

Bishopston Valley, Brandy Cove and Pwlldu Head

Start Southgate

Distance 5½ miles (8.9km)

Height gain 870 feet (265m)

Approximate time 3 hours

Parking National Trust car park

Refreshments Café and pub at Southgate

GPS waypoints

-  SS 553 874
-  A SS 558 876
-  B SS 567 879
-  C SS 580 882
-  D SS 585 874
-  E SS 573 872
-  F SS 565 871

Ordnance Survey maps Landranger 159 (Swansea & Gower), Explorer 164 (Gower)

Limestone creates spectacular scenery wherever it appears and this walk combines a deep, steep-sided valley with a magnificent coastline. Thickly wooded and a haven for wildlife, the valley was once mined for lead and silver while the cliffs were quarried for their stone.

 From the car park entrance, walk across to the second of two lanes leaving to the right, Hael Lane, which is

signed to Bishopston. Keep with it as it bends left, walking almost to the end. There a track, marked as a bridleway,



and a lamp room where, in the adjacent office, are the pay tins that were used at the Duffryn mine until the 1930s.

 Facing the visitor centre and the oak statue of 'Dai', take the path on the right, marked as the start of several forest trails. Keeping right, wind down past a large gate to a junction in front of a bridge beneath the road **A**. Bear left on a broad forest track past a picnic area, which then rises beside a stream into a narrow valley, Cwm yr Argoed. After $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.2km) the ongoing way crosses a bridge onto the other side and climbs through a series of bold zigzags, eventually reaching a T-junction **B**. Go left and then later, at a second junction, left again, shortly arriving at the edge of the forest at a meeting of several tracks **C**.

Climb over a stile beside a gate to the left and immediately turn right at the edge of open grazing. Keep going beyond a gate, the boundary now on your left, while to the right, there is a fine prospect across the Llynfi Valley to the rolling hills behind. The path

Nant Tryfal



remains beside the wall and is part of an ancient route from the coast. Later losing height into a deepening valley along the western flank of Foel y





St Lythans burial chamber

Bear right in front of the dolmen to a kissing-gate in the bottom hedge.

Emerging onto a lane, walk left for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (800m) to the second of two junctions. Turn right and then almost immediately, cross the right-hand verge to a gate **F**.

Head away beside the high wall of Dyffryn Gardens, keeping your line across the ensuing fields. Reaching the top corner of the fifth field in front of trees, climb over a couple of stiles in quick succession into the corner of the next field, where a metal kissing-gate opens into an enclosure surrounding the Tinkinswood long barrow **G**.

Built around 6,000 years ago and far older than Khufu's Great Pyramid in Egypt, this tomb is even more impressive than St Lythans. Upright slabs form walls to support a single massive capstone weighing more than 40 tons, the largest known in Britain. Excavations in 1914

recovered more than 900 pieces of bone. Analysis suggested some 40 separate individuals, which included men, women and at least eight children. Also discovered were shards of different styles of pottery, indicating use over a considerable period of time extending into the early Bronze Age. This tomb also has many legends associated with it and, if you spend Midsummer's Eve here, it is said you will go mad, die or become a poet.

Coming out of the kissing-gate, walk past the chamber along the top of the field, turning the corner below a pylon to find a stile in the hedge. Now bear right across the next field to a stile where fence meets hedge. Follow the left hedge to a stile and gate just before the corner and then strike across the field to another stile in the far-right corner. Walk the length of a final narrow field, leaving at the end onto Dyffryn Lane. To the left, the route will take you back into St Nicholas at the traffic lights. ●

Glyn Corrwg and the Abercregan Grottos

Start Cymmer, cycle track off A4107

Distance 7 miles (11.3km)

Height gain 785 feet (240m)

Approximate time 3½ hours

Parking Car park beside cycle track

Refreshments Pub at Cymmer Old Station, café at the Glyncorwg Mountain Bike Centre

Ordnance Survey maps Landranger 170 (Vale of Glamorgan), Explorer 166 (Rhondda & Merthyr Tydfil)

GPS waypoints

- SS 862 961
- SS 859 963
- SS 874 991
- SS 866 983
- SS 860 979
- SS 849 966

The old railway that ran through Glyn Corrwg begins this walk, which then climbs the forested hillside above. Clearings and open spaces provide spectacular views before the route descends past the stone mines at Abercregan. The final stretch beside the Afon Afan returns to Cymmer, where the former station waiting room is now a pub.

 Leave the parking area and head away from the bridge, following a short tarmac path to join the road beside traffic lights in front of the fire station. Cross the bridge and go left and then right, onto a broad track behind houses marked as a cycle route to Glyncorwg ■ A.

The old railway bridge



The trail follows the line of a mineral railway that ran to the remote village at the head of the valley, which sprang up at the beginning of the 20th century when the Glyncorwg mine was sunk.





SCALE 1:25000 or 2 1/2 INCHES to 1 MILE 4CM to 1KM

Blaencwm. The trod eventually joins a more distinct path that has followed the edge of the forest over Pen-pych F.

The way now falls into Cwm Lluest, dropping ever more steeply towards a waterfall that soon comes into sight. Zigzags take you to the foot of the falls, from which the path continues down the valley into a pine wood. Beyond a second, smaller cascade, there is a well-sited picnic spot, which enjoys a

0 200 400 600 800 METRES 1 KILOMETRES
0 200 400 600 YARDS 1/2 MILES

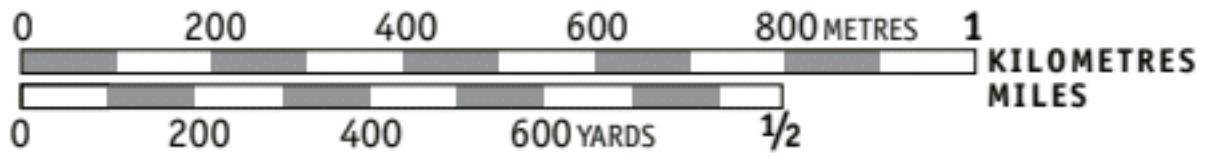
spectacular view back to the falls. A made path continues the descent, soon passing another small picnic area. Just after, fork off right onto a grass track and carry on downhill over a crossing to a second fork. Again bear right and keep dropping, suddenly emerging from the trees by the car park entrance. ●



Bracken-covered hillside

steeply to end at a broader track **F**. Turn left, but then, almost immediately, go sharp right on a narrow path, descending once more. Reaching a crossways beside a bench, walk left, the way now running

more steeply down the hillside to emerge abruptly onto a metalled drive at the bottom. The Nine Mile Point car park lies just to the left.

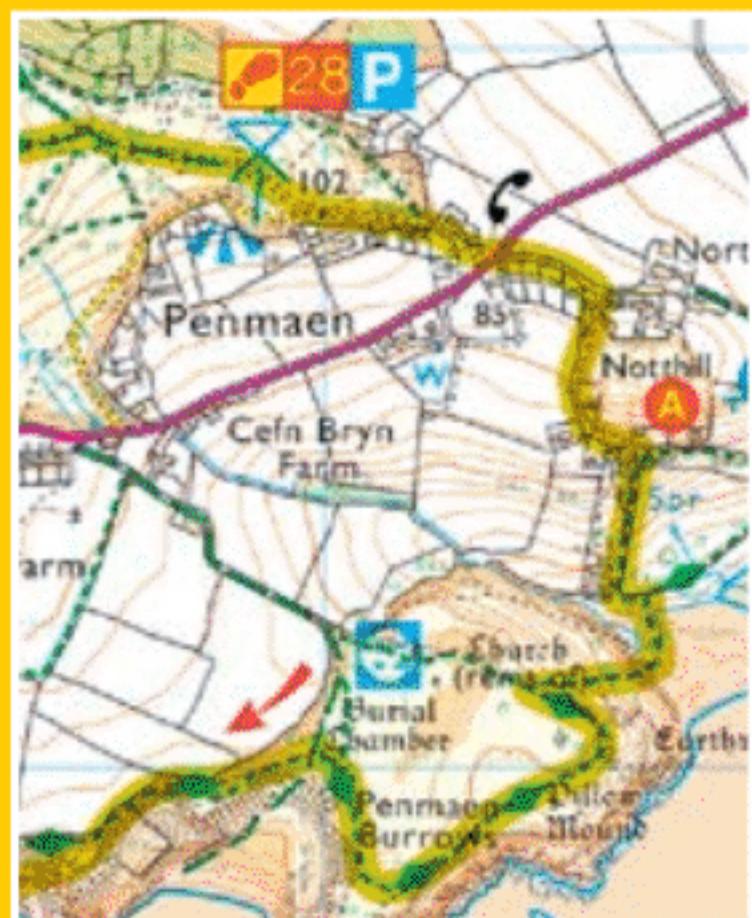


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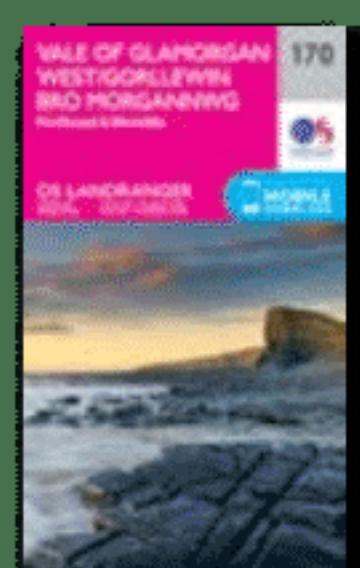
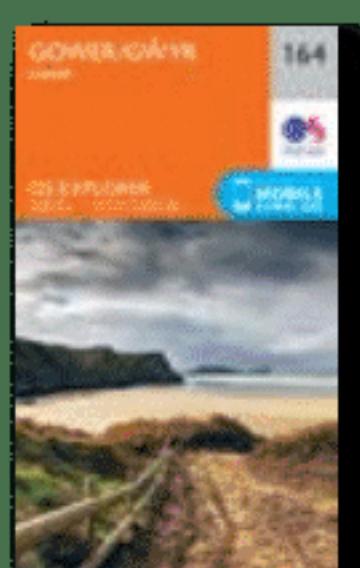
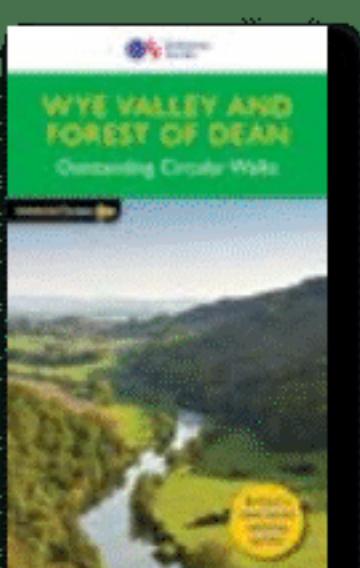
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