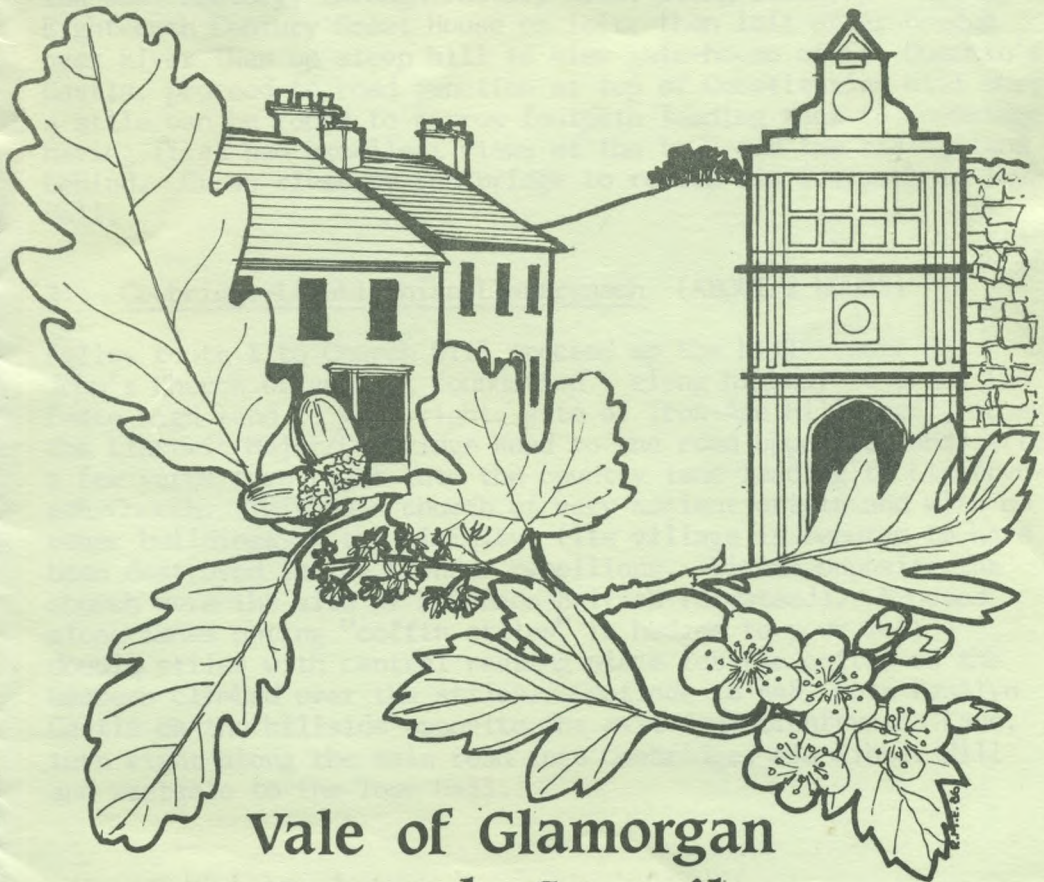


Exploring the Vale

No 2

# *Countryside Walks*

around the Cowbridge area.



Vale of Glamorgan  
Borough Council

## COUNTRYSIDE WALKS AROUND COWBRIDGE

### 1. Cowbridge - Llanblethian Village (ABOUT 1 HOUR)

With the Cowbridge Town Hall to your back, turn right up High Street (noting architecture e.g. Great House) - left into Church Street (note Church Cottages, Holy Cross Church with unusual octagonal tower, old Grammar School buildings) - through recently renovated 14th Century South Gate - along Town Mill Road to 90° right angle bend (note house facing you formerly the Town Mill), over river bridge to "kissing gate" on right; through the "three fields" skirting the remains of St. Quentin's Castle to kissing gate near old village pump at Llanblethian, right into picturesque Piccadilly; to Church Hill; up the hill then first left along the causeway road; left - noting "Causeway Cottages" rank of terraced cottages to right; down hill to the ford with bridge for pedestrians, large dwellinghouse to right formerly Llanblethian Wool Factory; through Factory Road, along Broadway - noting Eighteenth Century Great House on left; then left after bridge over River Thaw up steep hill to view gate-house of St. Quentin's Castle; proceed to road junction at top of Constitution Hill where a stile can be found to narrow footpath leading back to Cowbridge having first had excellent views of the town and the rising land behind. Cross river by footbridge to return via footpath to Town Hall.

### 2. Cowbridge-Llanblethian-Llanfrynach (ABOUT 2 HOURS)

Follow route 1 to Church Hill proceed up the hill - note St. John's Church of ancient foundation - along highway to Cross Inn (note high land to your right, site of Iron-Age hill fort), cross the Llantwit Major/Cowbridge Road to the road opposite, and, after a few yards turn right into the country lane leading to Llanfrynach Church. This is a church of very ancient origin and with no other buildings in the vicinity. (Its village is reputed to have been destroyed in the Glyndwr rebellions. Fields opposite the church were the site of a Romano-British farmstead). Proceed along lanes noting "coffin stiles" in hedges to your left - double stiles with central resting place for the coffin as the bearers climbed over the stiles. Continue to A48, note Penllyn Castle on the hillside opposite the exit from Llanfrynach Lane, turn right along the main road into Cowbridge, via Gibbet Hill and Westgate to the Town Hall.

### 3. Cowbridge-St.Hilary-Beaupre (SAY 3 HOURS)

With the Town Hall to your back turn left and proceed via Eastgate to traffic lights, continue up Cardiff Road (Primrose Hill) for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile where the ancient Roman road bears right off the main road (said to be one of the few pieces of Roman road in Britain still much as it was in Roman times as the solid rock surface may well testify); proceed to the summit of Stalling Down to the well known landmark "clump of trees" which may be seen from many points in the Vale of Glamorgan. These trees were planted by Reverend J.M. Traherne of St. Hilary in the Nineteenth Century. Admire the views south, to the Bristol Channel and beyond to Somerset, and north to Llantrisant and the Rhondda Valleys and the mountains beyond. Here until the late 19th Century stood Cowbridge's execution tree where many an unfortunate transgressor - so it is said - may have seen Caecady House (away to the north-east) as his last view of the world. Turn south to the attractive village of St. Hilary with its thatched properties, lovely Church, thatched inn and quaint lanes, then walk down the St. Mary Church Road, eventually crossing the disused railway from Cowbridge to Aberthaw, and note the remains of Beaupre Castle to your left.

Proceed to the junction with St. Athan/Cowbridge Road, turn left to stile on your left leading across meadows - waterproof shoes needed if grass wet - to the ancient monument Beaupre Castle where you should note in particular the fine entrance gateway and inner porch for which this monument is well known. The Castle is open Monday to Saturday for the following periods:

March - April	9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.
May - September	9.30 a.m. - 7.00 p.m.
October	9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.
November - February	9.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Admittance is free.

Returning to the stile, go left to next 'T' junction, turn right and follow the country lane, via 'hair-pin' bends to Llandough Village, first house on the left is The Cottage where Thomas Carlyle once stayed, where picturesque views of the Thaw Valley may be seen. If you turn left up the hill you reach Llandough church which contains the oldest monumental brass in South Glamorgan (memorial to Gwenllian

Walsh of the adjacent Llandough Castle). The castle was rebuilt in the Nineteenth Century and was the home of the Byass family of Gonzalez Byass fame (among others); the gatehouse is medieval. Then follow the country lane past the former Llandough Mill (now converted to a dwelling, but easily recognisable) back to Cowbridge traffic lights.

#### 4. Cowbridge-Aberthin-Stalling Down (ABOUT 1½ HOURS)

With the Cowbridge Town Hall to your back, turn left and through traffic lights, up Cardiff Road (Primrose Hill) to first road to left, follow country lane, passing over the Cowbridge By-Pass, to the village of Aberthin, noting old chapel to the left (now a community centre, but said to have been visited by some of the most famous of preachers in Welsh non-conformist history). Drop down to the village centre where you will note two inns, one each side of the main road, but turn right and walk along the Llanquian Road to view the Great House, a lovely Jacobean gabled house with a gatehouse approach. Next door - among the out-buildings of Court farm - is what may well be a good example of a Welsh 'longhouse'. The more energetic may then find footpaths up the steep side of the Stalling Down, and the less energetic may return to the village centre and turn left up the Penylan Road to the A48 and down to Cowbridge; or, alternatively, walk up to the "clump of trees" and down the Roman Road described in Walk 3.

The whole of the Vale of Glamorgan is laced with delightful country lanes which may easily be followed from a 1:50,000 map, and you may wish to visit such lovely spots as Llanmihangel about 3 miles south of Cowbridge with its lovely old Manor House and Church (and burial place of the first non-conformist Lord Mayor of London) or any of the numerous villages such as Welsh St. Donats, about 3 miles north-east of Cowbridge, where there is a fine old Church and adjacent to the village large areas of forest where the Forestry Commission have established "walks" and picnic areas.

A word of warning - drive with great care if you use your car in the country lanes.



The Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council is grateful for the assistance of Mr. Alf Charles and Mr. Jeff Alden in the compilation of this leaflet.

Further copies of this leaflet can be obtained from the Leisure and Amenities Department, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry. Tel: Barry 730333 Ext. 385.

