

Cardinham Woods

Distance: 5.5 miles (an optional short-cut would reduce this to 4.8 miles)

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 109

Start: Forestry Commission Car Park (Grid Ref SX 100 667)

Character: This walk passes through coniferous and deciduous woodland as well as farmland. There are also short stretches of road. The route passes the site of an early Norman Castle and the remains of a silver mine. The walking is fairly easy going, with one long ascent on the short cut. A compass might be useful, as compass points (N,E,S,W) are used and we also recommend that you use OS Explorer Map 109.

Note: From time to time, the Forestry Commission closes sections of the trail. Details are available from their Cornwall office: 01208 72577

From the main car park/picnic area at Cardinham Woods (£2 all day) cross the stream passing to the left of the cafe and children's play area and turn right up the valley, following the Lady Vale Walk, way-marked in red. Ignoring any side routes, continue NNE for about a mile until you reach a major junction of tracks. Turn right to cross a bridge (noting the ancient clapper bridge alongside) then turn left up the valley (signposted Wheal Glynn).

At the next junction ignore the Wheal Glynn turning. Continue NE until the main track swings right. Here, take the lesser track down to the left, passing between a few cottages. The track becomes a tarmac lane. At a lane junction turn left across a stream and follow a rocky track uphill.

Turn right (yellow waymark) and continue NE through woodland. Leave the wood via a stile and proceed across a field. Leave the field via a gate and turn right along a country lane, crossing a stream before taking a footpath on the right. This leads to Cardinham church, which is seen ahead. The church, which was damaged by bombs that were intended for Bodmin during the war, contains some fine bench-ends and an unusual 15th century brass plaque dedicated to one of the earliest rectors - Thomas Awmarie. The churchyard contains a couple of particularly fine Cornish crosses, one of which dates from the 8th Century.

Leaving the churchyard turn right (south) along the lane for 400m to a 'steep hill' sign. If you wish to take a short cut at this point, continue along the road for a further $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, ignoring side turns, to a triangular road junction, and skip the next paragraph.

For those not taking a short cut - - - follow the bridleway signed to the left, which feels as though you're trespassing in someone's garden! Go through the yard of the house, then cross a streamlet (not over the little wooden bridge) and walk down beside it. This is clearly an ancient route leading across the valley to Castle Farm, and can become very muddy after rain. Continue past the farm buildings and millpond to reach a lane.

Turn left and, at the next bend, you can just about see the minimal remains of a motte and bailey castle in the field on your left. (This was Cardinham Castle and was built in 1080 by the Sheriff of Cornwall for the then Earl of Cornwall, Robert de Mortain who was William the Conqueror's half-brother. Not content with the estates he already owned after the Norman Conquest of 1066 he also seized much of the land in the parish that had formally belonged to the priory in Bodmin. His actions were unpopular with the locals, so he built this fortress to keep the moorland folk subdued. He also built castles at Lostwithiel and Launceston). Continue up to the crossroads and turn right along the lane for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to a triangular road junction.

Ahead of you there are 2 tracks. Take the one on your right leading west (if you took the short-cut it'll be the first track on the right, just before the junction). Continue until the track forks and take the forestry track that bears right. Follow the main track which winds downhill, initially. At another fork, bear left, slightly uphill. Near the head of a steep valley you will pass the engine house of what was once Hurstock mine, where silver and lead were mined. The track rounds the head of the valley, then descends to a junction with the lower path. Continue ahead (SW) to the car park.

Nearby walking options At the other end of the parish is St Bellarmin's Tor on which there are the remains of a small chapel dedicated to St Bartholomew who reputedly lived and preached there. It is a lovely spot and can be reached by a track which leaves from opposite the telephone box in the nearby village of Millpool.

Legend

N: North

E: East

S: South

W: West

Keep Cornwall Tidy

Please remember to take your litter home with you, thus ensuring future enjoyment of Cornwall for others. Better still, take a carrier bag and pick up litter along the way! Thank-you.

This walk has been researched and compiled by Bodmin Visitor Information Centre. 'Gold' award winners at the 2009 Cornwall Tourism Awards-Best Tourist information Centre. For further information on this walk, refer to OS Map No 109. For details of other walks in the area, please speak to a member of staff. With compliments, Bodmin Visitor Information Centre ☎ 01208 76616. Reviewed and updated April 2010.

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