

The Homfray Trail



Trail 1 The Homfray Trail

Strenuous Walk, 6 Miles/10 Km (2 Hours)

Start at Bedwellty House (SO 143 085).

Bedwellty House is the mansion of the Homfray family – the ironmasters of the Tredegar Ironworks. It was built in about 1800 and enlarged in 1818. **1 2 3 4**

Pass through the main gates onto Morgan Street. Continue towards the Town Clock.

The Town Clock was built in 1858 out of the proceeds of a bazaar promoted by Mrs R. P. Davies, the wife of the works manager. Ironically, it was not made in Tredegar but by Charles Jordon of Newport. The Circle is the heart of a planned town laid out on a grid pattern in about 1802. By 1841 the population of Tredegar was over 7,300 and still growing. **5 6 7**



From the clock, retrace your steps and then turn left down Bridge Street to Siloh Baptist Chapel - completed in 1806. **Turn right in to Shop Row.**

Built in 1811, the Company Shop was once a fine three-storey stone building with a two-storey wing.

Follow Iron Row uphill to Duke Street, follow the path from the rear of the large chapel, through the small car park and down to the roundabout near the bus stops.



Trail 1 map



Tredegar Ironworks

Follow the footpath from the rear of the large chapel, through a small car park and down to the roundabout near the Bus Station.

Here is the entrance to the Yard Level where John Jones ('Colier Mawr') cut the largest block of coal ever mined for the Great Exhibition of 1851. The block weighed twenty tons and can still be seen in the grounds of Bedwellty House. **8**



Bedwellty House

Walk across to the corner of the main car park.

Tredegar Ironworks was established in 1801 on land leased from Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar Park near Newport and Tredegar Ironworks were named in his honour. The first blast furnace was completed in 1801. By 1841, the works employed over 2,700 people. **9**

Retrace your steps to the top of Castle Street, cross the main road and follow Queen Street, Harcourt Terrace and Park Row. 10 Beyond Park Row the road turns sharply uphill. After a climb of about 1.5km 11, turn left and you will see a large pond on your right. Follow the dam round to Cefn Golau Cholera Cemetery. The cemetery is a grim reminder of the cholera epidemics that hit Tredegar in 1832, 1833, 1849 and 1866. In 1849, whole streets were swept away.

Return to the town centre to continue the rest of the trail. Turn left into Commercial Street. At the end of Commercial Street 12 walk straight ahead into Church Street to St George's Church.



Cefn Golau Cholera Cemetery

Designed by John Jenkins and completed in 1842, the building is similar to an ironworks an engine house.

Opposite the church stands the Central Surgery built in 1911 by the Tredegar Medical Aid Society.

The surgery provided consulting and treatment rooms, a pharmacy and a waiting room. The Tredegar Medical Aid Society was used by Aneurin Bevan as the model for the establishment of the National Health Service. Tredegar is the birthplace of the NHS.

Continue to the roundabout where A4048 and A4047 join. Cross over the roundabout and after 150m you will cross a bridge over the Sirhowy river.

This was built between 1802 and 1805 to carry the Sirhowy Tramroad linking Sirhowy and Tredegar with Newport.

Before continuing into Sirhowy Ironworks, turn right along the Dukestown Road. Here you will see some carved stones. One, dated 1818, commemorates when Ebbw Vale took over the Sirhowy works. Another, dated 1797, is all that remains of one of the original blast furnaces.

Return and turn right through the gap in Duketown Road and into Graham's Yard.



Sirhowy Ironworks

Continue out of the site to the north through the narrow lane. Follow the Dukestown Road. You will pass the former Sirhowy Truck Shop on the right (now the Armoury Stores).

Continue along the Dukestown Road – it follows the course of a leat (a man-made watercourse) that originally fed the waterwheel for the 1797 blast furnace at the ironworks.

Cross the bridge in front of The Oak public house, turn left in front of Yellow Row and walk along Picton Road. After 70m you will come to a right turn near a small green. This is known as Feeder Bank and the grassy bank on the right hand side is the leat itself. Below and to the left is the village of Scwrfa. The name means "the scouring" and refers to early water-powered opencast mining in the area.

Follow the road to the end and continue along the footpath ahead of you. Here, the leat survives as an overgrown ditch on the right hand side of the path.

Follow the footpath as far as the junction with Scwrfa Road. Turn right and into St Luke's Road. 14 Drop down the hill to Pont y Widw ("The Widow's Bridge").

Follow the footpath on the right for about 100m to the weir built in 1796 to send water along the Sirhowy leat. The footpath also leads to the viaduct built in 1864 to carry the

Merthyr, Tredegar & Abergavenny Railway across the valley.



Continue to join the A4048 at the roundabout 15. Take 2nd left and follow Ashvale Road past the Crown Inn. Continue to the next roundabout on the A4048. Do not join the roundabout but bear right. To your left is Charles Street, the birthplace of Aneurin Bevan.

Take the right fork and continue along Sycamore Avenue following the line of the Tredegar Tramroad for just over 1km until it returns to the town centre. Where the road makes a slight bend at Deighton Primary School was Briggs Pit. At the roundabout ahead of you the Tredegar Tramroad crossed Commercial Road into the ironworks.

Turn right into Commercial Street and down Castle Street and on to the Circle. Continue back down Morgan Street to where you started.



Tredegar Pit Girl

This trail is one of seven "In the Footsteps of the Iron-makers" series that is part of the Green Mines/Atlanterra project to promote our mining heritage through tourism.

To let us know if you enjoyed the walk or for further information please contact us on 01495 355937 / 07968 472812 or at alyson.tippings@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

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