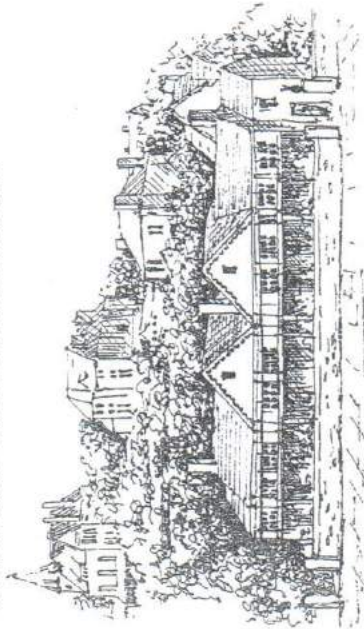


lifeboat station, opened in 1861, with the lifeboat 'George Gay', 30 foot long with six oars and a launching carriage.

The Penarth Boat Club was formed around 1880, the first craft being housed in sheds between the life-boat house and 'Sea Cot'. The present Yacht Club was built in three stages: the north wing in 1884, the middle section a year later and the south wing, third stage, built on the site of the lifeboat station in the mid 1890's, the lifeboat being moved to a new home under the Head in 1883/84.



Rock Villa and Balcony Villa

'Sea Cot' now a residential home, was empty for the 1861 census, but in 1905 it was occupied by Robert Redford, manager of the 'Theatre Royal', St. Mary Street, Cardiff.

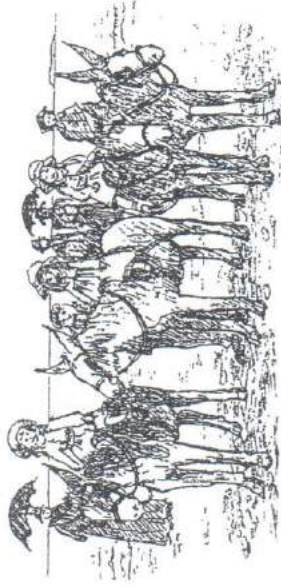
If we look seaward we have a splendid view of the Somerset coastline and the two islands Flat and Steep Holm, both used in modern times as military bases, and used perviously by Vikings, Irish raiders, pirates and smugglers. They are both mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, as Bradan Relice and Steapan Relice. If we look southward we see Lavernock Point. In December 1892, the Post Office sent successful transmission of telegrams "without wires" between Lavernock Point and Flat Holm. A paper noted — "a message across a broken intervening space of 3 miles, this points at once to a means of communication from shore to lighthouses and between ships at sea." Marconi sent his message in 1897.

The Italian Gardens were laid down and opened in 1926 on a strand previously the site for numerous boat-houses, a large bathing-machine store, and a cottage occupied in 1871 by Edward Morgan, bathing machine keeper, and his family. In the decades 1840/50/60 the area was an occasional "shanty town" for illegal Irish immigrants escaping

the "Famines", brought over from Ireland by unscrupulous captains of small sailing vessels, as human ballast and dumped on the foreshore.

The Beach Shelter, opened just after the Prom was built, was run as refreshment rooms in 1886 by J. Moore and Sons. Now underutilized, it would be an ideal site for a Town Museum, with perhaps a Tea-Garden on the plateau roof.

Next to the Shelter is the elegant Victorian terrace built by F. Speed in 1904, originally shops and restaurants with private hotels at either end. Early occupiers were Govier's Restaurant and Confectionary, Meredith's Toys and Fancy Goods, Stephans and Co.: Toys and Fancy Goods Bazaar, and the 'Cabin'. Mrs. Smith had the 'Gwalia Cafe' and private hotel at the south end and Mrs. Roc had a private hotel at the north end. These two sites are now in the hands of the successful Rabaiotti family and both run as restaurants.

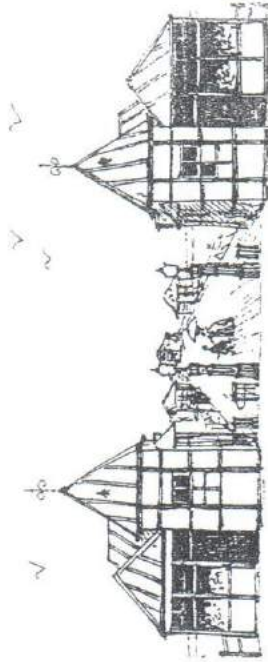


The unusual block of flats covers the site of Beach Cottage, home to the first two Piermasters: Evans and Leonard, and 'Rock Villa' and 'Balcony Villa'. An early occupier of 'Rock Villa' was Mr. Matthews in 1881, while 'Balcony Villa' was occupied by Edward Stockdale, Customs official, with his wife, four children, a nephew and two servants. Later in 1886 John Bigg, brewer, lived there.

In the town visitors lists for 1876 we find Mr. and Mrs. Brain and a Miss Thomas staying at 'Beach Cottage', and Mr. and Mrs. Davies of Clifton and the Misses Hunt staying at 'Balcony Villa'.

At the corner of the Esplanade and Bridgeman Road, where the Trail ends, was a large boat-yard and boat-house, used to store and repair boats belonging to the Penarth Promenade and Landing Pier Company, formed in 1888.

Town Trails No. 5



Penarth Pier

PENARTH TOWN COUNCIL

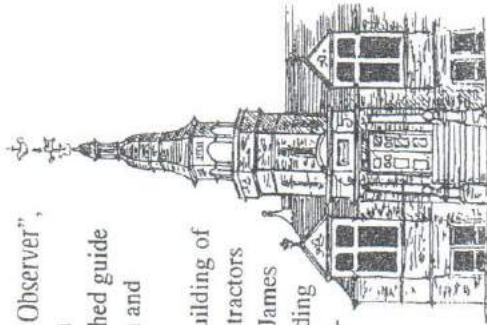
Duration of Walk:

Approximately 45 Minutes

This walk has been produced as part of the Penarth Pier Centenary 1894 — 1994

TCXI © Alan Thome 1994
Illustrations © Diana Mead

An editorial in the "Penarth Observer", June 1892, complained about a "Sham Pier" noting that published guide books showed a pier at Penarth and stated this was misleading and dishonest. In April 1894 the building of the pier started, the main contractors being the brothers Arthur and James Mayo of Manchester. The building was not without problems including litigation by a local resident James Thorne, for non-payment of wages!



Penarth Baths

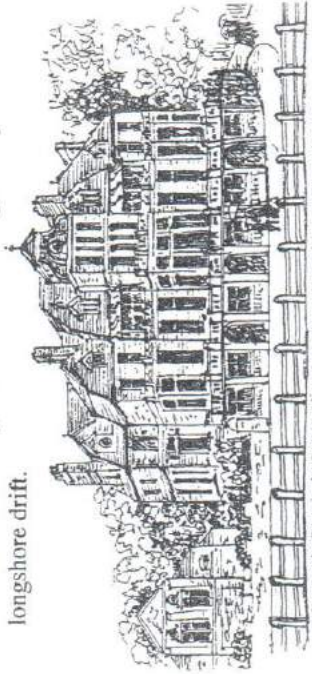
The pier opened for prom-enading in February 1895 and in April 1895 the first excursion boats, the "Bonnie Doon" and the "Waverley" left accompanied by music provided by the Cogan Military Band. The Commodore, formerly the New Pavilion and then the Marina, was built in 1929 and was used as a music-hall, cinema, theatre, dance hall, boxing hall, night club and a snooker hall. An original pavilion built in 1907 at the seaward end of the pier, burned down in 1931.

Leaving the pier entrance we turn north along the prom-enade, built 1883/84 by the Windsor/Clive family and built over and extended in 1926/27. We pass the site of the slipway that served the Cardiff and Penarth Steam Ferry Co., one of their vessels, the "Iona" having been built in Penarth, at the Penarth Slipway.

Climbing up Beach Road, opened in 1924, we reach the Kymin House built on an earlier farm. In 1700 the Kimmin Farm was occupied by Gwennllian Evans. The derivation of Kymin is from 'Ki', the old Celtic for stream and 'minni', the old Norse for 'stream's mouth'. An earlier occupier of the Kymin, 1841, was John Minchin an Army Officer; later the house was occupied by J.S. Batchelor. At the rear of the house can be seen the preserved remains of cottages and stables.

Walking down the hill we pass Seabank Flats, built on the densely wooded grounds of the Kymin and separated when the new road was built. The old road ran at the rear of the flats in front of the lovely Park Superintendent's house.

The new block of flats, 'Alexandra Court', was built on the site of the 'Esplanade Hotel' opened in 1887 and burned down in 1977 — the original headquarters of the Barbarians R.F.C. The hotel was built on the confluence of three streams that then ran through a pill to the Severn Sea (now the Bristol Channel), lost with the building of the prom and longshore drift.



Esplanade Hotel

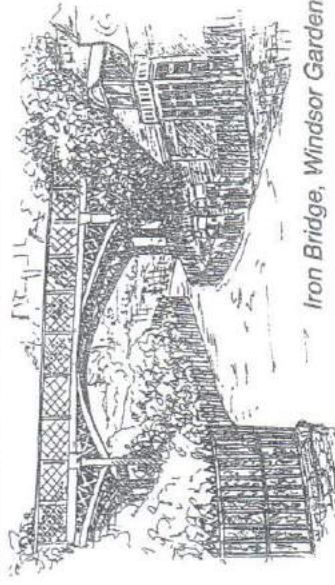
The Swimming Baths, of local blue lias stone and built in 1884, now a pub, were saltwater, the water being pumped up from under the pier to two reservoirs in Alexandra Park Gardens and recently filled in. Entering Bridgeman Road, named after Lady Mary Selina Bridgeman, daughter of the Earl of Bradford, who married Robert Clive, son of Baroness Windsor, in 1852, we see the lovely park lodge, a charming piece of Victorian Penarth overshadowed by a modern block of flats. The Windsor Gardens, opened in 1880, initially had a penny admission collected by the first lodge keeper Charles Shaw. Moving up the hill we pass the Alexandra Gardens, opened in 1902, and see the Cwrt, the route of one of the previously-mentioned streams. The house that over looks the Cwrt was called 'Camaret' and was owned by C. Howells, a shipowner whose vessels ran Franco's blockade during the Spanish Civil War. The Germans bombed one of his vessels the 'Jeanne M' as she lay in Barcelona Docks in 1938. The large houses opposite were originally 'Oakhurst', occupied by George Urry, Solicitor, 'Ashdene' by J.P. Jones, a builder who did much of Solomon Andrews' building in Cardiff and Penarth, 'Glynne Towers' by Harry Cousins, Solicitor, and 'Holme Tower' by Charles Heywood, merchant.

At the junction of Bridgeman Road and Park Road stands 'Gardenhurst' first occupied by Llewellyn Wood; S.A. Brain of brewery fame lived at Roxburgh, Park Road. We enter Holmesdale Place, named after William Pitt, Viscount

Holmesdale, who married the Dowager Countess of Plymouth, widow of the 5th Earl of Plymouth. On her death in 1838 he married the Dowager Countess of Plymouth, widow of the 6th Earl!

Turning left into a lane and then narrow alley we pass two Victorian gems — the 'Rocket House' and the 'Rocket Carriage House'. Entering the Tower Hill we see the 'Coast-guard Watchtower', unfortunately much changed, and the row of Coastguard Cottages, all built in 1864 with a communal courtyard behind, communal outhouses and until recently a communal water-pump. The chief-coastguard lived at the seaward end. In 1886 he was James Regan and his house was called 'Bleak House' — very apt!

Crossing Marine Parade we enter the lane to the beach; this is the original path from when the Coastguard Cottages stood in isolation surrounded by fields. On the left is 'The Holmes', originally home to Raymond Heitzmann; later it became home to the Gibbs shipowning family. We then pass 'Bron-y-Glyn', previously 'Plymouth House', occupied in 1861 by Anne Evans. In 1871 Herbert Locoek, a Captain R.E., lived there with his wife and 3 children. His wife was born in Quebec. They had living in: a nurse, cook, house-maid, parlourmaid and undernurse. Above the stables lived Thomas Barnes, his wife and 2 children.



Iron Bridge, Windsor Gardens

The path passes between the first and second phases of Windsor Gardens, originally linked by a beautiful Victorian ornate, cast-iron bridge. The buttresses can still be seen. The houses in Marine Parade and Bridgeman Road all had private entrances to the parks, paying the Windsor Estates an annual fee.

At the bottom right of the path is Cliff Hall, cut out of the cliff face in 1884, and the site of one of the town's many alfresco gents' toilets. On the left is the site of the town's first