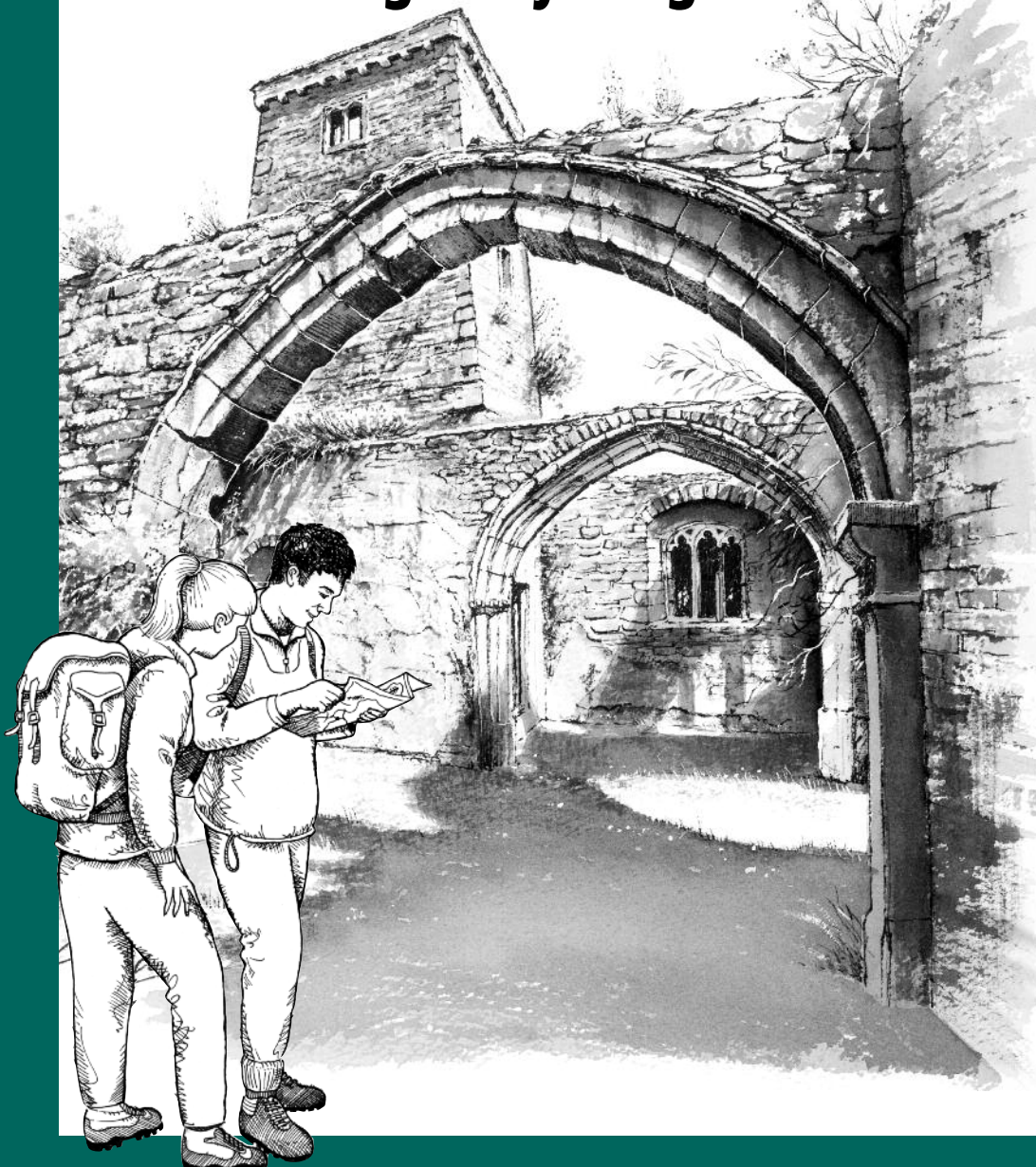


CANASTON & MINWEAR WOODS

including THE KNIGHT'S WAY

Walking & Cycling Routes



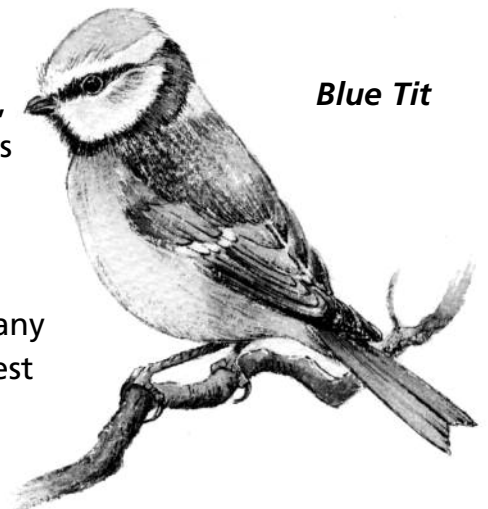
PLANED

CANASTON WOOD AND MINWEAR WOOD

The woods have been in existence for centuries and are classified as ancient woodland. Canaston Wood is listed by the Elizabethan George Owen in his 'Description of Pembrokeshire' (1603) as one of the best standing woods in the county. Originally part of the Slebech Estate, the Woods are all that is left of a much larger forest of Oak, Ash and Hazel, which was an important source of timber for the Estate. For hundreds of years, smaller trees were used for firewood, while the Oaks were allowed to grow on and were used for building and shipbuilding. Large quantities of timber were also converted into charcoal and used to fuel the iron foundry, which then existed near Blackpool Mill. By the end of the 18th century, the historian Richard Fenton recorded that, 'the whole forest, without any reserve, from an over anxiousness of gain, was at once laid low'. From this time coppicing became the means of ensuring a regular supply of timber. In 1834 the Baron de Rutzen of Slebech imported wild boar via Hamburg and introduced them to the wood to satisfy his passion for hunting. The hostility and resentment it caused amongst his tenants was enough to quash his intentions of importing wolves. Managed by Forest Enterprise, today the woods produce timber for a wide variety of purposes. Most of the woodland is coniferous (Douglas Fir, Japanese Larch and Norway Spruce) with some areas of planted Beech. There are also pockets of native woodland species such as Oak, Ash, Hazel, Willow, together with a number of Wild Service Trees.

Wildlife

Many birds feed, breed or roost in the woods - Blue Tits, Great Tits, Long-Tailed Tits, Robins, Wrens, Chaffinches, Greenfinches, Goldcrest, Spotted and Green Woodpeckers, Buzzards, Jays and Carrion Crows can all be found. Flowers abound alongside the forest tracks and paths. In early spring Lesser Celandine, and Wood Anemones can be found. These are followed by Bluebells, Foxgloves, Wood Spurge, Wild Thyme and many other hedgerow plants. Many varieties of fern can also be found. In the autumn the forest floor is covered by many species of fungi. Butterflies, such as Peacock, Small Tortishell and Red Admiral frequent the tracks and clearings in the summer sun. Grey Squirrels, Foxes and Badgers also inhabit the Woods.



Blue Tit

BLACKPOOL MILL

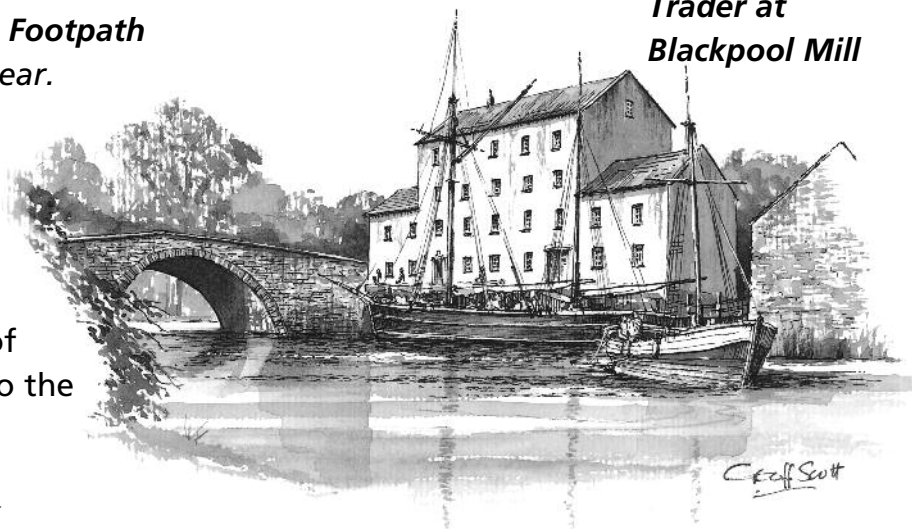
From the early 17th century, through to the early 19th century Blackpool Mill was important for its iron furnace and ford. The present building, a cornmill, dates from 1813 and was built by Nathaniel Phillips, the owner of Slebech Estate. He is also credited with the construction of the bridge erected 'to unite two roads which had long existed'. The mill remained in use for grinding corn until 1945 and for storage possibly longer. *A copy of Ordnance Survey 1:50 Landranger Sheet 158 or 1:25 Outdoor Leisure Sheet 36 is recommended for the following walks. All distances/times given are approximate.*

SHORTER WOODLAND WALKS FROM BLACKPOOL MILL

The Leat Walk Disabled Access Footpath

Approx 500 yds, 300 metres linear.

A level, surfaced path with a number of passing and turning spaces, which is suitable for wheelchair users. The path leads through woodland, following the line of an old leat or water channel, to the banks of the Eastern Cleddau.



***Trader at
Blackpool Mill***

Toch Woods and Slebech Walk

Approx 3m/4.8km linear, 1 hr.

Cross the bridge next to Blackpool Mill, turn right, and follow the northern bank of the Eastern Cleddau. This track will take you past the privately owned Slebech House, a fine 18th century mansion, to the ruins of Slebech Old Church - formerly the Commandery of the Knights Hospitallers. The Hospitallers established a base at Slebech in the late 12th century. The Commandery acted as a headquarters for their operations in Wales, administering their considerable estates in the diocese of St David's. It also served as a hospital for the infirm and as a recruitment centre for the Crusades, although its prime concern came to be the provision of hospitality to the pilgrim for which it was famed in the Middle Ages. With the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VII the estates of the Hospitallers were taken over by the Crown. Slebech itself was purchased by the two brothers of Bishop Barlow of St David's. The church became the parish church of Slebech and fell into disuse about 1848.

The Forestry Commission Minwear Wood Walk

Approximately 1m/1.6km circular 30mins. Follow wooden posts circled with blue.

A number of short circular routes loop east and west into Minwear Wood from the public road that runs through the Wood. Access to the walks is just to the south west of Blackpool Mill.

Sisters House Walk

Approximately 3m/4.8km linear, 1 hr.

This walk follows a small section of the much longer Landsker Borderlands Trail (separate leaflet available). Standing with your back to Blackpool Mill turn right immediately right, cross the car park and go through the gate in the corner.

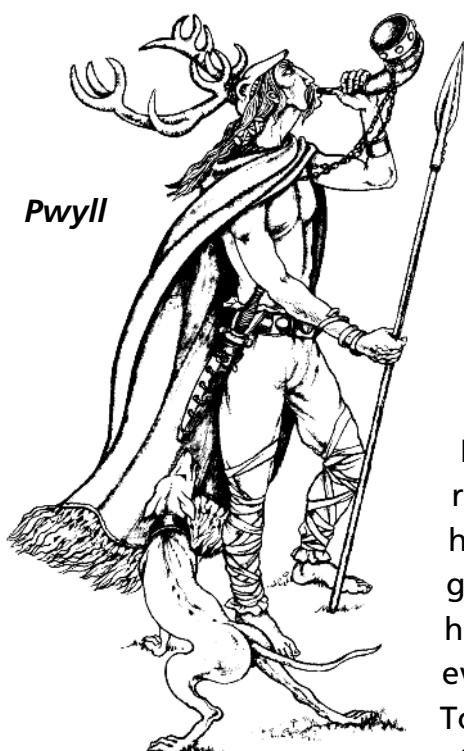


Sisters House

Head straight across the field and over the stile, then go along the board walk that leads into the Wood. This route takes you past the viewing point over the Eastern Cleddau and leads you to **Minwear Church**, which was founded by the Norman Knight Lodomer and was granted to the Knights at Slebech in 1150. En-route you will pass the ruined Sisters House. Called Systerne House in the earliest documentary reference. The function of the original building is unclear but in the early modern period it was a gentleman's residence. ***The ruins are dangerous and should not be entered.***

CANASTON WOOD WALKS

There are numerous footpaths that lead off the Knight's Way (the unsurfaced public road that leads through Canaston Wood) making it possible to plan a variety of circular routes of different lengths - from a few hundred yards/metres to several miles/kilometres.



To the south of the Knight's Way it is possible to explore paths which lead to a number of ancient structures. **Mounton Chapel** dates from the 13th century. It was extensively restored in the 18th and 19th Centuries. ***The ruins are now in a dangerous state and should not be entered.*** Once an impressive Iron Age fortified settlement, **Molleston Camp** could be the site of Gorsedd Arberth mentioned in the famous collection of Welsh folk tales - the Mabinogion. It was at Gorsedd Arberth that Pwyll, Lord of Dyfed, saw the beautiful princess Rhiannon dressed in gold and riding on a white horse. He rode after her but was unable to catch up with her no matter how fast he rode and how slowly her horse appeared to be going. As in all good folk tales, however, the story came to a happy end - Pwyll and Rhiannon married and lived happily ever after.

To the north of the Knight's Way will lead you to the remains of another Iron Age Fort - **Cilfoden Camp**.

CYCLE ROUTES IN CANASTON WOOD AND MINWEAR WOOD.

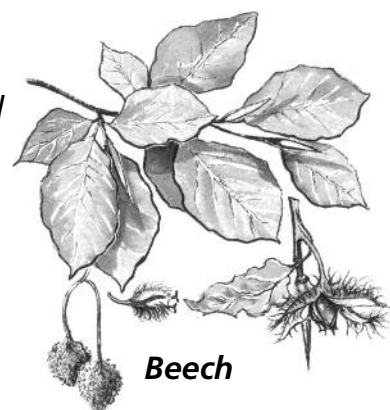
An information panel is situated at the A4075 crossing (Eagle Lodge)

UNSURFACED CYCLE ROUTES/BRIDLEWAYS FROM BLACKPOOL MILL

Up to 3m/4.8km linear. Red Way-Markers. These unsurfaced bridleways can be very muddy in wet weather. Cyclists should give an audible warning when approaching horses from behind and dismount when passing horses.

Canaston Wood

From the road that runs past the front of Blackpool Mill (with your back to the Mill) turn left and follow the route that leads into Canaston Wood. Take care crossing the busy A4075 just after Eagle Lodge. The route leads as far as Mounton Chapel where it turns north to Valley Road or south to Molleston Cross.



Minwear Wood

Turn right and follow the route that leads into Minwear Wood and on to Cott Farm.

FAMILY CYCLE ROUTES FROM BLACKPOOL MILL AND EAGLE LODGE

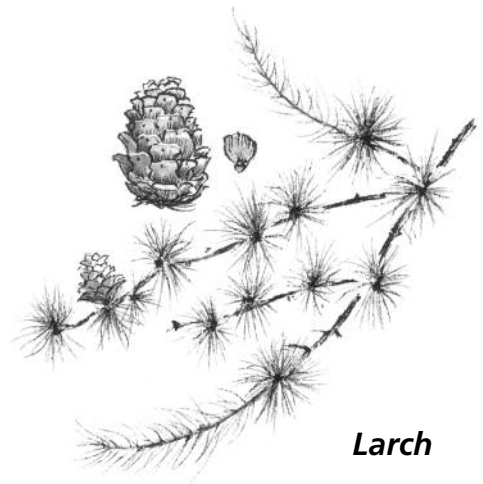
Green Way-Markers

Blackpool Mill. 1m/1.6km linear

With your back to Blackpool Mill turn left, cross the bridge and turn right. This route leads to through Toch Wood.

Eagle Lodge (A4075 crossing). 3m/5km circular

The route uses forest roads that run through Canaston Woods and are little used by vehicles and a specially constructed section of surfaced path, which includes a 'water splash' across a small stream.



Larch

THE KNIGHT'S WAY - 9.3m/15km linear walk

The Knight's Way stretches from the upper tidal reaches of the Eastern Cleddau to the coastal village of Amroth. It can be walked as one (or more) linear section. From the start, at Blackpool Mill, it is 4m/6.5km, 2hrs, to Templeton and a further 2.5m/4km, 1¼hrs to Ludchurch. From Ludchurch it is 2.8m/4.5km, 1½hrs, to the end of the walk at Amroth. Connections with public transport can be made from Templeton, Ludchurch and Amroth. Ascents 249m (817ft) and descents 248m (814ft). Height difference is 1m (rise). There are 15 stiles, 9 gates and 2 footbridges and 4 fords - 2 of which have footbridges. There are no stiles or gates between Blackpool Mill and Templeton and surfaces are generally fairly firm. On the Templeton to Amroth section there is a ditch to cross between Templeton and Ludchurch and extreme care should be taken when crossing the the busy A477 road between Ludchurch and Colby.

The Knight's Way also forms part of a long distance circular trail comprising of: The Knight's Way, Amroth to Pembroke (Pembrokeshire Coast Path), Pembroke to Blackpool Mill (the Daugleddau Trail) 85m/136km.

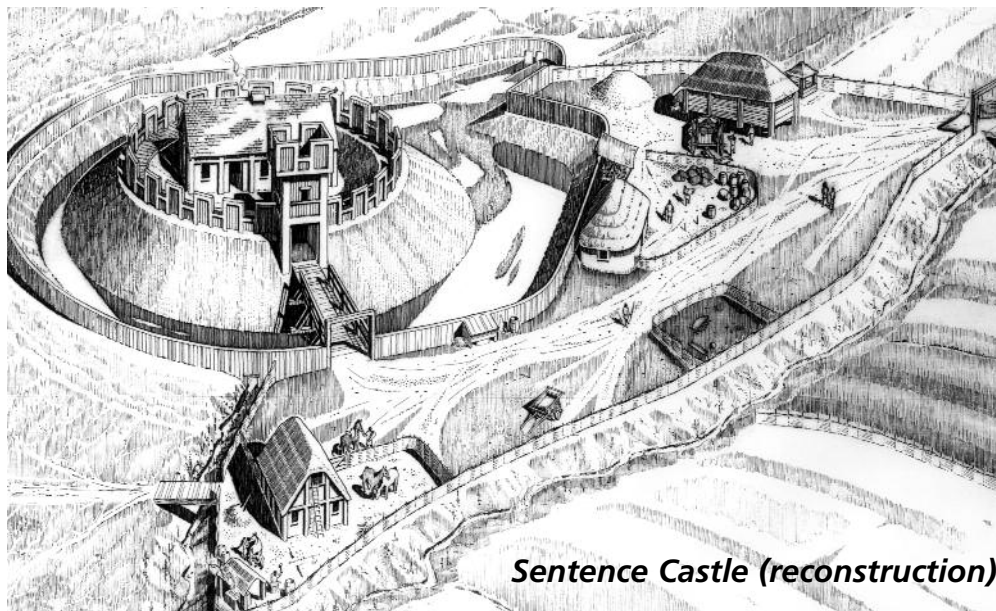
The Knight's Way passes through a number of places having strong associations with both the Knights Templars and the Knights of St John (or Hospitallers). These orders of knighthood emerged during the 12th century and became involved in the Crusades. Waging war in Palestine and tending the casualties of the Crusades were gradually supplanted by the protection of pilgrims throughout Europe. The Templars were dissolved in 1312.

Standing with your back to Blackpool Mill turn left along the road that runs past the front of the Mill. A few yards down along the road you will see a path on the right that leads into the Wood - the start of the Knight's Way.

TEMPLETON

Templeton is the site of Sentence Castle, which was once a small moated castle thought to have been of timber construction with a wooden palisade around the outer bank. The

Castle was probably built but the Normans in the 12th century but may have been connected with the Knights Templars who gave the village its name (Templar Town). The village is a reminder of the Knights Templars presence in West Wales, an area where they held few

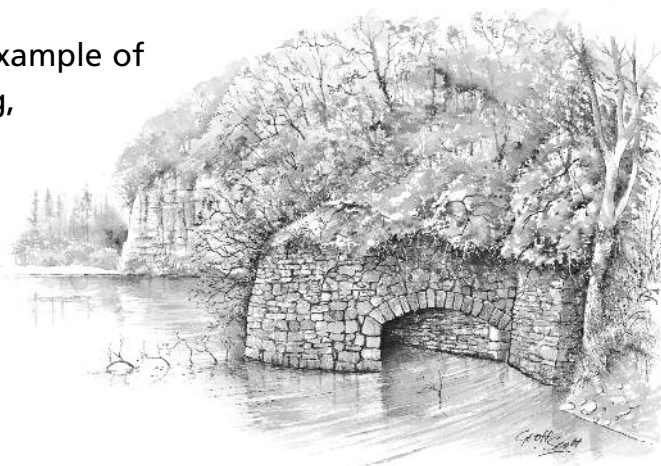


Sentence Castle (reconstruction)

possessions. Lands and property had passed to the Mortimers, Lords of Narberth, before the end of the 13th century. The village church of St John was built in 1859.

LUDCHURCH

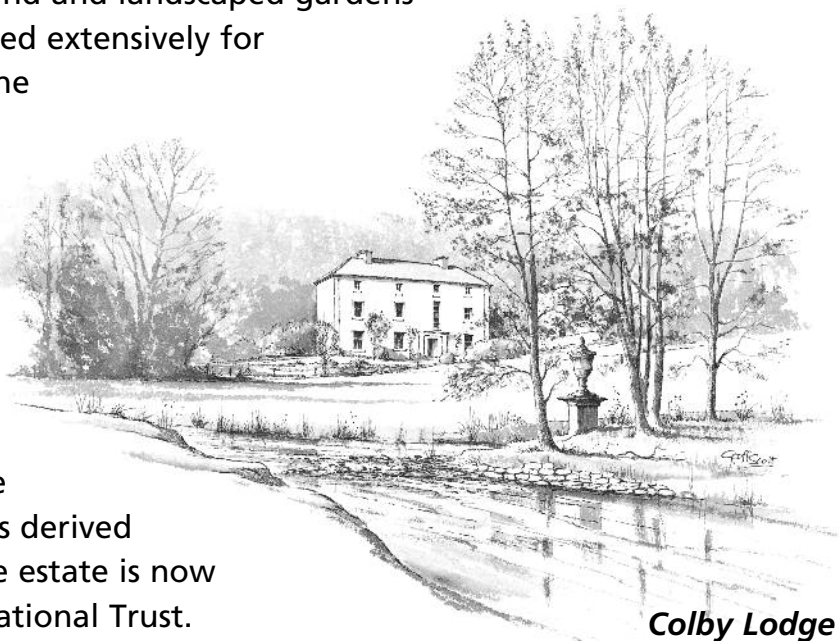
The church, dedicated to St Elidyr, is a fine example of Norman architecture. It now stands on a crag, isolated by centuries of limestone quarrying. Controversy surrounds the derivation of the village name. One suggestion is that it came from the Middle English personal name 'Loud'. Alternatively it is claimed the name stems from the Welsh 'Eglwys Llwyd' or Grey Church, which was corrupted to Ludchurch.



Ludchurch Limekiln

COLBY

This sheltered valley of woodland and landscaped gardens was, until the last century, mined extensively for anthracite coal and iron ore. The woodland is thought to be a remnant of the large medieval forest of Coed Traeth lying between Amroth and Saundersfoot. The estate takes its name from John Colby who purchased land here in 1787 and who subsequently built Colby Lodge in 1803. The house has features derived from designs of John Nash. The estate is now owned and managed by the National Trust.



Colby Lodge

AMROTH

The church of Amroth together with fifty acres of sanctuary land was granted to the Hospitallers in around 1150. Papal decree allowed the Hospitallers to grant sanctuary to all criminals except those guilty of treason and acrilege, on the understanding the guilty party would then proceed to a convenient port and leave the realm, never to return.

Country Code

Respect • Protect • Enjoy

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.

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