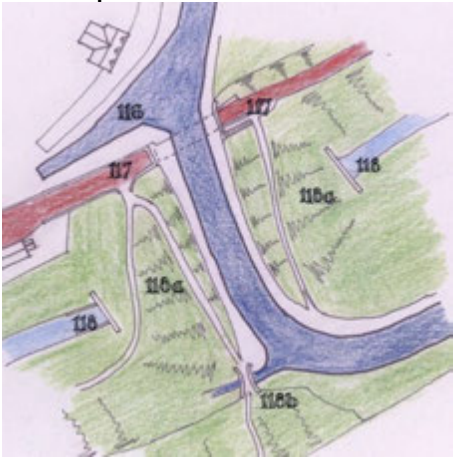


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| BRECON AND MONMOUTHSHIRE CANAL MONUMENTS RECORD CARD | Monument Number: MB117 GILWERN |
| Monument Name: | Tunnel for Clydach railroad under the canal. |
| Map Reference: | 324390 214500 |
| Official Status: | Listed Building Grade II* (Reference: 23826) Scheduled Monument. |
| Description:  | The listing is for "Embankment & Aqueduct of Brecknock & Abergavenny Canal inc. N Revetment Walls and SW Overflow Bridge" so, as with the wharf, it is not immediately clear what statutory protection is afforded by the listing title for the tramway tunnel and its associated walls. They are, however, included in the detailed description that follows and hence listed. Listing description: History: Impressive embanked aqueduct built 1797 by Thomas Dadford, engineer for carrying canal across deep Clydach gorge, also providing a tunnel for the earlier Clydach tramroad leading to |
| <p>Glangrwyne Forge. In 1792, the Act for the Monmouthshire Canal was passed: in the same year, the promoters of the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal were proposing a canal to run separately, from Brecon to Newbridge. By October 1792 it was resolved to link directly to the proposed Monmouthshire Canal rather than the river Usk, and Thomas Dadford, engineer, was asked to survey a suitable route from Pontypool to Brecon. Work began early in 1797 with the aqueduct and embankment at Gilwern, and by November 1797, the eight-and-a-half mile (13.7 kilometre) section from Gilwern to Llangynidr was open. A further twelve mile section to Talybont was open by February 1799, and on Christmas Eve 1800, the final link to Brecon was opened. After 1798, Thomas Dadford was replaced with Thomas Cartwright, who engineered the extension of the canal from Gilwern to Llanfoist 1802-05. By February 1812 the canal had connected to the Monmouthshire Canal at Ponymoile, and the wharves at Brecon and Gilwern had been extended. The engineer for this section was William Crosley. After, when the Newport and Pontypool Railway was promoted, the canals were in decline. The Brecknock and Abergavenny Company made several unsuccessful overtures to various railway companies, but by 1865 had sold out to the Monmouthshire Canal Company. In 1880, the</p> | |

Monmouthshire Canal Company merged with the Great Western Railway. The last toll on the canal was taken in February 1933.

Exterior: Massive wooded earth embankment standing approximately 25 metres high and some 100 metres long, blocking the lower mouth of the Clydach Gorge, the Clydach River taken through a long segmentally-arched tunnel. Tunnel is approximately 90 metres long. Arched buttressed portals with ashlar voussoirs and rubble abutments. **Above, to north is former tramroad tunnel, now used as pedestrian route. Round-arched tunnel with stone voussoirs to portals; segmental over-arch to W side. Very long rubble revetment wall to NW containing earth bank, following line of track to Waterfall Cottages. To NE of tramroad tunnel are sloping splayed revetments.** To SW is very small segmentally-arched bridge over overflow with stone voussoirs and rubble-capped parapet.

Reason for Listing: Listed at Grade II* as an outstanding feature of the engineering works associated with the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal. Scheduled Ancient Monument Mm 251.



Much has been written that is very confusing so here is a simple account of the order of things in relation to this monument. The tramway (light pink on the map taken from the Clydach Valley website) was built to link the Glangrwyne Forge (to the north and across the Usk) with the Gelli Felen colliery (on the south side of the Clydach Gorge to the south west of Gilwern). It was engineered by Dadford and opened in 1794. Hadfield (p.162) says, "*It was laid as an edge-railway with rails from*

Penydarren and sleepers partly of iron, but then changed to wood. Waggon loadings of three tons were reduced to two in 1799, probably because of rail breakages."

The canal crossing was started in 1797 and a tunnel formed in it to accommodate the railroad. A spur of the railroad was taken northwards to the Gilwern Wharf (MB116) and limekilns (MB114A), probably soon after 1797. The Glangrwyne forge closed about 1800 while waiting for the canal on the Monmouthshire side of Gilwern to be completed. It could not get to its markets so easily as its competitors in the Clydach Gorge who made railroads through the Bleanavon valley to get out to the south and east.

The tunnel is 21m long with an additional 2m extension. For section see below.

Images:



Towpath wall looking from Brecon side.



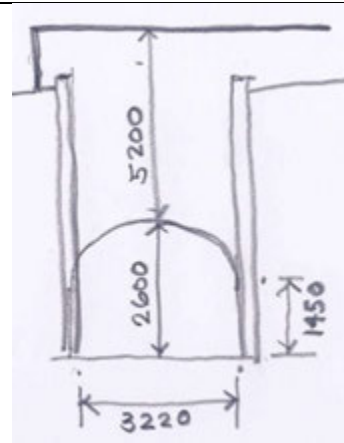
Stair



Upper part of wing walls and towpath wall.



Wing wall and stair towpath side







Wing walls and stair on towpath side.
Details of tunnel entrance on towpath side.











Details of tunnel entrance on towpath side.

Railroad surface. This could be archeologically sensitive.

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|  | <p>Clydach side.</p> <p>Note the tunnel has been extended with a higher arch to widen the way for a footpath (or railroad) to the wharf on the Clydach side. This may have been associated with the so called Llam-march tramroad of 1809 from the Clydach Ironworks and beyond to Llam-march.</p> |
|  | <p>Path leading to the overspill bridge (Card 118B)</p> |
|  | <p>The long retaining wall between the wharf and the railroad on the Clydach side.</p> |
|  | <p>Character of the retaining wall masonry</p> |

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|  | <p>Character of the retaining wall masonry</p> |
|  | <p>Character of the retaining wall masonry</p> |
|  | <p>Character of the retaining wall masonry</p> |
|  | <p>Interior of tunnel.</p> |

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| <p>Condition: Generally sound but the walls need a detailed survey. The towpath parapet wall has a vertical crack at one end which needs to be stitched.</p> | |
| <p>References: C. Hadfield The Canals of South Wales and the Border 1977 D.D. & J.M. Hadfield The Canals of the Welsh Valleys and their Tramroads 1991 Information from the R.C.A.H.M.W. Information from the Buildings of Wales Office, Penguin Books, London http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_landscape/clydach_gorge/english/clydach_main.html http://www.industrialgwent.co.uk/clydach/south/index.htm</p> | |
| <p>Notes:</p> | |