



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF RICHARD BURTON

When undertaking this walk please ensure that you are suitably prepared by following the Countryside Code which will assist you with visiting safely and keeping our environment and communities in mind. For more information go to www.naturalresources.wales/countrysidecode

THE RICHARD BURTON TRAIL

Start point: Rhyslyn Car Park, Pontrhydyfen, Afan Forest Park

Length: 3 miles

Duration: 1 - 2 hours

Parking: Rhyslyn Car Park. Follow signage off the A4107

Food and Refreshments: There are a range of places to eat and drink within Afan Forest Park and the village of Cwmavon. Public toilet facilities are available at Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre.

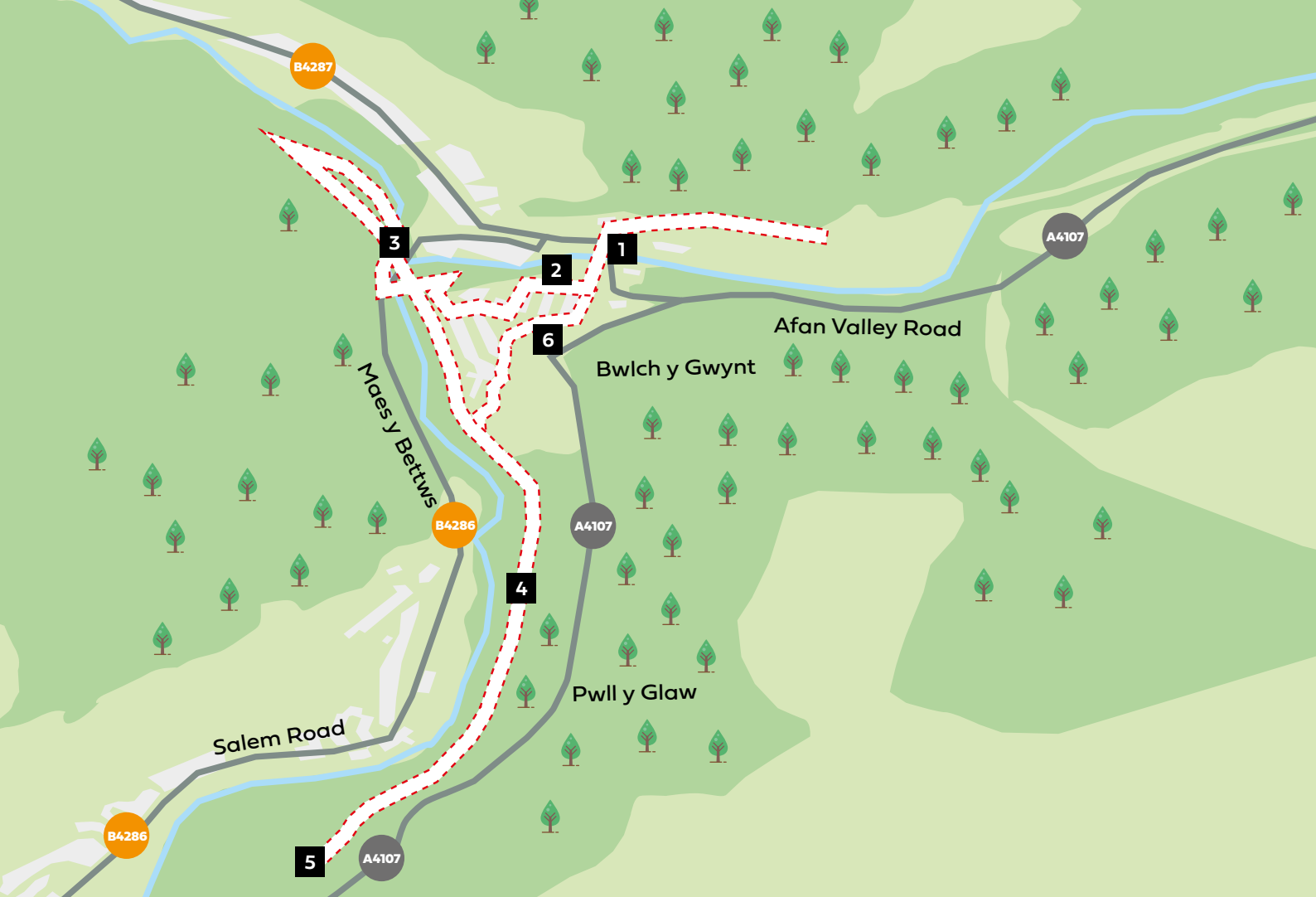
On this trail you will walk in the footsteps of Port Talbot's most famous son, Oscar winner Richard Burton CBE. Richard Burton was born in the village of Pontrhydyfen on 10th November 1925, he was a Welsh miner's son who never forgot his roots. Born Richard Walter Jenkins, he lived in Pontrhydyfen until just under the age of 2, when, following the death of his mother, he moved to Taibach in Port Talbot.

His love of poetry and literature was coupled with the support and inspiration of his school Master (Philip H. Burton) and he excelled in school productions and won an Eisteddfod prize as a boy soprano.

Phillip Burton played a huge role in Richard's progression and identified his talent, taking him on as his ward. Richard and Phillip used to regularly walk the mountains above Port Talbot where they performed voice drills to improve voice projection, shouting and singing at the top of their voices. Richard later went on to adopt the surname Burton and pursued a successful acting career.

You can extend your walk to a second day and visit the industrial town of Port Talbot where Richard spent his childhood when he moved to live with family in Taibach. Here you will see how the contrast between the green landscapes of Pontrhydyfen and the industrial landscape of Taibach combined to inspire Richard to become such an excellent actor.





ROUTE

From Rhyslyn car park entrance, walk along the top road and turn left onto the aqueduct **1**.

At the end of the Aqueduct turn right, down the steps. You'll pass the end of Penhydd Street **2**, where many of Richard's family used to live. Follow the lane and walk through the children's playground. With the school in front of you, turn left, then right. Follow the path, keeping the school wall to your right. At the t-junction of paths, turn left down the steps then right onto the viaduct **3**.

At the crossroads, turn right downhill. Cross the main road, turn right and follow the road. To your left, cross the steel bridge and continue up the steps. From the t-junction of paths you can retrace your steps back to the car park to complete the short walk. For the longer trail turn right down the steps and left where the trail continues until you reach the portrait bench **4**; with Pontrhydyfen behind you, left to right, the sculptures are of Richard Burton, locally born comedian Rob Brydon and retired Afan Forest Park Ranger Dick Wagstaff.

Retrace your steps back along the path. At the fork of paths, go right and walk along Oakwood Avenue. Follow the road as it bears right. Bethel Chapel **5** is on the far corner. Shortly after Richard's death, a memorial service was held here and was attended by hundreds of locals and many celebrities. Continue towards the aqueduct and retrace your steps back to Rhyslyn car park.

POINTS OF INTEREST

1 Ponrhydyfen Aqueduct

Ponrhydyfen Aqueduct is pictured in famous images of Richard Burton walking across the structure during the 1950's. The Aqueduct was built in 1842 by ironmaster John Reynolds to supply waterwheels at the nearby Oakwood Ironworks, and is one of the few surviving structures related to the use of water power in the iron industry in the region. Walk across the aqueduct just as Richard Burton, and generations of local people, have done to see views of the village below. The houses next to the road on the right hand side mark Richard's birthplace (please note the exact house is not indicated to protect the privacy of the current residents).

2 Penhydd Street

A street in the heart of the village where many of Richard's family lived during his childhood. Richard would have revisited his family throughout his life.

3 Railway Viaduct

This structure was built in 1897 to carry the South Wales Mineral Railway and its cargo to the docks at Port Talbot. From here you can appreciate the views of the village and the valley beyond.

4 Portrait Bench

In memory of Richard Burton and others, the bench was installed as a tribute to those who have hailed from the area or contributed to the community here. At the portrait bench you will see silhouettes of Richard Burton, locally born comedian Rob Brydon and local retired Afan Forest Park Ranger Dick Wagstaff.

5 Bethel Chapel

Upon his passing, a memorial service was held for Richard Burton at Bethel Chapel. It was attended by hundreds of locals and many celebrities from throughout his life.

4

