

C.T. Jones

# COWBRIDGE

RURAL  
DISTRICT  
GLAM.



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*The Official Guide*  
TO THE  
**COWBRIDGE  
RURAL DISTRICT  
GLAMORGAN**

*With Map*

Issued by Authority of the  
**COWBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL  
COWBRIDGE**

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## COWBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT

The district administered by the Cowbridge Rural District Council is based upon the boundaries of the ancient Hundred of Cowbridge, modified both in the east and west by successive boundary commissions.

The administrative centre is in the Borough Town of Cowbridge, where the Courts of the Hundred sat and where the Courts of the Great Sessions as well as the Quarter Sessions of the County were held.

The boundaries of the district reach from the coast of the Bristol Channel, where at Breaksea Point the most southerly latitude in Wales is found, to the mountain slopes of Mynydd Meiros and Mynydd Portref where altitudes of over a thousand feet are attained. Within this region of Blaenau and Bro is found the most fertile land in the county, a part of the celebrated area known as the Vale of Glamorgan. In the north the valuable seams of the South Crop of the Welsh Coal Field emerge to the surface followed closely by the Iron Ore deposits, both of which are actively and intensively worked. In the south the long unspoiled coast line with the beauty of its ever changing views and aspects, the unique exposure and fossil beds of the Lias formation in the cliffs, in places two hundred feet high and crowned with a succession of pre-Roman earthworks, these all provide interesting studies for the historian and geographer, and are a never failing attraction to the visitor.

Through the ages this rich and fertile area has been coveted and settled by a succession of conquerors and the record of their occupation now remains in the form of Bronze and Iron Age Tumuli and Earthworks, Roman buildings and pavements, Norman Castles and Mottes. The parish churches are an epitome of the Romanesque and Gothic periods, with votive crosses and fonts of especial beauty.

It is in this region that the early missionary efforts which spread Christianity in Wales were centred, and the Age of the Saints with their churches and colleges is reflected in the place names of the village settlements which now occupy the sites of past endeavours.

Wales is indebted to the culture fostered in the villages of the Vale. There much of the Bardic lore was preserved, and the traditions of the Eisteddfod maintained.

Within this broad framework are continued the beauty, culture and history which made this one of the most interesting and lovely districts in the Principality.

**Communications.** The main highway approach is the Trunk Road, A.48 which runs from Cardiff to Swansea, passing through Cowbridge and bisecting the area.

Serving the coal mining area in the north A.473 from Llantrisant to Bridgend passes through the village of Llanharan. The coastal road is B.4265 from Barry to Bridgend, with narrow roads leading to the villages on the coast. The highways northward from the Coast link up the road system with the centres of population in the mineral areas.

On all the highways excellent bus services are operated by the Western Welsh and Rhondda Transport Companies and reach all the smaller villages and points of interest, while the Neath and Cardiff

Coaches provide additional long distance facilities from Cowbridge.

**Railway Communications.** The main line of British Railways, London to Fishguard, passes through Llanharan Railway Station, with fast trains stopping at Pontyclun and Bridgend. The southern and coastal main line Cardiff—Bridgend, runs parallel to the coast with stations at Llantwit Major and St. Athan. A branch from the main line at Llantrisant passes through Llanharan with a terminus at Cowbridge. Here passenger and goods stations are available, but intermediate stations and halts afford communication to smaller centres as well as to the Air stations at Llandow and St. Athan.

**Air Stations.** At St. Athan and Llandow are sited two important and permanent R.A.F. Stations; and in addition Llandow has from time to time been considered for a transatlantic or continental air station, a purpose for which the site and location are admirably adapted.

**Climate.** The general prevailing wind throughout the year is from the south west with very mild temperature conditions to the south of the Trunk Road, and a rainfall of about 46.49 inches on the average. North of the Trunk Road the conditions alter, the temperature being much lower generally, while the rainfall increases to about 59.77 inches per annum.

**Industries.** Throughout the area the primary industry is agriculture on a mixed basis with milk production on a large scale. In the northern districts coal mining is now being extensively developed with byproduct plants operating under the National Coal Board.

**Services.** Although the area is so predominantly rural in character a water supply from public services reaches 95% of the houses, while urban standards are reached in Electricity supplies, sewers and public cleansing.

### Municipal Administration.

The Rural District Council consisting of 23 members administers the area from its administrative centre at Cowbridge; and here also are the Food and Fuel and Public Health Offices.

### CROSS KEYS HOTEL

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"PORTE MELIN," SOUTH GATE, TOWN WALLS, COWBRIDGE

**COWBRIDGE.** Cowbridge, an old Borough Town, until the Reform Act returned a member of Parliament in conjunction with Cardiff and Llantrisant. It shares with Boverton a claim to be the Roman Station of Bovium mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, and the layout of the town within the walls coupled with the discovery of Roman coins and remains from time to time, gives substance to the idea.

**Charter.** The original Charter of the Borough dates back to the Fourteenth Century and this was confirmed during the reign of Charles the Second. In 1887 a new Charter was granted and the Coat of Arms with its motto *Awn Rhagom* was then adopted, following on the pattern of the old Borough Seal.

The Silver maces now in use date to 1606, while the Mayor's gold chain was presented to the Borough about 1883 by Alderman Thomas Rees.

**Town Hall.** The old Town Hall formerly occupied a site at the junction of High Street with Church Street, but about 1830 it was removed and the present town hall was then built on the site of the old county prison. In the lower part of the building the old prison cells may still be seen. Here also is the administrative centre and Council Chamber of the Borough Authority.

**Town Walls.** The town walls with two towers on the south side of the town, appear to date from the fourteenth century, but tradition insists the town was walled by Robert St. Quintin in A.D. 1091.

**Town Gates.** Of the three gates the south gate "Porte Melin" remains, its much restored masonry containing elements of an earlier date.

**Grammar School.** Adjacent to the South Gate is the Boys' Grammar School formed about 1608, probably removed to this site from Llantwit Major, and endowed in Charles the Second's reign by Sir Leoline Jenkins then Secretary of State, who was formerly a scholar there.

The School is now under the joint control of the Trustees of Jesus College, Oxford, and the Glamorgan Education Committee.

**Church of the Holy Cross.** The Church of the Borough adjoins the Grammar School and is dedicated to the Holy Cross.

It dates from the twelfth century and possesses no transept.

The Llanquian aisle on the south side was built in 1473 for Lady Anne Nevill, and there is also a guild chapel at the north east corner of the church.

The mural tablets are interesting and will repay study. Among them are tablets to Judge Jenkins of Hensol and to Benjamin Heath Malkin, a local Historian.

In the garden of Rhos Celyn House stands a broken monolith called Y Garreg Wen.

The houses in the main street present a most interesting study of Georgian domestic exteriors with Tudor detail giving colour and background. The Y.M.C.A. youth movement of the town is located in the Institute at the rear of the Town Hall, a very attractive building but rather small for the growing needs of the Borough.

In the west end is Ramoth Baptist Chapel founded in 1828. The old Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in the Limes is dated 1825. The Wesleyan Chapel in the East Gate is a comparatively modern building.

To see Cowbridge in its proper setting it is necessary to select a spot preferably on the high ground east or west of the town.

From this vantage point the walled town can be observed in conjunction with the outlying Norman Castles at Penllyn, Talyfan, St. Quintins and Llanquian.





ABERTHYN. TY MAWR BRIDGE GATE HOUSE

**LLANBLETHIAN.** Llanblethian is the large parish surrounding the Borough.

**Church.** The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist has a very fine tower dating from 1477.

Generally the church and the Sutton Stone font are of an earlier date.

**Castle.** The castle of St. Quintins stands on a site formed by the horse-shoe bend in the Thaw River. It was erected by Gilbert de Clare during the 14th century. The entrance gateways are good examples of the fortified work of the period and on the external ashlar work may be seen a large number of mason's marks.

On the high ground north west of the village are earthworks of the Iron Age period.

**ABERTHYN.** The village of Aberthyn is to the north of the Borough. Ty Mawr is a very fine Tudor House in the east side of the village, with a Bridge Gate House.

Iolo Fardd Glas (Edward Williams) Bard and historian was born at Penylan in 1770 and died at Bridgend in 1854.

Reference is made in Llyfr Llandaf to the Villa Fratrus at Aberthyn. The old Methodist chapel at Aberthyn is dated about 1740.

**Stalling Down and St. Hilary Down.** The open spaces of St. Hilary Down and Stalling Down are common land of the Manor, and the summit of the down is crowned by the Beacon and tree clump forming a landmark for the surrounding Vale.

On the north slope of Stalling Down is a monument erected to the men of the Glamorgan Yeomanry who fell in the 1914—18 war. Near the tree clump is the reputed site of the gallows for the execution of sentences on the prisoners from the gaol at Cowbridge.

The northern part of Stalling Down was the site of a battle during the Glyndwr Rebellion, and with the surrounding woods are connected stories of the patriots.

Near St. Hilary on the south slope of the down are caves named after the highwaymen who took refuge there.

**ST. HILARY.** The village of St. Hilary is on the south slope of the downs.

**Church.** The Parish church dedicated to St. Hilary was restored in 1862, but despite this the interior contains much of interest. The font and the details belong to an earlier church.

On the old village blacksmith's shop is a lettered stone tablet now perishing rapidly, with an englyn, generally attributed to Iolo Morganwg, extolling the work of the smith.

**Beaupre.** To the south of the village, well off the main road, near the River Ddawen is the Castle of Old Beaupre. The approach is by a long drive entering from the main road by the railway bridge, or by the footpath from the road near How Mill. The main buildings date from the 12th century, but successive owners during the centuries have added and altered in the style of their period.

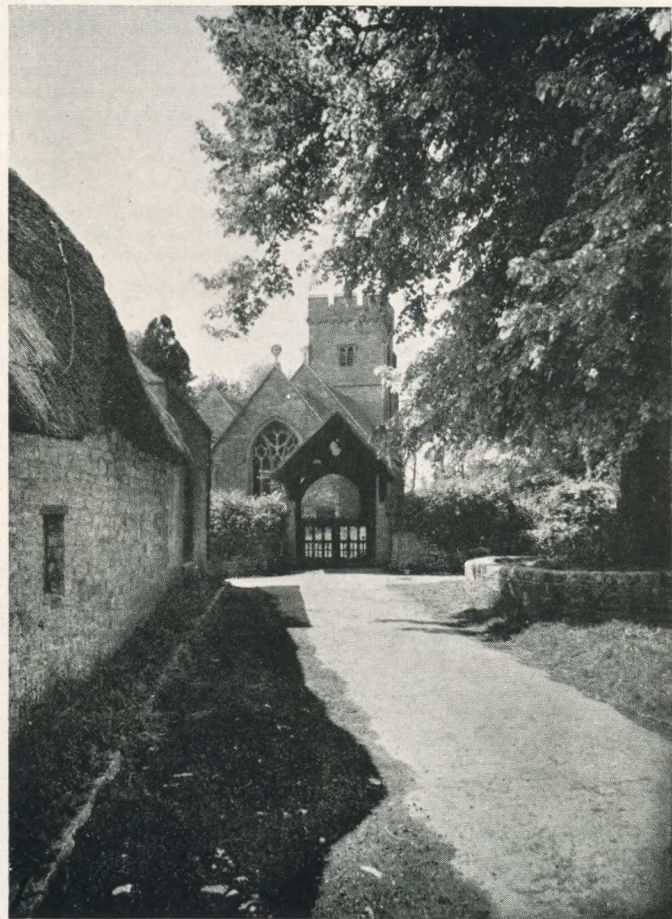
The principal features are the two main entrances, one leading to the inner bailey and the other into the Tudor portion of the house.

**Gateways.** The outer gateway of Tudor Renaissance detail is dated 1586 while the inner gateway is a more florid rendering of Early





CASTLE OF OLD BEAUPRE—MAIN ENTRANCE PORCH—ST. HILARY



CHURCH AND PARISH HALL, ST. HILARY



Renaissance of three super imposed orders, and dated A.D. 1600. A lettered inscription on three small stone panels records a very curious aphorism. A fine heraldic centre piece carries the family motto of the Basset family Gwell Angau Na Chywilydd, later used by the Welch Regiment.

Tradition asserts that the draft of the Great Charter was prepared at Beaupre and read to the barons prior to presentation to King John at Runnymede.

A seat of Welsh culture, a famous eisteddfod was held here in 1681, said to have been the final congress of bards under the old Order.

**SIGGINSTON.** The small village of Sigginston is on the main bus route, Llantwit Major to Cowbridge, and is a convenient stopping place for Llanmihangel a short walking distance away.

**LLANMIHANGEL.** Llanmihangel with its church, Tudor mansion, bridge and lake has a picturesque setting.

The manor belonged to the Norrises of Penllyne, and was successively owned by the Bawsons, Thomases, Edwins and finally the Earls of Dunraven.

**The Plas.** Llanmihangel Plas was rebuilt by James Thomas, who was sheriff of Glamorgan in 1550. His arms appear on the fireplace of the panelled hall, and the backplate of this fireplace displays the quarterings of the great Lord Burghley. In the same room are the arms of Queen Elizabeth which still show the Red Dragon as the sinister supporter. Behind the Plas is a Pleasaunce and an avenue of 110 yew trees.

**The Church.** The Church of St. Michael is a small one consisting of Nave, Chancel, South Porch and Western Tower. It contains a quaint Graunt effigy and two large Edwin memorials. Sir Humphrey Edwin, 1642—1707, Nonconformist Lord Mayor of London, who died at Llanmihangel, 14th December, 1707, is buried here.

On the bank between the Church and the Plas, is St. Ann's Well, a very interesting object which has suffered much neglect.

**ST. MARYCHURCH.** St. Marychurch is a hill-top village clustering about the circular churchyard in which stands the church.

**The Church.** The Church contains a Norman font and a pillar piscina of the same period.

Iolo Morganwg's wife was a native of the place; while the aged Welsh poet Ioan Trithyd spent the evening of his life in the parish.

**FLEMINGSTON.** The village occupies a commanding site overlooking the flood plain of the Thaw River, and was the home of Edward Williams, Iolo Morganwg, Bard and Antiquary 1746—1826. In the church is the tablet erected to his memory by the Countess of Dunraven. The site of his home is in the yard of Gregory Farm, but his birthplace is at Pennon on the other side of the river.

**The Church.** The church contains a 14th century effigy of a lady of the Fleming family, and is dedicated to St. Michael.

**The Court.** The Court adjoining the church yard was a seat of the Flemings, and is a fortified manor house containing much Tudor work.

Gregory farm is a picturesque farm building of traditional construction.

**LLANDOUGH.** Llandough, St. Docheu, was, with St. Marychurch, the property of the Le Waleys or Walsh family.

**The Church.** The church which has been drastically restored, losing much of its character in the process, once contained an early effigy, doubtless one of the Le Waleys family, which now lies mouldering in the churchyard. It still retains one of the very few "brasses" to be found in the diocese. This records the death of Wenllian le Walsche in December, 1427.

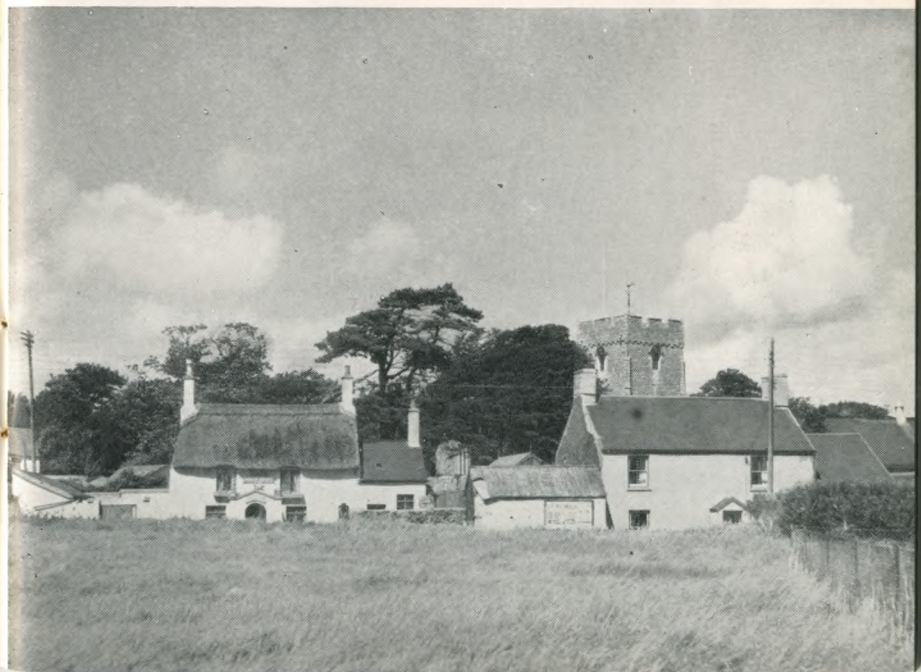
**The Castle.** The castle has been rebuilt and modernised. Some of its recent occupants were the Prices, Staceys, Ebbsworths and Byasses.

The Reverend John Walters, 1721—1797, a former rector of Llandough, compiled a Welsh Dictionary during his incumbency.

Thomas Carlyle once visited the Redwoods who resided in the parish.

**EGLWYS BREWIS.** Eglwys Brewis, both parish and village, is now practically all included in the new air station.

ST. ATHAN VILLAGE





**The Church.** The parish Church dedicated to St. Brice and one of the smallest in the Vale, is in the grounds of the manor house, and appears to be erected on an artificial mound. Interest is added to the exterior by a small bell cote of the Tudor period.

The font of Sutton Stone indicates a 12th century foundation for the church.

On the walls are emblazoned the royal coat of arms, probably of the Stuart period, while lettered panels contain the Creed and the Commandments.

The manor appears to have taken its name from a daughter of William de Braose who held it in the 13th century. Many Roman and Mediaeval coins have been found in the vicinity from time to time. At near-by Fisher's Bridge, St. Patrick, local tradition says, was captured by pirates and taken, a slave, to Ireland.

**ST. ATHAN.** St. Athan has changed greatly of recent years. The presence of a large permanent Air Station has caused much building and increased the population in the village.

The parish takes its name from the church and extends to the estuary of the Thaw. It surrounds the adjoining parish of Gileston.

THE LEYS, ST. ATHAN, SHOWING BARRY GOLF CLUB HOUSE



**The Church.** The Church dedicated to St. Tathan is of 12th century foundation, and contains some fine 14th century windows and effigies of the Berkrolles family.

In the Church yard is a memorial to John Williams 1728—1806, the well known hymn writer.

East Orchard castle a fortified manor house near the estuary of the Thaw was held by the Berkrolles, and it was here that the dramatic meeting between Owain Glyndwr, the Welsh soldier patriot, and Sir Lawrence Berkrolles is reputed to have occurred, ending too tragically for the latter.

**The Old Port.** At the mouth of the Thaw River is the old port of Aberthaw, which formerly carried on a thriving trade with Bristol and the coast ports of the Bristol Channel.

The old Booth cellars remain but the milestones on the roads leading to the port with the port distances were removed during the war, and have not been replaced.

The celebrated Aberthaw Lime used in the construction of the Eddystone Lighthouse is no longer produced; but across the river a large cement making plant manufactures the modern equivalent of this material from similar limestone.

The Leys Golf Club possesses a full course, with a club house which was formerly the old Ship Inn.

The Miners' Welfare Camp on the high ground east of Gileston is well appointed and laid out, and has been engaged in welfare work in connection with young people from the mining areas for many years.

**GILESTON.** The village centres round the manor house and the parish church of St. Giles.

**The Church.** The south door of the church has a series of carved armorial panels of the Tudor period.

The parish extends along the sea coast including Breaksea Point with its clanging bell buoy, and the Old Limpert cottage contrasting strangely with the Dragon Teeth concrete defences of the last war, still remaining in position.

The name of the Gallant Acre upon a portion of the foreshore indicates the former site of the castle of Llandathan destroyed by the sea. The sea coast is here served by footpaths which lead east round the river estuary, and westward towards Llantwit Major.

The Council of Social Services has a large welfare camp within a short distance of the sea.

**ST. ATHAN AIR STATION.** The St. Athan Air Station takes in a large area of the parishes of St. Athan, Llantwit Major and Eglwys Brewis. The station is of permanent construction, its buildings arranged and grouped along the main road B.4265. This road will shortly be diverted along a new road from the War Memorial at St. Athan, to Boverton village, running practically parallel to the Railway. Batslays will bring to mind the story of the Ladi Wen, the unfortunate wife of Sir Lawrence Berkrolles. Her ghost is still reputed to haunt the scene of her sufferings.

**BOVERTON.** Boverton, as previously mentioned, shares with Cowbridge a claim to be the site of the Roman Station of Bovium.



**The Plas.** The Plas a large Tudor building now in ruins stood on the site of an earlier building. It provided a refuge for King John when, as Gerald Fitzalan, he was in hiding from the barons.

Anne Boleyn is also reputed to have stayed here.

The present modern village of Trebefered was erected for the Boverton Co-Operators who have successfully organised a large market garden enterprise on a co-operative basis.

On the coast are the remains of a large triple Iron Age earthworks, and an 18th century summer house built in the centre gives it the name of Summerhouse Camp.

In the adjoining fields are the permanent buildings of a Girl's Camp organised by Miss Davies of Llandinam.

During the battle of Britain, Boverton suffered one of the first Air raids in Wales on 19th June, 1940.

**LLANTWIT MAJOR.** Llantwit Major, the principal town in the Southern Area, is the apex of a road system which leads to the principal points in the County.

The old town is formed of small enclosures each completely

TOWN HALL AND SQUARE, LLANTWIT MAJOR



encircled by small winding roads, showing the development of an extensive British village.

The Tudor Town Hall and the Swan Inn opposite of the same period, occupy commanding sites and are in close proximity to the site of the Bronze Age Tumulus, now the garden of the Social Club, during the excavation of which a remarkable hoard of weapons and implements of that age were recovered.

**War Memorial.** In the centre of the village the base of the Great Cross has been restored and a War Memorial erected to the men of the 1914-18 and the last war.

In the 5th Century the missionary movement which brought the Christian faith to Wales founded here a monastic institution and college, and the site of "Cor Tewdwr" is near Plymouth House. St. Illtyd, described as knight and saint, founded here seven churches and was also the principal of the eight colleges of Bangor Illtyd, and from him the town takes its name Llanilltyd Fawr. Among the students who are said to have received instruction here were St. Patrick, St. David, St. Sampson and many others.

None of the buildings of that early period remain, but the ornamented and inscribed cross shafts may be seen in the Western portion of the Parish Church.

**The Parish Church.** The Parish Church is of 12th Century foundation; but the western part of the church is distinct from the Parish Church and appears to belong to the 15th century.

In the south aisle of the church is a 13th century Jesse rod niche. The reredos of stone dates to the 14th century.

In the western church is stored a large interesting collection of inscribed stones and effigies.

**Chantry.** The chantry building then very dilapidated, to the south of the church, was finally destroyed by a direct hit during the bombing of Llantwit Major on 22nd August, 1940, when nearly every house in the village suffered damage.

**Monastic buildings.** To the west of the church enclosure on Hill Head are the remains of the 13th century monastic buildings. The great barn has been taken down, but the Gate House and the detached dove house remains, the nesting boxes being practically intact.

**Caer Mead.** Slightly to the north of the main road and about 1½ miles out is Caer Mead, the site of a Roman Villa, probably destroyed in 432 A.D.

The site has been excavated and a geometrical mosaic pavement in situ was disclosed, with the foundations of a considerable establishment of the period.

**Colhugh and Castle Ditches.** Through Colhugh Cwm along which runs Nant Colhugh, the public highway reaches the sea. The coast line at the Cwm mouth is open and the beach is accessible, but the cliffs rise rapidly east and west. Sea bathing should only be undertaken under experienced direction. Footpaths to Colhugh from the town provide very attractive walks in several directions.

Castle Ditches on the eastern ridge is a triple line of earthworks showing signs of Roman influence, but unfortunately as is the case with all historical remains near the coast, it has suffered considerably from the sea erosion of the cliffs.

The port dues of the period show that Colhugh was a port trading



like its neighbours with the other harbours in the Bristol Channel during the 15th Century.

Methodist, Congregational and Baptist denominations have churches in the town. The shopping facilities are excellent. There is a very good Cinema and Social Club, and good inns and restaurants. At the bus terminus services are available for the Barry, Bridgend and Cowbridge routes.

Water supply from the mains, a good sewerage system and electric light are available.

**LLANMAES.** About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles in a north easterly direction from Llantwit is the village of Llanmaes.

At the Cross Road immediately before entering the village is Gallows Way, the site of the old Gibbet of Llantwit Major.

**The Church.** The Parish Church is dedicated to St. Cadog.

On either side of the church are the remains of two Norman Castles, one the Bedford Castle, and immediately behind the Great House the Malefaunt Castle.

COLHUGH BEACH, LLANTWIT MAJOR, SHOWING ST. DONAT'S WALL AND TRESILIAN BAY



The Great House belongs to the Georgian period, and the entrance gates have very fine pillars.

To the East of the village is the old Independent Chapel of Bethesda y Fro, one of the best known and loved of the places of worship in the vale.

#### **ST. DONATS.**

**The Church.** The Church is dedicated to St. Dunwyd and has a Romanesque Chancel Arch, and there is much detail belonging to the 14th century. The South Door is called the Soldier's Door from its use by Cromwell's troopers when stationed in the castle. The Calvary in the church yard is a beautiful example of the 15th century and is fortunately intact, the cross head depicting the Crucifixion and Adoration.

**The Castle.** The castle dates from the 14th Century but much of the work is now obscured by the later extensive restoration and additions carried out.

The entrance gateway is well preserved, and the concentric plan with the main towers, Mansell, Gibbet, and Lady Ann, can be noted. In the courtyard walls are fixed circular terra cotta panels attributed to da Majano and similar to those in Hampton Court. To the west the detached watch tower of the castle is erected upon a site commanding the sea approaches.

The Castle was the seat of the Stradling family but is now the property of the National Magazine Co.

**Lewis Thomas Stairs.** At the east side of the Castle Park the foot-path leading to the Lewis Thomas Stairs affords a very difficult access to the beach and the Stradling Well. A better pathway eastwards leads to Tresilian Bay and Cave.

**Tresilian.** On the main road towards Llantwit Major is the entrance to Tresilian House, marked by an interesting octagonal Lodge. On the opposite side of the road a cross set in the wall indicates the site where human remains were discovered during road widening operations. These form the basis of a well known local ghost story.

On the shore near Tresilian House is Tresilian Cave, the flat stone lintel, called the Arch of Destiny, spanning its width tempting visitors to peer into the future by the process of throwing stones over the arch.

Here to show her defiance of the new Church Regulations, Cecil Powell of Llandow was married. She became the mother of General Sir Thomas Picton of Waterloo fame.

**MARCROSS.** In the centre of the village a road leads direct to the beach through Marcross Cwm.

The Light houses at Nash Point provide warning to seamen for the Nash Sands and the Tuskar, the older Light house still standing adjacent to the one now in use.

On the western headland is a three ring earthwork of the Iron Age period, now being greatly damaged by sea erosion.

The car park site and the approach road are private.

**The Church.** Marcross Church is transitional with a very ornamented Romanesque chancel arch, and a low side window of the 13th century.

Near the village along the line of the stream are a number of old buildings belonging to the Grange of Neath Abbey.



**MONKNASH.** Practically the whole of the land between here and Marcross was bestowed upon Neath Abbey by Richard de Granville, and remained Ecclesiastical property until the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

The layout of the Abbey Grange with the Dove Cot and main barn can be observed, and surrounding the site are earthworks of earlier date.

Access to the sea coast can be obtained by pedestrians through the Cwm, one of the most beautiful walks in the neighbourhood, and a footpath eastward along the cliff edge leads back to Marcross Cwm. **The Church.** The Church is of the usual 12th century foundation with examples of 14th and 15th century work. The churchyard contains many graves of sailors whose vessels foundered or were wrecked on the dreaded Tuskar rock.

The west boundary of the parish is Clawdd y Mynach—the Monk's Dyke, which is also the boundary of the Parliamentary Division and the Rural District.

**COAST WALKS.** The coastal walks on the cliff tops with the exception of a short length from Nash Point to St. Donats and from Summerhouse Camp to the Limpert at Gileston, provide opportunities to inspect the whole coast line and the earthworks. The cliff tops are treacherous and care is required as sea erosion causes falls to occur without warning.

In traversing the beaches it is necessary to be well informed of the tide times, as the bays and caves in most cases are cut off at high water.

**LLANDOW.** The village is off the main road but is served by the halt on the British Railways, and near the village is one of the main entrances to the Air Station.

**The Church.** The church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity and is of 12th century foundation. The chancel arch is of unusual design and the church has some interesting mural tablets.

**NASH MANOR** Nash Manor for long the residence of the Carnes whose descendant Colonel G. S. Nicholl-Carne still lives there, was in early times a possession of the Bishops of Llandaff.

In the grounds are the remains of the Chapel of St. Andrew and a small pre-Norman Cross.

**LLYSWORNEY.** Llysworney with its church and interesting village well is traditionally associated with the 6th century chieftain Nudd Hael.

**The Church.** The Church with its central tower is dedicated to St. Tydfil.

To the north of the parish are some bronze age tumuli, while the Romano-British settlement at Mynydd Bychan has yet to be investigated. Between this site and the village are The Surges, probably the site of the ancient churches. The interesting Moat Farm was once an episcopal residence.

Llysworney in Norman times was closely associated with Llantwit Major.

There is a Methodist Chapel; and at Llysworney resided that well-known Methodist, the Rev. David Williams, 1717—1792, who is stated

to have influenced considerably the celebrated Rev. David Jones of Llangan.

**COLWINSTON.** Colwinston is said to have taken its name from Colwyn the reputed chief shepherd to one of the ancient rulers of Glamorgan.

To the north east of the parish is "Twyn Colwyn," known in Tudor times as "Y Filltir Aur" or the "Golden Mile". Here, tradition asserts, the Norman Forces received payment for their services to Iestyn ap Gwrgan before returning to Porthkerry and thence to Bristol.

At "Twmpath," a large mound near the Golden Mile was found to contain seven urns, when excavated many years ago. They belonged presumably to the Bronze Age period.

**The Church.** The Church dedicated to St. Michael consists of Tower, Nave, Chancel and South Porch. Among the features of this church is a Romanesque chancel arch, on either side of which are trefoiled niches and some wall frescoes. A 13th century niche in the north wall of the chancel contains a Sutton stone effigy of early date, with scroll moulding and dog-tooth ornament.

CHURCH AND CASTLE ENTRANCE, PENLLYNE





The principal residence is Pwll-y-wrach, the old home of the Thomases and Prichards.

**Llanfrynach Church.** Llanfrynach Church reputed to have been founded by St. Brynach in the 5th Century, lies secluded and deserted in the valley to the north of Llanblethian. The village which once surrounded it was destroyed in the Glyndwr Rebellion. To the north of the church a Celtic Field system can still be traced. The church was formerly the parish church of Penllyne, but now services are held only twice yearly.

Access to the church is by means of a sunken road, or alternatively across the fields by a series of curious "Coffin" stiles.

The building is of transitional Romanesque to 13th Century date with some Tudor additions, and was the burying place of the Turbervilles of Penllyne. Dr. Salmon the celebrated centenarian of Penllyne Court is buried in the church.

**PENLLYN.** The village to the north of the main road, centred round the new church and castle gates, replaces the village destroyed with the castle in the Glyndwr Rebellion.

At Pentre Meyrick the old road from Llantwit Major, a ridge road of great antiquity, crosses the main Trunk Road A.48 and leads to the iron deposits in the vicinity of Llanharry and the lead mines in Llangan.

Along this route tumuli, graves, and Camp sites emphasise its antiquity and importance.

**The Church.** Penllyn church is the modern building which replaces the older church of Llanfrynach, and is laid out in keeping with the castle entrance and Lodges.

**The Castle.** The castle stands on a most prominent site to the north of the Trunk Road, and the occupied portion probably dates to 1790, but additions and extensions have frequently been made.

The Norman portion of the castle is represented by the Keep which stands on the edge of a precipitous ravine. The base is of an unusual form of herring bone masonry construction.

The village wells, now replaced by a modern piped water supply, are very beautifully situated, and the older well contains a niche in the rear wall. On the well nearest the road a tablet has the following inscription :—

"Dwr Rhoddyr Hollalluog Dduw"

The Graig Penllyn, a very beautiful and well wooded valley extends from the village to the ford over the Thaw, passing Penllyn Court.

**LLANGAN.** The village is off the main road. In the vicinity lead ore has been mined but the works have been abandoned many years.

The Parish Church is dedicated to St. Canna and is much restored. It contains a memorial window to the Rev. David Jones.

In the churchyard are two splendid examples of votive crosses, one a 9th Century Wheel Cross with the Crucifixion in slight relief and now much worn, and a 15th Century Cross, the head of which depicts the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Transfiguration.

#### **ST. MARY HILL.**

**The Fair.** The great horse fair held on the open mountain on August 26th has now practically ceased.

**The Church.** The Parish Church of St. Mary has a 13th Century porch and the remains of a Calvary cross.

The main Road from Pentre Meyrick is a ridge road of great antiquity and excavations during road widening have from time to time disclosed many bronze age and early Christian remains.

On Ruthin the mountain limestone deposits have attracted limeworking, and the British Portland Cement Company and the Marley Tile Company have erected plants. Ruthin Common was the site of a large American Camp and the remains of the buildings still litter the surface.

At Fferm Goch a very thriving co-operative market garden society operates, providing a model village for its members.

**LLANILID.** Llanilid Church is approached from Felindre by Heol Porth Mawr, and stands well up above the surrounding countryside.

Adjoining the Church is a large mound of great antiquity; while to the south is the site of a Roman Encampment.

**The Church.** The Church, dedicated to St. Ilid and St. Curig, is much restored but is of the usual 12th Century foundation.

CHURCH AND MOUND, YSTRADDOWEN





The district is associated with Bran the father of Caractacus the British Chieftain, and with the early Christian missionary effort of that period.

Bran the son of Llyr Llediaith is said to have brought the Christian faith first to this Island from Rome, and was therefore called Bran the Blessed. With him came St. Illid who converted many to the Christian faith.

At Felindre on the Ewenny River is a small community surrounding the inn.

**LLANSANNOR.** The village of Llansannor possesses the uncommon name of City Llansannor, and stands near the source of the Thaw.

**The Church.** The Church is dedicated to St. Senewyr and has a 16th Century Porch and Sun dial. The tower and western door probably are of much earlier date. There is a fine effigy said to be of Stephen Bauson of Brigam in 14th Century armour.

**The Court.** The Court is a fine Tudor mansion, beautifully situated, and is still occupied.

HIGH CORNER, LLANHARAN



**YSTRADOWEN.** The village is on the main road from Cowbridge to Pontyclun.

**The Church.** The dedication of the Church is to St. Owain, and adjoining the church is a large tumulus in a grove of trees.

**The Castle.** Talyfan castle, a Norman building now in ruins, was held by Sir Richard Seward a most formidable and determined knight.

There is very little trace of the building known as Mur y Llengau, and so far as can be ascertained no investigations have been conducted on this site.

**LLANHARRY.** The Parish of Llanharry is part of the Manor of Talyfan but later was held with Trecastle.

Of late years the village has increased in importance owing to the population being engaged in mineral workings in the area.

The iron ore mines in the parish have been worked since earliest times. Near Naboth's Vineyard a Tumulus excavated during road widening operations disclosed a Bronze Age burial with pottery and implements of the period, and Roman remains and workings were found near Llechau Farm. The present iron Ore mines have been worked for many years by the Glamorgan Hematite Iron Ore Company.

At one time the forest of Mynydd Garth Maelwg was sold to the Iron Men for smelting purposes; this shows the importance of the workings at that date.

**The Church.** The Church is dedicated to St. Illtyd.

The village has a Nonconformist place of Worship, and the village hall is the centre of the communal life.

The road from Llanharry travels northward passing the old farm house of Torgelli, and over the common land of Llanharry Meadows where it enters the area of the coal measures.

**LLANHARAN.** Llanharan in conjunction with the neighbouring village of Brynna is one of the largest communities on the South Crop of the coal fields. Its population is largely dependent upon the coal mining industry, centred now, under the National Coal Board, in the Llanharan and Coed Ely Collieries.

**Industry.** In the Coed Ely Colliery production has been extended to cover the full range of a bye-product recovery organisation as well as the establishment of a large brick making plant. The Llanharan Colliery is operated by long distance power transmission from the central stations of the Board. The result is the intensive development of a Colliery plant entirely free from smoke.

Diversity of industry is provided by the large co-operative dairy near the railway, while furniture making, concrete products and other industries are sited in the eastern portion of the parish near Lanelay.

The town is fully developed, and possesses good shopping facilities, recreation ground and places of worship of all denominations. The dedication of the Parish Church to St. Aaron and St. Julius indicates the origin of the name of the parish. The cinema, welfare grounds, St. John's Ambulance Hall and Ex-Servicemens' organisations meet the local needs for recreational facilities.

To the north and east the upper portions of Mynydd Garth Maelwg are under the control of the Forestry Commission who have undertaken conifer production on a large scale.



At Brynna the village centre is well established round the shopping area, and the main road carries the bus services to and from Llanharan.

On the ridge to the north of the town runs the old road from Llantrisant to Margam, crossing Mynydd Portref and passing the old church of Llan Bedr y fynydd, from which the modern name of the parish of Peterston super Montem is derived.

From this road paths lead to the Beacons of Mynydd Garth Maelwg, to the old sulphur well, Ffynnon Garth Maelwg, the fine earthworks and Camp of Mynydd y Gaer and past Gelli Fedd Gaer to the old village and church of Llandyfodwg. From this ridge, rising in places over nine hundred feet above sea level, wide views over the vale and the Bristol Channel to Dunkery Beacon and the other heights of Exmoor may be obtained.

Northward the ground rises in a succession of peaks to the Beacons north of the County.

The presence of intensive agricultural activity on the south slopes of the mountains can also be noted, the mineral undertakings confining their operations, generally, to the valley floor.

From Brynna a mountain road passing the old farm of Gelli Fedi

MYNYDD-GARTH MAELWG AND LANELAY HALL



and thence to the Ely Valley at Thomas Town, joins with the old ridge road; while on the eastern side the road northward along the west bank of the Ely River by Lanelay, makes a rapid entrance into a region of unexpected beauty.

Llanharan has a back ground of Welsh culture and Bardic tradition. Rhys Brydydd of Blaen Cynllan was the preceptor of Iorwerth Fynglwyd the celebrated bard and scholar who flourished in the latter part of the 15th Century. The Llyfyr Hir Llanharan, the work of Llywelyn Siôn, (in manuscript) was deposited by Mrs. Blandy-Jenkins in the Cardiff Central Library.

The old house of Hendrewen has connections with the Turberville family of Ewenny Priory, while the name of Argoed Edwin brings to mind Sir Humphrey Edwin, Lord Mayor of London, during the reign of William and Mary.

Llanharan House with a beautiful setting and back ground is still in the occupation of Mrs. Blandy-Jenkins. Lanelay Hall near the River Ely has been acquired by the National Coal Board as a rehabilitation centre.

To attempt to present adequately within the limited space available the area administered by the Council is an impossible task.

Much has been omitted that should have had attention, and places of great interest have received notices entirely out of keeping with their importance.

The Council put forward this account in the hope that the interest it may arouse will encourage a desire to visit and enjoy one of the most beautiful and historic districts in the principality.

Edward Loveluck,

Surveyor, Cowbridge R. D. Council.

August, 1949.

*Whilst every care has been taken in compiling this guide, and the statements contained herein are believed to be correct, the publishers and the promoters of this publication will not hold themselves responsible for any inaccuracies.*

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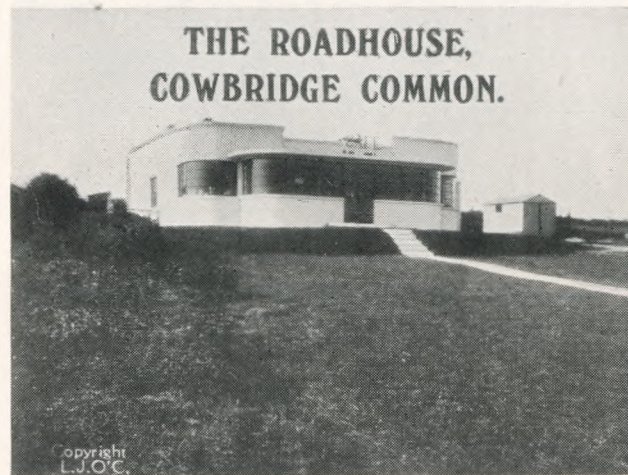
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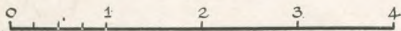
# COWERIDGE RURAL DISTRICT ROAD MAP

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Parish Boundaries within R.D. }  
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