



Up to 11 km (7 miles) 3 1/2 to 4 Hours



Garw Valley Walk 1



- Garw Valley Rangers
- Karl Lufford, Dan Ffion, Garw Valley Rangers

leaflet

Thanks to the following for helping to prepare the walk and text or for sponsoring the

Acknowledgements

www.bridgend.gov.uk
you can visit our website - which is at
tourism@bridgend.gov.uk. Alternatively,
Bridgend area you can contact us via e-mail
For further general information about the
Portcawl (telephone **01656 786639**).

Designated Outlet of off junction 36 the M4
Information Centres. These are at McArthur Glen
on accommodation contact one of the Tourist
To make a reservation or to obtain information

Accommodation

- Free Parking Provision at Parc Calon Lan
- On-street parking in Blaengarw

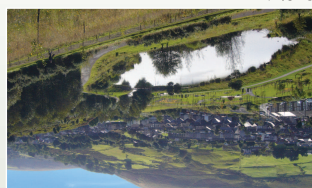
There is parking provision at the following:

Car Parking

on **0871 200 22 33** www.traveline.info
on **01656 642559** or the Traveline

service numbers telephone Bridgend County
Borough Council's, Public Transport Section
For further information on bus times and

Public Transport



Follow the Countryside Code wherever you go.
You will get the best out of the countryside and help
to maintain it now and for the future.

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



RESPECT - PROTECT - ENJOY

Countryside Code

Advice and Information

The going can be steep and may be wet and slippery
in places with some stiles to climb. Remember to
wear suitable clothes and good shoes/boots and take
food and drink with you and be prepared to get fit!
Always follow the Countryside Code. When you are
walking on minor roads keep to the right and make
use of verges whenever you can.

It should be easy to follow the route using the map
route try and look out for the Walk logo that will be
directional way marks with arrows will assist you as
to which direction to walk in once you are on a public
right of way. We also recommend you refer to the OS
Explorer Map 166 Rhonda and Merthyr Tydfil.



Nant Hir

CHOICE! At this point the walk connects with the
community route that will take you back to Parc
Calon Lan or you can continue on this walk.

6 Pontcymmer Lake. Near the lake are a
number of picnic benches, and this is a pleasant
place to stop and take a rest. The lake usually holds
a good number of Mallard which breed here
throughout the summer. Trout can be seen leaping
out of the water. A series of weirs has been
constructed just above the lake. This is to encourage
migratory Sea Trout or Sewen to spawn. The lake is
also a good spot for Dragonflies and Damselflies.



Darren Fawr

To continue on the walk head south on the
community route keeping the river on your left hand
side. On reaching the end of the community route
exit onto Prospect Place and follow the tarmac path
to the end of the road. Turn left and continue ahead
where you will reach Pontcymmer Square.

7 You are now in Pontcymmer Square.
Literally translated means Bridge of the Confluence,
and is a busy village which consists of various shops,
a café and other eateries.

Cross the road in Oxford Street, then turn left by The
Squirrel pub and onto Alexandra Road. Continue
along Alexandra Road heading towards the
cemetery. You should see a footpath sign on your
right just before the cemetery. Follow this through
the alley way and then take the first left, up the
incline, passing another entrance to the cemetery
and head towards a detached house on your right.
Go through the small gate, take an immediate right
and cross the narrow road to connect with the
bridleway. Go through the gate and follow the
bridleway that runs adjacent to a fence as it climbs
up the hillside to a point where it meets a rough
track. Continue upwards passing a waymark post,
until you come upon a second waymark post. At this
point turn left and head in the direction of the double
posted pylon on the hill ahead. Cross the open
hillside covered in bracken until you reach a dry-
stone wall.

Viewpoint. You can now look back across the
valley to where you were walking earlier. Along here
listen out for the Skylark as it sings and displays over
the open hillsides during the spring and summer.
Two bird species typical of upland habitat are the
Whinchat and Wheatear, both are summer visitors
and can also be seen around here.

8 Just beyond the dry-stone wall you may
notice a row of indentations in the hillside. These are
old mining levels. Private land owners searched for
coal seams during the late 1800's to early 1900's to
extract coal.



Old mining levels

Cross over the dry-stone wall continue along the
track past the mining levels until you reach the Nant
Gelli-wern. Cross the stream and follow the well
defined grassy track ahead that contours around the
hillside and above Ty Meinor Farm.

Viewpoint. To the south the valley opens out,
giving views towards and as far as the Bristol
Channel. As the path curves around the hill, there are
expansive views of the Garw Valley & the large areas
of forestry.



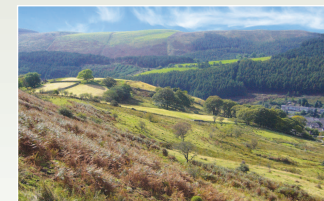
Dram Road

Keep on the track for 700 metres until you reach a
drainage culvert at which point you can jump across
the culvert or there is a small bridge about 10 metres
above for easier crossing. The track now heads into

Cwm Nant Hir, from where you can look down on two
small lakes. The track descends heading towards the
top lake. Cross the stream above the top lake.

6 Cwm Nant Hir. Site of the old Ocean colliery,
the last mine to close in the valley in 1985. The lakes
here hold Rainbow Trout and are very good for fly-
fishing. In winter, raptors such as Red Kite & Peregrine
have been seen patrolling above the cwm here.

Go through the kissing gate at the bridge and
continue towards the bottom lake. Once past the lake
you are now onto David Street, continue towards the
main road, cross, and head onto Gwendoline Street.
You will now see Parc Calon Lan and have reached
your starting point.



Views over Garw Valley



Wheatear



Garw Valley Walk 1

Up to 11 km (7 miles)
3 1/2 to 4 Hours

This leaflet describes a circular walk starting and ending at Parc Calon Lan, Blaengarw. The walk encompasses both sides of the valley leading you through the wooded west side and out along the more open east side. The whole route is approximately 11kms long taking about 4 hours to complete, allow a bit more time if you wish to rest and take in the wonderful views on offer. The route uses a combination of public footpaths, bridleways, the community route and maintainable highway.

For convenience the directions below are written with Parc Calon Lan as the starting point. You could, however, equally start from any point along the route, and if travelling in the opposite direction, simply reverse all directions.

The Garw Valley is a former coal-mining community nestled in between the hillsides of the Ogmere & Llynfi Valleys. The valley comprises the highland area of Bridgend County Borough and stretches approximately 6 miles north to south rising steeply until it reaches Carn & Werfa mountains which dominate the northern region of the valley, historically referred to as the Rhyll valley but now more commonly known as Garw Fechan.

The Afon Garw that flows down the valley was formerly known as the 'black' river, but now supports wildlife such as Dipper, Grey Wagtail, Grey Heron and spawning Sea Trout (sewen).

1 Parc Calon Lan. The park was developed in 2008 with financial assistance from the Garw Valley Regeneration Fund and opened that year by Huw Edwards of the BBC. The site on which the park stands was a former colliery washery. The name Calon Lan is taken from the famous Welsh hymn of the same name that was written in Blaengarw in 1890 by Daniel James.

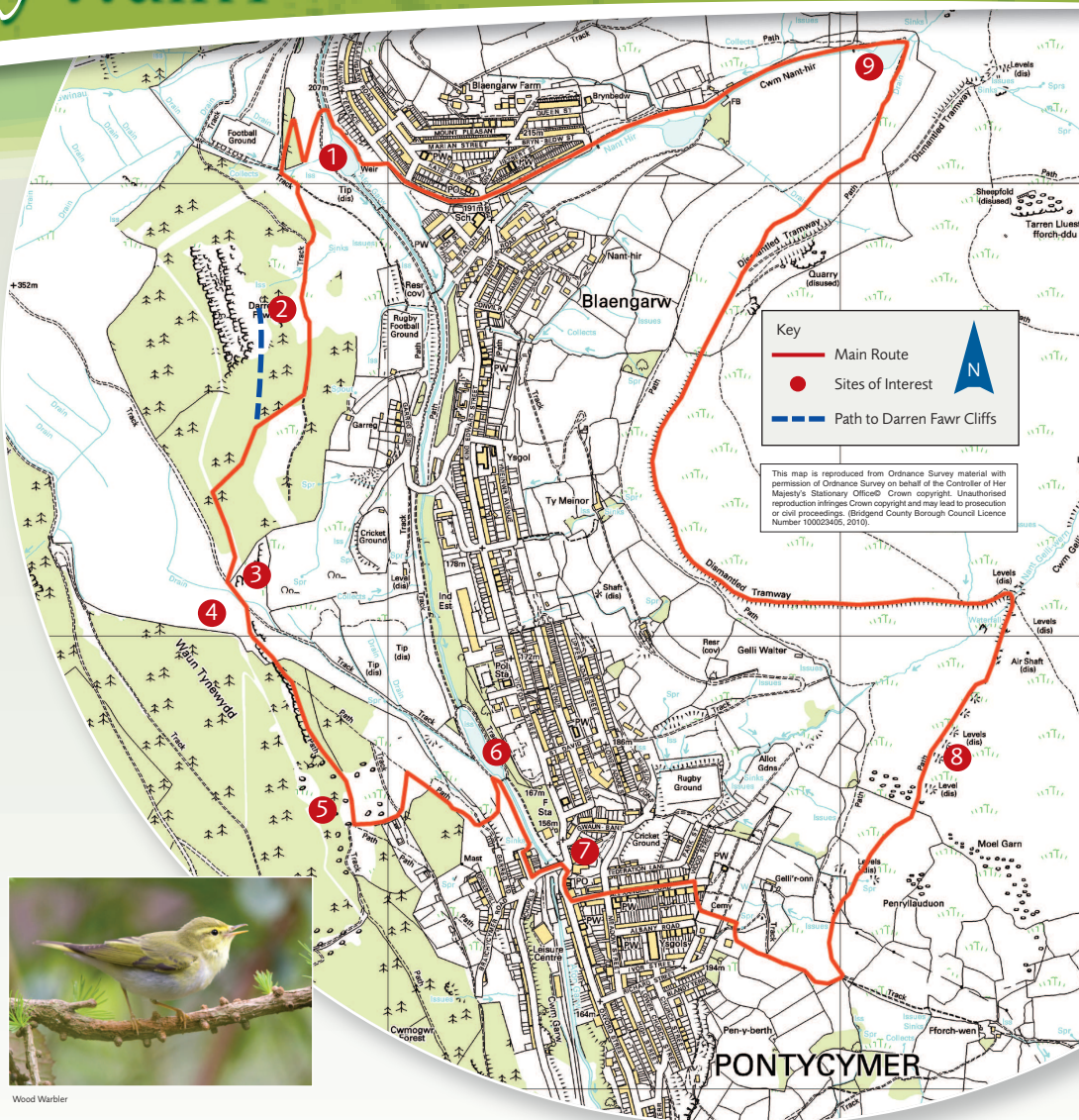
Leave Parc Calon Lan and head towards the wooden bridge at the top end of the lake, cross bridge and community route and take the gravel track directly in front of you that climbs zig-zagging up to a second wooden bridge that crosses over a drainage culvert.

Viewpoint. From the bench you can look down on Parc Calon Lan and views of Garw. Below the bench is an area which contains the community orchard. The orchard was planted by volunteers and children from the local community and primary school in the spring of 2008 and was funded by the Garw Valley Regeneration Fund and EU objective 1 funding. 104 apple trees and 400 native trees were planted. These include eating, cooking and cider apples, ash, birch, hazel, field maple, hawthorn and blackthorns.

Shortly after the wooden bridge take the track on your right following the waymarkers, then head up and go over a stile or through the gate and you are now entering into Darren Fawr woods.



Views over Pontycymer



Wood Warbler

2 Darren Fawr is dominated by coniferous trees such as Scots Pine, Larch & Sitka Spruce. The woodland floor is carpeted in Bilberry which fruits in the summer months. Keep an eye out for birds like Great Spotted & Green Woodpeckers, the declining summer visitor the Wood Warbler & butterflies such as the Speckled Wood which can all be seen here.

Continue on the well defined path for 100 metres. Take path to your left again looking out for the waymarkers and follow this path for 260m.

Gently ascending turn right then immediately bear left and continue for a further 200m where you will reach a junction with another well defined path. At this junction go left.

CHOICE! To look at the views from the Darren Fawr Cliffs bear right and follow the well defined path for 200m. To return to this walk retrace your steps back to the point above.

The path then rises through an area of Scots Pine woodland. Crossing a small stream and passing a bench on your right. Once you reach the end of this path you will connect with a wider track. Turn left at this track and you will now begin to leave the woodland and exit Darren Fawr.

3 Craig Barber Memorial. As you head out of Darren Fawr woods you should notice a Welsh national flag down to the left which is a memorial to a local soldier.

4 Ffaldau Colliery. The bare land here used to be covered in huge conical shaped tips which were fed by an aerial ropeway from the Ffaldau Colliery, remnants of the old steel cables can be seen protruding from the ground along here.

Head towards the flag and on reaching it bear right looking for a safe crossing point over the drainage

culvert. Follow the well defined ridge level with the flag pole heading towards the forestry and waymark post ahead. Follow the path until you reach a stile at the edge of the forestry. Go over the stile and continue on the well defined path. On reaching another waymark bear right keeping to the defined path through the woodland.

5 Old stone ruins, assumed to be old forestry huts used by German POW's during the 2nd world war that planted this forestry.

Continue along this path until you reach another waymarking post. At this post turn left and follow the path which descends, gradually becoming steeper. The path then turns right, then drops to the left. Continue on and you will reach another waymark post. Turn left and you will shortly see Pontycymer Lakes.