

ANCIENT HOUSE YIELDS ITS LONG-LOST SECRETS

WHEN Nick Evans and his family moved into the Ancient Druid house in Eastgate, he already knew that it was probably the oldest house in Cowbridge.

However, since he started on a renovation project, the house has been showing glimpses of its past by throwing up historical curios on a regular basis.

A few years ago, it was an ancient rosary that illustrated its past as a chapel and hostel for pilgrims on the way to St Davids. Soon after, it was a boar's tusk.

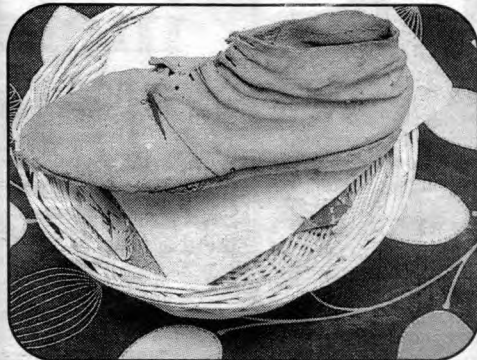


ABOVE: The griffin carving on the wall of the Ancient Druid.

Now, the latest find is currently awaiting a visit from experts at the Museum of Wales – it is a shoe which appears to date back to the early 1800s.

A spiral staircase into

the loft was in a bad way, so local carpenter Richie Phillips was called in. He and Anthony Jones, who has been working on the renovation for some time, were busy upstairs



ABOVE: This 200-year-old shoe has been found in a Cowbridge house.

when Richie removed a rotten piece of wood.

When he looked down towards the foot of the spiral staircase, he noticed a small hiding place – apparently common in old houses, and that was where they found the shoe.

Nick told The GEM that the house dated back to the early 14th Century, and at that time was probably a hostel outside the Cowbridge town walls.

It would have stood all alone, with no other dwelling near it. Since then it has been a public house, and over the

years, many owners have added extensions in all directions.

Nick fully expects to unearth more items as the renovation work progresses.

After all, although it is possible to document its owners and its uses from 1766 onwards, those earlier years are still a bit of a mystery.

Nick added: "There is so much still to be learned about the house.

"For instance, we still don't know why the carvings of griffins on the front of the house were put there.

PHILIP IRWIN

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