

COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 24

AUTUMN 1986

OCTOBER MEETING

Len Davies was the speaker at our October meeting and he gave a most stirring and exciting talk on 'Pirates, Wreckers and Smuggling in the Bristol Channel'

Few of us had imagined that such a turbulent band of pirates and smugglers existed in such large numbers in the vicinity of Cardiff or that so many famous pirates were Welshmen. Bartolomew Rogers (Black Bart) gave his name to the Jolly Roger.

The authorities were hard pressed to get rid of both pirates and smugglers. The Court of Admiralty sent an Admiral to investigate, but he was set upon in St. Mary Street. Hardly surprising when Cardiff, Lavernock, Penarth and Sully were finding that trading with the large number of pirates was extremely rewarding. In the early 17th Century a notorious pirate called Knight, with a crew of 140 was operating from Barry Island.

Eventually the authorities got rid of the pirates, although smugglers and wreckers remained a problem.

Y. Weeding



FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

November 7th

'Aspects of Victorian Cowbridge'
Speaker: Philip Riden.

December 5th

The Maud Gunter Memorial Lecture.
'Albigensians, Heresy and
Carcassonne'
Speaker: Arthur Peplow.

January 2nd

'The Vikings'
Speaker: Dr Jane Clarke.

February 6th

'Recent work on Prehistoric Sites'
Speaker: Henry Owen-John.

The Society meets in the Lesser Hall
of the Town Hall, Cowbridge, at 8.00 p.m.

VICTORIAN CHARTER CELEBRATION

Friday the 26th September, 1986, was the start of a weekend of pageant and fun in Cowbridge. It will be remembered for many years as a joyous community occasion and all who worked to make it a success are to be congratulated.

The cooperation of Banks, Building Societies, estate agents, shopkeepers, Rotary, Round Table and many other voluntary organisations, including this Society, resulted in a great sense of fellowship within the town.

Much credit is due to the leadership of the Mayor, Councillor D. Borthwick, and the President of the Chamber of Trade, Mr Joe Roddam, as well as to the committee (upon which the Society was represented by Gwynneth Keay and Dilys Parker).

Many people entered into the spirit of the occasion by wearing appropriate Victorian costume ---did the Victorians really look so attractive and colourful? Some shops had Victorian window displays and costumed assistants standing in the doorways. Church Road was closed to traffic for the day and local organisations held stalls. Amongst others, the Women's Institute sold Welsh Cakes and the Women's Fellowship of local churches sold pies. There was a roundabout and trampoline for the children.

The Chairman of the Society, Yvonne Weeding, and the Secretary, John Miles, led historical walkabouts of the town, and Yvonne also talked on the history of Holy Cross Church.

Mugs, to mark the occasion, sold well at £1.50 each.

The crowds who flocked into Cowbridge on the Saturday obviously enjoyed the day thoroughly.

Victorian Buffet and Ball

This function was held in the Town Hall on Saturday, 27th September.

The guests assembled in the Lesser Hall, the ladies being elegantly and elaborately coiffured and dressed in all manner of styles, including crinolines, bustles, flounces, and buttoned boots!

After a champagne reception at which a harpist and a flautist performed, the guests were called to the Main Hall for the buffet, each guest receiving a present of perfume or after-shave lotion. Following the meal, a Barber's Shop Quartet entertained before the dancing. Formal photographs of guests were taken before a suitably Victorian background.

This very successful event was organised by the Vale of Glamorgan Round Table and Ladies' Circle, assisted by the Chamber of Trade, the South Wales Constabulary Band and a number of local firms.

Gala Performance

Taking part in this event were Cowbridge Amateur Operatic Society, Cowbridge Amateur Dramatic Society, the Moya Vahey School and Classical Ballet plus members of our Society.

The show was produced and coordinated by Dilys Parker and comprised items of Victorian poetry and music, including excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Society members enacted a sketch about Victorian life above and below stairs, and also sketches about the granting of the Charter.

The show was enthusiastically received and pronounced 'first class' by a capacity audience.

Mayor's Tea Party

On the Sunday afternoon, the Town Council arranged a tea party in the buildings and 'Boss's Garden' of the old Grammar School, kindly loaned for the occasion by the Youth Centre.

Entertainment was provided out of doors by the Glamorgan Brass Consort and indoors by an ensemble comprising the Whelan and Treharne families.

Refreshments were organised and given by Rotary.

Glamorgan Archive Service

More about Charter Day

Town Hall Exhibitions

The children of Maendy, Y Bont Faen and Llancafarn C.P. Schools put together an excellent display of pictures, posters and old photographs showing Victorian fashion, home and school life, street sellers and transport, including Cowbridge Railway.

There was a special exhibition in one of the cells of the Museum, assembled by Mrs Marion Eveleigh and her assistants, all suitably attired for the occasion. Items of clothing, fans, crochet work and samplers were shown, together with kitchen equipment such as a carpet beater, toasting fork and posser. These last utensils were used regularly by some of us not so very long ago (or so it seems).

Mrs Patricia Moore, the County Archivist, had arranged an exhibition of documents connected with the granting of the 1886 Charter. Here were details of events starting earlier in the last century when the previous charter was repealed. A petition by townspeople led to a Commission of Enquiry on 20th April, 1886, which eventually resulted in the granting of the Charter by Queen Victoria on the 28th September of that year.

Thanksgiving Service

On Sunday, 28th September, the church of Holy Cross at Cowbridge was filled with townspeople, many still in Victorian dress, for a combined Charter Day Thanksgiving and Harvest Festival.

The Service was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev'd Gwilym E. Williams, and the Deacon, the Rev'd Jolyon Seward, ably assisted by some of the children in the congregation. The Mayor, Councillor D. Borthwick was present and read the lesson. The theme of the Service was God's gift to mankind, symbolised by bread and wine, and the Service culminated in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

THE COWBRIDGE ORDINANCE ROLL

A NEW PUBLICATION

To coincide with the September Charter celebrations the Glamorgan Archive Service published a photographic reproduction of the fifteen-foot roll containing the Cowbridge Borough Ordinances as they were re-written in January 1610 (Old Style), January 1611 (New Style), when they were copied from an older, decaying, parchment roll.

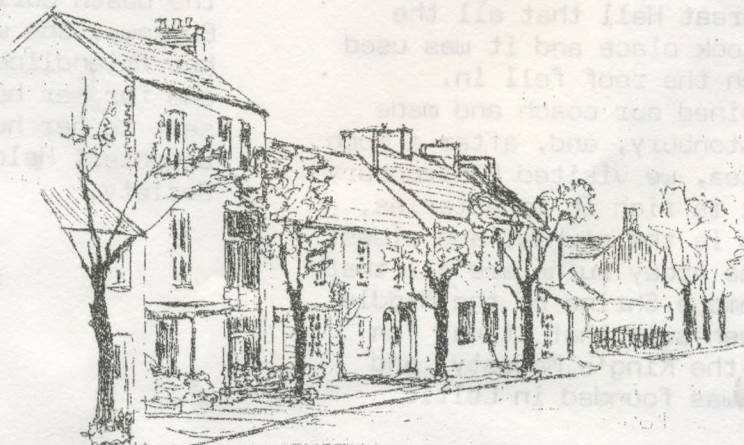
The Roll was written in a neat Secretary hand, easy to read (once you remember the long 's'), but the Record Office booklet also gives a transcription which is intended not as an academic treatise but as a readable discussion of a document of exceptional interest, prized among the archives of the ancient Borough.

The regulations, by which law and order were maintained, fair trading established and the rudiments of public health introduced, give an insight into life in the medieval and later borough. They throw light on the people who made up its population and the framework against which their lives were lived. The Ordinances make clear the privileged position of the burgesses and touch on other inhabitants, traders, shopkeepers, craftsmen, innkeepers, scolding women, harlots and 'naughtipackes'.

The photographs of the original parchment enable the reader to enjoy the pen drawings which enliven the initial letters of each paragraph, a feature unique to the Cowbridge Roll. The Beauchamp family's bear and ragged staff from one of the initials looks out from the front cover of a handsomely produced publication, printed by D. Brown and Sons.

The price of the booklet is a modest £5, and it may be ordered through the Society. Please contact Alan or Marjorie Hey, telephone Cowbridge 2869.

Patricia Moore



WESTGATE
COWBRIDGE

On a bright, sunny June morning, we left the Town Hall at 8.30 in the coach for the day's outing to Wells and Glastonbury, stopping at Newport to pick up our guide for the day, Arthur Peplow.

Wells is a city within a city, for inside the municipal boundary is the ecclesiastical city enclosed by walls and containing the Cathedral, Chapter House, Bishop's Palace and Deanery. Wells Cathedral is a superb example of English 13th century Gothic. There has been a cathedral here since the 10th century. It was the first church in England to be built in purely Gothic Style, the first great building owing nothing to France and the first to be known as English Gothic. The West Front is considered to be one of the greatest in Europe, with its lovely gallery of stone sculpture. There are 350 statues on the West Facade. The inside of the Cathedral is also typically English, with its marvellous columns or piers, with clusters of beautiful shafts. The stiff leaf foliage is one of the English contributions to English Architecture.

The Chapter House is considered to be the loveliest in all England and Wales, and is what is known as a centrally planned Chapter House. There are only about twelve left, and many say that Wells is the most beautiful of all. The Lady Chapel is renowned for its beauty and grace, and one of the lovely views in this Cathedral is to just stand in the choir and look back through the Lady Chapel to the East window, which is the loveliest original window, a Jesse window, and a superb 14th century example.

Wells took its name from the Holy Springs, where King Ina built a monastery in 704 A.D.

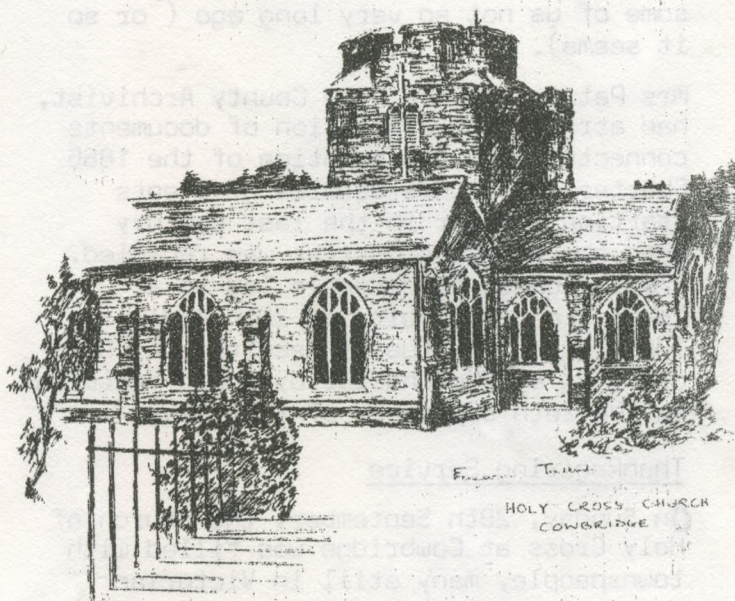
After lunch we assembled again at the Bishop's Palace. The land here has belonged to the Church for over 1000 years. Since 1209 the Bishops have all lived here in the Palace. The building was started by Bishop Jocelyn. The Palace and the Great Hall are linked by a chapel. It was in the Great Hall that all the entertainment took place and it was used until 1550, when the roof fell in.

We now rejoined our coach and made our way to Glastonbury, and, after a much needed cup of tea, we visited Glastonbury Abbey. Somerset is rich in monasteries, but Glastonbury is the richest and oldest of them all. The Abbey ruins are all that is left of a famous Shrine of the Middle Ages. It has been said that it was "an house meet for the King's Majesty, and none else". It was founded in Celtic

times, suppressed by Henry VIII in 1539, and bought by the Church of England in 1908 and vested in Trustees. It is considered to have one of the finest Mediaeval kitchens to survive in this country.

After a good journey back to Newport, Mrs Weeding thanked Arthur Peplow for a most interesting and exciting day. As one member remarked, it had been a perfect day, and this must really be attributed to John and Jean Roberts' excellent organisation of our outing. Many thanks from all.

Dilys Parker.



RACHEL BURROWS

Members learned with great regret of the death during the summer of Rachel Burrows. She will long be remembered for her friendliness, willingness to help, and for her hospitality. Condolences are sent to her husband, Geoff, and her daughter, Helen, on behalf of this Society.

COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Friday, 12th September, 1986

Officers and Committee Elected

Chairman	Mrs Y.M.Weeding	Cowbridge 2878
Hon. Secretary	Mr J.L.S.Miles	Cowbridge 2270
Hon. Treasurers	Mr & Mrs N.H.Shannon	Cowbridge 3957
Programme Secretary	Mrs E.G.Keay	Cowbridge 2879
Excursions Secretary	Mrs L.Carthew	Peterston S. Ely 760256
Social Secretary	Mrs D.Lloyd	Cowbridge
Museum Curator	Mrs M.Eveleigh	Cowbridge 2495
Publicity Officer	Mr J.Keay	Cowbridge 2879
Editors of 'The Newsletter'	Mr & Mrs J.A.Hey	Cowbridge 2869
Committee		
	Mr G.H.Burrows	Mr G.H.Pratt
	Mr L.Davies	Mrs V.Wythe
		Mrs D.Sewell

Information

Details of the monthly meetings of the Llantwit Major Local History Society and activities of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust's Friends are available from the Hon. Secretary.

Finance

The Society had over 100 paid-up members during 1985-86. A small subsidy had been paid to Charter Day. The Annual Excursion completely covered its costs. The Society decided to welcome clergymen and ministers of religion, both local and visiting, without charge, to full membership and meetings of the Society.

Cowbridge Museum

A Museum Trust for Cowbridge Museum has been set up, with six Trustees, being John Roberts, John Jones, Mrs V.Shannon (Secretary), David Edwards (Treasurer), Mrs Dorothy Sewell (Deputy Curator) and Mrs Marion Eveleigh (Curator). Friends of the Cowbridge Museum had been founded (membership £3 a year, Family £5, children 50p). The Museum will hold a Victorian Exhibition on 27th September when the Museum Management Committee would preside in costume. Commemorative mugs purchased by the Council would be on sale, profits going to the Museum.

Victorian Charter Centenary

Gala Evening

The Society would take an active part in the Gala Evening on 26th September in the Town Hall, and in the Victorian Fair on 17th September, with street stalls. The Charter would be on view in the Town Hall.

Chairman's Address

Mrs Y.M.Weeding addressed the meeting on 'Nepal'. Her account of the walking tour in which two other members of the Society also took part was so vivid that members almost felt that they had been there. The slides used to illustrate the account were only a fifth of the 500 taken by Mrs Weeding, and all were excellent, many of them being very finely composed. The whole address was a remarkable achievement, a brilliant account of an outstanding experience, and all present enjoyed it enormously.

J.L.S.Miles
