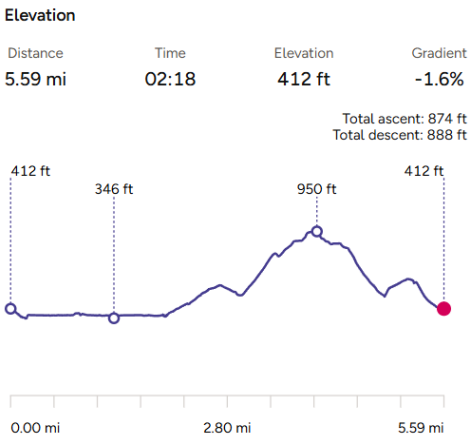
PUBS WORTH THE WALK

The Goose & Cuckoo Pub Walk

From quiet towpath to mountain views, 5.6 miles.

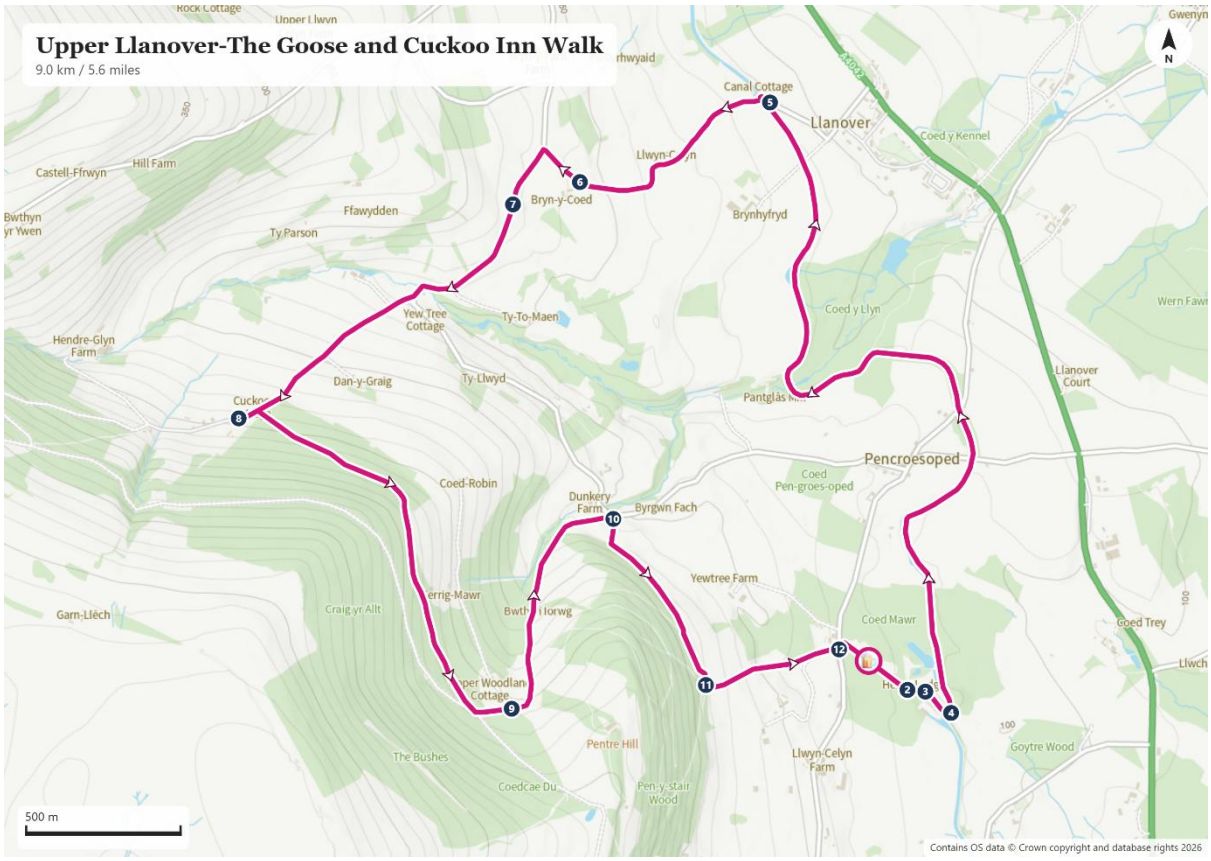
OVERVIEW

This walk is about the destination – a wonderfully remote pub on the slopes of the Blorenge overlooking gorgeous Monmouthshire farmland.
It starts out from the public car park at Goytre Wharf, initially following the Monmouthshire & Brecon canal before winding uphill on quiet lanes to reach the pub.
Then a return through woodland with fine views, a steep lane and then fields to return to the car. I've featured a number of canal walks already on the site, but the section from Goytre Wharf to Bridge 81 to Upper Llanover is magical.



Start/Finish	**Goytre Wharf Canal Visitor Centre, Llanover, NP7 9EW**
Parking	Public pay & display car park/parking app.
Grid Reference	SO 311 065 for the canal car park.
What3Words	///sudden.buzzards.patting for the canal car park.
Distance	5.6 miles / 9 km **Time** 2.5 hours **Ascent** 874 ft / 270 m
Paths/Terrain	Easy walking along the towpath. Some miles of quiet country lanes, some steep. Woodland walk on well-trodden tracks. A stony farm track & fields might be wet after rain.
Difficulty	Moderate, largely due to the steep lane up to the pub.
Public Transport	Bus service runs between Abergavenny & Newport along the A4042 with a stopping service near Goytre Hall. Access to Goytre Wharf from there along a lane.
Toilets	At the Canal Visitor centre, and at The Goose & Cuckoo.
Other Pubs Nearby	Try **The Foxhunter** in Nant-y-Derry. **The Goytre** in Penperlleni is quietly regenerating, re-establishing itself at the heart of the community once again.

DIRECTIONS



1. From the public car park at Goytre Wharf the goal is to cross the canal to walk left on the other side. The path runs under a bridge passing Aquaduct Cottage, alongside a row of line kilns, just below the boat rental shed. It's the only place to cross over, so easy enough to find using the various 'you are here' boards. If you've found the café, you're close – just head downhill.
2. Once on the other side from the wharf, head to the left, up a hill on the other side of the bridge to join the towpath on the canal bank. Continue straight ahead with the wharf now opposite you.
3. From here, the route along the canal is easy. It's a superb stretch. You'll pass a number of bridges, with Bridge #81 the one to watch out for.
4. Leave the towpath just before the bridge, to follow the lane over the bridge. This is a quiet lane all the way to the pub!
5. At a junction go left. And that's all the instructions you need. The path drops down into a hollow on a bend as it passes 'Ty To Maen' (stone roofed house), and then the uphill effort to the pub kicks in.
6. You've now earned the refreshment at the Goose & Cuckoo!

7. For the return journey, look out for Cuckoo Cottage just below the pub. There's a bridleway opposite – that's the path you need.
8. Continue on this path all the way through the woodland, until you reach a repeat of the gate you saw at the entrance to the bridgeway near the pub.
9. From here, the woodland opens out, and we're aiming for a lane to the left, the start of the downhill section towards Goytre Wharf.
10. The track becomes a tarmac lane and rounds a corner leading to a steep downhill below high banks of beech.
11. As the line of beeches ends and the lane opens out, look for the first junction on your left. Immediately opposite is a wide-mouthed footpath slightly uphill. Take this, towards a wooden barrier fence.
12. Turn left at the barrier, and follow this track all the way close to the fence. Eventually another path joins from the right. Stay left to reach a stile into a field.
13. Follow signs downhill through the fields from here. The car park of Goytre Wharf is in the woodland below. There was a 'beware of the bull' sign on one of the gates through this section, and sheep & cattle in various corners of the fields. Nothing troubled me thankfully.
14. Leaving the fields behind you join a farm lane for the final short section, emerging over a stile opposite the entrance to the wharf.

NOTES

The landscape around the Goose & Cuckoo is closely associated with the work of Alexander Cordell, whose novels are set in this part of south-east Wales during the rise of the iron industry.

In Rape of the Fair Country, he describes the transformation of the Usk valley and the hills above Abergavenny and Blaenavon—from quiet farmland into one of the centres of Britain's ironmaking. His stories follow ordinary families living through that change, as the beauty of the countryside existed alongside the noise, fire, and hardship of the works above.

The Goose & Cuckoo sits right on that divide. From here, you can look out over the same peaceful valley Cordell celebrates, while just behind rise the slopes of The Blorenge, once lit by furnaces and shaped by the labour that drove the Industrial Revolution.

Cordell's novels are well worth seeking out. They offer a far richer sense of this landscape during the Industrial Revolution than most straightforward histories—bringing to life not just what happened here, but how it was lived and felt by the people at its heart.