

The first building on your right was the Custom House (1865). Note the Royal Coat of Arms on the stone clock-tower with its cast-iron weather vane. This was the site of Penarth Head Inn, said to be owned by the 18th-century smuggler, Edward Edwards. The next building was the Marine Hotel, another Taff Vale Railway property. Note the unusual mansard roofs and the French windows with the initials TVR on the guard rails of the balconies. Both buildings are listed. The lifeboat station was at the rear from 1883 to 1905. From the far side of the Marine Hotel look up at the wall from the shore to the Northcliffe House cliff-top summer house. It was built for M. Ernest Plisson, whose ship *Sainte Adresse* traded between Penarth and Le Havre.

Retrace your steps up the hill, bearing right along Paget Road, formerly called Dock Road.

(6) The cobbles and triassic marl steps of Ferry Lane (the first left on the far pavement) are a reminder of the path that used to continue down the fields on your right to the chain ferry. Between Ferry Lane and Hill Street (also cobbled) the pavement is on a raised platform. Then, until the aptly named Steep Street, note the housing style with bay windows and short steps to a front door set back above the pavement.

You are still walking above the curve of land into which Penarth Dock was fitted and which was opened in 1865. A record of 4,660,648 tons of coal was exported in 1913. General cargoes were handled on the far side, but both sides of the dock had coaling staiths and some stone piers remain. There were four movable steel tips on the far side of the basin, and it was claimed that they were so fast-loading that a boat could be turned around on one tide.

Brunel's *Great Britain* — the first ocean-going, propeller driven iron steamship — left from No 9 tip in February 1886. This proved to be its last voyage. Caught in a hurricane off Cape Horn, it took shelter in the Falklands where it remained till 1970. It was then brought back to Bristol, where it is still on exhibition in the dock in which it was built. After the post-war decline in the coal trade the dock closed in 1936, but re-opened for war service with the Royal Engineers and the U.S. Navy especially before the D-Day invasion of France.

Climb to the end of Paget Road and turn right. Notice the triangular garden between the bow-fronted Royal Hotel and the former St Joseph's Catholic Church and Schoolroom. This community project

was undertaken by schoolchildren, and was visited by Prince Charles in 1982, when it received a Prince of Wales Award.

(7) Continue walking above the dock along Harbour View Road. At the end of the last Harbour View block of flats (nos 81 to 84) is the third viewpoint of your walk. After about 30 yards stand on the highest point of the path leading down to an adventure play area.

On your right is the expanse of Cardiff, with the River Ely ahead of you winding its way inland. On the left of the river is the railway to Cardiff and above it, on the curve, a modern block of flats in two-tone brick (Elizabethan Court) next to the oldest building in the area. Parts of Cogan Pill House (now a pub and restaurant called Barons Court) date from 1554.

In clear weather you can see the turrets of Castell Coch above the River Taff gap and, in the far distance, towards the Rhondda, Fendale, Aberdare, Merthyr, and Rhymney hills and valleys. It was these coalfields whose exports were the main reason for the construction of Penarth Dock near Cogan Pill, a tidal creek of the River Ely.

Less than a mile ahead of you is the village of Llandough. The landmark saddle-backed tower of St Dochdwy Church is to the left of the former 18th-century farmhouse of Great House Farm, now demolished, the site of a Celtic monastery. The remains of a Roman villa were discovered near there during house-building in 1979. The church is a Grade 2 listed building and within the grounds stands an Ancient Monument in the form of a Celtic Cross.

Towards your left Andrew Road rises from Penarth Leisure Centre in Cogan towards Dinas Powys. Further to your left is the estate built on the sloping fields of Cornerswell Farm. On your extreme left, above the site of two former brickworks in Cogan, are Tennyson Road, Kipling Close, and the other "poets corner" roads of Penarth.

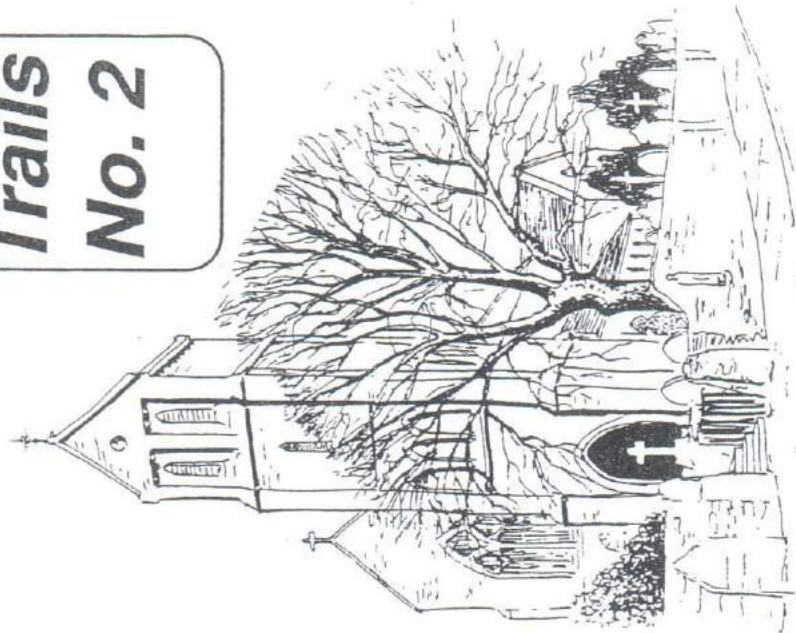
(8) Retrace your steps as far as the first gap (after flats 65-68). Turn right, and after about 60 yds follow the paved path bearing left. Then, after making two sharp right turns down the steps, you enter Hill Terrace. Cross the road to the right of Holy Nativity Church (opened 1894), and walk up Windsor Road. Pass the police station (built 1864) and cross the bottom of High Street. Monty Smith, at the junction with Railway Terrace on your right, has premises adapted from the Windsor Kinema, run by the Willmore Brothers. Cross the bottom of Arcot Street. (several roads in Penarth commemorate the local link with the Clive of India family: Cawnpore Street, Clive Crescent, Plassey Street, Ludlow Street, Paget Road.)

(9) Windsor Road was originally residential, but towards the turn of the century a 'town centre' was created with shop conversions. The use of the houses' front garden space achieved projecting shop fronts without sacrificing a wide pavement. The original 19th-century upper floors remain clearly visible. Notice, for instance, the ornate roofs and embellishments above David Morgan, Olivers, and Lo-Cost. The Solomon Andrews horse buses left opposite from the side of the St Fagans Public House.

You have now returned to the town centre roundabout where your walk began.

# THE PENARTH SOCIETY

## Town Trails No. 2



## PENARTH TOWN COUNCIL

Duration of Walk: approx. 1 hour. 30mins

The text of this second walk is derived from entries to a competition organised by Penarth Town Council. The entrants were M. E. Brennan, Councillor A. M. Ernest, Miss C. M. Neill, Class 6 of Evenlode Primary School (1984/5) and Penarth District Local History Society.

Edited by The Penarth Society and Penarth Town Council. Illustrated by Diana Mead of The Penarth Society.

Illustrations copyright Diana Mead.

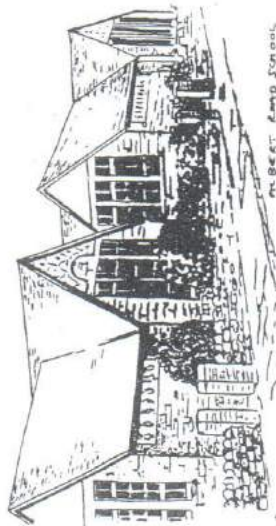
Penarth, like Tenby, has one of the best concentrations in South Wales of Victorian buildings and architectural styles. Many of its terraces and large detached properties were built of local materials: lias limestone quarried on the site of Cwrt-y-Vil playing fields (off Laverock Road) and brick made of local marl at two sites in Cogan.

The walk begins at the town centre roundabout. Opposite Windsor Arcade (1898), now a listed building, is the National and Provincial Building Society. A post office on this site was transferred to the other side of Bradenham Place and, until the late 50s, it housed Penarth's manual telephone exchange.

This building, until recently, was occupied by the Job Centre and Social Security and was once the Grosvenor Restaurant. From its balcony town proclamations were made including the end of the Boer War.

(1) Passing Lloyds Bank opposite, now a listed building, begin walking up Albert Road. To the left, on the corner of Ludlow Lane stands the former Crown Post Office building which was built in 1936 and which, together with the pillar box has also been listed by the Secretary of State as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The Post Office building has recently been extended over the site of what was the Solomon Andrews Hall, The Hippodrome. From 1887 until 1929, when it was destroyed by fire, it was used for meetings, films, variety shows and productions by Penarth Operatic Society. To the rear of the Post Office building lies the yard which originally stabled the horses for the Solomon Andrews buses into Cardiff. Although the Post Office Counters Service has transferred to Windsor Road, Royal Mail still operate from the site.

Continue walking up Albert Road. The Methodist Church was opened in 1906. Higher up, on your left, Belle Vue Court is now in residential use, but was the town's first fire station and the offices of the Urban District Council.



The next building, Albert County Primary School, also a listed building was the first Board School when it opened in 1876. Its unique murals of schoolchildren were painted 10 years later by R. Norton Nance from his wife's design. The couple lived in St Ives, but visited Penarth to stay in Westbourne Road with Mr Nance's brother. On the opposite side of the road stands one of several red telephone boxes now listed in the town as being of special Architectural or Historic Interest.

At the top of Belle Vue Park, opened 1914, turn right. Like the Edwardian terrace on the seafront, Belle Vue Terrace is a unified block with pointed roofs at No.1, No.7, and No.14. The bowling green



area of the park was once a quarry so deep that after heavy rain in 1877 two brothers were drowned in it. Continue walking towards St Augustine's Church, a Grade 1 Listed Building.

(2) You are now on the highest land in Penarth (about 220ft above sea level) and for centuries the site of a religious settlement dating back to a foundation of Austin Canons. The 90ft saddle-backed church tower is well known to seamen in the Bristol Channel and is a prominent landmark from many viewpoints far inland.

Designed by William Butterfield and financed by Baroness Windsor, the church replaced a much smaller building in 1866. The interior is particularly noteworthy for its organ and its use of coloured brick. Three relics of the old church are preserved:

- \* a long flat 13th-century stone with an elaborate carved cross.
- \* the 14th-century churchyard cross brought indoors to minimise the ravages of the weather.
- \* a prayer desk made from the former chancel gate

A pillar surmounted by a harp marks the grave of the composer, Dr Joseph Parry, Professor of Music at Aberystwyth, who lived at Cartref in Victoria Road from 1888 to 1903.

Set into the wall just past the church gate is an ornate cast-iron drinking fountain. Continue along Church Place South, and cross the main road to enter Penarth Head Lane at the side of 57 Clive Place.

(3) At the end of this lane you are standing about 200ft above sea level, on the headland — the 'Garth' — that allegedly gave Penarth its name. This is probably the most spectacular local viewpoint. On a clear day you can see the towers of the Severn Bridge near Chepstow. Ahead are the Penarth Head buoy and the Outer Wrach buoy marking the dredged channel entrance to Penarth and Cardiff.

In 1984 a sponsored charity football match was played on Ceft-y-Wrach sandbank. You can see Penarth seafront, the 1894 pier, and Laverock Point — the southern limit of Penarth bay.

The tide often goes out beyond the pier as here in the Bristol Channel the range between high tide and low tide is one of the largest in the world.

The two islands in the Channel are Flat Holm and Steep Holm. Both had Viking associations at least a thousand years ago. Flat Holm, the nearer island, is part of South Glamorgan, and is a nature reserve and gull colony. It has been farmed for at least seven centuries. The lighthouse was established in 1737, and there was a

19th-century cholera hospital and a barracks, occupied even in the last war. Steep Holm, part of the county of Avon, is a bird sanctuary run by the Kenneth Alsop Trust. On the Avon coastline opposite Penarth are Clevedon and Weston Super Mare.

In May 1897 Marconi achieved the first radio transmission over the water. His Morse message 'Are you ready?' was transmitted from Flat Holm and received by a 110ft mast in the farm at Laverock Point. A commemorative plaque can be seen there in the front wall of St Lawrence's Church. Return along Penarth Head Lane, turn right into Clive Place, and walk down St Augustine's Crescent.

(4) At the bottom of St Augustine's Road the imposing building used to be Penarth Hotel, opened by the Taff Vale Railway in 1865, for a business and seafaring clientele. It was eventually given to the National Children's Home and Orphanage by the widow of Major J. A. Gibbs, DSO. Turn left into John Street. This was the first type of terraced house in Penarth. Similar use of lias limestone and local brick can be seen in Queen's Road, Salop Street, and Ludlow Street. The Clive Arms was the first pub of the 'new' town that sprang up with the development of Penarth Dock. From this pub William Sedler, the licensee and the town's first baker, operated his daily carrier service to Cardiff.

Turn right down Maughan Terrace. These three-storeyed properties were seamen's lodging houses, and No 12 was the Dock Hotel. Cross the main road with North Cliffe Cottage on your right, and continue downhill to the second viewpoint of your walk.

(5) Ahead of you, beyond the muddy waters of the Taff river-mouth, is Cardiff's dockland. On your left is the basin of Penarth Dock, now transformed into a marina development which has won a Civic Trust Award. There used to be a swingbridge to the far side of the dock and to the subway. For 63 years, until it was bricked up in 1963, this subway gave pedestrian access to Ferry Road on the Cardiff bank of the River Ely.