

**Ride:** Avon Afan

**Start/Finish:** Cwmafan

**Distance:** 17 miles (2½ hours plus stops)

**Level:** Gentle

**Map:** OS 1:50,000 Sheet 170 *Vale of Glamorgan*

For a change from the Gower peninsular this ride is to the east: an off-road route which climbs gently up the lovely Afan valley to Glynccorwg. The path has an excellent surface except for four miles between Cymer and Pontrhydyfen on the way back.

Although I have chosen the start/finishes for all of my rides at locations with car parks I have in mind that some (like me) prefer to leave the car at home. On this ride the distance to the start from Swansea can be shortened by taking the train to Port Talbot. From the station Sustrans Route 887 can be followed for the two miles to the start in Cwmafan. It is well signed and actually takes you all the way to Glynccorwg.

A short distance up the road from Cwmafan Community Centre, where you can park, a signed right turn takes you across the river. You then climb steadily to Pontrhydyfen. On this path stop at the metal profiles of Richard Burton, Rob Bryden and Dick Wagstaff. This is a Sustrans "Portrait bench". Turn the handle on the box and you will hear Richard Burton reciting Dylan Thomas.

Just before Pontrhydyfen fork right and follow the 887 signs to cross a cycle/pedestrian bridge high above the valley. A short distance to the east a footbridge takes you back to the south side of the river. Immediately on your left there is a small park containing the "Japanese Garden". This is worth a visit.

It is five miles from here to Cymer. Note the pub on your left as you approach the village. This used to be a station and in it there is a fascinating collection of railway memorabilia.

In Cymer the route crosses the valley for the final two miles to Glynccorwg. To get to the Mountain Centre, where refreshments can be had, turn right shortly before the village on to a steeply descending and initially very rough path. It soon becomes rideable before taking you up to the Centre.

To return, back track to Cymer but on reaching the road turn right and immediately left to join another cycle path. Follow this for the five downhill miles to Pontrhydyfen and from there retrace your route to Cwmafan.



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