



Craig-y-dorth

SUMMARY This short walk provides some of the best views in Monmouthshire. Delightful at anytime of year, but in spring there is a succession of wild flowers – snowdrops, primroses, daffodils, wood anemones and bluebells. It follows a little used minor road around Craig-y-dorth hill and is suitable for pushchairs and motorised buggies.

START Approximately three miles from Monmouth, on the B4293 towards Trellech; turn right at the crossroads signed Craig-y-dorth 1½ miles. There is roadside parking for a few cars just beyond the driveway to Caerllan Field Study and Conference Centre.

WALK INFO

DISTANCE 1½ MILES

No. OF GATES 0

No. OF STILES 0

- Once parked, carry on along the lane keeping right at Caerllan Cottage [1]. The verge to the right is covered in snowdrops early each year. After young woodland to the right, views open out as you pass an old stone stile. There are stunning views of Monmouth, the Wye and Trothy valleys. There is also a convenient bench if you would like to pause and enjoy the panorama.

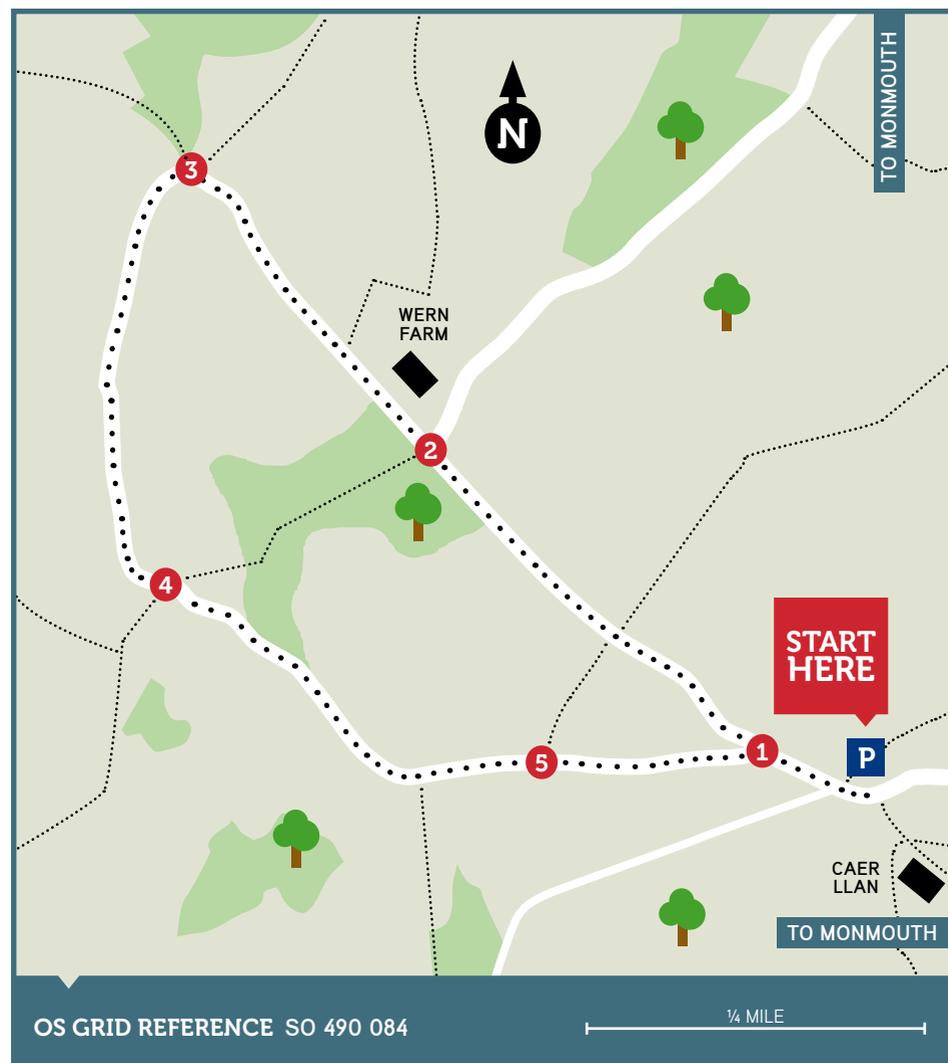
- Keep on the level, ignoring the right turn [2] and pass Wern Farm, once the home of MI6 intelligence officer Colonel John Wyke (1920-91). In the 1960s, at the height of the cold war with Russia, he was "the best technical operator". His exploits took him to Germany, Cyprus and Pakistan but his cover was blown with the publishing of 'Spycatcher' in 1984.

- You may hear noise from the traffic on the A40 following the route of the former railway in the valley below. Just before the bend there is a bridle gate and Byway sign to the right [3] and if you would like to rest there is a seat just inside the gate. It was put in by Monmouthshire footpath volunteers and is aimed at walkers who have struggled up the steep field below, but it is there for everyone to enjoy.

- Rejoin the lane and just over the hedge to the right is a small dewpond. It often has tadpoles in spring. Marked on maps as a battleground, this area is reputed to be the site of the rout between Owen Glendower and King Henry IV in 1404. On this occasion, the Welsh rebels were the winners, chasing the King's men back to the gates of Monmouth.

- The fantastic views to the north take in, from left to right, the Blorenge, Sugarloaf and Skirrid near Abergavenny, The Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons, and the edge of Hay Bluff. In the near distance, you can see Dingestow, with Dingestow Court to the left and Treowen Court to the right of the village.

- Continue around the hill to the community of Craig-y-dorth [4] a group of houses on the



warmer, west facing side of the hill. Craig-y-dorth translates from the Welsh into 'hill of the loaf'.

- You now climb steadily uphill through bluebell-carpeted woodland. On the left at the crest there is a bank that is covered in snowdrops in January. The views to the right take in the remote Cwmcarnan valley with Croes Robert Wood on the far side – a Gwent Wildlife Trust reserve. As you start to descend [5]

look slightly to the right and spot a large stone house tucked into the hillside. This is Caerllan Field Study and Conference Centre. Part of the property is Berm House – set into the hillside and earth-covered so that it is perfectly insulated. Over the hedges to either side are wonderful panoramas.

- At the lane junction [1] walk straight back to your parked vehicle.