

16. Craig Cilhendre Woods

Pontardawe, Swansea

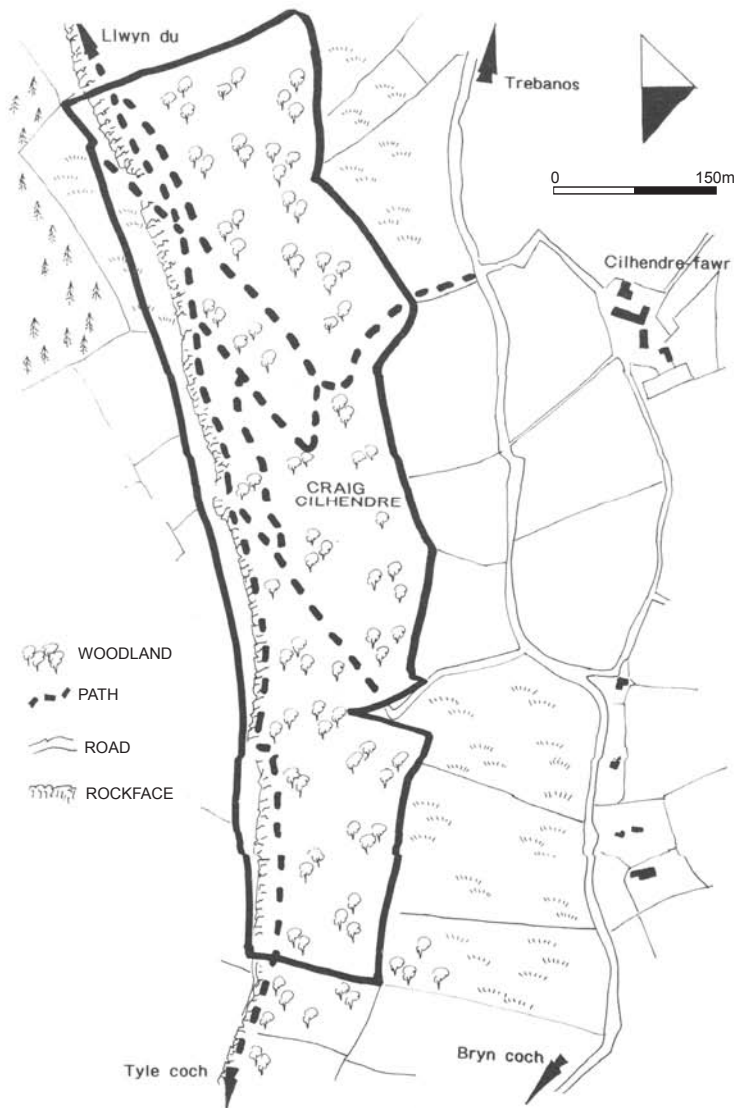
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| Grid References | O.S. Explorer map 165 Swansea. Main entrance: SN720023, Site centre: SN719022 |
| Status | |
| Tenure | The freehold of this reserve was purchased by the Trust in March 1987, with grants and financial assistance from Dr. Martin Cahn, the Countryside Commission, WGCC, and WWF. |
| Size | 16 ha (39.8 acres). Extension to reserve being purchased in 2006. |
| Location and Access Notes | 1.5 km south of Pontardawe. Access to the reserve is by way of a made up track to a small car park at the northwest corner of the reserve located at SN724024. Not accessible to wheelchairs. |
| Public transport | Bus numbers 122, X20, X25 from Swansea Quadrant Bus Station to Pontardawe. |

Description: Craig Cilhendre is upland Oak woodland, part of which is ancient in origin, with some patches of wet woodland, situated on a steep north-facing hillside. Several broad tracks which date from earlier coal extraction, including the route of a former tramway, run through the reserve. The site is underlain by Pennant sandstone, and a number of small coal seams outcrop within the reserve. A sandstone cliff about 8 metres high, and over a kilometre long, runs through the reserve at the top of the slope, offering fine views over Alltwen.

The woodland has a diverse age structure particularly in the western part of the wood. A few dense areas near the entrance reflect where clear felling has occurred in the recent past. The woodland canopy comprises of a mosaic made up of Sessile Oak, Beech, Birch, Ash, Sycamore, and Alder. Part of the reserve is shown as not wooded on a map dated 1831.

In most of the western, more ancient part of the woodland, there is a prominent shrub layer where Hazel and Holly are particularly abundant. Several minor watercourses descend the slope and there are areas of impeded drainage at the base of the slope where Alder grows and large areas of Marsh Violet (4-7) and Yellow Pimpernel (5-7) can be found.

The reserve being rather damp supports a variety of lower plants including mosses and liverworts.



Management Objectives: To maintain the reserve as upland Oak woodland, by allowing natural regeneration of native trees, continuing coppicing, and avoiding grazing by maintenance of the boundary fencing. A car park has been provided and footpaths re-established and linked with the existing network of rides.

Good times to visit

- Apr - Jun Woodland flowers
- Apr - Jul Breeding birds and insects
- Sept - Nov Fungi