

Rural Ramble: Cwm Dyffryn Trail

A delightful and historic walk along the former railway

The Port Talbot Railway & Docks Company line linked Garw and Llynfi Valley collieries to Port Talbot docks and this walk is on the most attractive part of that route, through the deeply wooded Cwm Dyffryn.

Opened in 1898 and from 1911, leased and operated by the Great Western Railway, it was absorbed into that company in 1922. Its main aim was to take trade away from the harbour at Porthcawl by offering better facilities at Port Talbot. Passenger trains were operated from the start, ceasing in 1933, though the terminus at Port Talbot remained for another 30 years.

You will see little trace of the railway except for the track bed and no visible trace of the small mines on this section. The once extensive locomotive sheds at Dyffryn Yard disappeared under modern housing development at Goytre in 1964 and the delightfully named 'Chapel of Ease Crossing' over the A4107 is but a memory.

As well as appreciating its history, enjoy the present day peace and tranquillity of this attractive valley and the birdsong from the numerous species in the woodland.

The Route in detail

Alight from the bus at Bryn Royal Oak, walk to the rear of the pub (GR 819920) at Station Terrace where the former railway trail is joined.

The railway station at Bryn was near the Royal Oak and the line went on north to Maesteg and beyond. You will see reference to the 'Beast of Bryn', following numerous sightings of a large black panther-like animal giving its name to an annual 25km run around the area, using the railway in part. The colliery at Bryn was across the B4282 road opposite the Royal Oak.



Start point
Bryn Royal Oak
(GR 819920)
End point
Port Talbot Parkway Station
(GR 767897)



O.S. Explorer 165
O.S. Landranger 170



6 kilometres



2 hours



Easy to moderate



Royal Oak Hotel, Bryn
Port Talbot town centre



Port Talbot Parkway Station
Port Talbot Town Centre



Maesteg 3 kilometres
Port Talbot 7 kilometres



Bryn Royal Oak (adjacent)
Port Talbot Parkway station
(adjacent)



On street parking is available in
Bryn (free)
Port Talbot Parkway (south
side-charged)

The trail initially takes a level course above the village before dropping on a falling grade crossing over a minor road after 1 kilometre.

From here, it curves gently into Cwm Dyffryn on a course high above the river with surroundings becoming gradually more wooded. It meets the road (left) after 3 kilometres and thereafter, rail and road alignments are parallel through a deeply wooded area. Note the holiday park (left), built on the site of a coal mine (GR 788900), and the village of Goytre on the hill to your left.

The 'gentle' grade referred to above was quite steep in railway terms (2.5%) and heavy trains heading north often needed an assisting locomotive. Little evidence remains of previous coal mining though a number of drift mines existed close to the Goytre Valley Holiday Park.

A little further on, the trail comes to an abrupt end and you pass alongside the river (right) with a housing estate (left) on the site of the former Dyffryn Yard locomotive sheds.

These sheds were significant servicing a large fleet of freight and shunting locomotives servicing Port Talbot steelworks. They closed in 1964, the remaining steam locomotives transferring to Neath and diesel locomotives to a new depot at Margam.

The trail emerges on the bend of the A4107 road and you turn right then left and walk down Tanygroes Street, turning left into Eagle Street.

On the left at the A4107 is a former chapel and the cabin controlling the level crossing at this site had the odd name 'Chapel of Ease Crossing' after the Holy Cross Church (now a 'chapel of rest!')

At the end of Eagle Street, you pass (right) the site of Central station before reaching the A48; turn right here and your walk ends at Port Talbot Parkway station.

No trace remains of the Central station, which, though closed to passengers in 1933, remained as a goods yard up to the 1960's.

All distances are given in metric

GR refers to Ordnance Survey grid reference



The X3 bus connects Port Talbot and Bryn

X3 Cymru Clipper route Swansea-Port Talbot-Bryn-Maesteg every hour weekdays' daytime; no Sunday service.



First Day tickets Swansea Bay or Neath Port Talbot areas giving a day's unlimited travel (adult, youth and family options) can be purchased from the bus driver

If coming by train, Port Talbot Plus Bus tickets for local travel can be purchased with your train ticket.



Site of Bryn Colliery opposite Royal Oak



The trail immediately south of Bryn



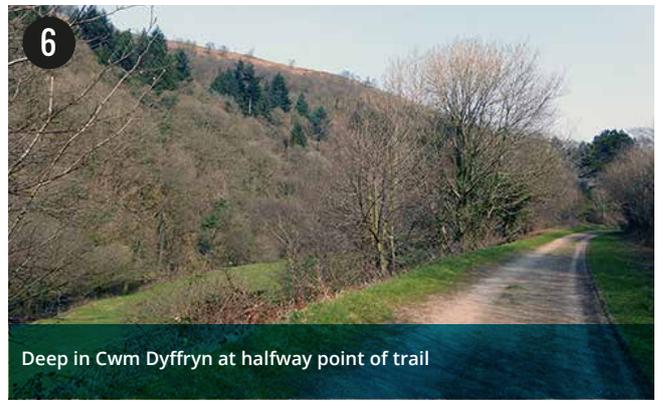
The Bryn to Goytre road crosses under



The long straight section before Cwm Dyffryn



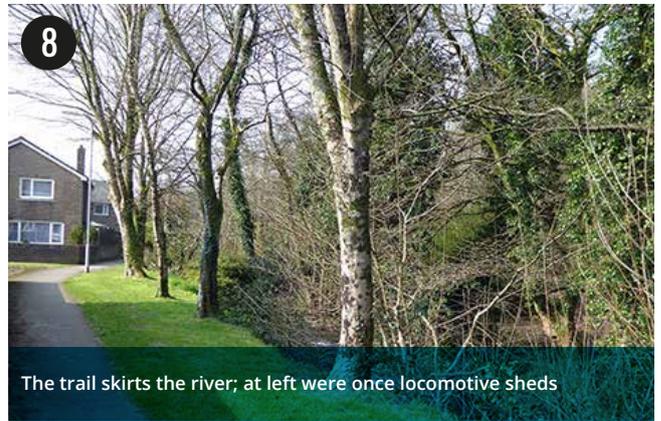
The trail is in the dip below the white house



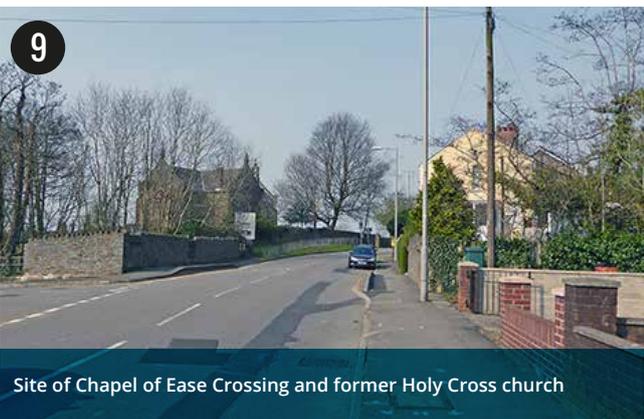
Deep in Cwm Dyffryn at halfway point of trail



The trail Goytre valley holiday park



The trail skirts the river; at left were once locomotive sheds



Site of Chapel of Ease Crossing and former Holy Cross church

