

# INTERCOM

No. 2 April/May 1977

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WALTER!

On the 17th February, Mr Walter Carswell celebrated his 90th birthday. There was a party in the Town Hall, and the Cowbridge Bellringers rang a quarter peal in his honour. Earlier in the month, I had the pleasure of visiting his home, and talking to him about his life in Cowbridge since he came here 67 years ago.

He was born in Shrewsbury in 1887 and came to Cowbridge in 1910. He had frequently seen advertisements in the Hereford Times for gardeners at Cowbridge Grammar School, little thinking that he would take that job in the not so distant future. He remembers Owen Evans, headmaster at that time, being strict but well-liked, and being a marvellous preacher in church. The school at that time had only eighty pupils, and so some Cowbridge boys had to attend Pontypridd County School, as did Mr Carswell's son.

In 1913, he enrolled in the voluntary fire service, established two years previously. There were twelve volunteers, and their one manual pump was kept in a part of the Town Hall, which has now been modernised. Their drill room was one of the offices in the Town Hall. He remembers various blazes, especially one next to the Duke of Wellington, which completely destroyed a Malt house.

Mr Carswell fondly remembers the time when there were twenty-two pubs along the main street of Cowbridge, conjuring up names like The Pelican, The White Lion, Cowbridge Arms, The Commercial and The Blue Bell, as well as the existing ones. The fairs at Cowbridge remain in his memories as well. September saw the sheep fair, and sheep and people were thronging the street at 3 o'clock in the morning, and it would stay busy till eleven o'clock at night. Other fairs that came were private enterprises, and a prominent name at that time was that of Studd. There were three brothers, Henry, John and Jacob, each having a different type of stall, such as roundabouts, boxing booths and a Noah's Ark with many species of animals. Mr Carswell paints a picture of a lively, friendly community.

In 1952, Mr Carswell retired from the now modernised fire service, and became honorary mace bearer. This is a job which mainly entails guarding the mayor, and not leaving his side on public occasions. Mr Carswell was presented to the Duke of Edinburgh when he visited Cowbridge four years ago - the first time royalty has visited Cowbridge.

He retired two years ago, but is still very active in the church. I would like to thank Mr Carswell for being so hospitable and helpful, and all of us at Intercom would like to wish him good health and many continued years of happiness.

David Cox.

## FEMALE FOCUS

For this issue of Intercom, with spring in the air, Female Focus took a look at the fashion scene in Cowbridge. There are a surprising number of fashion shops and boutiques, considering the size of the town, covering a wide choice of fashion wear, from boutiques offering Haute Couture styles and model gowns from renowned British and Continental designers to fashion shops specialising in Indian cheesecloth fashions.

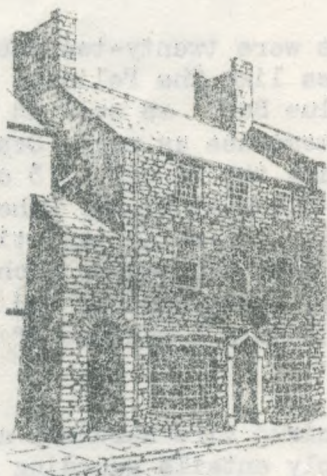
Upon examination it appears that the bulk of the trade (between 50% and 70%) comes from outside Cowbridge. Customers come from as far afield as West Glamorgan, Porthcawl, Bridgend and Barry. This is because ladies are turning from larger chain stores in the big cities to the smaller boutiques for a more personal approach and a more individual look.

At first glance, the large number of boutiques implies that there would be great competition between them. But in fact, if anything, trade is improved by the competition. A spokeswoman for the longest established boutique, which has been here for eight years, said that since the opening of the other shops business has increased. It seems that between the shops there is a friendly inter-relationship which can only improve trade.

The newest boutique on the scene, which opened just before Christmas, specialises in new and nearly new fashionable clothes from photographic sessions - designer clothes - plus all accessories.

With such a variety of shops, there is no need to travel out of town to obtain that special spring or summer look. It's all on your doorstep!

Jenny Lycett.



**Farthings Old Wine House  
and Carbery**

**HIGH STREET  
COWBRIDGE**

**Telephone 2990**

**A WARM, ELEGANT  
ATMOSPHERE**

**TEMPTING CARVERY**

**EXTENSIVE WINE LIST**

**OPEN FOR  
MORNING COFFEE  
10 am**

## COWBRIDGE & LLANBLETHIAN W.I.'s

The Women's Institutes in Cowbridge and Llanblethian are two of over 9000 institutes in the U.K., all part of the National Federation of Women's Institutes formed in 1917, whose main purpose is to enable countrywomen to take an effective part in rural life and development by working together to improve conditions in the community and to develop the spirit of friendliness.

Both WIs have a membership of about eighty, and the members attend monthly meetings: Cowbridge in the afternoon of the first Tuesday of every month, and Llanblethian the second Thursday. This meeting includes business, a talk, film or similar item and refreshments. The WI's policy is created through resolutions put forward at the AGM at the Albert Hall, London, which, if passed, provide a mandate for continuing follow-up work by all members.

A large number of WI members are also members of charitable organisations, for example the Red Cross, and a team of members go to Hensol Hospital once

Meet ....  
David and Vicky  
of the

### **Cowbridge Record Centre**

40 High Street, Cowbridge

We stock records,  
cassettes, 8 track,  
stylus replacements,  
blank tapes,  
cleaning equipment  
and audio accessories.

10% discount given to clubs,  
discos and on bulk purchases.

## **through the looking glass**

Alice looked and saw beautiful clothes and accessories, both new and nearly new, in all sizes, for all ages and occasions. Something for everyone; even the White Rabbit could find another coat.

She was told they needed top quality fashionable day and evening clothes in all sizes and immaculate condition, and said she would tell her friends.

Curiouser and curiouser...

50 High Street,  
Cowbridge.

Tel. 3933

a month to run a canteen for the patients and have been doing so for several years.

One enterprising and popular activity of the WI is the market held in Cowbridge every Friday morning from May to October. It gives the general public a chance to buy home produce such as cakes and vegetables; nationally well over £½ million a year is returned to market producers who may be small scale gardeners with a surplus, or perhaps housewives willing to prepare high quality preserves, bread, pastries, etc for sale.

In short, the WI is an important and well-respected part of the community, with representatives attending most borough and local meetings - such as the entertainments committee meetings - if asked.

To each member the WI may bring something different - the chance to pursue her own particular skill or interest - but to all it means friendship and the ability to participate in village, country and national issues.

Rhiannon Sanders.

## Historical Series 1

## THE COWBRIDGE RAILWAY

How many people know where Cowbridge Station used to be? Why was the railway opened, and why was it closed? These are some of the questions I hope to answer in the first of a series planned for Intercom. It is hoped to be a not too technical ramble through the history of Cowbridge.

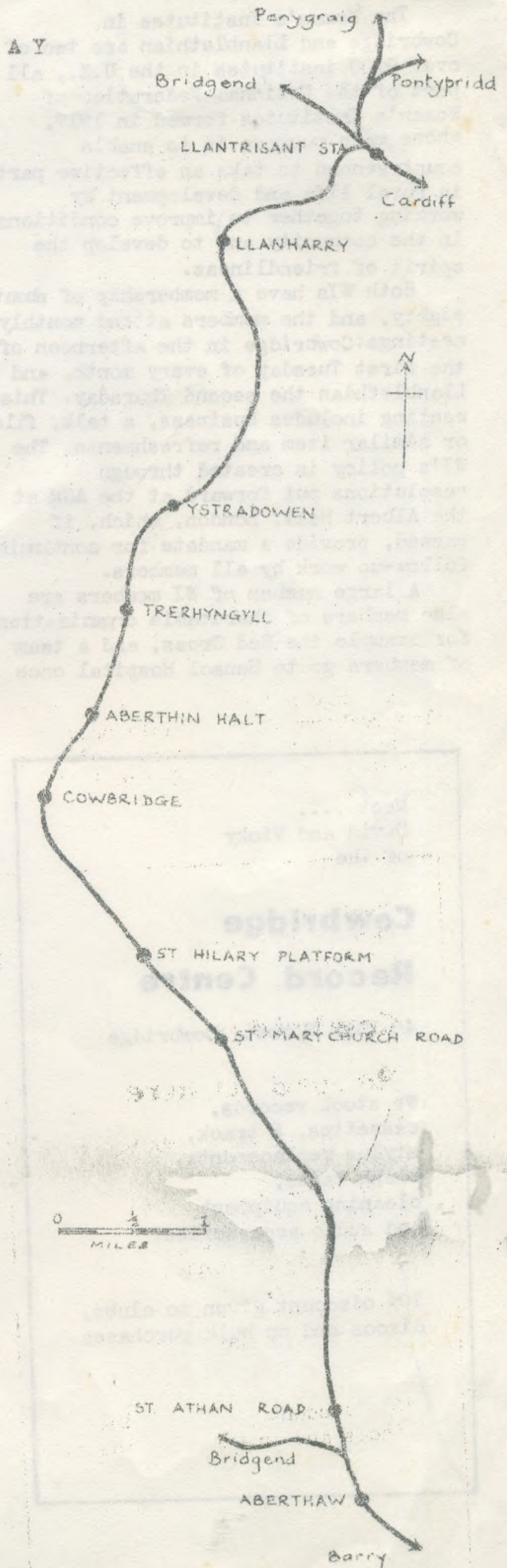
The Cowbridge Railway was authorised by an act of Parliament in 1862, and was opened three years later, on Jan 30th 1865 for goods traffic, and later that year - September 18th - for passenger traffic. It ran between Llantrisant and Cowbridge with intermediate stations at Llanharry, Ystradowen and Trerhyngyll and Maendy. There was also a halt at Aberthaw.

An agreement was made with the Taff Vale Railway, that giant of the South Wales railway companies, to operate the line due to lack of cash on the part of the Cowbridge Railway. The CR was completely amalgamated with the TVR in 1889. The Cowbridge branch was in fact not joined to the rest of the TVR system; instead the TVR exercised running powers over the GWR branch from Llantrisant to Pontypridd.

There then followed an example of railway rivalry so common in the 19th century. The Barry Railway was planning to build docks at Aberthaw to supplement the docks at Barry. This did not please the TVR as it would take business away from them. Almost immediately after the TVR had taken over the Cowbridge Railway it applied for authorization to extend the line south from Cowbridge to Aberthaw, to counteract the Barry Railway's move. The extension to Aberthaw was brought into use on 1st Oct., 1892. For local use this line was useless: it ran from nowhere to nowhere, through nowhere, but it had stopped the Barry Railway's move. The same sort of thing happened on the other side of Barry, at Sully, where the BR also wanted to build docks. The TVR again countered this by extending its line from Fenarth to Cadoxton, again through nowhere.

The first closures on the line took place in 1920 when St Hilary Platform and Aberthaw Halt were axed, the latter most probably because it was almost quicker to walk to Cowbridge than to the halt.

In 1922 the TVR itself came under the wing of the Great Western Railway - God's Wonderful Railway, to those who knew and loved it, and the Great Way Round to those who didn't. Within ten years the GWR had



completely closed the Cowbridge - Aberthaw extension to passenger and freight, and the Cowbridge-Llantrisant line reverted to its original purpose of being a country branch line.

Soon after came diesel railcar No 18 of the GWR. This worked the line until its closure. The railcar, built 15 years before the first British Rail diesel appeared, was transferred from Reading depot, where it worked the Lambourn branch: it was ideal for working the lightly-trafficked Cowbridge line.

This happy arrangement continued for about 10 years, through into British Railways ownership, until closure of the line to passengers in 1951. No 18 then returned to Reading for the rest of its life.

Goods traffic on the line lasted until 1964 when the line was closed completely. The line was lifted from Cowbridge to Llanharry, where the iron-ore mine kept the Llantrisant-Llanharry stub working for a few more years. This section of the line was lifted in 1976 after the mine closed.

Now the Cowbridge branch has largely returned to nature, and you could be forgiven for missing it. In fact, very little remains of any of the stations, and nothing of Cowbridge station, as Druids Green housing estate now covers it!

Simon Snowball.

#### CONGRATULATIONS

- ... TO Isabel Jones and Gethin Jarvis, winners of the Silver Jubilee Poetry competition organised by the Cowbridge Arts Group. They have each received a Jubilee plate from the Cowbridge Pottery.
- ... TO Y Bontfaen School mini-rugby team, for their tremendous achievement in the all Wales competition
- ... TO Rob Llewellyn of Penllyn, who had an outstanding game with the Wales Youth Rugby team

## COWBRIDGE ELECTRICAL SERVICE

TOWN HALL SQUARE  
COWBRIDGE 2370

ALL TYPES OF LIGHT FITTINGS,  
LAMPS AND SHADES  
SUPPLIED AND FITTED.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES,  
KETTLES,  
TOASTERS,  
SHAVERS,  
HAIRDRIERS, ETC.

ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES.

#### MOTHER AND TODDLERS CLUB

Great interest has been shown in the club by local mothers, and attendance has been high. Anyone wanting information about the Mother and Baby/Toddler Club can ring the Chairman, Mrs Margery Hodson at Gwbridge 3367, or the Secretary, Lynne Stephant, at Cowbridge 3222.

OLD PEOPLES ASSOCIATION meet in the Lesser Hall on the third Thursday of every month. New members would be most welcome: please contact the secretary, Mrs Betty Williams, Cowbridge 2107

COWBRIDGE WEEK this year is in July. More details in the next issue of Intercom.

# Sportsdesk

## SQUASH

The proposal for a squash club in Cowbridge was first put forward in January 1975. A committee was set up to look into the possibility of building these courts, and a year later the construction began.

This was only after an application to the council for a grant. Firstly, though, time had to be taken in raising funds to show the council that there was ample demand for the formation of a club. The money was raised by offering debentures in the club, and also borrowing a large amount from the bank. The council then approved the grant and the building commenced.

These courts were eventually completed in January 1977, with a total outlay of £25,000.

Although lacking an official opening, the club is thriving, with now over 250 members using the courts at 50p for half an hour. The peak times are at weekends and on weekday evenings. At other times it is not so busy.

The first squash tournament has taken place, with the finals day on March 12th. The Men's Open championship was won by Mike Roberts; the Ladies' Open champion is Veronica Morgan. More tournaments are proposed for the coming season. Other ideas include the formation of a ladder league within the club and also a move for Cowbridge to enter the South Wales Squash League.

So why not go along sometime and have a look for yourself? It is certainly one of the better things to have happened to Cowbridge in the past few years!

Philip Edge.

## COMING EVENTS

June 4 : Jubilee Song Contest  
June 6 : Bonfire and Fireworks  
June 7 : Street Parties.

\*\*\*\*\*Please send us details of  
Community events for free inserts  
in a Community Diary \*\*\*\*\*

Meet ....

David and Vicky  
of the

## Cowbridge

## Record Centre

40 High Street, Cowbridge

We stock records,  
cassettes, 8 track,  
stylus replacements,  
blank tapes,  
cleaning equipment  
and audio accessories.

10% discount  
given to clubs, Discos  
and on bulk purchases.

\*\*\*\*\*COMPETITION\*\*\*\*\*

Design us a poster we can use  
to advertise the existence of  
Intercom.

Any colour - any size  
Prizes for three age groups  
A. Children up to the age of 11  
B. Children from 11 to 16  
C. Persons over 16.

Entries to David Cox, Cowbridge School,  
Aberthin Road, by May 30, please.

## INTERCOM

Editors: J. Homewood, J. Alden  
Sub-Editor and Advertising: David Cox  
Reporters: Lis Donne, Philip Edge,  
Roger Harrison, Jenny Lycett,  
Martin Pascoe, Rhiamon Sanders,  
Simon Snowball.  
Correspondence to David Cox,  
Cowbridge School, Aberthin Road,  
Cowbridge