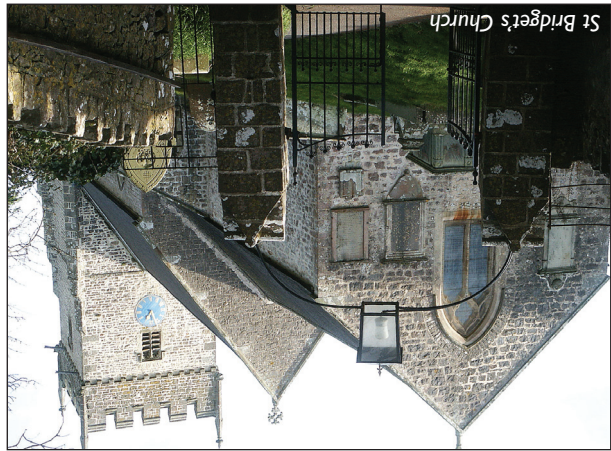




Photograph © G. Woosnam
Pont y Brown



Photograph © G. Woosnam
St Bridget's Church



Photograph © G. Woosnam
Quarry with Port Talbot steelworks in the far distance

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



WALK LOCATION IN RELATION TO VALEWAYS' MILLENNIUM HERITAGE TRAIL



Photograph © G. Woosnam
Ewenny Priory outer wall



Photograph © G. Woosnam
Ewenny Priory



Photograph © G. Woosnam
Ewenny Priory with Bridgend behind

WALK FEATURES

- St Bridget's Church
- Ewenny Priory
- Pool at Corstown
- River Alun Clapper Bridge
- Coed y Bwl Nature Reserve
- Pitcot Pool



Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council
Pitcot Pool



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. Hyslyswyd y rhaglen Weithredu dros Gymunedau Gwledig gan Awdurdod Datblygu Cymru, sy'n gorff noddedig o Lywodraeth Cymru.

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FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Walk No. 32, Ogmore

Castle-upon-Alun Circular

(including Ewenny Priory spur)

Distance: 7 miles, with shorter options.

Photograph © Roger G. Lewis
Packhorse Bridge



River Alun

Photograph © G. Woosnam

Walk No. 32, Ogmore Castle-upon-Alun Circular

A glance at the map below clearly shows that this walk is more than just one circular walk. There are three distinct sections to it. So, as well as providing a walk of about 7 miles, the walker can permutate the sections to provide a walk that meets his or her wishes. A range of walks of between 2 and 7 miles is possible. You must add on another mile or so if you wish to visit Ewenny Priory. Whichever walk is taken there are attractive downlands, a deep wooded valley and in spring delightful displays of flowers. Other features include a clapper bridge, a nature reserve, an elegant Priory and two public houses.

Distance 7 miles but with shorter options.

Map OS Explorer 151 Cardiff and Bridgend.

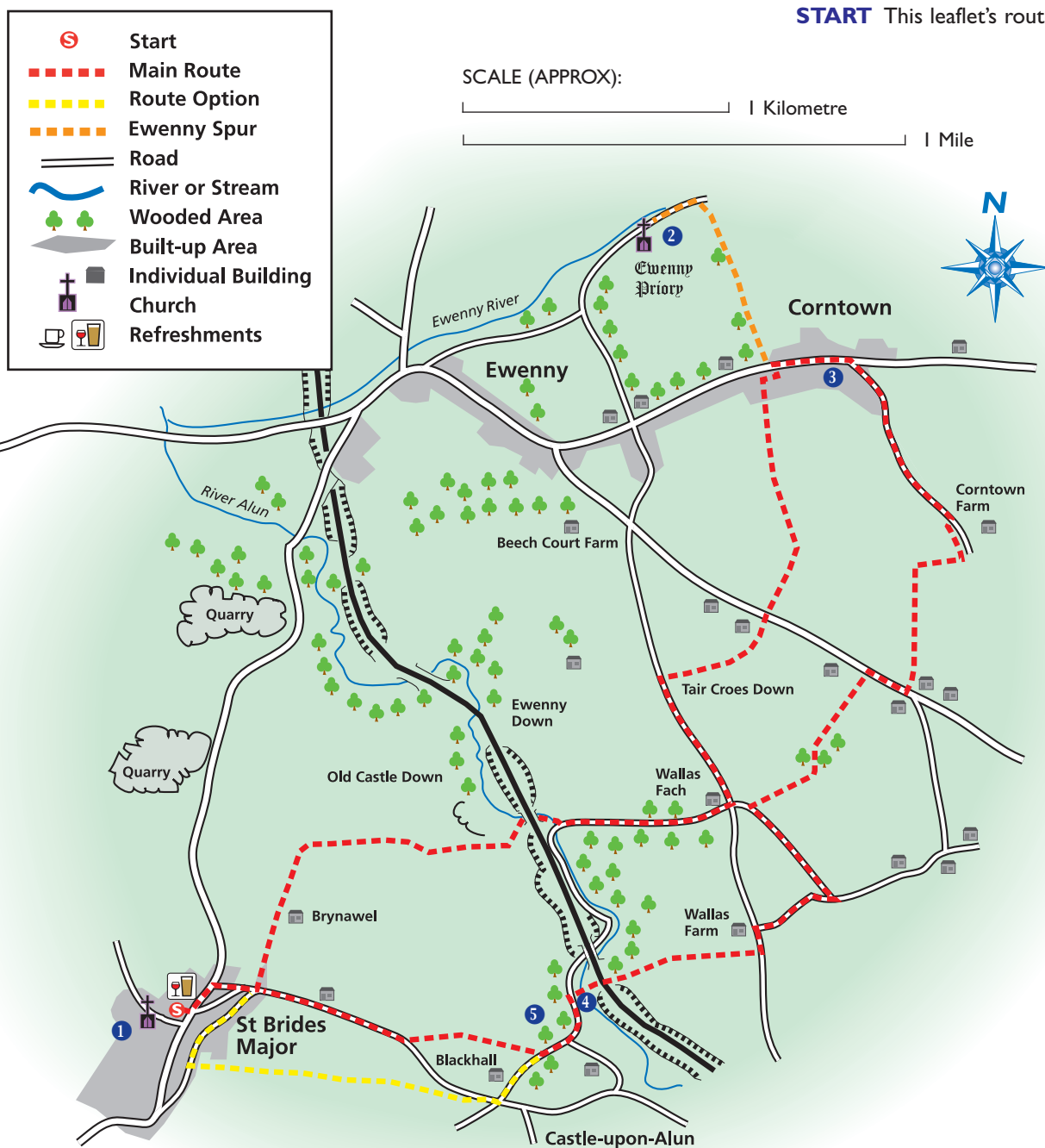
Parking Car park at St Brides Major. Limited roadside parking at Castle upon Alun and at Corntown.

Public Transport Buses Nos. 45 & 46 Bridgend - Llantwit Major, where there are railway stations.

Refreshments Fox & Hounds and Farmers Arms at St Brides Major.

Toilets linked with refreshment points.

START This leaflet's route guide begins at the car park opposite the Fox & Hounds, St Brides Major.



THE ROUTE

Leave the car park, with the church 1 behind you, and cross the main road (B4265). Go left to pass the Fox & Hounds. Then after some 80 yards, where the pavement ends, turn right, uphill, along Blackhall Road. As the gradient lessens you will reach a cattle grid with a waymarked track off to the left. Follow this hard surfaced track as it wends its way up Castle Down but leave it as it swings right to a house. You carry straight on along a wide, grassy track (with fine views to the west of limestone quarries and steam emissions from the Port Talbot steel works) Soon the track swings to the right (eastwards) and you pass a four-sided, waymarker post. Carry straight on here to reach shortly a waymarker on the left directing you downhill along a narrow, fairly steep path.

At the bottom turn right under a railway bridge. You will quickly reach, on your left, a stepping-stone bridge (Pont y Brown) over the River Alun. Cross this bridge to enter a minor road. Follow this, uphill, for 1/2 mile to

reach the junction with what is Wick Rd.* (If at this point you wish to shorten the walk and return to St Brides. Turn right. Go to ** on this guide and follow the route instructions from there on).

Here turn left, past Wallas Fach, and walk up the road for some 600 yards. Then just over the brow of the hill turn right along a way marked route, keeping a hedge and wall on your left. You will soon reach another minor road. Cross it. Turn right on the road, then almost immediately left over a stone stile to proceed downhill following the good signposting towards the main road that runs through Corntown. (A vista of industrial and retail development on the outskirts of Bridgend appears in front of you, while forward left you catch sight of Ewenny Priory) 2. Follow the alleyway between the houses to reach a stone stile that gives onto the main road. Here turn right.

(However, if you wish to visit the impressive Priory go just to the left and turn right at the side of Ty Capel to enter a lane. Go over a stile, and follow the clear route to cross a footbridge and stile before

the path swings left and leads on to the Priory itself. This extension involves a two-way walk of just 1 1/4 mile).

Back on the main route continue along the road to reach the village pond 3 on your right. Turn right on to Heoly Cawl. Walk up this lane as far as the entrance to Corntown Farm. This involves a steady climb of 1/2 mile.

Turn right over the stile adjacent the entrance to the farm. Once in the field turn sharp left and hugging the hedge line walk around the field corner to reach a gateway. Here climb over a rough stile and go straight on to the right hand side of a stone wall/hedge. Follow this (southward) to arrive at a metal gate that gives on to a minor road. Turn right and walk up the road for a short distance to reach a waymarker post on your left. At this, turn off the road onto a bridleway. Follow this through a metal gate and on to the right hand side of a hedge. Continue alongside this hedge to another gate and then into a wooded area. Continue through a sometimes muddy stretch to turn sharp left just before reaching a road (Wick Road).*

If you started the walk at Corntown you could now shorten the walk and return there following the walk guidance given after the * above.

Follow the narrow path to reach a country lane. Here turn right to walk to a T junction at Wallas Farm. Turn left, then immediately right over a couple of stiles. Now follow a series of stiles that gives a passage through the fields. When you reach a rather dilapidated stone stile bear right to a wooden stile that leads you onto a path that winds down through the woods (Coed y Wallas). En route you cross an active railway line (heed the warnings). The path then crosses a small field and the river Alun via a stone footbridge, (a clapper bridge) 4, on to a metalled road. Turn left along this road and continue gently uphill. Go past the main wooden gated entrance to the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust of Coed y Bwl 5 to reach soon another gate on your right. You now have two choices of route back to St Brides.

Option 1 Cross the stone stile that is adjacent to the left of the gate and bearing a little left follow the path uphill to enter a field via a stile. Keeping roughly to the same orientation as the stile itself, with the hedge at first on your left, cross this now large field (O.S map shows it as two) diagonally to reach a hedge that you keep on your right to reach a stile and emerge on Blackhall Rd.. Turn right to continue along the road back to the start. Distance for this option is just under 1 mile.

Option 2 Continue up the road to a junction and turn right. On the left there is a waymarker post (Blackhall Farm is to your right). From the post there is a short path through scrub that leads to a dilapidated stone stile giving on to a field. Once in the field continue with the hedge on your right to a point where the hedge starts to swing to the right. You diverge from by carrying straight on to a stone stile. Once over this continue with the hedge to your right to cross a wooden and then a double stone /wood stile. Here turn left, and very shortly right to enter an old track littered with debris from collapsed side-walls. Cross the stile at the end to soon reach a road - Penylan. For the purpose of this walk ignore the way marker and turn right. You will pass the now closed Bryn Sion Chapel on your right and Y Crofty on your left. (When you reach Blackhall Rd, you go downhill to return to the starting point. Distance for this option is 1 1/4 miles. Option 1 is the easier to walk route and the shorter. Option 2 takes you past some interesting buildings in St Brides).

PLACES OF INTEREST

1 St Bridget's Church

St Brides is a shortened version of St Bridget, the 5th century Irish saint. St Bridget's Church is of 12th century Norman origin and contains 16th century monuments and statuary. In the late 19th century, it was visited by Princess Mary of Teck during her stays with Countess Caroline of Dunraven. Later, the princess, through marriage, became Queen Mary, wife of George V.

2 Ewenny Priory

This is one of the finest examples of a fortified, ecclesiastical building in Wales. Its origins were early Norman. Built by William de Londres between 1115 and 1120 it was given in 1141 to the Abbey of Gloucester by his son, Maurice. It was a Benedictine foundation with a solid stone screen separating the monastic portion from the parish church. Many changes to the building took place in Tudor and Victorian times. Now the Priory is under the care of Cadw, for it is a listed building. It plays still an active role in the life of the community

3 Pool at Corntown

The pool passed at the side of the road in Corntown was, it is thought, once a baptismal pool (Bethel Baptist), that fell into disuse for that purpose around 1900. It has subsequently been used for watering cattle. It is fed by ground water.

4 Clapper Bridge

The term clapper is derived from Anglo Saxon and means a stone slab bridge used in the past by packhorses and walkers. Sometimes the slabs, which were supported by vertical piers, collapsed, leaving the piers as stepping-stones. The best examples are found in the South west of England where the stones are often large and made of granite. That at Castle upon Alun is a small example some 25 yards long and consists of four spans.

5 Coed y Bwl Nature Reserve

Purchased by the Glamorgan trust in 1970, the reserve was opened in 1971. It is a predominantly ash woodland for it rests on carboniferous limestone, ash replacing the former dominant elm. The wood is estimated to contain over 250,000 wild daffodils as well as wood anemones and, on the upper slopes, bluebells.

6 Mormons and St Brides

St Brides proved to be a fertile recruitment ground for the Mormon Church. Between 1856 and 1875 many from the St Brides area sailed to USA to join Brigham Young. This migration, (plus that to the nearby coalfield), led to a reduction in the population of the village; from 914 in 1841 to 621 in 1891. Before departure to USA the converts gathered in a croft then attached to the house called Y Crofty in Penylan Rd. It is claimed that 20% of Utah's population have Welsh ancestry.

7 Pitcot Pool

Is an attractive water feature opposite the Farmeris Arms. This pool fed by ground water never dried up so was invaluable to farmers and the rest of the local population prior to the establishment of piped water in 1926. It was the scene of many skating parties during the harder winters of the late 19th century, attended sometimes by the Countess Dunraven. The pond has recently been threatened by Japanese knotweed.