



CARREG CENNEN



Tom Hutton
explores Carreg
Cennen castle,
as well as the
surrounding
woodland.

Of all the castles in Wales, Carreg Cennen has to be the most spectacularly positioned. Its tumbledown walls and proud but shattered turrets are perched precariously on top of towering limestone crags, offering quite stunning views over the Black Mountain and the rolling hills of Carmarthenshire. The castle, as it is now, was built in the 1200s by the Welsh rather than the Normans, but despite its impregnable looking position, it changed hands regularly in the coming years and ended up with no fewer than ten different owners in as many years during the latter part of the thirteenth century. Among these was Sir John Gifford, who was responsible for many of the later modifications. It was semi-demolished following the Wars of the Roses, when in the hands of the Yorkists it became a den for local bandits. Labour was cheap in those days and the five hundred odd men that did the work were paid a total of only £28 between them.





1. From the car park, head out of the gate at the top and proceed towards the castle. Just before you reach the white building on the right, turn right through a gate onto a footpath. Follow this diagonally leftwards, down to join the fence on the left-hand side of the field and follow this down to a stile that leads onto a road. Turn left and pass a footpath on your right to drop around a left-hand bend. Before you reach the house on the right, turn right over a stile and walk down the centre of the field to another stile. Cross this to drop steeply down to another stile and a footbridge across the River Cennen.



2. Cross the bridge and climb steeply up towards the left-hand hedge where you'll cross an iron gate. Continue upwards, along the hedge, to the top of the field where you bear right to follow the top of the field around, beneath Llwyn-bedw farm. This leads to an opening in the hedge where you join an obvious farm track and bear right. Follow this across a cattle grid and over a shallow ford to another cattle grid. Climb up a short hill and at the top, turn left over a stile. Follow the edge of the field to meet a small stream on the right. Continue over a stile and up a stony track, with the stream still on your right. Continue along the tree-lined path to another stile.

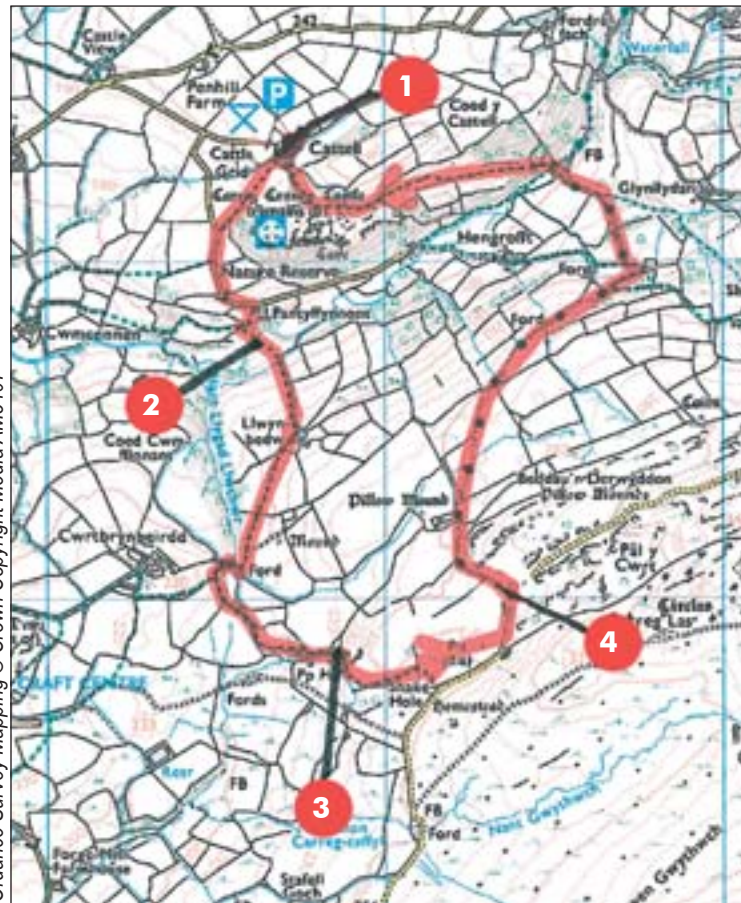


3. Cross this and keep ahead, with the source of the River Loughor down to your right, to continue past a limekiln on the left. Now follow the track up and around to the left where it peters out into open pasture. Keep straight ahead to a stile and keep ahead again, keeping a fenced-off shake hole on the right, to a stile that leads onto a narrow road. Turn left and follow the road up over a cattle grid and around a left-hand bend.



4. As the road swings right, turn left onto a clear farm track and follow this until it curves right to the farmhouse. Keep left to cross a stile and then follow a waymarked path with a fence to the left. This eventually swings right and becomes fenced on both sides as it heads towards the brow of a hill. Continue over the hill and down again to a stile that leads onto a sunken track. Follow this down to join a broad track at hairpin bend and turn left to take the lower track. Then, as the track turns sharply left, bear right to cross a stile and drop down a stony, tree-and hedge-lined path that leads to a stile by a stream. Bear left on the bank and cross a stile, then a footbridge, then another stile. This leads to a larger footbridge over the River Cennen, which you cross. Turn right on the other side, and then left onto a waymarked path that climbs up through oak trees towards the castle. The car park is just a few minutes walk from here. ☘

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Walker's Fact File

Distance: 4 Miles (6.4km), Time: 2 hours

Start/Finish: Carreg Cennen Car Park SN 666194

Paths: Good paths and tracks throughout, most are well waymarked. Some mud.

Maps: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL 12 (Brecon Beacons West) with a short section on Explorer 186 and 178

Nearest Town: Llandeilo

Tourist Information: Llandeilo TIC – tel. 01558 824226