

*3 1/2 mile (2 1/2 hour)  
Circular walk with some moderate climbs.*

# Llanbadoc & Cefn Ila Circular Walk

**Llanbadoc Community Council Walk Leaflet No 6**

An extraordinary evolutionist, an eccentric adventurer and author, a French Marquis, evacuees and thousands of little bundles of joy feature in this circular walk through the countryside around Llanbadoc to Cefn Ila.

## Start and park:

Llanbadoc Island, Usk adjacent to St Madoc's Church (1) OS Grid ref 376001

(You can also start / park at Usk Rural Life Museum (15) joining the walk at (13), lane s/p Coed-duon. Follow this path crossing a field, a stile and uphill to another stile to meet the main route at (12).)

**Numbers in the text relate to numbers on the map.**

Several stiles mean this route may not be suitable for dogs.

**Start:** From the car park walk past St Madoc's Church (1) to the main road. Turn left along the pavement for 60m. Turn right across the road and up the lane between Myrtle Villa and Ty Mawr Farm (2). Follow this lane uphill passing two houses on your right. At the top of the lane keep right along a footpath heading uphill towards Pant-y-cwch wood.

**Look out for the view to the left towards Wentwood Forest.**

Go through a gate and keep on this path. **Lined with trees and old hedgerows this is an ancient hollow-way and reputedly a Roman road.**

Look out for a way marker on the right approaching the field boundary. Turn left in front of the gateway, walking between the trees and then along the field edge. **On a clear day you may be able to see Twmbarlwm, the Iron Age hill fort above Cwmbran.**



Go through two gates, following the way marker downhill, passing the larch wood of Cae-maen (3) on the left. After the wood follow the track downhill to the right. **Can you spot the tall ornamental trees of Cefn Ila on the hillside in front?** Continue downhill and through a gate onto the road and turn right. Turn left beside the former entrance lodge to Cefn Ila (4). Continue on this track past the car park (5).

**Thousands of babies were born at Cefn Ila between 1945 and 1973 when it was a maternity hospital. Since 2008 the Woodland Trust / Coed Cadw have planted a tree for every baby born and adopted in Wales, creating the new woodland on your left. (Alternate route through trees leaves from car park.)**

Go left through the next gateway (6) into the grounds of Cefn Ila following the track to the top, where moss-covered stones and bricks in the undergrowth are all that remains of the mansion (7).





**'It is approached from the Main Road by a long, winding carriage drive through park-like lands.'**



**'The Pleasure Grounds comprise remarkable fine Conifers and Plantation, with a natural Rockery, and on the South and West there are extensive promenades, arranged in Terraces.'**

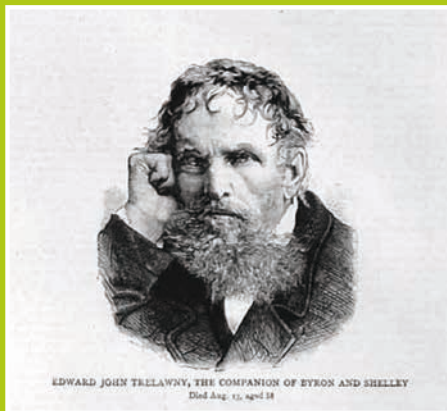


**'It is well placed on an eminence, nicely sheltered, has a South aspect, commanding extensive and lovely views.'**



**'The walled Vegetable and Fruit Gardens are well stocked with very productive and choice fruit trees, and there are greenhouses and melon pits.'**

## The many lives of Cefn Ila



**Edward Trelawny (1792-1881). Mary Shelley described him as 'six feet high, with raven-black hair curling thick and short like a Moor's.'**

Revolution, owned Cefn Ila. In 1925 it became a convalescent home. During WWII it was a school for evacuated children and after the war it was a maternity home. Destroyed by a mysterious fire in 1973, echoes of Cefn Ila's past live on today in Trelawny's splendid cedar trees. The Woodland Trust are now restoring the ground

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(Photos courtesy of Nic Henderson.

Descriptions and maps from Sale Particulars, 1897, Gwent Archives)

Walk to the left of the bat house, into the orchard through a kissing gate. Head across the orchard towards the bottom of the walled garden (that can be explored from here via the doorway) **(8)**.

Continue past the garden uphill and through the kissing gate. Turn right to corner of field and then left along the fence to a kissing gate. Go through gate. **There are wonderful views towards the Sugar Loaf on a clear day. To your left are remains of WW2 pill boxes. (9)**

Cross the farm track and go over the stile, turning diagonally right along the fence to the woodland. Go over a stile and turn right to walk beside the fence.

In the mid-19th century Cefn Ila was home to a 'dark, handsome and moustachioed' author Edward Trelawny. He was a close friend of Shelley and Byron and following Shelley's death he tried to grow seedlings from his friend's remains in the ornamental garden he created. Many of the specimen trees you see today were planted by him. He led a colourful life, enjoying nude bathing in the Usk, breaking the Sabbath, and taking tea with the vicar of Usk on Sunday afternoons!

The 300 year old house Trelawny lived in was built by Edward Lister, High Sheriff of Wiltshire, in 1870. By the turn of the century Gerard Gustavus Ducarel, a French aristocrat whose family had fled the French



Convalescents at Cefn Ila c. 1925.

**The recently planted trees around Cefn Ila will mature into mixed native woodland like this. A gap in the trees (10) gives views towards Coleg Gwent (another previous owner of Cefn Ila) and in the distance to the Skirrid Mountain.**

Continue over a stile, keeping close to the woodland through the next field and down to another stile. Walk downhill keeping to the left and over a stile beside a gateway on the left **(11)**, quickly followed by another stile. Cross the field heading toward the electricity poles in the middle of the field. **Can you see Llancayo windmill, built around 1813?** Then head downhill towards a stile. **(12)**, where you have a choice:



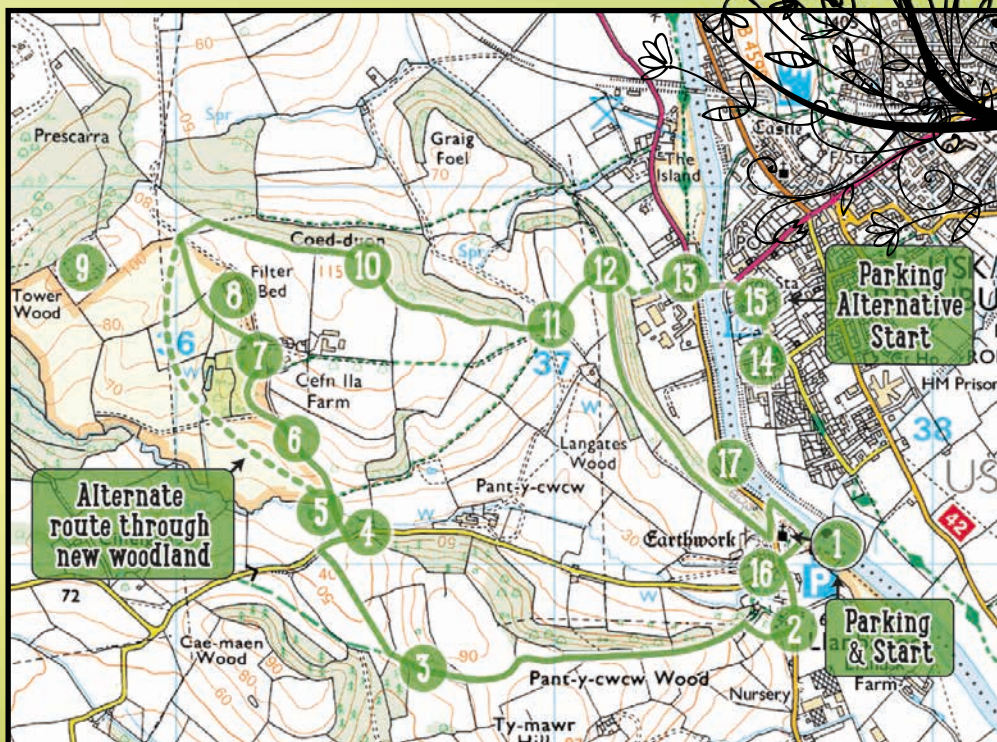
To visit Usk Rural Life Museum go over this stile **(12)** following the path down to the road. **(13)** Turn right and then left across the bridge. Turn right along New Market Street as far as the Royal Hotel **(14)** on the right, where Trelawny lived when he came to Usk in 1839. Retrace your steps to the Museum **(15)** on the right to find out more about the surrounding countryside and to take a tea break!

To return directly to Llanbadoc Church turn right before the stile and walk along the field edge over two more stiles. At the far end of the field go over another stile and down a short lane. Trelawny lived at the house on the right, Twyn Bell **(16)**, before moving to

Cefn Ila. At the footpath sign turn sharp left downhill to the road. Cross the road, turn left for 20m and walk down the lane towards the church (1) passing the memorial stone to Alfred Russell Wallace on your right.

*Wallace (the naturalist and co-founder with Charles Darwin of the theory of evolution) was born at Kensington Cottage (17) in 1823 and baptised here. His childhood memories included standing on large flat stones on the riverbank and scooping up lampreys in large saucepans and eating them for dinner!*

*There is a little bit of Italy and France in the churchyard. The cedar trees were planted in 1846 by Trelawny, from cones he collected from Shelley's grave in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome, whilst members of the French Marquis de la Pasture family are buried in the family tomb here.*



We would like to thank Gwent Archives, Nic Henderson and Annie Leaver for permission to reproduce images. Thanks also to all those people who kindly supplied photos of babies born at Cefn Ila used on the front cover.