

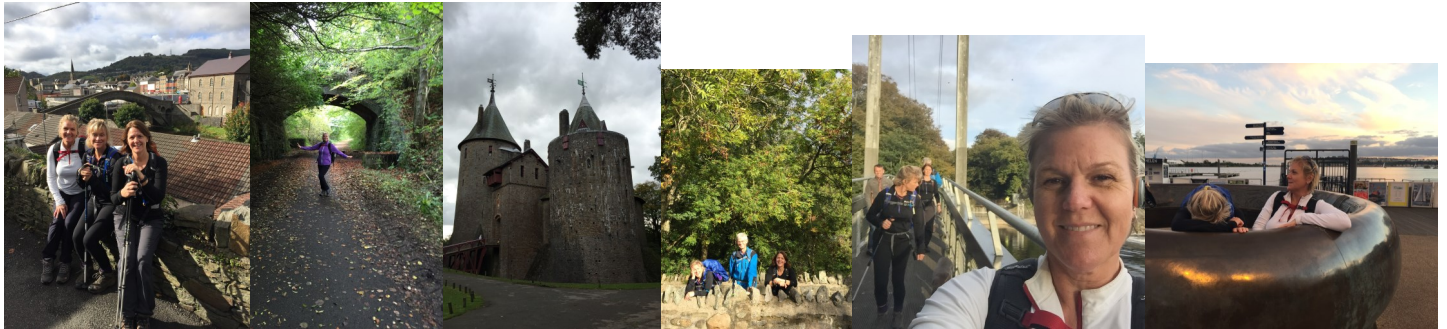
PUT ON YOUR WALKING BOOTS AND JOIN KATIE'S CREW

To commemorate Katie's 50th birthday in 2016, our challenge is to find 50 walkers to complete the Taff Trail which is over 50 miles long. Our planned dates are Thursday 9th June (evening meet) to Sunday 12th June (morning depart). The 2 walking days are Fri 10th and Saturday 11th.

I (Emma Maziak) with 3 intrepid companions—Sar, Amanda and Dick set off in October to suss it out in terms of logistics and do-ability versus being a sufficient challenge to warrant sponsorship. So here's my trial run story in the hope that it will inspire you to join me when I do it again next year for real!!



Congregating at the Travelodge in Merthyr Tydfil with butterflies in our tummies we got an early night. Up equally early and with ready porridge pots and blueberries as fuel, we jumped in a cab at 6.30am. October denied us the stunning views on the ride to Brecon so I look forward to those in June. Our Day 1 walk began in Brecon and took us 24 miles back to Merthyr. It included some of the most picturesque views of the Welsh valleys, tracing canal paths, up into the hills and alongside stunning reservoirs. Although a large part of this leg of the walk is uphill, the distraction of the wonderful scenery and first day excitement eased the way. When we walked into the Travelodge, 10 and a half hours later having done 8 hours of walking (plus breaks) we were tired but by no means broken! After a well deserved rest and bath, we headed over to Nando's for a surprisingly tasty and healthy meal and then collapsed into bed!



We rose earlier than Day 1 for Day 2, with slight trepidation that we already had 24 miles of attrition on our bodies and about 29 miles to go. Happily, most of Day 2's walk is flat or down hill (bar one castle at the top of a hill). The early section of the walk is probably the most disappointing in terms of beauty as we made our way through old Welsh mining villages that have sadly seen better days. However, the history is tangible. Soon enough though we found ourselves back on the side of the Taff, following it further downstream, through wooded pathways and under and over viaducts. In parts you are enclosed by trees and greenery and in others, higher up with vistas across the valley. Our purposeful strides became a little more trudge-like as we progressed (despite an ice cream stop). The gap between breaks became shorter and feet and joints began to groan. The road into and through Cardiff was uplifting again as we followed the river through the parks and joined the human race again as people around us bustled to and fro. As we passed the Millennium Stadium we knew we were close to the end and that was almost the hardest section of the walk. So near and yet so far. We dug deep and our camaraderie kept us going. 9 hours walking and an 11 and a half hour day including the breaks. Phew what an achievement. Who said walking was easy!?

ARE YOU GAME? (Plus friends, family, male or female—we don't discriminate here!)

If you think you might like to join the crew and challenge yourself, then hesitate not, email emma@maziak.co.uk and get your name on our Katie's Crew distribution list. We'll send out more information this side of Christmas and ask you to commit by the end of the year (or not as the case may be). That way we can work on more accurate costs and logistics! Email away!!

FUNDRAISING

This would be done centrally via one Just Giving page that participants can direct friends, colleagues, etc to. There won't be individual targets.

PS: COSTS—Estimated Essential Spend:

- Accommodation— £138 (prices @ 4.11.15)
- Travel—train/car to/from Cardiff plus one way train to Merthyr—£5.60. East Mids area participants may have a minibus option. Plus taxi from Merthyr to Brecon (TBC subject to numbers) - 20 mins drive.
- Food and Drinks—3 x evening meal (Nando's style); Breakfasts and walking sustenance—self catering—suggested tuck box TBC.
- 'Essential' Kit—Walking boots/shoes; Good socks and liners; Walking sticks/poles—I couldn't have managed without them; Waterproof outerwear (including for rucksack); Compeed, Pain Killers and Muscle Bath Soak (Travelodge has baths—a blessing!)