



3 Cliffs Bay & Foxhole walk – Gower

Description:

A lovely costal walk visiting some beautifully secluded bays, and passing by some of Gower's most important bone caves. I would recommend a stop at the 3 cliffs coffee shop or maddocks for a great lunch. **For those of you not staying with us you are welcome to use this walk but as there are no rights of way through the grounds, please see the note and the diversion map on the walks page to help you circumnavigate.**

Distance covered: 4.5 miles **Average time:** 2 hours **Terrain:** Easy, under foot a couple of climbs up onto the headlands.

Directions:

Walk out of the front door of the house and turn right, walk past the end of the house and up the corral (fenced in area).

Follow the track through the corral and along the old Church path, you will pass the trout ponds on your right, and valley gardens on your left immediately after this there is a cross roads – take the track straight on across the fields and through the woods.

At the woodlands end you will cross a stile next to a gate, here the track will bear left taking you past a



small pink cottage end on to the road and then through a grassy car park.

When you reach the tarmac village lane turn left over the cattle grid. Look out for Penmaen Church on your right.

Now cross the main road and continue for 100yds down the lane, take the first and only right turn.

Follow the road until you find yourself at the lookout above Three Cliffs Bay

Follow the track down to the river, cross the stepping stones and follow the storm beach to the other side of the valley. Look for a path to take you up back on to the cliff top on the edge of Pennard golf course and then bear right and follow the coast around.

If you keep to the coast you will have the opportunity to follow walk along the neck of three cliffs well worth a detour especially if the tide is in. the next bay you will pass is pobbles, before climbing back up to the coastal path and following the cliff edge past fox hole. At this point you will see a national trust car park and on the round about next to it there is the 3 cliffs coffee shop, a great place to stop for lunch or buy some snacks.

When you have finished your lunch and if you are feeling suitably restored it is worth considering walking a little further along the coast as a little way further is hunts bay and down below the cliff top only about 600m from the coffee shop there is Minchin hole bone caves. Be careful if you decide to go down to the cave it is this is a real dangerous scramble but it is also probably the reason that the cave is in such pristine condition today.

History of Minchin hole:

The cave has been excavated on a number of occasions in the past; the first of which took place in the mid nineteenth century. The many artefacts now lie in Swansea Museum include the remains of a straight-tusked elephant, bison, soft-nosed rhinoceros, cave bear, reindeer, wolf and hyena.

Along with the animal remains which indicate residence in the upper Palaeolithic period evidence of later occupation in the form of pottery (pots, dishes, boles, spindle whorls, combs, bronze brooches and a number of coins indicate that the cave was still in use during the Romano-British occupation and later in the Dark Ages.

Now follow the path back along the coast to 3 cliffs bay, on your way if you keep your eyes peeled you may spot a quite insignificant looking but very rare plant known as Yellow whitlowgrass, (*Draba aizoides*) it only grows about 2 inches high and carries yellow flowers in late winter to mid spring. A member of the Brassicaceae family the plant is widely distributed in continental Europe this is the only place in the UK where it can be found.

When you reach pobbles bay you have a choice you can either follow the path back around the coast and follow the top of the valley back to Pennard castle or you can follow the path up the valley from the

top of pebbles beach until you find a signposted footpath directing you left across Pennard golf course to the castle.

History of Pennard Castle:

Pennard Castle, originally a possession of Henry de Beaumont, was established in the 12th century probably as a ringwork castle, the stone castle we see today was likely constructed in the late 13th or early 14th century and the work of the de Breose's.

The castle and surrounding village were abandoned by 1400 though the church (St. Marys) continued in use until 1532 when it finally succumbed to the encroaching sand, the sand blew in from the beaches and choked the agricultural land, records note that tithes (taxes) were lowered to help the struggling farmers survive.



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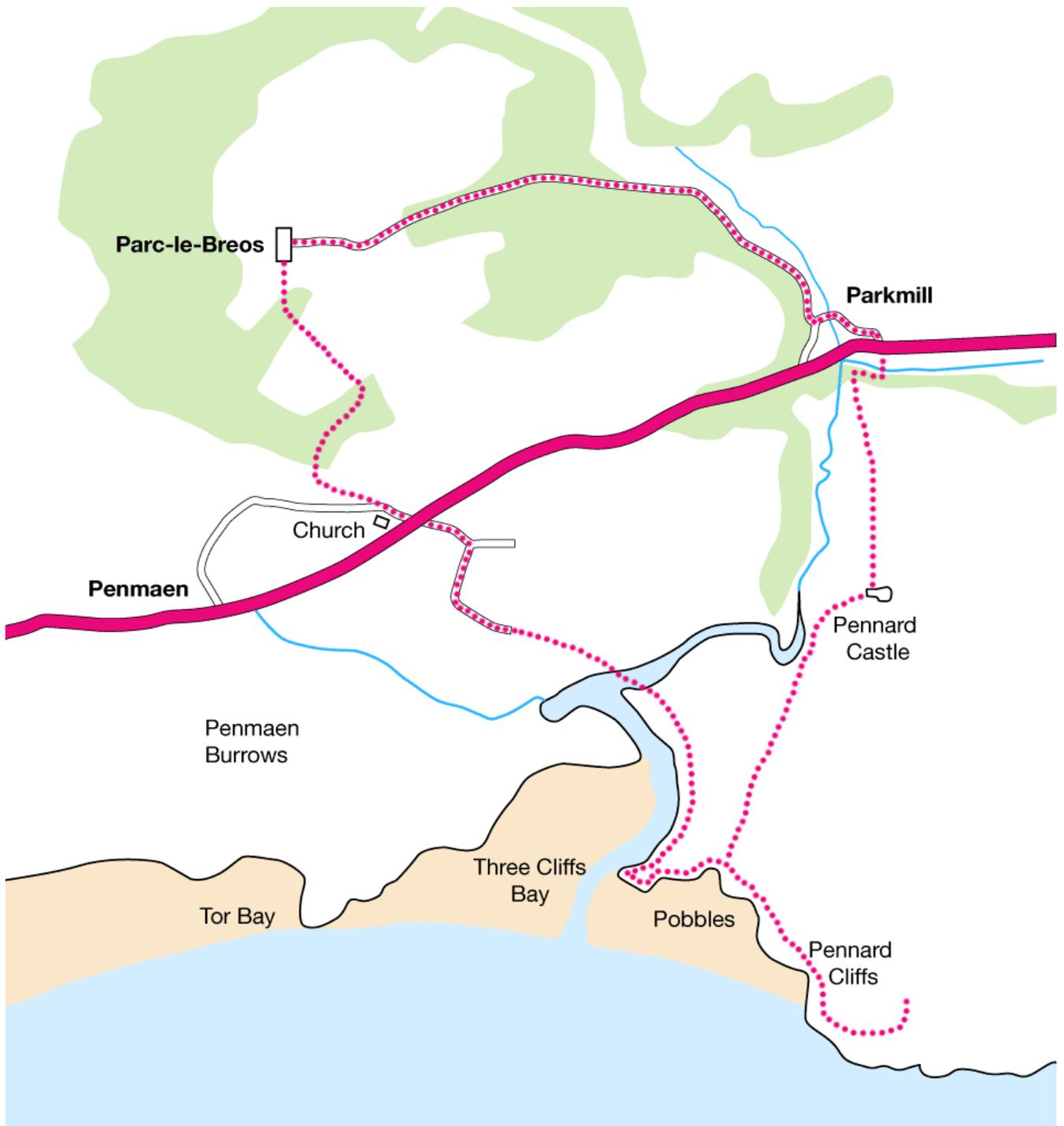
With regard to the be-sanding, though a geographer may have an alternative explanation, the truth is that many hundreds of years ago There was warlike chieftain called Prince Rhys ap Iestyn who once lived in the castle. He had won the hand of a Prince's daughter as reward for his battle exploits. A great feast was prepared to celebrate the forthcoming marriage. However the celebrations were disturbed by strange noises coming from magical lights dancing at a grassy area on the other side of the valley. Rhys ordered some of his men to discover the cause of the commotion. The men returned and said "Sire, 'tis the Tylwyth Teg (the fairies of Welsh folk lore), feasting and dancing, Rhys was so annoyed that the Tylwyth Teg would interfering with his celebrations summoned his men. Everybody begged him not to as they knew the Tylwyth Teg were not to be medaled with, but Rhys, too drunk to think rationally and bragged, "I have nouthing to fear from the little people!" The chieftain summoned his men to arms and ran down to the grassy area and attacked the Tylwyth Teg who as everyone konws can only be seen but not touched, none the less they were not vary pleased that the chieftain had spoiled their innocent fun and so cursed the chieftain sending a storm of unimagivable proportions to bury the castle under the deep sands.

Follow the valley floor over the river walkway and cross the small stream which emerges from holy well beneath the castle, its said to have curative properties!

From the castle continue to follow the top of the valley north away from the sea until you find a path on the edge of the golf course which you can follow down through the woods

When you meet another path turn right and follow the river until you see a blue foot bridge. Cross the bridge you will find yourself in parkmill village. Bear left across the main road and follow the lane immediately in front of Shepard's shop until you reach the ford. Follow the lane back up to park-le-breos

Walking Map 3 Cliffs Bay and Foxhole:



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