

Creative Walks: Coast

A walking tour starting at The Cold Knap, exploring the Roman remains and moving up towards Romilly Park. On this walk you will immerse yourself in the coastal landscape and learn about the history of this area. Take this walk as an opportunity to creatively interact with your surroundings using the expression of free-writing/free-drawing. Please note you will need headphones, a notebook, pen or pencil to complete this walk. You can alternatively type on your electronic device.

This walk is brought to you by Megan Mattravers, special thanks to Tom Clemett and Paul Ogden. Please send all responses to mvelios@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Welcome to our creative walking tour.

You find yourself at the coast, surrounded by sea, sand and pebbles.

The Cold Knap: This area of coast is called The Cold Knap, often referred to as The Knap. In Old English Knap means hill-top and the Welsh word translates as a lump or mound in the landscape. After WW1 this area along with Barry Island began to develop but people have been living here since 2000BC. Cold Knap Farm was built in the late 16th Century, making it one of the oldest lived-in Barry residencies.

Pebble Beach: Did you know on 30th January 1607 there was a giant tsunami, otherwise known as The Bristol Channel floods. Many people were killed on both sides of the channel, it altered the look of the beach forever.

Free-writing/Free-drawing Exercise: I want you to find a place to sit down, you may want to sit on the wall or find a bench further along. Look around you, what can you see? Create a list of everything you can see. Now choose one of the things you have listed and use it as inspiration to free write or draw.

Free-writing in this circumstance refers to an exercise of writing with a specified time and stimulus. It can produce anything from a short story, poem, rant, rap, monologue or another list. I'm going to give you a couple of minutes, try not to stop writing before the time ends. If you get stuck come back to your initial word. I will play some music during the timed exercise. It is the music of Barry born composer Grace Williams. There is no right or wrong, just be free.

(Set a timer for two minutes)

Finish the sentence you are on, you may want to pause the recording here to read what you have written or you can move to the Roman Site, just behind the wall and up the hill.

Roman Site: Welcome to the Roman Site at The Knap or as the Roman's would say "Ave" meaning "Hail". What do you know about the Romans? The Romans are often remembered as the first invaders, invading Britain between the first and fifth centuries AD. That was a very long time ago. Hidden in the ground, historians have excavated and found incredible foundations of buildings and artefacts which help to teach us about this fascinating time period.

Archaeological investigation shows that the Roman Empire invaded Britain in AD 43. At this time the people living in Britain were divided into a number of tribes, constituting independent kingdoms. The Romans started in the South East, fighting hostile tribes and making alliances with friendly ones. Wales was important to the Romans, perhaps they saw the same beauty we see surrounding us now. In South East Wales there resided a tribe called the 'Silures'. They didn't like the Romans. They defended their land and fought the invaders. The 'Silures' sustained their fight until AD 75. After this time the fighting ceased and Wales became a land of peace.

What can you see?

The building in front of you dates back to the end of the third century or the very beginning of the fourth century. It was hidden underground for many years, a history undiscovered. Thankfully excavation of the site began and the foundations emerged. When it was excavated some of the walls had collapsed directly over the builders' levels, suggesting that building work had been abandoned before it was completed.

Historians believe that what you are looking at is a public building, possibly an official guest house for users of the imperial post system. Unfortunately the building was never completed, it never housed all of its intended guests.

Free-writing/Free-drawing Exercise: Find somewhere to lean or sit down. We are going to do another free-writing exercise together, if you prefer to draw then that's also great. I would like you to think about what it would have been like to live during the Roman times. What was their life like? Create a character and free write about them. You might want to tell us about their day or who they are. You might also want to create a free-drawing of them.

Again there is no right or wrong, it should be a stream of consciousness. It can be anything and take any form. I will give you a couple of minutes to explore this time period.

(Set a timer for three minutes)

Finish the sentence you are on, again you may want to pause the recording here to read what you have written or you can move on to Romilly Park.

Make your way along the seafront towards Watchtower Bay and follow the path along the edge of the boating lake.

The Old Lido: At the end of the harp-shaped boating lake there is a large flat area of grass. This was home to Barry Baths, the largest outdoor salt water swimming pool in the country. Can you see the Watchtower? The Watchtower was built in 1865 with its Rocket Station and the Breakwater was built in 1896. These remind us of Barry's history and its changing landscape.

Now, make your way to Romilly Park.

Romilly Park: Did you know this park is Grade II listed? This means it is very old and now is protected land. The park was originally constructed on land belonging to the Romilly family in 1898. It used to be grazing land until it was donated by the Romilly family. It took over ten years to complete, it officially opened in 1911 and became 'known at the time to be one of the best Edwardian Parks in the country'. It retains most of the original framework and features. In 1920, the National Eisteddfod of Wales was held in the park near the Gorsedd Circle which still stands today.

Ffynnon Y Bustach: Can you find the water feature? Ffynnon Y Bustach means 'Well of the Oxen', it is one of the remaining features in the park.

Free-writing/Free-drawing Exercise: Find somewhere to sit down. You may want to sit on the grass or find a nearby bench. We are going to do another free-writing exercise together, so get your pens ready. Using all of your recent observations and your current surroundings create a piece of free-writing or drawing which reflects this area. You may want to create a poem which guides us around the park or you may want to choose a person and write a story for them. Give them action. You could create a dramatic scene set at the park. It's completely up to you.

I'm going to give you a couple of minutes for this final exercise.

(Set a timer for three minutes)

Finish the sentence you are on. How are you feeling? Did you enjoy free-writing and free-drawing? It would be great to read some of your responses. You can get in touch via email, the email address is included in the walk description. Your responses may get shared on our Vale of Glamorgan social media.

I hope you have enjoyed your creative walk.