

The Dovecot



Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council

# Walk Nos. 26, 26a & 27, Llantwit Major Church, College & Lighthouse

This walk is really three walks in one. There is the complete walk named above of 9 miles but also two shorter walks within it; a western elliptical Llantwit Major walk of 3½ miles; a Marcross/St Donats Circular of 5 miles. Whichever walk you do, you will be captivated by the magnificent Glamorgan Heritage coast with its cliffs and foreshore, and by the walks' nature reserves and ancient churches. On two of these walks you will be in touching distance of the impressive St Donats Castle.

**Distance:** 9 or 3½ or 5 miles.

**Map:** OS Explorer 151

**Parking:** Town Hall car park Llantwit Major, GR 967687; Llantwit Beach GR 957675; Nash Point GR 916684; Lay by just east of St Donats GR 940682 (limited).

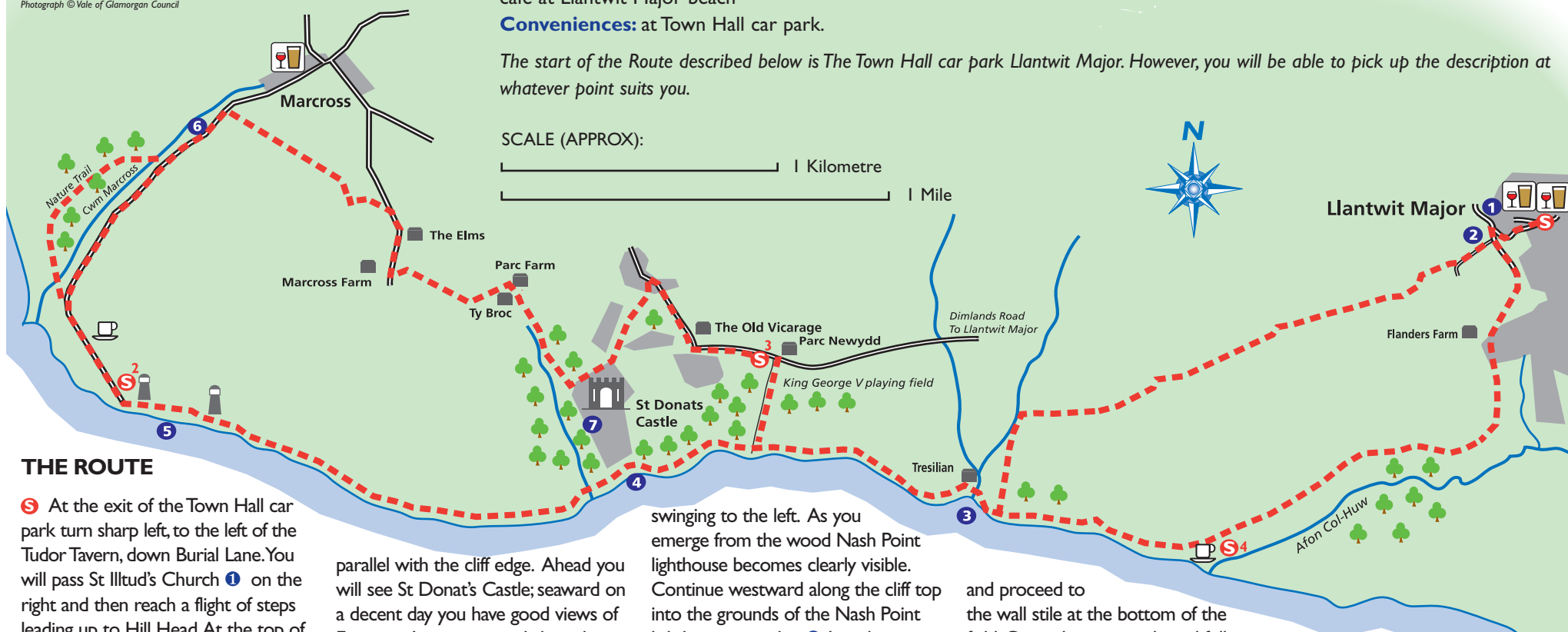
**Public Transport:** trains and buses to Llantwit Major and buses only to the Lighthouse Inn at Marcross.

**Refreshments:** various at Llantwit Major; the Lighthouse Inn at Marcross, kiosk (March - Nov inc) at Nash Point, cafe at Llantwit Major beach

**Conveniences:** at Town Hall car park.

The start of the Route described below is The Town Hall car park Llantwit Major. However, you will be able to pick up the description at whatever point suits you.

SCALE (APPROX):



## THE ROUTE

At the exit of the Town Hall car park turn sharp left, to the left of the Tudor Tavern, down Burial Lane. You will pass St Illtud's Church 1 on the right and then reach a flight of steps leading up to Hill Head. At the top of the steps turn left into Hill Head (the Gatehouse 2 is over to your right and in the field behind is a Dovecote).

Walk past the Hill Head cottages and continue downhill along a track to reach a stone stile on the right. Once over this, bear left along the field edge to a corner stile. Continue downhill, down a flight of steps with Flanders Farm to your right. You will emerge onto Flanders Road. Turn right and follow this road past the junction with Colhugh Park to reach a gateway. Here the road becomes a track.

In essence, all you do now is follow this track for about one mile to reach the coast proper. Along the way you will pass Bramble Cottage on the left and then, walking gently uphill, go through a gate and past some barns on the left. As the path follows the top of the steep western side of the Colhugh valley you cross two more stiles and eventually reach the remains of a bench on the right. Immediately beyond the bench, cross another stile and continue along the well worn stiled path to the coastal cliff. Here there is a dedicated metal bench. Nearby is the beach car park 4.

The path then swings right, westwards, on a course roughly

parallel with the cliff edge. Ahead you will see St Donat's Castle; seaward on a decent day you have good views of Exmoor. As you proceed along this path, ignore any paths leading off to the right (unless told otherwise in the text below), but heed all warning notices, for this coastline is prone to cliff falls. After about ½ mile you will pass a WW2 pillbox on your left and then a stone stile on your right. Here walkers doing the Llantwit elliptical should turn off right and follow the text from \*1 below.

On the main walk continue ahead to descend into Tresillian Bay 3. Cross its pebbled storm beach, with its often unsightly jetsam, to return via steps on its far side to the cliff top. Keep on the well marked cliff top path to reach after approximately another ½ mile a junction with a path coming in from the right. Here walkers doing the Marcross circular will join the path.\*2

**Because of severe erosion along this stretch of coastline the foot-path is likely to be repositioned further inland. Please heed relevant notices should this take place.**

You now cross a stone stile into a wooded area. Keep to the right hand path, which stays on top of the slope. The path then gradually descends and passes in front of Atlantic College 4 (there is no public access from here). Cross the sea wall and then climb the steps into the woods, the path gradually

swinging to the left. As you emerge from the wood Nash Point lighthouse becomes clearly visible. Continue westward along the cliff top into the grounds of the Nash Point lighthouse complex 6. Join the metallised track and follow it via a small metal gate to Nash Point car park. 5

Leaving the car park you have a choice: either take the road inland towards Marcross and its Church 6; or continue along the coastal path into the valley. Once on the valley floor turn right, crossing the stream twice via stepping stones, to enter the wooded nature reserve. Take either the left or right hand path. Each leads you to the Marcross road. Here turn left for ¼ mile to reach the church.

Continue along the road past the church to turn right along a track next to the bungalow Swn-y-Môr. Follow this track which turns left and then right to a stile. Over the stile stick to the hedge to your left. The hedge turns sharply left on two occasions. Ignore the footpath leading off to the left at the second of these, you continue ahead to reach a stone stile. From the stone stile head diagonally left to a gate that takes you onto a road. Turn right. After passing The Elms go straight on through a gateway for about 100 yards to a stile on your left. Cross it and the stile opposite to enter a large field. Head diagonally right to a stile in a gap in the wall. Turn left, hugging the wall

and proceed to the wall stile at the bottom of the field. Cross this stone stile and follow the path left around the building (Tŷ Broc) to a second stile that gives onto a lane. Turn right. Now head through a gap between a garage and Park farmhouse on its left. Continue to a new gate that takes you into woodland, along a rough, downhill track into the grounds of Atlantic College. (Ignore paths off to the right). You emerge onto a road with St Donat's Church 7 on your right. Turn left and walk uphill with the Castle on the right. Follow the road (West Drive) as it bears left, taking directions from the Millennium Trail discs. On exiting the College grounds turn right along the road, past the main College entrance, until you reach a kissing gate on the right, near a layby 3. Go through this to enter George V playing field. Walk south with the wall and woods to your right. Go through a wooden gate to reach the coastal path. Those on the Marcross circular turn right here and follow the relevant section of the guide i.e. onwards from \*2.

Those doing the full walk turn left and for about ½ mile retrace your steps to just beyond Tresillian Bay. Turn left at the metal/stone stile \*1. Walk inland for ¼ mile to reach an 8 step

	<b>Start</b>
	<b>Path</b>
	<b>Road</b>
	<b>River or Stream</b>
	<b>Wooded Area</b>
	<b>Built-up Area</b>
	<b>Castle</b>
	<b>Refreshments</b>

high stile on the right. Climb it and head for the ruins (Sheeplays). Go round this via a stile and, obeying the one waymark in this area, through a tied gate (this does not correspond with definitive footpath map). Maintain direction, making for the left of a large clump of trees. Once past these, change direction very slightly to the left to walk through a large prairie-like field to reach a stone stile (note castellated Dimlands Lodge to the left). You now cross four fields via stone stiles almost in a line. On the far side of the fourth field cross the wooden stile and, bearing slightly right, cross two more stiles and fields to reach a broad track (Church Lane). Bear left to reach Hill Head and Llantwit Major.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**1 St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major.**  
A grade I listed building, it contains medieval wall paintings, Celtic stones dating back to the 8th century and a medieval carved stone rebedos. The roof in the west end is thought to date back to the 15th century. Originally the eastern end of the

church was for the use of the monks of the monastic grange, the western part by the townsfolk.

**2 Gatehouse and Dovecote**  
These are the main physical remains above ground of the monastic grange that was established in Llantwit Major.

**3 Coastal Geology**  
The cliffs along the entire coast show very well defined strata of Lias

Limestone and Shales. At Tresillian erosion of the shales lower down has led to the creation of a number of caves, the largest being Reynard's Cave.

**4 St Donat's Castle and Atlantic College**  
The original castle was built early in the 14th century. It was held by the Stradling family for 23 generations eventually passing through a number of owners including William Randolph

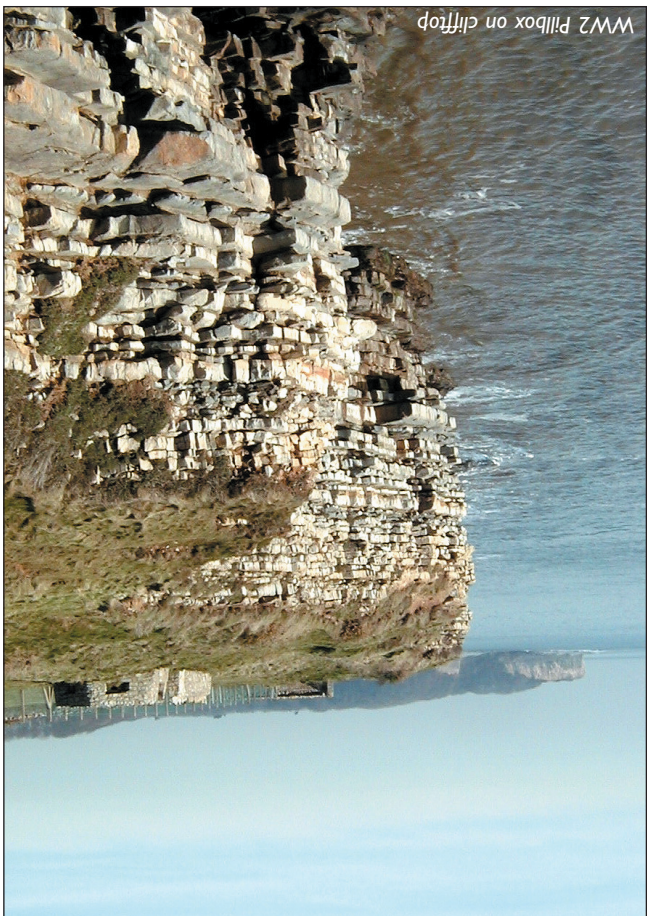
Hearst. The United World College of the Atlantic has occupied the site since 1962.

**6 Nash Point light**  
Built in 1832 as a response to the wreck of the 'Frolic' with the loss of 40 lives. The western light is now decommissioned but the eastern one is still working, albeit unmanned.

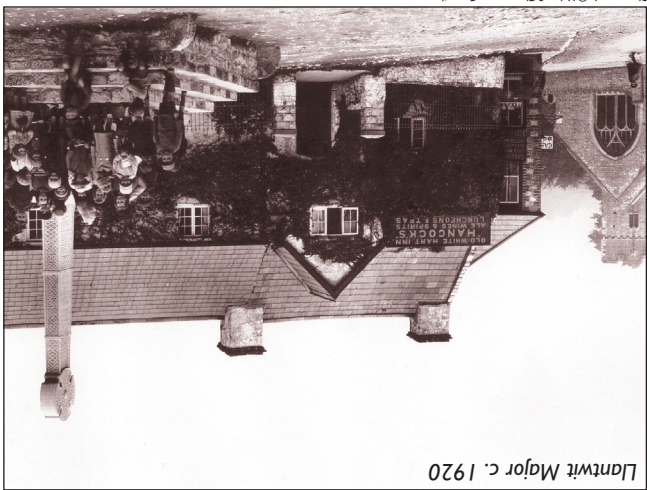
**6 Holy Trinity Church Marcross**  
Originally 12th century with a Norman font, south doorway and chancel arch. There is also a 'leper window' on the south side of the chancel. There is a fine information board in the porch.

**7 St Donat's Church**  
This also has a Norman font but most of the building is 14th century. In the churchyard is a 15th century Calvary cross.





WW2 Pillbox on cliff top  
Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council



Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council

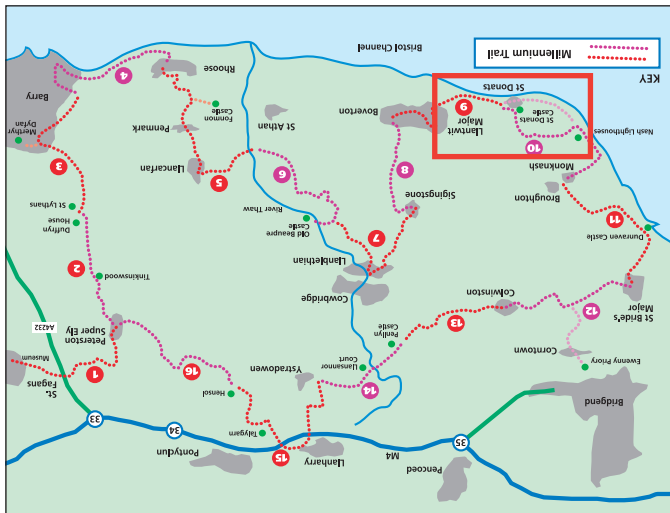
Llantwit Major c. 1920

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.

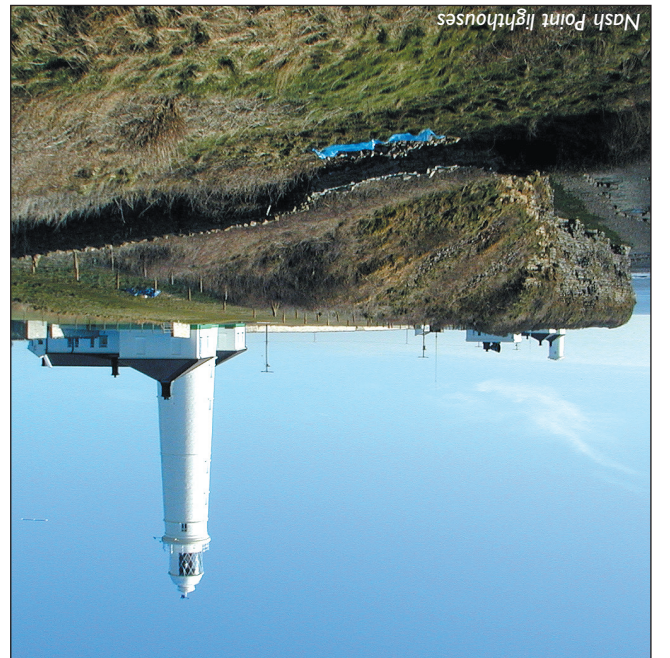
100km, spanning over 6,000 years of history. It wends its way through a variety of beautiful landscapes. At its northern edge there are panoramic vistas of the Blaenau Morgannwg, while in the south it skirts a spectacular cliffed coastline.



**WALK LOCATION IN RELATION TO VALEWAYS' MILLENNIUM HERITAGE TRAIL**



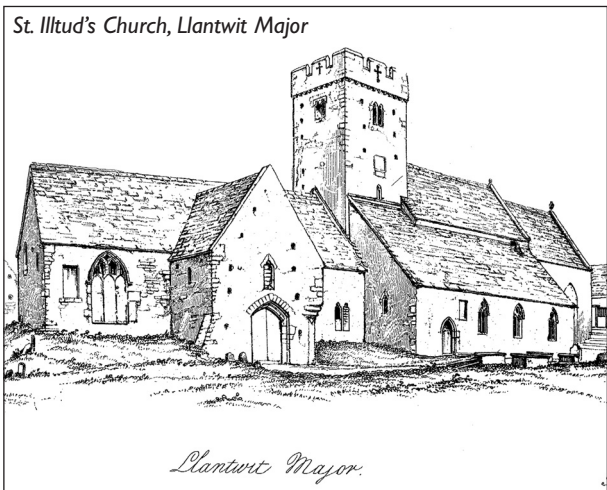
Effigy in St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major



Nash Point lighthouses  
Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council

**WALK FEATURES**

- St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major.
  - Gatehouse and Dovecote
  - Geology at Tresilian Bay
- St Donat's Castle and Atlantic College
  - Nash Point lighthouses
- Holy Trinity Church Marcross
  - St Donat's Church
  - The Heritage Coastline



St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major

Llantwit Major.

**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



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.

Cefnogwyd gan Supported by



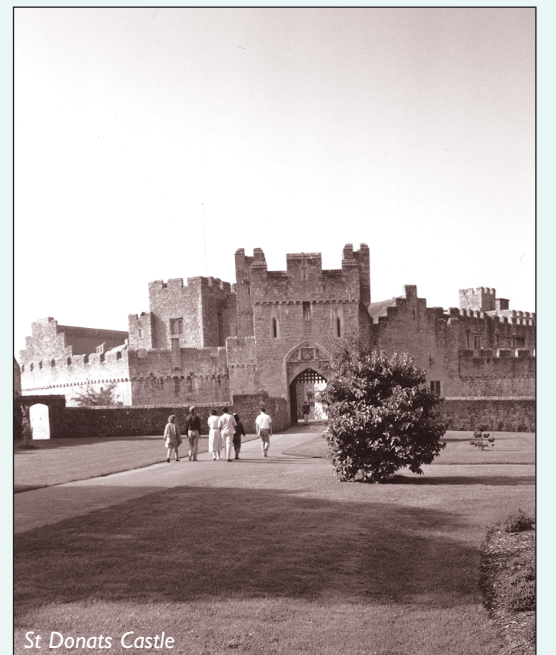
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Registered Charity No. 1062031 Registered Company No. 3330088

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**Church, College & Lighthouse**

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St Donat's Castle  
Photograph © Vale of Glamorgan Council

