

Notes on Lordship of Gower(Stryveland)

This walk is based on the Upper Gower Challenge Walk designed by Alan Richards, (www.pontarddulaiswalkingclub.com/). His notes have been added to for this walk.

GR SN 649 033 **Lliw Valley Reservoirs** - We pass nearby.

The Lower Lliw Reservoir (or Felindre Reservoir) was originally opened in 1863 to provide water for Swansea and the surrounding area costing £160,000 to create. The Upper Lliw Reservoir opened in 1892 and cost £116,000 to build. Subsequently the Lower Lliw Reservoir was reconstructed between 1976-78 with inclusion of new rockfill dam, new overflow spillway and new pumping station.

GR SN 670 062 **Torclawdd Dyke** - We pass nearby.

The tenth century dyke at Tor Clawdd was constructed possibly to guard the route to Gower. Traffic would have had to travel along it's long linear causeway (still visible). A ring work is also located along side the causeway but it is not certain whether they are both connected. Alas, much of the north facing dyke has been badly scarred by old mine workings but is still visible.

GR SN 676 053 **Torclawdd Bungalow** - We pass nearby.

This was built in 1934 by the Gloucestershire born inventor, Harry Grindell Mathews. It had a well-equipped laboratory, bedrooms, bathrooms, a lounge, dining room and kitchen. It also had its own power and water supply and was the ideal place for him to continue with his work in relative seclusion. Matthews was a qualified pilot and behind Tor Clawdd had a small airstrip built so that he could land his own private light aeroplane. Surrounding the property was a tall electrified fence topped with barbed wire to keep away any snoopers.

During his time spent at Tor Clawdd Matthews worked on submarine detection and invented an Aerial Torpedo to defend cities from airborne attack. This was a small rocket launched from the ground that would fire a series of smaller secondary rockets in all directions, like the spokes of a wheel, to a distance of about 200 yards. Inside each of the smaller rockets was a carton that contained a small bomb attached to a parachute by a length of serrated wire. As the carton fell back to earth the tiny parachute would be deployed with, hanging from the wire, a small bomb attached to it. With lots of these small bombs parachuting back to earth the whole thing created an aerial minefield. Matthews even visited officials at Downing Street to try and interest the government.

He invented radio telephony and developed a process for sound on cinematic films and was once employed by Warner Brothers. Indeed Mathews was way ahead of his time and successfully demonstrated that he could immobilize combustion engines and destroy vermin by means of an electric gun. This gave him the tag 'Death Ray Mathews'. Unfortunately Mathews was not taken seriously by the British Government and was poised to take his inventions and ideas across the Atlantic but sadly died on September 11 1941.

GR SN 675 031 **Pant y Crwys Chapel** - We pass near.

For those with an interest in the Eisteddfod the bard and Archdruid William 'Crwys' Williams was born in Craig -cefn-parc in 1875 and is buried at Pant-y-crwys Chapel. The garden which inspired his famous poem 'Y Border Bach' still exists in Craig Cefn Parc.

GR SN 676 035 **Cwm Clydach Nature Reserve** - We pass through.

RSPB Nature Reserve

GR SN 700 041*** **Chapel** - We pass near.

This long established nonconformist chapel was built in 1692. The chapel was rebuilt in 1801 and part of a Celtic cross was placed in it's east side. This relic, once used as a mounting block, has on it an image of a draped man. The original stone is now housed at the Swansea Museum and has been replaced at the chapel by a replica.

GR SN 697 062 **Carn Llechart** - We pass near.

Carn Llechart Burial Chamber is one of the better known archaeological sites in Glamorgan. It is a Bronze Age ring cairn consisting of 25 upstanding slabs 14 yards in diameter. The stones protrude outwards suggesting pressure from a long destroyed mound. The interior contains a robbed cistfaen. Unfortunately all of the cairns in upland Gower have been robbed of their stone. A few yards to the south lie the remains of an earlier Neolithic Burial Chamber.

GR SN 687 078 **Baran Chapel** - We pass near.

Chapel is one of many isolated meeting houses located on these hills .This particular meeting house was established in 1805 when worshippers left nearby Gellionnen Chapel after it became Unitarian. Meetings were first held in the nearby farmhouses of Llwyn Ifan and Nant Y Moel Uchaf. 50 members of the congregation emigrated to Pennsylvania during the nineteenth century.

GR SN 688 113 **Views**

GR SN 665 095 **Penlle'rcastell** - We pass near.

The remains of this Norman fortification is situated at the highest point in the Lordship of Gower and is also the highest castle in Glamorgan. The castle has been robbed of masonry but the surrounding ditch has survived well. The construction of the castle during the late thirteenth century seem to be connected to a period of particular unrest which resulted in the Welsh regaining part of the lordship; the lost territory became known as '**Stryveland**'. Today it is known as Mynydd Betws.

GR SN 633 047

Mynydd Pysgodlyn

- We pass near.

Mynydd Pysgodlyn was a venue for mass gatherings, but also a site for more serious meetings. During 1843 Stephen Evans, a leader of the Rebecca Rioters, addressed a mass meeting in Welsh against the Poor Law and Tithe Act.