



St. Mary's Church & Coity Castle (Bridgend)



Taff Ely

Christmas Party (Sat. 3rd Dec.) - organised by Hayley Thomas



With living costs soaring, and an evening Christmas party to organise, I had to think outside of the box.

As I regularly attend WAM events (Words, Art, Music - nothing to do with the 80's!), I got in touch with organiser Mike Church and we were able to confirm a date.

The All Hallows Church Hall was a perfect venue with its ample parking and plenty of space to lay out the tables. With a few last-minute apologies we were just under 40.

The three entertainers were warmly appreciated, and we even helped Mike create an original Taff Ely Ramblers poem, with a few surprising additions to the suitcase; a few people even got up for a dance.



The catering by Ace Caterers was plentiful and the choice of delicious desserts meant everyone was pleased with their food (especially the vegetarians).

It was lovely to have some emails of thanks on what was mostly described as a 'different' Christmas Party.



There are no other socials planned at the moment, but I am considering a ten-pin bowling night in February.

December 2022

Welcome again to the Taff Ely newsletter which finishes off a successful year for the group.

Thank you to Tony Yule for kindly submitting a trip down memory lane from Christmas 1994.

A special thanks to all those who have organised events, trips and led walks (and submitted reports and photos) this year, it's very much appreciated, but most of all, thank you to all our members who continue to be a part of the Ramblers charity. I'd like to wish you all the best for the year ahead with new memories to boot. 😊

Finally, just for fun, can you spot the two apples in this newsletter? Clue: You will need to zoom in!

Steve Craven
Publicity Officer



On behalf of those who could make it, I would again like to thank Hayley for the efforts made to bring the Christmas night to fruition. It was a unique experience with a lot of fun, and the tree photos were also a nice touch. (Steve)

Saturday 3rd December: Llanfabon - Led by Tony Lawrence



The walk started at Llanfabon Inn car park, which the owners kindly allowed us the use of for the two-hour walk duration. Leaving the car park we crossed a mixture of fields, stiles and minor roads to arrive at the grounds of Llechwen Hall Hotel. The hotel was the venue for the Taff Ely Ramblers Christmas dinner a few years ago.



After skirting the hotel grounds, we made our way along a minor road then crossed an area of open land before following an enclosed path which led into a farmyard. The farm dogs made us aware we were not welcome. Barking and disapproving looks sent us on our way.



Leaving the farm along a bridleway we came to a minor road and almost immediately turned into a lane. Here we crossed a stone stile into fields and joined a footpath leading across a field. At the end of that field, we crossed another stone stile to navigate two more fields to arrive in the vicinity of Llanfabon. A short walk on a minor road completed the walk back to the inn.



Following a quick change into clean shoes, everyone went into the cosy surroundings of the Llanfabon Inn for a post-walk chat and refreshments. It is always good to support an inn that has allowed us to park in their facilities.

Sunday 4th December: Llanharan - Led by Geoff Williams



13 walkers took to the Rhondda hills on a crisp and misty Sunday morning.



With intermittent showers it was a refreshing seven-mile moderate walk led by Geoff, who took them from Llanharan and on to the Glamorgan Ridgeway where they passed the Cariad (Caer) Rocks, Taff Ely wind farm, and St. Peter's Church ruins where they stayed for lunch.



Sunday 11th December: Coity Castle - Led by Andy Fellows & Hayley Thomas

Our Coity Castle walk was inspired after I (Hayley) drove past it en route to Coychurch Crematorium, something I have unfortunately done far too often this year! It made me realise I had never explored the castle, and having driven across the common, I thought there were bound to be some lovely routes to walk which would include visiting the castle. As usual, easier said than done! Our first walk was only five miles long, but it was a nice circular from Coychurch; we then found the Bridgend circular walk and used it to add the extra miles we needed for our walk. After a successful recce we popped into the White Horse pub to ask if we could use their very large car park during our walk, and a deal was struck to buy post-walk drinks in the pub afterwards. (As if most of our group would need any persuasion! Steve/Editor)

A few days prior to our walk there was a forecast for snow, but as it drew closer, the forecast changed, so it was quite a surprise to wake up to a lovely light covering of snow after all. However, the pub car park was like a skating rink, and we were slightly worried it would be the case for our route, but once out of the urban area and across the railway line, it was just open countryside. There were no golfers out on the pristine white fairways of Coed-y-Mwstwr Golf Club.



A little later crossing farmland, we came across a poor sheep caught up in a brambly hedge. Luckily, Huw had a pair of clippers and used them to set it free, even if it did run off with a tangle of brambles still attached. A loud cheer ensued.

Despite the snow, there was not a breath of wind and it felt surprisingly warm enough in the sun to choose an open field to have our first break. We reached the edge of the common then followed the prison wall around, before a stretch of street walking meandering through the large new housing estate. Grey clouds were gathering and by the time we reached the castle it was feeling much colder, so everyone dispersed to find cosy nooks within the ruins of the castle to have their lunch and a little exploration.



We had just three miles left, again through open countryside, encountering three friendly donkeys on the way back to the cosy pub, amazingly all in one piece.

Saturday 17th December: Pendoylan - Led by Tracey Williams

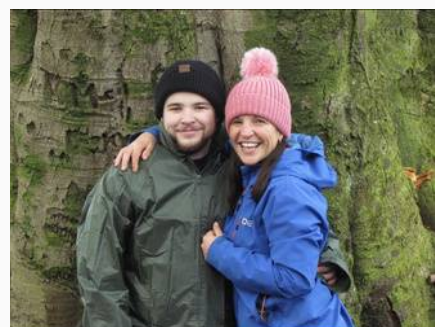
On a crisp winter morning with frost on the ground, 10 members (and my son) joined me on a Saturday stroll starting from the village of Pendoylan.



It was a four-mile walk through the fields and farms with wonderful snow-capped mountain views behind us.



During our coffee break under my favourite tree, we enjoyed Christmas cake and mince pies before heading back past the lake and down into the village. A beautiful morning walk putting us all in the Christmas mood.



Sunday 18th December: - Led by Tony Lawrence

The last Taff Ely walk before Christmas was unfortunately cut short due to treacherous icy conditions. 12 Ramblers joined Tony at Barry Sidings Country Park in the hope that our planned walk over to Ynysybwll (albeit a shorter version due to the weather) was still possible, but alas it was not to be; however, it wasn't for lack of trying.

After a short walk out of Barry Sidings over to Hopkinstown, it was clear that it was going to be too risky, so a decision was made to have a forest walk (Gelliwion Forest) back at the country park instead. (All the while, the rain continued to pour down heavier than it did at the start.)

This, again, proved futile, after we walked up a couple of forest tracks, and we were more concerned about staying safe on the ice rather than appreciating the nature around us. It was then that Tony called off the walk to opt for hot refreshments and a catch up instead, at the Barry Sidings Cafe, before we all headed for home to dry off! Spending time at the café went some way to save the day so all was not lost. Thank you, Tony, for putting safety first.

(Photos on page 5.)

Continued from page 4.



TER Christmas Past at the Lamb and Flag Inn (by Tony Yule)

While out walking recently I passed the site of the old Lamb & Flag Inn at Castellau. This reminded me of the group's first Christmas dinner there in 1994. The walk was led by the late Walter Jones, Chairman at the time. Marvi and I attended with our two grandchildren. The youngest Rebecca, aged just under 4, made Walter laugh as, at times, she was not visible due to the long grass. How time passes, in January this year she became a mother.

Sat 10th	Crickhowell/ Wain Fach/ Black Mountains	9/10 9 am	Jan Gourley 0443 222777
Sunday 18th Dec	Mystery Walk ending with Christmas Lunch at the Lamb & Flag - 4 miles meet 10 am Gillian Bowen 0443 207716 or Janet Roscoe 0443 201344		
Mon 26th	Boxing Day walk at Castle Coch	8 9.30 am	Daphne Little 0443 207689

The Inn is mentioned in the first edition of the Castellau bunny walk where it states "The Lamb and Flag was built during the 16th century. The original building was called "The Inn". Adjoining the inn used to be a mill and oasthouse. The Inn was remodelled in the early 1920's and the symbol of the "Lamb and Flag" comes from the coat of arms of the famous Williams family of Aberpergwm. The last Inn was burnt down and has been replaced by a private residence."



For some reason this was removed from the latest edition of this bunny walk. Walter always considered the Inn to be a stopping place for those undertaking the Penrhys Pilgrimage. The modern 'Way', designed in recent times, passes close to the Inn. (My suggestion that the route should pass the site of the Inn was rejected.) The original name comes from the symbol of Christ as the victorious Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) from the Book of Revelation.

Social Media



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Taff Ely Ramblers



January 2023 walks programme

Monday 2nd

From Hensol Forest nr. Welsh St. Donats
7 miles M - Led by Tony Lawrence

Sunday 8th

Mynydd Gelliwion & Mynydd y Glyn
8 miles M - Led by Tony Yule

Saturday 14th

Meet at top of Enterprise Way, Llanharan
4 miles L - Led by Geoff Williams

Sunday 15th

Pentyrch - parking at Pentyrch RFC
8.5 miles M - Led by Tracey Williams

Sunday 22nd

Cold Knap 7-8 miles M - Led by Colin Owen

Saturday 28th

Ynysybwl - meet at Clydach Park
4.5 miles L - Led by Tony Lawrence

Sunday 29th

Nelson - parking on Caerphilly Road
7.5 miles M - Led by Peter Law

