

The Joseph Bailey Trail

Trail 6 The Joseph Bailey Trail

Easy Walk, 3 Miles/5 Km (1.5 Hours)

Start at the Market Hall Car Park, Brynmawr (SO 190 116).



Office Row



Trail 6 map

In 1791, Thomas Hill entered into a partnership with Harford, Partridge & Co. to build an ironworks at Nantyglo. Two furnaces were nearly completed by 1794 when the partnership broke up and the Harfords were left to complete the work themselves.



Nantyglo Truck Token

In 1811, Thomas Hill sold the works to Joseph Bailey and Matthew Wayne. In 1820 Matthew Wayne left and Crawshay Bailey replaced him. By 1823, there were five furnaces producing nearly 18,000 tons of iron a year. In 1833, Crawshay Bailey bought the Beaufort Ironworks and a tramroad link was made between the two. By 1842, there were 3,900 employees.



Nantyglo Ironworks

From the car park at the back of the Market Hall turn into Alma Street - the line of the 1793 Clydach Railroad from Beaufort Ironworks to the canal at Gilwern. Lower Bailey Street follows the course of Bailey's Llangattock Tramroad

built in 1829 to carry limestone from the Llangattock Quarries to the ironworks. The tramroad ran directly through the car park. It was along here that Crawshay Bailey's engine - the "Cymro" - ran. The engine is commemorated in the nearby "Cymro Inn".

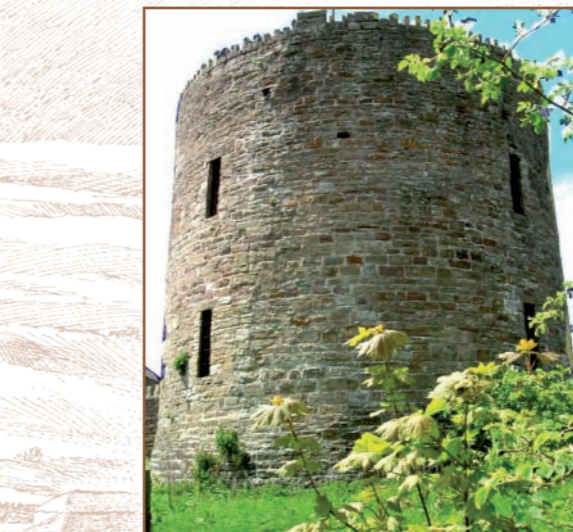
Return to the car park and leave it by the narrow exit into the Market Square. Once in the square the 1829 tramroad divided into two. The left branch runs almost at right angles down Station Road heading for 'Limestone Road' and the ironworks.

Follow the other branch straight across the square, cross the B4248 road and swing left into Warwick Road. You will see some railway masonry and on your right is the Welfare Park - the drained site of the Heathcock Pond, one of the Nantyglo feeder ponds.

Take the tarred footpath to the left and walk along it for its whole length. On your right is the dam of the "Machine Pond" - another of the feeders for the Nantyglo Ironworks. Continue on to a cycle barrier and a road. Turn left onto the road (Waunheulog) and follow it to the next road junction. Continue along Waun Ebbw Road for a further 600m. On the right you will see some fingers of spoil from an old level cut into the hillside to supply iron ore or coal to the ironworks.

Continue along Waun Ebbw Road to one of the Nantyglo Round Towers. These were built sometime between in 1816 and 1822 to protect the Baileys from their disgruntled workers.

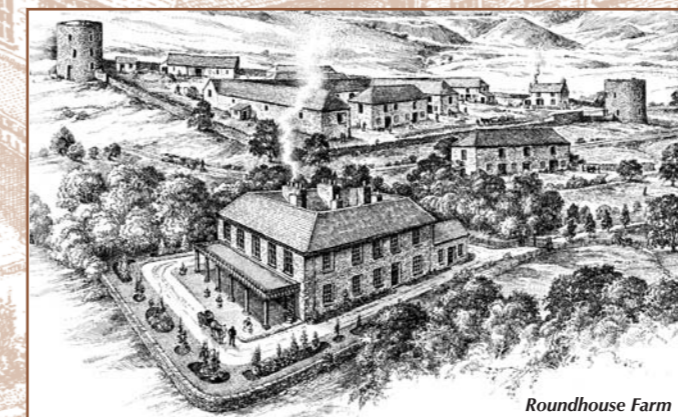
Please note that Roundhouse Farm is privately owned and can only be viewed from the car park or public bridle way to the west of the complex - entrance is strictly prohibited.



Roundhouse

The tower has a solid iron door with two musket holes with swivelling flaps. The tower walls are four feet thick with windows made of cast iron, as are many of the fittings and structural features normally made of wood. The rest of the barns and buildings date back to 1795. They stored equipment for the works and housed the tram ponies.

Continue along the track. Here you will find the foundations of Ty Mawr ("The Great House"). The Baileys built this magnificent mansion in 1816. It was surrounded by large gardens complete with avenues of trees and a mountain stream.



Roundhouse Farm

Return along Woodland Terrace. At the junction, turn left at Laburnum Lodge and walk back along Waun Ebbw Road. At the corner of Roundhouse Close, turn right and head down into the valley. Continue to the bridge over the A467. Here, you can compare this painting of about 1829 with the modern view.

To the left is 'Office Row' and the truck shop built in the early 1790s. Behind the truckshop are four furnaces built in the 1820s. On the right are the tall engine houses that sent blast to the furnaces.



Nantyglo Ironworks, 1829

Cross over the bridge and turn sharp right to follow Market Road. The bungalows stand on the site of 'Office Row' with the surviving Truck Shop a few metres beyond. Office Row housed workers in the 1790s. They were divided into a two-storey upper house and a single-storey lower house.

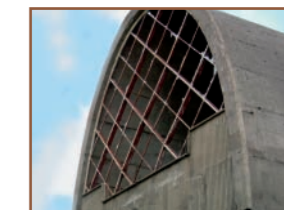
The truck shop - was owned and run by the company and workers were paid in tokens that could only be spent at the Truck Shop. The goods sold were often expensive and of inferior quality. Things were made worse by the fact that workers were kept constantly in debt.

The footbridge on the right across the A467 leads to the site of the first blast furnaces. Look to the left to see a 'furnace bear' - a mixture of iron, unburnt coke, brick and slag from the bottom of blast furnace.

Turn around, and you will see a white building. This was one of the cast houses where the molten iron from the furnaces ran into moulds to make ingots of cast iron known as "pigs".

Return up the road past the bungalows and at the junction turn right up to the New Road. Turn immediately left to follow the main road for 75m to the zebra crossing. Cross here, turn left and then sharp right along the footpath into Limestone Road. Turn left and then walk northwards along Limestone Road. Limestone Road is the end of the 1829 Llangattock Tramroad that brought limestone from Llangattock Quarries to feed the blast furnaces.

Follow Limestone Road for 450m until you join the A467. The tramroad would have continued straight north here but you will have to turn left and down to the main road and then turn right back along to the Market Hall.



Semtex Boilerhouse

Along the way you will pass the Semtex Factory boiler house. The factory was designed in 1946-51 by Sir Ove Arup (1895 - 1988) and was famous for revolutionary shell-concrete construction.

This trail is one of seven "In the Footsteps of the Iron-makers" series that is part of the Green Mines/Atlanterra project to promote our mining heritage through tourism.

To let us know if you enjoyed the walk or for further information please contact us on 01495 355937 / 07968 472812 or at alyson.tippings@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Details included in this leaflet were correct at time of going to press. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this leaflet, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council can accept no liability whatsoever for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions or for any matter in any way connected with or arising out of the publication of this information.

