

Ale Trail 2011

Monknash & Marcross, South Glamorgan

MINIMUM TIME: 2.5 hours

DISTANCE: 4.5 miles

LEVEL/GRADE: Moderate with many stone stiles plus some stepping stones. Can be slippery if wet

PATHS: Field paths, woodland paths and a short stretch of quiet country lane

LANDSCAPE: Seaviews, farmland, ruins

A circular walk following the coastal footpath along the cliff tops with varied terrain, seaward views, two coves, some old ruins and a nature reserve

SUGGESTED STARTING POINT

Landranger grid ref – SS 924693.

Park at the The Horseshoe Inn (with permission) or nearby.

OS MAPS

Explorer 151 (Cardiff & Bridgend) / Landranger 170 (Vale of Glamorgan)

THE WALK

1. With your back to The Horseshoe Inn (☎ 01656 890568), turn left and follow the road for about 1 mile to Monknash.
2. Pass the Plough and Harrow (☎ 01656 890209) at the road junction and continue until you reach Water Street on your right. Take the footpath opposite on your left marked to Blaen-y-Cwm. This takes you over a stone stile ⁽¹⁾ – the first of many stiles of this type on this walk.
3. Walk straight across the field, over the next stone stile ⁽²⁾, through the next field with the ruins of a monastic grange, over the next stile ⁽³⁾ and along the footpath as it runs parallel with a small stream.
4. Over stile ⁽⁴⁾ where the footpath marker diverts you to the right. Cross over the stepping stones (some are a little precarious but wet feet can be avoided with care). It's only shallow here so wellies allow you to walk straight across. NOTE: You must cross the stream here – don't be tempted to continue along the well-trodden path on the left bank as it is later blocked by a fence!
5. Continue along the right bank of the stream, over a wooden stile ⁽⁵⁾ where you pick up signs for the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and Millenium Heritage Trail.
6. Over another stone stile ⁽⁶⁾ and then another stile ⁽⁷⁾ then over the wooden bridge and turn right along the edge of a field.
7. Over the next stile ⁽⁸⁾ you come onto a drive which you cross. Turn left and immediately right to follow the sign for the beach, entering Blaen-y-Cwm Nature Reserve over another stile ⁽⁹⁾.
8. The path follows the stream downhill, past an old ruined building and waterfall and through some low wind-swept woodland.
9. At the gate at the far end of the woods, you get your first view of the sea. Simply follow the path now down towards the beach.
10. Just before the beach, take the footpath to the left (or you may wish to pause at the beach to enjoy the impressive rock formations of the cliffs which contrast sharply with the flat rock terraces of the beach which have been worn smooth over the millennia).
11. Follow the coastal footpath along the cliff tops, crossing a series of stiles on the way. You may hear a bell chiming which is the East Buoy visible out to sea, warning boats to keep away from the rocks.
12. Nash Point lighthouse comes into view and soon you descend down into a valley where there is another cove (detour here to visit Nash Point Lighthouse or the cove or follow the coastal footpath further to St Donat's Castle adding about another hour to the walk).
13. At the valley floor, turn left to walk up the valley. You now enter a more wooded section of the walk as you follow the meandering stream up hill. This is Marcross Brook and you cross this repeatedly on man-made, non-slip stepping stones and also have a number of steps to descend and climb.
14. Cross the wooden bridge and then turn immediately left and over a wooden stile to follow the Glamorgan Heritage Coast Path.
15. The path follows the stream and then diverts left before switching right again. It continues for perhaps half a mile to the road.
16. At the road turn right and walk the last few hundred yards to The Horseshoe Inn ready for some well-earned refreshment.



KEY TO SYMBOLS

- Your route
- Public road
- Footpath/Bridal Way
- River
- Railway track
- 5 Points on the route
- ☎ Pub

Please drink responsibly



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