



*Countryside Access and Walking*

# VALEWAYS

*Cerdded yng nghefn gwlad*



## Newsletter Winter 2020

**'May the beauty of nature fill your heart with peace and joy throughout the year.'\***



***Valeways – seeing their way clear to a new decade! (see how they got on later!)***

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the year! Even with 20-20 vision we could not have foreseen the events of the turbulent year culminating in such a dramatic landslide! Yes, if truth be told, it certainly was a landslide when part of the Wales Coastal Path in Ceredigion fell into the sea following a recent storm. After an inspection from council officers that particular section of the path was closed and will remain closed for the foreseeable future. So if one of your New Year resolutions is to take a walk along the Wales Coastal Path in West Wales maybe it needs to be reviewed!



The month of January is commonly regarded as deriving from the Roman god, Janus. Janus is usually depicted as having two faces, one which looks at the past and one which looks to the future. The following comments are an indication of how Valeways braces itself for the future.



### **A Request for Voluntary Administrative Assistance from Phil Gibbins on behalf of Valeways Trustees**

Many readers will know that with our difficulties in obtaining funding, Valeways has had to move from employing staff to running on a volunteer basis.

This transition has started promisingly owing to the enthusiasm and willingness of our supporters. As we stand, both our major programmes, the monthly walking programme and the weekly walk and clear programme are continuing with little if any change. Also, we have agreed to organise and run this year's Walking Festival in May.

This all requires coordination so we have retained the use of our office and most significantly, Carolyn, our long time administrator has generously volunteered to continue her key support roles.

It would be impractical as well as unreasonable to expect Carolyn to cover all Valeways' administrative needs voluntarily, so she and the Trustees have started to look at areas of her work which may be taken on by individuals. The initial areas identified are:-

**The Friends of Valeways:** This is most important as the Friends of Valeways are now a more significant source of funds than previously. The task of coordination is not too onerous involving the organisation of three events a year, monitoring the renewal of membership and occasional communication with our Honorary President, Derek Brockway.

**Our Policy Files:** As a registered charity we have both a constitution and a series of policies on how our business is conducted. These need keeping up to date and in some cases creating. Assistance is available from Valeways supporters with relevant knowledge and from Glamorgan Voluntary Services who can provide models.

**Events:** Valeways keeps itself in the public eye not just by its programmes of activity. We also attend various events during the year, The Vale Show, local fairs and so forth. We have banners and literature available but need volunteers to attend and bookings require coordination.

This list is not comprehensive. What we have done so far is to try to identify areas which are self-contained and not so demanding that they can't be taken on comfortably.

More generally we always welcome offers to become Trustees.

Anyone who believes that they can help would be warmly welcomed. Initial contact is through Carolyn either by email - [info@valeways.org.uk](mailto:info@valeways.org.uk) or telephone 01446 749000. She will arrange an initial meeting to explain what might be involved before an agreement is made.

**Please come forward if you feel that you can help. It is vital in sustaining Valeways through this period so that we set ourselves up for the future.**

**Valeways office opening hours are: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10:00am—1:00pm.**

**Messages may also be left on our answering service. 01446 749000**

... and some good news!

Valeways has been included as one of the 'Local Good Cause' charities at the Cowbridge branch of Waitrose! Each time you place your little green token in the Valeways box we could benefit from a share of £1,000! - easy!



### So 'What's occurring' with Walk and Clear? Alan Simmonds, Valeways Volunteer, puts you in the picture!

"Returning to a walk and clear session after an enforced break due to an operation and recovery, one of the first conversations began with the words "Have you heard what has happened to the girls?". This was my first knowledge of Carolyn's and Rebecca's impending redundancy. The chat continued with much sympathy for their position and continued with regret for the loss of an activity we enjoyed and loved. We all seemed to have a common feeling for being in the countryside, doing a useful task and enjoyed the company of like minded people. Quickly this chat turned to action. With help from Rebecca we held a meeting after a session and over a coffee formulated a plan to continue this arm of Valeways led by volunteers. A proposal was written and presented to the Trustees, the plan was accepted and the reorganisation began.

Rebecca's continued support was vital. She gained agreement from almost 40 volunteers so that we could access their contact details and was happily forthcoming regarding the aspects of her role. Six volunteers stepped up to take on responsible roles in the new organisation. We have 3 W&C coordinators who are now arranging the clearance jobs and meeting with Vale Council's Public Rights of Way user group to continue to pass on and receive footpath issues. We have developed a few IT systems including a new footpath issue reporting system to ensure there was little repeated effort. The online form can be initiated by the reporter and handed to the council with minimal further input.

Rebecca's last walk and clear through the "three fields path" was followed by a coffee gathering and a well deserved thank you for the morning's work posted by a local resident on the **Nextdoor** social media site.

Six volunteer led sessions have been held so far, we have 1 new volunteer and have met with the council twice. All is running smoothly....."



*The cutting edge of Walk & Clear*



*That's the stile!*

### Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival 2020

We are delighted to inform you that the Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival will be taking place in 2020 and will run between Tuesday 19th and Saturday 23rd May. So far we have 20 walks promised including some new features such as bilingual walks, dog walks and family walks, walk to a hidden castle plus a bat walk. In order to be able to provide Festivals in future years we will have to make a small charge of £3 per walk. This change has meant that we have been fortunate to attract some generous funding from the Vale Tourism Association and several local Councils. If anyone is able to help the small group of volunteers with leading a walk, assisting with Facebook, other Social Media, or website updates please contact Rebecca at [rebeccaexley@aol.com](mailto:rebeccaexley@aol.com).

Valeways might be experiencing some big changes but the walking programme's fare remains constant, with varied, interesting and informative walks planned throughout the winter, from 'Dave's Annual New Year's Day Walk (1 Jan.) to 'Almost Spring!' (29 March). Walks also provide the opportunity to explore the Vale - all the way from Penarth in the east to Llantwit Major in the west and calling at Fontygary (23 January) on the way. Amongst such favourites as 'Castle-upon-Alun Circular' (5 January) and 'Salmon Leaps' (14 March) are some fascinating outings. Can you answer the question, 'Have we been here before?' (30 January) The walk entitled 'Over the Hill' (12 March) requires no answer! There is the opportunity to enjoy the countryside, from Cowbridge (12 January) to Cosmeston. (23 February) Wherever you decide to go however, the coast is not far away – see 'Countryside and Coast' (6 January) and 'Woodlands and Coast' (19 March). Yes, 'I must go down to the sea again!' (26 March)



***Walkers, including the artist Glyn Pooley, enjoying the countryside and the coast at The Knap. (Thanks to Oggie for the photo)***

The various Coffee Shop Strollers continue to be popular with five groups meeting regularly. The comments of Lynne Frugtniet, who leads the 'Living with Cancer Strollers' are a timely reminder of the benefits of such walks. "Do you want to feel better, have more energy, burn some calories, manage health problems and have fun? Then join our walking group at Cosmeston."

**Look out for the change!** February's walk is on the second Thursday (13 February), then it's back to the first Thursday for March and the rest of the year.

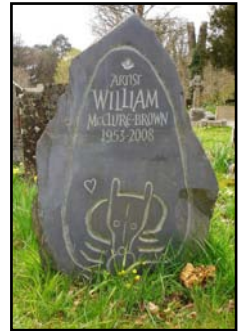


***'Living with Cancer Strollers' – appreciating the benefits of walking – and having fun!  
(Thanks to Lynne for the photo.)***

Walkers visiting the tranquil Saint Teilo's Church at Merthyr Mawr (16 February) might be in for a big surprise when they discover the final resting place of artist William Brown. Look out for his unique gravestone.

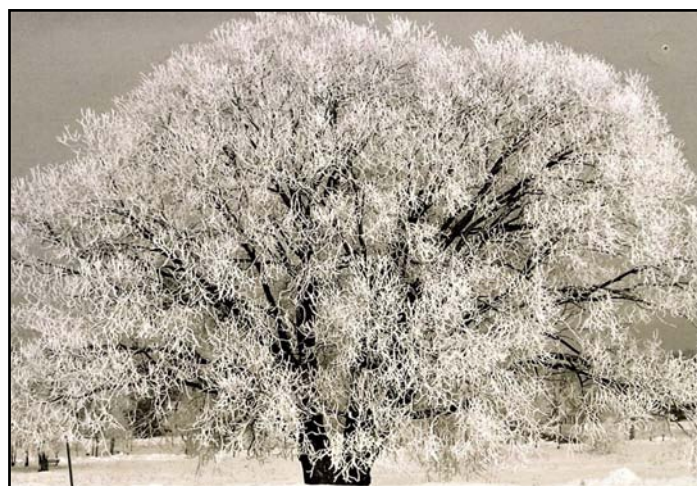
The art work on the gravestone is the work of renowned calligrapher Ieuan Rees. Visit Ewenny Priory cemetery to see more examples of his work.

***A playful polar bear pays homage to William Brown***



**Nic Fogg 1949 – 2019**

We were saddened to hear of the sudden passing of one of Valeways' founder members. Nic Fogg's name might be unfamiliar to many of us but he was instrumental in establishing Valeways. Nic Fogg was a journalist who after spending some time in the Vale returned to the Fylde coast some 20 years ago. Despite his long absence from the Vale, he had always continued his interest in Valeways and according to Carolyn, sent donations from time to time. He died after being taken ill on his way to New Zealand to celebrate his 70th birthday with his family. Fellow founder member, Val Warlow recalls that Nic was an inspiration behind Valeways and was actively involved in Valeways' first project – The Highlight Trail (now part of The Millennium Heritage Trail) Val adds, "After 23 years, Volunteers continue to maintain the footpaths so everyone can enjoy our wonderful countryside and coast in the Vale - a fitting legacy to a lovely man".



\* And finally, in pursuit of an appropriate photo for this Newsletter we make no apologies for republishing this beautiful image of a tree in winter seen on a Christmas card which has adorned the Valeways office for a few years and featured in the Winter 2017/18 Newsletter. The card bore the greetings printed at the top of this Newsletter and, by sheer coincidence, the personal inscription inside reads, 'To All at Valeways, with best wishes from Nic Fogg'.

**This just goes to show that despite looking forward to the future with confidence and fortitude there is no harm in looking back sometimes.**