



Taff Ely

Sunday 4th September: Pontypridd and Cefn Eglwysilan circular Led by Steve Craven

16 of us convened at the starting point including two newcomers, Paul & June, with two more (Ramblers from other groups) running late... After waiting a few minutes longer, I made the tough decision to start the walk after agreeing they could catch us up.

My original plan was to do a shorter version of the 12-mile Pontypridd Circular Walk, but I had to create a different walk incorporating only parts of the circular due to unsafe paths and sheer undergrowth, which would not have been enjoyable. The weather was much better than originally forecast earlier in the week, but today we were blessed with sunshine and clouds, at least for the most part. It was very humid to begin with and as there were a few ascents early on, this made myself and the pack a bit hot and sweaty! Still in talks with the missing Ramblers we kept going 'over the Graig' through woodland trails to Treforest. After walking through streets and under the A470 turn off, we came to the first Taff Trail section of the day alongside Glyntaff Cemetery, and up the first part of the mountain. Only recently, it had the undergrowth 'cut back' to make this section easily manageable (even if it was steep to begin with). By now I had found out that the two 'strays' had gone in the opposite direction and thus had no chance of catching us up, or so we thought. Shortly after, we came to a road and settled down for a break.

We were making good time and walked through a field and on to the steepest section (on road) until we reached a farm where we stopped for a few breaths. As Colin was back marker and holding up the pack, his t-shirt was given a heart-shaped sweat patch for his efforts. Thanks Col. ☺ Through the farmyard we came to Eglwysilan Common then eventually the summit/trig point of Cefn Eglwysilan, where we stopped for lunch and savoured the views overlooking Pontypridd and beyond. (cont'd. on page 2)



September

Welcome back to another monthly issue of the Taff Ely Ramblers newsletter.

Over recent months we have seen more and more new members join the group which is very encouraging, and maintains the group's strength in numbers. The weather was kind to us during this last month of summer, but sadly we saw the loss of our Queen Elizabeth II, which I think it's fair to say shocked the world and many of our members. Moving on, October has a variety of walks on offer, including the weekend when a few of our members are away in Elan Valley, and it's this hard work ethic that I feel makes Taff Ely a success.



Fair play to everyone, we had done a bit of climbing up to this point, but it was all downwards from here, and sadly the wet weather made an appearance for periodic intervals. Thankfully, this didn't dampen anyone's spirits as we walked through a field to the streets of Cilfynydd, then over the main road to another section of the Taff Trail behind Pontypridd High School. It was then that the wanderers, Emma and Louise, met us some 7 miles in! This was a nice surprise, and they were welcomed by us all, and joined in to finish off the 10-mile walk, continuing along the trail, and the finale of Ynysangharad Park. Afterwards, most of us enjoyed a cold drink in The Tumble Inn to cool down on what was a very enjoyable five hours walking. Thank you to everyone who attended.

Saturday 10th September:
The Knap, Barry - Porthkerry Park circular
Led by Janet Sully



On Saturday 10th September, a select group of seven walkers enjoyed a walk to the west of Barry in perfect weather conditions. We were pleased to welcome three new walkers: Mark, Sandra and Theresa. We first went through Romilly Park, before walking past the remains of the medieval Barry Castle and then descending through a wood into the eastern end of Porthkerry Park. After walking almost the full length of the park, we stopped for refreshments near the café and then headed along a board walk to the coast. The quite steep ascent of the so-called 'Golden Stairs' to the clifftop followed. As we walked towards The Knap, we had clear views across the Channel. We eventually descended to the shoreline, passing the substantial remains of a Roman villa. Finally, we walked around Cold Knap Point before returning to the car park via the beautiful Knap Gardens and lake. No-one rushed back home as we all either stopped for a light lunch in the sun or stayed on to do more exploring.



Sunday 11th September:
Rhymney to Bryn Bach Park
Led by Huw Evans

25 humans and 4 canines came on what was my first attempt to lead a Sunday walk. The venue was Rhymney, and the walk of 7 miles, was a bit shorter than recent ones on a Sunday, thus encouraging a couple of people that may not otherwise have come.

Thankfully, it was a nice clear day enabling us to appreciate the panoramic views of what is quite desolate, but still beautiful countryside. We started from Rhymney railway station and proceeded uphill through a park and on to open countryside where we were accompanied by lots of sheep. After a brief coffee stop on top of the hill, we came down to what would have been a very tricky stile to climb over. Luckily a kind farmer who was repairing the barbed wire fencing beside the stile, unlocked a gate for us to go through instead, thus avoiding the stile (and inevitable complaints!).



We then entered the estate of Bryn Bach Park and through a rather poorly maintained golf course. As well as looking out for any flying golf balls, we had the additional entertainment of watching model aeroplanes being flown by the local club. We proceeded through a bit of woodland before seeing the wonderful sight of the vast lake in Bryn Bach Park. A walk around the lake, and a lunch stop at the impressive visitors centre with hordes of Canada Geese, kept us company. (continued on page 4)

After walking through the entrance to the park with its metal sheep sculptures, we eventually reached the village of Llechryd and some rather grand but ostentatious houses, and then proceeded up to the prominent landmark of the Twisted Chimney sculpture. It was somewhat disappointing to find that it is actually made of plastic, and not bricks as everyone had thought.

We then visited the historic model village of Butetown which was built around 1830 and comprises three rows of housing together with what was a small church, with a little bell tower. These were occupied by iron miners and colliers in the 19th century and provided a better standard of accommodation than the usual valley towns. We passed a school built around the 1900s still having separate entrances for boys and girls, and then proceeded down to the river path where we followed the Rhymney River back to our starting point.

Sunday 18th September: Abercynon, Aberfan and The Giants Bite Led by Andy Fellows & Hayley Thomas

We came across this walk on The Ramblers website and the first time we did so, we really struggled to find our way down, plus it was only 7 miles long! But we loved it, so multiple recces later we had a feasible 10.5-mile route that we were happy with. The weather forecast was good, but it was overcast when 22 of us set out.

The start of the walk followed the Taff Trail, with the river on our left, passing over bridges, under viaducts, and taking in the historical relevance of the Trevithick railway; the first journey by a steam locomotive to pull a load on iron rails in 1804, it pulled a load of 10 tonnes of iron and 70 men, nine miles down the track from Merthyr to Abercynon, all for a bet!



At Merthyr Vale we veered off the path to continue our route to Aberfan Cemetery. Here we had our

lunch and spent time taking in the enormity of the terrible disaster that happened in 1966, when a colliery spoil tip suddenly slid downhill killing 116 children and 28 adults as it engulfed Pantglas Junior School. Many of the parents are now buried with the children they lost, and it is a very beautiful, but sobering memorial to them all. Before we moved on, Andrew called for a minute's silence to remember all those lost souls, our Queen Elizabeth and past fellow Ramblers. (continued on page 5)



Returning through Aberfan we started to climb and the surroundings changed dramatically as we walked through dense forestry, navigating felled trees and eventually emerging on the top of the hill with clear 360 degree views. We followed a track on the Mountain Ash side of the mountain and it wasn't long before we were in view of The Giants Bite. It is a bit of a scramble up to the top, but it is so worth it.

We had a short break here to take in the views and for someone to reflect on how the valley had looked when she was a child. Elaine Lawrence grew up in Mountain Ash and said the sky was full of smoke and the hillsides were ravaged with the coal industry in the area. Elaine and Tony were also celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary, and what a perfect way to spend it.



Our route down was yet another fern jungle, maybe not as high as some we have seen this summer, but equally dense. (Luckily during our last recce we were able to find an alternative route out of the field, as ferns and brambles had totally overrun the original one.) We saw remains of the old Glamorganshire Canal before we finished our walk then had some well-deserved refreshments in the Navigation Inn to finish the day off nicely.

Saturday 24th September:
Peterston-super-Ely to St. Nicholas
Led by Tony Lawrence



The four mile walk started at the footbridge crossing the Ely River at Peterston-super-Ely with 11 adults, two children and a nervous dog. The route made its way through Wyndham Park and onto the fields south of Peterston. Unfortunately, the first field we entered contained a herd of cows with calves. Always a risk with dogs and cattle with calves, we erred on the side of caution, and the owner of the dog and her children abandoned the walk. This was a great disappointment to the leader since the adult and the children were his daughter and grandchildren.

The walk continued without further problems to St Nicholas and a short stop near the church. From there we took the return route across fields and at one point, a panoramic view looking north across the Vale of Glamorgan and beyond.

On return to Peterston, a few of the walkers visited The Sportsmans Rest for a post-walk chat and refreshments. Turned out nice again.



Sunday 25th September:
Bwlch and Llangorse Circular
Led by Tony Lawrence



On a day of warm September weather, seven walkers [plus the leader – Editor] set off on an 11-mile circular route which included the hills either side of Llangorse Lake. The walk started at the car park of the Welsh Venison Centre near the village of Bwlch. After walking through the village, we joined a fairly taxing climb which eventually led to a gently undulating path with views of Llangorse Lake en route.

Four kilometres along the path we came to the trig point at Mynydd Llangorse, and no trig point is passed without a photo opportunity!

The walk resumed on a level path for approx. a kilometre, before a long descent to join a series of footpaths, which eventually led to Llangorse village. At the village we joined a footpath which led to the lake and a lakeside lunch stop.

Lunch over, we set off to circumnavigate the lake and eventually to join a steep, winding path which led to the summit of Allt yr Esgair. We had a short stop here to observe the 360-degree view of the surrounding hills. Below and to the South West lay Talybont and the River Usk and to the North East, Llangorse Lake. There followed a gentle two kilometre descent to Bwlch and our cars.



Just to de-stress, we visited a local hostelry for refreshments before the return journey home. One foolhardy walker (the leader) risked his car wing mirrors to cross the lovely old bridge over the River Usk at Llangynidr, fortunately without incident...this time!



Social Event: Late Summer Luncheon - arranged by Hayley Thomas (Sat. 17th September)



The turnout was low for our Late Summer Luncheon, but as I have said with previous socials, I am quite happy to go ahead, even with a smaller group.

The Old House 1147 was a venue I had seen on Instagram and the setting, and the views really appealed to me. When it was advertised I had a flurry of apologies quite early on; the main being a clash with a coach trip with the Bridgend Ramblers on the same day, but I was encouraged by the positive feedback I was given about The Old House 1147.

So on a crystal-clear sunny Saturday, 11 of us met up in the bar. I was already loving the look and cleanliness of the place and quickly found the front of the house where we were offered two areas of seating. A member of staff explained that there was a large group which had turned out to be a baby shower, and she was mindful that the main dining area may be too noisy for us, therefore we had the option of a little cwtch in the old part of the building, or a front table in the floor to ceiling windowed main dining room. Anyone who knows me would know I would opt for the window seat! The service was not rushed and by booking the last sitting for lunch, we had a very relaxed and rather lovely two-course meal. We were the last people to leave, but it gave us a lovely opportunity to gather on the terrace and take in the wonderful country views. It would be nice to revisit, maybe next summer?



Looking to the future of the group, Tony Yule, who has been our Footpath Secretary for 25 years, has been advised that he needs to consider a successor in the not-too-distant future. Tony will not be retiring just yet, but what he wants now is for someone to shadow him in this role to learn from the vast amount of knowledge he has gained. Within any group, this role is the backbone of the mission that Ramblers pursue, namely the protection of the Rights of Way that have been so hard earned by our predecessors. Tony has been at the forefront of this for an incredible period of time and it is hoped that we can find a suitable replacement, so please let the Ramblers board know if any of you feel that you can commit.

AGM 2022

Our 2022 AGM will be held on Saturday November 5th at the All Hallows Catholic Church Hall commencing at 3pm. As in previous years, there will be a social function as part of the event and members will be asked to contribute food/drinks. More details will follow in due course.



October Walks

Sunday 2nd

Rudry and Waterloo/Cefn Mably Woods
8 miles M - Led by Peter Law

Saturday 8th

Radyr Woods and Glamorgan Canal, 5 miles L -
Led by Lisa Burton

Sunday 9th

Crickhowell and the Beacons Way to Pen Gloch
Y Pibwr & Pen Allt-Mawr, 10.5 miles M+ -
Led by Michelle Mansell

Sunday 16th

Cwm Garw/A loop around Garw Forest,
10 miles M - Led by Tony Yule

Saturday 22nd

Pencoed area, 4-4.5 miles L - Led by Rob Young

Sunday 23rd

Pontypridd, Castellau and Castellau Uchaf,
9 miles M - Led by Tony Lawrence

Sunday 30th

Pontyclun Circular incl. part of Badger Walk 5,
7.8 miles miles M - Led by Julie Brightman





JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday December 3rd, 7:00 pm
All Hallows Catholic Church Hall
Miskin, CF72 8PG.

An Exclusive Roast Experience &
B.Y.O. Drinks.

Entertainment in the form of
Words, Art & Music.

Ticket price person TBC (payable
in advance).

Please also refer to e-mail sent on
23rd Sept.

