

5. TWYN-Y-GARTH (CANNON HILL) & BOTTLEDOCK FOOTBRIDGE

A hill fort with a cannon! - and a gorge. Map: Explorer 188.

Full Circular: 7 miles. 3 1/2 hours.

Hill Fort only Circular: 4 miles. 2 hours. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6.

Erwood Station Coffee House and Craft Centre is 7 1/2 miles from Builth Wells. Cross the bridge and turn right at the roundabout. Take the next right, cross the roundabout at the industrial estate and take the next right. Follow the until you get there. Ample parking in the old station yard. (3 mile scenic road on the old railway track from here to the Llanstephan wooden suspension bridge.) Shop & pub in Erwood village across the river.

5.1 Erwood Station - Tywn-y-Garth

25 mins

Turn right out of the car park and walk along the road, taking the turning signposted Painscastle. At the first bend, where the road climbs up Sunnybank, continue straight, on the No Through Road leading to The Skreen. Here the track becomes a green lane, passing above The Skreen. After ascending a-while the way is blocked by a fence. When we climb over it we are on Twyn-a-Garth.

5.2 Route to the hillfort

25 mins

One route to the top is straight up - quite a climb, but you'll be King of the Castle. More elegant (even if you become the Dirty Rascal) is to stay on the old road. Go through a gate and past a ruin. In front of the next gate, where a track drops down right to Cilau Farm (don't go through the gate), take the path into the field on the left which crosses the field diagonally back. Maintain the angle over the field until you come to a stile leading back onto the open hill. Opposite is a well defined path which makes a long, gentle ascent. It rounds the hill to the far side where paths lead from the hamlet to the top.

5.3 Twyn-y-Garth hillfort

For the view, cross to the far side of the ditch and ramparts of the garth ('garth' means enclosure). From the left, the northern escarpment of the Black Mountains: Hay Bluff and Twmpa (Lord Hereford's Knob). The table-top of Pen Allt-mawr, soars above the ruins of Castell Dinas which, with pointed Mynydd Troed, straddle the A479, the mountain pass. Further right, the Brecon Beacons pierce the sky. Below us is Erwood village. To the right a small road snakes up Twmpath and crosses Pant-y-llyn Hill (**Walk 2**). Far off to the right, are the Cambrians. The story of the cannon is that it was stolen from Erwood by the lads of Aberedw then stolen back and placed on Twyn-y-Garth. With backs to the Wye walk to the far side of the top where two burial mounds are visible. We look into the suspended valley of the Bach Howey river, Painscastle at its head. The left wall is Llandeilo Hill; the right, The Begwyns, with a circular wall on top, restored as a Millenium project. (**To return go to 5.6**)

5.4 Twyn-y-Garth - Bottledock footbridge

35 mins

Drop down to the hamlet, turn right and take the road to Garth Farm. Go left on the track around the farm, or take the path through the gate on the left of the barn, go diagonally left over the field and re-join the track from the house. Take the track downhill, ford the brook, and continue to the road. Notice to the right of the track in this field, a much older track borders the hedgeline. (If a new stile due to be put in here has been, use it to cross the next field). Turn right down the road and, at the corner, take the drive to Penisarplwyf. After 30yds, on the bend, take the bridle gate, left, and follow the edge of the old green lane. Lower down, it follows the bed of a stream. Cross the stream and stay on the course of the green lane until the footbridge. For a good view of the waterfalls, cross the bridge and follow the bank to the big oak.

5.5 Bottledock - Garth hamlet

50 mins

Recross and with backs to the footbridge cross the fence above the wall facing (a building once stood here). Follow the bank downstream and cross the tributary a few yards down (site of a Norman mill - the rock has been cut to make a housing for the wheel). Now turn right, briefly follow the bank of the stream and cross into the field. (The farmer has kindly provided a 'permissive path' across a couple of fields.) Aim for the gate at the very top. Climb the slope keeping to the left edge of the field for views down the valley. Make for the gate to the right of the conifer plantation ahead. A good track leads back to Penisarplwyf (stay right). Take the farm drive to the road and retrace the route to Garth.

5.6 Garth hamlet - Erwood Station

35 mins

Leaving the hamlet by the road take the first gate on the left diagonally forward across the field and through the next gate. Cross the next field to the gate opposite. The next one is diagonally right, half way along the facing hedge. We enter Ty-isaf farm by a stile at the back of the barns. The farm drive leads to the road at Sunnybank.