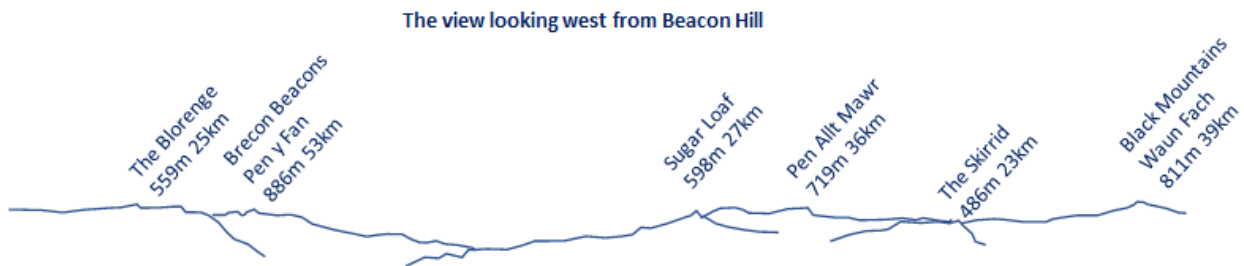




Penallt Linear Walks – Beacon Hill

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Length: | 9.2 km; total ascent: 240 m |
| Time: | 120 to 160 minutes |
| Grade: | Mostly level or downhill with one stiff climb near the end |
| Starting point: | Beacon Hill Car Park (GR SO511053). |

The route takes in Beacon Hill, Duchess Ride, Pen y Fan Green and Whitebrook.

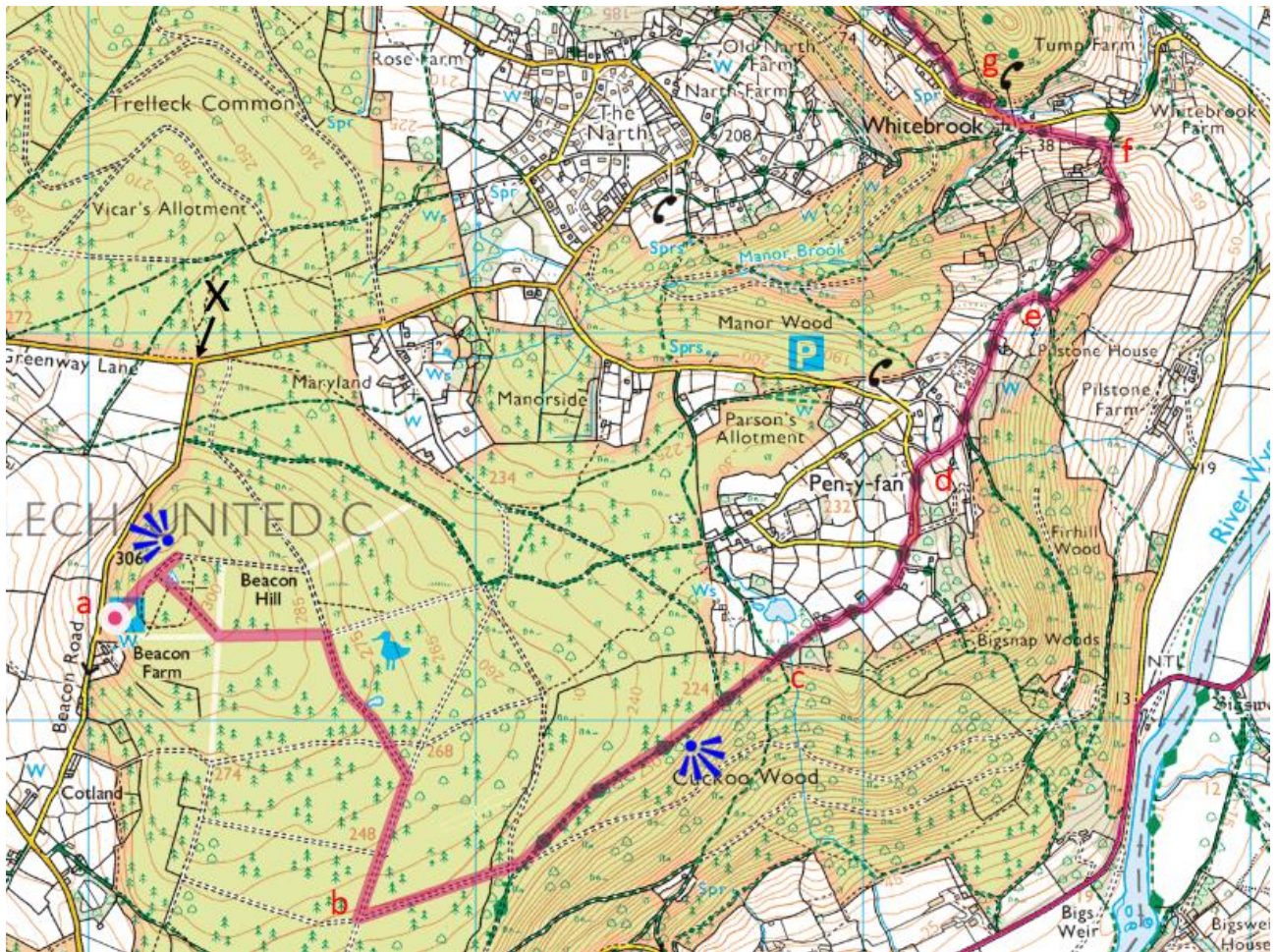


THE ROUTE

Access the Beacon Hill Car Park by car (retrieve later) or by 65 bus from Penallt. If coming by bus, arrange to be dropped off at "X" (see map 1 overleaf) at the junction with Beacon Hill Road and then walk up to the car park from there (ignore first parking area, approx. 100m on the left).

- a. At car park top, turn right and follow the red and black footpath signs to the top of Beacon Hill where there is a picnic table and a viewpoint with views over towards the Sugarloaf, the Brecon Beacons and the Blorenghe, with Waun Fach over to the right. Retrace your steps 50 m and take the track forking off on the left opposite a post with red and green footpath markers on it. Go past the trig point which marks the summit of Beacon Hill (306 m/1004 feet). Bear left through a gate at an intersection with a crossing track into an area of heathland. Turn right at the junction with a forest road. The Malvern Hills can be seen in the distance half-left. Pass a pond on the left and in 200 m go right at the T-junction with another forest road.
- b. In 550 m turn left, following a green footpath sign. After about 400 m the path descends toward a 5-way junction where you take the 2nd track on the left. This is Duchess Ride, said to be a favourite carriage ride of the Duchess of Beaufort. You are now on the Wye Valley Walk (WVW) coming up from the valley. This track remains level for a while. After about 450 m, a purple sign points down to a viewpoint on the right with stunning views of the Wye and the Severn. This is the Duchess Ride viewpoint, one of the best in the Wye Valley.
- c. Rejoin the ride and then go through a gate and continue along the Wye Valley Walk, through another gate and then straight on along a metalled lane. Bear right where a road comes in from the left, then bear left past the entrance to Woodfield House.
- d. Follow the WVW (signed) down to the right along a path which bears right off the road. Ignoring a turning to the left after about 100 m, continue down the path, bearing left lower down and then turning left at the T-junction at the bottom, still following the WVW signs. Immediately bear right at a fork, passing close to a house on your left. Keep following the WVW signs down the lane until arriving at a T-junction with a metalled road. Turn right and follow the road with Pen-y-Fan Green on your left, passing a mounting stone on your left.
- e. A bench at the bottom of the green provides a providential picnic spot with good views of the Wye and Bigsweir Bridge (when the trees are not in leaf!). Continue along the metalled lane, dropping diagonally downhill until you reach a house with a large courtyard in front of it.
- f. Here you leave the metalled road, bearing right (signposted WVW) steeply down a winding footpath with some steps. Continue downhill after some railings always following the WVW

signs. Turn left onto the metalled road at the bottom of the footpath. This is where you leave the WVV to walk up the Whitebrook valley, famous for its paper mills, now all disused.



The rest of the route is shown on map 2 overleaf.

- g.** Go 70 m past a telephone box and fork right in front of Kingfisher Cottage to cross the stream on a small bridge. Turn left immediately over the bridge, along a lane signposted "Colonel's Park". Vehicle access ends after 200 m and the track narrows and starts to climb. With the stream on your left, keep straight on for 1250 m, ignoring paths signposted to the left and right.
- h.** At a finger post with a yellow top turn right up a few short steps along a signposted footpath, keeping the stream on your left. Continue up to another post with a yellow top where you turn left and contour for a short period. Follow the posts with the yellow tops past a pond on your left and go diagonally uphill, forking right at yet another yellow-topped post. The path continues diagonally upwards along a fence.
- i.** Continue to another post where you turn right and go steeply uphill to a gap in an old wall filled by a short fence with a zig-zag gap in it. Go through the gap and turn left. After 20 m, at another signpost, turn right following the footpath sign. An avenue between holly trees takes you up to a junction with a bridleway. You go straight over and then meet a forest road where you cross over, continuing up some steps on the other side.
- j.** Follow this path to a post where you bear left at a T-junction and continue until you meet a metalled lane. Turn right on the lane, following it round to the left at a junction where the right fork goes downhill. Continue on round bends until you get to another T-junction.
- k.** Straight across the road is a wooden stile. Cross over into a private garden (the path is public!), keeping the woodland on your left, aim for a point about 15 m to the left of an obvious telegraph post until you see a gap in the brambles ahead of you. Follow the path through the brambles to a kissing gate at the edge of the Argoed. Go through the gate and continue

straight on into the grounds of the Argoed, an impressive country house, dating from the 1860s with earlier origins from the late 16th and early 17thC. Follow the path straight through the grounds of the Argoed and the arboretum to another kissing gate. Cross the drive and, keeping the same direction, pass immediately through a gap in the wall straight ahead, joining another drive. Continue past several magnificent Wellingtonias and, where the drive swings left, continue straight on along a small path and then over a stile. Follow the path over a small cattle grid until meeting the road at a gap in the hedge where you turn right.

- I. Follow the road straight through the village of Penallt, past St Mary's Church (1868) and The Old School (1834). Both are now converted to residential accommodation. At the war memorial, bear right to return to the village green.

