



Great House, Llanblethian

Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council

Walk No. 10, (East) Cowbridge

Eastward from Cowbridge & Llanblethian

For most of its length this walk runs along field and woodland paths and enjoys a reasonably level terrain, though there is one fairly long, moderate climb needed to ascend onto Stalling Down. Once there this vantage point affords some splendid views. The walker will pass through three contrasting, interesting villages - Aberthin, St Hilary and Llanblethian, two of which possess attractive inns. Combined with Walk No 7, this walk almost creates a complete circular route around Cowbridge. Shorter versions of this walk are also offered.

Distance Main walk 6½ miles; shorter versions 5¾ and 3 miles.

Map Explorer 151.

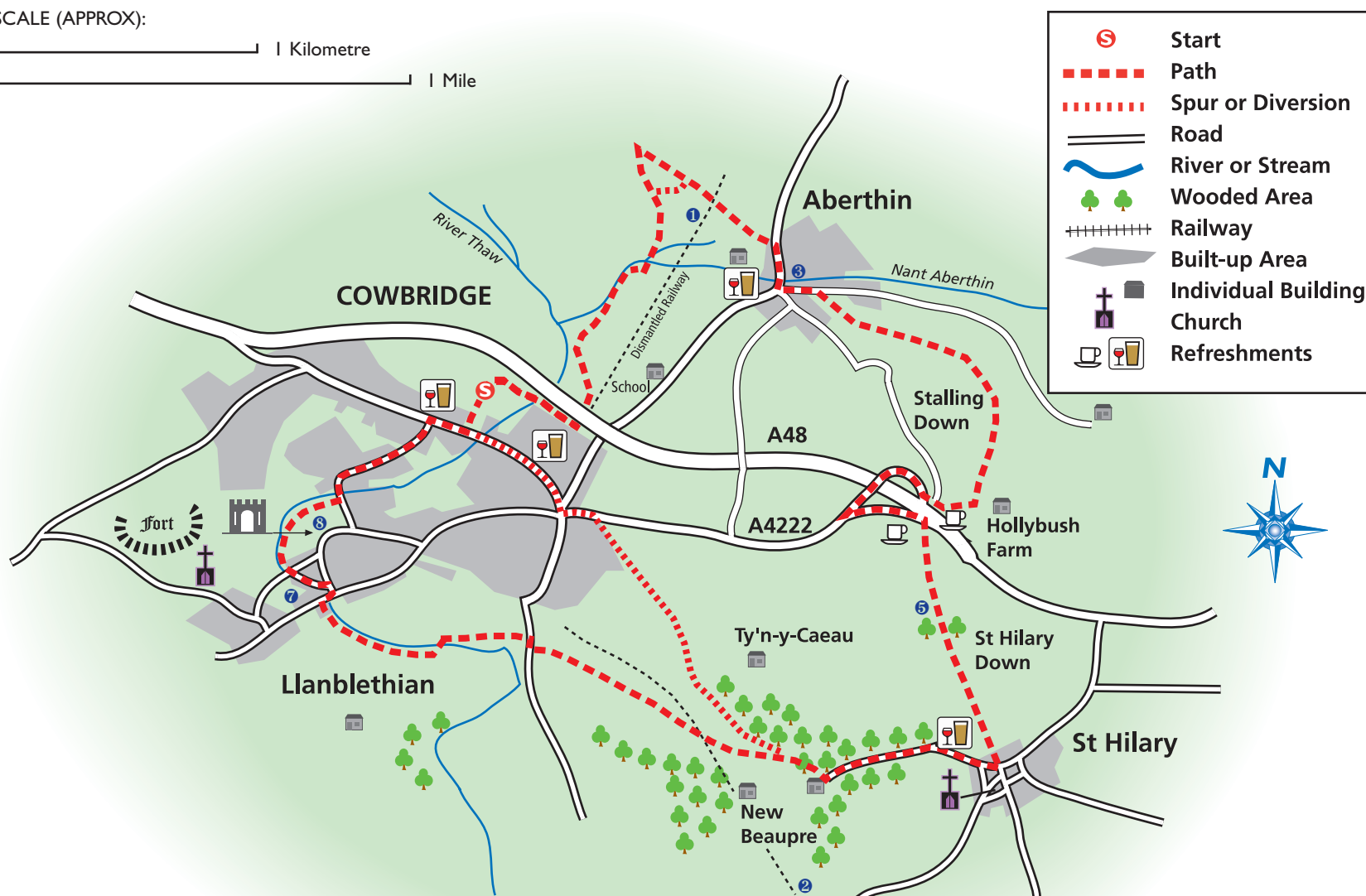
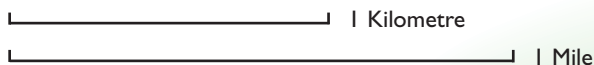
Parking Car Parks in Cowbridge. Some parking is possible in each of the three villages named above.

Public Transport Buses to Cowbridge.

Refreshments & Toilets At Cowbridge car park, at the Farmers and Hare & Hounds pubs (Aberthin), the Bush (St Hilary) and at the cafés adjacent to the A48.

START At your convenience. The walk guide below starts at The Town Hall Car Park, Cowbridge, Grid Ref: SS 997747 and proceeds in a clockwise direction.

SCALE (APPROX):



THE ROUTE

① With your back to the car park entrance, proceed to a footpath at the far right hand corner. Follow this path, which runs parallel with the River Thaw, until you reach a footbridge on your right. Cross it to enter a lane and then take either of the two paths that go left under the viaduct. Each leads you to a kissing gate at the start of the boardwalk and its path continuation that run around the edge of the newly developed school playing fields. Pass through a second gate and maintaining direction continue along a well-marked track. As you walk on take care not to swing to the right but head straight across the field to a stile in the hedge.

Now proceed, keeping in the same general direction, through a succession of fields with their stiles, bridges, boardwalks and stepping woods. Cross the stile reached after the stepping woods into a field. Here many locals turn right and walk across with the hedge on their right to a **gap** in the field corner. However, to stick to the Right of Way, you should continue straight on with the hedge line to your left to the field's north west corner where a way marker post will direct you, diagonally, back across the field to the same **gap** in the field's far corner. Then cross another field to a stile and kissing gate. Continue in the same direction in the subsequent field to a

stile adjacent to a gate. Now cross a narrow stretch of field, with hedge on right, to another kissing gate. Now go along a well-used track to reach the village of Aberthin.

Turn right at the main road and where this road bends right between the two village pubs you turn left along Llanquian Road. A short distance along this road you will see a waymarked post on your right. Turn right here along the path that bears left, uphill. It is useful that this path proceeds diagonally uphill on to Stalling Down ④, not primarily because this lessens the gradient, but because it allows you to look back down the valley at picturesque Aberthin, while as you climb higher the views expand to encompass the rolling surface of the northern Vale. Follow this path for some 500 yards to pass under electricity lines. On reaching the grassy common land keep just above the bracken using the path that gradually swings to the right. You will note a farm complex just to your left. The path leads on to a farm drive where you turn right. You will soon reach a minor road and a café. Proceed forward left to reach the main road, - the A48. Here, on grounds of safety, you are advised to use the overpass to cross the road.

Once on the southern side use the slip road to reach and pass the Indian restaurant and other café. Almost

immediately turn right on a footpath that will lead you fairly gently uphill through quite thick vegetation to the top of the ridge. On route you may catch sight of the Glamorgan Yeomanry memorial just to the left, while behind you are distant, clear views of the hills that girdle the Rhondda Valley. At the ridge crest you emerge on to a circular copse termed 'The Clump' ⑤ with transmitting masts to its left. Pass along the left hand side of the Clump to walk downhill along an enclosed track, and the southern Vale unfolds before you, with striking views of the tower of the church at St Hilary ⑥ in the foreground. Continue downhill to a road junction. Here turn right into the heart of the village to pass the Bush Inn. Follow the road as it bends around the inn and walk down a steep, tree-lined hill and reach a 'New Beaupre' sign.

Turn right at the sign 'No Public Access' and follow the footpath through the wood. The path leads downhill to a stile giving on to a field. (If walking the shorter route follow the purple text overleaf). There are stables on the left. Cross the field, along the front of the stables, to a stile that abuts a house drive. Turn right. You now walk along the drive over very flat land for about ¾ mile to arrive at the Cowbridge - St Athan road. (On route you will have passed through the embankment of the former

Cowbridge to Aberthaw railway ②).

Cross the road and continue in the same general direction along the broad vale.

Keeping the sewage farm to your left, cross the River Thaw via the foot bridge. Walk on westwards over the river's floodplain, viewing the church tower on the skyline, to cross two stiles. At the second of these turn right to reach the main road at Llanblethian. Opposite, just to the left, is Llanblethian's Great House ⑦.

There is a variety of routes to follow to return to Cowbridge centre. The following is but one. Turn right on the main road. Cross a river bridge then turn immediately left into Castle Hill and almost as quickly, left again into Greenfield Way. (Those wishing to view St Quentin's Castle ⑧ should continue up the steep Castle Hill). Then turn right into the road named St Quentin's Hill. Soon on the left you will see a footpath sign and kissing gate. Go through and walk on along a path that curves to the right through three fields. You then arrive at a road. Turn left, downhill. The road then bends to the right and takes you past the now closed Comprehensive Lower School, the Town's South Gate, the refurbished Old Grammar School, the physic garden and on to the High Street. Here turn right to reach the Town Hall on the left.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Besides those within Cowbridge itself, the following features will be passed or clearly seen en route.

① THE OLD RAILWAY TRACK FROM PONTYCLUN TO COWBRIDGE.

Opened in 1865, the first train carried 50 tons of coal to Cowbridge. The last passenger train ran in 1964.

② THE LINE FROM COWBRIDGE TO ABERTHAW

Partly financed by Daniel Owen who then lived at Ash Hall, Ystradowen, this line opened in 1892. It was never very profitable for it ran through a sparsely populated area, carrying coal and limestone as its main freight. It was closed to passengers in 1930 and for freight in 1932. The track was dismantled in 1947.

③ GREAT HOUSE, ABERTHIN

A grade II building. It dates back to the early Renaissance period. It retains many of the original features of its 17th century domestic design.

④ STALLING DOWN

Rising to a height above sea level of over 120 metres (400ft) this hill gives splendid views over the nearby vale. It is thought to be the site of a battle, variously dated between 1401 and 1405, between Owain Glyndwr and Henry IV that resulted in great loss of life. Nowadays, as it is common land, it is favoured by dog walkers and because of its exposure is a favourite kite flying location.

⑤ THE CLUMP

Planted in the 19th century. This spot was for a period a location for public hangings.

⑥ ST HILARY VILLAGE AND CHURCH

This is a picturesque village with a fine medieval church and 17th century inn - the Bush. The Normans dedicated the church to St Hilary of Poitiers. The village also contains a circular stone pigsty at Church Cottage

⑦ GREAT HOUSE, LLANBLETHIAN

This is a Queen Anne Grade II listed building. Largely built in 1703 for Thomas Wilkins, a lawyer, it is believed to have 16th century origins. Its frontage is beautifully symmetrical.

⑧ ST QUENTIN'S CASTLE

Building was begun in the 14th century by Gilbert de Clare. He was killed at Bannockburn in 1314. As a result the building was never fully completed. It was further damaged by Owain Glyndwr and later by Cromwell. It became one of the many homes of the Lords of Glamorgan. The gatehouse has been recently restored by CADW.

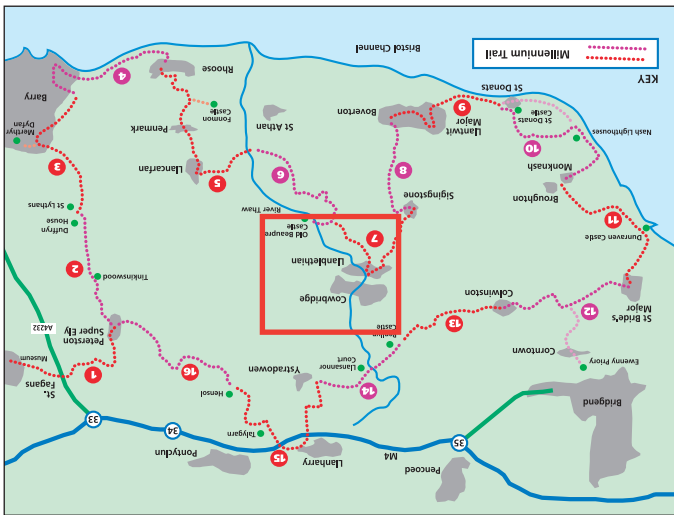


Valeways has published a guide to the Millennium Heritage Trail. This colourful book describes the 16 sections which make up the Trail and comes in a package with 16 separate A3 maps. The guide can be obtained from Valeways for £8.49 including post and packing.

Those who have never visited this part of Wales will enjoy walking through fertile, lowland countryside adjoining the spectacular Heritage Coast with its beautiful beaches. The route includes many fascinating historic features, from prehistoric burial chambers to magnificent castles, churches and mansions.

The Trail is split into 16 easy to follow sections, each of which can be walked within a few hours. The surroundings are diverse, often spectacular and steeped in history.

100km, spanning over 6,000 years of history. It wends its way through a variety of beautiful landscapes. At its northern edge there are panoramic vistas of the Blaenau Morgannwg, while in the south it skirts a spectacular cliffed coastline.



Turn right at this stile and with the woods on your right exit the field via another stile. With the woodland now on your immediate right, proceed across a long field to a stile. Here turn right and walk uphill to the tree-lined field boundary. Entry to the next field can be through a gap (a stile to the left can be difficult to climb). In this field continue uphill bearing slightly left to a stile on its far side.

In the next field, head slightly left to pass through a waymarked gap in the far hedge. Keep in the same general direction through the next field to a stone stile in its corner. Once over this you enter an enclosed lane. Turn right and go downhill to reach the main road. Here turn left. Proceed through the traffic lights to return to the centre of Cowbridge. (If you walk in an opposite direction to this guide i.e. from Cowbridge through Llanblethian to New Beaufre you may return via this shorter route. The total distance for this walk is just over 3 miles.)

SHORTER WALK ALTERNATIVE

WALK FEATURES

- Old Railway Track
- Great Houses
- Stalling Down
- St Hilary village
- St. Quentin's Castle
- Attractive Inns



Valeways is a registered charity working in partnership with the community to reopen existing footpaths to create a network of enjoyable circular walks across the Vale of Glamorgan, linking towns and villages to the surrounding countryside and points of interest. We are indebted to the many volunteers who give up their time freely to provide this walk for your enjoyment.



Valeways Partnership - Many thanks to the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Countryside Council for Wales for their continued support.



The Rural Community Action programme is facilitated by the Welsh Development Agency, which is a sponsored body of the Welsh Assembly Government. Hwyluswyd y rhaglen Weithredu dros Gymunedau Gwledig gan Awdurdod Datblygu Cymru, sy'n gorff noddedig o Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru.

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Registered Charity No. 1062031 Registered Company No. 3330088

FOLLOW THE WALKER'S CODE

- Guard against all risk of fire
 - Fasten all gates
- Keep all dogs under close control
- Keep to public paths on farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges & walls
 - Take your litter home
- Protect all wildlife, plants and trees

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Eastward from Cowbridge and Llanblethian

Distance: 6.5 miles (short versions 5.75 & 3 miles)



Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council

