



Countryside Access and Walking

VALEWAYS

Cerdded yng nghefn gwlad



March 2022

Sorry for the delay in getting this out to you all.

First Signs of Spring

One of the joys of walking is seeing the first signs of Spring_unfurling. Nothing much happened during January this year, it hardly even rained! But move into February and as early as the 6th we saw lambs and lots of snowdrops during our walk around Merthyr Mawr, however the rains had returned which meant curtailing our route.



Gwenda's Welsh learners walk on 23rd February took walkers to Castle upon Alun to see the first of the wild daffodil flowers. The Wildlife Trust reserve here is one of the largest plantation of wild daffodils in Wales. The bright Scarlet Elfcup mushroom was also spotted.



Move on a week to our walk in St. Fagans, where more rain caused several of us to become stuck in mud along a short section of the footpath.

The variable Welsh weather continued, and on our 6th March walk the route had to be altered 3 times due to fallen trees, however we were rewarded with plenty of primroses.

Scarlet Elfcup

Now the days are getting longer and the sun warmer ready for some more adventures in the forthcoming programme.



Walks on offer between April and the end of June include coast and countryside, spring flowers, orchard and butterfly habitats, through to the mysterious search of the Purple Gromwell!

There is always something to learn on a Valeways walk.

Post Covid Valeways volunteers and supporters have been keeping very busy, so here's the latest news.....

Watch out for our newly trained Walk Leaders



Three new walk leaders undertook Walk Leader Training in March this year.

Charles is already leading the well-being strollers walk in Barry but Owen and Sarah are now raring to go. They will be joining walks during the current programme to learn the ropes and we welcome their input over the summer months.

Photo includes Charles, Rebecca, Owen and Sarah during the demonstration walk.

Walk and Clear Volunteers Update

Regular Walk and Clear volunteer, Terry Dennis also volunteers with the Vale of Glamorgan's Ranger service based at the Glamorgan Heritage Centre at Southerndown/Dunraven. He reports that 'a few months ago we were on the coast path cutting back a patch of blackthorn. Even with power tools, progress was slow. I thought it was not a good use of the Rangers' time as their skills are in conservation. So I offered to enquire whether any of Valeways walk and clearers would be interested in helping out, particularly as it was a bit quiet prior to the growing season. And hey presto, that's how we ended up lying on our sides under the bushes, getting thorns in our hands and scratches on our foreheads. A special thank you goes to Peter Jones for undertaking all the organisation behind the scenes'.



Once the work was completed Paul Lock, Site Ranger for the Heritage Coast sent the following note of thanks...

Just a little thank you for the great work you've done on the Wales Coast Path at St Donats. This is often the sort of job that we find very difficult with our small team. These areas often end up being trimmed each year to keep it open rather than the big cut back that's needed. It's amazing how quickly the vegetation grows and takes you by surprise. I don't underestimate how hard the work was to clear the blackthorn. The worst scrub to deal with!

When reporting on the work undertaken on the coast path this year I'll make sure to credit you.

Letting the light in and having the wind blowing through will mean the path always stays dry for walkers. We will see another benefit come during the spring and summer when the sun reaches the ground there I'm expecting a range of wild flowers which will have been lying dormant to start flowing again. Maybe even some orchids if we're lucky.

Valeways Walk for Ukraine



Regular walk leader Lynne Frugtriet reports finding 'Distressing and disturbing pictures of people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine have been in the newspapers and on the television. Many thousands of people, of all ages, have been trying to walk to safety. Walking is something that lots of us do regularly and... well; so some Valeways strollers decided to do a sponsored Walk for Ukraine. The idea was to sponsor yourself to walk around Cosmeston, then all money raised was to be sent to Ukraine to support the need for blankets, food, medicines....everything.

Fortunately, the group gathered under glorious blue skies for the start of the walk. One lady walked past as we were preparing to leave and hearing what we were up to, donated money! Another lady in the group had talked to her 99 year old neighbour about what she was doing, and the neighbour insisted on giving her £30. She said she couldn't walk anymore, but she wanted to support the Walk for Ukraine. The group raised over £400. a truly magnificent amount. In a small way, we have supported people who are losing everything, but are attempting to walk to a better life. Walking really is life changing!

Very well done to all who participated.

Words of Thanks from a loyal Valeways Volunteer

Walkers joining one of Phil Bond's recent walks were taken by surprise when he made the following announcement 'Volunteering with Valeways gives me so much pleasure, to see people smiling when you show them the hidden secrets of the Vale, their comments are always good. Beautiful views of the coastline, forest, lakes, rivers, fields and much more. So many species of wildlife, (alpacas included). To witness so many different people making new friends, talking, laughing and enjoying themselves. It makes me feel good'

We all echo Phil's thoughts and Rebecca decided to build them into the recent Walk Leader Training session.

What is Health?

Mental

Volunteering with valeways gives me so much pleasure, to see people smiling when you show them the hidden secrets of the Vale, their comments are always good.

Social

Beautiful views of the coastline, forest, lakes, rivers, fields and much more.

Physical

So many species of wildlife, (alpacas included).

To witness so many different people making new friends, talking, laughing and enjoying themselves.

It makes me feel good.

The slide describes the three aspects of health (mental, social and physical) and Phil's statement shows us that Valeways is so friendly and supportive we often forget that we have undertaken physical exercise!

Celebrating International Women's Day with Barry Soroptomists



Barry Soroptomists asked for help with walk leading along the Penarth Women's Trail. Peter, Kate and Rebecca joined the group who were very knowledgeable about a number of women who have had links with Penarth over they years. Following the walk we were invited to join the group for a lovely lunch and additional short talks about some of the women featured in the walk. Full details of the Penarth and Barry

Trails can be found at <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/enjoying/Arts-and-Culture/Barry-and-Penarth-Womens-Trails.aspx>

And finally, 'Book Early'

The 2022 Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival website is about to go live and walks can be booked from 1st June. The festival runs from 6th to 11th September and the programme includes walks of between 2 and 14 miles so there is something for everyone.