

COMING EVENTS

Meetings are held on the first Friday of the month, in the Lesser Hall at 8pm.

January 4 : 'Mediaeval Pots and Pans' - Mr Nigel A. Kerr, B.A., University College, Cardiff.

February 1 : 'Merchants and Mariners: Cardiff 1660 - 1800' - Mr Philip Riden, Staff Tutor in Local History, University College, Cardiff.

March 7 : 'The Study of Church History' Revd T.G. Hughes, Warden of St Michaels College, Llandaff.

April 11 (the second Friday, in this case) : 'The Artist and Tourist in Industrial Wales' - Mr Richard Keen, Assistant Keeper of Industrial Archaeology, National Museum of Wales.

May 2 : Members' Evening.

**** On a Saturday in March - Charter Day celebrations in the Town Hall ****

C O W B R I D G E ' D I G S '

It is rather annoying to have to type this at the beginning of what might well be a very significant 'dig' in the Bear Field. To Judge from the size of the trench - 40 yards long, 20 yards under cover of a polythene 'greenhouse', the Glamorgan-Gwent people have high expectations. I would hope that this will expose the perimeter of a Roman camp or fort - suggesting that Roman Cowbridge was very much larger than Mediaeval Cowbridge.' So far (Nov 26) some Roman sherds have been found, so it all seems very promising.

The dig at the back of the Bear also exposed some Roman material - pottery in particular. It unearthed what appeared to be the Town Ditch, but no Wall, so perhaps the Wall was removed when the C18 barn/stables were built. I had always thought the ditch was under Bear Lane, but it appears to have been a yard or so inside it.

O F F I C E R S 1 9 7 9 - 8 0

President - Mr Norman Williams, C 2107
Honorary Vice-Presidents -

Mrs Patricia Moore

Canon S.H. Mogford

Chairman - Mrs Yvonne Weeding, C 2878

Secretary - Mr John Miles, Cardiff 36490

Treasurer - Mr Jeff Alden, C 3373

Programme Secretary - Mrs Gwynneth Keay,
C 2879

Excursions Secretary - Mrs Val Nicoll,
C 3842

Publicity - Posters: Mr S. Nicoll

Newsletter: Mr J. Alden

Committee - Mr S. Davies, Mr A. Jones,

Mrs D Sewell, Mrs V. Whythe,

Mrs B. Hol - and the above-named .

F I N A N C E S

Membership now costs £1.50 a year; students and OAPs 75p. This decision was reached at the AGM in September; the accounts showed a credit balance of only £28.80, whereas the previous year had started with £79.88. The situation now seems much healthier.

B O O K S

I am also a little early for a review of the new book on Cowbridge, "Cowbridge and Llanblethian Past and Present" by Brial Ll. James and David J. Francis (pub. Stewart Williams/Browns, £6.90). The book is being launched on December 4, and to Judge from the contents pages, it should provide an interesting and comprehensive survey. Many will remember that Brian James gave us a most enlightening talk on the Cowbridge printers last year, and his chapter on Cowbridge in 'South Glamorgan' is excellent.

The Booklet by Philip Riden, Llanblethian in 1851, has sold well - I only have three copies left. It gives an interesting picture of the whole parish (including Aberthin and Penylan) at the time of the 1851 census - so if you want a copy, hurry up!



LLANMIMANGEL

B U I L D I N G S G R O U P

Arrangements are now being made for visits for 1980, so the list below is only tentative, but it will give a good idea of what we hope to do. More details in meetings.

Jan/Feb: National Museum of 'Wales -
conducted tour of the archaeology
and mediaeval history departments.
March: Llanmihangel
April: Village Farm and The Grange,
St Hilary.
May: Coedarhydyglyn
June: Gelligaer
July: Llancarfan (including a bar lunch
at the Fox and Hounds).

M U S E U M S - T H E I R S & O U R S

"They made us feel so welcome: what an impressive display." Those of us who visited the Porthcawl **Museum** on Friday, 16th November were unanimous that we had had a most enjoyable and instructive evening. The interest of the exhibits was only equalled by the quality of the refreshments.'

The Porthcawl Museum and Historical Society has only been in existence for three years. The museum, which has been established at the old Police Station, is open every day, and I would thoroughly recommend a visit to anyone who was unable to come with us. We were impressed with the efforts that the Society has made: they have assembled a most interesting collection relating to the area, covering many aspects of archaeology and local history. The articles are most professionally and sympathetically displayed.

For some years our members have wished to establish a small museum in Cowbridge, so we were very pleased to have this opportunity to get advice and ideas, which were most generously offered.

Our society has already been granted the use of one cell in the Town Hall. The time now seems right, with Wilf Matthews as Mayor and a sympathetic Council, to co-operate with them to see if we might put on an exhibition in the other two cells as well. Our Committee has been approached by the Council on this matter; the three cells in question are the ones between the Council Chamber and the passage.

We already have a list of people -who are prepared to help mount an exhibition, but obviously the more the better. Some offers of material have also arrived, which is most encouraging. Obviously, this sort of project can only be started with the enthusiasm and help of the society and townspeople. Start looking through your attic **now!** We will have a meeting about this - date to be announced.

Porthcawl will be selling their existing showcases in the New Tear, as they are buying new ones. Those of us who saw them felt they would be well worth purchasing, as they would enable us to show exhibits securely. In order to raise money to buy these, it has been suggested that we have a second-hand book sale; surely most members of the society have some surplus books, and yet we are always glad to add to our collections. More details about this later, but please save your books.

Yvonne Weeding.

I had a dream . . .

From the proceedings of Local History Society, Reg. No. 116/867/521/A224-/59, as recorded at the Much Lesser Hall, Area 3, Zone 8, on Rest Day 34, in the year 2072 a.d.

"The Maud Gunter Memorial Lecture"

(Before the lecture began, the Chairman, Citizen (Grade 3) Edwards Morgan Kahn Thomas, requested that, should there be earth tremors from random nuclear strikes, the assembly should proceed to the Even Lesser Hall, two floors below. However, he added, the Much Lesser Hall should be safe enough at 150 metres below the old Roman level)

The lecturer, citizen (Grade 2) Llewellyn Jones Davids Patel, began by tracing the history of the Society since its inception in the 1970s.

Cowbridge, as Area 3 was then known, was, he said, inhabited by an industrious people who usually 'worked' (the description given to the passing and receiving of pieces of paper) at a place situated to the east of the area and known as Cardiff.

(Cardiff has long since ceased to exist. Its decline began, even before The Terror, with the so-called 'environmental planning' which eventually prevented people from reaching the commercial area without walking at least 10 kilometres.

Starved of trade, the business-persons moved to the township of Newport, which was obliterated one night in September, 1992, when the nuclear power station at Thornbury-on-Severn blew up)

The enterprising Cowbridgians who were our founding fathers travelled in those quaint metal boxes we saw when the Industrial Archaeology Section recently visited the Ancient Relics Exhibition. They were once produced in these islands in great numbers, but, eventually, came to be made only in the Nippon Islands where they were assembled with a religious zeal and fervour.

The 'cars' were powered by that long-since-departed fossil fuel, oil, for which, in the mid 1980s, men were known to have traded the virtue of their wives for a small measure.

Those not possessed of their own c?cars travelled hopefully by municipally owned, monstrous contraptions called 'buses' until astronomical rises in passenger tariffs made the whole thing impossible.

Laughingly, the lecturer produced a cherished museum-piece, a fare ticket from 1985. 'Cowbridge/Bridgend, single fare, £50.50'

'National Welsh', the owners of the fleet in the area, eventually sold out its interests to the amalgamated unions of Transport and General/Mineworkers/Public Employees who, during the ten year strike, used the transport to convey their members to and from picket-line duties.

(Here the speaker was most careful to point out that his remarks about the amalgamated unions had been passed for utterance by the appropriate authority)

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He went on to compare travel in those far off days with that of the present, evidencing the trip he had himself made when he 'dematerialised-transported' for his annual 'privileged party member's' holiday to the south Pacific islands. He made the transition, he said, in under ten units of time 'from pad to pad'.

Great enterest was shown when the speaker produced a 'cigarette' - a tube of a fibrous drug-substance which many people sucked continuously until their lungs disintegrated. On the container which he was also able to produce, there appeared to be a declaration by the Government of the day as to the lethal qualities of the 'cigarette'. But this would seem to be some sort of joke packaging...

The speaker then revealed that, at the time of the Society's foundation there was a flourishing medical-care centre of sorts and the remedies (found by chance after a recent explosion) created much mirth with the audience.

(One example was the potion, made up of many chemical compounds, and claimed as a sure relief for the 'constipation'. How different today, with our discovery of the natural senna-pod which grows with such profusion on the rims of craters).

Producing an array of packages found intact and in remarkably good condition during the excavations for the 'Vale of Death' laser-beam site, the lecturer gave details of the food habits of the day.

People, he said, ate three or four times a day, stuffing themselves with abandon. They cheerfully ate, and apparently relished substances which slowly poisoned many, bringing early death to some. How different these days, he continued, when we all 'pop a pill to fill' once a day at the time we consume our ration of purified water.

He touched on the subject of entertainment. Our founders, so it appears, were much addicted to the viewing of moving pictures from a plastics and glass box, but this went out of fashion after a scandal in the 1980s when it was revealed that top party members had access to a device which allowed them to see into homes where pictures were being transmitted.

Again, how different today, when we all have our own brain-implanted receivers and can close our eyes and conjure up ...

* * *

Here the speaker was interrupted by earth tremors of a most violent kind and the audience adjourned to the safety of the Even Lesser Hall, where the lecture continued ...

DOES ANYONE KNOW?

Information is required - so if anyone knows the answers to the following questions, please tell me so that the answers can go in the next newsletter. Other questions would also be welcomed - I am indebted to Mr S.T. Golden for these:

1. The Masons' Arms, near the site of the old Westgate, has a projection reaching right to the roadway, with ground floor windows looking in both directions along the road, that facing the west with a protective canopy. Although not the usual polygonal shape, could this building at one time have been a toll house? Does anyone know? Miss Gunter's map in Old Cowbridge (L.J. Hopkin-James, 1922) names a turnpike gate further to the west near the road to Llantwit Major. Or might it have been a place for payment of fees for the adjacent market?

2. The second question has been answered in part in Lady Traherne's talk in November. It related to the small circular wood on top of St Hilary Down, which apparently was planted by John Montgomery-Traherne.

Does anyone know why it was planted, why it was planted there, and if it was on the site of anything significant?



J.M.T -
a man
with
trees
on his
mind!

3 Does anyone know anything of the history of the Old Brewery in Eastgate, which stands next to the old course of the Thaw?

CARDIFF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

LECTURES

will be held in Room 164 in the New Building of UWIST in Cathays Park at 7.15
The programme for 1980 is as follows:

- Jan. 10th THE LIFE AND WORK OF MINOAN COUNTRY TOWNS AND VILLAS
P.M. Warren, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.
Professor of Ancient History and Classics
Archaeology, University of Bristol.
- Jan. 24th RECENT DISCOVERIES AT THE NEOLITHIC AND IRON AGE HILLFORT OF CRICKLEY HILL
Philip Dixon, M.A., D.Phil., F.S.A.
Lecturer In Medieval Archaeology,
University of Nottingham.
- Feb. 7th ARROWHEADS AND ARCHERY IN PREHISTORIC BRITAIN
H.S. Green, B.A., Ph.D.
Assistant Keeper of Archaeology,
National Museum of Wales.
- Feb. 21st ASPECTS OF ROMAN IMPERIAL ART
Janet Webster, B.A.
- Mar. 6th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1980-81
Film.

Overheard in the Lesser Hall:

"I hear that the Buildings Group are to visit the Stones at the National Museum in January."

"Personally, I can't stand Mick Jagger!"

EDITOR'S NOTE

Many thanks to our contributors for this month's effort. I can now only claim credit for the first page (and for the drawing of Llanmihangel, which comes from some notelets I have produced for Christian Aid - 30p for 5 if you want any!).

More contributions are needed - so if you have anything to say, or have any answers to our questions, or any more questions, do please get in touch with me.