

COWBRIDGE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No 60: APRIL 2006

COMING EVENTS

April 7th: 'The Royal Mint' — a lecture by Haydn Walters; Lesser Hall, 8pm

May 6th: Excursion to Ludlow. Seats are available on the coach taking the Parish Pilgrimage to Ludlow, at a cost of £10. Contact Yvonne Weeding, 772878

24th June: 3- and 6- mile walks around the Penllyn estate, and also 'historic walks' around Cowbridge: organised by Valeways for which we provide the historical expertise! We would welcome volunteer guides - please contact Jeff or Bruce.

6th July: Caerwent visit. See below.

8th July: Day Trip to Malvern and Coughton Court near Evesham, organised by Llantwit Major LHS. Cost of £17.50 includes coffee in Malvern, entry to Coughton Court house and gardens, and driver's tip. Contact Rita Griffin, 792350.

CAERWENT VISIT- 6TH JULY

Members who were at our January meeting will remember the interesting talk that was provided by Richard Brewer from the National Museum on Caerwent - Excavation of a Roman Town.

As a result of requests made following his talk Richard has agreed to take us on a site visit on the above date. He has asked that we meet him at the carpark by the West Gate in Caerwent at 10.30 am. We will 'walk and talk' the site and conclude with lunch at a suitable local hostelry. Transport to be arranged by members.

If you do not have a chance to indicate your interest at our meeting in April please give me a call on 773611.

I will then be able to make the necessary arrangements for lunch and provide further details.

Bruce McGovern

Thanks to all the writers of the articles in this newsletter. Contributions and comments are always welcome: please contact Jeff Alden at 773373.

ARCHAEOLOGY

There have been some exciting finds in the various archaeological excavations prior to building development in Cowbridge.

The 'Depot' site in Church Street has yielded many pieces of shaped flint, suggesting a much earlier settlement than we have known. There have also been some Roman ditches, with associated pottery; a medieval pit with the remains of 40 cattlehorns, possibly linked with a tannery or a lanthorn works; and the eighteenth-century floor of the street-side cottage.

On the other side of the road, the Grammar School site has yielded mainly medieval remains, with the base of the thick town wall exposed in the boot house, and another solid wall abutting this which might have been part of the South Gate. An adjoining pit has contributed much medieval pottery.

Behind 32 Westgate, foundations for the extension to the house have also yielded much Roman pottery.

Finally, in Old Hall gardens, we have exposed the base of the full width of the Town Wall where it had been rebuilt as a single skin (near the Physic Garden). We have also unearthed a wall running at not quite a right angle to the line of the walkway near the western part of the Walls, age and purpose not yet known.

JA

DIG OUT YOUR FILMS!

In conjunction with Big Screen, we intend to put on a programme of local films in the Town hall in November. If you have any cine or video films containing aspects of life in Cowbridge, we should be able to copy these snippets, and incorporate them into a longer film. Please contact me on 773373 if you feel that you have anything which might be of interest.

Jeff Alden

RATIONS AND SHORTAGES 1940 -1954

With memories of the food shortages of 1917 and 1918 caused by German submarine attacks on merchant shipping, the people of the United Kingdom welcomed the British government's introduction of food rationing on 8th January 1940. Ration books were issued to cover a period of one year divided into thirteen numbered 'ration periods' of four weeks each and the holders of these books had to register with retailers to claim their weekly rations. Initially only margarine, butter, sugar and bacon were included in the scheme but within a few months meat, cheese, eggs and tea had been added, to be followed in 1941 by all canned food and in 1942 by sweets and chocolates. No-one in 1940 could have forecast that they would be living with food rationing for the next fourteen years!

The prices of all rationed foods were strictly controlled and the amount of each ration was announced just before the start of a ration period. At the beginning of the scheme retailers were obliged to cut and count every coupon and then return them to the local food office to be checked against the number of registered customers - a bureaucratic nightmare which was later abandoned in favour of marking the ration books.

There was no branding nor pre-packaging of groceries. Butter, margarine and cheese were cut from large slabs, weighed and wrapped. Cheese was invariably 'mousetrap' cheddar and workers in heavy industries (coal miners, steel workers, construction etc) could apply for a supplementary cheese ration. Loose leaf tea and granulated sugar were weighed and then packed in blue bags - no tea-bags, icing sugar, caster sugar or demerara sugar for many years to come! The egg ration fluctuated wildly as few eggs were laid in winter and early spring and weeks could pass with perhaps only one egg per book per week. By 1944 tins of National dried egg, imported from the USA, were sometimes available which, when reconstituted, could be used for baking or (very unpalatable) scrambled eggs.

Unlike groceries the meat ration was determined by price and not by weight. Butchers were told the controlled price of all joints and cuts of beef, mutton and pork. If the meat ration for a week was fixed at one shilling (5p) a customer could either choose to buy a small amount of an expensive cut such as topside of beef or rump steak or buy a larger joint of brisket or silverside of beef. As the war progressed the meat ration became smaller and part of it had to be taken as corned beef. There was never any supplementary meat ration. Butchers received an allowance of 'manufacturing meat' which could be used for sausages, the meat content of which was strictly controlled and at one time was as little as 33 % of a sausage. The following were not included in the meat ration: sausages, offal (liver, kidney, heart, tripe, brains, tongue), rabbit, game, poultry (always scarce and expensive) and horsemeat (from licensed horsemeat traders only). Fish was never rationed but was always scarce as most of the deep-sea fishing trawlers were requisitioned by the Admiralty in August 1939 for conversion to mine sweepers. Whalemeat and snoek (a South African fish) were not popular substitutes for cod and haddock!

Apart from occasional distributions of oranges, and then only on children's ration books, there were no imports of fruit or vegetables: no bananas, no lemons, no grapefruit, no melons, no peaches, no apricots, no pineapples. As there were no freezers or frozen foods most vegetables and fruit were seasonal: peas, beans, marrow and beetroot only on sale in the summer, strawberries and tomatoes from June to September, apples from August to March. Small quantities of raisins, currants and sultanas were included with the rations every year before Christmas. There were no fruit juices. This was a diet which was conspicuously low in vitamin content although small bottles of concentrated orange juice and also of cod liver oil were available at welfare clinics for children under five years.

Milk was never rationed but supplies were very limited and during the winter and early spring months had to be augmented with National powdered milk. Some luxury items were banned from sale for the entire duration of the war: ice-cream could not be made and cream was reserved for butter-making so cream-filled eclairs and pastries vanished. Bread was not rationed until 1946 but National wheatmeal flour (the only available flour) produced a grey-coloured bread which was neither appetising to look at nor to eat. In November 1941 canned food was rationed by using a points system: a set number of points were allocated for

each month which could be tendered to any retailer. A similar system was used when chocolates and sweets came on the ration.

Throughout the war years most unrationed foods were scarce which inevitably led to long queues when something tasty and rare, such as onions, appeared at a greengrocer and shortages of items like cigarettes and cosmetics led to 'under the counter' dealing. British civilians largely survived by 'eating out' for which no ration books were needed. A school meals service was started in 1940 so that all children received at least one good meal a day. Factories set up works canteens. British Restaurants opened in rooms such as church halls. Fish and chip shops flourished with special supplies of fish and fat for frying (home-made chips were a rarity due to the meagre fat ration and also the fact that there was no vegetable cooking oil for sale). Hotels and restaurants were still able to provide meals although very often many of the items listed on a menu were 'off'.

Nutritionists and health experts today are endlessly writing of their concerns over the nation's unhealthy food preferences: too much salt, too much sugar, too much fat, increasingly obese children living on 'junk food'. Very often an article deploring the present-day diet will include a statement that the only time the British population had a healthy diet was during the years of rationing when experts at the Ministry of Food decided what everyone should eat. No doubt it was very good for everybody that sweets were rationed until 1952 and that fizzy, sugared drinks were unobtainable but, although it is certainly true that government food controls meant that the nation (unlike war-ravaged Europe) was never near starvation, an overwhelming memory of the years between 1940 and 1954 is of dreary, monotonous meals usually bulked out with potatoes and root vegetables!

Jose and Ken Rawlins, August 2005

TITUS LEWIS (1822 -1887)

Tims Lewis: draper, commercial traveller, lecturer, author, poet and antiquarian, lived in Llanblethian for twenty-one years, from 1866 until 1887.

His humble beginnings were a long way from the cultured and academic status he was to achieve later in his life. He was born in Llanelli in 1822, the eldest son of a draper; neither parent could sign his or her name. Baptised at the age of fourteen, it was only one year later that Tims was obliged to take over the shop in Thomas Street, Llanelli, with his younger brother Thomas, on the death of their father. Lewis's early years as a draper seem to have gone well and in 1841 the business moved to larger premises on the other side of Thomas Street. The following year he married Catherine Davies, his senior by ten years. She was the daughter of successful shopkeepers and probably helped finance the new shop.

The expansion was badly timed. The economy had turned sour. O'Connell was pushing the Irish towards insurrection, Britain had armies fighting in both China and Afghanistan and there were now two other drapers competing in Llanelli. But worst of all had been the introduction of the Corn Laws in 1838. Devised to protect national producers against imported grain, all it achieved was to push up prices of basic foodstuffs, hitting the poor and reducing their ability to spend on things other than food.

In desperation, the Lewises moved the business to Neath in March 1846 and with the repeal of the Corn Laws, the business might have been saved. But the depression was too deep and by May Lewis was bankrupt. The family moved back to Llanelli and Lewis became a commercial traveller, joining the firm of S & J Watts & Co of Manchester. He was to work for them for the next forty years. 'His firm was a very large wholesaler of Manchester goods': involving twenty-nine departments, these were an enormous range of items for retailers who sold silks, mercery, drapery, hosiery and haberdashery for which Lewis's previous occupation would have given him considerable experience.

Lewis's sales territory was a large one. It covered the whole of Wales and also included Cheltenham and Gloucester. It seems a strange choice for the family to have moved to Carmarthen in 1847. Perhaps, with Lewis absent so often, Catherine wished to be near her sister who lived there. At that time also, it was

expected that the Swansea to Carmarthen railway line would be shortly completed, although in fact it was delayed until 1854. However, Lewis prospered in his new role. Amongst other things he moved to a larger house in Carmarthen, rented a holiday property in Ilansteffan and bought a two-and-a-half-ton yacht

By 1865, Lewis was forty-three and obviously worked very hard. Perhaps he wished to be more centrally placed in his territory. For whatever reasons the Lewis family came to live at St Quentin's House in Llanblethian, situated on the corner of Castle Hill and St Quentin's Hill. One of the reasons influencing the choice of house may have been that, at the time, it was owned by John Hughes and Richard Formby. Both were Lancashire men and were possibly connected with Lewis's employer, Watts & Co. Another reason would have been that from the station in Cowbridge, Lewis could connect into the rest of the railway system.

Titus Lewis and his wife Catherine moved into St Quentin's with six of their children. In all, they had eight children; their last son had been born when Catherine was forty-four. Those living at St Quentins were the daughters, Hannah, Catherine and Eleanor, and three of their sons, Alfred being a tutor at Oxford University whilst Isaac and James attended Cowbridge Grammar School. The two sons not living at home were Titus, who like his father had become a commercial traveller based in Neath, and John St David who was a chaplain in the Royal Navy. There was at least one servant and things might seem to have been rather crowded. However, at the time the property comprised not only what is now St Quentin's House but also St Quentin's Cottage, next door. The cottage was then the stable with additional accommodation above.

Prior to coming to Llanblethian, Lewis had embarked on what might be called his 'academic' career. This took several forms. No doubt using his numerous train journeys and frequent nights away from home, Lewis studied hard. He was particularly interested in the Ancient Britons and their contribution to national history. He believed that the 'Ancients' enjoyed a much higher standard of civilisation than was customarily believed. He also studied archaeology. He had articles published and also lectured on both subjects. He studied the works of Shakespeare, about which he also gave lectures. There is evidence that he found time to learn Latin. His output seems to have been considerable and drew a lot of attention. As a result, in 1858, he was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He must have been very proud and gained a lot of amusement from people puzzling over his business card, which read: 'Commercial Traveller - FSA'.

If this was not enough, Lewis also had a literary career. He translated for publication a quantity of Welsh hymns into English. These included, in 1877, Joseph Parry's composition *Mynyddog* Lewis also translated several poems by Davis Evans [Dewi Haran]. Lewis also wrote poems of his own: *The Soldier's Wife* [dealing with the battle of Inkerman], which ran to a second edition, and *So, My Joe, You're Going To India* [a soldier leaving at the time of the Indian Mutiny]. At the time of the Crimean War and later during the Indian Mutiny, patriotic fervour ran very high. These poems responded to these feelings and *The Soldier's Wife* was printed as a special edition, with all the proceeds going to the Patriotic Fund. This was not the limit of Lewis's output He also composed songs, mostly comic, with which he entertained various gatherings. On top of all this, he also wrote a novel, *The Brothers Jones, A Tale of Real Life*. This seems to be partly autobiographical, as it describes brothers who keep a drapers shop, train journeys, and a commercial traveller hero who marries his sweetheart 'Kate'.

Lewis obviously became part of the 'Cowbridge scene'. In 1872, his eldest daughter, Hannah, married Frederick Richardson, also a Llanblethian resident, in the parish church. In 1881, Lewis attended the funeral of Dr Stannistreet, the Cowbridge doctor who had been struck by a train whilst walking, in a blinding snow storm, along the railway track between Llanharry and Pontyclun. An account of the funeral states 'Amongst the rest of the mourners perhaps Mr Titus Lewis, of St Quentins in Llanblethian, was the most interesting person'.

Lewis's frequent absences from home led to some confusion amongst the neighbours as to what he did for a living. The recollections of Miss Evelyn Hopkins of Broadway House, Llanblethian, [recorded in 1977] whose uncle had lived in Greenfield Terrace, just below the garden of St Quentin's, had Tims Lewis down as a 'Commander in the Navy'. The naval uniform in St Quentin's would have been that of the Lewis's son, John St David, the naval chaplain. Of course, if Titus had acquired some form of nautical cap for the outings on his yacht, this may have also added to the confusion. Miss Hopkins also had a story about a parrot 'brought back from sea by Titus Lewis'. Her aunt and uncle were asked to look after the parrot and taught it to talk.

There is no confirming information about a parrot belonging to the Lewis family, but had Tims Lewis known

of these memories it is almost certain that he would have been highly amused for he seems to have had a great sense of fun. For someone who had so bettered himself from his origins in an illiterate household, there was a risk that he would take himself very seriously. This seems not to have been the case as is evidenced from the following extract from his lengthy obituary in the *Western Mail*, dealing with his time in Llanblethian.

'One morning a learned brother archaeologist called upon him when he and his wife were alone at breakfast. The teapot happened to be an earthenware one. When his wife left the room, Mr Lewis mischievously told the archaeologist that the teapot was an heirloom. "It has been", he told the credulous antiquarian visitor, "in the Lewis family 200 years". The delight of the antiquarian visitor was unbounded. He gazed at it through his spectacles and went on to dwell on Etruscan and other potteries. Mr Lewis told the visitor that this particular teapot was a fine specimen of ancient British pottery. But Mr Lewis left the room before the teapot had been removed. As luck would have it, Mrs Lewis returned into the room and the visitor instantly dwelt with rapture on the antique British teapot. Mrs Lewis was amazed at the extraordinary interest the visitor took in the article and especially the learned name he applied to it. "Why", said she, "you can buy one like it in Cowbridge any day for ten pence. I bought this teapot there the other day for that sum". The two friends afterwards had a hearty laugh over the affair'.

Laugh, they may have done, but one wonders if the 'learned brother archaeologist' took to not making his unannounced calls on the Lewises quite so early in the morning from then on!

Lewis seems to have been popular amongst his fellow commercial travellers, of which there would have been a great many at that time. Landlords and hotel keepers saw them as a basis of their clientele and took great care of their needs. For dining, a large table and sometimes a special room would be reserved exclusively for their use. Around the table, information would be exchanged on common clients and other things of mutual interest. Also, the commercial travellers would use the evening to create an informal debating group. They probably spent a lot of time putting the world to right. Because of his wide knowledge and speaking ability, it seems that, when he was present, Lewis invariably ended up being elected the chairman for the evening debate.

By 1886, Lewis was ready for retirement. The constant travelling must have been very demanding. He had suffered for some time with recurring bouts of bronchitis which at that time was both painful and dangerous. His ability to resist the illness had been reduced in 1876 when he had been bitten by a rat and seems to have been unable to completely throw off the effects of the resulting blood poisoning. His morale must have been low. In 1884, his son Isaac died. A year later the terrible news arrived from Jamaica that John St David had died suddenly whilst serving as chaplain on HMS *The Urgent*.

In 1887, Titus Lewis retired after forty one years of service with Watts & Co. He and some of the family went to Llansteffan for a holiday during the summer. He died there on 9th September. Catherine Lewis continued to live at St Quentin's until 1889, and then went to live in Devonport with her youngest daughter Eleanor, married to George Clow RN. She died there in 1893. Titus and Catherine Lewis are both buried in Llansteffan churchyard.

Titus Lewis must have possessed remarkable energy and a will to succeed. From very humble beginnings and being declared bankrupt [no light matter in those days] at the age of twenty four, he not only created a prosperous position for himself and his family but drove himself to compensate for the education he did not receive in his youth. He also made sure that all his children, including his daughters, were very well educated. Of his sons, two went to Cowbridge Grammar School, one to Lampeter and three to Oxford University.

Details of Lewis's writings appear in both *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography* and the *Oxford Companion to Literature in Wales*. The National Library in Aberystwyth holds a collection of his work.

George Haynes

COWBRIDGE, THE VALE, AND PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION, BEFORE AND AFTER THE GREAT REFORM BILL

Wales was not represented in Parliament before 1536 (the first English Parliament was the 'Model Parliament of 1295). The Act of Union gave the Principality 24 seats, one for each County and one for each of 12 boroughs, which were newly created. Several of the borough constituencies were made up of a number of small boroughs grouped together to jointly elect one member. This was the case with Cowbridge, which was part of the Cardiff or Glamorgan Boroughs constituency and which comprised the boroughs of Cardiff, Swansea, Llantrisant, Kenfig, Aberavon, Neath, Loughor and Cowbridge.

The Welsh electoral system was not as full of abuses as was that of England. In England some constituencies were virtually uninhabited (e.g. Old Sarum in Wiltshire) but still returned two members, while large towns such as Birmingham and Manchester were unrepresented. However, the Welsh system of representation also had little to commend it. The voice of Wales at Westminster was weak - a total of 24 MPs compared to 44 from Cornwall. Radnorshire had 25,000 inhabitants in 1801 and Glamorgan 127,000, but both had the same representation. Merthyr, with a population of 22,000 in 1831, was outside the system of contributory boroughs, whereas the population of Cowbridge in 1831 was 1,097 and yet was part of the Cardiff or Glamorgan Boroughs. The total Welsh electorate in 1801 was approximately 19,000.

The Welsh county franchise was the same as that in England - the freeholder of land worth 40 shillings per annum. This varied so much that he could be a man of considerable substance or the owner of a cabbage patch. The franchise for the Welsh boroughs was determined by a complexity of rules and tended to be a mixture of freemen, scot and lot (payment of a local tax) and corporation boroughs. In practice they were all under the control of local patrons and contested elections were rare. A tight group of some 20 families controlled parliamentary elections in Wales and they were generally decided not by the casting of votes but by private arrangements which ensured the emergence of a single unopposed candidate.

By 1801, Glamorgan County which had 2,000 voters was under the control of the Bute family. Representation was contested only twice between 1536 and 1802. The Cardiff (Glamorgan) Boroughs were under the control of the local councils or corporations. There were 800 voters in 1801, and they too were contested only twice between 1536 and 1802. In Cowbridge the freemen, who had the right to vote, were those holders of burgage plots allocated to the first settlers in the 'new' town from the mid 13th century at a rent of one shilling per year. In the General Election of 1830 not one of the Welsh constituencies was contested, and when voting did occur it was done publicly. In 1831 one candidate in Cardiff spent £15,000 in the taverns of the town and the surrounding area in order to purchase votes.

The demand for parliamentary reform had begun in the 1760s, as a result of the tremendous rise in population in the 18th century, and the shift in population from the South and East to the North and West, with the Industrial Revolution. This demand became widespread after 1815, when parliamentary reform was seen by the working classes as a panacea for all their ills. Agitation was immense, for the period was one of deep social distress, both in England and Wales.

The hard winter of 1830 was one of severe depression in the Vale of Glamorgan, and there were widespread protests by agricultural workers. The typical farm in the Vale was small, but at the same time less than 2% of the land was enclosed. High corn prices after 1790 (when Britain was unable to import corn from Poland and Russia due to the Napoleonic Wars) meant that demand for butter and bacon from the Vale fell off, and the high duties on salt hindered a development of trade in salted provisions. Wages of agricultural labourers in the Vale had fallen. In 1767 Arthur Young in his "Annals of Agriculture" said that "labour in Cowbridge was 10d a day all year round, the cheapest I have met with in South Wales. At Bridgend the wage was one shilling a day in winter and 1/6d in harvest". By

1820 wages in Cowbridge had actually fallen to 8d a day in winter and 1 /3d a day in summer.

There were quite serious riots when enclosure of land was attempted - when the Earl of Bute attempted enclosure at the Heath in Cardiff and the Earl of Plymouth wished to enclose land on the outskirts of Cardiff in what is now Ely. There were outbreaks of Rick burning at Bonvilston and Llanmaes - not quite on the scale of the ' Swing Riots" in Southern England, but nevertheless evidence of the distress and poverty felt in the Vale.

Welsh periodicals were drawing attention to the abuses of the electoral system in the 1820s, and in 1830-31 reform meetings were held throughout Wales. Industrialists in Glamorgan - who resented the power of the landowners - were particularly vocal. When Earl Grey's First Reform Bill was defeated in April, 1831 there was a ferocious reaction in South Wales. A riot occurred in Carmarthen and in June 1831 a great upheaval shook Merthyr. The Merthyr Rising (which must be the subject of a further article) was the most savage and bloody event in the history of industrial Britain.

When the Reform Bill became law in June 1832 the Vale celebrated with bands marching and church bells pealing. The Act gave Wales five additional members. The representation of the counties of Glamorgan, Carmarthen and Denbigh was raised from one to two members. A borough seat was created for Merthyr and the Glamorgan Boroughs were split into two, with one seat centred on Cardiff and the other at Swansea.

Although the working class had campaigned vigorously in favour of the Reform Bill hardly any of them obtained the vote as a result of it. Before 1832 one in eight adult males had the vote, after 1832 one in five. There was no secret ballot so the ability of landowners to control the parliamentary elections in Wales was hardly impaired.

Don Gerrard

CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE ... CHATEAU MOUTON ROTHSCHILD ...
CHATEAU ST QUENTIN.....CHATEAU ST QUENTIN???

In recent years we have been used to seeing wine made from grapes grown near Cowbridge and sold under the brand names of Cariad or Glyndwr, but wine was made in Wales centuries ago.

There is no record of the Romans having planted vineyards here but Giraldus Cambrensis, the scholar priest who was born at Manorbier Castle in or about 1145, recorded the existence at the castle of a vineyard planted by the Normans. Later, in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Owain Glyndwr would entertain visitors to his castle at Sycarth (between Oswestry and Llansilin) with wine from his adjoining vineyard.

From this time until the second part of the nineteenth century wine production in Wales seems to have died out. Then the Third Marquess of Bute arrived on the scene. John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, Marquess of Bute, whose wealth came mainly from the export of coal through Cardiff, owned extensive property in the area. This included land near Tongwynlais on which stood the ruins of an eleventh-century fortified tower known as Castell Coch. In his youth the Marquess had made the Grand Tour of Europe and was greatly impressed by the Rhineland castles with their associated vineyards. At Castell Coch, with its panoramic view of the river Taff, he saw the opportunity to develop something similar. He had his architect, William Burges, draw up plans for the castle we see today and construction went ahead, hand-in-hand with the great work of restoring Cardiff Castle.

As the work progressed, the Marquess set about establishing a vineyard on the slopes below the casde. In 1875 he sent his young garden manager, Andrew Pettigrew, to France to learn all about growing grapes and making wine. Although he made brief visits to the Champagne and Bordeaux regions, Pettigrew spent most of his time in the vineyards which then existed around Paris. Perhaps Paris offered Pettigrew too many temptations because he was ill-advised in his selection of vines for Castell

Coch. He planted two-thirds of the vineyard with the red Camay grape and the remainder with the unpopular Mlle Blanche. Castell Coch is too far north for the red grapes then available to flourish in a normal year, and there was only one good harvest, in 1893 when 12,000 bottles of wine were produced.

The Marquess, undeterred by these poor results, went on to plant two more vineyards, one at Sully and the other at Llanblethian. Wine production at Castell Coch had ceased by the outbreak of the Great War and that vineyard was returned to pasture in 1920. That at Sully was converted into an orchard though in recent years in the same area, vines have been found growing wild which presumably were related to the original planting.

The Llanblethian vineyard was a complete failure, producing not a single grape! As far as it is known it was planted on the flat land at the head of Constitution Hill, behind the high stone wall and bounded at its western edge by Castle Cottage and St Quentin's Castle. CHATEAU ST QUENTIN? Sadly, no!

Alec Jones

HOUSE OF CORRECTION - FRIENDS OF COWBRIDGE MUSEUM

As many members of the History Society will know the construction of the new Cowbridge House of Correction - now better known as the Town Hall - was completed nearly two hundred years ago on 1st September 1806.

As it so happens the first meeting of our 2006/2007 lecture programme falls on Friday 1st September 2006. You will therefore not be too surprised to learn that the topic for the evening, after the usual very short AGM, will relate to some of the history of the building in which our meetings are held. In addition to the usual social element of the September meeting the Trustees of the Museum would like to invite you to view the original cells of the House of Correction. These cells now of course are used by the Cowbridge and District Museum Trust which is supported by the Friends of the Museum Most of the Friends are members of the History Society. For those readers of this Newsletter who are not yet involved with the museum you are very welcome to join us at our annual meeting on Friday 2nd June in the Lesser Hall at 7.30pm.

In addition to the refreshments that will be provided, there will be an update of museum activities during the past year and a talk, usually by a speaker from the National Museum. Membership remains, as it has for the past twenty years, at £3 per person (£5 for families).

If you need any further information either about the meeting of the History Society in September or that of the Friends in June please give me a call on 773611.

Bruce McGovern

THE TOWN WALLS - A PROGRESS REPORT

Cooperation between the Vale Council and the Cowbridge Charter Trust has meant that to date, progress has exceeded all expectations. Support in kind has been provided by the Vale (tree-felling, waste clearance, provision of hand tools, and the bureaucracy involved in risk-assessment and bat-and-bird surveys), and by Creative Rural Communities with a grant for tool purchase. There has also been generous help from individuals with mechanical clearance of coppice growth, loan of staging for high-level work, and also two days'-worth of work with a mechanical digger to clear waste and level ground within the walls. Especially, though, it has been the tireless work by a dedicated group of volunteers who have worked in groups for two hours in the morning, 6 days per week for six months that has resulted in the clearance of all vegetation, and the exposure of the walls for re-surveying.

The re-survey, up-dating the 1999 study, has recently been completed. Now the restoration needs can be assessed, estimates prepared and grants applied for (as a registered charity, the Trust is able to draw on grants for restoration which are not available to the Council). It will be a long and costly business, but both the Council and the Trust are totally committed to carry it out.

Luke Millar