

Caldicot Castle & Black Rock Loop

Distance: 8½ km | Time: 2½ hours



Discover Gwent Levels

Follow the Countryside Code

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so gateways and driveways are clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow
- Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep your dog under effective control and on a lead around livestock.
- Pick up after your pet – dog mess can harm livestock
- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs

Look out for...



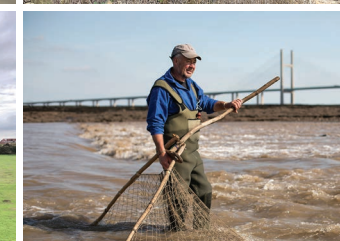
Sudbrook Pumping Station (C Harris)



Holy Trinity Church (C Harris)



Sudbrook Camp (C Harris)



Lave net fisherman (N Hepburn)



Heston Brake (C Harris)



St Marys, Portskewett (C Harris)

Walk Highlights

CALDICOT CASTLE

Caldicot Castle was built to guard the crossing over the River Nedern, although today the Nedern is little more than a narrow brook, it was once wide enough to allow ships to travel as far as Caerwent. The original timber motte and bailey castle was built soon after the Normans invaded South Wales in the 11th century.

SECOND SEVERN CROSSING (PRINCE OF WALES BRIDGE)

This magnificent bridge was opened in 1996. In total, the bridge is over 5km long, with the longest span 456m.

SUDBROOK CAMP

Sudbrook Camp is an Iron Age fort built sometime in the 2nd century BC. At the time of the Roman invasion it was occupied by the local Silures tribe and may have played host to the Celtic chieftain Caradoc (Caractacus) as he retreated before the Roman Legions. The inner ramparts rise to over 5 metres.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

The ruins of the 12th century Holy Trinity Church stand perilously close to the cliff edge. The church was still in use up to 1560 but was abandoned by the mid 1700s due to erosion of the nearby cliffs. Much of the graveyard has since fallen in to the sea.

SUDBROOK INTERPRETATION CENTRE

Discover the history of Sudbrook and the Severn Tunnel, Wales' crucial rail link with England. The centre tells the story of the village built in the 1870s to house the 3000 workers constructing the Severn Railway Tunnel.

BLACK ROCK PICNIC SITE

Black Rock has been a crossing point between England and Wales for centuries; Roman coins found in the mud along the foreshore are thought to be offerings to the gods for a safe passage. Black Rock is home to a group of lave net fishermen, who fish for salmon using traditional techniques.

HESTON BRAKE

Heston Brake is a neolithic chambered tomb or long barrow (c. 4000 - 2500BC). Much of the mound of earth that once covered the tomb has been removed exposing a small group of puddingstones, which once stood at the entrance to the tomb.



About the Gwent Levels

The Gwent Levels are an iconic, estuarine landscape of international significance. First reclaimed from the sea in Roman times, the Gwent Levels are a network of fertile fields and historic watercourses, known locally as reens. This special landscape of high skies and low horizons is one of the finest examples of a 'natural' landscape hand-crafted by people in Europe; and one of the largest tracts of bio-diverse wet grassland left in the UK.

The Partnership

The Living Levels Landscape Partnership is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. We are delivering a programme of work which will promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and wild beauty of the Gwent Levels.



Contact

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For more information about this walk visit:

www.livinglevels.org.uk



Caldicot & Black Rock

This circular route takes you from the magnificent Caldicot Castle down to the coast by the Prince of Wales Bridge, along the Wales Coast Path to the Iron Age fort at Sudbrook, and on to Black Rock picnic site, for spectacular views over the Severn Estuary.

The Route

Start at Caldicot Castle

(Grid Ref ST 487884 | OS Explorer Map 154)

- From the car park, follow the access road to the eastern entrance, crossing over the **Nedern Brook**. Turn right along Caldicot By-pass. After 250m turn left down Pill Road and follow the road to the end.
- Bear right onto Symondsciff Way and follow the road over the railway crossing and straight on between factory units, through a kissing gate and towards the **Prince of Wales Bridge** along a tarmacked track. At the end of the track the footpath joins the Wales Coast Path.
- Bear left and follow the track with the Prince of Wales Bridge on your right.
- After 1km the ground starts to rise towards Sudbrook Point and the path passes through the outer ramparts of **Sudbrook Fort**, an Iron Age enclosure. Follow the path across a playing field and exit towards the village of Sudbrook along Camp Road, passing the ruins of **Holy Trinity Church**. A short distance along Camp Road is the **Sudbrook Interpretation Centre**, which has a fascinating display all about the history of Sudbrook and the Severn Railway Tunnel.
- Just past the Social Club, turn right across an old railway line on to Church Row and turn right towards



Gatehouse, Caldicot Castle (Chris Harris)

the huge red brick pumping station, built in 1886 to house six beam engines used to pump water from the Severn railway tunnel. Follow the road as it bears to the left, passing some of the houses built in the 1870s to accommodate workers on the Severn Tunnel, and follow to the end of the surfaced road, where the track continues onwards towards **Black Rock**. Just before Black Rock the path splits; turn right to go through the picnic site, which has fantastic views across the Severn Estuary, or carry straight on towards Black Rock Rd.

- From Black Rock, follow the road towards Portskewett for 50m then turn right onto a track and bridge over the disused railway to a field gate. Enter field and turn left following the hedge and then the footpath along the old railway line, before emerging onto Black Rock Road. At the end of the road, turn right along Main Rd and then, after 200m, left along a road (signed to Leechpool).
- After 300m, look for a fingerpost and stile on your left and cross into a field. On the crest of the hill on your left is **Heston Brake**, a Neolithic tomb or long barrow. Cross the field following the waymarking, through a hedge and follow the path along a farm track. Cross into a narrow



lane that takes you back on to Main Rd. Turn right and follow the road down towards the village of Portskewett.

- After 150m, look out for St Mary's Church on your left, well worth a detour. Continue down Main Rd. Just before the next turning on your left (Manor Way), the path heads off to the left across Harold's Field, the site of a Saxon hunting lodge. Follow the path, passing Portskewett and Sudbrook Football Club and the Cornfield Project Community Garden, exiting next to the railway line.
- Follow the path through some industrial units and on to a lane that takes you back to Symondsciff Way. Cross directly to Pill Row and head back towards Caldicot Castle.



The Fisherman, Black Rock (CH)

At Black Rock picnic site, look out for *The Fisherman* and *The Engineer*, two sculptures celebrating the people of the Levels.