

RHONDDA CYNON TAF POINTS OF INTEREST

# RICHARD GRIFFITHS' TRAMROAD TRAIL



Amgueddfa  
Pontypridd



Pontypridd  
Museum



CYNGOR TREF  
**PONTYPRIDD**  
TOWN COUNCIL



STRONG HERITAGE | SHAPING FUTURES  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**  
TRAF FADDEBEN I'GADAMEN | DREFODDOL NICH

## THE WALK

The tramroad is a 1½ mile linear trail, with car parks at both ends. The walk takes you through Barry Sidings Countryside Park.

Rhondda Heritage Park,

Coed Cae Rd, Trehafod, CF37 2NP



Sardis Rd Car Park, Sardis Rd, Pontypridd, CF37 1LE



Please follow the signposts marked with



## THE TRAMROAD

The tramroad was built in 1809 by Dr. Richard Griffiths, a colourful local character who saw the potential of the Rhondda coal industry. The tramroad linked the first coal mines in the valley with the Glamorganshire canal and supplied coal to the iron-working industries of Pontypridd. It also provided transport for the women from the Rhondda valley to visit 'Ponty' on market days.

Along the route there are a number points of interest which have been highlighted on the enclosed map.



**1** (Approximately 100 yards from the gate at the start of the walk) The Eirw level was a drift mine which in 1842, employed 25 men and 5 boys, including 10-year-old William Evans who worked as a door boy.

**2** The tramroad was an early type of railway. In 2009, remains of 'L-shaped' plate rails were excavated at Barry Sidings Countryside Park, to mark the 200th anniversary of the opening of Dr. Griffiths' tramroad in 1809.

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- 3** This picture by Henry Gastineau shows the Lower Rhondda in 1830. The bridge in the distance carried coal from Hafod Fawr level to the tramroad which ran through the trees on the left. The rocks in the foreground can be seen from the road bridge leading to Barry Sidings Countryside Park. *(Please be aware this bridge is very narrow and pedestrians should be careful when viewing)*



- 4** The picture below shows a train or 'journey' of drams leaving Pwllgwaun colliery c. 1905. The site of the colliery is near Sardis Road Rugby Club, where a coal dram now stands behind the rugby posts.



- 6** Close to the tramroad are two memorials to the miners; one outside the NUM office and the other, inscribed with the poem by Wilfred Owen, at the end of Woodland Terrace.



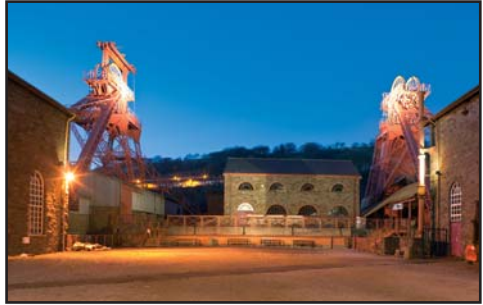
- 5** Pontypridd in 1890, with a dram of coal standing on the tramroad near the station. The final stretch of the tramroad's journey south passed through Pontypridd running along present-day Sardis Road and the Broadway to Machine Bridge in Treforest. The area outside Pontypridd railway station is still known as the 'Tumble', a possible reference to the stray lumps of coal dislodged from passing drams.



**There are a number of places of interest close by the Tramroad Trail which are well worth discovering if time allows:-**

**A** RHONDDA HERITAGE PARK

In 1913 there were over 50 collieries in the Rhondda Valley. By the end of 1990 there were none. At Trehafod the Rhondda Heritage Park tells the story of how the coal industry came to dominate this area so completely and shaped the social and cultural life and character of its people. Venture underground for a real-life experience guided by former miners. Take a trip down memory lane with our historic street.

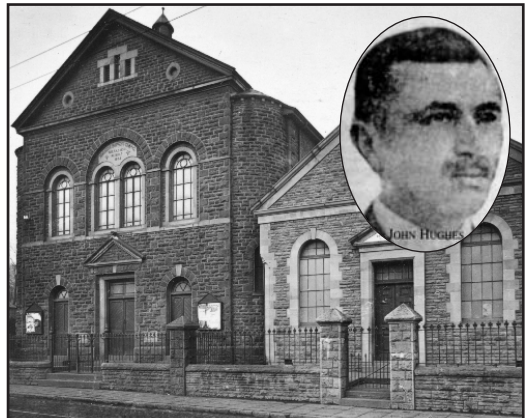


**B** HETTY ENGINE HOUSE

Across the river from the Tramroad Trail at Hopkinstown stands the winding-engine house and headgear of the Hetty pit, all that remains of the Great Western/Ty Mawr colliery complex which covered the valley floor at this point. The engine house contains the original steam winding-engine built in 1875 which is now Grade I listed and scheduled. The engine is one of the few surviving winding houses, still set in its original colliery setting. Since 2002 a group of dedicated volunteers has restored the engine and they hold occasional open days to explain and demonstrate the machinery.

**C** CAPEL RHONDDA

Also on Hopkinstown Road is Capel Rhondda Welsh Baptist chapel which opened in 1853 and is now a Grade II listed building. John Hughes, a member of the chapel who worked as a clerk at the nearby Great Western Colliery, composed the hymn tune 'Cwm Rhondda' to mark the opening of the chapel organ and it was first sung here on Sunday, 1st November, 1907. Set to the words 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah' it is probably the best-known Welsh hymn, almost as likely to be heard at rugby internationals as in a place of worship.



## **D** HOPKINSTOWN RAIL DISASTER

Just before the First World War, around 500 trains a day passed through Pontypridd railway junction. The track layout and signalling system needed to cope with this volume of traffic was extremely complicated. On 23rd January, 1911, confusion between two signalmen caused a tragic accident at Hopkinstown on the approach to Pontypridd. At 9.48am, a Treherbert to Cardiff-bound passenger service carrying 100 people ploughed into the back of a stationary coal train, killing 11 passengers and injuring 5 more.



## **E** MERLIN PUB

The Merlin public house stands at the river end of Pwllgwaun Road. It was built in 1887 and is listed Grade II primarily due to the impressive statue of Merlin the Magician which stands above its main entrance. Merlin is a significant figure in Welsh literature and mythology, Arthurian legend and druidic folklore. During the 19th century Pontypridd was at the centre of a revival of neo-druidic beliefs. Evan Davies (bardic name Myfyr Morganwg), a local clockmaker, was recognised as Archdruid of Glamorgan in 1850 and attracted crowds to druidic ceremonies at the stone circle he constructed around the Rockingstone on Pontypridd Common. A contemporary, Dr. William Price, grew a full-length flowing beard and led processions to the Common dressed in increasingly outlandish costumes. It could be these characters we see reflected, remembered and honoured by the statue at the Merlin.

## **F** PONTYPRIDD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Pontypridd RFC was formed in 1876 and has occupied a special place in the sporting life of the town ever since. The club moved to its present ground at Sardis Road in 1974. Tommy David, Neil Jenkins and Martyn Williams are among the legendary Welsh players produced at Pontypridd. Fittingly for an area so steeped in coal mining the pitch stands on the site of the former Pwllgwaun colliery, better known as 'Dan's Muck Hole' – the colliery headgear stood at the Rhondda end of the ground and a coal dram is placed there to commemorate the sacrifices demanded of those who worked in the industry.



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MANNAU O DDIDDORDEB RHONDDA CYNON TAF  
LLWYBR TRAMFFORDD RICHARD GRIFFITHS

Mae'r llwybr cerdded hwn yn un o blith nifer sydd ar gael yn yr ardal. Hoffech chi gael manylion o'r llwybrau hyn, lleoedd i aros, ac atyniadau eraill? Croeso i chi ymweld ag: [www.croesorhct.cymru](http://www.croesorhct.cymru), Ffôn: 01443 424052.

This walking trail is one of a series available in the area. Details of these trails, places to stay and other attractions can be found at [www.visitrct.wales](http://www.visitrct.wales), Tel: 01443 424052.

