

30. South Gower Coast: Deborah's Hole

Pilton, Gower, Swansea

Grid References	O.S. Explorer map 164 Gower. Site centre: SS435862
Status	Part of the South Gower Coast SSSI, which in turn is part of the European Natura 2000 site, the Limestone Sea Cliffs of South West Wales SAC.
Tenure	The reserve was purchased by the Trust in July 1972 with financial assistance from Marks and Spencers plc.
Size	6.7 ha (16.5 acres).
Location and Access Notes	2 km east of Rhossili, 3 km west of Port Eynon. Access to the Deborah's Hole nature reserve can be gained from the public footpath leading south to the coastline from Kimerley Moor, or via the Rhossili to Port Eynon coastal footpath. Not accessible to wheelchairs.
Public transport	Bus number 118 from Swansea Quadrant Bus Station to Rhossili.

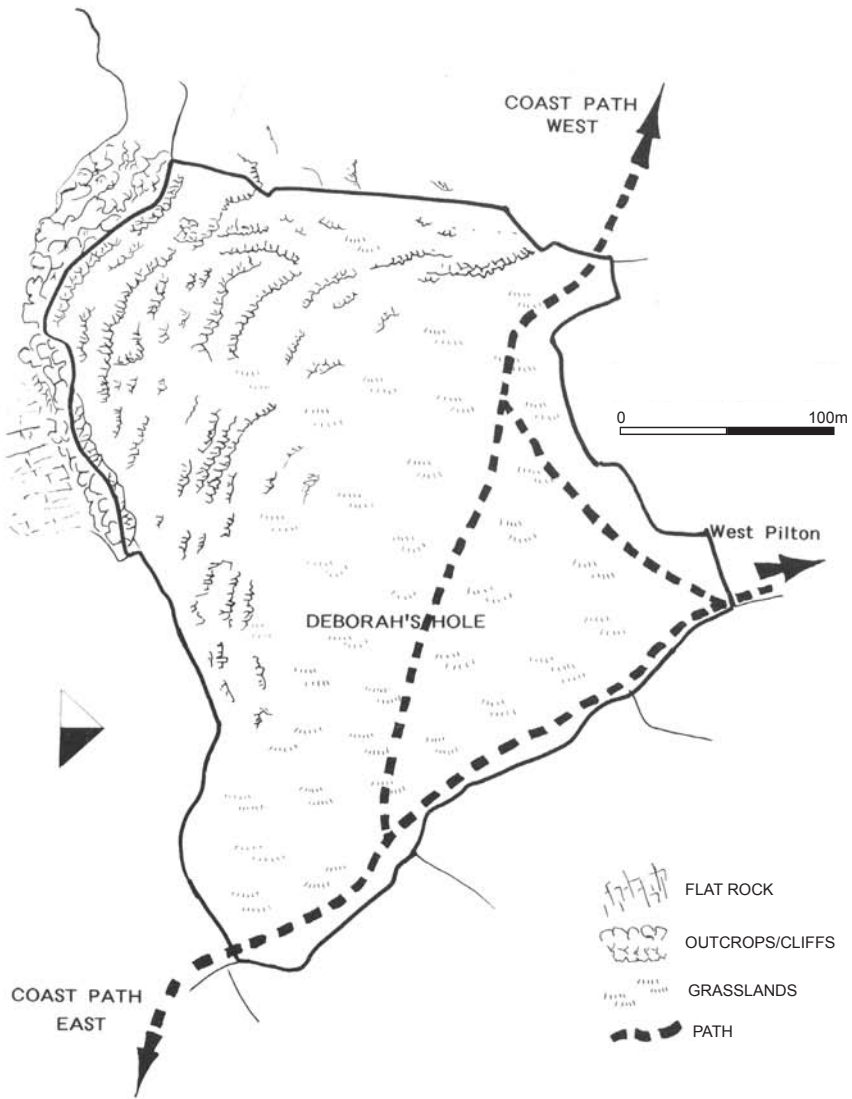
Description: Sea cliff, calcareous grassland, and heath.

Deborah's Hole is named after a small inaccessible cave which during archaeological excavations in the nineteenth century yielded Stone Age tools, which are to be seen in the Royal Institution in Swansea.

The reserve has been partially surface quarried for limestone either as building stone for walls or for burning to produce lime for agricultural fields. This has left a broken surface and varied soil depth which has not allowed subsequent agricultural improvement, as has occurred on the cliff top of Horse Cliff, immediately to the east.

The vegetation ranges from limestone grassland with Common Rock-rose (5-9), the nationally scarce Spring Cinquefoil (4), Squinancywort (6-7), and Thyme (5-8) on the thinner soils through to heathland supporting Bell Heather (7-9) together with Gorse and Hawthorn scrub. The reserve also has nesting Rock Pipit, and Linnet, with Fulmar and Raven nesting upon adjacent cliffs. The Hornet Robberfly has been seen in early autumn.

This reserve allows good views of the Knave, a small offshore stack with attendant Cormorants and Shags, and on a clear day, Lundy Island can be seen out in the Bristol Channel.



Management Objectives: To maintain the present mosaic of calcareous grassland and heathland through grazing.

Good times to visit

Mar - Jul	Coastal flowers
Apr - Jul	Breeding birds
Aug - Sept	Heathland flowers
Nov - Mar	Sea watching