

THE GLAMORGAN *Heritage Coast* AND COUNTRYSIDE

country
parks



the most Southerly point in Wales

There's something about the countryside that refreshes and enlivens. Wandering through beautiful woodland or along the banks of a fast flowing river seems to put a whole new spring into your step. Everyone should spend time rediscovering themselves. The problems that life throws at us seem miles away.

In the Glamorgan Heritage Coast & Countryside area, it's possible to discover a wealth of unspoilt countryside, secluded woodland walks and heritage trails, close to the principal towns and cities of South Wales but a million miles from the noise and bustle of urban life. Within a few square miles you will find a variety of natural habitats where you can lose yourself for a few hours in a haven of peace and tranquility.

Country Parks come in all shapes, sizes and styles. One of the Country Parks featured in this guide has been developed on the site of an old colliery and Ironworks where nature has cloaked the old industrial scars in a rich tapestry of charming woodlands, grasslands and meadows. Another has a full sized original medieval village!

Country Parks offer a great day out for the whole family and many are equipped with designated picnic spots, barbecue pits and children's play areas. And let's not forget the educational element of a visit! Education should be fun, and for children, learning about the wildlife and natural history of these fascinating areas at one of the Visitor Centres offers a unique experience; a world away from the classroom!

So why not get away from it all for the day. Take the family, or go alone! Listen to the silence and breathe the fresh, clean air in one of the Country Parks in the spectacular Glamorgan Heritage Coast and Countryside area of South Wales. It's a magical, mystical area full of surprises just waiting to be explored –

Come and share the magic!

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Bryngarw Country Park

Brynmenyn, Nr Bridgend CF32 8UU
Tel: 01656 725155
www.visitbridgend.com

Comfortably nestling at the entrance to the Garw Valley, just a few minutes drive north of the M4 motorway, is Bryngarw Country Park. The house and grounds were purchased by the local Authority in 1961 and designated as a Country Park in 1980. Grant aid from the Countryside Commission and a Manpower services team, turned the jungle back into beautiful countryside and footpaths, car park and information centre. The Park opened to the public in 1986 and quickly became a favourite with locals and visitors alike.

The Park has 113 acres of beautiful walks and gardens that look spectacular at any time of the year. It might well be called a park for all seasons where nature works its own special magic in a rich palette of colours painting every area of this enchanting park with multi-coloured green and gold. You will find everything you could possibly imagine, from wild mysterious woodlands to formal gardens, unusual exotic trees to mossy wetlands teeming with life, traditional mighty oaks to beautiful tiny wildflowers, quiet secluded corners to wide open pastures, ornamental lake-lands to fast flowing rivers.

Time stands still at Bryngarw Country Park, offering something for everyone - nature lovers who want to explore the flora and fauna, families with boisterous children, walkers who want to stay active or those who just require solitude. It is easy to find your own quiet spot to enjoy the peace and tranquility of this very special place.

Woodlands

The Park has a wealth of woodland habitats from mature sweet chestnuts to a majestic avenue of beech trees, while beside the river lies a larch and sycamore woodland. Don't miss the spring when the woodlands are carpeted in stunning bluebells while the summer foliage provides a relaxing cool green canopy, even on the hottest of days. Autumn brings its own special look with a blaze of burnished red, copper and gold, while winter brings a carpet of white to add its own magic of crisp, fresh atmosphere.

Water features

Water is an important feature at Bryngarw. The River Garw flows through the Park and is fringed by wooded banks, marshlands and rocky gorges. Close to the main driveway is an ornamental lake and still ponds that delight children and adults alike.



Woodlands



Pond dipping

Grasslands

As you would expect in a Country Park, there are plenty of open spaces for the children to run and play. Large areas of open grassland and meadow sweep up the hillside with areas where you can picnic together or just relax in the warm sunshine.

Formal Gardens

There are delightful ornamental gardens, such as the exotic Oriental garden on the lower levels near the river dating from 1910. This is an inheritance from the last private owner of the park, Captain O. P. Traherne. The pond, pagoda, oriental plants and lanterns provide an insight into the different cultures, which are now part of the local scene. There is a small lake forming part of a series of inter-linked ponds, which are the focal point for an exquisite display of trees, shrubs and decorative stones. Other fascinating features include the bridges and Japanese style Tea Garden Pavilion. The Oriental garden is at its best in spring. At that time it is ablaze with azaleas and rhododendrons and the magnolia, cherry trees and maples are in full bloom.

Flora and Fauna

Bryngarw is a veritable paradise for flora and fauna enthusiasts. Beech avenues and marsh plants, ferns, fungi and mosses are all part of the diverse habitats that harbour a profusion of plants and wildflowers in the Park. Keen bird watchers may be able to spot buzzards, blue tit, great tit, coal tit, woodpecker, jay and heron. The park is also alive with butterflies, dragonflies and insects during the summer months.

The Park has **Way-marked Nature Trails** that go from gentle strolls around the gardens to longer walks of up to 1½ miles. There are also colour-coded trails throughout the Park and along the boardwalk over marshy wetlands. The three main walks are:

- **Bryngarw Riverside Ramble**

The first walk takes you on a relaxing stroll along the banks of the River Garw.

- **Bryngarw Meadow Meander**

This second walk provides a pleasant, leisurely stroll through open fields on the valley side of the River Garw.

- **Bryngarw Woodland Walk**

Try this enjoyable walk through regenerated woodlands, where a wide variety of flowers and plants may be seen as well as a number of woodland birds.

Ask a warden for the new Bryngarw Country Park leaflet or collect one from the visitor centre. The Park also provides an opportunity to have a much longer day out by providing a route which links to the Ogwr Ridgeway Walk, 13 miles of footpath across some of the higher parts of the area, offering magnificent views of the surrounding countryside.

Although Bryngarw is quite compact, if you wish, you can make a full day of your visit to the park. There are Barbecue Pits and picnic areas that are sure to please the whole family. Please make certain that your barbecue is properly extinguished after use and remember to take your litter away with you.



Oriental Garden



Play Area

In the **Visitor Centre** it's possible to learn about the history of the house and park as well as the varied flora and fauna of Bryngarw. A wide range of leaflets are also available.

There is also an **Adventure Playground** where the children can enjoy themselves on the slides, swings, multi-play units, spring animals and climbing tower.

And we haven't forgotten **Refreshments**, which are available in season, right next to the main car park. For a more formal meal, try the **Harlequin Restaurant** at the house, but remember to prebook a table.

Accessibility is important to us. Here at the Park, we have arranged for **Facilities for disabled**. Most of the park is accessible for wheelchair users and other disabilities, and there is a vehicle available for visitors with limited mobility. The Park also has **Toilets** with disabled facilities.



The Country Park is open all year (except Christmas Day and Boxing Day) and is free to enter, although there are car park charges at weekends, and holidays from April to September. Pre-reserved coach parties are welcome.

For more information contact: the warden on (01656) 725155.

Throughout the summer months, the Park is alive with a series of **Events**. There are several staged from Shakespeare to Opera, from Clowns to Jazz bands with pre event **Dinners** at the house. Many events are **Free** except for the car park charge mentioned. A brochure is produced showing all these events and is available from the Heritage Coast Tourist Information centres at Bridgend and Porthcawl. (Telephone numbers are on the back cover)



Jazz Band



Bryngarw House

Brynmenyn, Nr Bridgend CF32 8UU
Tel: 01656 729009
www.bryngarwhouse.co.uk

At the centre of the Park is Bryngarw House, which has always dominated the formal lawns within the park, generating a great deal of interest amongst the many visitors. There is very little material evidence available that fits the house into the Bryngarw jigsaw, but the earliest reference to it is in 1774 when John Popkin of Coytrahen gave the house to his sister Frances on her marriage to Edmund Traherne, a lieutenant in the Royal Glamorgan militia. Edmunds' lands were greatly enlarged by his shrewd marital tactics. He gained the Castellau Estate from his first marriage, and Coytrahen and Bryngarw from his second marriage to Frances Popkin. Edmund came from Castellau and was also a Collector of Custom's Taxes in Cardiff.

The Traherne family, were important local gentry and the estate remained in their hands until 1944 when the last member of the family, Onslow Powell Traherne, sold it to Mr. R.S.Hayes.

There is architectural evidence, however, that point to the house originally being a farmhouse possibly dating from the 15th century. The house has been altered over the years and therefore displays characteristics from many architectural periods.

It was Onslow Powell Traherne who we have to thank for the grounds as they are today. He was born at Broadlands House, Bridgend in 1866 and was educated at Sherbourne. He became a Captain in the Glamorgan Yeomanry and a member of many fashionable London clubs. In his day the grounds were a model of a true country gentleman's estate. Pheasant and rabbits were bred for sport, the woodlands provided timber and the grounds were landscaped for leisure. Many of the exotic trees and shrubs that are here today were planted by the Captain or his gardeners.



Onslow Powell Traherne

When the local Authority purchased the house in 1961, it was altered into apartments and the area now used as a car park was used to accommodate caravans. The house that we see today resembles closely the way it looked in 1834 when it was described as a 'small but elegant dwelling'.

In 1994 a European Grant enabled a refurbishment plan to be put into action and a major programme of work was undertaken to clean up the exterior and turn the semi-derelict interior into the high standard finish that is there today. Almost the entire building was refurbished and a Conference Centre with accommodation was established. The remainder has been done over the years, in a systematic manner. More than 220 years since it was first mentioned, and following careful sympathetic renovation and refurbishment the essential character and atmosphere of Bryngarw House has been preserved and also enhanced by the addition of modern creature comforts.



Bryngarw House



Bedroom

Experience the special charm of Bryngarw House with a meal in the Harlequin Restaurant. A unique experience of quality produce expertly prepared and lovingly served. In the evenings, the conservatory is transformed by soft music and candlelight; providing the perfect romantic setting for a superb dinner or special occasion.

With its complete facilities service, Bryngarw House is now a major conference and function centre. There is a choice of well-equipped conference and meeting rooms while the peace and quiet of Bryngarw makes this the ideal venue for important business meetings, training events, product launches, conferences and courses.



Restaurant

The beautifully furnished rooms offer a perfect choice for an away from it all special weekend or celebration. Each of the 19 en-suite bedrooms is individually decorated to its own unique style and offers tea and coffee making facilities, television and direct dial telephones. A spacious residents' lounge adds to the comfort and enjoyment of this unique venue.

The oak-panelled Traherne Suite provides an elegant venue for that special occasion and an adjoining marquee provides a magical setting for summer weddings.

Pre-booked coach parties are welcomed for tea and coffee stops, as well as lunches and dinners.

And of course, it's all situated in 113 acres of country parkland. If you would like to know more about facilities at **Bryngarw House** please telephone: (01656) 729009.



Events in the Park



Parc Slip, Nature Park

Tondu, Nr Bridgend CF32 0EH
Tel Glamorgan Wildlife Trust (01656) 724100
www.visitbridgend.com

Discover the unique environment of wetlands, woodlands and meadows at the Parc Slip Nature Park. After a century of coal mining on the site, the Wildlife Trust began to manage the land for nature in the late 1980's. Varied habitats have since been created and the park supports an increasing diversity of wildlife.

Alongside Parc Slip Nature Park is Park Pond Nature Reserve which has an old millpond at its heart, surrounded by a small area of mature woodland. Here, a different variety of wildlife can be seen, thanks to the existence of a set of habitats associated with the woodland's greater age.

There is a Visitor Centre with a 3D interactive exhibition, information, souvenirs and wheelchair access to most of the facilities, including refreshments. There are information points along the trails and paths providing further details about the surrounding wildlife. There are a number of picnic sites also. There are outdoor activity areas for children and cycling is encouraged as part of the National Cycle Network passes through the park on its way to Bedford Park.

There are nature trails, bird hides and access for all paths, to enable everyone to explore at their own pace. The Nature Park and Reserve are open all year, but the Visitor Centre only opens from April to October



Tondu Iron Park

Tondu, Nr. Bridgend, CF32 9TF
Tel: (01656) 727800
www.visitbridgend.com

One of the newest and most exciting attractions in the area is Tondu Park, the conserved structures of a former Victorian ironworks. This unique legacy of South Wales' industrial revolution is one of the key sites for the interpretation of industrial heritage in Bridgend County Borough. Visitors to Tondu Park will eventually be able to explore the Scheduled Ancient Monument, learn about iron making, enjoy the natural woodland and landscaped parkland setting, and attend a variety of public events.

Cyclists on the Celtic Trail, part of the National Cycle Network, will be able to branch off the main route to enjoy the park picnic area, off road mountain bike course as well as all the other facilities at the Park. The Education Resource Centre will be a valuable resource for the local community, schools and visitors, assisting in the interpretation and celebration of this major attraction.

There is ample car and coach parking and Tondu rail station is close at hand, offering access from Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea.

For more information please contact
Groundwork Bridgend: (01656) 722315



Bedford Park

Cefn Cribwr, Nr Bridgend, CF32 0BW
Tel: (01656) 725155
www.visitbridgend.com

Wandering around the 40 acres of quiet woodlands, meadows, secret glades and green open spaces of Bedford Park, it is hard to believe that this was once an area of intense industrial activity.

From the late 18th to the early 20th centuries, ironworkers, coalminers and brick workers toiled here while a railway noisily rumbled through the valley carrying industrial produce to the coast.

The legacy of those harsh industrial years remains, even though the buildings have long since crumbled and the scenery is now softened by greenery. Today Bedford Park is a beautiful, peaceful haven harbouring a rich variety of flora and fauna; a perfect place in which to spend a few hours enjoying a picnic or stroll, far away from the madding crowds.

Old Industries

The central feature of Bedford Park is naturally the old Cefn Cribwr Ironworks, the remains of which is now protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in fact it is one of the most complete of its kind in Britain.

The Park takes its name from Birmingham industrialist, John Bedford; a self-proclaimed expert on iron making, who

acquired the estate in 1770 and lived in Plas Cefn (now known as Bedford House), just south of the Park. His grandson, John Bedford III was born in the house, which is reputed to have its window sills, made of cast iron from the Bedford Iron Works.

John built a blast furnace here in the 1780's and also sunk pits to mine the raw materials of ironstone and coal as well as founding a forge and brickworks.

The ironworks never fulfilled John's expectations and began to decline soon after his death in 1791. The estate was sold in 1824 to William Bryant, a brewer from Merthyr Tydfil. His son, also William, with various partners attempted to revive the works.

Although helped by the building of the Duffryn, Llynfi & Porthcawl Railway, their efforts were ultimately unsuccessful and ironworking at Cefn Cribwr ended around 1836. Coal mining and brick making, however, continued throughout the 19th century but ceased completely after the 1st World War. It was acquired by the local Authority in 1987, but there was considerable interest in the site long before that. The Authority carried out emergency repairs to protect what was left of the Ironworks, and more recently a programme of consolidation and archaeological excavation with financial assistance from the former Welsh Office.



Explore the Countryside

The car park occupies the site of the original kilns of the brickworks and only a short distance from here, and almost hidden from view, can be seen the remarkably well preserved ironworks which may come as a surprise both in terms of scale and survival.

The site is so well preserved; visitors can once again follow the entire iron making process through a series of interpretive panels. It is still possible to see the remains of the calcining kilns, blast furnace and charging ramp, where the raw materials were thrown into the furnace. It's also possible to see the blowing-engine house, where a steam engine forced in air to keep the furnace at a constant temperature as well as the cast house where the iron castings were made.

The old Dyffryn, Llynfi and Porthcawl Railway linked the ironworks to the coast at Porthcawl. It was built between 1825 and 1828 as a tramway where the 'trains' were pulled along the 16-mile route by horses. The total journey from Maesteg to Porthcawl took 6 hours on the downward stretch and 8 1/2 hours upwards. It was rebuilt as a railway line in 1861 and survived until 1963.

The original route of the railway now forms Bedford Park's main footpath, which follows the line and is the most important footpath in the park.

The Celtic Trail as it's now called, is a traffic-free path for cycling, walking and wheelchairs and runs from Tondu to Frogpond Wood. The route covers seven miles and passes through a variety of beautiful scenery giving the opportunity to explore different natural habitats and local wildlife. The route also includes the Tondu to Pyle Community Route, which forms a part of the National Cycle Network of Britain (Route 4).



Iron Works

Bedford Park is untouched and left to nature in order to retain a natural feel to the environment. Footpaths are deliberately left to become overgrown so that each new visitor can find their own thrill of 'discovering' a new path.

New Life

Nature has its own way of reclaiming the land and the Park is once more home to a colourful array of wildflowers such as Marsh Orchid, ragged robin, yellow toad-flax, tansy and ox-eye daisy as well as foxgloves and enchanter's nightshade.

Wildlife is returning and foxes are often seen from the path along the old railway while buzzards, bullfinches, whitethroat and kestrels are among the many birds to be seen here. Butterflies abound in this natural wilderness and you can spot many different species including common blues, meadow browns, tortoise-shells and skippers.

The little river of Nant Iorwerch Goch, (Welsh word for 'red'), meanders through the wooded gorge. It is said to be so named because the waters were stained by the iron oxide from the old industrial workings. It really is red but derives its name from a much earlier time when local landowner "Edward the Red" (Iorwerth Goch) lived here in the 12th century.

A dense cover of woodland abounds consisting of oak, ash, hawthorn and hazel, in fact the area around the Ironworks is characterised by oak and hawthorn. Oak is a very common tree in the area and is important for wildlife. The native 'British' oak is capable of providing a home for an amazing 284 different species of invertebrates and the picnic benches throughout the Park are made from unique 'Welsh' oak obtained locally.

Wildflowers too, are an important feature at Bedford Park and provide splashes of vivid colour throughout the year. The Community route is an important wildlife habitat and a range of wild plants can be seen including wild strawberries, pignut, blackberry and elderberry.



The Red River



Walkers Footpath

The Park is the ideal setting for a family picnic, a walk or cycle along the Community route, or just to sample the delights of our natural environment.

There are many amenities in the park including some **Waymarked nature trails** that are easy to follow with paths for short and longer walks. Some are on well-surfaced pathways, which are easily accessible to all.

There are **Cycle-ways** where you can travel along the route of the old railway.

The Park also has **Children's Play Areas**, which are attractive, safe and well equipped for children.

For all the family, there are Picnic sites but please remember to take your litter home with you as discarded rubbish can be very harmful to the wildlife in the park.

Ample **Free car parking**.

Parts of the Park are also suitable for Disabled people particularly the main path and cycle route through the site.

For educational groups, there is a Classroom with facilities but please remember to make an advance booking.

Bedford Park is open all year (Except Christmas Day and Boxing Day) and admission is free.



Kenfig National Nature Reserve

Ton Kenfig, Nr Porthcawl, CF33 4PT

Tel: (01656) 743386

www.visitbridgend.com

Glamorgan's largest natural lake, Kenfig Pool, is set on the edge of this beautiful area, with spectacular views from Sker beach across Swansea Bay to the Gower. It is one of the finest wildlife habitats in Wales and one of the most important in Europe. It is just a small part of a once huge sand dune feature that spread from the mouth of the River Ogmore at Merthyr Mawr; to the Gower.

The reserve is home to unique wild orchids, as well as insects and wildlife. There are two bird hides where visitors can observe the movement of birds on the lake, as well as a fascinating reserve centre with exhibition, shop and information point where qualified wardens can answer questions.

Ample **Free car parking**.

Kenfig National Nature Reserve is open all year and admission is free. The Visitor Centre opens from 2pm to 4.30pm weekdays and 10am to 4.30pm weekends.



Lakeside Farm Park

Hendre-lfan-Goch Farm, Glyn Ogwr, Blackmill, CF35 6EN
Tel: (01443) 676805 Email: info@lakesidefarmpark.co.uk
www.lakesidefarmpark.co.uk

Lakeside Farm Park, on Hendre-lfan-Goch Farm, offers an enjoyable day out for all the family. The venue is a working hill farm with speckled faced sheep and Welsh black cows and a range of smaller animals such as lambs, calf, rabbits, guinea pigs and a small horse. There are also undercover and outdoors viewing areas.

The lake has an area of fresh-water, which is fed by mountain springs that run over a small waterfall, and is stocked with best quality rainbow trout. It lies in an area of unspoilt countryside with outstanding views and there is also a small pond for children to fish.

The park has an indoor and outdoor children's play area. A cafeteria with picturesque views of the lake serves hot and cold drinks and fresh food, much of which is home-produced.

The lake and buildings are fully accessible for disabled people.



Porthkerry Country Park

Park Road, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 3BY
Tel: (01446) 733589
www.visitthevale.com

Porthkerry Country Park is situated a mile west of the town of Barry, adjacent to the coast. This spacious country park stretches from the old village of Porthkerry, eastwards towards Barry and south to the sea, where a fine imposing semicircular pebble beach formed by the wave action on the constantly crumbling limestone cliffs dominates the Southern boundary of the park.

Moving inland the dominant feature of the park is its' fine 500 metre long grass meadow, flanked by 150 acres of rich deciduous woodlands. Within its boundaries, there are wide-open spaces for families and groups to enjoy ball games and sports, or just to relax in the warm summer sun. Three small valleys spread inland, reaching into open countryside, linking to the urban area of western Barry.

Amble down to the seafront and explore the many caves and hidden spots or collect multicoloured pebbles with the kids and see who gets the most interesting! Alternatively, climb the steps to the top of the cliffs and take the cliff walk with wonderful views across the sea, or inland towards the impressive rail viaduct that goes through the park. Sit and watch the 'coming & going' of the aircraft at the International Airport, close by.

History

In the past, the park was home to many small Celtic tribes. As visitors wander around the park, with its feeling of peace and wellbeing, it may be hard to imagine that ancient peoples lived and worked here, as well as fighting the marauding Vikings during one of their regular raids!

Porthkerry Country Park as we know it today passed into the ownership of the Council in the 1920's, when the influential Romilly family sold their estate to the town of Barry. The Romillys had bought large areas of land around the Barry and Penmark during the early 19th century and developed Porthkerry along the lines of a small English Country Estate. It was managed as a model farm from the 1820's and subsequent building of a water driven sawmill, estate workers cottages, and a foresters lodge reinforced their influence within the community, at this time the Porthkerry and Cwm Cidi workers community was larger than the village of then Barry. The Park has not changed greatly since the 1920's; it has traditionally been a place for family picnics and days out in an informal setting.



Porthkerry Country Park



Pitch and Putt

Features

Porthkerry Country Park is noted for its' imposing viaduct, built by the Vale of Glamorgan Railway Company and opened in 1900. Subsequently managed by the Barry Railway Company, for the purpose of bringing coal from Bridgend and the Ogmore and Llynfi Valleys for export at Barry Docks in conjunction with the thriving docks at Cardiff and Newport.

The Viaduct is still in use, but now the coal travels in the opposite direction, destined for Aberthaw Power Station. The Vale of Glamorgan line carrying passengers between Bridgend and Barry runs across the 374-yard long viaduct high above Porthkerry Park with some excellent views towards the Bristol Channel.

Facilities

BBQ's

A BBQ site is available for use by groups and is situated next to the pebble bank. It can be pre-booked at a cost of £10.00 by contacting Cosmeston Lakes Country Park. Tel: - (029) 2070 1678. Informal BBQ'S are allowed in the Country Park with the consent of the parks Ranger Service.

Picnics

Picnic tables and benches are situated a short distance from the main car parks.

Horse Riding

Horse riding is permitted by permit holders along the main roads within the park and a designated route around the meadow. Permits can be applied for by contacting Cosmeston Lakes Country park on the above telephone number.

Formal play areas

There is a small adventure playground incorporating swings, slide and climbing frames, adjacent to the main car park.

Nature trails

All the extensive woodlands have well sign posted nature trails, there is also a clearly way-marked, footpath system within the park leading beyond the park as a starter system to longer walks into the Vale of Glamorgan, Heritage trails and easy walking routes.

Environment

The varied habitats of grassland, woodland, seafront and scrub ensure that Porthkerry has a rich variety of insect life and have ensured that the woodlands have been designated as a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest'. Species of Flora such as the Purple Gromwell and the Wild Service Tree both having National importance status and grow along with other rare species enjoying the mild climate that the south facing cliffs offer. Badgers, foxes, weasels and smaller mammals are common throughout the year.

Golf

There is an 18 Hole Pitch and Putt Golf Course which is open seven days a week between Easter and the end of September. Charges apply.

Ranger Service

The park is managed by a full time Ranger Service, who are available by prior notice to take visitors and school parties on study trips within the park. Should you wish to know more about the Flora or Fauna, or any aspect of the Country Park please contact the Ranger Service on (01446) 733589.

Dogs

Dogs under strict control are welcomed to the park, there are several dog faeces bins situated throughout the park for owners to deposit their dogs faeces.

Café

There is a Cafeteria situated in the main car park which is opened seasonally between Easter and the end of September.

Toilets

Toilets, with a disabled facility are situated in the main car park.

Access

Access is via Park road in the West End suburbs of Barry, sign posting is limited because of the suburban nature of its' approach. The nearest Railway Station is Barry Station at Broad Street about fifteen minutes walk from the entrance to the park.

Car Parking

Porthkerry Country Park is open 24hrs, 365 days a year and there are three car parks, which can accommodate up to 500 cars at peak times. There is a small parking charge on Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter to the end of September, but free throughout the rest of the year.

For more information call: (01446) 733589 or visit our website www.visitthevale.com



Cosmeston Lakes Country Park

Lavenock Road, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, CF64 5UY
Tel: (029) 2070 1678 www.visitthevale.com
email: cosmestonlakescountrypark@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Just a few minutes drive south of the M4 motorway, is Cosmeston Lakes Country Park. Over 110ha acres of stunning lakes, woodlands and meadows open to the public all year round, with a vast variety of flora and fauna and migrating birdlife en route to sunnier climes.

Cosmeston Lakes Country Park's origins go back to the advent of limestone quarrying in the early part of the twentieth century. In the 1890's, Limestone quarrying commenced on the southern side of Lavenock Road but increased difficulties encouraged them to transfer to the north side to what is today Cosmeston Lakes Country Park. The limestone was used for the production of cement, and during the building boom after the First World War, peak production reached 175,00 tons per annum.

Eventually work in the northern quarries ceased shortly after 1962 with the Cement Company downscaling it's operations and vacating all premises by 1970. The abandonment of the site left an area of complete dereliction.

In 1968 the Countryside Act gave Local Authorities power to implement the 1966 White Paper 'Leisure in the Countryside' recommendations. As a result the Vale of

Glamorgan Borough Council decided that this derelict quarry would be ideal for reclamation and renovation into an area which would combine recreation and conservation. A work programme of tree planting and landscaping began in 1978 and the project was completed in 1982. This gave access to a total of 110ha of woodland, calcareous grassland and wetlands.

Activities

Today, Cosmeston Lakes Country Park is one of the most popular parks in South Wales and attracts around 350,000 visitors per year. You will find, woodlands and mossy wetlands teeming with flora and fauna and quiet secluded corners to wide open pastures.

The Park has beautiful walks that look spectacular at any time of the year. An extensive network of footpaths allows access for everyone to enjoy the natural surroundings the park has to offer. The East lake is open to clubs and organisations affiliated with the Vale of Glamorgan Council for the purpose of water sports such as sailing, wind surfing and canoeing.

As you would expect in a Country Park, there are plenty of open spaces for the children to run and play. Large areas of open grassland and meadow sweep down towards the large lake where you can picnic or just relax in the warm sunshine.

There are picnic tables situated in picturesque areas around the park, also four BBQ ranges are available for hire, with one giving easy access to disabled visitors. Also available is an adventure playground for children, which is within an easy walk of the car park.

Conservation

Cosmeston is a veritable paradise for wildlife enthusiasts. Nature lovers who want to explore the flora and fauna are well catered for, as are walkers who want to stay active or those who just require solitude. It is easy to find your own quiet spot to enjoy the peace and tranquility of this very special place. Within the Country Park there is 12ha of open water divided into two lakes (east and west) by the Mile Road. For keen bird watchers and conservationists, the lakes are home to a variety of waterfowl such as the Mute Swans, Great Crested Grebe, Mallard, Coot and Moorhen. Winter visitors such as Pochard, Widgeon and Tufted Duck are commonly sighted. The elusive and rare Bittern also frequents the site during winter months.

Along the lakeside margins lies a marshland habitat, of 3ha. Supporting plants such as Reed mace, Yellow Flag Iris, Purple Loosestrife and the rare Greater Spearwort. The area is accessible by means of a wooden boardwalk which enables people to view the plants and animals within the site without damaging the fragile environment. The reed beds and lakeside margins also support numerous Dragonfly and Damselfly species such as the Emperor Dragonfly, Migrant Hawker, Four Spotted Chaser, Common Blue Damselfly and many more.

Also available is 20ha of broad-leaved woodland and extensive calcareous meadows which are all accessible by means of a series of footpaths. Many rare species can be found on your travels, flowers such as the Bee Orchid, Pyramid Orchid and Butterfly Orchid will be seen in the summer months. The calcareous plant species attract many common butterfly species with the common visitors being Brimstone, Red Admiral and the Common Blue. The woodland hosts a selection of common British mammals such as the shy Badger, fox and the rarely seen Bat population.



Cosmeston Medieval Village

Ranger Service

The Countryside Rangers who manage and conserve the Country Park are there to give advice and answer questions in relation to the countryside and surrounding area.

Throughout the year the Ranger staff carry out a number of environmental events which are open to the public and can supply an environmental education service which offers a comprehensive package to visiting schools and groups with an education resource pack available on request.

Bring the entire family or a group and relax at the side of the lake and watch the everyday lifestyle of the local wildlife. The park is a place you can relax, walk and take a closer look at nature. It can be as lively or as relaxing as you want it to be.

Cosmeston Medieval Village

Set in the Country Park, close to the visitor centre and car park is the unique Heritage project of Cosmeston Medieval Village. The reconstructed 14th century village is still standing on its original site and consists of medieval buildings, gardens, rare breeds and a small yet fascinating museum.

Tours of the village are by costumed villagers, and special events, such as Jousting, archery, combat, medieval crafts etc., are held throughout the year.

Cosmeston Lakes Country Park has free car parking for 350 cars at the entrance with reserved spaces for disabled visitors. The visitor centre houses an information/reception area with gift shop, display area, toilets and restaurant.

This area of Wales offers a surprising range of things for visitors to see and do. If you are looking for a holiday or day out by the sea, then look no further.

Easily accessible from the M4, The area offers a variety of experiences for visitors, from lounging on one of the award winning beaches, to strolling along a lovely promenade.

If you prefer the more natural beauty, then the entire Glamorgan Heritage Coast offers some of the most spectacular seascapes in Wales. To the east of Porthcawl you'll find an ancient dunes system with its varied ecology and the lovely thatched village of Merthyr Mawr. From here, cross the stepping stones to reach Ogmore Castle and also thereby reach the start of the dramatic cliffs and caves of the Heritage Coast proper.

Beyond is an ideal countryside area to explore, and if you wind your way inland you'll find market towns such as Bridgend, Maesteg and Cowbridge.

Not to be missed are the country parks. There's a range of habitats for visitors to explore from woodland to meadows and wetlands to formal lawns, including lakes and even an oriental garden. Follow one of the marked walks. There are lots of picnic sites in the parks to encourage visitors to make the day of it, and ready made BBQ sites can also be found.

There's a great deal more available for you to do than can be mentioned here with an extensive summer events programme available throughout the area. So if you're looking for a wide variety of experiences in a compact area, why not visit us and prepare to be surprised by what's on offer.

The Glamorgan Heritage Coast & Countryside is full of hidden delights. If you would like to discover even more of them, then call in at one of the Heritage Coast Tourist Information Centres listed on the back cover. There the knowledgeable and friendly staff will be pleased to welcome you to the area with a host of other informative brochures and leaflets. Cycle and walking routes, maps etc., in fact all the information you will need to make your visit to our area the best ever! You can even book your holiday accommodation with them, either in advance or on your arrival.

Other booklets that are available to assist your enjoyment are:

'Days Out'

listing all the local attractions in the vicinity.

'Legendary Villages'

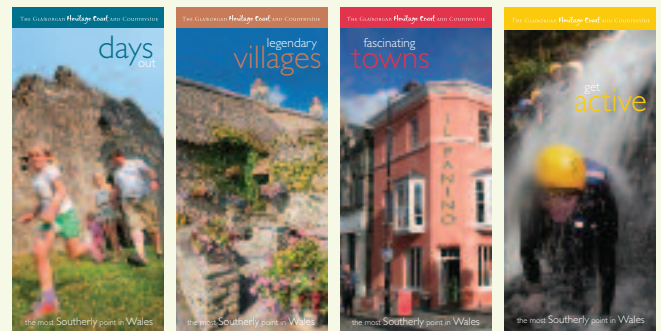
listing dozens of smaller fascinating communities.

'Fascinating Towns'

listing the most interesting towns.

'Get Active'

listing activities to enjoy.



Or visit our website:

www.glamorganheritagecoast.com

The area is easy to get to and only a few hours driving time on the motorway from London. It's even quicker by train - just 2½ hours from London to Bridgend.

For all public transport information Traveline Cymru 0871 200 2233 (National call rates apply)
National Rail Enquiries Tel: 08457 484950



Map not to scale

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TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES



The expert and welcoming staff at Tourist Information Centres around the area are there to ensure that you get the most from your visit. They offer independent assistance with the planning of routes and the booking of accommodation. You will find information on places to visit and events as well as unusual mementoes of Wales.

All centres offer an independent, local and national accommodation booking service, for which a small charge is made - indeed, any Tourist Information Centre in England or Scotland is also able to book accommodation in Wales for you.

Look out for this sign, the sign of a warm Welsh welcome and a quality information service.

Tourist Information Centres are usually open daily between 10.00 and 17.30 - please telephone to check.

Open All Year

Tourist Information Centre at
Bridgend Designer Outlet,
The Derwen, Bridgend CF32 9SU
Tel: +44 (0) 1656 654906
Fax: +44 (0) 1656 646523
Email: bridgendtic@bridgend.gov.uk

Cardiff International Airport

(Self service) Arrivals Hall
Tel: +44 (0) 1446 709325

Llantwit Major Visitor Centre Town Hall,
Llantwit Major CF6 1SD
Tel: +44 (0) 1446 796086

Porthcawl Old Police Station,
John Street, Porthcawl, CF36 3DT
Tel: +44 (0) 1656 786639
Fax: +44 (0) 1656 782387
Email: porthcawltic@bridgend.gov.uk

Seasonal

(In winter telephone calls only)

Barry Island The promenade,
The Triangle, Barry Island, CF62 5TQ
Tel: +44 (0) 1446 747171
Fax: +44 (0) 1446 747171
Email: barrytic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Penarth Penarth Pier,
The Esplanade, Penarth, CF64 3AU
Tel: +44 (0) 29 2070 8849
Email: penarthtic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

London

For visitors in London wanting to go to Wales, the Britain and London Visitor Centre will be happy to help.

1 Regent Street, London. SW1Y 4XT
Tel: +44 (0) 8702 250930

Bridgend County Borough Council



Tourism Unit,
Innovation Centre,
Bridgend Science Park,
Bridgend.
CF31 3NA

Tel: +44 (0) 1656 815332
Fax: +44 (0) 1656 815339
Email: tourism@bridgend.gov.uk
Website: www.visitbridgend.com

Vale of Glamorgan



Tourism Unit,
Docks Office,
Barry Dock,
Barry, CF63 4RT

Tel: +44 (0) 1446 747171
Fax: +44 (0) 1446 704892
Email: tourism@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Website: www.visitthevale.com

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