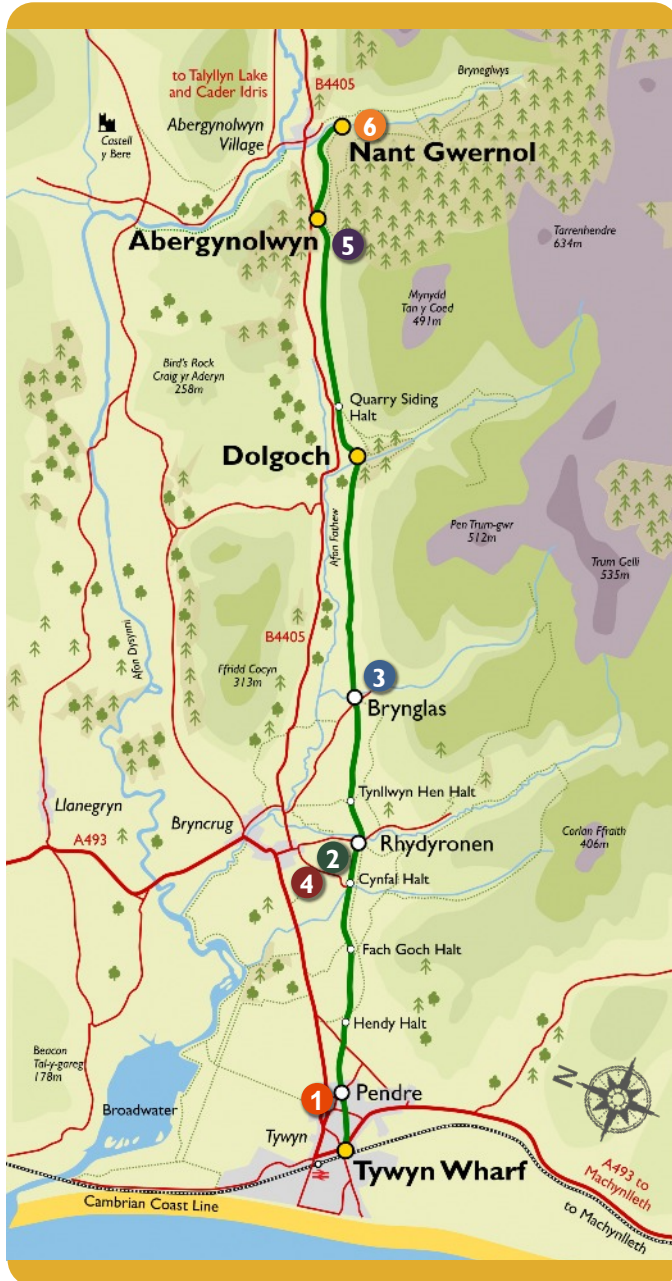


Rheilffordd Talyllyn Railway ROUTE MAP



**THE WORLD'S FIRST
PRESERVED RAILWAY**

Continued: homage to him, and not to the English King. This resulted in a strained relationship between the two rulers, although this was ameliorated for a while when Llywelyn married Joan, King John's illegitimate daughter, in 1205. Llywelyn was defeated by the English King in 1211, and died in 1240.

The castle was besieged by the English army under Edward I's Lieutenant, the Savoyard Sir Otto de Grandison, and fell on 25th April 1283, to be subsequently occupied by a few soldiers, carpenters and stone-masons. Edward intended to maintain Castell y Bere as a bastion of English power, and to found an English town and borough there. But none of this came to fruition, and the castle was re-captured by the Welsh in 1294, during Madog ap Llewelyn's revolt. Although the English expressed a desire to recapture it, the castle never again featured in the royal accounts, and subsequently fell into ruin.

The entrance was on the western side, defended by a draw-bridge and overlooked by a small tower. Just inside was a well, a vital asset for a building which was subject to siege. The middle tower was probably the main defensive structure, with another to the south containing living accommodation and the latrine.

Llanfihangel-y-Pennant

In the village there is a monument to Mary Jones who, in 1804, walked over 50 miles barefoot to Bala to collect a bible. Unfortunately Thomas Charles had no bibles left, but he took pity on Mary and gave her his own copy. He then went on to found the British and Foreign Bible Society. His grandson, David Charles, founded Coleg y Bala in 1837.

A statue of Thomas Charles can be seen in Bala.



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WALKS

6: The Castell y Bere Walk



One of a series of six selected walks which start and finish at stations on the Tallyllyn Railway

Castell y Bere Walk

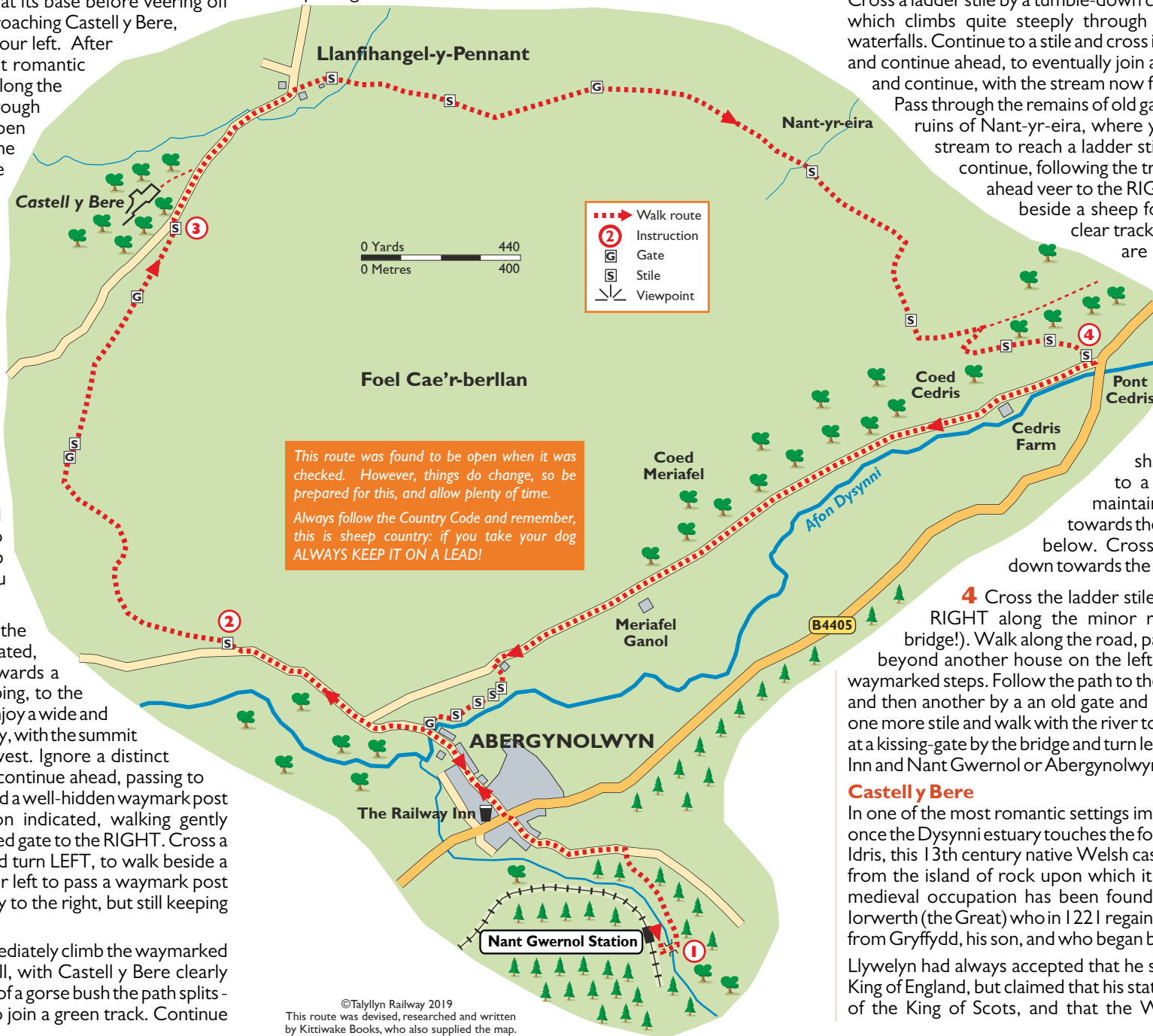
A fascinating route which circumnavigates Foel Cae'r-berllan and passes through the village of Abergynolwyn, where you can enjoy a drink and a meal at The Railway Inn. You then walk along a valley with the Afon Dysynni hemmed in at its base before veering off above Coed Cae'r-berllan and approaching Castell y Bere, prominent on a rocky outcrop to your left. After visiting what is one of Wales' most romantic castles you then make your return along the cwm of Nant-yr-eira, initially through woods and then along an open trackway. You then drop down to the lane to make a level return to the village, where a path takes you beside the river. The total distance is about 5½ miles. Allow about 4 hours.

1 Leave the platform at the terminus end of Nant Gwernol Station, cross the footbridge and turn LEFT to walk downhill, with waterfalls to your left. When you join a lane, turn left and walk steeply downhill to Abergynolwyn. Cross the road and walk along the minor road to the right of The Railway Inn. Continue along Heol Llanegryn, passing single storey cottages on the left and climb the hill. At the road junction continue ahead as signed to Castell y Bere. Continue to climb gently and, at the brow of the hill, you reach a stile on the right.

2 Cross the stile signposted to the RIGHT. Walk in the direction indicated, climbing diagonally up the field towards a waymark post. Continue, still climbing, to the next waymark post. You will soon enjoy a wide and splendid view over the Dysynni Valley, with the summit of Bird Rock visible to the south-west. Ignore a distinct track which curves to the right but continue ahead, passing to the left of a small clump of trees to find a well-hidden waymark post behind them. Follow the direction indicated, walking gently downhill and looking for a waymarked gate to the RIGHT. Cross a tiny stream, go through the gate and turn LEFT, to walk beside a wall. Continue with the wall on your left to pass a waymark post which indicates that you veer slightly to the right, but still keeping fairly close to the wall.

Go through the gate ahead and immediately climb the waymarked stile. Now follow the path downhill, with Castell y Bere clearly visible ahead. As you pass to the left of a gorse bush the path splits - veer LEFT and continue downhill to join a green track. Continue

ahead, looking out for a kissing-gate on the LEFT. Go through this and walk half-RIGHT towards a waymark post. Cross the stile by the post to join a road and turn RIGHT. You soon pass the entrance to Castell y Bere on the left, and the ruins are well-worth exploring.



This route was found to be open when it was checked. However, things do change, so be prepared for this, and allow plenty of time. Always follow the Country Code and remember, this is sheep country: if you take your dog ALWAYS KEEP IT ON A LEAD!

©Talylyn Railway 2019
This route was devised, researched and written
by Kittiwake Books, who also supplied the map.

3 Continue along the road to reach Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, where you pass the very attractive little church on the left, and (summer only) toilets on the right. Opposite the churchyard gate take the waymarked track on the RIGHT.

Cross a ladder stile by a tumble-down chapel and follow the path, which climbs quite steeply through a wooded cwm beside waterfalls. Continue to a stile and cross it. Ignore a stile to the right and continue ahead, to eventually join a track. Go through a gate and continue, with the stream now further away to your right.

Pass through the remains of old gateways to walk below the ruins of Nant-yr-eira, where you have to step across a stream to reach a ladder stile by a gate. Cross it and continue, following the track. When a wall appears ahead veer to the RIGHT to reach a ladder stile beside a sheep fold. Cross it and follow a clear track around to the left - there are fine views of the escarpment of Mynydd Cedris opposite. Continue along the track, looking out for a waymarked path on the RIGHT. Take this path and follow it through the trees - soon a waymark indicates a sharp LEFT turn. Continue to a fence stile and cross it, maintaining your direction towards the road junction now visible below. Cross a ladder stile and walk down towards the gate ahead.

4 Cross the ladder stile beside the gate and turn RIGHT along the minor road (DON'T cross the bridge!). Walk along the road, passing Meriafel Ganol. Just beyond another house on the left, turn LEFT down clearly waymarked steps. Follow the path to the right, crossing two stiles, and then another by an old gate and continue half-right. Cross one more stile and walk with the river to your left. Rejoin the road at a kissing-gate by the bridge and turn left to return to The Railway Inn and Nant Gwernol or Abergynolwyn Station.

Castell y Bere

In one of the most romantic settings imaginable, where what was once the Dysynni estuary touches the foothills of the mighty Cader Idris, this 13th century native Welsh castle seems almost to grow from the island of rock upon which it stands. Evidence of pre-medieval occupation has been found, but it was Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (the Great) who in 1221 regained control of Meirionnydd from Gryffydd, his son, and who began building here.

Llywelyn had always accepted that he should pay homage to the King of England, but claimed that his status should be equal to that of the King of Scots, and that the Welsh barons should pay