

THE GUILDHALL AND TOWN CROSS

Funeral processions from Holy Cross Church, and mayoral processions from the Town Hall to Holy Cross, make a marked swing around the junction of Church Street and High Street. Now, if you look carefully at the road surface here, you will notice a brass plaque which states 'site of former town cross'. This was where the cross and guildhall stood until 1830. Old pictures show the guildhall standing in the middle of the High Street (between 'Headquarters' and the 'Duke of Wellington') with just enough space for a horse and cart on each side. This site was of course the centre of the walled town of Cowbridge; the cross was probably a preaching cross for the itinerant friars who did not always get on well with the monks inside the church. By the sixteenth century a market for animals and farm produce was held here every Tuesday and Saturday - and this too continued until 1830.

The Guildhall was at first floor level, rather like today's Town Hall; it was entered by an exterior flight of steps at the west end. There were shops underneath, although one of these was converted into a prison or lock-up in 1787. The Hall was used for the borough courts, and for more important ones like the Quarter Sessions and the Great Sessions (Assizes), because in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Cowbridge was second only to Cardiff among the towns of Glamorgan.

John Wesley, in 1743, tried to preach in front of the Guildhall, but was shouted down. 'The sons of Belial gathered themselves together, headed by one or two wretches called gentlemen, and continued shouting, cursing, blaspheming and throwing showers of stones, almost without intermission'. (It was not long, however, before Wesley addressed - successfully - a meeting in the building where Roy Edwards' shop is today).

Records exist of the Guildhall being repaired prior to the Great Sessions in 1775. The man responsible for the building was the 'Hallkeeper and keeper of the Town Clock' who received £1 per annum - but the salary of the new keeper in 1798 was raised to £2 per annum! The dirty condition of the streets must have made it necessary to paint the building frequently; for instance, the hall was whitewashed and yellow ochred in 1805, and again ochred in 1806 and 1811. However, as traffic increased along the road in the early nineteenth century, the Guildhall proved more and more of an obstacle; there couldn't have been much room for coaches to pass between the Guildhall and surrounding houses. In 1823 the Rev. John Montgomery Treharne proposed that a new town hall be built; in 1830 the new building - on the site of the former House of Correction - was opened, and Isaiah Verity (whose name is now preserved in Verity's Court) received the freedom of the borough in 1831 for his work. The removal of the Guildhall and Cross (and the accompanying market) made movement through the town much easier for stage coaches, though by 1850 their importance had also dwindled.

SPRING

In Spring the days get longer and the nights get shorter. In the shops there are fresh Spring flowers, like daffodils and tulips. The shopkeepers are cleaning their shops because of the dirt and smoke. The animals come out from hibernation and their breathing gets gradually faster. Hares and rabbits are playing merrily across the meadows.

Kevin Wilkins (8)

2nd. CAMBRIDGE GUIDE COMPANY

The next session begins on Friday, April 14th. We are glad to say that a number of parents of the Guides have offered to prop up the Guide leader for another term, but as most parents like an occasional break from their own children we are still appealing for helpers of a more detached nature. Thank you again for your support of the Easter Fayre. The amount raised was £60. 39¹/₂p

On Palm Sunday we went to the Lutheran Church in Cardiff. A dozen of the older children went with four adults. The first thing that struck me was the simplicity of the Church - plain white walls and the font and pulpit were made of concrete. Hanging on the wall was a patchwork with symbols which we associate with the Passion. The service lasted for an hour and a half. It was a Communion Service which we followed from a book which had all the music written in so we weren't too lost. There was a lot of standing up and sitting down. When we reached the sermon in the book we stood up and for a moment I thought we had to stand for the whole sermon - but it was just a prayer before. The Pastor preached a good sermon saying that Christmas should be as enthusiastic as a Welsh Rugby supporter. He was enthusiastic, and we were in the front row! Everybody was given a Bible and a Hymn Book with tunes, and were expected to follow the readings. They joined in the singing with great verve.

Elizabeth Humphrey

SPORT

Due to Wales winning the 'Grand Slam'.....I have decided to start a soccer team with a view to cultivating talent (soccer) in the Church and in the future joining a league in our area. (Perhaps you would like to meet the Editor in a dark alley one "ark right!!!!!!") Anybody interested in helping eg. finding a training venue and obtaining equipment, please could you contact me, Timothy Davies, on any Sunday morning in Church (thus if you want to supply physical or advisory help

Public Houses
Cowbridge

The Edmunds
The Eastgate
Horse and Groom
Master Brewer
The Duke of Wellington
The Bear
Ye Old Masons Arms
Vale of Glamorgan Inn

Hotels and Motels
Cowbridge

The Bear
Llansannor
The City Inn Motel

Restaurants (Licensed)
Cowbridge

The Bear : Lunch 12.30 - 1.45
Evening Meal 7.30 - 9.45
Farthings, The Wine House
Light Meals 10am - 3pm
Evenings 7pm - 11pm
Guy's : Lunch 11.30 - 3pm
Evenings 7.30 - 12mid
The Southgate 8.30 - 5.30
Light Meals
Yiet Ming Chinese Take Away 12.00 - 2.00
5.00 - 12 mi

The Bear

Cowbridge, being the centre of the Vale of Glamorgan, was often used as a stopping point to and from the West.

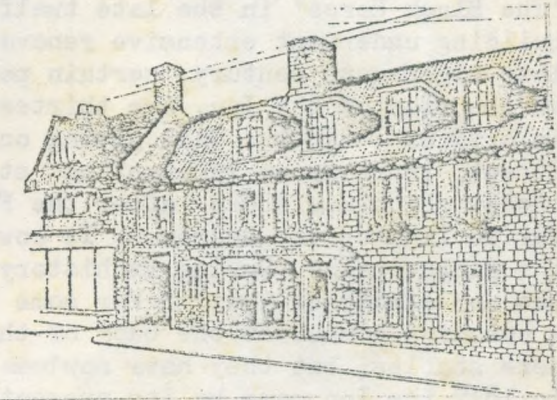
The Bear Inn, one of twenty in the borough, is one of nine inns that has survived to the present day. Certain parts of the building go back to the 1400's, including the ground floor wall and an original 15th century doorway in one of the bars. The frontage was added in the late 16th century and the place where the existing frontage was joined can still be seen.

Inside the building, there is one bar which has timberwork displaying 17th century cottage craftsmanship. The cellar has walls 6 ft. thick with a few narrow window places slotted in. At one end of the cellar there is an apse and another apse is directly above it in the Ballroom. The apse in the Ballroom is of the Georgian era and was supposedly used as a musicians' gallery until 1890.

The Bear was used by four coaching lines as a stopping place and was the 'Coaching Inn' for Cowbridge. During the coaching era there was great rivalry between coaching lines and the inns they used. One landlord of the Bear, Christopher Bradley by name, left the Inn to start up his own coaching line from his private residence. From here he advertised his amenities to great effect, so the new Bear Inn landlord increased his efforts and a veritable battle ensued.

It has been suggested that the Bear once belonged to the Dunraven Estate, but this cannot be verified as the deeds only go back 100 years.

The Inn is now visited by many people who are attracted by the character of the building.



Ye Old Masons Arms

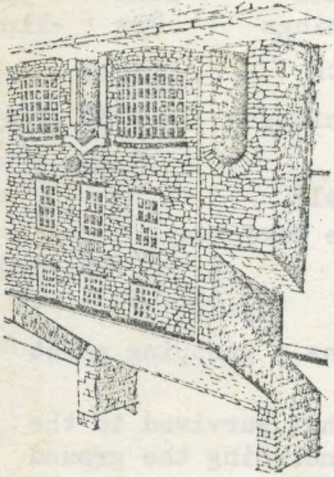
"Ye Old Masons Arms", more commonly known as 'The Masons' was built on to the inside of the town hall, adjacent to the West gate. Although it has been changed greatly the structure is mainly medieval. While one wall was being pointed, a Norman window was discovered and it was thought that the building had some time been used for religious purposes. A Priory or Monastery is said to have been somewhere in Cowbridge but the absence of up-to-date records make it impossible to verify the explanation that The Masons was the site.

More recently on Fair days the Inn proved very popular with harpists who used to visit and play in the 'Gallery' or the 'Long Room'. Today three posts can be seen outside the Inn which were placed there by an owner of the Inn who had to fight a court case against the Corporation who wanted them removed.



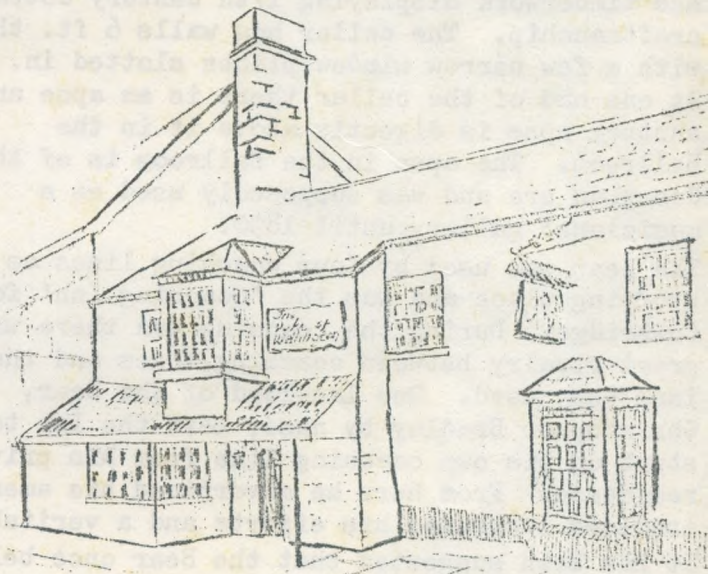
RESTAURANTS

PHOTELS



The Duke of Wellington

The Inn now known as the Duke of Wellington was established, allegedly, under the name of 'The Black Horse' in the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century. Although the building underwent extensive renovation in the late eighteenth century, certain parts, mainly in the rear of the Inn, are thirteenth century in origin. In the wall giving on to Church Street, there is an interesting stained-glass window which was added after the First World War to lighten the bedrooms. It now illuminates the dining-hall. During its history 'The Duke' was not always an inn. For some time it was a coaching house. At the back of the Inn there were stables, but they have now been demolished. In 1817 the Inn came by its present name.



Tradition has it that the Duke of Wellington arrived hurriedly through one of the windows without having made the necessary preliminary arrangements to dismount. A more credible version of the tale is offered by a former licensee, Mr. Pratt. He stated that the Duke, on his way to visit the widow of one of his generals, General Picton, changed horses and was probably offered hospitality. It is suggested that he was in need of hospitality as the radical townsfolk had pelted the hero of Waterloo with rotten fruit.

On entering 'The Duke' with its low ceilings, narrow passages and old-world atmosphere, it is easy to believe the stories and legends associated with it. 'The Duke' preserves the old fire-places, beams, brasses and oak in an appropriate setting. It is almost possible to see the gamblers of the Golden Mile who once patronised the hostelry.

Among its assets 'The Duke' can lay claim to a ghost, a phantom lady in grey, who does not appear to have made a recent appearance.