

## Mynydd Llangorse burial cairns



### Walk Information:

**Maps:** OS Explorer OL13

**Distance:** 4.75 miles / 7.5 kilometres

**Duration:** Allow at least 4 hours

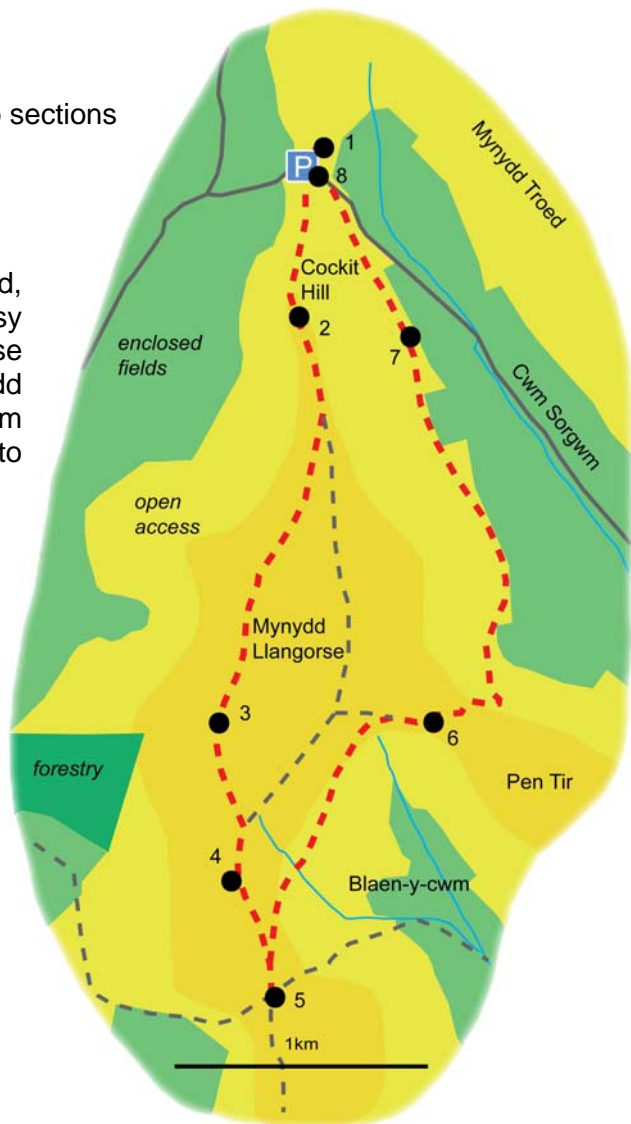
**Difficulty:** medium. Includes some steep sections

**Start and finish:** SO 16072833

### Walk summary

The walk is entirely on open access land, and uses a series of obvious, grassy paths and tracks which lead from the base of Cockit Hill to the summit of Mynydd Llangorse before descending to Cwm Sorgwm and climbing gradually back to the start.

The views are spectacular and the walk visits a number of impressive Neolithic and Bronze Age burial sites.



### Introduction

Mynydd Llangorse lies on the W side of the Black Mountains, overlooking Llangorse Lake. The area has a wealth of archaeological sites, but of particular interest are a series of chambered burial cairns which date from the Neolithic (4,300 – 2,300 BC), one of which lies at the base of Mynydd Troed. The uplands also have numerous smaller burial cairns dating from the Bronze Age (2,300 – 1,200 BC), including several on Mynydd Llangorse.



Llangorse Lake looking towards Mynydd Llangorse

Llangorse Lake has a small artificial island close to the northern shore which is thought to have been the residence of the kings of Brycheiniog during the 9th/10th centuries and may have been destroyed by a Mercian (Saxon) army in AD 916. The site, which is known as a crannog, was excavated between 1987 and 1993 by University of Wales, Cardiff and the National Museum of Wales.

### The Walk

The walk starts from the col between Mynydd Llangorse and Mynydd Troed where there is limited roadside parking (SO 16072833). Before starting the circular walk it is worth a short detour to visit the **Neolithic chambered tomb (1)** at the base of Mynydd Troed. Go through the gate on the N side of the road and follow the track which curves to the right, leading to the irregular bracken-covered mound (SO 16142842). The site was discovered in 1921 and excavated in 1966. The cairn is around 26m long and 15m wide and is surrounded by a stone revetment wall, although this is not visible above ground. A large hollow with exposed stones marks the site of one burial chamber and there are thought to be at least two others.



The **Neolithic chambered tomb (1)** at the base of Mynydd Troed

Return through the gate and cross the road, taking the obvious path which rises steeply up Cockit Hill. The path leads through an area of stone quarrying and up onto the ridge crest, giving good views W across Llangorse Lake. It is thought that this end of the ridge may have been defended as a **hillfort (2)** during the Iron Age (1200 BC – 74 AD), with an indistinct bank and ditch running E-W across the ridge (SO 16032774). Continue along the ridge and eventually take the righthand fork along the more major path which crosses the highest part of the ridge before descending slightly to a **trig point (3)** at SO 15722610.

Continue ahead, descending gradually to a junction at SO 15832568 and turn right. There is an obvious **boundary stone (4)** on the right of the path at SO 1577525455, one of several in the area marking the boundary between local estates. Continue S to a col where the path is crossed by another path E to W.

There are three **Bronze Age burial cairns (5)** on the E side of the path, one on the S side of the junction and two to the N (SO 15932500), which are partly hidden by bracken. The southern cairn is the more obvious, having a small shelter hollowed out of the top.



The three burial cairns (5) in the col, looking N

The return route retraces the path from the cairns for 150m before taking a more minor path on the right which contours around Blaen-y-cwm. This gives good views down the valley towards the valley of the Usk. Eventually another path joins from the left and shortly after take a path on the left, next to a marker post, which leads to a large **burial cairn (6)** with a modern cairn on top (SO 16582612). This is a good vantage point to view the prominent ridge to the east which includes the distinctive summit of Pen Cerrig-calch at the southern end.

It should be noted that at this point the Ordnance Survey maps have incorrectly marked the route of the descending footpath. From the cairn follow the obvious path E which descends into Cwm Sorgwm and joins a bridlepath at the bottom. This leads N, ascending gradually towards the col. Ignore any descending paths, always keeping to the upper path. There is a **boundary stone (7)** at SO 16481 27661 which is inscribed 'DINAS. Sir J Bailey Bart MP 1847'. This marked the boundary between the Dinas estate and the estate of Sir Joseph Bailey who made his fortune as an ironmaster, owning the Nantyglo Ironworks with his brother Crawshey.



The large burial cairn (6) with Pen Cerrig-calch beyond

On the SE side of the col there are numerous sunken trackways marking successive routes which predate the present road. There are another two **boundary stones (8)** on the S side of the road near the parking area, one of which is inscribed 'Mrs McNamara 1821'.



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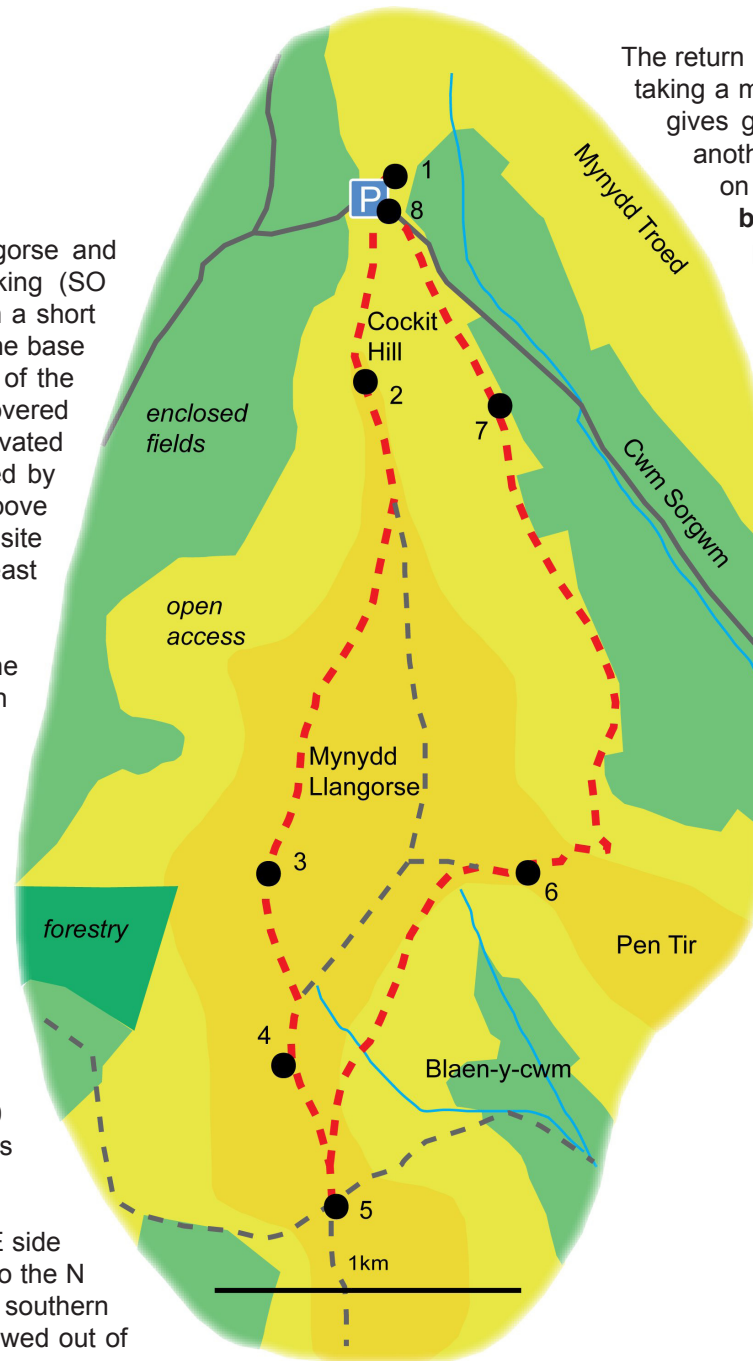
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