



Llanpumsaint is a picturesque village on the river Gwili approximately six miles north of Carmarthen.

The village has a long and distinguished past and although it did not gain its name until the sixth century, the area has been occupied for at least four and a half thousand years as seen from the large number of standing stones in the area.

The walking tour will give you a flavour of the history of the village.

About The Walking Tour

The Llanpumsaint Heritage Walking Tour which starts at the Village Hall is 1.5 miles long and takes approximately an hour. It is more or less on the flat with only a slight elevation near the railway bridge. The main walk is along tarmac roads so no special footwear is called for.

The Optional Extension

There is an option at about the halfway mark to extend the walking tour outside the village to the area known as Ystum Gwili and this adds another 3 miles and involves a walk uphill and across fields so it's recommended that stout shoes are worn if you take this option. The optional extension should add another two hours to the time that it takes to walk the tour. The points of interest on the extension are marked below in **yellow**.

Points of Interest on the Tour

1. The Village Hall
2. Penybont Fach - site of the birthplace of writer 'Brutus'
3. Bethel Methodist Chapel
4. The Jennie Eirian Memorial Plaque
5. Llanpumsaint Church
6. Martha Llwyd
7. Llanpumsaint School
8. Gwili Mill

9. Cooper's Arms

Optional Ystum Gwili Extension to the Walk
(skip to 14 if you don't want to take the extension)

10. Holy Pools

11. Nebo

12. Roman Way

13. Betws - The Forgotten Church

Rejoin or continue the main tour

14. Pantycelyn Shop and Butchers

15. Caersalem

16. Clwtte Cochion

17. The Railway Bridge, Railway Arms and the Railway Yard

18. Glanryrnys Factory

Directions are in [pale blue](#).

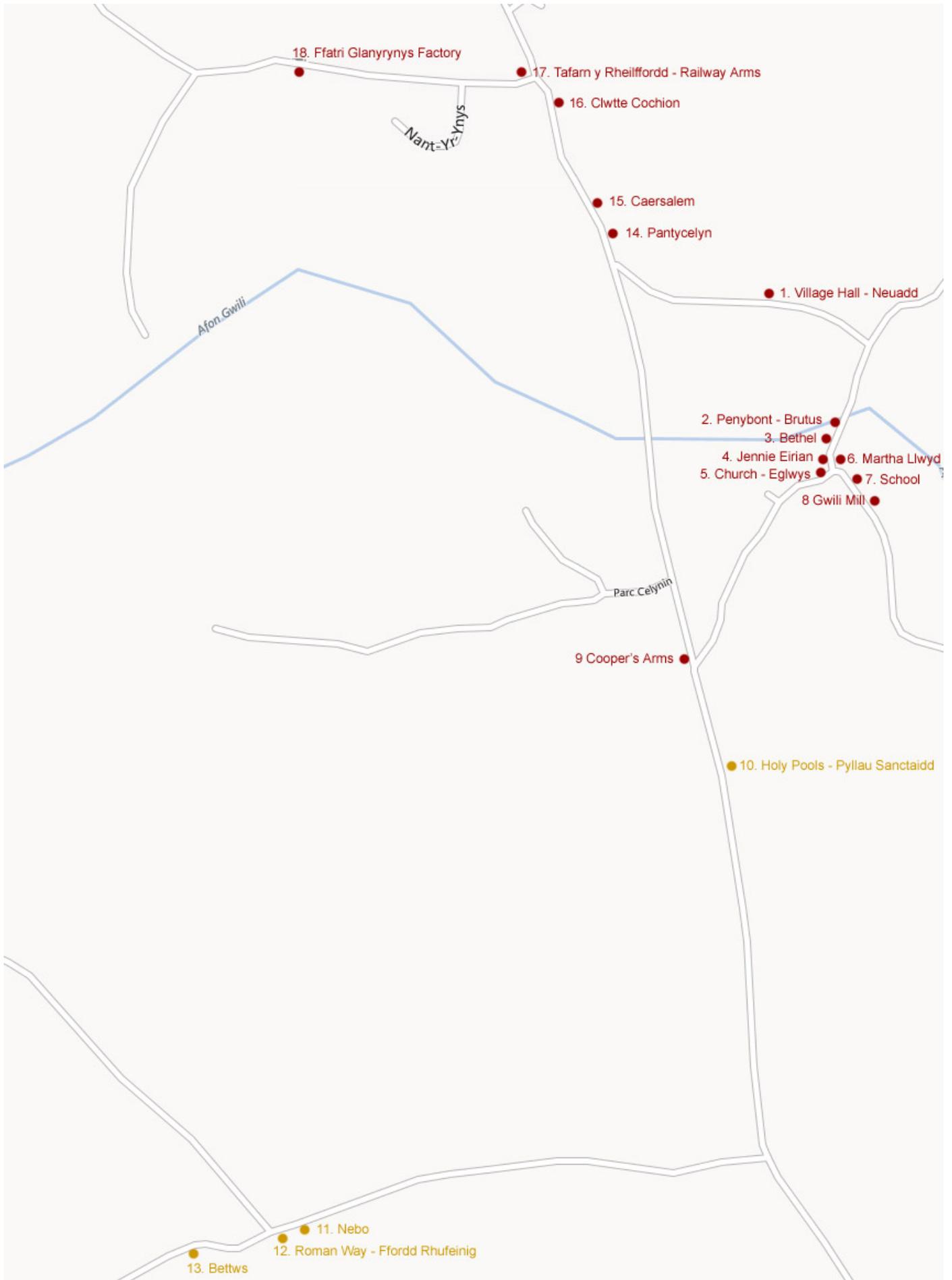
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THE WALKING TOUR



1. The Village Hall

Llanpumsaint and Ffynnonhenri Memorial Hall was built in 1928 on a site where there had previously been a wooden hut.

The money to build the hall came partly from a donation of £500 in the will of DR Evans, a local boy who made his fortune in the retail trade in London, and partly from a grand bazaar and carnival held in the Farmers' Co-op which raised £370 in one day - a huge amount for the 1920s.

Sand from the river Gwili and local stone from Cwmdwyfran were used in the construction and other materials including slate from Caernarfon and one and a half tons of steel girders were brought in by train.

The hall was officially opened by the widow of DR Evans and his portrait was hung in the hall.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the hall came under the influence of Reverend Emlyn Lewis and his wife, Decima Morgan Lewis. They introduced drama and music events enriching the cultural life of the village, including eisteddfodau, some of which ran for 12 hours! The culmination of this surge of culture saw the Girls' Choir competing in the Llangollen International Eisteddfod.

[With the Village Hall to your back, go left and walk past the village shop to the T-junction then turn right.](#)

[Walk over the bridge and stop for the next point of interest.](#)
>>



2. Penybont Fach - site of the birthplace of writer 'Brutus'

Just past the three arched bridge over the river Gwili lies the site of the house which was the birthplace in 1794 of David Owen (Brutus).

His father was a bootmaker and sexton of the parish church where young David was christened on Christmas Day 1795. He attended school held in the same church.

During his apprenticeship to become a doctor in Aberduar near Llanybydder, he became attracted to the Baptist cause (to which his mother, Rachel had belonged) and set his mind on becoming a non-conformist minister.

He settled in Llangian, Llyn in North Wales where he married and he seemed set for a conventional life until he inexplicably wrote to the Unitarian Church authorities in London, begging financial help and falsely claiming that his congregation was drawn towards Unitarian principles! His fraud was uncovered and he was sacked by the Baptists.

In 1824 he wrote a scathing letter to 'Seren Gomer' a popular periodical attacking the Welsh language under the pseudonym 'Brutus'. The name stuck!

He tried his hand at editing various magazines eventually finding success as the editor of 'Yr Haul', which became the strong voice of the established church.

He remained the editor of 'Yr Haul' until his death in 1866 launching many attacks on non-conformity and he produced many books and articles on divinity and religion, although he is chiefly remembered as a gifted satirist.

He is buried at Llywel in Breconshire.

[With the bridge behind you, continue walking along the road past the row of cottages on your right until you reach the chapel which is the next point of interest. >>](#)



3. Bethel Methodist Chapel

The famous Welsh Methodist, Howell Harris rode into Llanpumsaint around 1740 and preached outside the church. He was the first person to bring the message of Methodism into the area though his reception was not particularly warm. A split developed within Methodism between the supporters of Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland and it was the latter's influence which eventually prevailed within the village.

To accommodate the Methodist worshipers, Bethel was built in 1827 and the 1851 religious census shows that 250 people attended the evening service.

Much of the success of the chapel was down to the followers of blacksmith, Dafydd Llwyd whose crippled wife Martha composed many of the hymns that were sung with gusto in Bethel during the 19th Century.

The sheer number of the Methodists in Llanpumsaint made it necessary to completely re-build a larger chapel in 1867 and their dominance continued into the 20th Century.

[Continue walking in the direction of the Church and stop at the Jennie Eirian Memorial Plaque which is the next point of interest. >>](#)

4. The Jennie Eirian Memorial Plaque

Jennie Llandre as she was known in the village was a teacher, politician and magazine editor. She was born on 6th February 1925 in Waunyrhelfa Farm on the outskirts of the



village. Her parents moved to Llandre in the heart of the village when she was 10 years old.

She was educated in the village primary school and later at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Carmarthen. During her two mile walk to catch the school bus, she could be seen book in one hand and on rainy days, umbrella in the other. She gained a scholarship to study at Aberystwyth University. After graduating she returned to 'Carmarthen Gram' but this time as a Welsh teacher.

She was chosen to contest the Carmarthen seat for Plaid Cymru in the 1955 General Election winning 7.78% of the vote. On the death of the sitting MP, Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris in 1957 she was again chosen to fight in the resulting by-election increasing Plaid's share of the vote to 11.5%. The work that she did, establishing Plaid as a legitimate political force in the county contributed to Gwynfor Evans' election as the first ever Plaid Cymru MP in 1966.

She was National President of Merched Y Wawr from 1978 to 1980 and became editor of Welsh periodical 'Y Faner' from 1979 until her untimely death in 1982.

[The Church which is directly behind the Jennie Eirian Memorial Plaque is the next point of interest. >>](#)



5. Llanpumsaint Church

The village of Llanpumsaint is named after the five saints (Welsh 'pum saint') Gwyn, Gwynno, Gwynoro, Ceitho and Celynin - brothers who are said to have built the first Christian church on the site of an earlier pagan temple in the 5th or 6th Century.

Probably the oldest surviving artifact within the church is the 10ft by 2.5ft stone mensa top which was discovered in the churchyard during restorations in 1882 and is now set in the floor of the church under the Communion Table.

Another ancient object which survived is the Ogham stone which sits at the southern end of the churchyard. This stone is marked with a cross within a circle and the inscription marked along the edge bears testimony to the Irish influence in this part of Wales at that time.

Little is known of the church's history during the medieval period though the font bowl dates from the 13th Century and an Elizabethan silver chalice bears the date 1574.

A slit window in the North wall was apparently a 'leper's window' through which sufferers of this highly contagious disease could peer into the church without coming into contact with the other church-goers.

The church was visited in 1710 by Archdeacon Tennison and it was noted that the windows needed glazing, the walls were in want of rendering and the chancel's earthen floor was very uneven!

The east window in the church, a memorial to Canon Joseph Lloyd and his wife Mary is the work of Mildred Eldridge, the wife of famous poet, RS Thomas.

The yew tree in the graveyard is thought to be at least a thousand years old.

With the entrance to the churchyard behind you, walk directly ahead and Glanyrafon, the last house on the left is the next point of interest. >>



6. Martha Llwyd

Martha Llwyd was a noted composer of many Welsh hymns. She was born in 1766 at Nantbendigaid Farm on the Cynwyl Elfed to Llanpumsaint road but her family moved to Y Felin farm in Llanpumsaint when she was a child.

It is thought that she may have learned to read at one of the Gruffydd Jones Schools in the area but for many years she could not write. Despite this she composed many poems and hymns which she held in her memory and taught to others. It is believed that she acquired some writing skills later in life.

In 1785 she married blacksmith Dafydd Llwyd and they settled in the house which bears her commemorative plaque, Glanafon. Together they had nine children and it's thought that the strain of raising such a large family took a toll on her health and Martha became crippled.

She was often seen being carried around the village in a specially built chair, especially on a Sunday when she and her family attended Bethel Methodist Chapel where her hymns were sung and popularised.

Martha died in 1845 and is buried along with her husband in the churchyard opposite their house beneath the yew tree. Their gravestone carries the anglicised versions of their names, David and Martha Lloyd.

With the memorial plaque behind you, walk directly ahead and the village school on your left is the next point of interest. >>

7. Llanpumsaint School

Llanpumsaint school opened its doors for the first time in January 1863 to 73 pupils divided into 4 classes. Within a week, as news spread, the number of pupils had increased to 93.



The school owes its existence to a local boy, William Williams brought up on Tredarren Farm on the outskirts of the village. He moved to London, made his fortune and became a Member of Parliament.

Education was one the causes which he embraced within parliament and indeed outside of it as he donated the money for the school building and a house for the master. He stated that teaching in the new school should be conducted 'upon strictly unsectarian principles' so that both children from church and chapel families could benefit from an education.

The sustantial stone building was made to last and still serves as a school today.

In March 2013, the school celebrated its 150th anniversary with over 200 ex-pupils attending the celebration. A book of reminiscences was produced to commemorate the event.

[Walk along with the school on your left and Gwili Mill on your left is the next point of interest. >>](#)



8. Gwili Mill

Operating from around 1875 until its closure in 1968, Gwili Mill was the longest running woollen mill in Llanpumsaint. Using the fast flowing river Gwili as its source of power, the mill produced goods for markets, fairs, industrial outlets and wholesalers.

As late as 1947, Gorseinon based TW Jones and Sons employed no less than 12 people here, making flannel, cartheni and tweed.

In the 1920s when there was a great slump in demand for the woollen products that the mill produced, it survived unlike many of its competitors because of the foresight of its then owners, James and James Owen who spent money updating the machinery to make the mill more competitive.

When it finally closed in 1968, the rhythmic sounds of the machines and distinctive smells which wafted over the schoolyard were gone forever.

[Turn around and walk back to the road junction. Take the road on your left so that you pass the church on your right hand side and walk for a quarter of a mile or so until you reach the T-junction. The next point of interest, The Cooper's Arms is directly ahead across the junction. >>](#)

9. Cooper's Arms



The building which became the Cooper's Arms was originally the workshop for the Cooper who made wheels for the carts of the local farmers.

In 1863, William Griffiths, then living at Bwlchtrap Farm bought both that property and also the Cooper's Arms at an estate sale.

He had obviously fallen on his feet as in 1841 he had been an agricultural labourer. It is thought that he had inherited some money and in the 1860s, he and his wife Mary retired from farming to run the 'Troedyrhiw Arms' as the pub was re-named.

The little pub, once a focal point at the busy crossroads failed to make it past the 1930s. When Rachel Rees, the final landlady passed away in 1932, the pub closed and the building became a private residence.

Take the tour extension up the hill to Ystum Gwili

Turn right up the hill and continue walking for approximately 400 yards until you reach a house on the left called Gwarcwm. Just past this house in the wooded ravine is the best place to view the next point of interest, The Holy Pools.>>

OR

Continue on the road to Pantycelyn shop.

Turn right at the crossroads and continue along the road for approximately 400 yards. You will pass a turn off to the right and the next point of interest is just after this on the right.>>



10. Holy Pools

Tucked away in the steep sided valley of the river Cerwyn are five pools. According to tradition, each of the pools was used for bathing by one of the five saints which give Llanpumsaint its name.

The water here was said to have healing powers and the pools were used by druids and early Christians for ceremonial purposes.

Even as late as the 17th Century people would flock to the pools on St Peter's Day, the 21st June for relief and healing. This earned the area the title of 'The Lourdes of Carmarthenshire'.

The area is now neglected and all-but-forgotten but for over a thousand years it was an important site of pilgrimage for the faithful.

Carry on walking up the hill for half a mile or so and turn right at the sign for Nebo.

The old name for this junction was Cnwcy Waterfall - a popular evening meeting place for the youth of the village until the advent of easier means of transport in the second half of the 20th Century allowed them to venture further afield.

Continue walking for another half a mile until you reach Nebo chapel on your left. >>



11. Nebo

When Nebo Chapel was built in 1840 it provided the first place of worship for the area of Ystum Gwili since Bettws Church fell into dis-use.

Moses Rees from Pencader was its first part-time minister and despite the fact that the chapel was well used and underwent a renovation in the 1880s, it wasn't until 1897 that the chapel had its first permanent minister, Henry Evans who remained in the post for 23 years until his death in 1920.

The longest serving minister was the popular WJ Evans who was the minister from 1945 to 1976.

The term 'Ystum Gwili' referring to the elbow shape of the river Gwili in the area has become less used and whole area is now more often known as 'Nebo' after the chapel.

The next point of interest, the Roman Road is on the left after Nebo. >>>

12. Roman Way

Nebo lies next to the halfway point on the Roman Road which runs from Bronwydd to Llanpumsaint. The Roman Way emerges on the main road at Troedyrhiw next to the Cooper's Arms.

As late as the 1950s, the Roman Way was regularly traversed by farm carts in both directions heading for the railway station at Bronwydd or the railway and Farmer's Co-op at Llanpumsaint.

Carry on walking along the road for about 400 yards until you reach the entrance to Bettws Farm. Turn left and when

you reach the farm shed you are at the next point of interest.
>>>



13. Bettws - The Forgotten Church

Bettws was a small chapel in the area of Ystum Gwili which has now disappeared in the mists of time.

It lay north of Bettws Farm straddling the lane leading down to it and taking in parts of two fields. A 1946 aerial photograph shows a definite mound shape close to where the present day farm sheds stand.

In around 1800, when Lampengaer field was being ploughed, a holy water stoup was found and taken to Llwyncroes farm where it remained until it was rescued in the 1970s by the then vicar of Llanpumsaint Church, Byron Davies. The stoup, perfectly preserved and bearing four mouldings on the outside can now be seen in the lobby of Llanpumsaint Church.

Retrace your steps to the road junction opposite the Roman Way and turn left. After half a mile turn first right. Continue, passing the entrance to Pantyfedwen Farm (the birthplace in 1857 of Timothy Davies who became the Liberal MP for Fulham) until you reach a public footpath sign on the left. Follow the path through the fields until you emerge at the Cooper's Arms.

Once you have rejoined the main road turn left and continue along the road for approximately 400 yards. You will pass a turn off to the right and the next point of interest is just after this on the right.>>



14. Pantycelyn Shop and Butchers

David Evans a local butcher and grocer ran a successful business from Glannant on the outskirts of Llanpumsaint. Having grown prosperous he leapt at the chance to buy Pantycelyn, an imposing house in the centre of the village when it came on the market in 1890.

He paid £1250 for the property and it then became not only his home but the premises for his business too. He successfully ran a slaughterhouse, grocery shop and feed outlet from Pantycelyn for the next 50 years. Pigs and sheep were regularly herded down the road from the station yard to the slaughterhouse.

The shop became something of a social hub in the village and young people would congregate at night to play draughts or dominoes and be fed as the shop remained open until midnight.

David Evans' son (also called David) was one of the first people in the area to own a car and a lorry causing much amazement among the locals!

Continue walking along the road and you will see Caersalem chapel, the next point of interest on your right. >>>



15. Caersalem

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the congregational members of Ffynnonhenri Chapel outside the village decided that it would be prudent to have a venue nearer the centre of the village for Sunday School or lose the attendance of the village children to other, more conveniently located chapels.

So it was that in 1907, Caersalem was built and in the following decades went from strength to strength by offering the villagers a mixture of religious services, community singing and 'eisteddfodau'.

Benjamin Davies, the only local soldier to be killed in the First World War is buried in Caersalem graveyard.

Continue walking along the road and stop just before the railway bridge. The entrance to Clwtte Cochion, the next point of interest is on the right. >>>



16. Clwtte Cochion

Clwtte Cochion is one of the oldest farms in the region. There exists an Abstract of Title which shows the farm in 1658 as belonging to Lord Vaughan, the Earl of Carberry and a Mr Henry Peck.

In 1834, William Henry Powell, the vicar of Llanpumsaint from 1823, acquired some of the fields from Caroline Griffiths Williams, the widow of Erasmus Griffiths Williams.

On the land that he bought, William Henry Powell built the house, Pantycelyn which in 1890 was purchased by David Evans and became the butcher's shop.

Proceed under the railway bridge to the next point of interest. >>>



17. The Railway Bridge, Railway Arms and the Railway Yard

The arrival of the railway in 1864 transformed life in Llanpumsaint. Even before it opened the construction provided work and salvation from poverty for many.

Carmarthen which was a tiring three hour walk away could now be reached in comfort in 40 minutes. But the most significant change was that the railway facilitated the founding of woollen factories.

The combination of the fast flowing rivers providing a source of energy, the ready availability of the raw material and the cheap labour combined with easy access to the lucrative South Wales market that the railway allowed, made the woollen industry flourish.

The first Station Master, Thomas Evans took charge in 1865 and would remain in the post until his retirement in 1901. He built and owned the Railway Inn but Great Western were unhappy with one of their Station Inspectors running a pub and so it was his son-in-law, Evan whose name appeared above the door. Evan's wife Ada was a reluctant landlady and so the arrangement didn't last long and the pub was taken over by Buckleys Brewery.

Across the road from the pub and next to the railway line is the old station yard and Farmer's Co-op building. Coal, lime and agricultural goods came in while baskets and cloth manufactured in the village went out.

The Carmarthen Farmer's Co-operative Society which was founded in 1903 opened its seventh branch in Llanpumsaint in 1928. Animal feed, flour and agricultural goods were delivered but rail and immediately unloaded into the gleaming new Co-op building. Delivery by rail was so efficient that the prices of products in the Co-op fell and Pantycelyn which up till now was the only farm supplies shop in the area has to drop their prices accordingly.

In 1966, Gwynfor Evans the newly elected Plaid Cymru MP for Carmarthen tried desperately to challenge the government's decision to close the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth rail line (as part of the Beeching cuts) but he was unsuccessful. In the same year, the Co-op store closed.

After the railway bridge, turn left and with the Railway Inn on your right, walk along the road for approximately a quarter of a mile and you will see Glanryrnys factory, the next point of interest, on your left just before the small bridge. >>>

18. Glanryrnys Factory

Thomas Lewis, realising the potential for transporting finished goods that the arrival of the railway provided, set up



Glanryrnys Woollen Factory in 1886 just a quarter of a mile from the station.

The 1881 census reveals 8 staff 'living in' on the premises at Glanryrnys including carders, wool washers, warpers and weavers.

Thomas Lewis made frequent visits to the fairs of South Wales as far as Aberdare and Treorchy, canvassing orders for his woollen shirts and blankets. The First World War and the consequent demand for uniforms provided a boost for the business.

In the 1920s however, the end of the war and changing fashions meant that the demand for wool products dried up and Glanryrnys ceased production at the end of this decade.

In 1939, the Ministry of Food used the buildings to store animal feed and flour and Cow and Gate used it as a store for dried milk for seven years after the Second World War, after which the building was converted into flats.

Thomas Lewis died in 1947 at the age of 84 and is buried in Caersalem graveyard.

Turn around and walk back to the junction at the Railway Arms. Turn right and walk under the railway bridge and past Caersalem. Turn next left, walk for approximately 400m and you will see the starting and end point of the tour, the Village Hall, on your left.