

20 POWYS

MYNYDD LLANGATWG & CRAIG Y CILAU

▶ Distance: 7 miles/11km ▶ Time: 6 hours ▶ Grade: Challenging



SEE
FEATURE
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Limestone crags at Craig y Cilau.

PHOTO: ROGER BUTLER

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Car park by narrow lane to south of Crickhowell, NP8 1LG, grid ref SO209153

Is it for me? Wild moorland escarpment – often pathless; paths and tracks lower down
Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Abergavenny
Refreshments Crickhowell
Public toilets None
Public transport X43 bus from Abergavenny
Maps OS Explorer OL13; Landranger 161

indistinct path on east side of Darren Cilau and continue uphill over the moor for 1km, through a scattering of swallow holes, until stony outcrops signal the approach to Tŵr Pen-cyrn. A trig point marks the summit and the start of the plateau of Mynydd Llangatwg. ➔



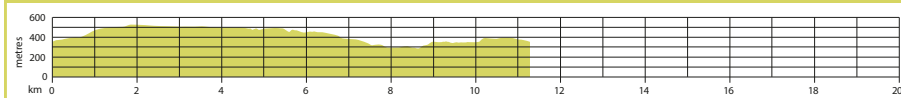
CHOSEN BY...
ROGER BUTLER
If you think the Brecon Beacons

National Park is all high rolling ridges then the great escarpment to the south of Crickhowell and Llangatwg will probably come as a bit of a shock. Here, cliffs and crags of battered limestone stand guard over the south side of the River Usk and provide a grandstand view to the Black Mountains. This challenging walk over Mynydd Llangatwg takes in a variety of upland features including swallow holes, a mysterious lake, old quarries and wide open moorland. The crags are home to a very rare type of whitebeam – you'll only

see it here – and at the foot of the cliffs a vast cave network is still waiting to be fully explored. But the walk stays firmly above ground as it climbs steeply to the cairn on Tŵr Pen-cyrn, crosses a wild plateau and follows the top of the crags at Craig y Cilau. The second half of the route runs along the foot of the escarpment and passes a rare floating bog as well as strangely-shaped conical mounds which are a legacy of limestone quarrying. All in all it's a memorable day out.

1 Start
From car park walk west for 500m, uphill through hawthorn trees, to a break in the old quarry workings. Turn L on an

GRADIENT PROFILE



20 POWYS Mynydd Llangatwg & Craig Y Cilau

► OS Explorer map OL13 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

2 1/4 miles/2km

Walk west along the ridge for 2km (no path), with some patches of limestone boulders, and then veer north towards a lonely lake. This is named as Pwll Gwy-rhoc on the OS map but is often known as the Witches' Pool where the shores are surrounded by banks of damp cotton grass. Local legends say the water sometimes turns red as the result of the blood spilled in a brutal 8th century battle!

3 2 1/2 miles/4km

Keep to the east side of the lake – the ground can be boggy – and turn east to the edge of the escarpment. Turn L to a sharp dip and contour around this to peer into an enormous swallow hole with stream. Walk back towards the escarpment and turn L. The limestone crags plummet 150m to a patchwork of fields and woods and the Black Mountains dominate the view to the north. Sheep tracks and faint paths follow the edge of the escarpment – keep ahead, walking north for 1km until the moorland begins to fall to the end of the crags above Waun Ddu.

4 3 3/4 miles/6km

Contour L for 500m and then turn R to descend south-east towards an open road. Go R, just before a cattle grid, and take the track on R. Fork R after 150m and follow

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the edge of Open Access land for another 150m. Turn south-east along the northern edge of the unusual raised bog at Waun Ddu (part of the National Nature Reserve – look for the information panels). A path crosses a stream, continues through trees and climbs to meet a grass track which was once a quarry tramroad.

5 5 1/2 miles/8.5km

Turn R and keep on the tramroad for 1.5km, pass gated cave entrances into a subterranean complex that extends for more than 30km. On reaching the old quarries, where the rock face is known as Pinnacle Bay, you might

spot huge boulders which were the result of a major rock fall in 1948.

6 6 miles/9.75km

Leave the tramroad and pick a route south-east through the old quarry workings, above the agricultural enclosures at Pant-y-rhiw, and then descend east to retrace your steps to the start. [CW](http://www.cw.gov.uk)

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:
lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING