

# Fforest Fawr GeoFest 2015 *(update of 14th May 2015)*

Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival 2015 takes place across the western half of the Brecon Beacons National Park between Saturday 23rd May and Sunday 7th June.

**Cost/donations** - all of our walks and talks are **free** this year courtesy of funding delivered through the EU funded Interreg IVB 'Rural Alliances' programme. Participants may on occasion be asked if they wish to make a donation towards various other worthwhile Geopark projects.

## What to bring on your walk

- remember to bring any drinks & snacks you may want.
- For full-day walks don't forget a packed lunch
- Boots or other stout footwear essential – trainers are not suitable!
- Wet/cold weather clothing – just in case
- Sun hat and sun cream – just in case!
- Walking poles can help on rougher/steeper terrain
- Your camera!

## Dogs

We are sorry but (except where otherwise indicated) no dogs may be brought on Geopark Festival walks in 2015. This is bird-nesting season and most walks cover ground used by ground-nesting birds and we wish to minimise disturbance to them. Where permitted we ask that dogs are kept on a short leash or otherwise under close control.

## Walk grades

1. **Access for all** - short, flat or gentle slopes – no barriers, suitable for wheelchairs & pushchairs
2. **Easy** - short(-ish), no steep slopes or difficult ground
3. **Moderate** - good exercise, may be long(-ish), some ascents involved
4. **Energetic** - long, may be one or two steep climbs,
5. **Strenuous** - long, with steep climbs and perhaps difficult ground

**Field study walks** – these focus on one or more specialist topics: geology, botany, zoology in the company of an expert in the field and are taken at an easy pace and involve numerous stops.

## More information and booking your walk

Please call at or phone the NPVC (National Park Visitor Centre a.k.a. the Mountain Centre at Libanus near Brecon) on **01874 623366** for more information about each event. Booking is advised for each of the walks – again this can be done via the NPVC. You can choose to just turn up on the day but we can't then guarantee a place on the walk if it is already fully subscribed – we usually set a maximum of 24. No booking is necessary for talks or other events. Bookings will be taken right up to the day of each walk.

- **NEW!** indicates walks etc added since the brochure was printed.

## Our sponsors

This programme has been made possible with funding from the Rural Alliances project which is 50% funded by the ERDF Interreg IVB North West Europe Programme and the Welsh Government's Targetted Match Fund. The project contributes to a more cohesive EU society as it derives from a co-operation of people from different countries working on common issues that touch the lives of EU citizens, The transnational project involves twelve different partners from Wales, Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium.

## The programme . . . .

**Sat 23rd May – Bank Holiday Mon 25th May**  
*no events notified on these dates yet*

**Tuesday 26th May** 1pm – 4.30pm (WALK)

### 1. Walking with Romans (*Grade 2/easy*)

Walk with us in the footsteps of Roman soldiers who left us with two marching camps and a fortlet at Y Pigwn high on Mynydd Bach Trecastell between Llandovery and Trecastle. A new App brings their legacy to spectacular life. Other of our ancestors left their mark here too – in the form of Bronze Age stone circles and C19th tilestone quarries. If you have either an Android or Apple smartphone or tablet you can download the ‘Walking with Romans’ App free from here. Due to the size of the App we recommend it is downloaded by WiFi before the visit to Y Pigwn. Get a sneak preview.

- **Distance/duration:** 6km/4 miles/3.5 hours
- **Total ascent:** 60m/200ft
- **Terrain:** mostly flat, but some boggy, exposed moorland with no shelter from poor weather
- **Start:** parking in lay-bys on A40 in Trecastle village – meet outside community hall on south side of A40 (OS grid ref SN 879292, postcode: LD3 8UN) for car share to walk start at SN 845300

**Tues 26th May** 7pm (TALK) **NEW!**

### 1a. Geodiversity of Fforest Fawr Geopark

A talk by Dr Adrian Humpage of the newly formed South East Wales RIGS Group on the rocks and soils and landforms of this area – in other words its ‘geodiversity’. Which caves, cliffs, quarries and other features around the Geopark and wider national park were chosen as ‘regionally important geodiversity sites’ (‘RIGS’) – and why? What makes the landscapes of this place special – come along and find out!

- **Venue:** Trap Village Hall, Carms SA19 6TR (OS grid ref SN 652188)

**Wed 27th May** 10am – 4.30pm (FAMILY EVENT)

### 2. Festival Family Fun-day

Come along to Craig-y-nos Country Park in the upper Swansea Valley for a day of fun for all the family. Plenty of activities for young and old including zip wire, woodworking, crafts, geology and wildlife

displays. Refreshments available on site. Free – but there is a charge for car parking (pay-and-display)

- **Venue:** Craig-y-nos Country Park, Upper Swansea Valley SA9 1GL

**Thur 28th May** 7.30pm (TALK)

### 3. Fforest Fawr: Wales’ 1st European Geopark

A talk by Dr Tony Ramsay, scientific director of the Geopark celebrating ten years of the west of the National Park being a Geopark – though this landscape has been 470 million years in the making! What makes our Geopark special and where does it fit into the growing family of Geoparks across the UK, Europe and the globe?

- **Venue:** Coelbren Miners Welfare and Memorial Hall, Station Rd, Coelbren SA10 9PN
- **Getting there:** follow signs for Coelbren off the A4221 Inter-Valley Road between Glynneath and Abercrave. Some limited parking at the hall, otherwise please park considerately on nearby streets.

**Fri 29th May** 7.30pm (TALK)

### 4. A Postcard from Wales

A talk by local historian and linguist, Brynach Parri on humorous postcards of Wales which provide an insight into changing attitudes and social values.

- **Venue:** the Guildhall, Brecon LD3 7AL
- **Getting there:** plentiful parking nearby

**Sun 31st May** 9.30am – 4.30pm (WALK)

### 5. Glacial legacy of the Eastern Black Mountain (*4/energetic*)

A long walk from the upper reaches of the Swansea Valley following the Beacons Way north-westwards along the foot of the Black Mountain scarp past Llyn y Fan Fawr before ascending to Bwlch Blaen Twrch and returning via the headwaters of the Twrch and the limestone pavements above Dan-yr-Ogof. Your guide James Cresswell will bring to life the many interesting glacial features that decorate this scarp.

- **Distance/duration:** 17km/10.5 miles/7hrs
- **Total ascent:** 720m/2350ft

- **Terrain:** a long route over relatively remote hills, one steep ascent, some rough ground
- **Start:** near the Gwyn Arms pub, Glyntawe in the upper Swansea Valley (OS grid ref SN 846166) Roadside parking available nearby.

**Mon 1st June** 7pm (TALK)

## 6. Faults, Folds and Furnace linings

A talk by Geraint Owen of Swansea University tracing the geological evolution of the Cynon Valley and nearby Vale of Neath. Penderyn sits astride the Neath Disturbance – one of the great and ancient geological structures of Wales – a legacy of not one but two separate occasions when continents collided.

- **Venue:** Penderyn Community Centr, CF44 9UX
- **Getting there:** the centre is set back off the A4059 road in the village of Penderyn (between Hirwaun and the A470 south of Storey Arms), a few hundred yards south of Penderyn Distillery but on the opposite side of the road (west). Free parking in front and to rear of building.

**Tues 2nd June** 1.30pm – 5pm (WALK)

## 7. From the Hub to the Rim (*grade 3/mod*)

A walk around Cribarth, exploring the hill's rocky flanks. Some of the finest views in the National Park are to be enjoyed here on the western rim of Cwm Tawe, and geologist Geraint Owen will be your guide, revealing some of the stories wrapped up in this landscape. Folding and fracturing, freezing and firing, digging and dissolving – it's all happened here! Come and find out what happened when, Then down to the cafe for a cuppa afterwards!

- **Distance/duration:** 6.9km/4.25 miles/3.5hrs
- **Grade:** 3/moderate
- **Total ascent:** 280m/900ft
- **Terrain:** two steep ascents, some rough ground
- **Start:** Abercrave Post Office/The Hub cafe (OS grid ref SN 816126)

**Tues 2nd June** 7pm (TALK)

## 8. Falls in the Forest, Hollows in the Hills

Why the abundance of waterfalls here? Why the myriad hollows scattered across the hillsides? A talk by Alan Bowring of Fforest Fawr Geopark exploring

the rocky underpinnings of Fforest Fawr and Waterfall Country. Free – but donations towards the Appeal Fund for St Mary's Church, Ystradfellte, will be welcomed on the night.

- **Venue:** Ystradfellte Church Hall CF44 9JE
- **Getting there:** Follow signs for Ystradfellte off the A4059 north of Penderyn or A465 at Glynneath. Free parking available near the hall which is next to the church in the centre of the village.

**Wed 3 June** 10am – 12.30pm (FIELD STUDY WALK)

## 9. Gors Llwyn (*grade 2/easy*)

A field study walk around the bog of Gors Llwyn to the south of the village should reveal plenty of interest. Join Michael Isaac tracking down specialist plant and animal life that calls this place home. Can be combined with an afternoon walk in the same area – see below. Refreshments and toilets available at hall.

- **Distance/duration:** 3km/2 miles/2.5hrs
- **Total ascent:** 35m/120ft
- **Terrain:** paths, sometimes wet
- **Start:** Coelbren Miners Welfare & Memorial Hall, Coelbren (OS grid ref SN 851116)
- **Getting there:** follow signs for Coelbren off the A4221 Inter-Valley Road between Glynneath and Abercrave. Some limited parking at the hall, otherwise please park considerately on nearby streets.

**Wed 3rd June** 2pm – 5pm (FIELD STUDY WALK)

## 10. Graig Llech and Henrhyd (*grade 3/mod*)

A walk into the depths of the Llech gorge beneath Henrhyd Falls in the company of biologist Michael Isaac and geologist Geraint Owen. This damp and shaded woodland habitat occupying a gorge cut into a succession of Coal Measures sandstones and mudstones will certainly offer much of interest to participants besides the famous 90ft falls. Can be combined with the morning walk in the same area – see above. Refreshments and toilets available at hall.

- **Distance/duration:** 4km/2.5 miles/3hrs
- **Total ascent:** 90m/300ft
- **Terrain:** one steep descent/ascent, narrow woodland paths – can be muddy
- **Start:** Coelbren Miners Welfare & Memorial Hall, Coelbren (OS grid ref SN 851116)

- **Getting there:** follow signs for Coelbren off the A4221 Inter-Valley Road between Glynneath and Abercrave. Some limited parking at the hall, otherwise please park considerately on nearby streets.

**Wed 3rd June** 7pm (TALK)

## 11. Layered Landscapes: reading the record of the rocks

A talk by Dr Geraint Owen of Swansea University tracing the geological evolution of the Swansea Valley, Cwm Twrch and the Black Mountain. On the border between industrial South Wales and the remote uplands of the western part of the Brecon Beacons National Park, this is a landscape and community clearly shaped by the rocks beneath.

- **Venue:** Ystradowen Community Centre, New Road, Ystradowen, Carmar SA9 2YY
- **How to get there:** the centre is on the A4068 between Ystalyfera and Brynaman. There is free parking to the rear of the centre.

**Thur 4th June** - no events notified on this date yet

**Fri 5th June** 10am – 4pm (WALK)

## 12. Cadair Fawr: cairns, cattle, kilns & quarries (grade 3/moderate)

In partnership with the Brecon Beacons Park Society, Edith Evans of Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust will explore the history and prehistory of these hillsides between Penderyn and Garwnant Forest. From Bronze Age cairns through Mediaeval farmsteads to the early industrial era limekilns – plenty to see en route – and all amidst a natural landscape of shakeholes and limestone pavements.

- **Distance/duration:** c. 8km/5 miles/6hrs
- **Total ascent:** 250m/850ft
- **Terrain:** mostly short limestone grassland, some damp sections
- **Start:** car park at OS grid ref SN 9925 1151 in Garwnant Forest off the minor road between Garwnant and Penderyn.

**Fri 5th June** 7.30pm (TALK)

## 13. The Geology of Eastern Greenland

A talk by James Cresswell, polar guide and director of GeoWorld Travel and Scenery Explained Wales on a dramatic and remote part of the world where glaciers

and spectacular coastal scenery combine to assail the senses. These rocks tell of a billion years of earth history and intriguingly some share a part of their story with our own rocks.

- **Venue:** The Guildhall, Brecon LD3 7AL
- **How to get there:** plentiful free parking available nearby

**Sat 6th June** - no events notified on this date yet

**Sun 7th June** 10am – 4pm (EVENT & WALK)

## 14. Two Forts, Two Peoples (grade 3/moderate)

Join us at Bethlehem Village Hall for a day celebrating the spectacular Iron Age site at Garn Goch which rises above the Carmarthenshire village of Bethlehem with commanding views over the Towy valley. A guided walk will leave the hall at 11am bound for the twin hill-forts on Garn Goch; y Gaer Fawr and y Gaer Fach, returning for 1.30pm. Displays at the hall. Refreshments and toilets available. Please bring a packed lunch if joining the walk.

- **Distance/duration:** 6.3km/4 miles/2.5 hours
- **Total ascent:** 215m/700ft
- **Terrain:** rough underfoot in places on Y Garn
- **Start:** Bethlehem Hall (the Old School) SA19 6YH (OS grid ref SN 686253)

**Sun 7th June (EVENT & WALKS) NEW!**

## LEAF Open Farm Sunday nr Llanddeusant

A chance to see the types of fields our great grand-fathers farmed at Pengraig goch farm, a traditional farm of the area. Ancient meadows, easy and more difficult walks, guided walks available, and pond dipping for children. Photography & wildlife spotting but no dogs please. *NOTE: this event doesn't form part of the Geopark Festival but is mentioned as visitors to the area may wish to enjoy this and the 'Two Forts, Two Peoples' event at Bethlehem which is close by.*

- **Getting there:** A few miles up the road from Garn Goch, Bethlehem. Go to A4069 and turn towards Brynaman and the mountains. Take left signed 'Lluest Pony Trust' (not the left over the bridge signed to Llanddeusant but the next left) Go 1 mile up the lane, and the farm entrance is on the right signed 'Pengraig goch'. Postcode SA19 9GH
- **More info:** [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)

