, you will see in the distance a post on the brow of the hill in a northerly direction. Set a course in this direction. Continue downhill, cross a water course and climb the hill opposite in the direction of the marker post. When you reach the post, you will see Dinas and a large cemetery on the hillside ahead of you. Bear slightly L and head downhill. You will see a wire fence ahead of you. Continue downhill towards this and then keep the fence on LHS, though you will need to deviate R briefly to avoid bracken. Cross a stile to join a sunken lane.
20.5	Follow the lane, passing through a gate as you proceed downhill. You will pass a ruin and beehives on LHS. At the bottom of the hill, the path bends L and you follow this over the stream until you reach a gate, with a main track coming in from LHS. Head straight on here. The track passes a smallholding and other old farm buildings and becomes a paved road (Graig Ddu Road). After about 0.25 miles you can either take a R fork along a short lane through trees to the A4058 Dinas Road or continue along the road to reach it. TL, cross the main road and go down the steps immediately after a block of flats. TL and follow the path with the river on RHS. When the path reaches the road, TR and cross the bridge over the river to Trealaw , beware of traffic.
21.4	Dinas Station is along the lane on RHS immediately after the bridge.

Stage 6: Dinas Rhondda station to Our Lady of Penrhys: 1.9 miles

21.4	If starting from Dinas Station , TL to reach the bridge. TR to go up a path, which soon becomes stepped, to reach a road (Bryn Dinas View). Keep going straight on up to the A4058, Brithweunydd Road . Cross this and continue uphill along Nile Road , passing a small general store on LHS after about 50 yds. At the top you will see the gates to Garth Park . Do not enter the park but instead take the lane on RHS (marked GARTH FARM PRIVATE ROAD) and follow it uphill around the edge of the park, keeping the green fence on LHS. At the junction, go straight up the steps on a narrow footpath opposite, with Tyddwyn bungalow on RHS. Pass through a metal gate into a field and walk uphill, with the wall a few yds on LHS. (NB the path can be overgrown with bracken) At the top L of the field TR on a path with a fence on LHS to reach a metal gate near a mast. Pass through this and keep the mast on RHS to meet a wide track with a gate on RHS. All the climbing is now behind you!
22.1	TL onto the track, which is the old parish road, across the golf course, so look out for flying golf balls! You will see the Old Smokey slagheap near Tylorstown on the RHS, also known as Llanwonno Tip or Tylorstown Tip . After following the track along the ridge for 700 yds, you pass a triangulation point on RHS. There are tremendous views to your LHS, looking down over Llwynypia and beyond, and back towards Dinas and the route you have taken. In the distance you can see Penrhys , with the

	statue of Mary the Virgin just visible in front. With binoculars it is also possible to spot the top of the holy well slightly downhill on LHS. After walking about a mile along the track, fork R onto a grass track immediately after the sub-station towards the statue.
23.3	You have reached the Shrine of Our Lady of Penrhys! To visit the holy well (Ffynnon Mair), go westwards, downhill from the statue, passing a man-made amphitheatre in the hillside, to a minor road. TR on the road for 20 yds, then TL to follow a FPS downhill to reach a track. TR and follow the track to the well.

The Abercynon Way: Our Lady of Penrhys to Abercynon: 6.7 miles

23.3	From the Statue pass through the car park and TR downhill. Just past a rugby club on RHS, TR over a bridge, go through a metal gate and TL downhill. After a few yds the track forks, take the L still downhill. Reaching a drive to a rugby pitch on RHS, TL but do not cross the bridge, instead TR downhill on steps. Where the steps divide take the L fork with a water tank on RHS. At the bottom of the steps reach a road, TL and after 50 yds TR down more steps to reach a roundabout.
23.9	Cross the roundabout access road and keep ahead to cross the River Rhondda . Cross the main road and then TL along a cycle path. Where the cycle path soon forks take the R upper fork. Reach a road (Llanwonno Rd) and TR uphill on the pavement. Continue steeply uphill, ignoring turns to R&L. Follow the road as it steadily climbs and bends to R.
24.6	Pass a farmhouse on LHS and continue as the road becomes a track. On reaching forestry continue ahead to reach a road.
25.6	TL on the road and where this meets a gravel track TR sharply. At a T-junction with metal gates on RHS, TL on the main track, ignoring paths to L&R. Go through metal gates to reach a T-junction with metal gates and a green shack ahead, and TL. Veer L where a track joins from RHS (may be muddy) to reach metal gates. Pass through these, ignore FPS on LHS and continue down the track. The track veers L with farm buildings on RHS and crosses a stream to reach a T-junction with a lane. TR here.
27.1	Reach a road with a bus shelter on LHS. TR into the village of Minachdy along the pavement. Ignore a L turn and go ahead to cross the river and curve L. Just past a bus stop on LHS TL at FPS through a metal kissing gate and head downhill. At the bottom of the field reach a lane on which TR and immediately take the L fork uphill. At the top of the ridge reach a T junction with a lane and TR. Ignore a farm drive on LHS but take the next L turn downhill with forestry on RHS. Ignore FPS to R&L and continue along the lane.
29.0	With farm gates ahead TL on a footpath downhill into woods. On reaching a fork take the L on a narrow path through dense woodland with a wall on RHS. At a T-junction with another path TL downhill with a bank on LHS and dense woodland on RHS. After 100 yds reach a fork and take the R, still downhill. As a more major path joins from RHS continue downhill on a stony path. At a wooden gate and metal stile cross this and veer R downhill. At another metal stile cross this and continue. After a few yds

	meet a more major track and continue. On reaching a road with a bungalow on LHS and barns on RHS continue downhill. Cross a minor road and walk ahead down steps.
29.6	Arrive on the B4275 and walk straight ahead into Abercynon along Ynysmeuig Rd with the railway line ahead. Pass the primary school and war memorial on LHS. Pass Station Rd on RHS and continue under the railway bridge. Cross the road at the traffic lights and TR onto a cycle path and follow this through an underpass under the second railway line. TL between industrial building to cross the River Taff then TL to join a road from R to reach the gates of the Church of St Thomas the Apostle .
30.0	The Shrine is signposted down steps on the LHS of the Church . The Stations of the Cross are past the Statue of Our Lady .