

36. Castle Woods

Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire

Grid References	O.S. Explorer map 186 Llandeilo & Brechfa Forest. Main entrance: SN623223, Site centre: SN614218
Status	Notified SSSI and Scheduled Ancient Monument.
Tenure	Freehold purchased in 1979 with funds from the Dyfed Wildlife Appeal, and grant aid from the Countryside Commission & WWF.
Size	25.5 ha (63 acres).
Location and Access Notes	2 km west of Llandeilo, adjacent to Dinefwr Park. Visitors can park next to the fire station off the A40 and walk down Dinefwr Park Drive. From Pen Lan Park there is a small footpath into the woods and roadside parking is also available at Towy Bridge. Visitors are asked to avoid entering the private drive to Newtown House. Wheelchair access to bottom of reserve only (footpaths can be steep).
Public transport	Train station at Llandeilo, on the Swansea to Shrewsbury route. Bus numbers X13 from Swansea and 280 from Carmarthen to Llandoverly.

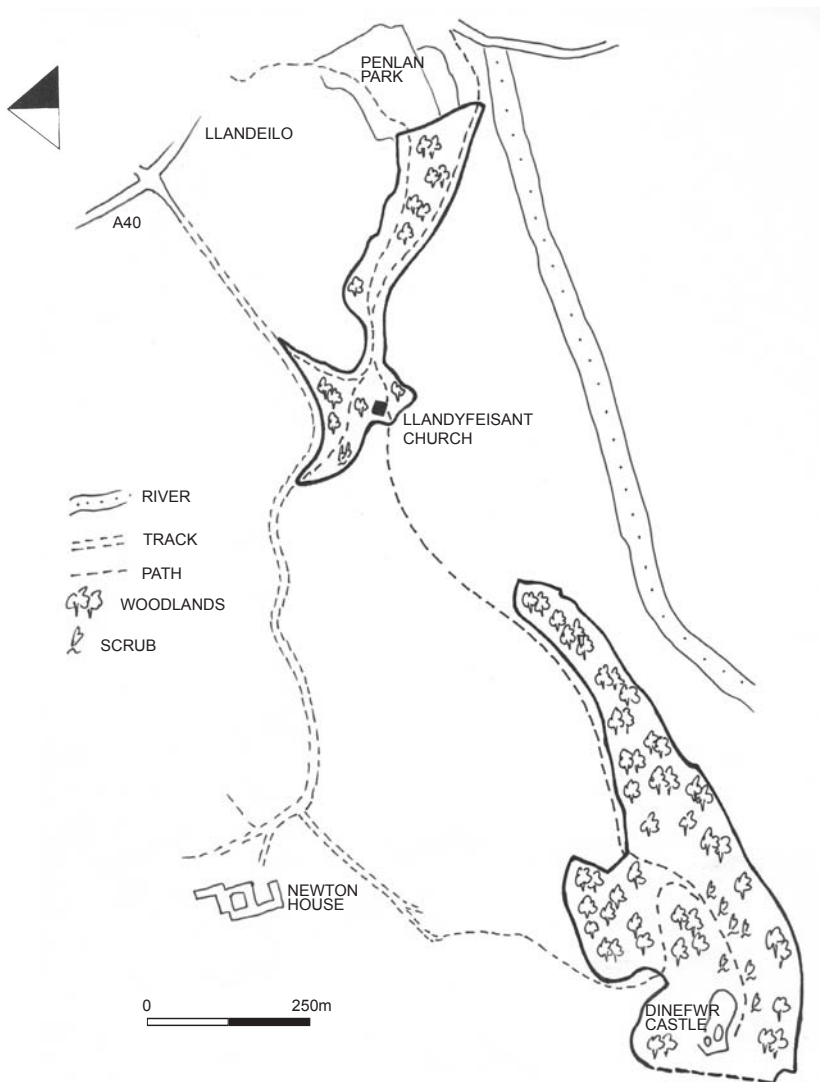
Description: Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, castle and quarry on the Llandeilo series of Ordovician rock which is of national importance.

Castle Woods is comprised of two areas of ancient semi-natural woodland with veteran trees on the steep south and west-facing slope that overlooks the River Tywi. Pendunculate Oak is interspersed with Ash, Beech and Sycamore, with 45% of the Elm having been lost to disease. The understorey is comprised of Holly, Hazel, Elder, and Spindle. The woodland floor is carpeted with Bluebell (4-6), Dog's Mercury (2-4), Primrose (2-5) and Wood Anemone (3-5), Toothwort (3-5) can be found on the roots of the Wych Elm. The woodland is rich in mosses and lichens, including the large Lungwort.

The breeding bird assemblage includes Great Spotted, Lesser Spotted and Green Woodpecker, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Redstart, Pied and Spotted Flycatcher. Resident birds of prey include Sparrowhawk, Buzzard and Tawny Owl. The floodplain grassland below the wood holds numbers of roosting wildfowl including Goosander, Mallard, Pochard, Shoveler, Teal, Tufted Duck with Pintail, Whooper Swan and Wigeon, in winter.

Butterflies are well represented, including Comma (3-5 + 7-9), Silver-washed Fritillary (6-8) and Speckled Wood (4-10) and mammals include Fallow Deer and Badger.

The ruins of Dinefwr castle occupy an impressive position above the Tywi water meadows to the west of the site. Dinefwr was the capital of Deheubarth, then West Wales, and a stronghold of the ruling Princes of Wales. The castle was a ruin by 1523, and is being restored by Cadw under a Deed of Guardianship with the Trust and is open to visitors (wheelchair access into the main castle walls).



Management Objectives: To manage the site as semi-natural woodland, by allowing natural regeneration of native trees, the removal of non-native species, and minimisation of grazing by maintaining boundary fencing.

Good times to visit

Mar - Jul	Woodland flowers
May to Jul	Breeding birds
Sept - Nov	Fungi
Dec- Feb	Wintering wildfowl on the flood plain