

Walking Itineraries



Oribarth Mountain from Craig-y-nos















This walk combines historical interest with stunning views and is worth the effort. It starts and finishes at Craig-y-nos Country Park (see Craig-y-nos itinerary for more details).

The Cribarth Mountain is sometimes referred to as the 'Sleeping Giant' owing to its profile when seen from down-valley. Cribarth (summit 428m), is one of the most extensively quarried uplands in Wales and it is criss-crossed by former tram roads. Limestone, silica rock and rottenstone were extracted in huge quantities during the 1800s for the iron, copper and tin industries around the Swansea Valley. There are also Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman remains in the surrounding hills. The rock is mostly limestone and the area is notable for the number of large craters known as sink or shake holes. These are formed when the ground collapses into a cave below the surface. The Brecon Beacons National Park has more shake holes than anywhere in Wales. Nearby is the attraction of Dan yr Ogof Showcaves.

Information

Where is it?

Craig-y-nos Country Park, Pen y Cae SA9 IGL. It is on the A4067 near Dan yr Ogof Showcaves. Explorer Map OL12 or Landranger Map 160 Grid reference - SN 840 155.

Distance

6km (3.7 miles)

Time

Allow 2-3 hours.

Terrain

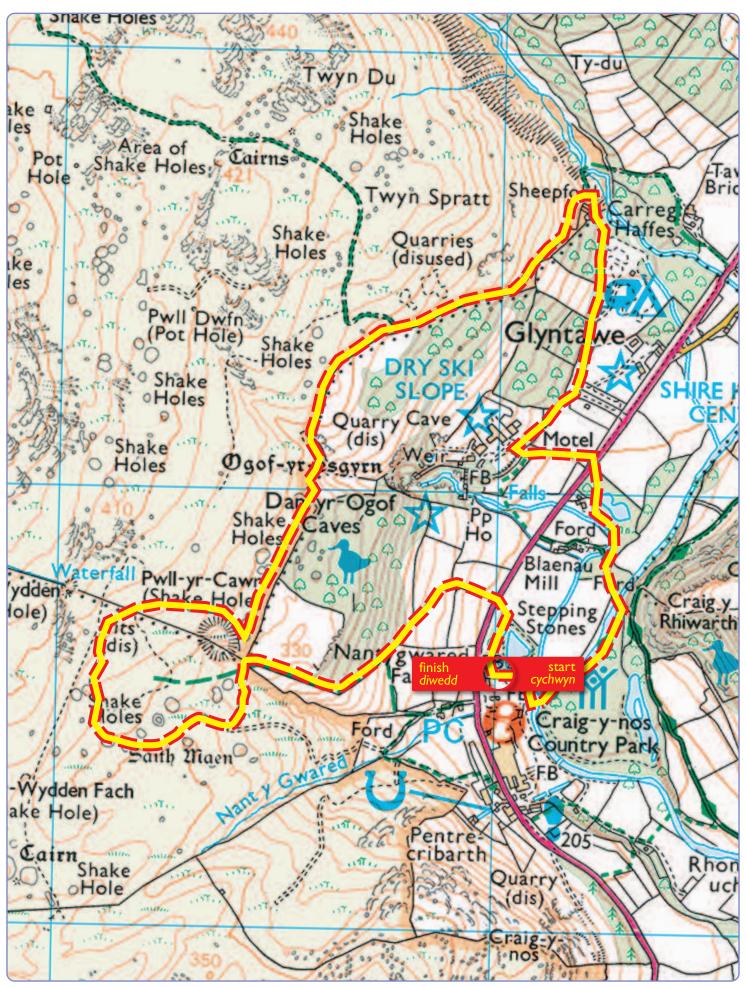
Mostly moorland terrain, rough in places. Follows paths but these can be indistinct in places and can be slippery and wet in poor conditions. There is a short, steep ascent to start (190m) and moderate descents near the finish. The rest of the walk is generally level. Highest elevation 390m. Several stiles and gates. Some of the stiles are higher than average. Care should be taken. A reasonable level of fitness is required.

Grade Strenuous.

Please note

It is essential that you carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Navigation can be difficult in poor conditions so check the weather forecast beforehand.

www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/ weather/mountain-forecasts/ breconbeacons#?tab= **mountainWeather**



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The Route

- Start at the boating lake next to the car park. Following the path round the western side of the lake until you reach the far end. Turn left and this path will take you to a gate onto the main road. Take care and walk in single file at this point as there may be fast traffic. Turn right and walk for approximately 40m. There is a gate and a signposted footpath on the opposite side of the road. Cross the road, go through the gate (there may be livestock-please ensure it is securely closed behind you) and walk straight up the field to the corner, keeping the hedge, then the fence, close by on your left.
- Climb over stile and bear left to follow path along the fence line. Be aware that in late summer bracken can partly obscure the path in places.

- 3 Cross another stile and continue to follow path upwards. You will have good views of Craig-y-nos Castle, the Country Park and the Upper Tawe valley. Continue upward on the path (last steep bit!) heading towards a fence and a wall. Ahead you will see Pwll yr Cawr (Hole of the Giant), a large shake hole (you will get better views of this later).
- Turn left to cross over the stile. Careful navigation is needed in this section. Standing with your back to the two gates and with the tall post on your right, follow a narrow, sometimes indistinct path directly ahead through the rough grass. You will be heading SW and, if it is clear, you can see a tall standing stone ahead of you on the hill.
- Follow this path for 250m (5-10 mins) until you reach the seven stones of Saith (or Saeth) Maen GR SN833154. Aligned from north-northeast to south-southwest in the direction of the Cerrig Duon stone circle, these stones vary in height from 1.7m to 0.5m and form a row 13.7m long. Many believe there is an important link between the two sites.
- Standing with the first stone behind you, head due north for 400m towards the wall which is shown on the map as a line from the big shake hole Pwll yr Cawr to Carreg Gap. You should soon pick up a small footpath running between smaller shake holes. This will bring you to a stile across the wall (approximately 10 mins from the stones). You could detour a little to follow the wall further up the hill where there is a waterfall then return to the stile.
- 7 Cross the stile then turn right downhill along a path. Keep the wall, then the fence to your right.

- You will pass along the northern edge of Pwll yr Cawr (one of the largest shake holes in Wales) so you can see the size and depth it is well fenced off!
- Ontinue on the path. You are heading north. Pass another shake hole and you will then reach a fence corner and be at the top of a small valley. (15 mins from wall stile.) This is a dry valley-the stream has now disappeared underground. Follow the path to the bottom of the valley and up the other side.
- Continue following the path downhill until you reach a signpost at a path junction. Bear left (the right hand path will join up with the main path further down) and follow the path past the remains of an old lime kiln used for burning lime before transporting. This wide grassy path continues down through a series of hairpin bends, past another lime kiln to reach sheep pens and a gate.
- Bear right to follow the path through the gate and downhill to reach the road within the Dan yr Ogof grounds. Turn right following footpath signs and walk along the road past the llamas, main entrance and caravan field, then head up towards the main car park.
- Before reaching the car park you will see some huge stones and a tree trunk. The footpath starts here so bear left and down the steps and through the gate to follow the path to the main road.
- Cross straight over the main road **take care-fast traffic!** to follow the footpath back to Craig y nos. The path passes a pond to your left, then turn right at the path junction by the river. You will go through a gate, then across a field. Go straight on towards the fence then bear left to the bridge.
- Cross the bridge into the Country Park, Turn right, following the path along the river to the next bridge. Cross the bridge, turn right and follow the path back to the boating lake and the car park.

Variation Can be walked in reverse.

To shorten go to Saith Maen only. Return by same route. 1.8 miles/3km.

Activities suitable on this route

Navigation practice, birdwatching, photography.

Cribarth Mountain from Craig y Nos



Information

Opening times Daily, 24 hours a day. The Country Park is never locked except on Christmas Day. Free entry.

Parking There is a car park at Craig-y-nos Country Park for cars/minibuses and coaches. Parking charges: £2.50 (£1.50 for 2 hrs only) Disabled parking available.

Refreshments and toilets Changing Seasons Café 01639 731498

www.changing-seasons-tea-rooms.weebly.com

Open Mon-Fri 10-4.30, Sat/Sun 10-5

Toilets Free. Open 24 hours every day except Christmas Day. Disabled toilet/baby changing facilities.

Public Transport www.traveline.cymru

Bus 63/X63 from Swansea via Ystradgynlais or from Brecon via Sennybridge. Buses are easy access and take wheelchairs and prams.

www.natgroup.co.uk/sites/www.natgroup.co.uk/files/ Service%2063%20X63X64%20-%20NEWEST_I.pdf

Nearest Towns

Ystradgynlais for all facilities-shops/fuel/post office/cafes. Shop at Penycae 3 miles south. Post office/café/information and shop at Abercrave.

Websites

www.breconbeacons.org/craig-y-nos-country-park www.craigynoscastle.com www.showcaves.co.uk www.tawetalk.co.uk/index.html#.Vo-iD1KXo6o www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk/enjoying/ places-to-go/upper-swansea-valley/cribarth/

Dogs Dogs are permitted but should be on leads near stock and between 1st March and 31st July on Open Access Land.

Sample Itinerary

10.00-10.30 Arrive. Tea/coffee at the cafe

10.30 Complete walk

12.30 Visit Dan yr Ogof showcaves on the way

 open March to October www.showcaves.co.uk (café and picnic areas available)

Or return to Craig-y-nos for lunch and visit

the caves in the afternoon.