

BRIDGEND CIRCULAR WALK

(SECTION 1)

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet describes a 9km (5½ miles) section of the Bridgend Circular Walk. You should be able to complete this section of the walk in 3 hours but allow more time if you are thinking of visiting some of the sites identified in the leaflet or you simply want to enjoy the countryside. The villages of Laleston, Pen-y-fai and Sarn have everything that you will need by way of facilities.

For convenience the directions below are written with Merthyr Mawr as the starting point (for this section of the walk). You could, however, equally well start from Sarn Park & Ride or any point along the route and, if travelling in the opposite direction, simply reverse all the directions.

If you wish to visit **Ogmore Castle (1)** and **Castle Tea Rooms** leave the car park by means of the swing bridge. Then follow an ancient track and cross the River Ewenny via the stepping stones. However, you must take care as the tides can be exceptionally dangerous as they change very quickly and you could be isolated on the wrong side of the river. It is easy to see why the Normans built a castle here as it commands a strategic position on the River Ewenny.

To begin this section of the walk, from the car park near the swing bridge in Merthyr Mawr - walk back towards the village green along the road. When you get to the green follow the road to the left and continue walking along it with the church on your right hand side.

Merthyr Mawr (2) is an idyllic little settlement, as picturesque as they come, with an outstanding collection of thatched dwellings beautifully positioned around an old Village Green. Surrounded by meadows and woodlands, the **Ancient Church (3)**, which dates back to the middle of the 19th Century, was built on an ancient site. Indeed stones have been found dating from the 5th Century suggesting there was an important Christian cemetery here.

Candleston Castle (4), once a 14th century fortified mansion house, is situated on the edge of the Sahara-like dunes of Merthyr Mawr Warren. It is now an Ivy covered ruin that was once the centre point of the village of Treganlaw (Welsh for: The town of a hundred hands), which has been buried beneath the ever shifting sands of Merthyr Mawr Warren.

Merthyr Mawr Warren (5) was once a part of the largest sand dune complex in Britain stretching along the coast to Briton Ferry. The warren is an important wildlife habitat and a site of scientific interest, which shelters a rich variety of plants.

Follow the road until you see a public footpath sign on your right hand side.

Choice: At this point you can take the road to the left which is a link to the Heritage Coast Walk and Candleston Castle.

To continue on the Bridgend Circular Walk follow the footpath over the stone stile through the wooded area, over a wooden stile (which is waymarked) and across a field to another stone stile opposite Home Farm. After this stile turn left and follow the waymarking posts situated in the verges on the minor road. When you reach the top of the incline on the road you will note a public footpath sign.

Choice: at this point if you want to get to Bridgend Town Centre on the River Ogmore &

The Bridgend Circular Walk

Section 1



Merthyr Mawr Bridgend Station Walk follow the road to the right and continue for a short distance until you see a stone stile in front of you. Go over the stone stile keeping the hedgerow and wall on your right hand side. When you have reached the stile opposite the entrance to Llanerch Home follow the road to the right and take either of the signposted footpaths on either side of the New Inn Bridge.

New Inn Bridge (6) was built in the 15th Century. The holes in the parapets were where farmers once pushed reluctant sheep into the River Ogmore for a seasonal dip! At the side of the bridge there once stood an Inn where the LandLord would rob and murder travellers en route to St. David's shrine.

To continue on the Bridgend Circular Walk follow the footpath as signed along the rough track towards Whitney Farm. Before reaching the farm take the waymarked footpath on the right hand side which leads through a small wooded area to a wooden stile. Follow the footpath along the field edge as waymarked on the stile with the hedgerow on your right hand side. Please note that the four fields on this section of route often contain cattle and other stock. You can help by reporting loose dogs or other problems affecting stock to the farmer at Whitney Farm. At the end of the field there is a wooden stile with an adjoining field gate. Cross this stile and follow the waymarks to a metal field gate. Go through the gate and the footpath continues to the stone stile with the hedgerow on your left hand side.

Cross the A48 (however take care as the traffic is usually travelling at high speeds). Follow the tarmac path and go over the stone stile. Cross the field to another stone stile and in the next field follow the well worn path to the waymarking post at the end of the field. Take the field to the left and continue until you reach a stone stile. Go straight ahead after the stile and you will then be on High Street in the

village of Laleston.

As well as being able to find most of the facilities you will need the Village of Laleston also has some interesting features.

The medieval **Church of St. David (7)** is located in the centre of the village. It sits on a slight rise above High Street and is listed Grade 1. Parts of the church date back to the 13th and 14th Centuries. The church currently has four bells hanging in the tower. The oldest one was cast at a Bristol foundry in 1380 and has an inscription that reads "Sancte Michael, ora pro nobis". Translated this means "St. Michael pray for us".

Situated on High Street in Laleston are also the following points of interest:

The Milepost (8), which is Grade 2 listed, is a good example of an elaborately detailed cast iron milepost. It is situated opposite the Mackworth Arms and was one of a series of cast-iron mileposts erected in the 1830's for the Bridgend Turpike Trust. The Road itself was first turnpiked in 1764.

The Great House (9) is a listed Grade 2* building. It is an Elizabethan manor house with parts of the building dating back to 1586. The building is considered to be an important survival of a larger early post medieval house. It is now a hotel and restaurant.

On High Street you will also find **The Oystercatcher Public House (10)**, **Village Farm House (11)** and **Horeb Chapel (12)** all of which are Grade 2 listed.

Until 1928 when mains water became available in the village **The Well (13)**, which is situated off Well Street, was the main source of water.

When you reach High Street turn left and you will note waymarks on a lighting column on the opposite side of the road. Walk between house numbers 41 and 43 High Street and follow the lane for approximately 30 metres. At this point on your right hand-side you will note an old concrete public footpath sign about 2ft high,

follow the accommodation track for approximately 100 metres past Rock House and Elm Cottages and you will note a stile and a signposted public footpath directly ahead of you.

Follow the signposted and way-marked footpath over 6 stiles through fields that sometimes contain cattle to a wooden stile in a small wooded area. Continue over this stile and follow the worn track through a wild meadow field to another wooden stile on Llangewydd Road.

The footpath on the opposite side of the road is signposted, waymarked and has a wooden stile at the start. Follow this footpath across the field in the direction of the waymark arrow to a point where the footpath enters a wooded area. Continue through the wood on the waymarked footpath to a wooden stile. Continue over the stile and straight ahead in a general northerly direction again through a large field to a wooden footbridge. The footpath carries on over a wooden stile and then through an underpass on the South Wales Main Line Railway through a small holding and over a wooden stile, then follow the minor road to the right.

Follow the road as waymarked on posts in the verges. (Remember to take care when walking on country roads and use verges where possible.) Follow the road past both the entrances to Court Coleman and the property known as North Lodge. Shortly after North Lodge take the minor road to the left. Continue on this road until just before the road bridge that goes over the M4 Motorway.

At this point take the waymarked and signposted footpath on the right hand side of the road through a smallholding and over two wooden stiles. Follow the waymarked route on the old highway bounded by trees on both sides. When you reach the junction with the minor road turn left to Penyfai. You will then be heading towards Penyfai. You have several options from this point. You can cross the two areas of common or

use the pavement on Heol Tyn y Garn. (Note that should you wish to sit down for a while there are benches on the common and also a children's play area).

The village of Pen-y-fai has a small Post Office on Pen-yr-Heol, and a village shop on Treharne Drive. The following buildings and structures are within a few minutes walk of the Circular Walk Route and may be worth a visit.

The Pheasant Public House (14) is located on the south side of Pen-y-fai village on Heol Eglwys. The building is listed Grade 2 and was originally a sub-medieval hall and parlour house and was built in the 16th Century. The building was modernised in 1967 and converted to a public house.

On the opposite side of the road to The Pheasant are three more listed Grade 2 buildings including the Church of All Saints (15), Church Lodge (16) and School Lodge (17). All of these Buildings were built by Robert Llewellyn of Court Coleman between 1898 and 1903 and are considered to be a fine group of buildings at the former entrance to Court Coleman.

The Tyn-y-garn Mile Marker (18) is located at the junction of Heol Tyn-y-Garn and Bridgend Road and is listed Grade 2. It is a detailed Victorian mile marker that dates from the mid 19th Century and is associated with the South Wales Railway and indicates 2¼ miles to the railway station in Bridgend.

At the end of Heol Tyn y Garn you will come to the A4063. As a safety precaution you should cross the road by using the central reservation opposite the bus stop. The Bridgend Circular Walk then follows the minor road called Penycae lane over the old stone bridge that crosses the River Ogmore.

Glan Rhyd Railway Viaduct (19) which bridges the River Ogmore is listed Grade 2* as a rare and especially fine example of an early railway bridge and an important component of the early industrial history of the district. The bridge was constructed to carry the Bridgend Railway, a

horse-drawn railway built between 1827 and 1830. It is now a road bridge. On the western side of the bridge is an engraved tablet reading "This bridge was erected in the year 1829 by Morgan Thomas, Laleston, Mason".

Choice: at this point you can take the spur of the Celtic Trail Cycle Route to Bridgend Town Centre. To do this continue along Pen-y-cae lane and follow the road markings and signs for route 4 alongside the river, through Wildmill, over the new cycle route bridge and through Trews Field industrial estate until the route terminates at Bridgend Rugby Club.

Just after the bridge you will see a stile on the left. To continue on the Bridgend Circular Walk use the stile or a chicane type barrier adjacent to it to get onto the next section of the route. (This is also a part of the Bridgend spur of the National Cycle Network Route 4 known as the Celtic Trail.)

Follow the tarmac surface and the wooden decking along this route and you will then come to the Sarn Bypass Road. Use the Toucan Crossing on the dual carriageway and then follow the signs to the Sarn Park and Ride car park. You have now reached your destination. However, if you wish, you could do any of the following from this point:

- Retrace your steps to Merthyr Mawr
- Continue on the next section of the Bridgend Circular Walk (See leaflet 2)
- Follow the Route 4 Celtic Trail to Blackmill or Tondy
- Catch a train into Bridgend from Sarn Station
- Visit McArthur Glen Design Outlet Village Near Sarn Services

Thanks to the following for helping to either prepare the walk and text or for sponsoring the leaflet:



BRIDGEND CIRCULAR WALK



9km (5½ miles) 3 hours

INFORMATION AND ADVICE

The going is easy although it may be wet in places. Remember to wear suitable clothes and good shoes/boots and take food and drink with you. Follow the Country Code and when you are on roads, keep to the right and make use of verges whenever you can.

It should be easy to follow the route using the map and instructions inside this leaflet. When walking the route try and look out for the Bridgend Circular Walk logo that will be situated on stiles, gates and posts along the route. Directional waymarks with yellow arrows will assist you as to which direction to walk in once you are on a public footpath. We also recommend you refer to the OS Explorer Map 151 Cardiff and Bridgend.

For further information about this walk, to pass on your comments and suggestions or to report any practical problems on any of the paths please contact the Rights of Way Section, Environmental and Planning Services Directorate, Morien House Bennett Street, Bridgend Industrial Estate, Bridgend, CF31 3SH (telephone 01656 642537 or 01656 642516).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

There are number of bus routes that link to the Bridgend Circular Walk. In Laleston you can catch the X1 service which runs hourly Monday to Saturday to Bridgend Town Centre, and has a journey time of 5 minutes. From Heol Tyn-y-Garn in Penyfai there are three bus services that go to Bridgend Town Centre two of the services have a journey time of about 7 minutes and the third service runs via Sainsburys and takes about 15 minutes.

BRIDGEND CIRCULAR WALK



Distance: 32KM (20 miles)



Key:-

- 1 Link to Vale Millennium Trail.
- 2 Link to Ewenny Circular Walk.
- 3 Link to Nant Bryn-glas Circular Walk.
- 4 Link to Sky to Sea Long Distance Trail.
- 5 Link to Ogwr Ridgeway Long Distance Trail.
- 6 Link to Sarn Station Walk (Proposed).
- 7 Link to C4 C/way and Community Routes.
- 8 Link to Bridgend Station Walk.
- 9 Link to Heritage Coast Walk.
- 10 Link to St. Brides Circular Walk.

If you wish to get to Bridgend Town Centre from Sarn Village there are 6 regular services that have journey times ranging between 11 and 20 minutes. Alternatively you can catch a train from Sarn Station. The trains operate every hour between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday with a journey time of 8 minutes.

For further information on bus times and service numbers telephone Bridgend County Borough Council's Public Transport Section on 01656 642559 or the National Bus Enquiry line on 0870 6082608. Information regarding train times can be made via National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950.

CAR PARKING

The two car parks at Merthyr Mawr and Sarn Park and Ride detailed in this leaflet are free of charge. The car park in Merthyr Mawr has a rough surface and is situated near the swing bridge. The car park at Sarn Park and Ride is a tarmac surface and is monitored by CCTV.

ACCOMMODATION

To make a reservation or to obtain information on accommodation contact one of the Heritage Coast Tourist Information Centres. These are at McArthur Glen Designer Outlet off Junction 36 the M4 (telephone 01656 654906) and at John Street, Porthcawl (telephone 01656 643182).

For further general information about the Bridgend area you can contact us via e-mail at tourism@bridgend.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can visit our website - which is at

www.bridgend.gov.uk