

Walk: SOC 04
Location: Fforestfach behind Dunelm – adjacent woodland walk

Directions: Drive towards Swansea, joining M4 J45 heading west, come off at J47, 2nd exit from large roundabout, towards Gower, down a hill to another roundabout, first left to Fforestfach and after 200 yards, left at large set of traffic lights, leaving shopping areas behind you. A few hundred yards along from the traffic lights, as the road bends round to the right, take a sharp left down a small lane for a few yards until it dead ends in a dirt track. Park up and follow the dirt track around to the right, into woodland area. (I call this the Dunelm Wood Walk because it is effectively behind Dunelm).

Distance (miles): 22.3
 Time (hours): 0.41
 Length of Walk: 1 – 2 hours or more according to preference
 Dates Walked: 18/10/2008, 10/12/2008, 01/10/2009, 02/12/2009,
 Parking: Free

Pop in to: Fforestfach & Pontardulais Road shopping centres – there are two, one each side of the traffic lights. There is a Tesco Plus Superstore, very large, which is worth popping in to as it is so big. Also the local soft furnishings shop Dunelm – excellent for bedding, cushions, curtains, blankets, rugs and assorted fabrics - is worth visiting, plus various other shops.

The walk itself is really rather incidental to the shopping trip and not worth bothering with unless as part of a visit to the shopping areas and retail park. Laura Ashley, M&S, etc all here.

Also, if you head past Tescos (leaving Tescos on your left) on the road leading from the traffic lights, you will come into an industrial area which looks a bit unprepossessing but for one rather unusual emporium – an unassuming from the outside block with the sign ‘Serendipity’ on it. Inside you will meet a most unusual individual who repairs old furniture (not antique but characterful period pieces and reproductions). Some of the castle bedroom furniture has come from here and it is worth a look around. It’s about a mile from Tescos, straight on through one further set of minor traffic lights and over a few speed humps, and look out for it among the red brick industrial units on the left.

Description: The walk itself starts off unprepossessingly, and on rare occasions can be spoilt by kids illegally riding noisy off-road motorbikes on the main paths. However it does make for a useful walk for dogs before or after a few hours shopping. The main gravelled path goes on for some distance, gently uphill, and I have not walked to the end. Various paths lead from it which I have not fully explored.

There is a parallel winding footpath route through woods alongside the banks of a stream, taking in various small lakes, with jump in spots for dogs, the odd pier and plenty of swimming areas for dogs.

There is one small weir on the stream to beware of, as though it is only a small stream and looks harmless enough, the flow of water is powerful enough to trap a dog in the down-current by this small weir. The sides of the stream are deep in places, so need care letting dogs in and out of it.

Path is muddy in parts alongside the stream, but there is plenty of opportunity to get dogs clean in the water, then walk them back via the main gravelled path, which are easy to rejoin at any time, so they stay clean.

In warm weather, do the walk first as the shops are open late into the evening. The shopping areas have no sheltered area to park car under so unsafe to leave dogs in, in warm weather.