

Churches of the Black Mountains

Start your day at the **Church of Merthyr Issui** at Partrishow. Stunningly located on the south eastern slopes of the Gader range with panoramic view. Inside you will find a truly beautiful 15th century oak rood screen and loft and most strikingly on the west wall of the nave is a painted figure of 'Time' a skeleton with scythe, hourglass and spade.

Retrace your footsteps and stop at the **Cwm Coed y Cerrig Nature reserve**. There is an accessible board walk or for the energetic a steepish path leads through the trees to the top. Look out for scattered open hazelnuts– a sure sign of activity by the resident dormouse population.

After the walk, head up the Ewys Valley to Llanthony – where you can find lunch at the **Llanthony Priory Hotel** – which sits within and is actually part of the original 12th Century Augustinian Priory. After lunch have a wander around the ruins of the Priory and the church of St David's – a spot where worship has been taking place for 1500 years.

Continue up the valley to **Capel-y-Ffin** – where you will find the tiny church of St Mary the Virgin. St Mary was said to have appeared as a vision in the fields where the church stands. Francis Kilvert the famous diarist, commented it reminded him of an owl and it is also said to be the inspiration for name of 'The Vision Farm' in Bruce Chatwin's famous novel 'On the Black Hill'. More recently the famous illustrator Eric Gill lived and worked in the village and the graveyard contains two headstones engraved by him.

Return back down the valley and detour to your left to your final church of the day. The Church of St Martin of Tours at Cwmyoy. The church was built on the shifting sub-soil of a massive ancient land-slip. As the ground has continued to settle it has caused opposite ends of the church to lean in different directions in a most bizarre fashion. – The tower leans to a greater degree than the leaning tower of Pisa!



Above: Partrishow, Cymyoy.
Right: Capel-y-ffin,
St Faiths Church Llanfoist.

Sample Itinerary

10.00am – 10.45am

10.45am – 12.15pm

12.15pm – 1.45pm

1.45pm – 2.30pm

3.30pm – 3.45pm

Visit Partrishow Church.

Visit Enjoy a walk in the Cwm Coed-y-Cerrig Nature reserve.

Take lunch at the Llanthony Priory Hotel and explore the Priory remains and the Church of St David.

Drive to Capel-y-Ffin and visit the tiny church of St Mary the Virgin.

Retrace your steps down the valley and visit the Church of St Martin of Tours at Cwmyoy.





Capel-y-ffin.

Advice:

The Roads in the Black Mountains are frequently single track with passing places and can be extremely icy in winter conditions. Road surfaces can continue to be icy in the mountains for some time after the ice has melted lower down. Phone signal is generally poor or non-existent. Most road signage is good but it is recommended that a map is carried.

Where is it?

Patrishow Church

Leave Abergavenny on the A465 in the direction of Hereford. Leave the A465 at Llanfihangel Crucorney. After 1.25 miles turn left towards Forest Coal Pit. At the five way junction follow the sign to Patrishow. At the next T junction (un-signed) turn right. The church is on the right after about a mile. Coed-y-Cerrig Nature Reserve Retrace your footsteps from

Patrishow. The small nature reserve car-park is on the left hand side a short way after the five-way junction.

Llanthony Abbey

Turn left on leaving the nature reserve. At the next junction turn left and follow the signs to Llanthony.

Capel-y-Ffin

Continue up the valley in the same direction – Capel-y-Ffin is four miles further on in the same direction.

Cwmyoy

Re-trace your steps back down the valley from Capel-y-Ffin. The village is signed on the left hand side, off the main valley road.

Facilities and Access

All of the Churches are open but offer little in the way of facilities. They are typically approached via somewhat uneven paths which can be slippery in poor weather.

Coed-y-Cerrig Nature reserve

A flat board-walk which takes the visitor around the wet woodland is accessible to individuals of all levels of mobility, with turning points provided at regular intervals. The dry woodland is quite different with a steepish path which leads through the trees to the top. The Countryside Council for Wales produce a leaflet giving more information on the reserve and

also containing a map showing the walks. This is usually available free of charge from Abergavenny Information centre.

Llanthony Priory Hotel,

Llanthony NP7 7NN
www.llanthonyprioryhotel.co.uk
Tel:(01873) 890487

Opening hours

April, May, September October

Tuesday – Friday 11.00am –

3.00pm 6.00pm – 11.00pm

Saturday 11.00am – 11.00pm

Sunday 12.00pm – 10.30pm

July and August

Monday – Saturday

11.00am – 11.00pm

Sunday 12.00pm – 10.30pm

November to March

Friday 6.00pm – 11.00pm

Saturday 11.00am – 11.00pm

Sunday 12.00pm – 4.00pm

The bar is in a cellar accessed by stone steps. The restaurant and toilets are on the ground floor. Drinks will be brought to the ground floor for visitors unable to manage the steps.

Public Transport

By Train the nearest station is Abergavenny

By Bus: The Beacons bus operates along the Llanthony valley on Sundays and Bank Holidays from the end of May until the end of September

(www.travelbreconbeacons.info)

By Bike: The Llanthony valley is on the National Cycling route number 42

