



Iron Bridge
Circular Walk

For more information on access to the countryside and bio-diversity in Newport contact the Countryside Service on 01633 656656
email: countryside@newport.gov.uk

This leaflet is also available in Welsh on request. please contact the above for further details.

Supported by:
The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Newport City Council
Ruperra Conservation Trust
Cadw
Caerphilly

Iron Bridge
Circular Walk

Look out for the Iron Bridge Circular Walk Waymark Disc.

The Iron Bridge Circular Walk is a 4.5km circular heritage trail that follows the footsteps of the Morgan family, who were connected to this area from the 17th Century. The route passes through Coed Craig Ruperra, a 150 acre woodland, which once formed part of the large Ruperra Estate and is now managed by Ruperra Conservation Trust.

The route follows permissive paths and public footpaths, passing important features associated with the rich archaeological heritage of the area. The paths can become quite muddy during bad weather so suitable footwear is strongly recommended.

The trail is signed with the distinctive Iron Bridge Waymarking Disc and should take around 2.5 hours to complete.

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Countryside Code

Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs. Leave gates and property as you find them. Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home. Keep dogs under close control, so that they do not disturb livestock or wildlife.



Places of interest along the route...

1 **Hollybush Inn**

Awarded Best Regional Ales Pub 2010

The 200 year old countryside inn is located on the crossroads in the picturesque village of Draethen. The inn was once used as a meeting point for poachers planning their night time raids of the surrounding Ruperra estate. The pub welcomes walkers and serves a selection of real ales and meals. Tel: 01633 441326

2 **Summer House**

Craig Ruperra has a long history. It has been an Iron age hillfort, a Norman motte and bailey castle and in the later 17th Century a two-storey stone summer house was constructed. Finally in the early 20th Century a split-logged thatched summer house was constructed where the Morgan family would take tea.

3 **Ruperra Castle**

Sir Thomas Morgan built Ruperra Castle in 1626. It was a typical Jacobean courtier's house, an example of the Great Rebuilding of the 16th and 17th Centuries. King Charles 1 stayed here in 1645 after the battle of Naseby. After fire destroyed the castle in 1785, it was rebuilt and the original gables replaced by battlements. In 1875 Captain Godfrey-Morgan, (of the Charge of the Light Brigade fame) became Lord Tredegar. During the 19th Century, the eldest son of the Tredegar Family lived at the castle. In 1941 fire again ravaged the castle, and it has stood as a "romantic ruin" overgrown with vegetation for the last 60 years.

4 **Iron Bridge**

The 16 metre span cast iron footbridge was constructed in 1829. It was part of the estate of Lord Tredegar, who commissioned its construction to provide access for horse drawn vehicles and pedestrians from Ruperra Castle to and from the church at Lower Machen and the Lower Machen area. The bridge was closed to the public in 2008 due to extensive damage to the stone abutments and cast iron beams. A programme of restoration work was carried out by Newport City Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council, with grant funding from Cadw, Heritage Lottery Fund and Countryside Council for Wales.

5 **Plas Machen**

The current farmhouse is the remnants of a substantial 16th Century mansion house, seat of the Morgan family before their move to Tredegar House in the 1660's. The house has reduced in size and its current character is the result of restoration work and improvement work undertaken around 1869. The house is constructed of old red Sandstone walls and wears a picturesque crown of 19th Century red brick chimney stacks that stand prominently in the surrounding countryside.

6 **St. Michael and All Angels**

Located in the pretty village of Lower Machen, the church was possibly founded during the Celtic period in the 6th Century. It has close connections with the Morgan family of Tredegar, and there are 11 hatchments connected with the family. The Morgan Family Chapel is now used as a vestry.

Iron Bridge Circular Walk: Turret, Bridge & Pew

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Walk Distance: 4.5km, 2.8 miles, Graded: Moderate, OS Map: Explorer 152
 Please be advised route descriptions may alter as improvements are made to footpath structures along these routes.

A Start at the Hollybush Inn, cross the stile at the rear of the pub and follow the trail uphill towards the woodland.

B Pass through the kissing gate and continue uphill and through the woodland. *Please note this path can be very wet during winter season.*

C At the path junction turn left and follow the waymarker through the woodland. Continue along wooded track heading slightly downhill, reaching a bench at the next junction.

D At the path junction follow the waymarker to the right and continue along path uphill to a wooden kissing gate.

E Pass through the kissing gate and follow the waymarker disc towards Craig Ruperra. Enjoy spectacular panoramic views from Ruperra Summerhouse.

F Continue along the trail and follow the waymarker heading downhill, passing the wooden arbour on your right.

G At the path junction, turn left and follow the path towards a flight of steps onto the main track behind Ruperra Castle.

H Turn left and follow the access track adjacent to the castle wall for approximately 300 metres.

I Turn left through the metal kissing gate and follow the path through the woodland, looking out for the Iron Bridge circular walk waymarker disc.

J Continue straight ahead following the track passing through 2 metal kissing gates to the lower car park and to the road.

K Turn right and follow the road for 150 metres approximately to a finger post at Iron Bridge cottage.

L Continue along the access lane to Iron Bridge cottage, pass Iron Bridge cottage on your right and follow the path to the Iron Bridge.

M After the bridge follow the path through woodland to a metal gate.

N Follow waymarker arrow across open fields to another kissing gate at point O.

O Here you have a choice, you can either continue along the well defined track towards Lower Machen by following the waymarker discs showing the extended route (take care when crossing busy road) or turn left along the hedgerow and then follow the river back to Draethen road.

P At Draethen Road follow the waymarker disc over the road bridge to Draethen and the Hollybush Inn.