



## KEY

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Taff Trail                                      | Parking                               |
| Train Station                                   | Forest Lock (FL) and Middle Lock (ML) |
| Llandaff Cathedral                              | Sunnybank cottages                    |
| Ty Mawr   | Tramway                               |
| Melingriffith Tin Plate works and Feeder Stream | Ivy House                             |
| Melingriffith Water Pump                        | Cooking Mound East of Taff Terrace    |
| Oak Cottage                                     | Iron Bridge                           |
| Former Towpath Bridge to Glamorganshire Canal   | Castell Coch                          |
| Forest Hall                                     | Gelynis Farm                          |
| Forest Farm and Cottages                        | Morganstown Castle Mound              |
| Glamorganshire Canal                            | Ynys Bridge                           |

# HISTORY OF THE TAFF TRAIL

This leaflet is designed to provide information on the History of the Taff Corridor in Cardiff. It covers the area between Llandaff and Tongwynlais.

If you take a walk along the River and you will still see many interesting buildings and features which will give you clues to Cardiff's past.

[Click here for more information on general history](#) or on the icons to find out more.

For further information about other opportunities to enjoy the countryside on your doorstep contact the Council's Countryside Team.

**Telephone:** 029 2087 3230

**Email:** [countryside@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@cardiff.gov.uk)

**Websites:**

[www.cardiff.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/countryside)

[www.cardiff.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/biodiversity)



# GENERAL HISTORY

Two rivers the Taf Fechan (Little Taff) and the Taf Fawr (Big Taff) start in the Brecon Beacons and join together in Merthyr Tydfil to form the River Taff. The Taff Valley is rich in history and has always been an important trade route. At the start of the 18th century it centred mainly along the parish road between Llandaff and Tongwynlais using pack horses and mules. This was replaced by a more efficient horse drawn light railway during the Industrial Revolution. The railway was built along the eastern side of the River Taff between the Pentyrch Iron Works and Melingriffith Tinplate Works.

In 1798, the Glamorganshire Canal was built and became an important link to move coal and iron ore from Merthyr Tydfil and the Rhondda Valley to Cardiff's dock. During this time, Cardiff became the largest coal exporting city in the world.

There are also many listed buildings and ancient monuments along the Taff Corridor including Llandaff Cathedral, Melingriffith Waterwheel and Castell Coch.







# LLANDAFF CATHERDRAL

Llandaff Cathedral is a Grade I listed building in the heart of Llandaff Village. Its formal name is the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. The first stone church of Llandaf was probably built in the eleventh century and according to the Book of Llandaff was a tiny building, 28 feet long by 15 feet wide and 20 feet high, with a 12 feet long apse at one end. Since then the cathedral has been rebuilt or restored five times.

If you follow the steps up from the Cathedral you will see the Cathedral Green and many old buildings, ruins and monuments some of which form part of Llandaff's Conservation Area.





# TY MAWR

Ty Mawr is a Grade II listed building and is noteworthy for being the earliest surviving house in Glamorgan dating back to 1583. Very little of the house remains apart from the basic walling, one upstairs fireplace and the fireplace in the garden. It is said to have been the house of a branch of the Matthews family of Radyr.

# MELINGRIFFITH TIN PLATE WORKS AND FEEDER STREAM

The Melingriffith Tin Plate works were built in 1749 and were on or near the site of an old corn mill that had operated as far back as the late 1100s. Melingriffith was the largest working tin factory in the UK, until the construction of the Treforest Tin Works which became the largest in the 1830's.

The tin mills were powered by water drawn from the River Taff along the Melingriffith Feeder stream. The Feeder also carried raw iron ore from the Pentyrch Iron Works until around 1815. After this time, the Pentyrch tram road was used and crossed the River Taff over the Iron Bridge. The feeder's lock was permanently closed in 1871 but traces of it still remain.

The tin plate works closed in 1957, and today the only signs that it ever existed at all are the mostly dry bed of the original Melingriffith feeder stream that still runs down from the River Taff from just above the Radyr weir, and the recently restored Melingriffith Water Pump. The works site itself has been completely cleared and is now the modern housing estate on the west side of Ty Mawr Road.

## MELINGRIFFITH TIN PLATE WORKS AND FEEDER STREAM



Melingriffith Tin Works, Whitchurch, Cardiff. 123

Photo credit:  
[www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)





# MELINGRIFFITH WATER PUMP

The Melingriffith Water Pump is a scheduled ancient monument and was constructed in 1810 to replenish the Glamorganshire Canal following a dispute between the Canal company and the Melingriffith Tin plate works. Increased competition from the railways brought about a slow decline in canal traffic and by 1890 it was no longer profitable. It finally closed in 1942.

The Water Pump was restored by Oxford House in 1970's and was transferred to the Council in the 1980's. It underwent further refurbishment works funded by Cadw and Cardiff Council in 2010.

MELINGRIFFITH WATER PUMP



# OAK COTTAGE

Oak Cottage is a Grade II listed building. It is thought the cottage could date back to the 17th century and was probably improved in the 19th century and again later when the sash windows were put in. It is important because of the links to the Melingriffith Tinplate Works and was said to be the house of officials. In the photo you can see the Glamorgan Canal which ran alongside the cottages.

OAK COTTAGE





## FORMER TOWPATH BRIDGE TO GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL

The bridge is located alongside to footpath to the Afon Taff railway bridge near the Melingriffith Waterwheel. It is cast-iron and once carried the towpath of the Glamorganshire Canal over an overflow from the canal into the Melingriffith Tinplate Works.

FORMER TOWPATH BRIDGE TO  
GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL



# FOREST HALL

There was once a large house at the entrance to Forest Farm where the car park now stands. It had numerous outbuildings and was surrounded by giant fir trees. The tenant of Forest Hall was a Mr Spence Thomas who was the manager of the Melingriffith Tin Plate works.



FOREST HALL

Photo credit:  
[www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)



# FOREST FARM AND COTTAGES

Forest Farm is managed by Cardiff Council and was designated as a Country Park in 1992 due to its role for tourism and recreation. The area is very important for nature - it contains a site of special scientific interest and a local nature reserve.

The original farm house and cottage is home to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and alongside is the Forest Farm Wardens Centre. A group of enthusiastic local residents have formed a Friends' Group to assist Cardiff Council in enhancing this area.



Photo credit: [www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)

Forest Farm cottages (old)

FOREST FARM COTTAGES (NOW)



# GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL

The Glamorgan Canal was constructed in 1798 by a group of Merthyr Tydfil businessmen, led by Richard Crawshay to cope with the increase in trade and the movement of coal and iron ore from the Merthyr and Rhondda Valleys. It had a dramatic effect on the importance of the Taff Valley and expansion of the port of Cardiff. The Canal was a major engineering feat, covering 25 miles and rising to a height of 80 metres above sea level through the construction of 52 locks.

It rapidly became over crowded and was eventually given competition by the Taff Railway.

Part of the Canal remains including two locks (Top Lock and Middle Lock) alongside Forest Farm and is now a Local Nature Reserve.



Photo credit: [www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)

Glamorgan Canal near Lock and Oak Cottage at Melingriffith c1940



Photo credit: [www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)

The Canal near Melingriffith c1940



GLAMORGAN CANAL (NOW)



Photo credit: [www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)

Glamorgan Canal at Hailey Park c1950



Towpath over Canal at Forest Farm Road



# FOREST LOCK AND MIDDLE LOCK

There are two remaining locks along the Canal in this section. You will see a capstan at Forest Lock where barges used to moor while waiting for their turn to head north. Again if you follow the canal to your right you will see Middle Lock and the remains of Middle Lock cottages.



FOREST LOCK



# SUNNYBANK COTTAGES

As you walk north along the Glamorgan Canal from Forest Farm Road to your right is a stone wall. This is the site of the Sunnybank Cottages that originally provided housing for the workers of the nearby Melingriffith Tin Plate works.



**Photo credit:**  
[www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk](http://www.whitchurchandllandaff.co.uk)

SUNNY BANK COTTAGES AT WHITCHURCH C1940



# TRAMWAY

If you take a walk past the Wardens centre and bear right along the Taff Trail towards Radyr Station, a section of the original tramway can be seen on the right hand side of the path.



MELINGRIFFITH AND PENTYRCH TRAMWAY



# IVY HOUSE

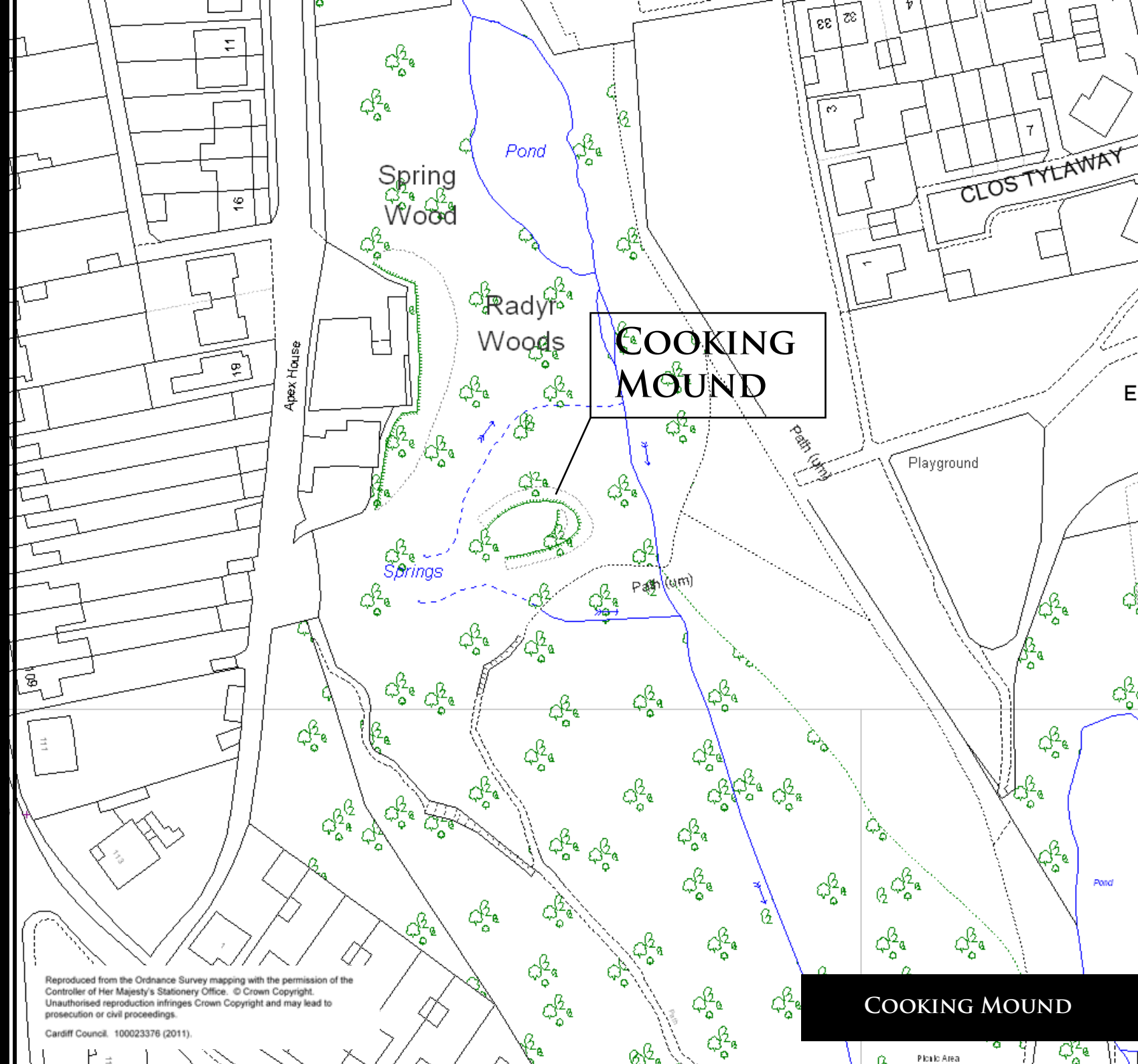
Ivy House is listed as a Grade II regional farmhouse and is located between the River Taff and the embankment of the A470 and can be reached by an underpass. You will see much of its original character remains and was owned prior to 1791 by William Price, owner of Pentyrch Ironworks.

IVY HOUSE



# COOKING MOUND EAST OF TAFF TERRACE

A small mound is all that remains of an iron age cooking hearth in Radyr Woods. Here hot pebbles would have been immersed in water until it boiled. The boiling water would then have been used for cooking. Discovered in 1911, it is evidence that the site has been inhabited from early times. A holy well dating from the 10th century is also reputed to exist on the site, and in medieval times Radyr Woods would have formed a part of the walled deer park of Radyr Court the historic home of the Mathew family. (ref: old.radyr.org.uk)  
The cooking mound is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.





# IRON BRIDGE

The Iron Bridge crosses the Taff between Tongwynlais and Morganstown. It is cast iron and was constructed for the trams that ran between Pentyrch Iron Works and the Melingriffith Tinplate Works in the 1800's.

If you take a walk past the Wardens centre at Forest Farm and bear right along the Taff Trail towards Radyr Station, a section of the original tramway can be seen on the right hand side of the path.



IRON BRIDGE



# CASTELL COCH

Castell Coch is a medieval castle created by the 3rd Marquis of Bute and his architect William Burgess. Construction began in 1875 and completed in 1891 on the site of a genuine Norman stronghold. The 'fairytale' castle is decorated with ornate mouldings, gilded statues and mock-medieval paintings. The castle was used as a summer residence until Lord Bute's death in 1900. It is now managed by CADW and open to the public.

It is a scheduled ancient monument.



# GELYNIS FARM

Gelynis Farmhouse and cottage is a Grade 11\* listed building. It is recorded as being built for Hugh Lambert – described as a Frenchman – a Wealden ironmaster from Tonbridge in Kent who was brought into the area by Sir Henry Sidney who set up a new ironworks and forge at the Pentyrch site near the Garth in 1564. Gelynis Farm range is the Grade II listed building which lies at right-angles to the farmhouse and cottage.

Gelynis Farm is currently used as bed and breakfast accommodation and a fruit farm during the summer months – visit [www.gelynisfarm.co.uk](http://www.gelynisfarm.co.uk) for more information.

You can visit Gelynis Farm by walking along the track over the railway from Morganstown or across the Ironbridge, off the Taff Trail on the Whitchurch Side (nr Asda).



GELYNIS FARM HOUSE



# MORGANSTOWN CASTLE MOUND

Morganstown Castle Mound is a scheduled ancient monument as often known locally as Radyr Motte and Bailey. It is 20ft high with a 50ft diameter across the top. This monument dates from the medieval period.

A mound would be made up from earth taken from a ditch dug around the mound or castle. It would often be built up with wooden structures and clay and topped with a wooden or stone structure known as a keep. They were favoured in the 11th and 12th centuries as they were considered an effective form of defensive but still very cheap and quick to construct without the need for skilled labour.

## MORGANSTOWN CASTLE MOUND

Playing Field

**Morganstown  
(Treforgan)**

The Tynant Inn  
(PH)

Garden  
Centre

Club

GVC

GELYNIS TERRACE NORTH

HEOL SYR LEWIS

Gelynis Terrace

Hall

MORGANSTOWN CASTLE MOUND

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# YNYS BRIDGE

A Grade II listed structure associated with the Pentrych and Mellingriffith works on the West side of the Taff.



YNYS BRIDGE





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