



Aberdare **Circular Walk**

This is a circular walk in the countryside around Aberdare. It includes sections of open moorland with spectacular views, secluded flood meadows, woodland, ffridd and farmland on the valley sides, a sculpture park, old railway and tramroad, and three short on road sections.

The full route is approx 20 miles (32km) long, with various shorter options available. The route is suitable for a reasonably fit walker with appropriate footwear.

Most of the route is on countryside footpaths, with stiles and some short steep sections. The overall height gain is 1,096m (3,596ft). The route is signposted and way-marked, mostly following public rights of way, as shown on the OS Explorer map no. 166 (1:25,000). Navigation (following the route) is generally easy, but the open moorland sections are not recommended in poor visibility, without an OS map and compass, and the knowledge to use them.

The route can be walked over two days, using public transport or circular route options to provide the links to accommodation.

Bus and train information is available from www.traveline-cymru.info

Accommodation information is available from www.visitrct.co.uk

The Aberdare Circular can be followed in either direction and can be started at any point. The map of the route is shown in four overlapping sections on the following pages. It is described in a clockwise direction from Dare Valley Country Park.



Dare Valley
Country Park



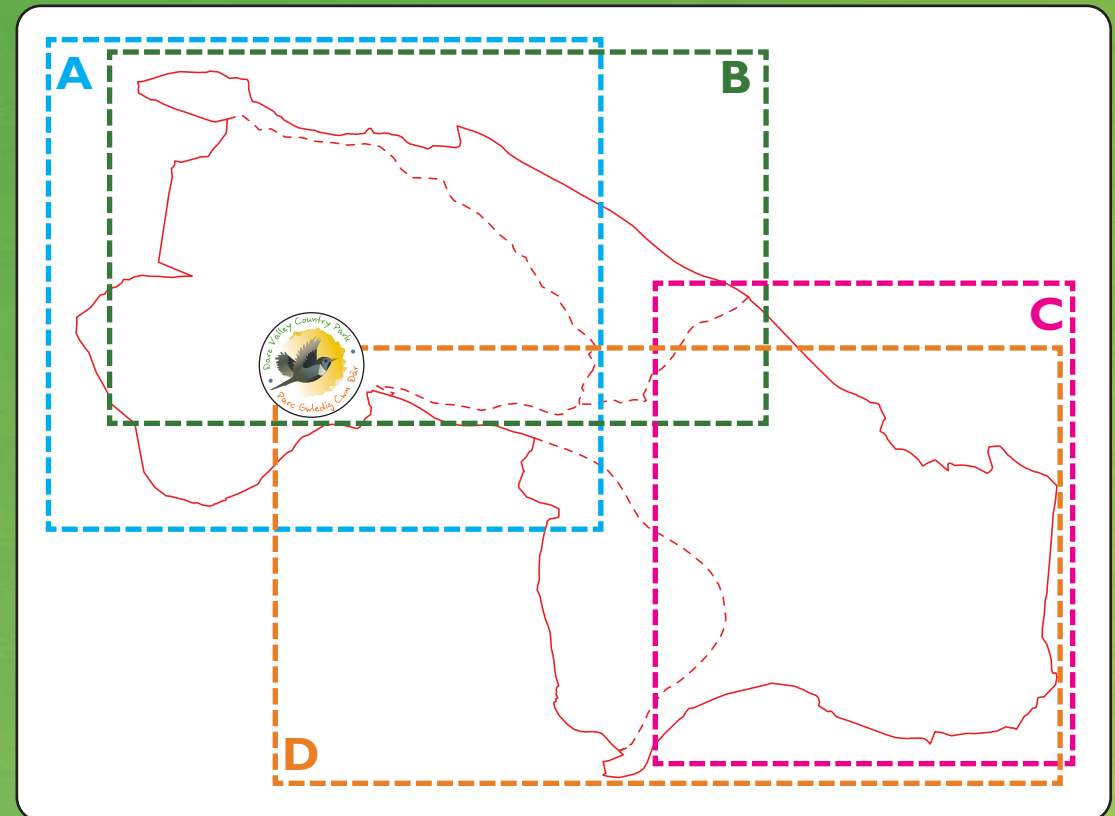
Way marking Sign



Viewpoints

Main Route

Linking Routes

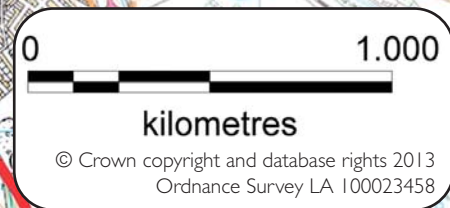
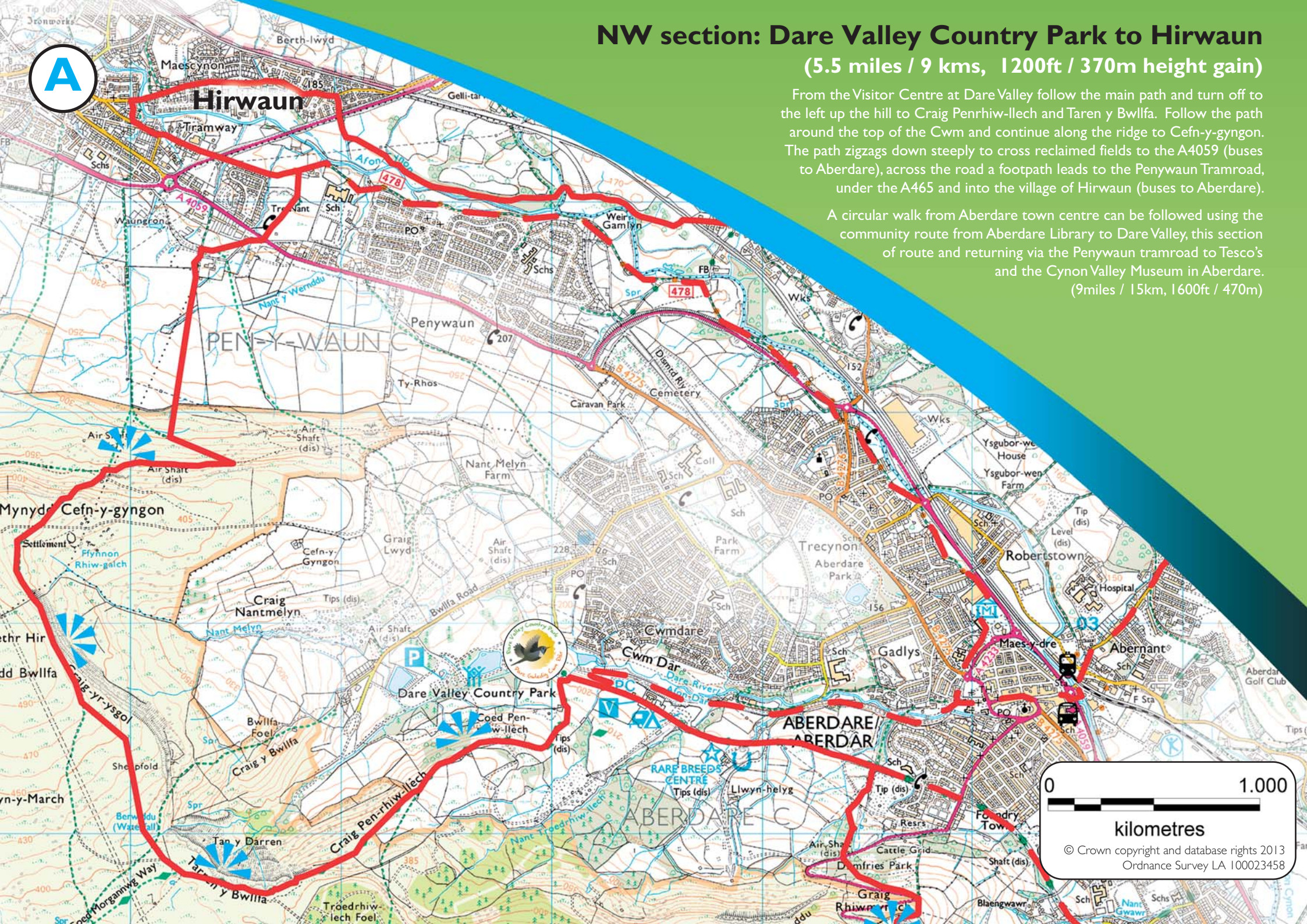


A

NW section: Dare Valley Country Park to Hirwaun (5.5 miles / 9 kms, 1200ft / 370m height gain)

From the Visitor Centre at Dare Valley follow the main path and turn off to the left up the hill to Craig Penrhiw-Ilech and Taren y Bwllfa. Follow the path around the top of the Cwm and continue along the ridge to Cefn-y-gygon. The path zigzags down steeply to cross reclaimed fields to the A4059 (buses to Aberdare), across the road a footpath leads to the Penywaun Tramroad, under the A465 and into the village of Hirwaun (buses to Aberdare).

A circular walk from Aberdare town centre can be followed using the community route from Aberdare Library to Dare Valley, this section of route and returning via the Penywaun tramroad to Tesco's and the Cynon Valley Museum in Aberdare. (9miles / 15km, 1600ft / 470m)

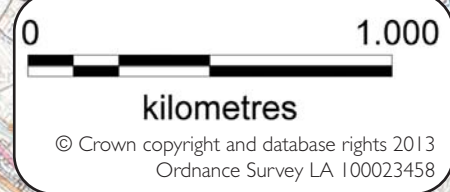
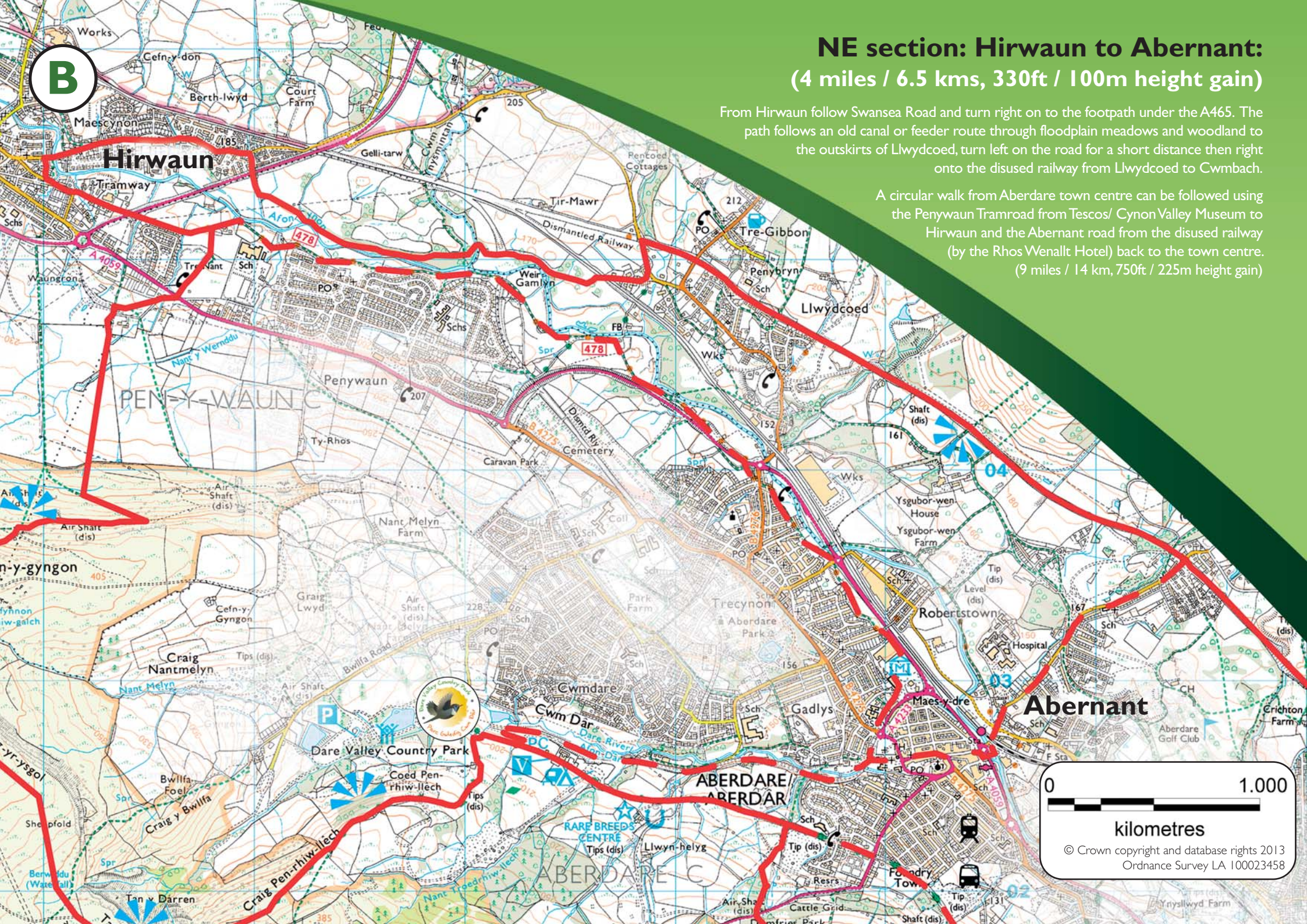


B

NE section: Hirwaun to Abernant: (4 miles / 6.5 kms, 330ft / 100m height gain)

From Hirwaun follow Swansea Road and turn right on to the footpath under the A465. The path follows an old canal or feeder route through floodplain meadows and woodland to the outskirts of Llwydcoed, turn left on the road for a short distance then right onto the disused railway from Llwydcoed to Cwmbach.

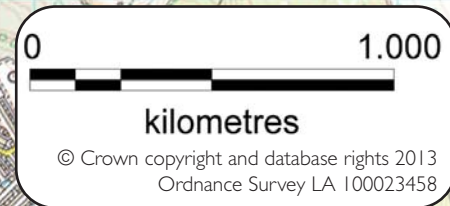
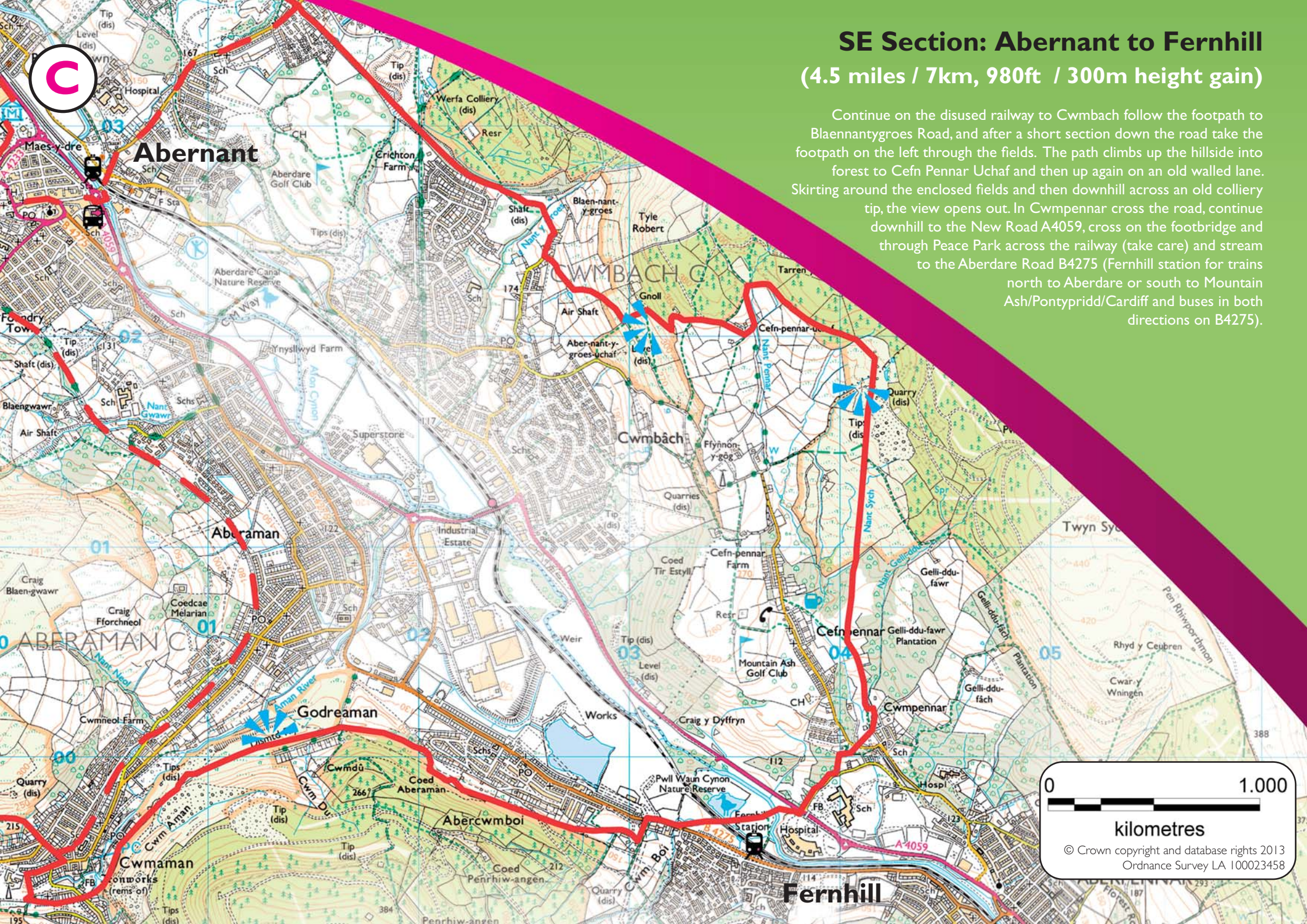
A circular walk from Aberdare town centre can be followed using the Penywaun Tramroad from Tescos/ Cynon Valley Museum to Hirwaun and the Abernant road from the disused railway (by the Rhos Wenallt Hotel) back to the town centre.
(9 miles / 14 km, 750ft / 225m height gain)



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SE Section: Abernant to Fernhill (4.5 miles / 7km, 980ft / 300m height gain)

Continue on the disused railway to Cwmbach follow the footpath to Blaennantgroes Road, and after a short section down the road take the footpath on the left through the fields. The path climbs up the hillside into forest to Cefn Pennar Uchaf and then up again on an old walled lane. Skirting around the enclosed fields and then downhill across an old colliery tip, the view opens out. In Cwmpennar cross the road, continue downhill to the New Road A4059, cross on the footbridge and through Peace Park across the railway (take care) and stream to the Aberdare Road B4275 (Fernhill station for trains north to Aberdare or south to Mountain Ash/Pontypridd/Cardiff and buses in both directions on B4275).





SW section: Fernhill to Dare Valley (5 miles / 9km, 1100ft / 330m height gain)

Follow the pavement along the B4275 for a short distance, cross the road and go left up the hill and right on to the path behind Abercwmboi. Follow this route along the valley side into Cwm Aman. Cross Llanwonno Road, through the sculpture Park by St Joseph's Church and Environment Centre into the village of Cwmaman (buses to Aberdare). Turn left on to Mountain Road and then left on to the old miners track leading out of the valley and over the hill (Rhos-gwawr). Skirting the edge of the hairpin on the A4233, follow the path downhill through Dumfries Park to cross the A4233 (take care!) and down again to join the Dare Valley entrance road.

A circular walk from Cwmaman or Dare Valley Country Park uses the Rhos-gwawr / Dumfries Park section combined with the Dare Aman community route on the former railway line between Dare Valley and Cwmaman. (6miles / 10km, 900ft / 270m height gain)

