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Bröydd Taf a Chleddau - Disgrifiad Cryno

Dyma ardal o dir isel amaethyddol eang, tonnog, sy'n raddol ddisgyn tua'r de ac yn ffurfio ardal cefnwlad wledig i'r aneddiadau a'r ardaloedd mwy poblog sydd tu allan i'w ffiniau i'r de-orllewin a'r de-ddwyrain. Fe'i dyrannir gan nifer o ddyffrynnoedd bach wedi torri'n ddwfn gan fân afonydd yn aml gydag ochrau coediog. Ceir ei groesi gan y prif lwybrau ffyrdd a rheilffyrdd, yn arbennig y daith o Dde Cymru i'r Iwerddon i Abergwaun sydd gerllaw. Mae'r ardal yn ffurfio lleoliad mewndirol cyrchfannau ymwelwyr mwyaf sefydledig ym Mharc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro. Yn bennaf mae'r ardal wedi ei amgáu gan wrychoedd aeddfed taclus a lonydd cul.

Mae Llinell Landsger y rhaniad diwylliannol hanesyddol, yn rhedeg ar draws ran o'r ardal. I'r gogledd ohono geir enwau lleoedd a thraddodiadau Cymreig yng nghanol tir ffermio ymylol tra i'r de ceir enwau Seisnigaidd, yng nghanol tir fferm gwastad sydd wedi'i wella ac yn cynhyrchu llaeth, cnydau gwraidd a grawn.

Summary Description

The area is a broad, undulating, agricultural, lowland, generally sloping southwards and forming the rural hinterland to the settlements and more populous areas that lie outside its confines to the south-west and south-east. It is dissected by numerous small, deeply cut minor river valleys, often with wooded sides. It is crossed by main road and rail routes, notably the South Wales to Ireland routes to nearby Fishguard. The area forms the inland setting to the more established visitor destinations in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The area is predominantly enclosed with well kept, mature hedgerows and narrow lanes.

A historic cultural division, the Landsker Line, runs across part of the area. To its north are Welsh place names and traditions amidst a more marginal farmland, while to the south names are Anglicised, amidst a gentler, improved farmland of dairying, root crop and cereal production.

Key Characteristics
Ordovician shales, mudstones and sandstones underlie much of the area with intrusions of Cambrian igneous rocks forming craggy summits (tors) in the west. An outcrop of later, Devonian Old Red Sandstone forms the boundary with Carboniferous Coal Measures to the south.
Undulating topography with harder rocks forming hilly areas.
Steep, often wooded, small glacial melt-water valleys with fast rivers and streams, generally running from north to south – particularly notable around Maesprior.
A predominantly rural, settled, agricultural landscape, with a mix of fields of pasture, cereals and hay meadows. Higher land is of a heathy character.
Fields are mainly medium sized, bounded by a regular pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and hedgebanks.
Small blocks of broadleaved woodland and mixed or coniferous plantations are located on slopes. Watercourses are often fringed by oak-dominated woodlands.
The East and West Cleddau rivers are nationally and internationally recognised as important wildlife habitats. Both support populations of otter and submerged water crowfoot.
A range of archaeological features is scattered across the landscape, with clusters of prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments occupying prominent positions.
Narbeth, St Clears and Whitsand are the principal towns. Settlement elsewhere is dispersed, with hamlets and small villages in valleys.
The main A477 and A40 trunk roads cross this otherwise overwhelmingly peaceful, rolling countryside.

Visual and Sensory profile

This large predominantly rural area straddling the modern counties of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire forms the framework for a series of major river valleys associated with the Taff and Eastern and Western Cleddau.

Small blocks of broadleaved woodland, coniferous and mixed plantations occupy many of the slopes and valley sides across the area. The main river valleys are fringed in swathes of semi-natural woodland that bestow an intimate, enclosed character to the valleys, which is compounded by the secluded nature of the rivers that preclude long distance views.

Within the wider landscape, land use is mixed, with a patchwork of medium sized fields given over to pasture, hay meadow and arable crops. These are enclosed by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and hedgebanks. The higher ground is more heath like in character with patches of gorse, heather and bracken. The more open areas of higher ground also engender a sense of remoteness under wide skies, with panoramic views to be gained across the mosaic of fields and hedgerows. In the north, the Preseli Hills form the horizon and a strong backdrop to the area.

There is a strong sense of time depth in the landscape, in which the dispersed settlement pattern of historic villages and hamlets, and the lack of large urban centres, afford high levels of tranquillity. The minor roads that criss-cross the landscape are quiet and often traffic free, save for local farm vehicles. The main A40 and A477 trunk roads and sections of other A roads cross the area, but their visual and aural impact is confined to their relatively narrow corridors compared to the remainder of this overwhelmingly peaceful landscape.



The backdrop of the rising Preseli Hills © LUC



Llys-y-fran Reservoir, set in one the many small valleys that drain from north to south through the area. © LUC



The southern part of the area, near Tenby, looking north to the distant Preseli Hills.
© John Briggs



Llawhaden, looking down the Eastern Cleddau valley. © John Briggs



Rolling hills and hedgerow patterns near Llawhaden © John Briggs



Open rural landscape to the north of Narberth © John Briggs

Geological Landscape influences

The underlying geology of this extensive area comprises a broad band of Ordovician shales, mudstones and sandstones, amidst which there are outcrops of older and harder, igneous rocks of Cambrian age in the west, forming prominent hills rising to an altitude of 178 m at Dudwell Mountain. These rocks were exposed during a period of underwater volcanic activity which lifted the former sea bed upwards to form this part of the Wales landmass. Softer sediments were eroded, leaving behind the more resistant igneous rocks. Today, the craggy volcanic rocky hills around Wolf's Castle serve as a reminder of the turbulent processes that have at times shaped the area's topography.

The Ordovician geology is broken in the south by an outcrop of Lower Old Red Sandstone from the Devonian period. This fringes narrow bands of later, Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit further south, which delineate the edge of the softer shales of the Lower Coal Measures.

The present landscape was smoothed by the movement of a massive ice sheet that originated in the Irish Sea area. Glacial meltwaters carved deep channels through the softer underlying sediments, depositing large quantities of sand and gravel in the process. The resulting landscape is undulating and crossed by a number of valleys originally formed by glacial meltwater in southward flowing watercourses and channels. The Maesprior meltwater channels (Geological SSSI) are particularly noteworthy in this respect.

Landscape Habitats influences

Fine silty loams cover much of the area, which become deeper and more prone to waterlogging in river and stream valleys. Agricultural land use is mixed, with a patchwork of medium sized pasture, hay meadow and cereal fields enclosed by hedgerows, hedgerow trees, or flower-rich hedge banks.

The higher ground around Wolf's Castle is of heathy character, with patches of gorse, heather and bracken. Small blocks of broadleaved woodland, coniferous and mixed plantations occupy slopes across the landscape. Watercourses are often fringed by oak-dominated woodlands. The Eastern and Western Cleddau and Taf are fringed by swathes of oak-dominated semi-natural woodland, as is the Llys-y-fran reservoir.

The Cleddau Rivers SAC and SSSIs support important populations of otter, bullhead fish, and river and brook lamprey. Aquatic and wetland habitats contain submerged plants such as water crowfoot, and are used as feeding sites for wetland birds including snipe, curlew and lapwing.

Areas of marshy grassland, in some cases associated wet heath, are scattered throughout the area where poorer draining soil conditions prevail. A number of these areas are of considerable ecological value with Wallis Moor SSSI towards the north of the area, Jeffreystone Pastures, Wyndrush Pastures, Yerboston Moors SSSIs and Yerboston Tops SAC and SSSI in a concentration north-west of Tenby, being particularly notable examples.

Historic Landscape influences

The landscape contains an array of archaeological sites and features which range from prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments to Norman castles and medieval ecclesiastical remains. The earliest evidence of activity comprises a significant cluster of Neolithic standing stones and Bronze Age round barrows in prominent positions on the higher ground above Wolf's Castle. Iron Age promontory forts occupy locations along watercourse, whilst hillforts are sited on pockets of higher ground throughout affording long views across the lowlands.

The early medieval period saw the development of a number of churches, around which settlements developed. Many churchyards contain inscribed stones and crosses which are particularly distinctive. The ruins of the Cistercian monastery at Whitland abbey, established in 1141, are visible in the landscape in the east of area. The Norman invaders established a number of motte and bailey castles and moated sites in the area, including at Wolf's Castle and Narbeth.

The post-Medieval period witnessed the development in the area of a number of country houses set within landscaped gardens, of which Scolton Manor in Spittal, built in the mid 19th century on the site of an earlier 14th century house, is a fine example.

Today's landscape contains a dispersed settlement pattern, with hamlets, small villages and whitewashed farmsteads mainly located in valleys. Villages are nucleated in form, often centred on churches. Some settlements also extend linearly along the roads. The historic towns of Whitland, St Clears and Narbeth have distinctive pastel coloured render buildings with slate roofs, while the agricultural landscape in the east provides a setting for Carmarthen – the historic centre for a much wider hinterland extending into the Tywi Valley beyond the confines included here.

Cultural Landscape influences

Much of the first branch of the Mabinogion describing the wondrous doing of Pwyll, the prince of Dyfed, is set within this area with his court at Arberth (Narberth), and Glyn Cuch

being the valley of Afon Cych, which forms part of the boundary between the counties of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. A no less important historic boundary here is that between the 'Englishry' and the 'Welshry' of Pembrokeshire – the so-called 'Landsker line', which reflects the extent of early Anglo-Norman incursions into the area.

These began in 1093 and what had been the cantref of Penfro became the earldom of Pembroke, which was consolidated with the establishment of castles and colonies of settlers. Under Henry I, after the earldom passed to the English crown, the Flemings arrived as a further wave of settlers into the area, and the legacy of these population movements of the 12th century lies not only in the linguistic mix of the area, but also in the pattern of villages – the radial villages such as Castlemartin, Jameston and Jeffreyston, that predate the Conquest, and the planted villages such as Letterston, Little Newcastle, New Moat, Tancredstown, Roch, Wiston, Llawhaden, Templeton, Angle, Cosheston, and Redberth which post-date it.

In many cases the medieval core of these villages remains apparent, even though there might have been considerable 20th century development on their peripheries. Features such as churches tend to vary according to medieval patterns of settlement; south of the Landsker, they are characterised by high battlemented towers, whereas those within the Welshry are simpler. These architectural and topographical details, as well as the linguistic affiliations of this area, reflect cultural and population changes from the 12th century and earlier. The Baptist chapel at Rhydwylym was an important religious centre, and is associated with the George family, of which David Lloyd George was one.



Typical rolling mixed pastoral and arable landscape with mature hedges and scattered farms © LUC