

Discover Swansea Trail

Discover Swansea's cultural side by following the trail around the city's galleries, museums, libraries and archives.

Take a stroll around Swansea to see places of historical interest over a day or do the trail in sections to allow yourself plenty of time for coffee and lunch and a browse in the shops. Print off the walking directions to help you find your way around and you'll find further information about the venues on the trail below.

Swansea Castle

Castle Street near Castle Square in Swansea. Try to imagine how Swansea Castle started out in 1106 as a motte and bailey castle (some think a ringwork) on a clifftop with the river running below along the line of The Strand. After various unsuccessful attacks by the Welsh, the castle fell in 1217 but was restored to the English in 1220 and after this the inner castle was probably walled in stone with at least one tower. The only visible remains of Swansea Castle are two sides of a rectangular 'new castle' that was built in a corner of a late 13th century walled bailey.

Where next?

Swansea Castle to the Dylan Thomas Centre

- Keeping Swansea Castle on your left, walk down Castle Street then Wind St (in effect this is one long street).
- Cross Oystermouth Road by Morgan's Hotel (formerly Swansea Harbour Trust offices).
- The Dylan Thomas Centre is further along Somerset Place on the left hand side.

Dylan Thomas Centre

Somerset Place, Swansea, SA1 1RR

The Dylan Thomas Centre is housed in the former Guildhall, which was originally built in 1825 and restored and refurbished to host the UK Year of Literature and Writing in 1995. The Dylan Thomas Centre has a cafe and regularly hosts events, films and talks. The centre also hosts the annual Dylan Thomas Festival held between Dylan's birth and death dates, 27 October to 9 November.

The Centre has become the focal point for Dylan Thomas enthusiasts all over the world. It houses the permanent 'Man and Myth' exhibition, based on the largest collection of memorabilia of its kind in the world. It is designed to appeal to the Dylan expert and interested visitor alike.

Where next?

Dylan Thomas Centre to Swansea Museum

- From the main entrance of the Dylan Thomas Centre, turn right and walk along East Burrows Road with the car park on your left.
- Turn right onto Cambrian Place.
- Swansea Museum is at the end of Cambrian Place on the left.

Swansea Museum

Victoria Road, Maritime Quarter, Swansea, SA1 1SN

Swansea Museum was built in 1841 and is the oldest museum in Wales. It is easily recognisable by its neo-classical style and impressive columned frontage on Oystermouth Road.

Swansea Museum is a real treasure house of the ordinary and the extraordinary from Swansea's past and contains all kinds of objects from the past of Swansea, Wales and the rest of the world. Contents in the six galleries range from an Egyptian mummy to a traditional Welsh kitchen.

Where next?

Swansea Museum to the floating exhibits

- Leave Swansea Museum via the rear exit and through the garden.
- Turn right at the gates and right onto Burrows Place.
- Continue forwards towards the marina, with the large Locws mural on your left.
- At the end of the road turn left to see the tramshed and statue of Dylan Thomas, turn right to visit the floating exhibits.

Swansea Museum's Boats

Swansea Museum pontoon, Museum Square, Maritime Quarter, Swansea

Swansea Museum has three floating exhibits that are kept in Swansea Marina - Lightship 91, known as 'Helwick', spent much of its life warning ships about the Helwick Sandbank in the Bristol Channel.

The second is a tug boat called 'Canning' which is an oil-burning steam tug built in 1954. There is no public access to Canning but she can be seen clearly from the pontoon and dockside.

The museum's third floating vessel is 'Olga', a Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter built in 1909. 'Olga' is an important and rare survivor from a past time and is listed on the National Historic Ships Committee Core Collection list. She regularly sails and competes in races.

Where next?

Floating exhibits to the National Waterfront Museum

- If you retrace your steps, there is an entrance to the National Waterfront Museum a few metres back from the floating exhibits.

National Waterfront Museum

Oystermouth Road, Maritime Quarter, Swansea, SA1 3RD

The National Waterfront Museum forms part of the National Museum of Wales and tells the story of industry and innovation in Wales, now and over the last 300 years.

Visitors can soak up Wales and Swansea's history in an original and listed waterfront warehouse that was formerly the Industrial and Maritime Museum, now linked to an ultra-modern slate and glass building.

The Industrial Revolution in Wales had a tremendous effect on people and communities as well as that of the rest of the world and this can be explored via cutting-edge, interactive technology married with traditional displays.

Where next?

National Waterfront Museum to Civic Centre for Central Library and Archives

- From the marina exit of the National Waterfront Museum turn right and walk around the end of the marina onto the promenade.
- Turn right and walk along, with the sea to your left, past the Marriott Hotel to the Civic Centre.

Central Library and Archives

Civic Centre, Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN

Both Central Library and Archives are located in Swansea's Civic Centre on the sea side of Oystermouth Road.

Central library

You'll find thousands of books, music scores, DVDs and CDs to borrow, as well as an amazing children's area and many internet PCs on which to work.

West Glamorgan Archive Service

Delve into Swansea's archives to trace your family history or investigate your local area. The West Glamorgan Archive Service covers Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot and details can be found about opening hours at HQ at Civic Centre on the web pages.