



Celebrating Twenty-Two Years of Walking in the Vale

VALEWAYS

Yn dathlu dwy flynedd a'r hugain o gerdded yn y Fro



Newsletter Summer 2018

*“Let’s go to Barry Island, Maggie fach,
And give all the kids one day by the sea,
And sherbet and buns and paper hats,
And a rattling ride on the Figure Eight;
We’ll have tea on the sands and rides on the donkeys,
And sit in the evening with the folk of Cwm Rhondda,
Singing the sweet old hymns of Pantycelyn
When the sun goes down beyond the rocky islands...”*

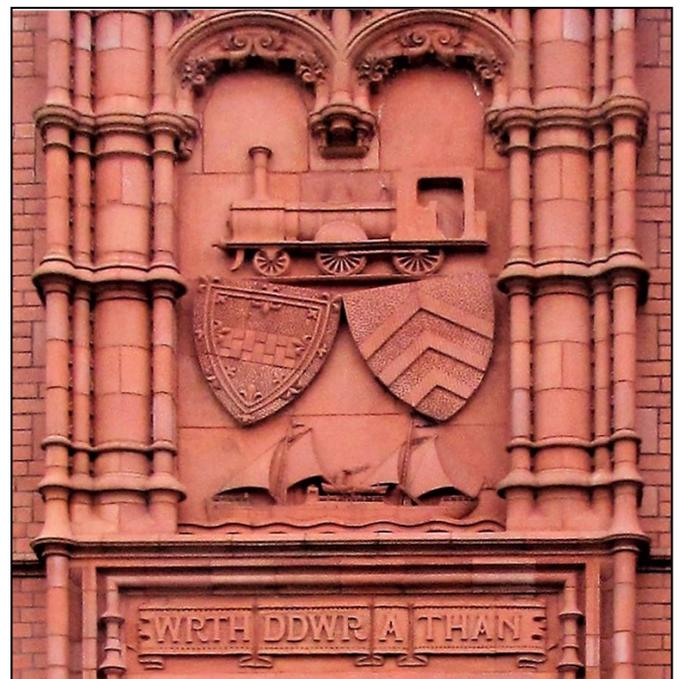
What an appropriate poem to welcome the long awaited Summer and the latest Valeways Newsletter and Walks Programme! The poet Idris Davies, an ex-miner and a teacher was born in Rhymney and is probably best known for his poem ‘Bells of Rhymney’ which was later adapted into a popular folk ballad by Pete Seegar.

While the poem reflects on the happy experiences of valleys folk as they visit the seaside on their annual day trip it also serves as a reminder of the hardship experienced by generations of workers in the South Wales valleys and how important was their day away from the coal face and the ‘big black tips’. Modern day living highlights the contrast even more, with the ferris wheel replacing the pit wheel and pithead baths giving way to supermarkets and retail parks.

‘Come on, Maggie fach, or the train will be gone’

The accompanying photo is a detail of the Pier Head Building in Cardiff Bay featuring the words ‘WRTH DDŴR A THÂN’ (by fire and water) – the contrasting elements which made the South Wales Valleys the bedrock of industry and made Maggie’s journey possible.

As she travelled down to ‘the holiday sea’ little did she think that in years to come her beloved train would be owned by a French / Italian company and that the old engine might end its days at Barry scrapyard.



'And leave our troubles behind for the day'

Welcome to the new Walks Programme for the period which includes August but also peeps through the door of Autumn. The programme starts off with an evening walk around Barry Island but despite the obvious attractions of the island, the Vale has much more to offer. The second walk reflects the Walking Programme's usual varied fare with another evening walk, this time to a new destination, Clemenstone and onto Llandow. Another evening walk invites us to visit Broughton before the evening light begins to fade. 🦶 **Look out for more walks later in the Newsletter.**

'And put on your best and come out to the sun ...'

On Tuesday 15 May, the 9th Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival, one of the biggest free walking festivals in the UK got under way in perfect weather. Over four hundred walkers participated in the six day event and each of the twenty eight walks on offer, from a two mile stroll around Aberthaw to the eight mile trek 'Down to the Sea' at Ogmere was greeted with a clear sky and sunshine! The festival launch took place at Porthkerry Country Park in the shadow of the magnificent Porthkerry Viaduct. Following a walk around the country park led by Site Ranger Mel Stewart over 40 walkers returned to the lodge for refreshments and a well-earned rest in preparation for a busy week's walking!



Mel Stewart, giving an introductory talk before leading the launch walk around Porthkerry Park.



The Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Cllr Leighton Rowlands accompanied by the Mayor of Cowbridge, Cllr Sian Vaughan launching this year's festival in glorious sunshine!

🦶 **Look out for the August walk, 'Porthkerry and Around' in the Walking Programme.**

Llantwit Major also held its own launch and walks, one exploring the Llantwit lanes and the other, the beach and the cliffs.

'Come, Maggie fach, with a rose on your breast'

Penarth is often referred to as 'The Garden by the Sea' and with good reason. Penarth walks are always a pleasure, particularly on warm summer evenings where walkers can amble through beautiful parks with their coloured flower beds, topiary trees and even an aviary, all overlooking the stunning coastline. No wonder one of the Festival Walks was named 'Penarth Scenic Walk' (Walk led by Marian Eynon).

 See also the walk **'Gemau Cudd - Hidden Gems'** in the current Walks Programme.

As the walkers approached Saint Augustine's Church they were pleasantly surprised at a notice declaring 'Church Open Today'. With a few minutes to spare they were able to marvel at its striking interior before continuing their journey.

'And an old Welsh tune on your little red lips ...'



A visit to the church is never complete without paying respects to possibly Wales' best known composer, Dr Joseph Parry who is buried in the cemetery. It was disappointing however that, after a concerted fundraising effort by Friends of St Augustine's over a year ago there was little evidence of any progress. The path to this grave is distinguishable only by the well-trodden grass made by the feet of numerous musical pilgrims. The beautiful marble headstone is yet to be cleaned.

This was in marked contrast to the regimented array of war gravestones with their carefully manicured grass verges at Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery (walk led by Cllr. Nic Hodges). The walk was based on the theme of 'Memorable Women of Barry – their stories' and it was significant that many women, including the artist Margaret Lindsay Williams are buried in unmarked graves. Arriving at the war gravestones Cllr Hodges paused a while to reflect on the number of graves in this part of the cemetery and paid particular attention to that of H Burton, a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, Died 14 February 1942, aged 20 - the only woman serving in the armed forces to be buried at the cemetery.



From a simple, single grave, walkers were directed to a family grave where lie six members of the same family who made a contribution not only to Barry but also to the wider world - Major Edgar Jones, ex Head Teacher of Barry County School and his wife, Annie Gwen Vaughan Jones, Secretary of the Cardiff and District Women's Suffrage Society along with their daughters, ex Headmistress of Barry Girls School, Gwyneth Valerie Vaughan Jones and Eirian Vaughan Lewis. Also buried in the grave is Gwen's sister, Winifred. The grave also contains the ashes of their son, the journalist Gareth Richard Vaughan Jones. Despite efforts to 'airbrush' him from the history books, Gareth Jones eventually gained worldwide recognition for exposing Stalin's 'Holodomor', the mass starvation of the Ukrainian people in 1932-33. The man who was regarded as 'a solitary beacon of light illuminating the darkness of a tumultuous world of evil tyranny' became 'the man who knew too much' and was himself murdered in Mongolia in 1935.



Cllr. Nic Hodges pauses at the grave of six members of the Jones family

A film simply titled, 'Gareth Jones' portraying the life of the journalist is to be released shortly. The actor James Norton, best known for his role in 'McMafia' and 'Grantchester' and of course the thematically appropriate 'War and Peace' plays the leading role.

Members of the Jones family were also remembered on the 'Memorable Women of Barry' walk (led by Rebecca Exley and aided by Jane Hutt AM and Prof Dee Beddoe) where 25 walkers visited the home of Annie Gwen Vaughan Jones and Gwyneth at 11 Porth y Castell, Barry.



The walk is part of a longer Barry Women's Trail, originally devised to honour significant women across the town. The tour also included visiting the home of composer Grace Williams and remembered Cllr Margaret Alexander, the first female Leader of the Vale Council and Lucy Dickenson, Founder of the SAFE charity and human rights campaigner, at the bench in her memory on The Knap.

Walkers having a well-earned rest while visiting the memorial seat to Lucy Dickenson at The Knap.

An additional feature on the ‘Sea, Tees and Stairs’ walk through Romilly Park, led by Lynne Frugniet, was the presence of the second ‘Friendship Tree’, fresh with adornments and personal messages. The tree was the subject of some publicity recently when a number of stones forming a circle around its base were removed – possibly to enhance someone’s personal rockery?

 **Look out for the tree on the ‘Sea, Stairs and Trees’ walk in the current programme.**



Artist and inspiration for the Friendship Tree project Glyn Pooley at the Romilly Park launch deep in thought, possibly contemplating Dolly Parton’s words - “The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.”

(Western Mail 21/4/18)

‘We’ll carry the sandwiches in a big paper bag...’

Did you see the extent of the ‘tsunami of litter’ left after a day on Barry Island recently? Promoting a sound sense of social responsibility has always been one of Valeways’ proud achievements. This was implemented in a very practical and direct way during the Sundowner Walk, (led by Mike Edwards) when a small group of walkers came equipped with bags and diligently filled them with ‘holiday sea’ litter as they walked along the trail. Well done you!

‘When the sun goes down beyond the rocky islands’

It has become a tradition that the last walk of the festival, called appropriately ‘The Sundowner’ is an evening walk around Barry Island. The walk finished as always at ‘Coffee Cove’, a popular ‘watering hole’ with a number of walking groups. This was an opportunity for folk to reflect on the success of the Walking Festival and possibly to discuss ideas for the next one! Many thanks to all who contributed in any way to the success of yet another walking festival.



Dave Phillips bidding farewell to the ninth Walking Festival on the Sundowner Walk

'...and the rival soup-kitchens, quarrelling like hell...'

The second Friends of Valeways Tour took place on Saturday 12 May when over twenty 'Friends' gathered together in Cardiff Bay for a tour of the Senedd building. The tour was led by the Senedd's Visitor Tour Manager, Richard Gwyn Jones, ably aided by Jane Hutt AM who provided a fascinating insight into the day to day running of the Welsh Assembly.



Photo: Patrick Davies



Jane Hutt AM presenting a cheque to Valeways Treasurer Colin Dunford during the tour of the Senedd

This photo of Jane Hutt AM renewing her annual membership of Friends of Valeways is a 'friendly' and timely reminder to us to renew our memberships!

The next 'Friends' event will be on Saturday, 8 September when a walk around Dyffryn, with refreshments to follow, will be led by Valeways Honorary President, television personality and Wenvoe resident, Derek Brockway!

If you wish to support the charity by joining the scheme and take part in its special events or to renew your membership please contact Carolyn Gully on 01446 749000 or go to www.friendsofvaleways.com. In the meantime however, anyone wishing to make a donation to Valeways can do so by using <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/valeways>.

Many thanks to all who donated to Valeways.



'...and sherbet and buns and paper hats...?'

The 'St Thomas Way', a new heritage route inspired by a real medieval pilgrimage will be launched at Hereford Cathedral on Saturday 7 July. The day-long event complete with story-telling, guest lectures and children's activities and dressing up will celebrate the launch. Pilgrims on the route from Swansea to Hereford will be given the opportunity to visit Llancafán and to share the delights of St Cadoc's Church on their way.

Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report

It was a delight to get back to work in May and to be able to participate in the Walking Festival. Many thanks to everyone who helped push me in the wheelchair. I am now back to driving the Land Rover and have been able to join the Thursday walk and clear team. Greg, and the Tuesday volunteers have been doing sterling work putting up the new way markers on the circular routes. They have completed 10 of the walks so far which has involved the installation of almost 1000 disks!

David and Tony are also making great progress on walking and checking the Millennium Heritage Trail. They have completed approximately two thirds of the route which represents almost 400 miles!

With the routes all freshly marked it would be great to recruit some new walk leaders to explore the paths and keep them open. We also need volunteers to adopt the leafleted routes. This involves walking the path in May and September and reporting any problems back to me. If you think you might be interested in any volunteering opportunities please do get in touch for a chat.

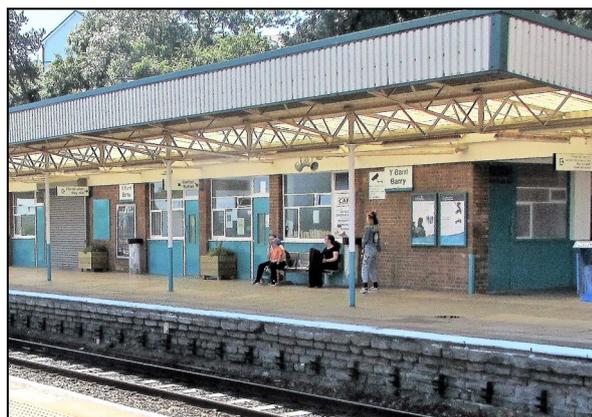
Rebecca Exley Volunteer Co-ordinator

'We'll have tea on the sands and rides on the donkeys...?'

Plans are well under way for the art exhibition by Valeways walkers and friends. Currently ten artists have agreed to exhibit their work in 'valeways@railways' exhibition at Travellers Gallery, Barry Station. The exhibition will run for five weeks from 10 September to 19 October. While we can't guarantee 'tea on the sands and rides on the donkeys', a Private View will be held at Travellers Gallery on **Thursday 13th September**. This is an ideal opportunity for artists to invite family and friends to see the work in an informal setting. The exhibition is an additional platform for our artists to exhibit their work and Valeways with some additional publicity. If there are any artists who have not yet declared an interest please contact cenwilliams@aol.com for more details.

The walk  **'Celf yn yr Oriol – Valeways Art Track'** starting at Barry Station on 18 September, led by Ruth King is sure to include a tour of the exhibition.

***"The next exhibition on Platform 1 is
valeways@railways arriving on 10th September 2018"***



'Singing the sweet old hymns of Pantycelyn'



A particularly picturesque and indeed invigorating walk seldom seen on our walks programme (any takers?) is one which takes in St Curig's Church, Porthkerry. The small window on the south wall of the church is a delight particularly on a summer's day as the sun's rays shine through and light up the nave.

The beauty of the church is not limited to the interior. The church was recently awarded a restoration grant by Cadw, on condition that the exterior be lime washed - a traditional and very effective way of protecting and waterproofing stone walls. The church set about finding specialist contractors to carry out the work. Facing an estimated bill of around £14,000 however the congregation decided to do the lime washing themselves. What a fine example of community spirit!

"We, the congregation of St Curig's know all too well that we are merely custodians of this lovely old church, here to do our bit to preserve it for future generations to enjoy."

Members of the church hard at work on a previous lime wash day.

The next lime wash session has been arranged for Saturday 28 July. According to the working party they are always on the look-out for volunteers!



Even in such a pleasant setting, reminders of darker days are not far away. The lychgate was built as a memorial to the local men who lost their lives in World War I and during the restoration of the organ a few years ago a piece of timber complete with a painted roundel was discovered. At the time it was thought that this was a remnant from a First World War bi-plane. This generated an interesting debate as to the true identity of this military hardware and how it found its way into the organ! The irony that possibly 'this fragment of a machine of war should now form part of an instrument more associated with harmony and joy' has not gone amiss!

The churchyard is also the resting place of Cpt. Heinz Karl Lipschutz, an inventor, a Rhoose resident and acclaimed 'Father of the U plane' – an underwater, heavier- than- water steerable 'airplane'. In an interview in 1996 Cpt. Lipschutz refers to the plane's potential use for ocean led exploration and exploitation but also to its 'military implications'. There are also gravestones for three unknown sailors in the churchyard.

In response to the article on alabaster in the previous Newsletter, the Valeways office received a message from Mike Statham, the author of the book 'Penarth Alabaster'. We are pleased to relay the message that the book is on sale at Insole Court, Llandaff, at Cardiff Castle Shop or from the author himself. For more information please contact the office.

Overheard on the radio recently when discussing the game of marbles – the word 'alley' commonly used in these parts for a marble is derived from the word alabaster.



If what happens to spare way markers has ever crossed your mind then one sharp eyed walker might have an answer! Although we aren't sure if Glen Stevens was coming or going we hope she got home safely. Thanks Glen for sending us this photo. Needless to say we have it on good authority that this was nothing to do with Valeways!

The 'Ups and Downs' of way markers was spotted by Glen on one of her regular walks.

So, to finish where we started as it were. This extract from a poem by Graham Davies was set to music by the composer Paul Maelor to celebrate the opening of the Fifth National Assembly in The Senedd, Cardiff Bay, on 7 June 2016.

The brightest daylight makes the darkest shade.

The sunset makes a pathway through the sea.

The flame that burns to ashes makes a home.

The fire that makes the chain can make the key.

The poem is called 'By Fire and Water'.

... 'And we'll all sing together in the Cardiff train

Down to the holiday sea.'

and finally ...

