# Fforest Fawr Geopark



A guide to exploring the western half of the Brecon Beacons National Park.











BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG



# Great days out in Fforest Fawr Geopark

# Planning to spend some time in the Geopark?

Here are some suggestions for places to visit, things to see and do to make your visit to the Geopark, the western half of the Brecon Beacons National Park, both enjoyable and memorable. We've arranged them to help you choose depending on the time available to you perhaps you're looking to spend a half or full day, then again maybe you've only got an hour to spare.

Of course, you can extend or shorten your visit to suit yourself. These and other stories - history, archaeology, myths, wildlife - are told through Geotrails and other walk leaflets, exhibitions, audio trails and panels around the area. Also look out for individual events organised throughout the year by Fforest Fawr Geopark, particularly during the annual Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival in late May/early June.

To dig deeper, visit the website at www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk

### Key to icons used in guide

OS 6 figure OS grid reference of site entrance

NAV Sat Nav-friendly postcode

Telephone number

Relevant website

#### Getting there

Many attractions in this rural area are not on a bus route and remote from the rail network. Taxi services operate throughout the area - for more info go to: www.breconbeacons.org/getting-around or put in a postcode at www.traveline-cymru.info

Nearest regular bus route

日

Nearest railway station and distance by road



Free car parking

P&D

Pay & display parking



You can also get the times of the next buses from any stop at **nextbuses.mobi** or download the app

#### **Facilities**

What can I expect when I get there? Please be aware that not all facilities are open seven days a week and some may be closed or have more restricted opening times during winter months.

Also remember that details of attractions can change – it's always best to check on the web, by phone or ask at an information centre before you go.



Site admission charge payable

FREE

Free entry to attraction



WC Toilet facilities available

Site/trail leaflet or audio trail available

Café/restaurant/tea rooms at site

Picnicking facilities available

Site with archaeological/historical interest

Site with industrial archaeology interest

Nature reserve or other key wildlife site

Wet weather suggestion

#### This is a landscape shaped by rock

Please remember that you don't need any special geological knowledge to enjoy this place. Though Geoparks are areas with amazing geology, they're not just about rocks, as this guide shows. However, look out for these icons which provide clues to what you'll see:

Geological interest - under your feet is a layer

Karst landscapes produced as limestone rock dissolves to produce caves, limestone pavements sinkholes and springs

Geological faults & folds some of these rocks are fractured and crumpled!

Ice Age legacy - glaciers sculpted this land during a series of ice ages

Mining /quarrying interest - people have quarried mineral riches here for hundreds of years

If you are looking for an introduction to the rocks, then pick up the general leaflet. For further detail, browse the shelves of the information centres across the Geopark - there's something for all including the official 1:50,000 geological map of Fforest Fawr Geopark – published by the British Geological Survey in 2014.

#### Did you know?

An increasing number of local people running tourism businesses in this area are National Park Ambassadors and Geopark Ambassadors. Committed to ensuring that visitors get the best from their stay, they are trained and knowledgeable about the Geopark.

www.breconbeacons.org/ambassadors





### The Geopark after dark

Brecon Beacons National Park was declared Wales' first International Dark Sky Reserve in 2013 - and some of the darkest skies are in Fforest Fawr Geopark. There are regular stargazing events organised to help you enjoy our most distant views – many hosted by our Dark Skies Ambassadors.

www.breconbeacons.org/stargazing

# 1. Castles and Crags

### Carreg Cennen Castle and Garn Goch Iron Age hillfort

Visit spectacular Carreg Cennen Castle near Llandeilo. Perched atop a 100m high sheer limestone crag overlooking the Afon Cennen, this mediaeval fortress with a long and chequered history is now in the care of Cadw. Enjoy the tea rooms and craft shop at the farm before making the short walk to the castle ruins.

Down the road (or along the Beacons Way) is Y Gaer Fawr, largest hill-fort in South Wales and one of two at Garn Goch overlooking the hamlet of Bethlehem. Once a stronghold of the Silures tribe who chose it perhaps for its commanding views over the Towy valley, it now rewards an hour or two of your time spent in exploration. Pick up the Garn Goch Geotrail (£1) at Llandovery Information Centre. The Red Kite feeding station and the National Trust's Dinefwr Park, Newton House and Castle are nearby attractions.



#### **Carreg Cennen Castle** NAV SA19 6UA ( 01558 822291 & www.carregcennencastle.com OS SN 668191 Getting there Heart of Wales Line) Ffairfach, Llandeilo 3.7/4.5miles If you've got an hour or less: If you've got a full day (6-8 hours): Walk the first section of the Beacons Way Tea and cake at Castle tearooms from Bethlehem to the historic Black Mountain. P FREE WC quarries. os SN 733186 **Explore Garn Goch** follow the whole Geotrail if you've time www.breconbeacons.ora/blackmountainauarries OS SN 682243 NAV SA19 6YW P FREE May 2 W 1 P FREE 14 2-12 --Llangadog Trap Village Hall and café TOWSVABLE OS SN 652188 NAV SA19 6TR ( 01558 823213 角 P FREE 🕎 wc 🧬 www.trapvillagehall.com Bethlehem If you've got half a day (2-4 hours): A visit to Carrea Cennen Castle and woods Dinefwr Park Llandeilo P & --Ffairfach Explore historic Llandeilo 🦒 P&D Visit Dinefwr Park Castle and Newton House 🔓 wc Carrea Trap OS SN 625225 NAV SA19 6RT Cennen Castle 01558 824512 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dinefwr THE BLACK MOUL Did you know?

Ammanford

Carrea Cennen Castle has been

all of Wales

described as the most romantic in

Glanaman

AMMAN

Brynaman

# 2. Water and Woodlands, Tracks and Trains

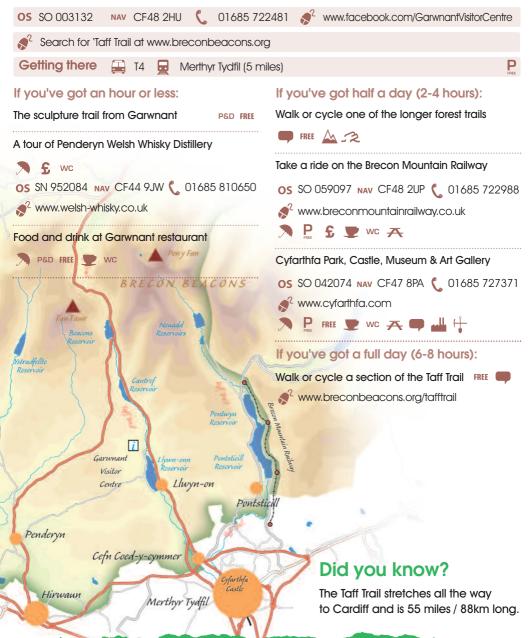
### Garwnant Forest and Visitor Centre, Taf Fechan Forest

Just off the A470, Garwnant Visitor Centre has information, outdoor play for children and a restaurant. Follow one of the woodland walks, some with a 'geo' theme. For walkers the Taff Trail runs up Cwm Taf past the centre and a separate route for cyclists follows the old railway from Cefn-coed-y-cymer up Cwm Taf Fechan then through the forest.

The top end of the Taf Fechan is a good starting point for longer walks in the central Beacons. The less energetic can enjoy a ride on the Brecon Mountain Railway near Pontsticill. The railway and nearby Cyfarthfa Park, Castle, Museum and Art Gallery are also good family friendly places to visit if the rain starts to fall!







# 3. Caves and Kilns: delving into the wild

### Craig-y-nos Country Park and Penwyllt

Start your exploration of the upper Swansea Valley/Cwm Tawe with a visit to Craig-y-nos Country Park.

Soak up the atmosphere at Penwyllt where abandoned tramways, limekilns and an old fire-brickworks sit beside the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu National Nature Reserve. The reserve protects limestone pavements above ground and Britain's deepest cave (308m) below. The Beacons Way passes through here en route from the wild and remote Black Mountain to the highly distinctive hills of Fforest Fawr. Closer at hand is the rocky ridge of Cribarth with its limestone crags, old quarries and tramroads.





# 4. Land of legends

### Llandovery & Myddfai

Visit the Mid Wales market town of Llandovery in the Towy Valley where Welsh princes and drovers are celebrated.

Seek out the traditional Carmarthenshire village of Myddfai where you can enjoy tea and cake at the community hall and visitor centre and learn about the legend of the Lady of the Lake and the Physicians of Myddfai. Then take to the Old Red Sandstone hills to the south or follow in the footsteps of Romans and tilestone-quarrymen across Mynydd Myddfai. Bring a bike or hire one locally to explore this culturally rich corner of the Geopark.

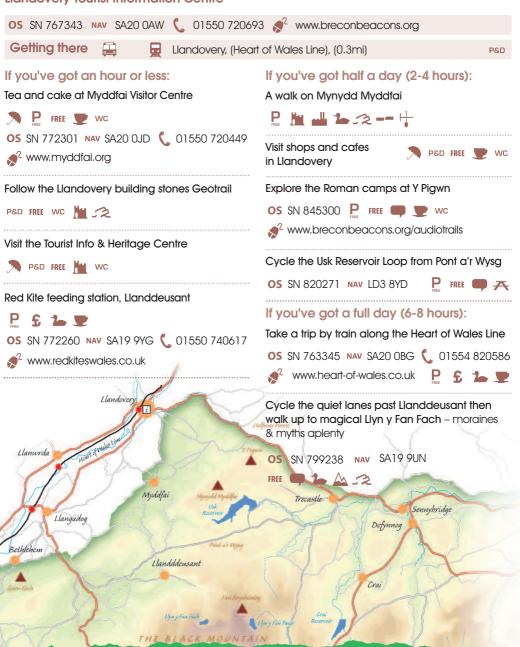


### Did you know?

The 'Llandovery Epoch' is a term used by geologists all around the world when talking of geological events 440 million years ago – whether in Wales, China or Peru!



### Llandovery Tourist Information Centre



## 5. Waterfall Country - Falls, Ferns & Faults

### Pontneddfechan, Ystradfellte and Coelbren

Start your visit to Waterfall Country by calling in at the Waterfalls Centre at the heart of Pontneddfechan - enjoy the Geopark exhibition and pick up all the information you need to enjoy and understand the area.

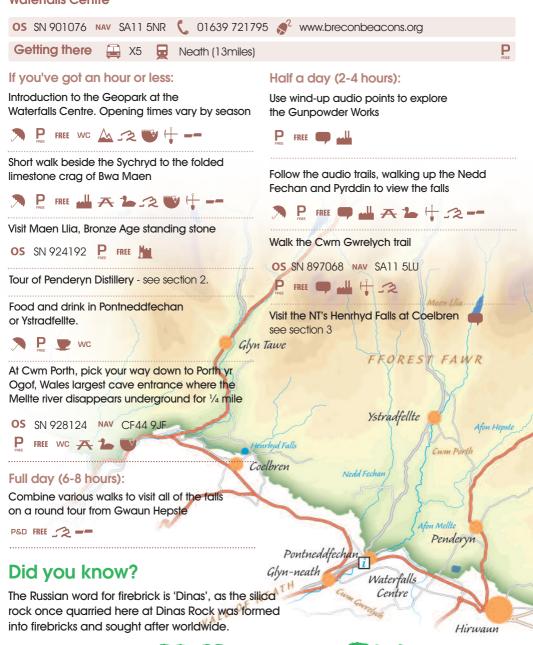
Here you will find more spectacular waterfalls to the mile than on any other group of rivers in the UK - what better place to visit in sunshine - or in rain!? Enjoy the 45 minute walk beside the Nedd Fechan and Pyrddin rivers to Sgwd Gwladus then return to the village for a pub lunch. The car park beneath Dinas Rock is only a five minute drive to the end of

the road from the Waterfalls Centre. Here former tramways provide excellent walking routes between the abandoned limestone and silica rock workings and through the nearby Gunpowder Works, once bustling but quiet since 1931. Enjoy the walk to Sgwd yr Eira and walk behind the falls if you've a half day to spare - either from Dinas Rock or from Gwaun Hepste. Pick up a copy of the Waterfall Country pack from the Waterfalls Centre.

Sandstone



#### **Waterfalls Centre**



# 6. Historic Brecon - rivers and ramparts

### Cathedral, canal, hillfort, Honddu and Usk

Begin your visit at the Brecon Tourist Information Centre - three Geotrails lead from here - walk along the Usk and up the Honddu rivers for waterside views or head for Pen y crug for a panoramic view from the Usk valley to the Brecon Beacons.

Stay in town for shopping and visits to the cathedral, museums, cafes and shops. There are also canoeing and boating opportunities on the canal and river.



#### **Brecon Tourist Information Centre**



### 7. The Black Mountain - Earth's riches

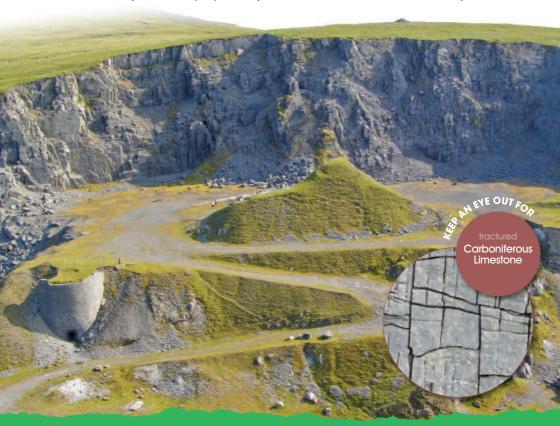
#### **Black Mountain Centre & the Black Mountain Quarries**

Start your day with a drink or a full breakfast at the Black Mountain Centre in Brynaman then follow the mountain road to the old Black Mountain quarry complex.

Enjoy extensive panoramic views west to Pembrokeshire, south to the Bristol Channel and north to Plynlimon on clear days. Limestone, silica rock and silica sand were quarried here until the 1950's. Encounter Bronze Age cairns along the Beacons Way to the east and west of the quarries or enjoy the more intimate - and sheltered - wooded valleys on the Black Mountain's southern fringe.

### Did you know?

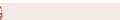
The Amman valley was a stronghold of the Welsh language when George Borrow visited 'Gwter Fawr' (modern day Brynaman) in the 1840's - and it remains so today.



#### Black Mountain Centre, Brynaman



### Getting there





#### If you've got an hour or less:

Driving up the mountain road, enjoy the views and explore the Black Mountain quarry complex

OS SN 733188 NAV SA19 9PE





Eating and drinking at the Black Mountain Centre, Brynaman



Carreg

Cennen

Glanaman

### If you've got half a day (2-4 hours):

Follow the Rocky Ravines trail from the Centre



Explore the more sheltered Henllys Vale from Ystradowen using the Geotrail or audio trail

OS SN 686135 NAV SA9 2YJ





Follow the trail 'From Cwm to Cwm' starting at Garnant in the Amman Valley

OS SN 750123 NAV SA18 1DZ



#### If you've got a full day (6-8 hours):

Explore a section of the Beacons Way from Black Mountain Quarries



Follow in the footsteps of Twrch Trwyth, legendary wild boar, visiting sites mentioned in The Mabinogion. Pick up a copy of the Amman Valley walks and trail pack

www.aattt.org.uk

THE/BLACK MOUNTAIN
Tair Carn Uchaf

Cefn Carn Fadog

Brynaman

Black Mountain
Centre

Quarries

Ystradowen

### 8. Classic Beacons

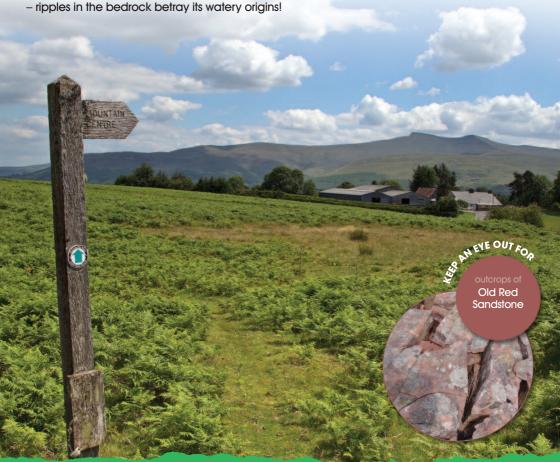
### Mynydd Illtud, Glyn Tarell and the National Park Visitor Centre

Pick up a Geotrail leaflet from the National Park Visitor Centre ('the Mountain Centre') and enjoy a walk on the common at Mynydd Illtud. Return to the Visitor Centre for lunch or a coffee.

Glyn Tarell with a view of the iconic skyline of Pen y Fan and Corn Du to the east and the national nature reserve of Craig Cerrig-gleisiad and Fan Frynych to the west is only a short drive away.

### Did you know?

Pen y Fan owes its flat top to a hard capping of Plateau Beds sandstone



#### **National Park Visitor Centre**

OS SN 977263 NAV LD3 8ER 📞 01874 623366 🧬 www.breconbeacons.org

Getting there 🚊 T4 💂 Merthyr Tydfil (17.2mi), Llandovery (17.6mi), Abergavenny (26mi)

#### If you've got an hour or less:

Enjoy the shop, exhibition and tea room indoors and the new children's outdoor play area.

P&D FREE WC

Take a walk on the common with 'What to see from the NPVC'

P&D FREE

Short walk to national nature reserve at Craig Cerrig-gleisiad

If you've got half a day (2-4 hours):

Take a longer walk on the common

OS SN 982203 NAV LD3 8NL

P&D FREE 🛧 🆢 🖄

eg Mynydd Illtud Geotrail

Visit Brecon - shops, cafes, museums, cathedral etc - see page 8

P&D FREE WC

### If you've got a full day (6-8 hours):

Follow a walk card to enjoy an ascent of Pen y Fan from Storey Arms (not a pub!) or Pont ar Daf

OS SN 982203 NAV LD3 8NL



Follow the Glyn Tarell Geotrail from here too, for spectacular views onto the glacial and landslip forms of Craig Cerrig-gleisiad!





# Map o Geoparc y Fforest Fawr

#### Ffordd y Bannau

Pa ffordd well o ddod i adnabod Geoparc y Fforest Fawr na cherdded y llwybrau a gefnogir gan Gymdeithas Parc Bannau Brycheiniog ac Awdurdod y Parc Cenedlaethol? BRoedd tywysydd daearegol – 'Land of the Beacons Way' - a gyhoeddwyd yn 2014. Ewch i www.breconbeacons.org /beacons-way

# Mapiau rhyngweithiol

Mae mwy o wybodaeth am hanes, daeareg a bywyd gwyllt yr ardal hon ar gael ar www.geoparcyfforestfawr.org.uk a cofiwch y gallwch ddefnyddio'r mapiau rhyngweithiol ar www.breconbeacons.org wrth ddewis llwybr neu drip fyddai'n addas ichi a'r teulu.

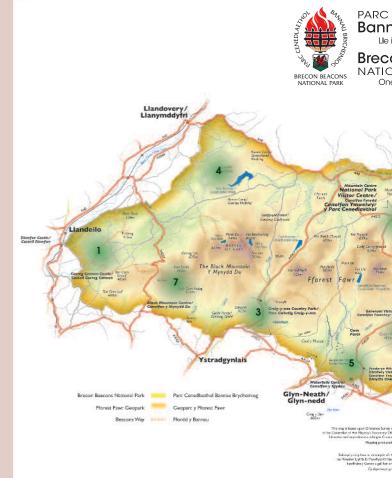
#### Taflenni Ilwybrau a Ilwybrau Ilafar

Cyhoeddir 9 Geolwybr, 4 o gardiau llwybrau, a nifer o daflenni a llyfrau eraill am lwybrau o fewn ardal y Geoparc. Mae llawer ohonynt ar gael am £1 yr un o ganolfannau gwybodaeth ac ymwelwyr y cylch.

Gellir lawr lwytho nifer o lwybrau llafar a phodlediadau o'r wefan ar www.geoparcyfforestfawr .org.uk/llawrlwytho

Ewch i'r siop ar y we

www.beacons-npa.gov.uk
/shop



Cestyll a Chlogwyni

Dŵr a Choedwigoedd, Llwybrau a Threnau

Ogofâu ac Odynau

Bro Chwedlonol

Bro'r Sgydau Tref Hanesyddol a'r cyffiniau

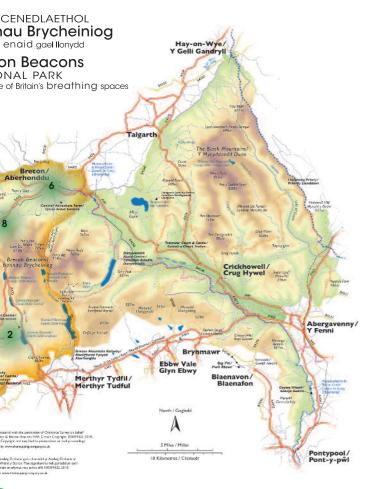
Y Mynydd Du - cyfoeth y ddaear

Y Bannau Clasurol





# Map of the Geopark



- Castles and Craas
- Water and Woodlands, Tracks and Trains
- Caves and Kilns delving into the wild
- Land of Legends
- Waterfall Country falls, ferns & faults
  - Historic Brecon rivers and ramparts
- The Black Mountain Earth's riches
- Classic Beacons





#### **Beacons Way**

What better way to explore
Fforest Fawr Geopark than to
walk the trail supported by the
Brecon Beacons Park Society
and National Park Authority.
A geological guide, 'Land of
the Beacons Way', was
published in 2014.
Visit www.breconbeacons.org/
beacons-way

#### Interactive mapping

There's more on the history, geology and wildlife of this area at www.fforestfawr geopark.org.uk and don't forget that you can use the interactive mapping at www.breconbeacons.org to choose a walk or ride suitable for you and your family.

# Trail leaflets and audio trails

Nine Geotrails, four 'walk cards' and a number of other walks leaflets and books are published for the Geopark area. Many are available at £1 each from information and visitor centres in the area. Several audio trails and podcasts can be downloaded from

www.breconbeacons.org/ audiotrails

Visit the Brecon Beacons online shop at www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/shop

- many new maps, books and leaflets now in stock.