

Black Mountains Circular

A 65-mile walk in the Brecon Beacons

by Harri Garrod Roberts

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Introduction

The Black Mountains form a distinct geographic region, separated from other upland areas within the Brecon Beacons National Park by the broad valley of the river Usk. Interlocking ridges and deep river valleys create a wonderfully varied landscape with new and beautiful vistas round almost every corner.

The Black Mountains Round is a 65-mile (105km) trail linking four towns – Abergavenny, Crickhowell, Talgarth and Hay-on-Wye – on the edge of the Black Mountains. All four are part of the Walkers are Welcome network, a community-led initiative promoting towns, villages and locations judged to be ‘walker-friendly’. The scheme operates throughout Wales, England and Scotland and in 2013 welcomed Abergavenny as its 100th member.

As well as linking these four towns, the Black Mountains Round also provides a rewarding five-day hike through stunning mountain scenery. From its official start point in Abergavenny, the trail follows a circular clockwise route around the Black Mountains, finishing four of its five days in a different Walkers are Welcome town.

Day 1: Abergavenny to Crickhowell: big mountain views and lush wooded valleys.

Day 2: Crickhowell to Talgarth: historic villages, lush common land and ancient monuments.

Day 3: Talgarth to Hay-on-Wye: woods, waterfalls and open common land

Day 4: Hay-on-Wye to Llanthony: hidden vales and rare religious relics.

Day 5: Llanthony to Abergavenny: mighty mountain ridges and sacred sites.

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Distances

1: Abergavenny to Crickhowell **14 miles** / 23 km

2: Crickhowell to Talgarth: **15½ miles** / 25 km

3: Talgarth to Hay-on-Wye: **11 miles** / 18 km

4: Hay-on-Wye to Llanthony: **13½ miles** / 21.5 km

5: Llanthony to Abergavenny: **13½ miles** / 21.5 km

TOTAL DISTANCE: **67½ miles** / 109 km

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How to use this ebook

For convenience, this book divides the route between Holyhead and Chepstow into thirty-four logical sections, each starting and finishing at or near somewhere accessible with reasonable facilities. Sections vary widely in length, the longest being some 21 miles (34 km) and the shortest no more than 6 miles (10 km). Most walkers will prefer to combine some of the shorter sections, but I hope that by dividing the route in this way I've created as many options as possible for the end user.

Each section begins with a short outline of the route. These note things such as key places along the way, waymarked trails used, and the types of terrain that the route crosses. Where available, hyperlinks have been added that will take you to websites containing further information.

Below the outline is a box – the 'Fact File' – containing key information about the section. Two important stats for most walkers are the section's length and how much climbing it involves. These have been measured using mapping software and, in the case of distance, rounded up to the next highest mile and kilometre. (The basis for this decision is that the distance walked on the ground is almost always further than that measured on a map.) Height gain is given to the nearest metre, but, again, is likely to be an approximation of the real amount of climbing involved.

The start and finish of each section have been identified by both name and grid reference, and a link has been provided to the OS Explorer map(s) covering the section. (It is not recommended that you attempt to walk the route using these instructions alone.) Also provided is a link to an online map on the [Viewranger website](#); this contains numbered markers which correspond to those in the route description. Maps can be accessed via smartphone using the Viewranger app, or, alternatively, you can choose to export the GPX data and upload it on to a standard GPS device.

Lastly, the fact file contains information on the facilities available on each section. These are divided into three categories: toilets, refreshments and accommodation. The first of these is self-explanatory, though be aware that public toilets in Wales are closing all the time and that in many areas toilets are only open seasonally. Refreshments include pubs, cafes, shops and restaurants along the route. These have been identified individually where facilities are limited; on other occasions, I have provided a link to a relevant tourist or community website.

A similar principle has been adopted with regard to accommodation. Wherever possible, I have also tried to provide information on a range of accommodation types – bed and breakfast, bunkhouse, camping – in order to give walkers the greatest amount of choice. Wild camping is also a possibility along the more remote sections of the walk, though be aware that there is no legal right in Wales to wild camp and that there may be specific restrictions against camping in some areas.

The bulk of each section is, of course, taken up by the route description. This is divided into numbered paragraphs corresponding to the numbered markers on the relevant Viewranger map. As mentioned previously, the route devised should be walkable in all normal summer conditions.

There are a number of places along the route, however, where tide or weather conditions may make alternative routes preferable. Where available, these have been outlined under separate headings, though for reasons of space, detailed walking instructions have generally not been provided. Detours from the main route have also been placed under separate headings. These can be anything from a short aside to a place of interest or a longer excursion to a mountain summit.

Finally, I've included links to places of interest within the route instructions and a brief summary of (what I consider) the highlights of each day's walking at the end of each section.

Photographs taken en route - including those of places highlighted in the text - are available to view on [Pinterest](#).

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A note on place names

The spelling of Welsh place names can be a contentious issues, and expert opinion on the subject is often at variance with local practice and preference, particularly in more anglicized areas of Wales. In this book, I have followed guidelines produced by the Welsh Language Board for the standardization of place names, adopting the standard Welsh form of a name where this differs from the 'English' form by only one or two letters – e.g. *Llangatwg Lingoed* instead of *Llangattock Lingoed* and *Rhandirmwyn* instead of *Rhandirmwyn*. However, when quoting signage or the names of businesses, I have stuck to the form used on individual signs.

Where the difference between the two forms of a name is large enough to cause potential confusion – for example, *Llandovery/Llanymddyfri* – or the Welsh and English forms of a name differ completely (*Monmouth/Trefynwy*), then I have adopted the most commonly used English version. For further information on the principles determining these choices, see the [Enwau Cymru \('Welsh names'\) website](#). A list of some of the more common place name elements and their meanings is provided below.

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Welsh place names

Welsh place names are often descriptive, so knowing what names mean can be a great help when walking. Unfortunately, providing a glossary of Welsh place name elements is complicated by a grammatical feature of Welsh known as mutation, in which the initial consonants of words vary. The following list includes mutated and non-mutated forms of some of the more common place name elements you are likely to come across.

aber / estuary, confluence

afon / river

bach, fach / small

betws / house of prayer

blaen / head of a valley

bryn / hill

bwlch / pass or gap

cae / field

caer, gaer / fort or fortified camp

capel / chapel

carn, garn / cairn or pile of stones

carreg, garreg / stone

castell / castle

cefn / ridge

coch, goch / red

coed / wood

craig, graig / crag

cwm / valley

dŵr / water

dyffryn / valley

eglwys / church

esgair / ridge

ffordd / road

ffridd / pasture

ffynnon / well or spring

glan, lan / bank or shore

glyn / deep valley
gwaun, waun / moorland or meadow
hafod / summer farmstead
hen / old
isaf / lower
llan / church or sacred enclosure
llwyn / bush or grove
llyn / lake
maen / stone
maes / field
mawr, fawr / big
moel, foel / bare hill
mynydd / mountain
nant / stream
pant / hollow
pen / top or end
pentre / village
plas / hall or mansion
pont, bont / bridge
pwll / pool
rhiw / slope
rhos / moorland
rhyd / ford
tal / end or front
tan, dan / below
tarren, darren / escarpment
tref, dref / homestead or town
tŷ / house
y, yr / the
ynys / island
ystrad / wide valley

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Day 1: Abergavenny to Crickhowell



Looking down into the Gwynne Fawr valley from the western end of the Sugar Loaf

An exhilarating walk through the heart of the Black Mountains featuring twin climbs up the Sugar Loaf and Table Mountain.

Information

Distance: 11½ miles (18 km)

Time: Around 6½ hours

Start: Abergavenny bus station (OS map ref: SO 300139)

Finish: Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre (OS map ref: SO 218183)

Map: [OS Explorer OL13 Brecon Beacons National Park \(Eastern Area\) \(1:25 000 series\)](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Facilities: Shops and pubs in Abergavenny and Crickhowell. Buses (Services 43 and X43) run between the two towns roughly once an hour.

Walk instructions

1. From the bus station, turn right on to the main road and follow it towards Abergavenny town centre. Cross to the opposite pavement and continue ahead shortly afterwards on to Abergavenny's main shopping street, passing the Market Hall into the town's pedestrianised zone (or follow the main road round the sharp right-hand bend to visit St Mary's Church). At the end of the pedestrianised zone, continue into Frogmore Street to a T-junction with a main road just past a Tesco Metro store.

2. Turn right at the main road (alongside the Tesco store) to reach a pelican crossing. Cross the main road and follow the pavement left into Pen y Pound passing Abergavenny Baptist Church. At a junction with traffic lights, turn left on to Avenue Road.

3. After a long, straight section, continue ahead into Chapel Lane, a private dead-end road that ends at a kissing gate. Go through the gate and turn right. Keep straight ahead at a crossroads, shortly passing a private drive to Llwyndu Court. Immediately after the drive, bear left on to a path signposted to the Sugar Loaf. This initially runs parallel to the lane before crossing a stile into a field. Bear left across the field to reach the corner of a lane by Home Farm. Continue uphill in the same direction.

4. Keep ahead along the lane until you reach a small parking area on the left (past this point the road begins to dip into St Mary's Vale). Ignore the continuation of the road and take the track forking uphill to the right. A short distance ahead, the track follows a hairpin bend to the right. Keep ahead through a gate and join a woodland trail climbing steadily along the slopes of the Rholben, a long spur projecting from the central 'cone' of the Sugar Loaf.

5. Above the trees, continue to climb diagonally across the slope until you arrive on top of the Rholben. An obvious path continues ahead towards the Sugar Loaf summit, becoming steeper and stonier the higher you climb. A final steep pull is rewarded by spectacular views into the heart of the Black Mountains and as far east as the Malvern Hills and the Cotswolds.

6. From the trig point, drop back down the slope for a few metres and turn right on to a grassy path just below the main summit area. This shortly curves right, passing below a jumble of rocks on the north-western end of the summit. Turn left here to join a wide grassy path along the mountain's west spur.

7. Less than a mile after joining this path, at the end of a flatter section, fork right and continue downhill. A bit further along, fork right twice more, this time in quick succession, and descend steeply to a wide grassy path contouring round the base of the hill. Cross the path and follow a fence down to a rusty metal gate, where a grassy path descends to a rough vehicle track. Turn left and descend gently to a farm.

8. Follow a lane downhill to the next footpath on the right. Waymarks lead across fields to a track in front of Gellyrhydd Farm. Turn left and then right at the next track, which is signed to Pen-y-bont. Take the next footpath on the left and descend to a footbridge across the Grwyne Fawr river. Cross a field towards a gate, keeping the smaller Grwyne Fechan river to your left. Cross a lane and another field, and climb on to a shoulder of land above the river. A rough track drops back down to the river. Continue upstream as far as the second bridge on the left.

9. Cross the Grwyne Fechan and follow a stony track uphill into Llanbedr. Pass the church and turn right by the Red Lion pub. Follow a narrow country lane for around 800 metres as far as the next footpath on the right. This runs along the access track to Tredomen. After a gate, do not continue towards the farm, but bear left on to a worn path across a field. Pick up the right-hand field boundary and continue to a small metal gate at the end of the field. Join a sunken track on the right and follow this left for a short distance to emerge on a road.

10. Turn right for about 200 metres. Just after a small lay-by on the left, turn left on to an enclosed path – part of the waymarked Beacons Way long-distance route – signed to Table Mountain. Climb past a ruined farm (Graig-lwyd) and up to a gate on to the common. Bear uphill to the right and shortly reach a junction of grassy paths. Turn left and continue climbing diagonally between bracken in the direction of Table Mountain (not yet visible).

11. The path briefly makes contact with the boundary wall on your left, but then continues climbing diagonally across the slope. Bear right and then left, the path eventually emerging over the crest of a steep hill with Table Mountain clearly visible ahead. Keep ahead towards this former Iron Age fort (there are number of paths criss-crossing through the bracken) and climb past a crag to the summit.

12. Retrace your steps off the summit and bear left to join a path running alongside the boundary wall of the common. Continue on a well-worn path along the base of the common, curving left and right, then continuing ahead where the common boundary drops again to the left. Rejoin the boundary wall and descend into a valley on the left along a stony path.

13. At an old sheepfold at the bottom of the slope, bear left through the walled enclosure (the path is signed) and continue for a short distance between substantial stone walls. Join the line of a stream for a short distance, which can be tricky after heavy rain, then bear left along the edge of a field. Cross a stream on the left to a gate and continue downhill on a sunken path through woodland.

14. At a fork, cross the waymarked stile on the right and continue along a clear path down the right-hand edge of fields. At the bottom of the fields, enter a yard by a modern barn and stables. Cross a stile to the left of the stables and turn right on to an old lane running along the edge of a housing estate. Cross Cumbeth Brook and turn left at a junction with a lane. Descend to the main road in Crickhowell and turn left, towards the centre of town. Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre is on the left-hand side of the road, just beyond the town square.

Highlights

St Mary's Church

Located in the centre of Abergavenny, this former Benedictine priory contains the most impressive array of grave effigies and memorial tombs in Wales. Ranging in date from the 13th to the 17th centuries, these commemorate prominent Abergavenny families, from early Norman lords to later Welsh gentry. Also on display is part of a rare oak-carved Jesse Tree, one of the world's most significant surviving pieces of medieval sculpture. Next door, a gallery in the former tithe barn houses the magnificent Abergavenny Tapestry, an ambitious contemporary project chronicling the town's rich history.

St Mary's Vale

Sessile oak trees abound up and down the steep slopes of St Mary's Vale, forming an area of extraordinarily beautiful broadleaved woodland. Unlike the closely related pedunculate or English oak, sessile oaks possess stalked leaves and stalkless (sessile) acorns. They tend to flourish best in the wetter, upland areas of Britain

along the island's Atlantic fringe, and have been designated the national tree of both Wales and Cornwall.

Sugar Loaf

At 596m (1,955ft), the Sugar Loaf is the highest of Abergavenny's 'three peaks' (Bloreng and Ysgryd Fawr are the other two). The mountain's distinctive, conical summit is often assumed to be an extinct volcano, but is actually formed from the same Red Sandstone as the rest of the Black Mountains. An abundance of bare rock, together with a long, steep drop-off into the Grwyne Fawr valley, gives the Sugar Loaf a sense of isolated dignity and a mountainous feel belying its modest height.

Table Mountain

Table Mountain's 451m (1,480ft) summit is encircled by the ditch and ramparts of an Iron Age hillfort, still clearly visible on the ground. Although built by a pre-Roman Celtic tribe, the fort is associated in local legend with a later Welsh king called Hywel, hence the hill's Welsh name of Crug Hywel ('Hywel's Mound') and, through Anglicization, today's town of Crickhowell.

For photographs visit [Pinterest](#)

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Day 2: Crickhowell to Talgarth



View along the Black Mountains' northern escarpment from near Trefecca

A long but rewarding day's walk in the western foothills of the Black Mountains.

Information

Distance: About 15½ miles (25km)

Time: Around 7½ hours

Start: Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre (OS map ref: SO 218183))

Finish: Talgarth Information and Resource Centre (OS map ref: SO 154337)

Map: [OS Explorer OL13 Brecon Beacons National Park \(Eastern Area\) \(1:25 000 series\)](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Facilities: Shops and pubs in Crickhowell and Talgarth.

Walk instructions

1. From the Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre, retrace your steps along the main road to the western edge of town. Turn right by a distinctive roadside shelter with a red tile roof and follow a lane steeply uphill (this is the lane descended on Day 1). Ignore a Beacons Way marker pointing along a lane on the right and continue straight up the hill past a house called Pregge Mill (also part of the Beacons Way).

2. At the end of the lane, go through the gate into Gwernvale Farm and follow the waymarked concrete track to the left. Follow the track up to the next house (Twyn), turning right over a stile just before the track ends at the house gates. Keep ahead

up the hill, passing to the right of a ruin. At a waymarked junction of paths, take the uppermost of the two paths signed to the left. Between here and the bottom edge of the common, the Beacons Way path is well marked and easy to follow.

3. On reaching the common, you initially need to follow the common boundary uphill to the right as far as a Beacons Way waymark post. The waymarked path then climbs across the slope to the left, eventually levelling off near the top corner of a conifer plantation. Continue along the bottom edge of the common, initially with conifer trees on the left. Where the common boundary drops sharply away to the left, look out for a waymarked path forking right. This descends steeply towards a pretty stone house (Cwm Mawr) in the deep valley formed by Cwm-gu brook. Just before the bottom of the slope, turn right on to a diagonally descending path.

4. Join a clear path contouring round the steep-sided valley along the bottom edge of the common. Later, where the common boundary drops away, continue ahead along a cut strip across the hillside. The common boundary is rejoined near two closely spaced gates, though later the Beacons Way curves right, across the open slope of the hill, before descending left again towards a large stone house (Llewenau Draw). The path then continues along the edge of the common, climbing steeply to the right for a short distance before levelling off. At a wide grassy area, turn left and locate a waymarked stile in a corner formed by the boundary wall.

5. Follow the left-hand edge of a field down to a farm track and turn left. This becomes a surfaced lane and follows a pleasant, meandering route off the mountain. At a T-junction opposite Pen-cae-crwn, turn left and follow a lane gently downhill past St Michael's Church to a junction with the A479 in Cwmdu.

6. Go straight across the A479 on to a lane opposite. As the road curves left after crossing the Rhiangoll river, bear right through a small metal gate. Cross a field towards a stile near the far left-hand corner and then continue along the right-hand edge of a field to a junction with a lane. Turn right and follow the lane to its end at Blaen-y-cwm-isaf. Beyond the house, a farm track continues up the valley to Blaen-y-cwm-uchaf.

7. At the latter house, turn left up a grassy bank to a gate on to the common. Keep ahead up the hill for a short distance and then bear right. Climb steeply to a junction of bridleways on top of the ridge (the junction is marked by a stone cairn). Leaving the Beacons Way, turn right and follow the gently ascending path along the ridge towards Mynydd Llangorse.

8. Fork left on to a smaller path to continue climbing along the ridge. Pass a trig point and keep ahead towards the mountain's true summit, some 600m (a third of a mile) to the north. Beyond this point, the path starts to descend, eventually joining a narrow ridge and dropping to a road pass between Mynydd Llangorse and Mynydd Troed.

9. At this stage of the day, only the masochistic will want to clamber up the steep slopes of Mynydd Troed, so our route instead forks left, on to the largely level bridle track contouring along the base of the common. The track is clear, though quite badly rutted in places – if required, drier ground can be found higher up on the right. About 200m after passing above a house (Garn y Castell), fork left to continue along the common boundary fence. Drop to a lane and turn left.

10. Shortly after joining the lane, keep right at a fork in the road. Descend gently for about half a mile, then bear left into a field at a footpath sign for Trefecca. Cross two fields and a sunken green lane to the left of Neuadd-fach. Keep ahead across another field, then bear right in the next to a stile in the far corner (not visible until you crest the brow of a small rise). Cross a narrow field ahead and join a path along the right-hand edge of the next field. To the right, a stile leads to the Neolithic barrow known as Long Cairn.

11. Bear left at the bottom of the field to a stile and then continue downhill along the right-hand edge of fields to Cefn-mawr. Keep ahead past the buildings, then drop down a bank on the right to a stile. Cross a rough area of ground below trees to another stile into a field. Continue down the right-hand edge of fields to a modern barn. Pass between the barn and the hedge and join a track on the right. Turn left and continue ahead down a road into Trefecca.

12. At the T-junction with the B4560, turn right and proceed with care for about 400m as far as College Farm. Immediately after the farm, take a footpath on the left and cross a field to a sunken track to the right of the farm buildings. Follow the path through woodland to Pont Nichol Crossing and bear left in front of the buildings to cross the bed of a former railway. Join the access track leading gently downhill to a junction with a lane.

13. Keep straight across the lane. Continue ahead through two fields with the meandering Llynfi river to your left. At a lane, turn right for about 70m and then left on to a grassy track below trees. This wiggles left and then right and emerges in a field. Keep ahead to a stile and gate, then ahead again, crossing a field diagonally towards a little black gate to the right of a wooden shed. Join a tarmac track up to the A479 and cross to the pavement opposite. Turn right and follow the pavement as it curves left from a roundabout into Talgarth. Its Information and Resource Centre is housed in a former fortified manor house in the centre of town.

Highlights

Crickhowell

You'll want to spend some time exploring this charming little country town. There's a lot to see – a ruined Norman castle in peaceful parkland, 13-arched bridge across the river Usk dating from the 16th century, 14th-century St Edmund's Church (note its fine interior), Market Hall and fine examples of domestic architecture that reflect medieval, Georgian, Edwardian and Victorian influences. Located in the centre of Abergavenny, this former Benedictine priory contains the most impressive array of grave effigies and memorial tombs in Wales. Ranging in date from the 13th to the 17th centuries, these commemorate prominent Abergavenny families, from early Norman lords to later Welsh gentry. Also on display is part of a rare oak-carved Jesse Tree, one of the world's most significant surviving pieces of medieval sculpture. Next door, a gallery in the former tithe barn houses the magnificent Abergavenny Tapestry, an ambitious contemporary project chronicling the town's rich history.

Cwmdu

The churchyard of this little village's St Michael's Church contains the grave of Reverend Thomas Price (1787–1848), a historian, linguist and major Welsh literary figure. Better known by his bardic name of Carnhuanawc, he was a passionate Welsh patriot who spent his life campaigning on behalf of the Welsh language, establishing a school in Cwmdru in which Welsh was used as the principal language of instruction – a radical idea at the time. He wrote a popular history of Wales, helped Lady Charlotte Guest translate the Mabinogi folk tales into English, and established Welsh literary societies in both Abergavenny and Brecon. His range of historical, literary and scientific interests was truly phenomenal and included overseeing major restoration work on St Michael's Church.

Long Cairn

This grassy mound is in fact a Neolithic barrow dating from around 3500BC. It is the best preserved of around 16 such structures in the Black Mountains area, and is possibly the earliest surviving human structure in Wales. A partial excavation has revealed the remains of at least 15 people, as well as the earliest sheep bone ever unearthed in Wales (the bone had been used to make a flute). It has been estimated that the barrow may contain the remains of over 50 people, along with an array of flint tools, knives and arrow heads.

Trefecca

The small village of Trefecca is intimately associated with Hywel Harris, a charismatic 18th-century preacher and early convert to the Methodist cause in Wales. He was a visionary in more ways than one. The religious community he founded here in many ways anticipated later social experiments by farming the land and living a strictly communal life. Harris's former home, Trefecca Fach, now serves as a training college and conference centre for the Presbyterian Church of Wales. Built in 1748, it is one of the earliest examples of neo-Gothic architecture in Britain, predating Horace Walpole's more famous Strawberry Hill by two years.

For photographs visit [Pinterest](#)

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Day 3: Talgarth to Hay-on-Wye



The common above Rhos Fawr

This route takes you past an impressive waterfall in ancient woodland followed by varied hill walking along the base of the northern escarpment of the Black Mountains.

Information

Length: About 11 miles (18km)

Time: Around 7 hours

Start: Talgarth Information and Resource Centre (OS map ref: SO 154337)

Finish: Hay-on-Wye Tourist Information Bureau (OS map ref: SO 228422)

OS map: [OS Explorer OL13 Brecon Beacons National Park \(Eastern Area\) \(1:25 000 series\)](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Facilities: Shops, pubs and cafés in Talgarth and Hay-on-Wye. Buses (Service 39) run between the two towns six or seven times a day Monday to Saturday.

Walk instructions

1. From Talgarth Information and Resource Centre, walk towards the Co-operative store and turn right up a road signed to the church. After about 50m, turn right on to Brook Lane, a narrow, pedestrianised road that descends to a bridge over a stream. (Continue up the hill to visit St Gwendoline's Church.) Follow a Tarmac path to a junction with a road and turn left. Ignore a narrower lane forking right and continue up the wider Hospital Road to the left.

2. After the Black Mountains Business Park, the road narrows to a lane. Where the gradient steepens ahead, fork right into Pwll-y-Wrach Nature Reserve and take the path descending right. Drop to the river and follow the waymarked path upstream to the main waterfall. Climb steps to a gate and continue ahead along the river until you reach a gate leading back on to the lane.

3. Turn right and continue up the lane for a little under 200m. As the trees open out, a lane turns off to the right by a red telephone box. Opposite the telephone box, bear left over a stile and clamber up through woodland to a field. Continue climbing steeply and cross a tree-lined green lane. Keep straight ahead across the next field and then through a quick succession of smaller fields linked by stiles. Do not follow a field boundary to the left, but continue ahead across a field to a gap in the hedge. The path then follows the left-hand edge of fields as far as Pen y bryn. Bear left at a waymark post near the farm, aiming for a stile on to a lane by the farm entrance.

4. Cross the lane to a track opposite immediately to the right of Upper Pen y bryn and climb to the bottom edge of the common. Turn left along the base of the common, which almost immediately drops away to the left. Do not follow it, but keep straight ahead across an area with no one obvious route (if boggy, drier ground can be found higher up the slope). Pass through gorse bushes to a small wooden gate in a fence.

5. Pass through the fence and follow the path along the edge of Wern Frank Wood. Veer away from the common boundary slightly to cross the stream in Cwm Cwnstab. Immediately after the stream, take the stony path climbing straight ahead – not the more obvious grassy path bearing left. Cut straight across the common on a grassy path and rejoin the common boundary along the edge of deciduous woodland.

6. Shortly after the trees on the left are replaced by open fields, bear right towards the top corner of a fence. Rejoin the common boundary, this time following it to the left as it turns down the hill. Where it turns sharply away to the left, keep ahead on a clear grassy path and descend gently across the common to a junction of grassy paths and tracks. Turn right, dropping into a wooded valley from which a clear track can be seen emerging on the far side. Join this stony track on the valley floor and turn right. The track shortly bears left, climbing out of the valley along the common edge.

7. Continue along the common boundary until it once more drops away to the left. Keep straight ahead across the common, soon picking up a track again along the boundary wall. Where the common boundary drops to the left again, keep ahead across a small stream and climb gently across the common on a rather vague grassy track. This soon becomes clearer and climbs to cross a spur extending from the north face of Lord Hereford's Knob. Once over the spur, curve right and descend gently, passing above a house (Caemarchog) and keeping roughly parallel to a lane below. After crossing a couple of small streams, bear left and descend to the Tarmac lane.

8. Turn right along the lane, passing round the head of a valley where two small streams are forded. Continue on the lane, which climbs steadily for a little over a mile to reach a junction with the Gospel Pass road between Hay-on-Wye and Capel-y-ffin. Turn left and follow the unfenced road downhill across the open common. A little further down the road, you are joined from the right by Offa's Dyke Path.

9. Just after the road passes an enclosed field on the left, veer left across the common at a waymark arrow on a boulder. There is no real defined path, but keep ahead between the common boundary and the road – you are heading for the farthest corner where the common narrows to a point between trees. Leave the common and go on to an enclosed stony path, descending along a sunken lane to Cadwgan Farm. Continue past the farm on to the gravel access track, which later turns to Tarmac and starts to descend more steeply.

10. Around 300m after Cadwgan Farm, look out for a stile on the right – if you cross a cattle grid, you've gone too far. Follow a clear field path downhill to the left and through a narrow band of trees. A further steep section of path leads to a lane a short distance to the right of Upper Danyforest. Cross over and continue down a section of enclosed path to a field. Follow the right-hand field edge down to a kissing gate on the right and a bridge over a stream. Once across, bear left and follow the stream down to the bottom corner of the field and a stile on to a lane.

11. Turn left, following the road into a dip. As you start to climb out of the dip, look out for a stile on the right. Cross this and follow the right-hand edge of a field ahead. Follow the field boundary as it curves left, ignoring a footpath to Cusop Dingle on the right. Keep curving left, cutting across the corner of the field, and cross a gravel vehicle track to a stile. The path ahead is now obvious, crossing a field and entering a patch of woodland. Continue along the right-hand edge of a field to a further area of woodland and cross a footbridge over a stream.

12. Continue through two further fields, reaching a fork in the path at the beginning of a third. Take the left-hand path, which follows the left edge of the field to a kissing gate. Fork right after the gate, following the right-hand field edge towards the car park ahead. Join a track by buildings and follow this up into Hay-on-Wye. Turn left at the road to reach the Hay-on-Wye Tourist Information Bureau at the entrance to the large car park.

Highlights

Talgarth

Once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Brycheiniog, this small, friendly riverside town is a well-placed hub for outdoor activities. It's also home to beautiful St Gwendoline's Church named after one of the many offspring of King Brychan, the 5th-century ruler of Brycheiniog. This historic church may well date from the early Celtic-Christian times of the 6th century.

Pwll-y-Wrach

Pwll-y-Wrach Nature Reserve protects a remnant of ancient woodland along a steep-sloped valley either side of the river Ennig. The damp, humid woods provide food and shelter for a wide variety of plants, fungi and animals, including a significant population of resident dormice. At the eastern end of the reserve, an impressive waterfall tumbles into a dark pool – the 'witch's pool' from which the reserve derives its name. The pool has a wild, haunted feel and features in a number of local legends. St Gwendoline, King Brychan's daughter, is reputed to have bathed in the pool – a story which makes her sound more like a Celtic goddess than an early

Christian saint – while other stories suggest that the pool was used to duck suspected witches.

Rhos Fawr Common

Rhos Fawr ('Big Moor') and neighbouring Rhos Fach ('Little Moor') are swathes of semi-enclosed common land used for grazing animals by adjoining farms that enjoy 'common rights'. Historically, these areas were vital for the poorer people of the parish, who used them for grazing their house cows, poultry and sometimes pigs. Land like this is quite a common (forgive the pun), characteristic feature of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Offa's Dyke Path

Offa's Dyke Path, one of three designated National Trails in Wales, follows a route between Chepstow and Prestatyn through the rolling countryside of the Wales–England borderlands. Wherever possible, the path follows the line of the great dyke built by King Offa of Mercia in the 8th century to mark the boundary between his kingdom and Wales. Unfortunately, there is no sign of the dyke on this stretch of the trail – in Offa's time, the border was actually many miles to the east, along the river Wye.

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Day 4: Hay-on-Wye to Llanthony



Enjoying extensive views from Cusop Hill

A journey through the hills and valleys in the Herefordshire Black Mountains and an airy ridge walk along the Wales–England border.

Information

Length: 13½ miles (22km)

Time: Around 7½ hours

Start: Hay-on-Wye Tourist Information Bureau (OS map ref: SO 228422)

Finish: Llanthony Priory (OS map ref: SO 288278)

OS map: [OS Explorer OL13 Brecon Beacons National Park \(Eastern Area\) \(1:25 000 series\)](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Facilities: Shops, pubs and cafés in Talgarth, refreshments at Llanthony

Walk instructions

1. From Hay's Tourist Information Centre, head for the road and turn right. After about 100m turn right down a track marked with an Offa's Dyke Path sign. Retrace your journey into Hay-on-Wye on the Day 3 walk by following the left-hand edge of one field and the right-hand edge of the next. Go through a kissing gate and turn left on to a cross-path towards Dulas Brook. Pass between cottages and cross a stone bridge over the stream into Herefordshire. Join a Tarmac path up to a road and turn right.

2. Almost immediately, turn left on to a lane signed to St Mary's Church. Go past a lane on the left and join a raised walkway along the side of the road and into the churchyard. Pass to the left of the church and go through a kissing gate at the top end of the churchyard into a field. Take the path leading along the right-hand edge of the field to a metal gate and continue through a further field with a row of trees and ditch to your right. Curve right, then keep ahead up the field towards a gate and stile.

3. In the next field, bear left and climb steeply towards a telegraph pole poking out above the crest of the hill. Go straight over a grassy track to the left of the pole and cross a stile in a fence. Bear left across the slope to a waymark post and follow the arrow right, straight up the hill on a fairly well-defined path. Bear slightly left near the top of the field to a grassy track between bracken, and continue into a further large field, with a wooded slope descending steeply to your right. Bear left towards a stile in a fence, then strike out across the wide grassy top of Cusop Hill. Keep to the left of the hill summit and cross a stile into another large field. Aim just to the right of two stunted trees and maintain your direction until a raised grassy track is reached. Turn left and follow the track to a lane near a stand of conifers.

4. Turn right and follow the lane towards the northern edge of New House Wood. Just after a building on your left (New House), turn right on to a forestry track heading gently uphill. Where the main track curves to the left, keep ahead on to a smaller forest trail climbing straight up through the trees. Cross a gravel track higher up the hill and continue ahead along a grassy trail to a gate leading out on to open common known as Cefn Hill.

5. Follow a faint grassy track along the ridge ahead, continuing until the common narrows and you can see a fence to either side. Where telegraph wires cross the common, turn right and follow these down to a metal gate and stile off the common. Follow the left-hand edge of a field down to Abbey Farm and into the yard. Bear left on to the farm track and pass a barn on your left. Look into the valley below and you will see the remains of a rare Grandmontine priory

6. Straight after the barn, go through a gate on your left. Immediately fork right through a further gate and continue ahead along the top edge of a field. In the next field, bear right and descend across the middle of the field to a wooded area in the bottom left-hand corner. Once in the trees, follow a stream to the left – the ground may be boggy here – and then use stones to cross the stream to a gate. Continue down the valley along the left-hand edge of two fields and then on to a grassy path enclosed by trees.

7. Re-emerge on the left-hand edge of a field. After about 50m, keep ahead where the field edge drops away to the left and then bear slightly right to a gate. Continue along the left-hand edge of a field (ignoring a stile on the left) and then straight across the middle of the next field. Join a track to the right of a barn and follow this down to a junction with another track straight after a cattle grid. Turn right and then immediately cross a stone stile on the left into the grounds of St Mary's Church, Craswall.

8. Pass the church on its right-hand side and cross a stone stile into a field. Head straight down the field to a stile at the bottom and enter a second field. As soon as the trees allow, bear left and descend a steep bank. Continue ahead towards a footbridge in the bottom corner of the field. Cross a stream and continue ahead with the field boundary on your right. Shortly, turn right and cross a footbridge over a

larger stream – actually the infant river Monnow. Bear left through woods, following the line of a sunken track with steep wooded slopes to the right. Follow a waymark arrow uphill to the right and climb a steep grassy bank into a field. Curve right and cross the field towards a stile to the right of a house.

9. Turn left along a lane, continuing straight past a track to Town Farm on the right. Take the next track on the right and climb straight up the hill until you reach a T-junction with another track running across the slope. Turn left and follow a mainly enclosed track for about 1.2 km (0.75 miles). Emerge on to open common with Crib y Garth or the Cat's Back ridge towering above you to the right. Continue on to a clear grassy track along the base of the common, eventually curving right to reach a picnic site at the Black Hill car park overlooking the Olchon Valley.

10. From the car park, follow the access road down to a junction with a lane and turn left. After about 100m (just before the lane starts to rise ahead of you), turn right at a footpath sign and descend along a steep wooded valley. At the bottom edge of the woods, keep ahead through a garden to the left of a house (Blackhill Farm). Ignore a gate on the left and descend to the bottom of the garden. Drop to the right through woodland and cross a stream into a field. Continue down the field with the stream and valley to your left.

11. At the bottom of the slope, cross the Olchon Brook by a footbridge and bear left. Cross a small stream towards a waymark post and follow the arrows uphill along the right-hand edge of the field. At a lane, turn left briefly and then right on to a lane heading straight uphill. At a left-hand bend where the road levels off, bear right on to a grassy track and go through a gate.

12. Walking initially in the field to the left, follow the line of an old green lane up the hill. Where possible, rejoin the sunken, tree-lined lane, which curves left and right to a kissing gate. Follow the right-hand edge of fields to another kissing gate and keep ahead through a wooded corner at the bottom of the common. Before long, the path bears left and begins to climb diagonally across the slope. Continue ahead, eventually curving sharply left and climbing in the opposite direction. As you approach the top of the ridge, the gradient eases. Continue ahead to a junction with Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.

13. Turn left and follow the well-surfaced path along the top of the ridge. Continue past a trig point and a signed path on the left to Red Daren. At a stone cairn, with Offa's Dyke Path beginning to descend gently along the ridge ahead, turn right on to a signed path – initially gravel – to Llanthony.

14. Follow the clear path to a lip where the ground falls steeply away in front of you: in the valley below, Llanthony Priory should be clearly visible. The path now bears right, descending steeply. Curve left, alongside a stream, then right, and continue steeply downhill to a stile in the common boundary. Bear slightly right towards a waymark post and cross two closely spaced stiles in a band of trees. A clear grassy path continues down the hill towards the priory. Join a track and curve left round the perimeter wall to the entrance and car park.

Highlights

Grandmontine Priory

This ruined priory is one of only three houses founded in the UK by the French Order of Grandmont during the early 13th century. The others, at Alberbury in Shropshire and Grosmont in Yorkshire, were confiscated by the Crown in 1441, while Craswall's priory persisted until Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536. Left largely intact and allowed to decay naturally, the original Grandmontine ground plan remains visible today, despite the ruinous state of the buildings.

St Mary's Church

Craswall's parish church is linked with the Grandmontine priory higher up the valley, the churches of this order always being dedicated to St Mary. Unusually, there are no graves within the churchyard, thin soil overlying solid bedrock making it unsuitable for burials. In the past, the church appears to have been the site of much secular activity: fives – a form of squash using a bare or gloved hand – was played in a shallow depression against the north wall of the church, while another depression, in the north-west corner of the churchyard, is believed to have been used as a cockpit. Before the opening of a village school in 1876, the locked room at the western end of the building served as a schoolroom.

Olchon Valley

Although part of England since 1535, Welsh was spoken in this remote valley until well into the 19th century. The valley played a significant part in Welsh religious history, providing a home for the first Welsh Baptist chapel in the early 17th century. More recently, this timeless valley inspired Bruce Chatwin's acclaimed novel *On the Black Hill* and was used as the setting of Owen Sheers's World War Two novel, *Resistance*.

For photographs visit [Pinterest](#)

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Day 5: Llanthony to Abergavenny



Llanthony Abbey was founded in the 12th century

A lovely walk over Hatterrall Hill with tremendous views from Abergavenny's 'Holy Mountain'.

Information

Length: 13½ miles (22km)

Time: Around 8 hours

Start: Llanthony Priory (OS map ref: SO 288278)

Finish: Abergavenny bus station (OS map ref: SO 300 139)

OS map: [OS Explorer OL13 Brecon Beacons National Park \(Eastern Area\) \(1:25 000 series\)](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Facilities: Refreshments at Llanthony, plus shops, cafés and restaurants in Abergavenny. The route also passes the Skirrid Mountain Inn and a small convenience store in Llanvihangel Crucorney.

Walk instructions

1. Facing away from the priory (and towards St David's Church), turn right along the access road towards a sharp left-hand bend. Keep ahead on to a gravel track (the one that brought you into Llanthony on the previous day's walk) and follow this gently uphill to the right along the edge of a field. Go through a gateway and immediately turn right, leaving the track to follow a grassy path along the perimeter wall of the

priory. Once past the priory, go through a small gate into a further field and bear left up the hill towards a metal field gate leading into woodland.

2. Go through the gate and follow a rough track steeply uphill through the trees. At the top of the woods, ignore the large metal field gate ahead, instead bearing left to a smaller waymarked wooden gate. Climb along the right-hand edge of a field, continuing past a stile on the right. At the top of the field, go through a small wooden gate on to Hatterrall Hill.

3. Turn right and follow a clear gravel path, lined with ash trees, along the base of the common. Where the gravel ends, the path bears left and climbs diagonally across the slope of the hill. (There is ongoing work to repair erosion damage here, so the gravel path may extend higher up the hill than indicated.) As the common opens up to the left, keep ahead with a dry stone wall to your right. Just before the top of the ridge, reach a junction with Offa's Dyke Path National Trail – a great place to admire the striking contrast between the green fields of Herefordshire and the seemingly endless mountain ridges to the west.

4. Turn right along the clear ridgetop path and climb gently across the summit of Hatterrall Hill. After passing a signed turn-off to Cwmyoy on the right, drop to the left along a gravel path and continue gently downhill along a narrowing ridge. Where the path forks, keep left to go past a trig point.

5. The path steepens as it drops from the trig point. Fork left – the path is indicated by a National Trail acorn symbol – and descend to the left of an old stone wall. Where the gradient eases, join a farm track on the right and continue downhill to a gate off the common.

6. Continue on to a lane between hedges and descend to a crossroads. Keep straight ahead past a stone house and start to follow the lane round a left-hand bend. On the outside of the bend, fork right on to the second of two gravel tracks – follow the track marked as a bridleway, not the access track to Little Llwygy.

7. Follow the track along the left-hand edge of a large field to a gate. Continue along the edge of a second field, now with woods to your left. At the end of the woods, leave the track over a stile on the left and join a grassy path climbing gently ahead. Cross the crest of the hill and maintain direction to the start of a rough track below trees. Join this and descend steeply into the farmyard of Great Llwygy.

8. Turn right on to the access track in front of the house. Almost immediately, cross a stile on the right and descend across a field to a stile in the bottom hedge next to a lone tree. The path continues downhill, now along the right-hand field edge. Keep ahead to the bottom of a third field, which is bordered by the main railway line between Abergavenny and Hereford. Turn right and drop to a waymarked crossing on the left.

9. Once across the railway, keep ahead along the right-hand edge of a field and the Afon Honddu to a stile on to a lane. Turn right, crossing a stone bridge over the river, and immediately reach a T-junction. Turn left and follow the road up the hill into the centre of Llanvihangel Crucorney. At a T-junction at the top of the hill, turn right past the Skirrid Mountain Inn.

10. Turn left in front of St Michael's Church on to a pedestrianised lane dropping down to the A465. Cross carefully and continue ahead along a dead-end lane to

Llanvihangel Court, a Grade I listed building dating from the 16th century. The lane curves right and then left in front of the house, continuing uphill past a stone and timber barn. Where the Tarmac ends, keep ahead on to an enclosed track.

11. Just before the track begins to descend, turn right through a small metal gate into a field. Bear slightly left and pick up the line of a fence on your left-hand side. The path now continues along the left-hand edge of four fields. In the fourth field, where the field boundary drops sharply away to the left, keep ahead, passing to the right of an ash tree. Bear slightly left after the tree, following the line of a worn path to a gate into woods.

12. Cross a bridge over an often dry stream bed and follow the path through the woods. Emerge in a field and bear right to climb to a stile in the top left-hand corner. Follow the left-hand edge of two further fields up to a lane and turn right.

13. After about 500m turn left over a stile just before a new access track. Walk up the field to the left of the track towards a stone barn. Just below the barn, turn left and cross a stile into a field. Bear slightly right across the field to a stile and gate. In the next field, turn right and climb along the right-hand edge of two fields. Go through a gate on to the common below Ysgyryd Fawr.

14. Continue ahead on the common, keeping roughly parallel to the boundary fence on the left. After about 250m turn right opposite a stile on the left. Climb slightly right up the slope until a clear grassy path becomes apparent on the left. This climbs steeply to the ridge. Turn right and follow the ridge north to the trig point and summit.

15. Retrace your steps from the summit, then continue southward along the ridge. Descend gently until a National Trust waymark directs you below and to the left of the ridge crest. The path curves right, then left, and descends steeply into woodland down some potentially slippery stone steps. Bear right to continue alongside a mossy stone wall. Just before a boardwalk begins ahead, turn left through a gate and follow a twisty path down through Caer Wood. Keep straight across two tracks and reach a bench at the bottom of the woods marking the official start of The Beacons Way long-distance route. Continue on to a track between hedges and emerge at a parking area alongside the B4521.

16. Follow the road to the left as far as the access track to Skirrid Farm. Cross the road to a track on the right and keep straight ahead up the right-hand edge of a field. At the top of the field, turn left for a short distance to reach a stile and continue along an enclosed path between fences. Emerge on a lane in Brynygwenin and turn right.

17. At the end of the village, keep ahead on to a track. At a sharp right-hand bend, keep straight ahead over a stile on to a golf course. There is no obvious path, but keep ahead towards a pylon. At a waymark post below the pylon, bear slightly left through trees and continue across several fairways along a line of black and white poles. Join a grassy track to a lane and cross straight over on to another section of golf course. Cross the fairway to a band of trees and join a grassy path just to the left of a green. Cross two further fairways in the direction of a waymark arrow. Pass to the right of a green and then the left of the 14th tee. Just beyond the tee, cross a stile in the hedge on to a lane.

18. Turn right along the lane and descend gently past Tredilion Park. After passing below road and railway bridges, you enter the outskirts of Abergavenny. Cross the

river Gavenny to a T-junction and turn left. Where this road starts to curve right, fork left along the signed cycle route and go under a bridge. Just after a metal gate on the left, cross a low stone wall and join a gravel path alongside the river Gavenny.

19. At a T-junction with a Tarmac path, turn left and cross a footbridge over the river. The path then curves right into a grassy area that was formerly part of Pen-y-Fal Cemetery. Go past a small play area and take the path forking to the right of houses. Curve left, on to a housing estate road, and turn left. Almost immediately, leave the road by turning right on to a Tarmac path between garden fences.

20. Emerge onto a road – the B4233 – and continue ahead down the hill. Keep straight ahead at a mini-roundabout, shortly afterwards crossing the river Gavenny once again. Straight after the river, turn left and follow the signed cycle path through parkland. Just after a play area, emerge on the main road through Abergavenny a short distance from the bus station.

Highlights

Llanthony Priory

Founded in 12th century by Norman nobleman William de Lacy, Llanthony Priory is one of Wales's great medieval buildings and a striking example of transitional Norman/Gothic architecture. William stumbled across a small chapel dedicated to St David while hunting in the secluded Ewyas valley and decided to settle there as a hermit. The intervening centuries have taken their toll – the five central arches and great west window have been lost – but the ruined priory still retains its inspirational and sacred atmosphere.

Hatterrall Hill

Straddling the Wales–England border, this area of heather moorland has been shaped by grazing since the Neolithic period, when early agriculturalists cleared the ridge of trees. Traces of these prehistoric farmers are scattered across the hillside in the form of cairns, enclosures and other archaeological features. The hill, home to significant populations of raven and merlin, also contains one of the most southerly populations of red grouse in Britain. In 2011, rare Silurian moths were discovered by scientists. The moth – which emerges solely at night – is known from only one other site in Britain, Coity Mountain in Blaenau Gwent.

The Skirrid

Known in Welsh as Ysgyryd Fawr, The Skirrid is a mountain steeped in myth and legend. The mountain's name – Ysgyryd roughly translates as 'shattered' or 'separated' – refers to its distinctive shape, the result of a landslide caused by retreating glaciers destabilising the hill's western flank soon after the last Ice Age. In local folklore, the landslide is attributed to either an earthquake at the time of Jesus's crucifixion or the keel of Noah's Ark scraping across the mountaintop. Such legends have contributed to a local tradition that the mountain is holy. In former times, soil from the mountain was considered to be especially fertile and collected by nearby farmers on Good Friday to scatter on their fields. Catholic pilgrimages were made to a small stone chapel on the summit dedicated to St Michael, particularly on Michaelmas Eve (its foundations can still be clearly seen around the trig point). This

remained in use until at least 1680, a century and a half after the English Reformation began.

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About us



Walking near

Capel Curig

Harri has an academic background in literary studies and Welsh culture, including both an MA and a PhD in Welsh writing in English.

Harri is the author of several print walking books. He is a fluent Welsh speaker and works as a freelance Welsh translator, editor, book reviewer and proof reader.

Harri is as passionate about hiking as he is about Wales and believes that some of the most stunning natural landscapes and trails remain undiscovered by hikers. He hopes his books will change that.

Tracy worked in media and communication roles for fifteen years before taking voluntary redundancy. She enjoys local history and co-ordinated an oral history project with first-generation Caribbean people living in Newport. She works as freelance writer and editor.

Tracy is the author of several travelogues and is currently working on her first novel.

Like Harri, Tracy has been passionate about walking since childhood; unlike Harri, she has never mastered map-reading.

Tracy blogs about hiking at [The Walker's Wife](#)

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Never Too Old To Backpack: a 364-mile walk through Wales

'Predictably, the hills were alive with Duke of Edinburgh participants. I reprimanded Harri when he groaned alongside me. These were our future customers, young people who venture into the wilderness for the first time while still in their teens and resolve to spend the rest of their lives in hiking boots. Only the majority of this lot looked pretty miserable under the weight of their huge rucksacks; worse, despite having barely left their valley campsite, they were huddling together in that all too familiar way. They couldn't be lost already, Harri sighed.'

[Never too old to backpack: a 364-mile walk through Wales](#) is a personal account of our experience of walking the undulating and frequently mountainous 23-day route from Holyhead to Chepstow devised by Harri Roberts.

From a sleepless night on a Bronze Age settlement to meltdown in Llandovery, a hunt for a long-lost friend in Beddgelert to karaoke in Brecon, Tracy shares the very best (and worst) that Wales – and long-distance hiking – has to offer.

The route was devised by Harri, who has published a separate guidebook [O Fôn i Fynwy: Walking Wales from end to end](#) with detailed hiking directions.

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O Fôn i Fynwy: Walking Wales from end to end

'Up to now, perhaps the closest Wales has come to having a genuine end to end walking trail is a popular but unofficial route created by the late [Tony Drake](#). The [Cambrian Way](#) is a high-level walk between Cardiff and Conwy which takes in almost all of the principal mountain regions in Wales. Although only 274 miles (441 km) in length, Drake's trail involves almost 19,000 metres of ascent, so is not for the fainthearted. Given fine weather, however, the route is one that almost all mountain walkers will relish.

But here comes the caveat: it rains a lot in Wales, particularly in the mountains. On a long-distance hike of some three to four weeks, there will almost certainly be days of rain and low cloud. In such weather, walking across exposed mountain ridges and high summits is unpleasant at best and at worst plain dangerous.'

The traditional Welsh expression 'O Fôn i Fynwy' literally means from Anglesey (Ynys Môn) to Monmouthshire (Sir Fynwy) but is also used figuratively to mean the whole of Wales, in the same way that 'From Malin to Mizen' is used in Ireland.

By devising a long-distance route which links the two traditional 'ends' of Wales, Harri Garrod Roberts hopes to capture the imagination of long-distance hikers who wish to walk through the most stunning landscapes the country has to offer.

[O Fôn i Fynwy: Walking Wales from end to end](#) by Harri Garrod Roberts is available from Amazon's Kindle Store.

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Hiking books by Harri Garrod Roberts

Print books

[Day Walks in the Brecon Beacons](#) (Vertebrate Publishing)

[Day Walks in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park](#) (Vertebrate Publishing)

[Carmarthen Bay & Gower: Circular Walks along the Wales Coast Path](#) (Northern Eye Books)

[Carmarthen Bay and Gower: Wales Coast Path Official Guide \(Tenby to Swansea\)](#) (Northern Eye Books)

Digital books

[Dylan's Welsh Walks](#)

[Castle Walks in Monmouthshire](#)

[Castle Walks in the Marches \(Gwent\)](#)

[Castle Walks in Newport and Cardiff](#)

[Rhymney Valley Walks](#)

[Circular Walks on the Gower Peninsula](#)

[England Coast Path: Severn Estuary & Bridgwater Bay](#)

For more information visit thewalkerswife.co.uk

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