



National Nature Reserves and Woodlands

// Walking / cycling / mountain biking and much more in South Wales







TRAIL CLOSURES AND DIVERSIONS

Information about visiting our woodlands and reserves was correct when we published this leaflet. If you are planning a visit to do a particular trail please check our website for the latest information.

Please note:

- Sometimes we need to close or divert trails for your safety whilst we undertake maintenance work or other operations.
- Occasionally we may have to close a site in extreme weather, such as high winds or snow and ice, due to the risk of injury to visitors or staff.
- Please always follow any instructions on site and make sure you follow any temporary diversion signs in place.



FIND OUT MORE

www.naturalresources.wales enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk 0300 065 3000 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact us.

Front cover: Afan Forest Park

WELCOME

This leaflet will help you plan a visit to many of the woodlands and National Nature Reserves that we look after in South Wales.

National Nature Reserves have the finest examples of wildlife habitats and geological features. This leaflet features some of the best ones to visit in South Wales from the vast wetlands at Newport to the rugged grandeur of Craig Cerrig Gleisiad in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Our waymarked walking trails range from relaxing riverside strolls to more strenuous treks and there are several accessible routes. For an adventure on two wheels head for Afan Forest Park or Cwm Carn Forest which offer some of Britain's best mountain biking trails.

Some of our woodlands in South Wales form part of the National Forest for Wales. The National Forest will create areas of new woodland, enhance existing woodlands and restore Wales' irreplaceable ancient woodlands.

Enjoy your visit to the great outdoors!

PLAN YOUR VISIT

The **listing pages** about the woodlands and National Nature Reserves are colour coded to indicate where each one is located.

Wye Valley area

Newport area

Brecon Beacons area
Swansea Bay area

Carmarthenshire area

Pembrokeshire area

The **fold-out section** has a key to the symbols used on the listing pages and a guide to how we grade our trails to help you pick one that's right for you.

The centrefold map

shows the location of each woodland and reserve in this leaflet and has a list of them all with a summary of the facilities at each one.

See the accessibility information on the listing pages for trails suitable for people with wheelchairs and pushchairs, and other accessible facilities.





Wyndcliff Wood is home to one of the best views in the Wye **Valley.** The Eagle's Nest viewpoint looks out over the River Wye. Chepstow Castle and the Severn Estuary. The viewpoint and the path to reach it, known as the 365 Steps, were constructed in 1828 for the Duke of Beaufort. The circular walking trail from Lower Wyndcliff car park to the viewpoint includes a very steep section up (or down) the historic steps and passes through the woodland with its ancient beech and yew trees.

Walking trail

Eagle's Nest Trail (11/4 miles/1.9 km, strenuous)

PPFA

Follow the trail clockwise through the woodland to the viewpoint and then return down several long flights of steep steps. Follow it anticlockwise if you'd rather go up the steep steps instead. The trail has some steep climbs and there are sheer drops at the side of the steps.

Other routes

You can walk directly to the Eagle's Nest viewpoint from the small car park at Upper Wyndcliff (OS grid reference ST 524 972). This car park is reached via a narrow minor road.

The Picturesque Piercefield Walk runs through Wyndcliff Wood. This historic walk was popular with visitors in the 18th century and many of its features still exist.

The Wye Valley Walk passes through Wyndcliff Wood. You can join this long distance walk from Lower Wyndcliff car park - look out for the information panel.

How to get here

Lower Wyndcliff car park is 3½ miles north of Chepstow. Follow the A466 from Chepstow towards Tintern. The car park is on the right after going through the village of

OS grid reference ST 526 971 / OS map number OL 14 See centrefold map for key to symbols

Wye Valley area



Whitestone Historic viewpoints overlooking the Wye gorge and river













Both walking trails go through the woodland and take in three viewpoints over the dramatic Wye gorge and river. There is a bench at each one to enjoy the views. The play area is next to the upper car park.

Walking trails

Wonders of Whitestone (11/4 miles/2 km, easy)

This trail follows a wide stoned path past the three viewpoints. Return the same way or follow the circular trail on a narrow path with a steep section through the woodland.

Duchess Ride Viewpoint Trail (3 miles/5 km there and back,

If vou'd like a longer walk. this trail takes in the three Wonders of Whitestone viewpoints. It then continues along part of the Wye Valley Walk through an avenue of huge Scots Pine trees to the

viewpoint where there is a bench. It returns along the same route.

Other route

The Wye Valley Walk passes through Whitestone - look out for the waymarkers.



How to get here

Whitestone is 10 miles north of Chepstow. Follow signs for Catbrook at the junction adjacent to the Wye Valley Hotel in Tintern. After 2½ miles, you reach a junction and the lower car park is opposite. The larger upper car park is through the barrier and along the forest road.

OS grid reference SO 525 029 / OS map number OL 14 See centrefold map for key to symbols





Walking trails

Beacon Bimble (1½ miles/2.3 km, easy)

This circular walk is on wide level paths through woodland and open heathland.

and peaceful woodland

Duchess Ride Ramble (3 miles/4.8 km, easy)

Enjoy woodland and heathland on this mainly level circular walk. An avenue of huge Scots Pine trees leads along part of the Wye Valley Walk to a viewpoint with bench.

Other routes

Follow the Duchess Ride Ramble to join the **Wye Valley Walk** which goes through the edge of the woodland. There are two short waymarked walks in **Manor Wood** in the nearby village of The Narth. The small roadside parking area here has a grassy picnic site and children's play area.

Wye Valley woodlands

The woodlands of the lower Wye Valley are some of the most beautiful in Britain. Historic viewpoints offer spectacular views across the Wye gorge and river, towards the Bristol Channel and the old Severn Bridge. The breathtaking natural scenery here has enthralled visitors for centuries, including painters and poets from Turner to Wordsworth.

How to get here

Beacon View is 6 miles south of Monmouth. Follow signs for Catbrook at the junction adjacent to the Wye Valley Hotel in Tintern. After 2½ miles, turn left at the T-Junction opposite Whitestone car park. Take the third turning on the right, opposite Beacon Lodge, and Beacon View car park is on the right after ¼ mile.

OS grid reference SO 510 053 / OS map number OL 14 See centrefold map for key to symbols

Newport area









Wentwood was once a hunting preserve for nearby Chepstow Castle but nowadays it is a peaceful place to explore and enjoy nature. The forest covers over 1000 hectares and is scattered with archaeological features from ancient trackways to the remains of an old mill. Most of the original native trees were felled in the 20th century to make way for conifers but Wentwood is now being restored to native broadleaved woodland. In spring the paths are surrounded by carpets of bluebells.

Visiting Wentwood

You can explore Wentwood on foot, bicycle or horseback. There is a welcome panel in the car park with a map and information about what to see. There are also marker posts to help guide you along the paths through the forest.

National Forest for Wales

Wentwood forms part of the National Forest for Wales. The National Forest will create areas of new woodland, enhance existing woodlands and restore Wales' irreplaceable ancient woodlands. In time it will form a connected ecological network running throughout Wales, bringing social, economic and environmental benefits.

Wyndcliff Wood, Whitestone, Beacon Hill and Afan Forest Park are also part of the National Forest - see pages 4-6 and 20 for information about visiting these places.

How to get here

Wentwood is 13 miles north east of Newport.

From Newport, take the A48 towards Caerwent. After $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles, turn left onto the Usk Road, signposted Llanvair Discoed (Llanfair Disgoed). After around 3 miles pass Wentwood Reservoir, and Foresters' Oaks car park is on the left. Continue for a further $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, and Cadira Beeches car park is on the right.

OS grid reference ST 422 948 / OS map number OL 14 and 152 See centrefold map for key to symbols



Newport Wetlands National Nature Reserve lies on the coast between the Severn Estuary and the River Usk, just a few miles south of Newport city centre. This wildlife haven of reedbeds, saltmarsh and saline lagoons is one of the best places in Wales to see and hear wild birds, whatever time of year you visit.

Younger visitors enjoy spotting ducklings and chicks in spring when the reedbeds are alive with song. In summer, you may spot an avocet in the saline lagoons while autumn is a great time to look out for migratory wildfowl and wading birds. In winter flocks of starlings give a breathtaking display at dusk before roosting in the reedbeds.

Visitor facilities

The reserve is owned and managed by Natural Resources Wales, working in partnership with RSPB Cymru and Newport City Council. The visitor centre, café, car park and other visitor facilities are run by the RSPB – check their website for details and opening times.

Please note that dogs are only allowed on the Green Lanes and Coast Walk where they must be kept on a short lead.

Other routes

The **Wales Coast Path** passes along the edge of the reserve.

Sustrans National Cycle Network route 4 has a branch to Newport Wetlands along cycle paths and quiet roads and there is a covered cycle stand next to the visitor centre entrance.



Walking trails

Wander on the network of paths or follow one of our five waymarked walking trails, most of which are accessible. Follow the paths around the reedbeds and scan the pools from one of the viewing platforms or from the raised bird hide. Walk along the floating pontoon across the reedbeds to the East Usk Lighthouse with views over the Severn Estuary.

Orchid Trail (1 mile/1.6 km, accessible) Spot orchids in late spring and early summer.

Sculpture Trail (1 mile/1.7 km, accessible)
Look out for the sculptures on this trail through reedbeds, over the floating bridge and past the lighthouse.

Woodland and Estuary Trail (1½ miles/2.3 km, accessible) Go through reedbeds, woodland, past open water and the estuary.



The Wetlands Experience (2½ miles/4 km, accessible) This route combines the Orchid Trail, the Woodland and Estuary Trail and part of the Wales Coast Path

Green Lanes and Coast Walk (3¾ miles/5.9 km, easy)
Highlights include the East Usk
Lighthouse, green lanes and
views over the Severn Estuary
as far as Exmoor. This is the
only trail on which dogs are
allowed.



Accessibility information

The paths around the Uskmouth reedbeds are accessible for wheelchairs and there are benches every 200m on the Orchid Trail, Sculpture Trail, Woodland and Estuary Trail, and The Wetlands Experience. The paths are level with some gentle slopes and a zig-zag ramp to the raised reedbeds. The viewing screens and bird hide have wheelchair spaces. The visitor centre, café and toilets are accessible and there is parking for Blue Badge holders. For further details and to book a mobility scooter or wheelchair, contact the RSPB visitor centre (tel: 01633 636363).

How to get here

Newport Wetlands National Nature Reserve is 5 miles south of Newport city centre.

Take the A48 (Southern Distributor Road) from the city centre towards the M4 and follow the brown and white signs to the wetlands reserve. The car park is on West Nash Road.

Postcode for sat nav NP18 2BZ OS grid reference ST 334 834 / OS map number 152

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Newport area



6 Cwm Carn Forest Family-friendly forest drive and mountain bike trails for experienced riders















Cwm Carn Forest is a popular destination for mountain bikers and is home to one of the UK's first downhill trails. There is also a choice of walking trails and the popular forest drive is due to reopen in 2021.

The Forestry Commission started to plant Cwm Carn Forest in the 1920s but, over the last few years, many trees had to be cut down as they were diseased. Since then, areas of the forest have been replanted and the forest drive has been resurfaced.

Visitor facilities

Cwmcarn Forest visitor centre is run by Caerphilly County Borough Council. You can get information about walking trails. book a camping pitch or pod or visit the shop and café with outdoor seating area. Check the visitor centre website for opening times.

Cwm Carn Forest Drive

The forest drive is due to reopen in 2021 after extensive redevelopment. This seven-mile long drive through the forest offers a great family day out. You can stop at any of the parking areas along the route to enjoy the range of visitor facilities. The children's play areas have basket swings, climbing frames, tunnels and slides and there is a storytelling area. There are lots of picnic areas with panoramic views

of the surrounding towns and countryside. Enjoy a gentle walk or set off on a more strenuous hike up to the Twmbarlwm Iron Age hillfort. See our website or contact the visitor centre for the latest information and admission charge.



Walking

There are paths along the stream and past the lake, ideal for a short stroll, and longer walks through the forest and up Twmbarlwm hillfort. See Cwmcarn Forest visitor centre website for information.

Mountain bike trails

Our waymarked mountain bike trails start from the car park look out for the signs and read the information on site to make sure you pick a trail that is right for you. Information about trail grading is also on our website along with an update on any trail diversions or closures.

Twrch Trail (13.1 km, grade red)

Open and flowing to tight and technical riding, mostly on purpose built singletrack through woodland and open ridge tops with views. Two new sections due to open in 2021.

Cafall Trail (14.5 km, grade red)

Climbing up through the more remote areas of Cwm Carn, this trail has hand-built singletrack sections and technical descents.

Pedalhounds Downhill (1.4 km. grade orange/ extreme)

This downhill course starts off with a handmade rooty section



then flows in and out of trees with drops and jumps. Join it from the Cafall Trail or use the uplift service.

Y Mynydd Downhill (2.7 km. grade orange/ extreme)

Reached by the uplift service. this downhill mountain bike trail is full of features.

Other mountain bike facilities

Cwmdown is the uplift provider for the downhill trails and offers a choice of uplift passes.

PS Cycles is located in the car park and offers bike hire, bike servicing, skills days, bike and accessories sales.

For more information about mountain biking in Wales. go to www.mbwales.com.

Accessibility information

The visitor centre, café and toilets are accessible and there is parking for Blue Badge holders.

How to get here

Cwm Carn Forest is 8 miles from junction 28 of the M4.

Leave the M4 at junction 28 and follow the brown and white signs to the car park which is run by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Postcode for sat nav NP11 7FA OS grid reference ST 229 935 / OS map number 152

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Brecon Beacons area



Coed v Cerrig National **Nature Reserve**





Coed y Cerrig National Nature Reserve is in the southern part of the Black Mountains within the Brecon Beacons National

Park. A wet alder woodland covers the valley floor - these trees used to be coppiced to make charcoal and soles for clogs. A mixed woodland, full of fragrant bluebells in spring, clings to the steep valley sides and an oak and beech woodland grows in the deeper soils at the top of the reserve.

Walking trails

Alder Tree Boardwalk (½ mile/0.6 km, accessible)

Cross the road with care and set off along the boardwalk to explore the alder woodland in the wet valley bottom. Return along the boardwalk or do a circular walk by taking the path through the trees.

Woodland Climb (1/4 mile/0.5 km, strenuous)

This short circular route climbs steeply up a series of rough stone steps, continuing through the woodland and dropping down a slope to the car park. Enjoy the swathe of fragrant bluebells along the path in spring.

Accessibility information

The wide and level boardwalk is suitable for wheelchairs. It starts just over the road from the car park and has passing places and wooden benches.

How to get here

Coed y Cerrig National Nature Reserve is 4 miles north of Abergavenny. Take the A465 from Abergavenny towards Hereford. After 4 miles, turn left into the village of Llanfihangel Crucorney. After 1/3 mile, turn left onto a minor road to Llanthony. After 11/4 miles take the left fork, following the brown and white nature reserve signs. The car park is on the right after 11/4 miles.

OS grid reference SO 293 211 / OS map number OL 13 See centrefold map for key to symbols

Brecon Beacons area



Taf Fechan Forest (Owl's Grove) Short riverside walking trail







Taf Fechan Forest is in the Brecon Beacons National Park, just a short drive from Merthyr Tydfil and the South Wales valleys. Discover this peaceful forest on our waymarked walking trail from Owl's Grove car park. There is a picnic bench next to the car park.

Walking trail **Taf Fechan Trail** (1¼ miles/1.9 km, moderate)

This circular trail goes through tall conifer trees alongside the babbling river and returns along a path through the woodland. There are some uneven sections and it is very wet and muddy after bad weather.

Other routes

The Sustrans National Cycle Network route 8 goes through Taf Fechan Forest.

You can walk to Blaen v Glvn waterfall from two of our nearby car parks. The route

from Lower Blaen v Glvn car park is shorter and has less of a climb than the route from Upper Blaen y Glyn car park. To reach these car parks, follow the road from Owl's Grove towards Talvbont Reservoir and look out for the car park signs.



How to get here

Taf Fechan Forest is 9 miles north of Merthyr Tydfil.

From Merthyr Tydfil, follow the brown and white signs towards the Brecon Mountain Railway. Continue past the railway station and, after 1½ miles, turn right at the T-junction towards Talybont-on-Usk. Follow signs for Talybont-on-Usk and the car park is on the right.

OS grid reference SO 048 162 / OS map number OL 12

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Brecon Beacons area



Garwnant

Family-friendly forest on the edge of the Brecon Beacons













Garwnant is the southern gateway to the Brecon Beacons National Park and is easy to find, just off the A470 north of Merthyr Tydfil. It has a café with outside seating area and a range of activities for families to enjoy. There is a large picnic area around the car park and picnic benches along the walking trails.

Walking trails

Several walking trails explore the forest. One is accessible for pushchairs and visitors using wheelchairs.

A section of the **Taff Trail** suitable for walkers passes through Garwnant.

Children's activities

There are two short mountain bike trails for younger riders and a skills park with childfriendly obstacles to improve skills and build confidence. There is a children's outdoor play area and an animal puzzle trail with sculptures to spot.

Future facilities

Forest Holidays plan to develop holiday cabins at Garwnant and will then manage some of the visitor facilities. Check their website for the latest information.

Opening times

Please check our website for current opening times and availability of facilities.

Accessibility information

Facilities include an accessible trail, parking for Blue Badge holders, wheelchair access to the café and a Changing Places toilet which has more equipment than a standard accessible toilet (RADAR key needed).

How to get here

Garwnant is 5 miles north of Merthyr Tydfil. Take the A470 from Merthyr Tydfil towards Brecon and follow the brown and white signs to the car park.

OS grid reference SO 002 131 / OS map number OL 12 See centrefold map for key to symbols

Craig Cerrig Gleisiad a Fan Frynych National

Craggy landscape with a choice of mountain walks







Nature Reserve

Brecon Beacons area

Discover the atmospheric amphitheatre created by the soaring cliffs of Craig Cerrig Gleisiad, just a few hundred metres from the busy A470 through the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Try our waymarked walks to get a flavour of the reserve or, if you have a map and want a longer walk, there's a choice of footpaths. The reserve is grazed by cattle, sheep and mountain ponies - please keep dogs under close control. The small picnic site is next to the parking area.

Walking trails

Under the Cliff Walk (1 mile/1.8 km there and back, moderate)

Experience the majestic landscape on this walk along the river to the base of the rocky slopes.

Bluestone Walk (2 miles/3.4 km. strenuous)

This circular route sets off alongside the river and climbs through heather and bilberry to a cairn. It returns down a steep, grassy slope with dramatic views towards Pen y Fan.

Other routes

The **Beacons Way** follows a footpath from the lay-by at the reserve entrance.

There are footpaths through the reserve to the moorlands of Fan Frynych and the cliffs at Craig Cwm Du – you need a map to follow these routes.

How to get here

Craig Cerrig Gleisiad a Fan Frynych National Nature Reserve is 7 miles south of Brecon. The best starting point is a large lay-by on the A470 – look out for the information panel just beyond the gate. Take the A470 from Brecon towards Merthyr Tydfil. After 5½ miles, go past a youth hostel and then turn into the second lay-by on the right.

OS grid reference SN 971 222 / OS map number OL 12

See centrefold map for key to symbols



National Nature Reserve Spectacular views and industrial history





Ogof Ffynnon Ddu National Nature Reserve is a huge expanse of moorland with magnificent views, situated in the heart of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The varied rock types in the reserve produce different soils on which a range of plants grow including heather, bilberry, mosses and lichens. It is hard to imagine the thriving village with its own railway station. post office and public house that was once here. The village was home to people working at the limestone guarry, the silica brickworks and the many lime kilns - you can see the remains of these on our walking trail.

Walking trail Tram and Train Trail (2 miles/3.2 km. moderate)

Follow this wavmarked walk around the reserve to enjoy the views and discover some of the industrial remains.

Other route

The **Beacons Way** passes through the reserve on its 95 mile journey through the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The caves

The cave system is one of the most extensive in Europe. The caves may only be accessed by properly equipped cavers with a permit from the South Wales Caving Club.

The National Showcaves Centre for Wales (Dan vr Ogof), a privately-run tourist attraction, is on the opposite side of the valley and is signposted from the A4067.

How to get here

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu National Nature Reserve is 20 miles south west of Brecon. Take A40 from Brecon towards Llandovery. After 7 miles, turn left onto A4067, signposted Ystradgynlais. Go through Glyntawe and turn left onto minor road signposted to Penwyllt. Follow brown and white nature reserve signs over river and left at junction. Pass disused quarry on left and follow track to car park.

OS grid reference SN 856 154 / OS map number OL 12 See centrefold map for key to symbols

Brecon Beacons area



Glasfynydd Forest Walk or cycle around the Usk Reservoir









Glasfynydd Forest surrounds Usk Reservoir in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Walkers and cyclists can follow the waymarked trail from the car park around the reservoir and across the dam. There is a picnic bench in the car park and several others along the trail.

Walking trail

Usk Reservoir Trail (5½ miles/8.7 km, easy)

Eniov views of the Black Mountains on this easy-tofollow circular trail around Usk Reservoir, Most of this route follows a level wide stoned track skirting the reservoir and it can get muddy in places when wet. Cyclists may also use this trail. There are public footpaths to the Physicians Well from this trail (not wavmarked).

Mountain bike trail

Usk Reservoir Loop (5½ miles/8.7 km. forest road and similar)

Most of this trail follows a level wide stoned track skirting the reservoir. This is a shared route for cyclists and walkers.



How to get here

Glasfynydd Forest is 13 miles south east of Llandovery.

Take the A40 from Llandovery towards Brecon. At Trecastle, turn right following the brown and white signs to Usk Reservoir. After 33/4 miles ignore the brown and white sign at the right hand turn to the reservoir and continue straight ahead for ½ mile. The car park is on the left.

OS grid reference SN 820 271 / OS map number OL 12 See centrefold map for key to symbols



Dinas Rock is an imposing limestone cliff in Waterfall Country on the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park. There is a short accessible walk from the car park to the cascades. The other walking trail goes to Sgwd vr Eira waterfall. The car park can get full as this area is popular with outdoor activity groups.

Walking trails

Svchrvd Trail (1/2 mile/0.6 km there and back, accessible)

Riverside trail through a narrow gorge to the cascades. It returns along the same path.

Sgwd yr Eira Trail (4 miles/6.3 km there and back, strenuous)

Walking trail to the famous Sgwd yr Eira waterfall.

Other route

Sgwd yr Eira and three other dramatic waterfalls can also be reached on the circular Four

Falls Trail from Gwaun Hepste car park (see page 19).

Waterfall Country

Nowhere in Wales has such a richness and diversity of waterfalls within such a small area as Waterfall Country. Four rivers wind their way down deep, tree-lined gorges, over a series of waterfalls, before ioining to form the River Neath. Waterfall Country is in the Brecon Beacons National Park and lies largely within woodland jointly managed by Natural Resources Wales and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Accessibility information

The Sychryd Trail is suitable for more robust wheelchairs.

How to get here

Dinas Rock car park is 12 miles west of Merthyr Tydfil. Take A465 from Merthyr Tydfil towards Neath. Leave A465 at Glynneath and follow signs for B4242 to Pontneddfechan. Follow brown and white signs to Dinas Rock, turning right at former Dinas Inn. After ½ mile go over bridge to car park.

OS grid reference SN 911 079 / OS map number OL 12

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Brecon Beacons area



Gwaun Hepste

Gateway to the famous Four Falls Trail









Gwaun Hepste is set within Waterfall Country in the Brecon **Beacons National Park.** This popular car park is the starting point for the legendary circular trail to the woodland gorges where four of the area's most spectacular waterfalls are found. You can walk right behind the thundering curtain of water at the famous Sgwd yr Eira waterfall (which means "fall of snow" in Welsh).

Walking trail

Four Falls Trail (51/4 miles/8.4 km, strenuous)

The main paths on this waymarked trail are wide and easy to follow. There are optional signposted sections to the best views of each waterfall - these follow narrow. steep paths which are rocky and can be slippery.

Other routes

The Four Falls Trail can also be started from the Cwm Porth car park (OS grid reference SN 928 124) which is managed by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

The **Sgwd yr Eira Trail** is a slightly shorter, direct route to Sgwd yr Eira waterfall from Dinas Rock car park (see page 18).



How to get here

Gwaun Hepste is 10 miles north west of Merthyr Tydfil.

Take A465 from Merthyr Tydfil towards Neath. After 5 miles, take the A4059 at roundabout towards Brecon, After 3¼ miles, turn left towards Ystradfellte. Bear left at next two junctions, following waterfall signs to Gwaun Hepste car park which is on left.

OS grid reference SN 935 123 / OS map number OL 12

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Swansea Bay area



15 Afan Forest Park

Historic valley with walking trails and world-class mountain biking













Situated in a former coal mining valley just a few miles from the M4. Afan Forest Park is one of Britain's iconic mountain bike destinations with trails for beginners to expert riders. Our wavmarked mountain bike trails and walking trails start from three car parks.

Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre is the starting point for woodland walks, family cycle routes and a range of mountain bike trails. The centre is home

to the South Wales Miners' Museum, a café and bike shop. It is owned by Neath Port Talbot Council - check their website for opening times.

Rhyslyn car park is on the site of a former railway station. It is the starting point for some of our mountain bike trails and two waymarked walks.

Some of our mountain bike trails can be started from the car park at Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre.

How to get here

Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre is 6 miles from junction 40 of the M4. Exit M4 at junction 40 onto A4107. The centre is signposted near Cwmafan.

Rhyslyn car park is just outside Pontrhydyfen. Take B4287 from A4107 towards Pontrhydyfen. Turn sharp right just over bridge and the car park is straight ahead.

Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre is 2 miles from Cymer. Follow signs for Glyncorrwg from the A4107 at Cymer and the car park is on the left.

OS grid references SS 820 950 (Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre) SS 800 942 (Rhyslyn) SS 872 984 (Glyncorrwg **Mountain Bike Centre)**

OS map numbers 165 and 166

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Walking trails

Our waymarked walking trails park - look out for the signs in the car parks.

Old Parish Road Walk (11/4 miles/2 km, easy, from Afan Forest Park **Visitor Centre)**

short walk through ancient to the river from benches along the way.

River and Railway Walk (3 miles/4.8 km, moderate, from Afan Forest Park **Visitor Centre)**

river and the former route of Brunel's South Wales Mineral Railway, with a riverside picnic

Gyfylchi Ridgetop Trail (7 miles/11.2 km, strenuous, from Afan Forest Park **Visitor Centre)**

The beautiful woodlands and climb worth the effort.



Rhyslyn Walk (1 mile/1.8 km, easy, from Rhyslyn)

Follow the river upstream to a viewpoint with a bench

Penrhys Walk (3½ miles/5.7 km, moderate, from Rhyslyn)

An historical trail with spectacular views of the Afan

Other routes

Sustrans National Cycle Network route 887 runs Forest Park and may be used by walkers and cyclists.

Accessibility information

There is parking for Blue Badge café and toilets at Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre are



Mountain bike trails

exciting trails for beginners three car parks within the forest park - look out for the signs to make sure you pick a trail our website along with an

Rheilffordd Low Level Cycleway

(grade green, from Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre, Rhyslyn or Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre)

Over 14 miles of disused and Glyncorrwg - this is a linear

Rookie Trail (5.8 km, grade green, from Afan Forest Park **Visitor Centre)**

2.4 km blue-graded loop.

Blue Scar Trail (7.1 km, grade blue, from Afan **Forest Park Visitor Centre)**

Penhydd Trail (14.4 km, grade red, from Afan **Forest Park Visitor Centre)**

singletrack descents and great

Y Wal Trail (18.6 km, grade red, from **Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre** or Rhyslyn)

Some of the best singletrack ride, combine with White's Level Trail via one of the W2 links.



White's Level Trail (15.4 km, grade red, from Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre)

black-graded loop. For a longer via one of the W2 links.

Blade Trail (23.6 km, grade red, from **Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike** Centre)

Skyline Trail (46.8 km, grade red, from Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike Centre)

Other mountain bike facilities

Afan Bike Park is an extreme

The Skills Area, suitable for

Afan Valley Bike Shed is next

Glyncorrwg Mountain Bike **Centre** has a café and mountain bike shop which offers bike hire and repair services.

www.mbwales.com.

Swansea Bay area



16 Crymlyn Bog National **Nature Reserve**

The largest lowland fen in Wales





Crymlyn Bog is one of the most important wetland sites in Europe, and its survival is remarkable considering its location **next to industrialised Swansea.** The extensive reed and sedge beds are home to a wide variety of wetland birds, insects and plants. The walking trails include a boardwalk through the heart of the fen. Horses graze parts of the reserve and there are gates on both trails.

Walking trails

Bog Walk (3/4 mile/1.2 km, easy)

The trail follows level grassy tracks and sections of boardwalk.

Bog and Balloons Walk (1 mile/1.6 km, easy)

This walk follows the boardwalk and returns via the field where a World War Two barrage balloon was anchored to deter German air attacks - look out for anchor points in the grass.

Pant y Sais National Nature Reserve

This small reserve is nearby at Jersey Marine. The reed and sedge beds are home to wetland plants, birds and insects. The short boardwalk over the fen is accessible for wheelchair users. The Tennant Canal towpath goes along the length of Pant y Sais and the Wales Coast Path passes the edge of the reserve.

How to get here

Crymlyn Bog car park is 1 mile from the A483 dual carriageway through Swansea (the Fabian Way). Exit M4 at junction 42 onto A483 to Swansea city centre. Pass Swansea University's Bay Campus, then turn right at junction for Fabian Way Park and Ride car park. Turn around here and rejoin the A483 travelling back towards the M4. Turn left immediately after BMW service garage and by Mile End pub. Follow this road (Wern Terrace) and turn right at T-junction with Tir John Road. Follow this narrow lane for ½ mile, bearing left at the civic amenity site, and the car park is on the right (the barrier is locked overnight).

OS grid reference SS 685 942 / OS map number 165

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Swansea Bay area



17 Park Wood and **Mill Wood**

Gower woodlands with historic





Just a few miles apart, both Park Wood and Mill Wood have a long history. Park Wood was once a medieval deer park and it has several archaeological sites including a Neolithic burial chamber, caves and lime kilns. There are remnants of 18th century landscaping and the ruins of a watermill and fishponds at Mill Wood which was originally part of the Penrice Estate.

Visiting the woodlands

There is a welcome panel at each woodland with a map and information about what to see.

Follow the gravelled forest road from the car park at Park Wood and look out for the information panels next to each archaeological feature. The short circular route through Mill Wood goes past the ruins of the mill and the former fishponds.



How to get here

Park Wood is 9 miles west of Swansea and Mill Wood is 12 miles west of Swansea - both are reached via the A4118 from Swansea to Gower. For Park Wood: go through the village of Parkmill on the A4118 and after 1/3 mile turn right, following the brown and white signs to Parc Le Breos. Continue along this minor road for ½ mile and the car park is on the left. For Mill Wood: Continue on the A4118 through Penmaen and Nicholaston villages and turn left signposted to Penrice. Continue along this minor, singletrack road for ½ mile and the parking area is on the right.

OS grid references SS 538 896 (Park Wood) SS 493 882 (Mill Wood) / OS map number 164

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Swansea Bay area



18 Oxwich National **Nature Reserve**

> Wildlife-rich dunes, woodland and wetlands











Oxwich Bay is one of Gower's most popular beaches but walk a little way inland onto the reserve and you'll discover a wildlife oasis in the dunes. Wild orchids grow in the dunes in early summer, and wildflowers support butterflies and other insects. The reserve's lakes and marshes are a haven for birdlife and provide overwintering habitat for wildfowl and the occasional migrant such as bittern. The Penrice Estate owns the car park and provides the visitor facilities.

Visiting Oxwich

Set off from the car park towards the dunes and follow the footpaths to explore the reserve - look out for our information panels.

Follow the link path from the edge of the reserve to Nicholaston Woods, Here you can enjoy breathtaking views of Oxwich Bay and carpets of bluebells in spring.

Look out for ducks, water rails, little grebes and moorhens from our lakeside bird hide.

The bird hide is over the road from the dunes and is accessed by a boardwalk over the marsh and reedbeds.

The Wales Coast Path passes through the dunes and along the edge of Nicholaston Woods.

Opening times

The car park and some of the visitor facilities are open seasonally. See the Penrice Estate website for details

How to get here

Oxwich National Nature Reserve is 11 miles west of Swansea. Take the A4118 from Swansea towards Gower and Port Envon. Continue through Penmaen and Nicholaston. Turn left after the church next to a ruin onto a minor road signposted to Oxwich and Slade. The car park is on the left.

OS grid reference SS 501 865 / OS map number 164

See centrefold map for key to symbols



Pembrey Forest is a huge pine forest on the Carmarthenshire coast. The Forestry Commission planted trees here to help replace woods cut down to supply timber for the two World Wars. The walking trail goes past the ruins of a First World War ammunition factory. The forest is next to Pembrey Country Park (run by Carmarthenshire County Council) with visitor centre, café, toilets and a large range of leisure activities.

Walking trail

Pines and Shells Trail (4½ miles/7 km. moderate)

The trail starts near car park 1 in Pembrey Country Park walk down the gravel track from the car park to the information panel. It follows sandy tracks and forest roads. along some of the former ammunition factory's train tracks. There are picnic tables along the route.

Horse riding

Horse riders need a permit in Pembrey Forest. Go to the Pembrey Conservation Trust website to apply for one.

Other routes

The Wales Coast Path goes through Pembrey Forest and along the sandy beach.

Pembrev Forest is on the Sustrans Celtic Trail cycle route.

Pembrey Country Park is managed by Carmarthenshire County Council and offers a wide range of leisure activities.

There is a short woodland walk from our car park at Pen-y-Bedd Wood near the entrance to the country park (see page 27).

Walking trail Pen-v-Bedd Trail (1½ miles/2.2 km. easy)

This wavmarked circular trail follows sandy tracks through Corsican pine trees. There are benches along the way and a decked viewing area overlooking a pond. The trail returns to the car park through mixed woodland and there are views through the trees over fields and farmland.

here and in neighbouring Pembrev Forest.

Other routes

Saint Illtyd's Walk (a 64 mile long distance walk from Pembrev Country Park to Margam Country Park) runs

through Pen-y-Bedd Wood look out for the waymarkers.

There is a choice of walking trails and other leisure activities in nearby **Pembrey** Country Park.

The country park is bordered by Pembrey Forest which you can explore on our Pines and Shells Trail (see page 26).



How to get here

Pembrev Forest is 8 miles west of Llanelli. Take the A484 from Llanelli towards Bury Port and then follow the brown and white signs for the country park. The country park and car parks are managed by Carmarthenshire County Council. Car park 1 is the closest to the Pines and Shells Trail.

OS grid reference (car park 1) SN 400 001 / OS map number 178 or 164

See centrefold map for key to symbols

How to get here

Pen-v-Bedd Wood is 7 miles west of Llanelli. Take the A484 from Llanelli towards Bury Port and follow the brown and white signs to the country park onto Factory Road. The entrance to the car park is on the right, over the bridge just after leaving the A484.

has a popular picnic site with benches and a large grassy area.

The short walking trail sets off through the woodland along

the route of a disused railway line which once served a Royal

Ordnance factory. The Pembrey Conservation Trust is based in

the woodland and its volunteers carry out many practical tasks

OS grid reference SN 419 013 / OS map number 164 or 178 See centrefold map for key to symbols



Carmel National Nature Reserve is home to the only seasonal lake in Britain. Known as a turlough, the lake fills up in winter and empties in summer. The reserve is made up of a rich tapestry of habitats from ancient woodland and flower-rich grassland to disused quarries. In spring enjoy the carpets of bluebells and look out for hundreds of toads making their way to the lake to spawn. The walking trail climbs to the top of an old quarry from where there are far-reaching views. There is a small picnic area next to the car park. The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales looks after the western section of the reserve next to Carmel village.

Walking trail **Quarry Trail** (11/4 miles/1.9 km. strenuous)

The views from the top of the disused quarry are well worth the steep climb at the start of the route. This circular trail returns through the woodland and alongside the seasonal



How to get here

lake.

Carmel National Nature Reserve is 5 miles south west of Llandeilo. Take the A476 from Llandeilo towards Llanelli. Go through Carmel village and, after 1/3 mile, turn left at a staggered crossroads signed to Llandybie. The car park is on the left after 1 mile, just before a junction.

OS grid reference SN 605 164 / OS map number 178

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Pembrokeshire area



Minwear Forest Woodland walk with estuary views







Minwear Forest is within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and is easy to find from the A40. Together with nearby Canaston Wood, Minwear has been thickly wooded for centuries. It is near the tidal section of the Eastern Cleddau River and the varied habitat supports herons and other waterside birds. In spring the paths are edged with lesser celandine and wood anemones and there are patches of bluebells under the trees. The burnished colours of the red oak and beech trees are a spectacular sight in autumn.

Walking trail

Minwear Walk (1½ miles/2.6 km, easy)

This waymarked circular walk goes to a viewpoint with a bench over the Cleddau Estuary. There are a couple of picnic areas along the route, one of which has benches carved from tree trunks.



How to get here

Minwear Forest is 22 miles west of Carmarthen, Take A40 from Carmarthen towards St Clears and Haverfordwest. After 21 miles, turn onto A4075 towards Pembroke Dock and Tenby. Take the first right, following brown and white sign to Blackpool Mill. Follow this road past the mill and the car park is on the right.

OS grid reference SN 059 142 / OS map number OL 36 See centrefold map for key to symbols



Located in one of the most breathtaking parts of Wales, the landscape at Stackpole National Nature Reserve is incredibly varied. The reserve includes woodlands, dunes, limestone cliffs, beaches and famous freshwater lakes which are adorned with water lilies in summer. Stackpole is wonderful for wildlife watching and it is a stronghold for several species, including one of Britain's largest populations of the rare greater horseshoe bat.

Dramatic cliffs, headlands,

dunes and beaches

Visiting Stackpole

The National Trust owns the reserve and manages it in partnership with Natural Resources Wales. There are footpaths on the Trust's estate and two of Pembrokeshire's finest beaches. Broadhaven South and Barafundle Bay, are within the reserve. The Trust operates four car parks at Stackpole and a tea room at Stackpole Quay.

The Wales Coast Path and the **Pembrokeshire Coast Path** follow the same route through the reserve and go along the cliff tops from Stackpole Quay towards Trefalen.

Find out more

See the National Trust website for information about visiting Stackpole and opening times of the car parks, tea room and toilets.

Accessibility information

Some of the paths are accessible to off-road wheelchairs. See the National Trust website for details about accessible facilities and how to hire a mobility vehicle.

How to get here

Stackpole National Nature Reserve is 5 miles south of Pembroke. Take the B4319 from Pembroke towards Castlemartin, from where minor roads lead to the National Trust's four car parks (Stackpole Quay, Broadhaven South Beach, Bosherston Village and Lodge Park).

OS map number OL 36

See centrefold map for key to symbols

Pembrokeshire area



Skomer Marine Conservation Zone

Unique underwater world. rich in plant and animal life









The waters around Skomer Island and Marloes Peninsula have been designated a Marine Conservation Zone to protect their nationally important marine wildlife, habitats and geology.

The varied underwater terrain is alive with plants, crustaceans. fish and mammals. Grey seals come ashore during the autumn to give birth on the remote beaches around the peninsula.

Visitor facilities

The car park at Martin's Haven is operated by the National Trust - please do not drive onto the beach. Follow one of the National Trust's walking trails from the car park or explore Martin's Haven's pebbly beach and rocky shore.

Learn about Skomer's marine life in our marine exhibition centre on the way from the car park to the beach (centre and toilets open Easter to October).

The **Pembrokeshire Coast** Path and the Wales Coast **Path** go through Martin's Haven.

Skomer Island

Skomer Island is a National Nature Reserve, famous for its seabird colonies and wildlife. Ferry services to Skomer Island depart from Martin's Haven from Easter to October. Find out more from the South and West Wales Wildlife Trust website

How to get here

Martin's Haven is 14 miles south west of Haverfordwest.

Take the B4327 from Haverfordwest towards Marloes, After 10 miles take minor road to Marloes. Continue through Marloes village and after 2 miles the National Trust Martin's Haven car park is on the left.

OS grid reference SM 761 090 / OS map number OL 36 See centrefold map for key to symbols



Long distance routes in South Wales

South Wales is home to large sections of three long distance routes, each of which can be enjoyed in bitesize chunks. They are all open to walkers, and some sections are open to cyclists and horse riders.

The 870 mile long Wales Coast Path follows the nation's coastline from Chester in the north to Chepstow in the south. The South Wales section is full of variety, taking in city landscapes, villages, stunning coastline and estuary views. There are several National Nature Reserves and miles of Heritage Coast along the stretch from Chepstow to Swansea and Gower.



The Pembrokeshire Coast Path is a 186 mile long National Trail from St Dogmaels to Amroth. It also forms part of the Wales Coast Path and is almost entirely within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. It twists and turns through some of the most breathtaking coastal scenery in Britain ranging from rugged cliff tops and sheltered coves to wide beaches and winding estuaries.



Offa's Dvke Path runs for 177 miles from Chepstow in the north to Prestatvn in the south. This National Trail traces the border with England and the spectacular earthwork constructed by King Offa in the 8th century. The southern section features river vallevs and medieval ruins before climbing into dramatic uplands in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

These three long distance routes go through or alongside some of our National Nature Reserves and woodlands. Look out for the National Trail acorn logo and the Wales Coast Path dragon shell symbol in this leaflet to find out where you can join one.

LLWYBRAU CENEDLAETHOL **NATIONAL TRAILS**







The Countryside Code helps you respect, protect and enjoy the countryside, enabling you to get the most out of your visit.

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors and stay safe

- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs

The Countryside Code family

The Countryside Code family includes activity codes for when you are walking dogs, using trails, at the waterside, wild swimming, angling or canoeing.

Follow the advice in the codes for a safe and enjoyable visit outdoors and to avoid causing problems for others.

Read the Countryside Code family at naturalresources.wales/ countrysidecode



PICK A TRAIL THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

Walking trail grades

We have included the distance and grade of each walk in this leaflet to help you decide if a walk is right for you. Read on to find out what the grades mean.

K	GRADE	SUITABLE FOR
4	Accessible	Walks for everyone, including people with wheelchairs and pushchairs, using accessible paths. Comfortable shoes or trainers can be worn. Assistance may be needed to push wheelchairs on some sections.
	Easy	Walks for anyone looking to improve their level of fitness on generally level trails which may have some rough, irregular surfacing. Suitable for pushchairs if they can be lifted over occasional obstructions. Comfortable shoes or trainers can be worn.
	Moderate	Walks for people with a reasonably good level of fitness. May include some unsurfaced and possibly steep paths and open country. Stout footwear and warm, water-proof clothing are recommended.
•	Strenuous	Walks for experienced walkers with a good fitness level. May include very steep hills and rough country. Walking boots and warm, water-proof clothing are essential.

Please also read the panel at the start of the walking trail and then follow the trail's waymarkers.

Mountain bike trail grades

We have included the distance and grade of each mountain bike trail in this leaflet. Please read the grading information below to make sure you pick a mountain bike trail you can handle. There is more detail about the type of trail surface, gradients and technical features on our website.

GRADE		SUITABLE FOR
	Forest Road & similar	A wide range of cyclists. Most bikes and hybrids. Ability to use maps helpful. Routes may or may not be waymarked.
	Green Easy	Beginner/novice cyclists. Basic bike skills required. Most bikes and hybrids. Some green routes can take trailers.
	Blue Moderate	Intermediate cyclist/mountain bikers with basic off-road riding skills. Mountain bikes or hybrids.
	Red Difficult	Proficient mountain bikers with good off-road riding skills. Suitable for better quality off-road mountain bikes
♦	Black Severe	Expert mountain bike users, used to physically demanding routes. Quality off-road mountain bikes.

Please also read the panel at the start of every mountain bike trail for more details and then follow the trail's waymarkers.

- (1) Coed Wyndcliff **Wyndcliff Wood** PPA
- Whitestone PPAR
- **Golygfa Ban Beacon View** P ?
- **Coed Gwent** Wentwood PA
- **Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol Gwlyptir Casnewydd** Newport Wetlands National Nature Reserve

- (6) Coedwig Cwm Carn **Cwm Carn Forest**
- (7) Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol **Coed y Cerrig** Coed y Cerrig National Nature Reserve P 👂 🔧
- (8) Coedwig Taf Fechan (Owl's Grove) Taf Fechan Forest (Owl's Grove) PPA
- Garwnant
- **Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol Craig Cerrig Gleisiad a Fan Craig Cerrig Gleisiad a Fan Frynych National Nature Reserve** PPF

- (11) Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol **Ogof Ffynnon Ddu** Ogof Ffynnon Ddu **National Nature Reserve** P
- (12) Coedwig Glasfynydd **Glasfynydd Forest** P 👂 🕸 🗷
- **Craig y Ddinas Dinas Rock** P & S
- (14) Gwaun Hepste P_E 👂 🗷
- **Parc Coedwig Afan** Afan Forest Park
- (16) Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol **Cors Crymlyn Crymlyn Bog National Nature Reserve** P
- **Coed y Parc Park Wood**
- **Coed y Felin Mill Wood** P
- **Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol** Oxwich **Oxwich National Nature Reserve**
- (19) Coedwig Pen-bre **Pembrey Forest**
- (20) Coed Pen-y-Bedd Pen-y-Bedd Wood PPF

- (21) Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol **Carmel Carmel National Nature Reserve** PPF
- (22) Coedwig Mynwar **Minwear Forest** PFA
- **Gwarchodfa Natur Genedlaethol** Ystagbwll **Stackpole National Nature Reserve**
- **Parth Cadwraeth Morol Sgomer Skomer Marine Conservation** Zone



Ymweld â Chanolbarth neu

Ogledd Cymru?
Cymrwch ein taflenni am leoedd ymweld â nhw yn yr ardal, neu awrlwythwch gopi o www.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru

Pick up our leaflets about places to visit in the area, or download a copy from www.naturalresources.wales



Allwedd Key



Parcio Parking

Parcio (tâl)

Canolfan Ymwelwyr









Lluniaeth



Llwybr cerdded



Llwybr hygyrch



Llwybr beicio mynydd



Llwybr darganfod



Cuddfan bywyd gwyllt



Maes chwarae Play area

Lle picnic



Cyfyngiadau cŵn



Llwybr Cenedlaethol





Llwybr Arfordir Cymru



Coedwig Genedlaethol National Forest for Wales

