

Weatherman Walking

Margam

Start: Margam Country Park Car Park

Starting ref: SS 801 860

Distance: 3.79 miles

Grade: Moderate

Walk time : Approx 2.5hrs

Set in 800 acres of stunning countryside, Margam Country Park offers a wide range of walks and activities to suit all ages and abilities. This walk takes in the historical highlights, as well as many of the best views to provide an interesting loop, with many alternative routes back.

Directions

Head for the wooden entrance hut where there is a charge for parking. This fee includes free access to the park and its facilities.

Once through the entry gates, veer left following signs for the Orangery and Gardens and head for the large open gate in the stone wall.

Once through the gate you'll be confronted by the remains of Margam Abbey.



Margam Abbey (SS 802 862)

This atmospheric Norman Abbey, was founded in the mid-12th century, and took 40 years to build. It was the largest and wealthiest in Wales and a religious centre of major importance. The remains of the Abbey are huge, and the architecture of the Chapter House ruins are amazing.

Many surviving relics from the Abbey are now housed at the nearby Margam Stones Museum.



The dramatic Abbey ruins are worth a walk around if you have time.

Weatherman Walking

Margam

The long, grand building to your left is the Orangery. Now head left on the path running parallel to the Orangery taking time to spot all the interesting sculptures and features dotted about the gardens.



Walking through the gardens there's an array of interesting sculptures, plants, trees and paths to explore.

2 The Orangery (SS 802 862)

The Orangery at Margam was built between 1787 and 1793 to house a large collection of inherited orange, lemon and citrus trees. It's listed Grade I as one of the finest classical buildings in Wales, and is a fantastic centrepiece to the gardens.

At 327 feet long, it's also the longest Orangery in Britain. Today the building provides a dramatic backdrop for weddings and functions and even hosted Sir Anthony Hopkins 70th birthday party!



If it's good enough for Sir Anthony Hopkins, it's good enough for Weatherman Walking! The Margam Orangery is one of the grandest in the UK

Weatherman Walking

Margam

Keep following the path to the end of the gardens and make your way over to the Glass Citrus House. This greenhouse is open to the public between 10am and 4pm and houses a range of citrus fruit.



Follow your nose through the Citrus House, but don't linger too long as it can get pretty hot in here!

Leaving the citrus house, follow the path back towards the abbey. Passing the abbey on your left take the wide gravel path and steps leading straight up to Margam Castle.



Walking up to Margam castle is like walking on to the set of Downton Abbey!

Arriving at the foot of this grand abode, take time to look at the amazing architecture and detail of the building.

Turn right, and walk through the gardens to the front of the house and enjoy the views. Next to the castle is a courtyard with a cafe, gift shop and toilets if required.

Weatherman Walking

Margam

3 Margam Castle (SS805 862)

Margam Castle is a Tudor Gothic mansion built between 1830 and 1840 for Christopher Rice Morgan Talbot. It's a listed Grade I building, with spectacular features such as the impressive staircase.

However today, the interior is mostly off limits after a devastating fire gutted the castle on 4 August 1977. Occasionally during the summer months the main staircase area and some of the ground floor rooms are open to the public.



Derek pauses to pose in front of the castle.

With your back to the castle take the left path keeping the train stop and lake on your right, and follow the path up a slight hill towards a large metal gate. Go through the gate and keep to the main gravel path



The gate leading you on the various forest trails. We are following parts of the purple trail.

Keep left at the first fork, but at the second fork leave the gravel path and take the grassy track uphill on your left. This will take you up to the Iron Age Hill fort. Passing the information board on your left; you are now walking through the site of an Iron Age Hill Fort that was inhabited by the 'Silures' – a fierce Iron Age tribe. Although today there isn't much left to see.



It's not sign posted, but take this grassy track to walk through the remains of an Iron Age Hill Fort.

4 Hydro Electric Scheme (SS 806 864)

Keep going uphill and left, and you'll arrive at what looks like an old empty swimming pool. It was in fact part of a hydro-electric scheme introduced in 1891 by Emily Charlotte Talbot, supplying enough electricity in the castle to light 400 lamps.



This isn't the remains of a private swimming pool, but actually an early hydro-electric scheme.

Here you can either retrace your steps or keep following the path around the top of the hill and back down to the gravel track.

Back at the gravel track take the left path and walk all the way to what seems like the end of the road, keeping the river on your right. Here you need to cross the bridge and head through the side section of another large iron gate and follow the path until you reach a single lane road and a small toy boating lake on your left.



At the end of the road turn right, and pass through the elaborate metal gates.

Weatherman Walking

Margam

Now turn directly back on yourself and follow the road uphill, walking up the single lane until you see an opening on your left. Follow this grassy path until you arrive at the ruins of 'Hen Eglwys'



Arriving at the single lane, head up hill as if you are doubling back on yourself.

5 Hen Eglwys (SS 801 865)

Hen Eglwys simply means 'Old Church'. This 15th century ruin is also known as Capel Mair - a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary (as were all Cistercian Abbeys), which used by the local people. The Cistercians did not allow parishioners to use their churches, but would often build small chapels near the abbey for their use.

Take time to relax here and explore this tranquil ruin and enjoy the stunning views from this vantage point.



The tranquil ruins of Hen Eglwys are well worth the effort, with great views over the vast grounds below.



Views over Margam Country Park and your return walk.

Weatherman Walking

Margam

From here you can either retrace your steps all the way back to Margam Castle or walk around to the front of the church and take the 140 steps back to the boating lake via Graig Fawr one of seven ancient woodlands in Wales being restored in a Woodland Trust project. But these steps are large and uneven so please take care.



Feeling fit? Then take the 140 steps back down to the road via the ancient woodland of Graig Fawr.

From here there are a number of lovely walks back to the car park, so if you have time we recommend strolling through the farm, and back through the woodland vibrations trail. It's also worth looking out for the Margam deer herd that freely roam large sections of the park, and are a lovely sight grazing the landscape. If you've had enough of walking, catch the delightful narrow gauge train from outside the castle which will take you right back to the car park.