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Location: Pentyrch **Distance:** 4.5 miles **Description of this walk:** A circular walk through Coed y Bedw nature reserve and up to the summit of Garth Mountain. **Map:** O/S Explorer Map 151 [Download a map of this walk to print off and follow in Derek's footsteps.](#) (PDF 1.3MB) Having trouble with the map? [Download the latest version of Adobe Reader.](#)

This walk was done using a GPS device and we've included GPS marker points with the directions, should you wish to follow them.

This walk begins outside the Lewis Arms, Pentyrch and led down through Coed y Bedw nature reserve, through the village of Gwaelod y Garth and up to the summit of Garth Mountain before heading back down to Pentyrch.

Garth Hill/ Mountain is usually referred to as 'the Garth' and was the inspiration for the book and film - The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain by Christopher Monger.

Derek was joined by a group of ladies from the [Welsh Women Walking](#) group who were high on life, having completed a trek up Mount Kilimanjaro.

1. Start of the walk: Lewis Arms, Pentyrch

N 51.53101, W -3.29720

Walk away from the pub along Heol Goch road and turn right onto Cefn Bychan lane.



Steep muddy track through woods

N 51.53233, W -3.29065

After around 450 metres turn left at the sign post and follow a short, steep trail down through woods to the road.



Take care crossing the road and opposite you'll find a field with a stile on the right hand side. Cross over and head onto a muddy walking track leading down the hill towards a large iron gate.

2. Track to Coed y Bedw reserve

N 51.53312, W -3.29146

Along the way you'll pass through beautiful meadows, full of wild flowers and ancient trees some of which are 600 years old. Garth Mountain looms over you in the distance.



Pass some large drainage pipes left on the grass and pass through the gate. Follow the track along to the next gate. Turn right and follow the hedge line along to a stile taking you into the nature reserve on your right.

3. Coed y Bedw Reserve

N 51.53565, W -3.28891

The reserve is owned & managed by the Wildlife Trust and it's hard to believe you're so close to a busy main road as you make your way down through the ancient, broadleaved woodlands of oak, birch and ash trees.



The pathways can get very muddy, especially after rain, so take your time crossing over the streams and wooden bridges.

There is plenty of wildlife here and the woods were alive with the sounds of tits and warblers in the trees above us during early summer.

4. Morgan Thomas' ruined cottage

N 51.53558, W -3.28691

A short way into the reserve, you'll stumble across an old ruined cottage belonging to former mine owner and poet, Morgan Thomas, who lived here 100 years ago.

Iron ore was once mined here but the tramways that used to cart away the ore, coal and charcoal are now covered with mosses and wild flowers.

Myths and legends have grown up around this valley - the water bubbling up from Ffynnon Gruffydd is said to have healing properties and fairies dance here on Hallowe'en.



There are ghosts too. Y Brenin Llywd (King of the Mist) haunts the old mine and there's also a one-armed ghost of a man who apparently committed suicide at the cottage in 1930.

Walk for a couple of miles, taking care where you tread along the uneven tracks, but don't forget to look up too as you'll pass by some magnificent old trees.

Exit the reserve

As you near the edge of the reserve, head down a steeper section towards a large wooden board walk and bridge carrying you over a stream.

Pass a wildlife information board and gate. The walk suddenly opens up with grassy meadows to your left and a babbling stream and moss covered stones to your right.



Look out for a cleverly made seat, carved into a tree branch on your left and follow the track to the left, through a gate and into a dense pine forest.

5. Pine forest

N51.53868, W -3.27569

Unlike a lot of planted pine forests this one actually contained plenty of bird life and had a surprising amount of light flooding through it to the forest floor.

Walk a short distance through the woods, emerging on the far side in the picturesque hamlet of Georgetown.



6. Georgetown

N 51.539342, W -3.274631

Pass through a wooden gate and past a row of colourful terraced houses. Walk down hill from Georgetown and turn left and straight up into Gwaelod y Garth village for around 750 metres.

In Elizabethan times, Gwaelod y Garth was known for its iron-ore mines but these days this sleepy village is better known for its commuters to Cardiff.



7. Gwaelod y Garth

N 51.54641, W -3.27602

Just before the Gwaelod y Garth Inn turn left and walk up a steep tarmac road. You'll now find that the route begins to get a little more strenuous from here on in.

At the hairpin bend in the road, keep left and head onwards and upwards, for around half-a-mile towards view points at the top.



As the road levels out, you'll pass above an old barn on your left, N 51.54256, W -3.28444 which is popular with visiting swallows in summer. Below it, is the the pine forest you walked through earlier.

8. Garth Mountain track

N 51.54249, W -3.28476

Follow the route marker sign on your right and head up a steep hillside track towards the mountain. The hillside was covered in bracken and ferns in summer and the sweeping views on the way up were spectacular.



As the track levels out you'll get your first glimpse of Cardiff in the distance with the Bristol Channel beyond.

9. False summit

N 51.54583, W -3.28235

The final push leads you up a steep grassy track towards a false summit as the actual summit is a little further on.



Once you reach the top of this plateau you'll have panoramic views over the world below with views over Taffs Well, the river Taff, Cardiff with its iconic landmarks and Somerset in the distance.

Further west you'll spot Aberthaw Power Station and to the north, the Brecon Beacons.

The wind had really whipped up as we made our way along the final leg of the track to the real summit of Garth Mountain at 1007 feet high.

There are a couple of paths leading to the summit now but we stayed on a bearing of N 51.54548, W -3.28657.



Veer left and then it's a straight route of around 730 metres to the summit and trig point.

Along the track you'll notice curiously shaped mounds to your right which are the remnants of Bronze Age burial mounds and have stood here for 4,000 years.

Follow the grassy track leading up to the summit and concrete trig point on top of a burial cairn.

10. Garth Hill burial mounds and Summit

N 51.54325, W -3.29438

The early to middle Bronze Aged round barrows date from roughly 2000 B.C and are scheduled ancient historic monuments.



There are four in total and worth taking a look at if you have time.

11. End of the walk: Lewis Arms, Pentyrch

From the summit, head south; down the mountain via the Ridgeway Walk and cross over the minor road (you turned off earlier further down, to head up the mountain).



At the junction (keep left) and head straight down Mountain Road into Pentyrch and back to the Lewis Arms where you started the walk from.

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