

Penllyn: Walk 1 (5.8 km)



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Following the route marked by blue dots, start at the Cross Inn pub (01446 772995) on the Cowbridge-Llantwit Major road, where the key to Llanfrynach Church is available. As you leave the pub, note the hill rising E surmounted by *Caer Dynnaf*, an Iron Age fort, overlooking the crossing of the river *Thaw* at Cowbridge. Cross main road and turn right into lane and go down the hill until the church is seen on your left

Llanfrynach Church



The Church is named after St Brynach, an Irish monk who lived a humble and penitent life in the 6th century. The current structure dates from the 13th century, perhaps earlier, but the church is isolated from habitation. This was not always so, as excavations at the E end of the churchyard discovered medieval buildings, finally deserted in the 16th century. Reasons for the desertion are not known but suggestions include water table change, plague and conflict.

Although the church has been frequently repaired, it has been little modernized, and retains its oil lamps. There were no pews, just stone wall-seats available for the infirm, giving rise to the expression "the weakest to the wall". The simplicity of the church only enhances the distinctly medieval atmosphere.

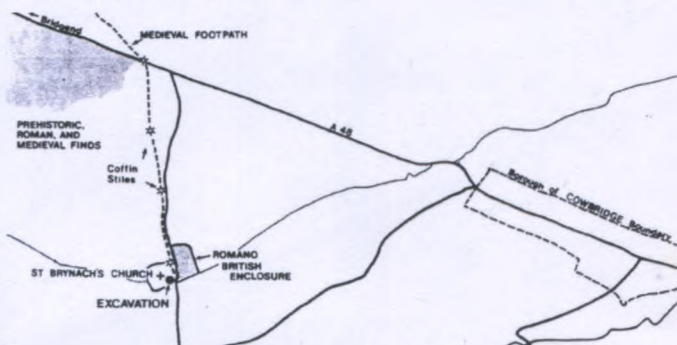
On leaving the church go to N boundary.

Coffin Stiles

This double stile, the first of four heading N, is of a kind unique to the Vale. The stiles lead to the chapel of rest in Penllyn, a journey of over 1 kilometre, and the central pillar would have been used to rest the coffin while the pallbearers negotiated the stile. *Go back to lane.*



Romano British enclosure



The map shows the location of an enclosure, now ploughed out. Here was found samian ware and various coarsewares of 2nd to 4th centuries indicating a Romano-British settlement. The word Llan means an enclosure and it is interesting to speculate that there may have been occupation at Llanfrynach, and perhaps an early shrine, from Roman times to the Norman era. *Go N along lane*

A48

The A48 in Penllyn is on a natural route that has probably been used for thousands of years. The early traveller, having crossed the River Thaw, would head to the lowest crossing point of the Ewenny River. The Romans built the current straight road which connected Cardiff with Neath.

As you walk W along the footpath you are walking the route of the roman legions, who would have protected this valuable agricultural area.

Morning Star

As you walk up the hill before reaching Pentre Meyrick you may just be able to see rubble in an enclosure in the field opposite. This was the Morning Star pub, one of three around Pentre Meyrick, serving the coaching trade on the old turnpike.

Cross Farm

Carry on W to the crossroads and on the opposite side of the road is a modern house built on the site of The Travellers Rest, the second pub at Pentre Meyrick

Pentre Meyrick

This crossing point is at the centre of a bronze age landscape. A hundred metres S on the Llysworney road is a robbed out barrow, which contained a funerary urn (i.e. holding human remains). Just to the N are further barrows and locations of flint scatters. Some 500M to the SW are the lumps and mounds, which mark the site of the fortified Iron Age settlement of Mynydd Bychan, locally "Humpty Dumpty" excavated in 1950 by H N Savory, and occupied from 50BC to 100 AD, and with a later period of medieval settlement. One resident recalls the excavation "my dad dug up a Roman coin just across the road from there. And I showed it to Dr Savory from the Welsh Museum when they were excavating in the Humpty Dumpty and "Oh", he said, "It's a first issue of Roman coinage" So there was a Roman presence here. He said that the coin must have been a month's wages for that legionnaire or whatever. He must have been very annoyed when he lost that!" *Note house to N & W of crossroads*

Crosswinds

This renovated cottage is believed to have been the Kings Head, the third pub. The occupants say that, in the old "snug", they occasionally can detect the smell of hops. Later the house saw use as the local police station. *Cross A48, head N, take first road right and go E along road.*



Great House Farm



This house is the renovated barn (photo pre-renovation) of the original farmhouse next door to the right. In living memory it saw use as a bakery and the loft space used as accommodation by itinerant workers at harvest. To the front of the house is a pond, actually a large paved water trough. This is one survivor of 11 once scattered around the village not only for cattle but also a defense against fire. The Cambrian newspaper in the 19th Century reported at least one major fire every year in the parish. *Note house to right*

Great House

This is a 17th century house which once had extensive farm buildings and orchards around. Documentary evidence is



sparse but from 1800 it appears to be owned by Nicholl of Cowbridge but it was always rented or leased, usually to the incumbent of the church (Llanfrynach and the chapel of ease). There was never a parsonage and the Living was always split between three families in turn. The third story of the house appears a later addition, the previous roofline visible when last re-rendered. *Go W to junction, to house to right of gates*

The Lodge

Pre 1846 a priest's house and glebe garden were on this site. The priest's house was demolished and the stone used for the boundary walls. The lodge was then built, but on a different alignment, by the Homfrays.



The otter was the crest to the Homfray coat of arms, with the motto "Vulneratur non vincitur" or "Wounded but defiant"
Go 10MS.

Hall House



These are the remains of a T-shaped 14th century Hall House, surviving only as a full height cross wall with fireplace, foundations and first floor doorway. The ground floor would probably have been the kitchen area with the living space on the first floor. *Go S on the "new road" built when the original road was closed (see Walk 2)*

Keepers Lodge

This lodge house would have been built c1860 and also bears the carving of the otter, though the fletching is no longer clear.



Take FP through gates 50M N of Keepers Lodge and head SE

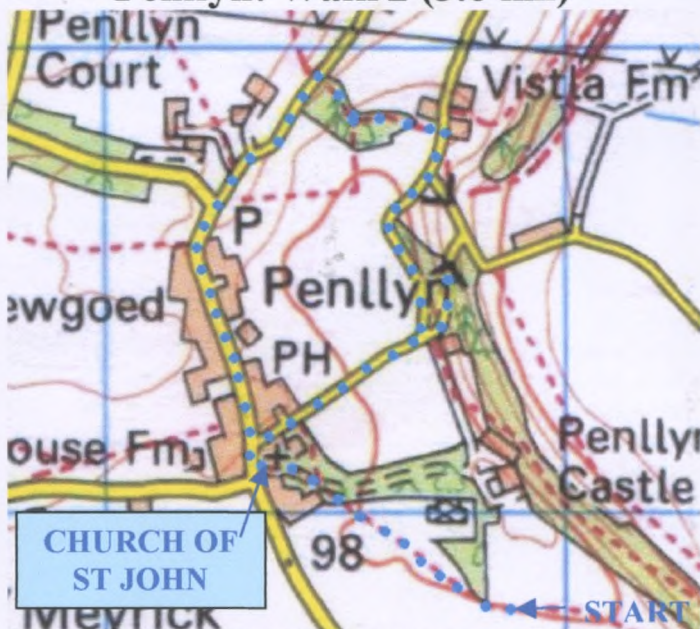
Beech Wood

Believed to have been planted between 1840 and 1860, the wood is now used for paintball games. *Go S through wood over stiles, cross fences via stiles and go diagonally left up hill to A48. Cross A48 and go 50M E to coffin stile.*

Coffin stile

Go S over stiles or via lane and back up to Cross Inn where you can return the church key and obtain some well-earned refreshments.

Penllyn: Walk 2 (3.6 km)



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To get to the start point you will need to go through the gates of Church of St John, go E along road and take the signed FP on the right through gate and go SE until the castle is in view

Penllyn Castle

Robert Fitzhammon beat Iestyn ap Gwrgan in battle c1090 to become lord of Glamorgan. On his death his daughter, Maud, inherited and she married Robert the Consul, Earl of Gloucester, in 1121. Earl Robert appointed Robert Norreys as Sheriff of Glamorgan, a post he also held under William, Earl Robert's son, a position which would have given Norreys great power. Sometime prior to 1135 Robert Norreys was granted Penllyn and Llanmihangel as two knights fees and it seems likely that Norreys would have built the castle at this time. From its bluff above the valley of the river Thaw it commanded the route from the Welsh held lordship of Senghenydd into the ancient Borough of Cowbridge, protecting part of the Norman held Vale and the coast. Today just the N and E walls of the keep remain (photo, 1923) as part of the outbuildings of the current manor house.



Around 1400 the male line of the Norreys failed and Tomkin Turberville married Lucy Norreys to gain not only a wife but also the castle and one third of the manor. The Turberville control of the castle lasted until the end of the 17th century but by then it was a poor Tudor style farmhouse attached to the ruins of a castle. The farmhouse manor is reported twice rebuilt until finally in 1789 a Miss Gwinnett inherited the estate and she had sufficient money to build 'an elegant



modern mansion in which some remains of an ancient edifice were incorporated' (photo overleaf, castle in 1894)

After her death the castle/mansion became something of a white elephant and it must have been rather dilapidated when John Homfray of Llandaff acquired it in 1846 and set about creating a fashionable 19th century estate, with grand entrance gates and a Baronial style Lodge complete with coat of arms. The old 'back entry lane' became a sinuous winding driveway of white spar and specimen trees, to suddenly open out to a vista of the Vale, visible from the front doorway of the manor. The 600-year-old driveway, which once led direct to the turnpike and Cowbridge, was completely removed and the parkland was landscaped. New roads were paved and walls built to define the northern and western boundaries. The village acquired a new life. *Go back to Church of St John*

Church of St John



The Church of St John is really a Chapel of Ease for Llanfrynach. The visible walls are all 15th century masonry probably built by the Turberville family. John Homfray completely refurbished the Chapel and dedicated it to his wife, who died the same year he moved. It was reputed that he spent a thousand pounds on this work and at this time wages were about eight pence a week for a labourer. The new estate walls enclosed the previously open Chapel, which led to a County Court confrontation with the villagers. Finally the Homfray family was allowed to retain the walls but with a permanent pedestrian access to the Chapel – hence the kissing gate. They were also allowed to close the driveway through the Parkland but were required to make access for carriages to the Chapel for Services. The Church is either open or the key available on enquiry at any nearby dwelling. *Look to rear and N of Church*

The Old School House (photo 1925)



This house is believed to be the old "Dame School" which started as early as 1818. By 1847 the school was moved to a house (now demolished) on the village road roughly opposite 'Kendal'. Then in 1874 a new Board School for 80 pupils (now The School House off the village street) and finally in 1920 a centralised school at Llangan. *View house to rear of the Lodge (see Walk 1)*

Chapel House (previously estate coachman's house)



This property probably predates Miss Gwinnett, but has been extensively altered with addition of stables to rear contemporary with the castle rebuild around 1800. *Turn right on main village road and go N*

The Red Fox (right)

In 1841 there were 3 cottage taverns all on the turnpike road at Pentre Meyrick (see Walk 1) and one at Graig. There was no inn suitable for



gentry or for the Hunt. Since a gentleman could not own a pub a piece of Homfray land was leased to a Cardiff company who undertook to build a suitable inn. The first landlord was Bert Bullock and this building has retained much of its original form and atmosphere. *Continue N along village street*

Village Street

Cottages of pre 1850 form used to line the road but all except two have been demolished or extensively modernised. The old Post Office and Tyla retain



their position and basic form. By contrast Forest Cottage (photo above) used to be much smaller yet still held both a Post Office and a General Store. *Continue N and on right.*

Village Farm



The whitewashed gable wall of Village Farm retains its 16/17th century form and structure. Its stonework and main timbers are original and it retains its cisterns. *Go N, until you reach the wells on the left.*

Village Wells



These are the ancient 'Fynnonau-y-Pentre', a group of three springs sometimes called Salmons Wells. This is a site restored by the residents of the parish as a millennium project and is now Listed with a descriptive plaque and with seats for tired walkers. Across the road is a stone stile, which defines the footpath going east leading to the rear entrance of the Castle the route for the daily water supply. *Go 100M N and to the left is a private road to Penllyne Court.*

Penllyne Court (photo, 1935)

A house has existed here from at least the 17th century but subject to so many fires and changes it is not Listed. Its' owners have been many, first Richard Morgan based on their claim for one third of the Norreys manor.

Then the Fleming family and then George Kemys of Llanblethian and back to the Flemings and by sale to the Deere family (1812). In 1816 Hester Deere married Dr William Salmon of Cowbridge, who lived to the ripe old age of 106. He enjoyed the status of squire of the parish for many years but was slowly eclipsed by the Homfray family.

In 1896, after the death of Salmon, it was purchased by a colliery mechanic turned entrepreneur cum publican, Thomas Llewelyn Evans. He aspired to be a country gentleman but in 1920 both he and his eldest son died and it was purchased by the Homfray family, who then owned most of the parish. By this time the Court had been considerably enhanced with landscaped grounds, greenhouses and scientific laboratory. It is now the principal home of the Homfray family. *Go N.*



Court Farm

This was probably the home farm of the Court. It is now situated on the west of the Village Street but once spread either side, and the highway passed through the farmyard with a stream, from the wells alongside. Now the road realigned, the stream culverted, and the old barns reused for boundary walling, it has become a road for commuting car traffic but the evidence remains for the discerning eye. *Go N.*

The missing houses. To the east is the dense woodland (Coed-y-parc), which hides the ruins of at least two cottages, a farm (Blaydon Lodge) and a bridleway. To W and E are two main parish roads, Groesel road and Heol Langdon, which once formed a main cross roads. They show what all parish roads were like 200 years ago in the Vale. Between 1900 and 1960 the parish appears to have lost 60 original dwellings, which is why it now appears as two ends with countryside in between. *Go E up bridle path and imagine the lost village.*

Rosevine.

The last cottage, 'Rosevine', was rescued and now appears as a modern house. Opposite is the old farm Vistla (Pen-fistla) and originally the bridle path went through it and continued down the slope into the Thaw valley to Llansannor and Llanharry by Stanby road. This is probably part of the packhorse trail mentioned by the 19th century diarist David Jones of Wallingford, which took iron and lead ores to the coast at Colhugh or the Leys. *Follow the lane south and bear right at the junction*

Woodland

You go past a hidden well over 80 feet deep but never dependable. Though now a wooded area this was originally common land but since exploited for limestone. *Go left for 100M at junction.*

Lime Kiln

This is a double kiln example of one of the twenty or more limestone kilns



distributed through the parish. They are mostly post 1860 for the old fields are generally calcareous and it was the opening up of the marsh and moorland, which would have created the demand for lime. They would also have provided lime mortar and whitewash for buildings. *Go back and follow road into Penllyn. At junction turn right and go N to Red Fox (01446 772352) for well-earned refreshments.*

Penllyn: Walk 3 (5.2 km)



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Start at the Barley Mow (01446 772558).

The Graig

As late as 1937, Craig Penllyn, "the Graig", did not have tarmac surfaced roads. Much of the land north of Court Farm (see Walk 2) was originally Common land, which, together with the moors, was enclosed in 1860. Of the 70 or so households comprising Penllyn at this date 28 were crofts worth less than £15 and most of these were in the Graig.

Most of the Crofts would have originated as tiny two bed cottages erected overnight on common land and so received tenure under the 'ty-unnos' tradition. In 1880 there were 11 paupers among the 70 dwellings of the parish. Many of the tenants relied on charitable distribution of food and coal from the Salmon family and later the Clarendon and Homfray families right up to the inter-war years. The restriction of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act on new building in the countryside gradually created a market for these poor dwellings, which with purchase of leasehold and permission for development, could yield a good profit. Together with infill development within large gardens, this created the area of exclusive housing which is the Graig today.

The Barley Mow

This was a cottage in the centre of this area, which served as a pub operated in the late 1840s by William and Catherine Lewis who had previously operated the Morning Star on the main turnpike at Pentre Meyrick.



The pond shown overleaf is the location of the Barley's current car park, and behind the pond used to be Ty Fry, a Welsh longhouse, a low structure half dwelling and half animal byre. Ty Fry was a traditional structure from 14th century, with a cruck roof, which was unfortunately burnt down in the 1970s. Look opposite the "Barley".

The Chapel (now a private dwelling)

Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, congregation dates from 1831 but the present building from 1888. It closed in 1957 and was



sold for residential conversion in 1979. The congregation and building were inspired by the Reynolds family. The father, a shoemaker by trade, lived in the cottage under the large rock, now Rhyd Cottage, on the main street. The tradition of chapel elder was carried on by his son, David, who became village Postmaster and agent of Dr William Salmon. David Reynolds was buried at the Chapel in 1903, but his father's grave is unknown. *Go up The Rhiw opposite pub*

Quedgely (photo below, house in middle)



A tiny cottage, originally with no name, which underwent many changes including use as a lodging for itinerant preachers with outhouse used as a chapel mortuary. This was before renovation and extension to form the modern dwelling.

Look opposite Quedgely

Merida (photo above, house on left)

Previously used as a place of rest. *Go up Rhiw to crest of hill Cymle*



Behind High Lanterns is the stone dwelling Kimred (1799), Cimle (1831), Cymtha (1847) Kymdu (1881) Cymle (1919), a sub-Medieval Glamorgan Cottage probably from 1550/1600. Cymle means 'on the edge of the common land' and its status in this part of the village suggests it could have been built by the Lord of the manor to house the village reeve. Much of the original form of the building remains. To judge from the Tythe map of 1847 in its original form it would be set in the centre of a large yard with pens for geese and plots of vegetables around. *Go 100M along Rhiw and on right*

Copse Edge

This property was the old Post Office and the steps opposite (now the "Dolly steps", previously "the Alley") gave access

from the village road adjacent to Winchfield. *Go past secondary woodland on right, to stile at end of the Rhiw*
The Parish Field (information board by stile, seat by FP)



Parish field is top left in 1930 photo, with Rhyd Cottage (one of the few survivors of redevelopment) in foreground and Rose Cottage (now demolished to make way for Ashfield and Hilltop) in background. This field was retained out of the original common lands of the Enclosure Act in 1860 for the exercise and enjoyment of poor of the parish in perpetuity. As a result it has never been ploughed and was used for grazing cows and horses until about 1990. It is now managed as a meadow and has superb Spring and Summer wild-flower displays. On the opposite hillside can be seen the early form of the settlement of crofts within the original common land. They lie on the slopes around the flat grazing land, now the Winchfield. *Go up FP to metal gate into wood.*

Coed Y Graig

This woodland, heavily replanted in the 20th century, still exhibits some ancient coppicing. The twenty-acre wood, originally common land, was split into thirteen freehold strips in 1860 and granted to separate cottars of the Graig. They were evidently piecemeal purchased or exchanged by the Homfray family who have since replanted it and conserved it as woodland. It is a delight in Spring when the wood anemones, yellow archangel and native bluebells carpet the woodland floor. *Follow FP to end of wood.*

Panoramic view of City and Thaw Valley.

Drainage work over the last 300 years has slowly removed extensive marshland known as Penllyn and Newton Moors. Here have been found the arrowheads of Bronze Age hunters. Here too may have been sacred sites, where axe-heads and spears were offered to the gods. Now the valley exhibits a severe chequer-board of roads and hedges and ditches, mainly from the 1860 enclosures. These are in clear contrast with the irregular shape of fields around the village mostly won from the woodland since the early medieval period. *Go down field to far corner, over stile, and down to track. Turn right and go SW, then take FP diagonally right up hill to stone stile to left of Vistla Farm (FP rerouted) At stile look N at field.*

Vistla Bank

Flint scatters and blades have been found here and there is also believed to be a ploughed out barrow. Crop marks on aerial photos appear to show old earthworks, though no trace can be seen on the ground. *Turn right, follow road down to Barley Mow, turn right onto village road, walk N and turn left through opening into Winchfield.*

The Winchfield (photo 1930)



This flat grazing land appears to have been excluded from the Common Land and was retained for grazing rental until Homfray purchased it from Lord Dunraven and leased it to the Parish. It is now leased to the Community Council and used for a children's playground and leisure field. *Cross Winchfield on FP.*

Graig (west) – compare Winchfield photo with present:

Unlike the sparsely built land at The Rhiw and Cae Rheddyn, the west of the Graig clearly has many crofts in the 1930 Winchfield photo. *Turn left onto road and follow to new houses set back in cul de sac on left*

Salmons Wood

Here was located Celynen-chwith, another Welsh longhouse, which fell down piecemeal. The last resident was known as Moses Bassett 'the poorest man in the parish' who, in the 1914/18 war was given permission by the Parish Council to cultivate the roadside verges with potatoes. The sketch illustrates the cruck construction that might have been used.



Follow road west from Salmons Wood until you reach crossroads with a signed Bridle path. Turn S and follow FP.

The Bridle Path and mining

This is the old Heol Laes / Heol Langton which was the route to St Mary Hill and the old cattle assembly point for droves to England. Once again we note the survival of a parish road of 19th century. At the crest of the rise on the left are the ruins of a lead mine now just a roughly filled hole (called a limekiln by the Ordnance Survey). This is one of scores of similar holes close to the crest of the limestone ridges, usually N-S, which traverse the Parish. There had been a tradition in Penlline of following veins of galena with open pits in the 18th Century and transporting the ore using pack horses to the coast and thus to Bristol, but Spanish ores could be cheaper when we were not at war with France. In 1851 William Salmon endeavoured to reopen the mines with a public company. The works were mainly in Llangan but the company was registered as Pennllyne Court Mining Co. The quantity of ore did not prove as good as expected and the price of ores dropped. The winding up of the company was not recorded. *Go down FP to crossroads with Village Street. Turn left and go N*

Ty Canol



Many local people used to be employed in the coal mines. This picture shows Jack Powell, after a shift as a stoker at Pencoed, starting to move his allowance of coal.

Continue N and return to the Barley Mow, where you can enjoy some well earned refreshments