

Penrhys Pilgrimage Way Groesfaen to Llantrisant



Start: A4119, Groesfaen (CF72 8NW)

End: Bull Ring, Llantrisant (CF72 8EB)

Distance: 3 miles / 5km

1. If you are starting the pilgrimage route here, you may wish to visit St David's Church in Groesfaen and see the probable base of the stone cross marking the route, which is now outside the door. Then, from the neighbouring Dynevor Arms, cross the A4119 with care to join the footpath on the east side of the main road.
2. Turn left. Walk past Groesfaen Babel Chapel. Stay on the pavement and continue straight on until almost the end of the village. You will have crossed over two right turns, one into Y Parc and one into Pen y Groes.
3. Turn right, into an unnamed road. Head in the direction of the house. Before the house, there is a kissing gate into a field. Go through the gate into the field. The view from this field almost mirrors the passport stamp for Groesfaen (Stone Cross). Ahead is a glorious view of Llantrisant with the Parish Church on the hill. The church is dedicated to three Celtic saints, St Illtyd, St Gwynno and St Dyfodwg, from whom Llantrisant draws its name: Llan (church or parish) tri (three) sant (saint). To the left of the church you will see a tower, known locally as the Billy Wynt. Wynt means wind, leading many to think that the Billy Wynt was once a windmill. Others, perhaps with better reason, believe it to have been an outpost for Llantrisant Castle, given its commanding view over the Ely Valley.
4. Keep to the right, close by the hedge and head down the field. You will find a kissing gate. Pass through this gate into a field.
5. Keep walking through the field, again keeping the gate to your right. You will find a stile. Cross the stile.
6. Follow the track. You will pass Bishops Pond, used by the Glamorgan Anglers, on your left.
7. The track bears left. Follow it. Ignore the stile ahead of you. It leads into a path in some woods. It is not a right of way. Also ignore the track to your right to Llwyn-saer (the carpenter's grove or bush).
8. Continue on the track. You will pass some industrial workings and then Leekes Head Office. You are now close to Mwyndy Cross, where there would have been a Pilgrim's Cross. If you want a break, leave the route here and turn left. This brings you to a traditional pub called The Barn. When you are ready to continue, retrace your steps to the track by Leekes Head Office.
9. After an S-bend, the track forks, creating an island. Take the right fork and continue along a lane to a T-junction. Turn right, over a cattle grid and onto a tarmac road. You will pass a derelict, old house.

10. Leave the road when it turns right. Continue along the track ahead.
11. The path goes through some woods and ends at a gate into a field. Go through this gate, turn left and follow the hedge line to reach and cross a stile.
12. Continue downhill to come to a bridge over the River Clun. It has two horizontal rails across it, on both sides of the bridge, 4 rails in all. Cross the bridge.
13. From the bridge over the River Clun, follow the path straight on, through a kissing gate, and across a field for about 110 yards (100m) to another kissing gate. Go through the gate to emerge onto Rhiwsaeson Road. This route does not take you to Cross Inn, as this would involve crossing two busy roads. In the old days, the pilgrims would have gone straight ahead at this point, where there was a Cross to guide them.
14. Turn right and walk along the road for about 275 yards (250m). Reaching a house called Little Foxes, take the lane to the left of the drive to the house.
15. Follow this path – a sunken lane that contours around the west side of Caerau, a significant Iron Age hillfort.
16. Eventually, the track bears left between a barn and the farmhouse, Gwern-y-Moel Uchaf. Moel is generally used to mean a bare hilltop and Gwern is used for soggy wet land. Uchaf refers to it being an Upper Farm. There would also have been a Gwern-y-Moel Isaf, or Lower Farm.
17. Continue as the path turns into a wider track and then a road. Bear left along the road as it crosses the A473.
18. Turn left along the footpath immediately after the bridge (signposted Cross Inn and Llantrisant).
19. Continue along this path known as the Community Route.
20. Immediately after the arch that goes under a disused railway line, turn right. Head uphill. Ignore the new path to your left. Go through the kissing gate. Follow the track, which bears left. Cross the opening to a track that comes in, on your right. Continue up the hill. The track bears right and continues to climb upwards. At the top of the incline, go through a kissing gate and follow the path towards Old Llantrisant.
21. The path joins a road called Erw Hir (Long Acre) by a Ridgeway Walk sign. The hill above Erw Hir is Caeau'r llan (the Parish fields). On this hilltop in 1884, Dr William Price horrified the townspeople by cremating the body of his own dead baby son, whom he had named Iesu Crist (Jesus Christ). His acquittal of this crime in court led to the legalisation of cremation a few years later.
22. Bear left and keep straight on until you come to a T-junction with the main road, High Street, which leads into Old Llantrisant.

23. Cross this road with care, turn right and after about 20 yards (18m) turn left up some steps.
24. Follow the path up, through a kissing gate. You reach railings that encircle the remains of Llantrisant Castle. Go up the steps to the right. You are now on Castle Green, with the ruined Raven Tower on your left. The castle was founded by Richard de Clare in the 13th century. Edward II was imprisoned here after trying to flee with the Lord of Glamorgan, Huw Despenser.
25. Follow the path and cross the Green passing the stocks. The old Guildhall is on your right. The Guildhall, a 14th-century building, rebuilt in the 18th century, has recently undergone a massive restoration. There are toilets at the Guildhall.
26. Pass the Guildhall and turn right into George Street. Head down George Street into The Bull Ring, to the statue of Dr William Price. Dr William Price was a well-respected physician but very eccentric. He was passionately interested in recovering the old Celtic Druidic traditions of the Celts in Wales.

With thanks to Janet Sully and all who contributed to mapping the route.

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