

# *Penarth* WOMEN'S *Trail*



A trail featuring 15 famous Penarth women

Kathleen Evans OBE    Mary Glynn

Ray Howard-Jones

Constance Maillard

Catherine Meazey

Edith Pamell

Margaret (Bunty) Thomas

Kathleen Thomas

Elizabeth Sheppard-Jones

Emily Pickford

Sheila Noel Gibbs

Hester (Hettie) Mackenzie

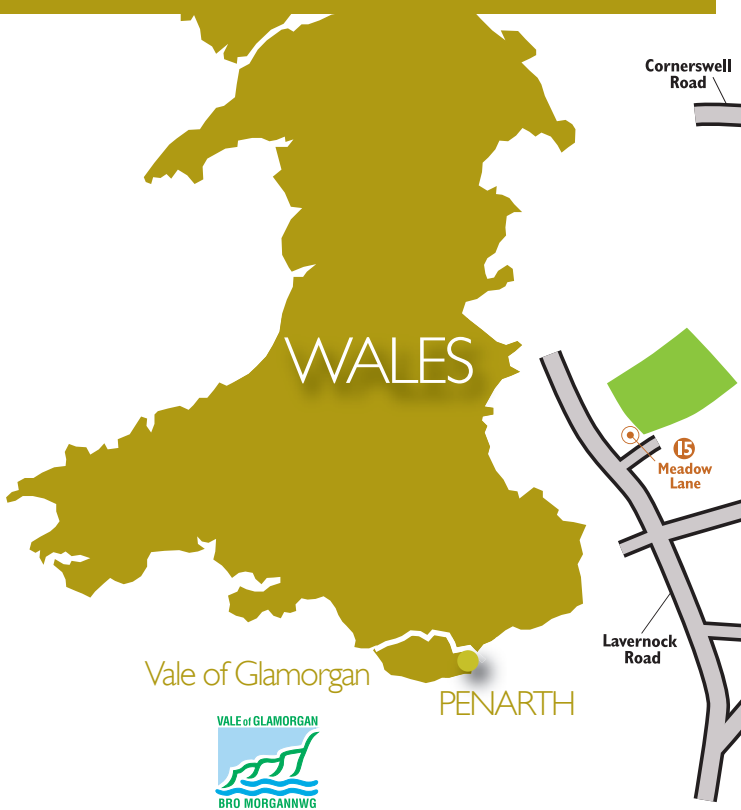
Joan Collins

Hilda Cross

Evelyn Allen

# *Penarth* WOMEN'S *Trail*

Following on from the popular Barry Women's Trail this booklet celebrates the many Penarth women who have achieved great things during their lives. Continuing the same format from the companion booklet the entries will take you on a tour of Penarth while recording their significant contributions to public life.



[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)





There are a number of cafes in Penarth to stop at during your tour - in the town centre, at the Esplanade and the cliff top.

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Edith Parnell             | 9 Constance Mary Maillard BEM   |
| 2 Catherine Guthrie Meazey  | 10 Rosemary (Ray) Howard-Jones  |
| 3 Marguerite (Bunty) Thomas | 11 Kathleen (Kath) Evans OBE JP |
| 4 Hester (Hettie) Mackenzie | 12 Eveline Allen                |
| 5 Hilda Janet Cross         | 13 Sheila Margaret Noel Gibbs   |
| 6 Joan Collins              | 14 Mary Glynne                  |
| 7 Emily Ada Pickford        | 15 Elisabeth Sheppard-Jones     |
| 8 Kathleen Thomas           |                                 |



## 1 Edith Parnell

1913 - 1938

**Special place of interest** HarbourView Road  
CF64 1HE

Edith was a distance swimmer who swam from Penarth to Weston-super-Mare in August 1929, when she was just 16 years old. She then became the first woman reporter for the Reuters News Agency in Paris and London and the first woman editor of a Sunday newspaper. Later the editorial manager of Higham's advertising agency she tragically died at just 25 after giving birth to a child in 1938, who also died.

## 2 Catherine Guthrie Mezey

1879 - 1957

**Special place of interest** Catherine Mezey Flats, Queen's Road  
CF64 1HL

Catherine was a noted benefactor, especially to the poor and needy during the Great Depression and both World Wars. She organised a Cigarette Fund for soldiers in First World War; the Penarth Santa Claus Fund for the needy and created the Samaritan Fund. The latter provided aid for the sick throughout the year and made gifts of coal at Christmas time. The flats were named after her in recognition of her good work.

## 3 Marguerite (Bunty) Thomas

1919 - 2003

**Special place of interest** Commemorative Bench, St. Augustine's Church, Church Place South CF64 1BA

Marguerite was a much-respected and inspirational ballet teacher in Penarth. She was made a Life Member of the Royal Academy of Dance for her lifelong dedication to the teaching of dance. Many of her students achieved successful entries to the Royal Ballet School and other university dance training courses. The event 'Dancing Together' managed by the Royal Academy of Dance, Wales Region, was made possible by a generous bequest from her, leaving a legacy of her continued devotion to dance.



#### 4 **Hester (Hettie) Millicent Mackenzie** 1863 - 1942

**Special place of interest** 107 Glebe Street CF64 1ED  
Used as a suffrage shop and campaign HQ

Hettie was a suffragist and professor of education and in fact was the first woman in Britain to be addressed as 'professor'. She was the first Welsh woman to stand for Parliament in 1918. A branch of the suffragist movement, dedicated to winning the vote for women, was founded in Cardiff in 1908 and Hettie was one of the founding members.

#### 5 **Hilda Janet Cross** 1917 - 2013

**Special place of interest** Albert Road Post Office  
CF64 1XL

Born in Penarth, Hilda joined the Post Office in the 1930s and trained in London. She became a counter clerk in Penarth and later taught at the Post Office training school in Cardiff. In a male-dominated world, Hilda rose through the ranks to become Postmistress of Albert Road Post Office in Penarth, where she worked until her retirement in 1977. She was a lifelong member of the Albert Road Methodist Church, holding many different offices, including treasurer/secretary of the ladies' Sisterhood until she was almost 90.

#### 6 **Joan Collins** 1931 - 2008

**Special place of interest** Penarth Library, Stanwell Road  
CF64 2YT

Born in Somerset, Joan moved to Penarth in 1953. She had a varied career first as a medical social worker, doing research work, before becoming a teacher and trainer of social workers. Joan edited and coordinated 'We Remember it Well' and 'I could have told you' oral reminiscence historical books for the Penarth Past Oral History Group and helped produce the four book historical series.



## 7 Emily Ada Pickford

1881 - 1919

**Special place of interest** War Memorial, Alexandra Park, Beach Road CF64 1FN

Penarth War Memorial remembers many residents but one name that stands out it is that of a civilian - and a woman - Emily Pickford who died in France on February 7, 1919 – a 'tragic death, brought about by the conflict of war by a strange quirk of fate'. Emily was a musician, elocutionist and a singer and conductor of the Penarth Ladies Choir. She won many Eisteddfod trophies and adjudicated at several. Emily also toured the Western Front to entertain the troops. On the night of her death she had performed at a concert in Gouy, France, along with several others, but while travelling back to their base at Abbeville their car slid over an icy bank into the River Somme. Her body is buried at Abbeville Communal Extension Cemetery.

## 8 Kathleen Thomas

1908 - 1987

**Special place of interest** Penarth Pier, The Esplanade CF64 3AU

At the age of 21 Kathleen was the first person to swim the Bristol Channel from Penarth to Weston-Super-Mare on 5 September 1927 and the first long distance swimming champion of Wales. The 11 mile channel swim (but equivalent to twice that due to the tide and currents) was commemorated by a plaque on Penarth Pier in 2007 - the 80th anniversary of her swim.



Emily Pickford  
War Memorial



Kathleen Thomas  
Plaque on Pier



'Not One of Ours' 1942, Ray Howard-Jones



**9 Constance Mary Maillard, BEM** 1880 - 1984

**Special place of interest** Italian Gardens, The Esplanade CF64 3AU

Constance was a Penarth councillor and social campaigner. She was the first woman chairman of Penarth Urban District Council (1924-25) and proposed the formation of a seafront garden on the Esplanade, which later became the Italian Gardens. Constance was the first secretary of the Penarth Suffragist Society and was later awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM), for her outstanding work as centre organiser of the Penarth district of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS).

**10 Rosemary (Ray) Howard-Jones** 1903 - 1996

**Special place of interest** Turner Gallery held her exhibitions - Plymouth Road CF64 3DH

Known as Ray Howard-Jones and 'Ray the Paint', she was a WW2 war artist and painter in the romantic tradition. She spent her formative years in Penarth painting Welsh scenes. Many of her paintings depicted shipping in the Bristol Channel preparing for the D-Day Normandy landings, thus achieving the distinction of becoming one of a handful of female accredited war artists. She also painted the coastal areas along Penarth. In 1948 she received a commission to record the islands of Flat Holm and Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel.

**11 Kathleen (Kath) Evans, OBE, JP** 1925 - 1999

**Special place of interest** West House, Stanwell Road CF64 2YG

Kath Evans was an active member of political, social and charitable organisations both locally in the Vale and nationally. She was a town councillor, a teacher, a magistrate (and later chairman of the bench) and became chairman of Penarth Town Council during 1961-1962.



**12 Eveline Allen**

died 1999

**Special place of interest**

West House, Stanwell Road CF64 2YG

Eveline was a teacher of French, with a love of French language and culture. She was a member of the Twinning Committee from its inception in 1969 and a great contributor to twinning exchanges between Penarth and St Pol de Leon. She was awarded the Freedom of St Pol de Leon in 1994 for her promotion of twinning relations.

**13 Sheila Margaret Noel Gibbs**

1912 - 2004

**Special place of interest**

Trinity Methodist Church, Stanwell Road CF64 2EX

Sheila Gibbs was a benefactor and social reformer and a major figure in the Trinity Methodist Church. She played an active role in the church drama group as actress, director, costume designer and playwright. Sheila helped develop the family Gibbs Charitable Trust making grants and donations to worthy causes and was also the pioneering first woman on the General Purposes Committee of the Methodist Church.

**14 Mary Glynne**

1895 - 1954

**Special place of interest**Paget Rooms, Victoria Road CF64 3EG  
(between 1932-40 was the Regal Cinema)

Mary Glynne was a Penarth-born actress affectionately known as the 'Penarth Girl'. She started her career in 1908 in a play called The Dairymaids at the Princess Theatre, Manchester. She appeared in 24 films, both silent and talkies, and had many West End stage successes. Her best known roles were in The Good Companion (1933) and The Angelus (1937).

**14**Mary Glynne  
Paget Rooms



# 15 Elisabeth Sheppard-Jones

1920 - 2004

**Special place of interest** Meadow Lane  
CF64 3QH

Elisabeth Sheppard-Jones was a published author of children's books – of Welsh history and stories of Wales, including 'Forty-one Tales from Celtic Heritage for Children'. She was for many years a manager at Headlands School. Elisabeth was confined to a wheelchair after becoming a victim of a war-time V1 flying bomb whilst attending a service at the Guard's Chapel, Wellington Barracks, London in June 1944. The attack killed 121 people.



3

Bunty Thomas  
St Augustine's Church



12

Kath Evans, West House



11



Eveline Allen

6



Penarth Library  
Joan Collins

7

Emily Pickford  
War Memorial



Kathleen Thomas  
Plaque on Pier



8



10

Ray Howard-Jones

Edith Parnell  
HarbourView Road



1



Constance Maillard  
Italian Gardens

9

Elisabeth Sheppard-Jones

15



Hilda Cross, Albert Road Post Office



5



13

Sheila Gibbs, Trinity Church

2



Catherine Meazey Flats

4



Hettie Mackenzie  
107 Glebe Street

