



Lavernock Nature Reserve, Cardiff

This circular stroll through Lavernock Point Nature Reserve is the perfect place to get away from it all.

"Historically this route is fascinating as well as scenic and quiet. This is the site where the first ever wireless message was transmitted over open sea – from Lavernock Point to Flat Holm Island. You'll also pass the Lavernock Battery, used in WWII to protect Cardiff and Barry. You can bask in history on this walk."

TRICIA COTTNAM, WALES COAST PATH OFFICER

Start and Finish:

Lavernock Point car park.

Distance:

1 mile/2km.

Along the way...

The reserve is criss-crossed by paths, so you can pick your own route through a landscape of woods, meadows, heathland and clifftops, home to a rich and diverse population of animal and plant life.

More than 25 different species of butterfly have been recorded in the reserve, while the meadowlands are bursting with wildflowers, including cowslip, yellow-wort and several varieties of orchid.

It's a great spot for bird watchers too. Look out for residents like sparrowhawks, bullfinches and green woodpeckers, and visit in autumn to see large flocks of migrating swallows, redwings and fieldfares.

Towards the western edge of the reserve is Lavernock Battery. Originally built in the 1860s, this military installation was one of the Palmerston Forts, a series of defences designed to protect access to the Bristol Channel. It also served as a gun emplacement during the Second World War and is now a scheduled ancient monument.

The reserve's other claim to fame is as the site of a major scientific achievement. In 1897, inventor Guglielmo Marconi successfully transmitted the first ever radio broadcast across open sea between Lavernock Point and Flat Holm Island. A plaque commemorating this momentous event can be seen on the church close to the car park.

Need to know:

There's parking at Lavernock Point, plus refreshments and toilets at The Marconi Inn at Lavernock Point Holiday Village. There's also a café and toilets at Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, about 1.5km away.

The walk can also be accessed via Cardiff Bus service number 94, which stops at Fort Road about 800m from the nature reserve.