



Cefn Bryn, Reynoldston and Oxwich Bay Walk

Description:

A lovely circular walk taking in the spectacular views of Cefn Bryn and a visit to Arthur's Stone, before dropping down through the Penrice estate and making your way home across the sands of Oxwich bay. **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 just park at the car park near to Penmaen church and pick up the trail from there.**

Distance covered: 9 miles **Average time:** 4 hours **Terrain:** Easy under foot but some hilly terrain.

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 but you need to take the small stoney path which heads up the hill at a 2 o'clock direction (do not take the path immediately on your right which follows the wood boundary)

When you meet the un-surfaced road at the top of the rise follow it to the right, you will see Cefn Bryn rising up in front of you. (On your right at this point just a little way off the road are the old gravel pits, a busy industry here over a hundred years ago)

Next take the rough road on your left directly up the steep climb to the top of the hill. Look for a small grass track looping off to your left when you reach the top turn off here and sit down out of the wind to admire the views.

Once rested continue along the track, always taking the way which keeps you on the crest of the hill. The track will rise and fall following the peaks which make up the ridge of Cefn Bryn until after about 2.5 miles you will reach the main road near to Reynoldston village.

At the main road you will need to turn left and follow it down the hill towards Reynoldston village. Why you are here you should probably take the opportunity to visit Arthur's stone, a famous local land mark thought to be a Neolithic chambered tomb. To find it just cross the main road and walk a further 400yds continuing in a straight line, you will come across the Cairn with its massive 25ton cap stone at the end of the wide track.

History of Arthurs Stone:

Arthur's stone or Maen Ceti is one of over 200 cairns located on Cefn Bryn, it is composed of a huge lump of quartz conglomerate over 4 metres long and 2 meters wide. In the past the stone attracted visitors from far and wide, records show that Henry VII's troops, having landed at Milford Haven en route to battle at Bosworth Field, made a one hundred and twenty eight kilometre detour to visit the stone. In the 16th Century the site was listed as one of the "three mighty achievements of the Isle of Britain" (the other two being the Stonehenge and Silbury Hill monuments). The tomb was however not excavated until 1870 by Sir Gardiner Wilkinson. And later became one of the first sites to be protected under the Ancient Monuments Act of 1882.

Despite its early fame it we now understand that the tomb is not quite the engineering feat that it first appears, it is actually a glacial erratic deposited here by the glaciers, Neolithic man mealy excavated beneath the stone placing 12 upright stones to support its weight and creating the two chambered tomb.

The stone has many legends associated with it the most famous explanation for its being is from the legend of king Arthur who whilst travelling in Carmarthenshire discovered a pebble in his boot and threw it across the burry estuary landing many miles away on the ridge of Cefn Bryn. Apparently the stone grew some what as it flew! Legend also has it that on occasions the stone will find its way back down to the burry estuary to quench its thirst.

Another favourite Gower folk law is that on a full moon, young maidens would make an offering of cake baked from Barley meal and honey, before crawling around the stone on their hands and knees. If their boy suitor appeared before they had finished their final circuit, it was proof that he would make a faithful husband.

Once you have finished exploring Arthur's stone, head down the main road towards Reynoldston village. You need to take the first turning on your left at the bottom of the hill next to the bus shelter (half a mile) when you get to the turning if you are feeling peckish head to the King Arthur hotel, for a spot of lunch and a pint. (that's a personal recommendation!) It is just another 100yds down the main road, and im sure you will have already spotted it on the way down the hill...

When you are ready turn down the lane by the bus shelter and follow it until you reach the main road (half a mile). Cross the main road and continue down the lane opposite. The lane will take you down into mill wood, follow the path down into the wood bearing left around the old mill pond. The path will emerge from the woods into a lane, on the opposite side of the lane you will see a large estate entrance, this is the Penrice estate. A little way off to your right you will see the sixteenth century corn mill from which the woods gets its name. Now cross the stile into the estate and follow the marked footpath (there are yellow way marks) up the tarmac drive, the path will take you between the manor house and the old castle. The castle, mansion house and beautiful grounds with its huge artificial lakes are all private so unfortunately you will need to keep to the path. The four storey mansion, built of bath stone was erected in around 1775 by Thomas Mansel Talbot and designed by the architect Anthony Keck of King's Stanley, Gloucestershire . The castle is thought to be of Norman origin it was abandoned in the late medieval periods in favour of Oxwich castle

When you reach a fork in the road bear left past the old stables, then almost immediately turn right, the path will take you out into farmland and through a stile onto the main road. Follow the main road right walk about 100yds and turn right down the lane to Oxwich at the towers.

Walk down the hill past the walled gardens until you see a gate way on your left, turn into the woods and follow the track, when you meet a fork in the road bear right this will keep you skirting around the edge of the woods and eventually the path will follow the valley up forcing you to climb up through the woods emerging at Nichoaston farm.

When the path meets the track at the top of the woods turn right, you will pass through a metal gate onto a tarmac road, follow the road up the hill, cross the main road and continue over the cattle grid up the lane.

When you see Nichoaston house on your left you will soon see a rough track forking off to the right. Turn right here and then immediately take the path on your right. It hairpins back along the base of the hill and is a wide grassy track. Stay on this path for about half a mile, when it reaches the main track over Cefn Bryn you should now recognise where you are. You need to turn right down the hill towards Penmaen village.

Encase your memory needs refreshing turn right when you meet the track at the base of the hill, then left at the tarmac road and left again at the cattle grid. This will take you back to the green gate out onto the hill from Parc-le-Breos.

Walking Map: Cefn Bryn, Reynoldston and Oxwich Bay walk:



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