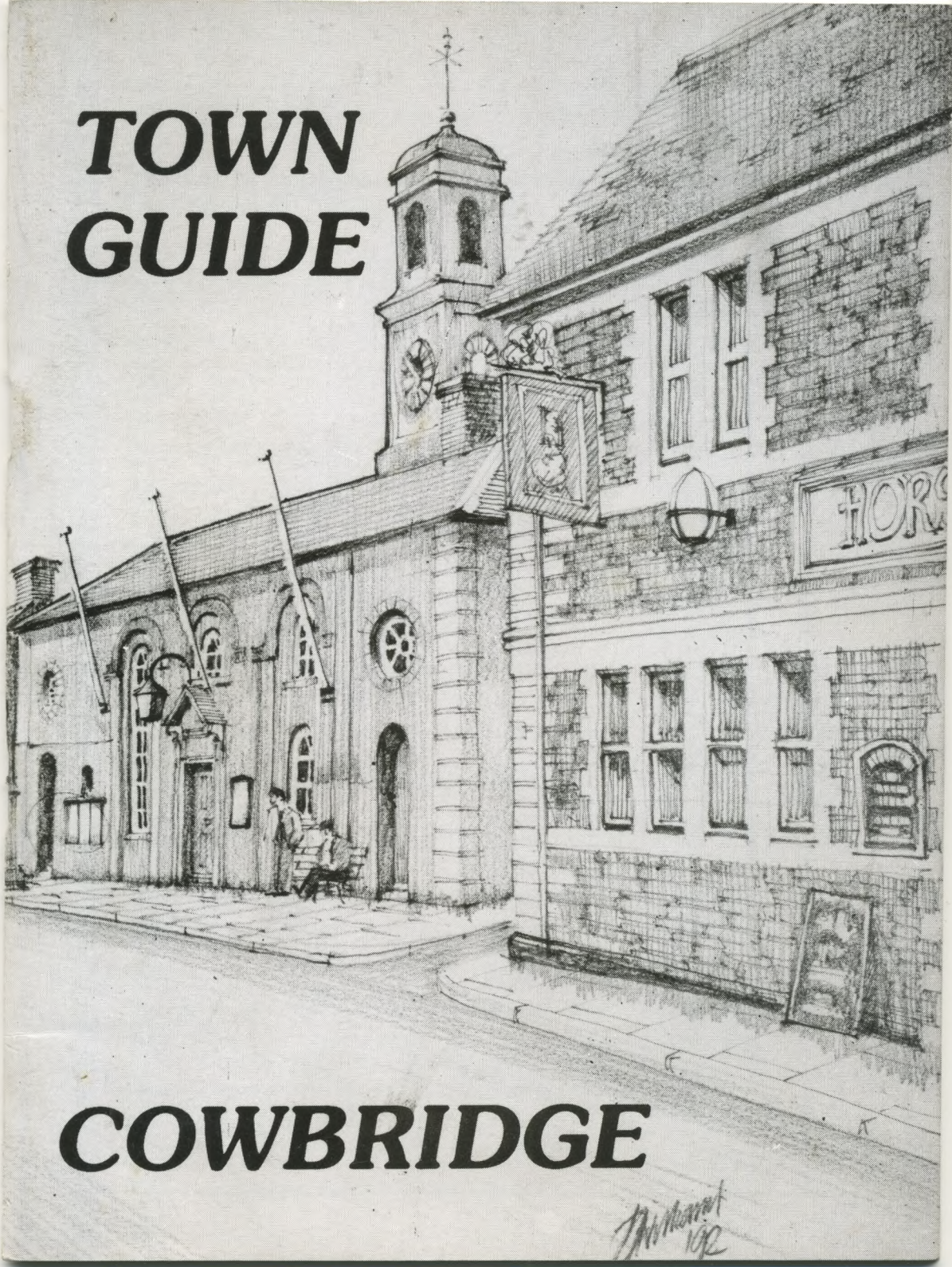


TOWN GUIDE



COWBRIDGE

The Artist
1912

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Welcome to Cowbridge

Visitors to Cowbridge (in Welsh "Y Bontfaen") are always made welcome by its proud townsfolk who have striven over the years to make sure that while moving with the times the town retains its historical roots. Residents of neighbouring towns and cities frequent Cowbridge's busy shops while holiday-makers find it a delightful contrast to some of the more commercialised resorts on offer. This small market town is linked with the adjoining villages of Llanblethian and Aberthin to form a community of about 4,400 inhabitants. It is located in the west of the county of South Glamorgan, 13 miles west of Cardiff and six miles east of Bridgend. The town has easy access to the M4 and Cardiff-Wales airport as well as being very near several beaches at Barry, Llantwit Major and the Heritage Coast.

The town is administered by the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council, but has its own Town Council perpetuating a local government tradition extending over the centuries.

Message from the Mayor

I am delighted to have the opportunity to invite you to the market town of Cowbridge and the adjoining villages of Aberthin and Llanblethian. This guide will not only help you find your way, but could also lead you to some of our lesser known treasures and attractions.

As well as excellent shopping facilities there are plenty of restaurants and public houses to choose from to make the visitor welcome. We also look forward to receiving friends from our twin town of Clisson, in Western France.

I do hope you will enjoy your visit and that you will want to return.

Cllr. Jane Hydon.

The GEM would like to acknowledge the following for their invaluable help in the production of this Town Guide:

*Cowbridge Town Council
Cowbridge Chamber of Trade*

*Cowbridge Librarian - Mr Geraint Bowen & his Staff
Vale of Glamorgan Planning Dept.*

Although every effort has been made to ensure that all information contained in this guide is correct, the publishers cannot take any responsibility for any errors or omissions made. No material may be reproduced in whole or part without written permission of the publishers.

Special thanks to:
D Brown & Sons, Cowbridge & Bridgend
John Richards - *Author of the Cowbridge Story for their permission to reproduce many photographs, illustrations and pieces of text.*

David Williams-Hughes, Williams Graphic - *for the cover illustration*

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GLEN TORJUSSEN

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The History of Cowbridge

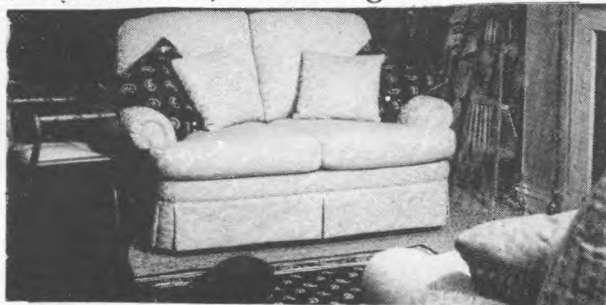
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|---|---|--|--|
| 1600 - 500 B.C. | walls. | ished. | 1862 |
| Bronze age settlement in Cowbridge area. | 1307 - 1314 | 1768 - 1775 | Police station built. |
| Dagger and skeleton found in grounds of High School : standing stone in garden of Rhoscelyn, Eastgate. | Beginning of St Quentin's Castle. Completion not confirmed, but may have been finished by 1375. | East gate demolished. | 1865 |
| 500 B.C. - 400 A.D. | Late 13th century to 15th Century | 1805 (and 1862) | Cowbridge to Llantrisant Railway opened. |
| Possible Iron age and later occupation of Llanblethian Hill Fort; also smaller hill fort at Llanquian Wood. | Building of Church of the Holy Cross, Cowbridge. (Nave and chancel, 13th Century; Tower, early 14th Century). | South Gate repaired. | 1828 |
| 50 - 350 A.D. | 1608 | 1828 | 1892 |
| Roman settlement - possible on site of Cowbridge High Street, from the river to Old Hall. | Cowbridge grammar School founded. | Date of Ramoth Chapel | Railway extended to Aberthaw. |
| 400 - 1250 | Charter of incorporation granted by Charles II - final recognition of the Town's status. | 1830 | 1896 |
| The Dark Ages - no evidence of settlement at Cowbridge. | 1681 | The House of Correction enlarged to become the present Town Hall. | Cowbridge High School for Girls opened. |
| 1254 | 1749 | 1835 | 1930 |
| Cowbridge founded as a Borough by Richard de Clare | First Methodist Chapel in the Vale built at Aberthin. | The first Bank in Cowbridge opened; then a branch of the national Provincial Bank, now National Westminster. | Cowbridge - Aberthaw Railway closed. |
| 1300 | 1753 | 1847 - 1852 | 1951 |
| Building of Town | West Gate demol- | Cowbridge Grammar School Buildings constructed. | Cowbridge Llantrisant line closed 30th November, 1951. |
| | | 1850 | 1965 |
| | | Cardiff-Swansea railway opened (by-passing Cowbridge). | By-pass opened. |
| | | | 1970s |
| | | | Library opened. |
| | | | Health Centre opened |
| | | | Opening of Old Hall |
| | | | Cowbridge Squash Club opened. |



The old course of the River Thaw after the bridge was widened in 1911

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Blooming Cowbridge!

The Rotary Clubs of Cowbridge and the Cowbridge Chamber of Trade both felt that this attractive town with its historic buildings would be enhanced by encouraging floral displays by residents and business people.

Great minds think alike - and this was the beginnings of Cowbridge in Bloom.

Where this has been carried out in other towns it has been found to be of considerable benefit to trade, by attracting an increased number of visitors.

The Cowbridge in Bloom Committee, formed with support and representation from the founding organisations, local business people and residents, had its inaugural meeting early in 1991.

The Committee sees its role as encouraging business owners and residents in the town to have window

Penny Lane, as well as the Old Pumps in the town. The Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council have made

public places, and the Gardening Club has taken a lead by planting at the "White Well" on the North side of Westgate.

It is planned to have all year round planting and to extend gradually to have more displays in the main street possibly with hanging baskets on lamp-posts etc. The Committee's aim this year is to improve on 1991, and it is especially fitting in this year of the National Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale - beyond this a future goal is to enter Wales in Bloom. The Committee members are happy to give any advice but the ultimate success of Cowbridge in Bloom is in the hands of individuals.

Cobwyn Treharne Jones



boxes, hanging baskets, etc. on their premises, and the Committee would be responsible for displays in public areas.

1991 saw a spectacular start, with a display of large containers along the River Thaw at

an important contribution with flower beds at the entrance to Druid's Green and near the main Town car park behind the Town Hall local societies are being encouraged to help with their own displays in

From Cowbridge to Clisson

Cowbridge District Town Twinning Association was formed in 1988 and three years later formally twinned with the french town of Clisson in the Loire Atlantique.

Clisson is a lovely, historic town situated on the confluence of the Sèvre and Moine 28k S.E. of Nantes on the Poitiers Road in the Muscadet region of France.

Many exchanges have now taken place between groups as diverse as the Arts Society, the rugby club, local schools, youth clubs and Cowbridge male voice and strong twinning links have been formed.

Further information can be obtained from Diane Kennard on 0656 658427.



THE OLD HALL

Shewing Chains protecting frontage

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Community

The Old Hall Community College was opened in September 1975 to provide additional facilities in the Cowbridge area for adult education and community groups.

The College, part of which was originally built in the 16th Century, is now a grade 2 listed building of architectural and historical interest. The building was originally occupied by the Edmondes family who were prominent locally particularly in connection with the church

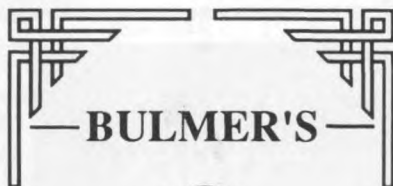
Dr. Benjamin Malkin (1776 - 1842) a traveller and social reformer also lived here (see parish church of the Holy Cross, Main Street). From 1932 - 1964, Old Hall housed part of the former Cowbridge Grammar School but the building fell into disrepair and was unused for a number of years.

Glamorgan County Council repaired and re-designed the building, intending to re-open Old Hall as offices.

After Local Government re-organisation however, the County of South Glamorgan, on the advice of the Education Committee, decided that the building would be ideal as a centre for cultural, social and educational activities.

With this in mind it was re-modelled as a Community College with offices, refreshment area and a number of general purpose rooms.

Since 1975 the College has become the focal point for many new developments locally in the provision of leisure and recreational classes. Over 2000 students and members annually take part in activities ranging from practical to academic courses leading in many

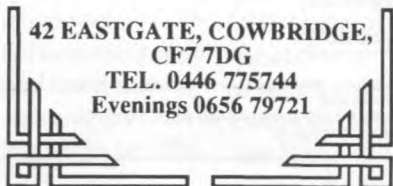


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college for all

instances to higher education. The College staff organise exhibitions in a purpose built area. Local societies/groups, the University Extra Mural Department and examination classes held under the auspices of the Barry College of Further Education are all housed in the building.

The Building

This is originally of 16th century origin. Its front elevation is much overlaid with 19th Century features in a Tudor style including window drip moulds, a porch and N.W. gable. The interior renovated in the late 20th Century. The building has two storeys, porch and N. W. gable faced with stone in snecked courses recessed wings with cement rendering cladding to ground floor and first floor with pebble dash and slate roofs. In the inside

is a 16th Century - 17th Century stopped and chamfered fireplace and is located on the first floor.

There are extensive grounds to the rear of the building, bounded by the original farm walls and the enclosed area also housed the local health centre and town library.

An exhibition programme is promoted and in Old Hall there are two venues:

(a) The Old Hall Gallery - located in the College.

(b) The Cowbridge Library which adjoins the main building.

An Arts Co-ordinating Committee exists to promote the main exhibition programme.

Old Hall is available for hire and full details of all activities can be obtained from the Principal. Telephone Cowbridge 77 3831.

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As early as 1823 plans and estimates of the cost of a new Town Hall had been drawn up by the Rev. John Montgomery Traherne at his own expense.

In 1824 the Court of Common Council passed a firm resolution stating that they would move the Guild Hall, shambles and weigh-house to some other spot as and when the opportunity arose.

The opportunity came in 1829 and was seized immediately. As soon as the prison building was purchased the Town Clerk sent out 200 letters to "the Gentlemen and Ladies of Fortune" of the district requesting subscriptions towards purchasing the House of Correction and building a new Town Hall.

Mr. C R M Talbot, then Member of Parliament for Glamorgan, donated a large sum of money towards the cost of the new building, and was granted

LOCKED UP IN

the Freedom of the Borough in recognition of his generosity.

The new Town Hall was built in 1830 under the direction of Isaiah Verity the elder, who was later made a Freeman of the Borough as a reward for his skill and care in this task.

The old Guild Hall and Cross were removed on the completion of the new building, and Mr. Verity received his freedomship in an oak casket made from the timber of the Guild Hall.

During the construction of the Town Hall, a large portion of the Bridewell was incorporated in the building, in particular the two blocks of cells, the remaining seven of which now form the Cowbridge Museum. The cells were last used for their original

purpose when the County Police Station was situated within the Town Hall building.

The clock and weather

vane surmounted by a cock were brought from the Guild Hall and installed in the new building; the clock how-



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THE TOWN HALL

ever did not take kindly to its new home for it was replaced in 1836.

Dr. Copleston, who was then Bishop of Llandaff, came to reside at Llandough Castle in the autumn of 1835, and very generously presented the Borough with a new clock for the Town Hall.

This together with the cupola was installed in 1836 and an inscription below the clock face records this kindly act.

The Hall itself was fitted out as a Court Room complete with Jury Rooms and until 1848 the Easter Quarter Sessions were held there. One of the reasons for taking the Sessions away from Cowbridge was the lack of prisoner accommodation and even in the days of the Bridewell the addi-

tion of Sessions prisoners led to serious overcrowding.

The Magistrates' Court was held in the Hall until 1882 when it was transferred to the new court room at the County Police Station. In later days some of the adjourned Quarter Sessions were held at the Bear Inn and Eagle Academy; these usually dealt with the business of the county.

The town stocks which had originally been used at the Guild Hall were kept in one of the recesses under the back of the Town Hall. When wanted for use they were wheeled round to the front of the Hall, where the offender was installed to suffer his prescribed length of time at the mercy of the general public.

They were last used in 1852 when Kames Knap was punished for one of his frequent bouts of drunkenness.

In 1895 the Town Hall was restored and enlarged. Cowbridge Fire Brigade which was formed in 1902 had its headquarters in what is now the Lesser Hall, the fire engine being housed in the kitchen and lounge area.

In 1911 the original central heating system was installed.

The Town Hall serves many purposes, it houses the offices and Council Chamber of the Town Council and the Mayors Parlour where a well dating back to the buildings time as a prison was discovered during repairs to the floor in 1972. This was in preparation for a visit

by the Duke of Edinburgh to the town.

There are two function halls and three smaller rooms which serve the town for everything from operatic and drama productions to children's birthday parties.

In the Council Chamber are photographs of past Mayors and Councillors., a list of Mayors, Town Clerks and Freemen of the Borough including Lloyd George.

A replica of the Roman Lion found at Hopyard Meadow and a rare copy of the 1421 Charter are also on display.

When local government reorganisation took place it was decided that the Town Hall would remain in the hands of the people of Cowbridge. Let us hope it will continue to serve the people for generations to come.

Don Jan Ltd.

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A town

THE TOWN

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form the southern western bounds of the grounds.

Riverside Walk and Twt Field

Off Mill Road

Pleasant children's playing area, leading to beautiful riverside park from where footpaths can be followed

to the ancient and at-

tractive villages of Llanblethian.

Further afield

Stalling Down

St Hilary Down

One mile from Town Centre.

Off the A48 at eastern end of Cowbridge By-pass.

An open heathland ideal for children's games and picnics, with sweeping views over the valley.

There is plenty of room for car parking and a cafe.

Beaupre Castle

One and half miles

from town centre, on the St Athan Road.

A Medieval fortified manor house, with an elaborate three storied porch which is one of the earliest examples of Renaissance architecture in Britain.

Partly ruined, this raven haunted castle is full of ancient atmosphere.

The castle is managed by Cadw-Welsh Historic Monuments.

There is limited car parking at lay-by, and access by footpath across the fields.

Where to park

All car parking in the town is free of charge

Main Public car park - rear of Town Hall

Additional parking

Adjoining Masons Arms - High Street

Rear of Old Hall Community College

Adjoining Cattle Market (except Tuesdays and occasional

Fridays - market days)

Toilets

Rear of Town Hall - adjoining Cattle Market (disabled facilities)

The Ancient borough of Cowbridge from the Bronze Age to the 20th Century

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CGI/KB

for tourists

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Six miles from town centre, you will find hundreds of hectares of natural mixed woodland, managed by the Forestry Com-

mission with way marked walks, picnic areas and a tree-surrounded fishing lake in the centre.

Car park (free). One mile from Welsh St Donats.

Dyffryn Gardens
One mile from the A48

at St Nicholas.

Seven miles from town centre.

Hundreds of species of rare and exotic plants in walled gardens, conservatories, hot houses and parkland surrounding the Victorian mansion which is home to the Dyffryn House Conference Centre.

Large car park admission charge.

For further details, contact (0222) 593328.

The Heritage Coast

Approximately seven miles from town centre is an expanse of unspoilt undeveloped coastline east and west of the town of Llantwit Major. Coastal footpaths, uncommercialised beaches, nature trails, historic churches. Many miles of coast and country walking.

For further information contact:


The Heritage Coast Centre, Dunraven Park (0656) 880157



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United Free Church

Westgate

Sunday Services 10.30am Family Worship and Junior Church (Holy Communion - First Sunday) 6.00pm Evening Worship (Holy Communion - Third Sunday). Rev James Hall Cowbridge 774580.

Holy Cross Church in Wales

Church Street

Sunday Services 8.00am The Holy Eucharist, 10.30am Choral Eucharist (Family Service - Third Sunday) 10.30am Sunday School (except Third Sunday) 6.00pm Evensong and Sermon (Choral Eucharist - Third Sunday).

Eucharist on Major Saints Days and Festivals 8.00am and 10.00am. Rev Gwilym Williams. Cowbridge 772302.

Llanblethian Church In Wales

The Mother church of the Holy Cross 9.30am Holy Eucharist Sunday Rev. G. William. (0446) 772302.

St Cadoc's Roman Catholic Church

Town Mill Road

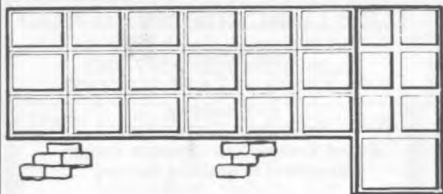
Sunday Services 10.45am. Tuesday 7.30pm Mass, Thursday 10am Mass. Father Dewi Davies, Llantwit Major 792381.

Noah's Place Church Centre

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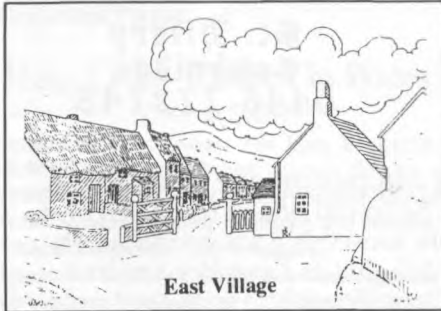
The Bush Inn the definitive Inn and Restaurant

What's in

Cowbridge

Variants of spelling through the ages:-

Cubrigg (1295), Coubrigge (1305), Coubrig,
Coubrigia, Coubrug (1306), Coubrugge (1310),
Coubruge, Coubrugg (1336), Coubrugge,
Cowbrege, Cowbrigge, Cowbrugg,
Cowwebridge, Kowbridge, Kowbrygge.



East Village

The present name is undoubtedly evolved from the Norman name. This probably arose from a "bridge and cow" association of ideas. An early Latin reference gives the name as Pontuobice which may have meant "bridge having two horns (or points)". Possibly the place was named after the shape of an early bridge, which may have had some feature resembling horns. It would not seem likely that the name Cowbridge comes from a Welsh corruption of Pontfaen (Pony y Von).

Carex

Sometimes spelled as Cae Rex, which is a mixture of Welsh and Latin. Carex is Latin meaning Rush and may in this sense be a contraction of Carectum which is "a place abounding in rushes", an ideal description for the place so named.

A 'tut' is a seat or hassock (made of straw).

Perhaps an early meeting place for the Elders using such seats, or a name given to the "tumpy" nature of the field. Sometimes spelled Tutt or Twt

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a name?

(a corruption). Now known as Twt Playpark, (at rear of Birds Garden Centre

Bowman's Well

Not very far from the Butts, possibly an archery association.

Perhaps a corruption of Bomium Well, but rather far away from the former bridge for this to be likely.

Possible site of one of the many wells serving Cowbridge now between the Verlands & Bowmans Well estates.

The Butts

May have been so named through some association with the famous Glamorgan Archers of the Middle Ages, or possibly as the land at the foot of Llanblethian Hill. The Will of Evan Jenkins, of Cowbridge, dated 1643 mentions "two acres of land called the Lesser butte - situate without the West Gate of the said Burrough of Cowbridge".

The Butts was once the site of a large pool, Pwll y Buttes. In 1630 referred to as the Butts.

Broad Shore

Broad Shoorde 1630, Broad Sword 1748 and later Broad Shoard. At the Cricket Field entrance, an old Borough possession. Before the construction and draining of the Cricket Field the land here was continually flooded in winter. Ashore is defined as the land bordering a sea or lake.

The Promenade

Probably named after the processional promenade on Fair Days. Renamed Mill Road when Town Mill became active. Constitution Hill would be named as a natural sequence to the Promenade.

Stumpie (off The Limes)

So named after stumps left in the ground - perhaps tree stumps.

Mentioned in 1748 as - "a free way for a wain and oxen leading from the Limes to Broad Way through the STUMPY fields".

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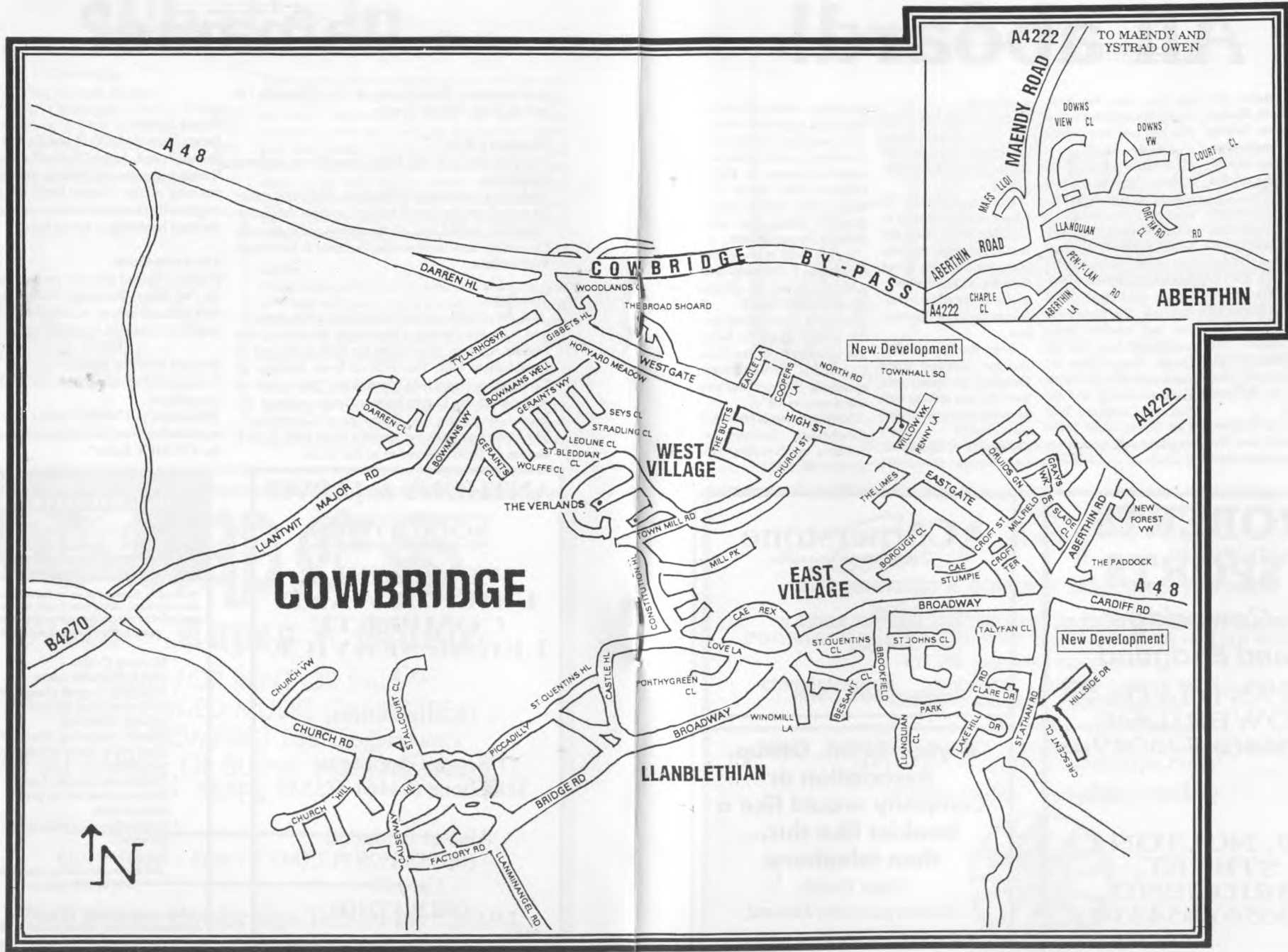
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All aboard!

When the plans for Brunel's South Wales Railway were being discussed, Cowbridge was chosen as one of the towns to be on the main line.

This idea, which was put before the Cowbridge Corporation and local landowners, was rejected out of hand.

Due to the exertions of Doctor Nicholl Carne of "Dimlands", work was commenced on the Cowbridge Railway, linking Llantrisant and Cowbridge, in the year 1862.

The Taff Vale Railway Company took over the line a year or so later when

the first train ran from Pontypridd to Cowbridge. The day was observed as a general holiday.

The construction of the Railway Station in East Village brought about increased residential development in that area. In addition the Commercial Hotel, Railway Inn, Edmondes Arms and New Druids were built about this time, the licence for the last named being transferred from the Old Druids. East Village became built up and became Eastgate Street, and the Railway Company built Taff Street (now called Croft Street) to accommodate railway

employees.

Work was commenced on the Cowbridge-Aberthaw extension of the single line in August 1889.

The single line to Aberthaw was opened in October 1892 when the first Cowbridge Railway Station in Eastgate Street became a goods depot, and was placed by a passenger station on the new line.

When the Vale of Glamorgan Railway from Bridgend to Barry was built the two railway systems did not connect and passengers from Cowbridge to Barry had to change trains at

Aberthaw, walking from the low to the high level station.

The passenger service from Cowbridge to Aberthaw was finally withdrawn in 1930: freight traffic, which consisted of lime and stone from Beaupre quarry, was withdrawn a few years later.

The five miles of track from Cowbridge to Aberthaw was taken up during the salvage drive in World War II.

Owing to poor service and the advent of motor buses the passenger service from Cowbridge to Llantrisant eventually declined and was withdrawn in 1951.

The last passenger train left Cowbridge Station at 9.28pm on Saturday November 30, 1951.

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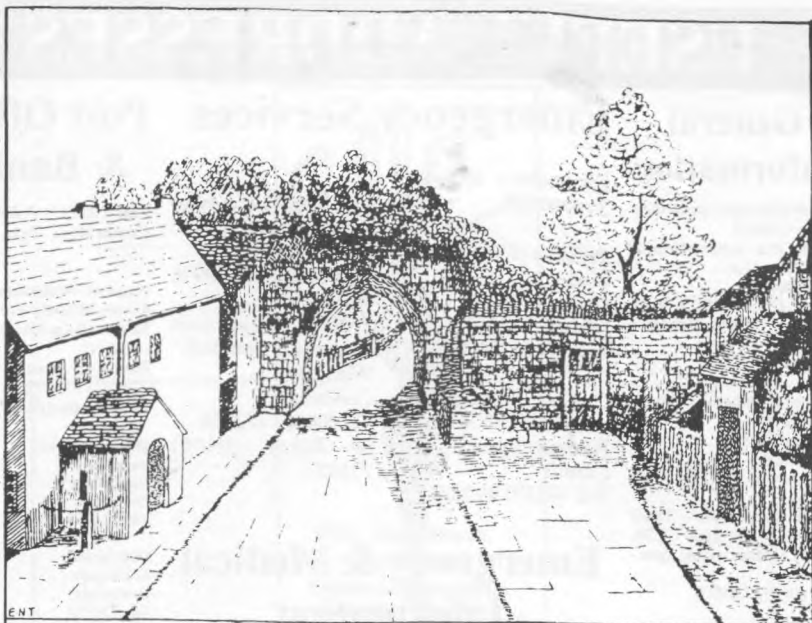
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Town Council
Town Clerk - Annette Dobson
The Town Hall
High Street
Town Clerks office open
9.30am - 1.30pm Monday -
Friday
Tel. (0446) 773385

Vale of Glamorgan Borough
Council
Council Offices
79 Eastgate
Information Officer - Mr
Chick
Office open Mon - Thurs
8.45am - 1pm; 2pm - 4.30;
Friday 8.45am - 1pm; 2pm -
4pm.
Tel. (0446) 772073

County Library
Old Hall Grounds
Librarian - Mr Geraint Bowen
Tel (0446) 773941
Opening Hours Mon Wed
10am - 1pm; 2pm - 6pm
Thurs - Closed
Friday 10am - 1pm; 2pm 7.30
Sat - 10am - 1pm; 2pm - 5pm

Citizens Advice Bureau
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Offices
79A Eastgate
Cowbridge
Tel. (0446) 775411
Open 10am - 1pm Mon - Fri

Youth clubs & children's groups

Cowbridge Youth Centre
The Old Grammar School
Church Street
Tel. (0446) 774460
Mr A Robson

A.T.C.
Mr T Prosser
Vale View
Castle Hill
Tel. (0446) 774881

Urdd Gobaith Cymru
Mrs Sanders
Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg
Tel. (0446) 772358

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pital
Coity Road,
bridgend
Tel. (0656) 662166

Cardiff Royal Infir-
mary
Newport Road
Cardiff
Tel. (0222) 492233

Fire Station & Ambu-
lance Station
Druids Green
Cowbridge call 999 in
emergency
Police Station (not
continually manned)
Westgate
Cowbridge
Tel (0446) 772268
or Barry (0446)
734451

Post Office - Penny Lane,
Cowbridge. Tel. (0446)
772277

National Westminster Bank
(0446) 772249 / 772941
Midland Bank (0446) 772220
/ 773750
Barclays Bank (0446)
772277 / 773872
Lloyds Bank (0446) 773106

Where To Stay
Bear Hotel
High Street
Cowbridge
Tel. 774814

Mrs Clinton
81 Eastgate
Cowbridge
Tel. 772732

Mrs Pierce
77 High Street
Cowbridge
Tel. 773248

Masons Arms
High Street
Cowbridge Tel. 774814

Miss J Taylor
88-90 Broadway
Llanblethian
Cowbridge
Tel 773333 or 775494

Mr and Mrs L Williams
The Amoury
46 Eastgate
Cowbridge
Tel 773229

Travel Information
Bus Services
S.W.T. Enquiries Swansea
(0792) 475511
Bus stops outside Town Hall
Rail Service
Main London Line - Bridgend
Station (0656) 657406/7or
Cardiff General (0222) 28000
Nearest local line - Barry
Station. Tel. 0446 735501
Coach Service
Golden Coaches (0446)
793957
Watts Coaches, Bonvilston
(0446) 781277
Air Services
Cardiff Wales Airport - Rhosee
Tel. (0446) 711211

Emergency & Medical Information

Doctors
Cowbridge Health Cen-
tre open 8.30am - 7pm)
Tel. 772383
Dr A Thomas
Dr R Jones
Dr J Taylor
Dr T Pardoe

Surgery hours 8.45am -
1pm
4pm - 6pm

Dr J Jemmett
Dr T Stuart
Dr W Jones
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772237

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ELECTRICITY

By the year 1925 the South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Company had made available at Pontyclun mains electric power generated at Upper Boat. In 1927 this power line, which was carried on wooden poles, was extended to the Borough of Cowbridge. The supply at 1100 volts was carried to a 100 kilowatt transformer situated in the field at the rear of the Town Hall. The first installations were the street lights, a fire alarm bell in the cupola of the Town Hall (not too effective when the wind blew from certain directions) and 26 private houses in the High Street.

The electric current was first switched on at Cowbridge on December 12, 1927.

DID YOU KNOW? Water supply

The Mid Glamorgan Water Board was formed in 1921 and in 1926 the Borough of Cowbridge received its first piped water supply.

In very early times drinking was carried by the townspeople from Silver Well in the meadow behind the Bear Field and perhaps in dry seasons from Bowman's Well. Later hand-operated pumps were installed within the Borough, the first two were situated opposite the Bear Inn and beside the site of the present Town Hall.

As the Borough expanded one pump was erected at both East and West villages.

The pump at East Village

was erected in 1765 by Phillip Walton and Oliver Richard at a cost of £13.13s0d and was situated on the pavement opposite the site of the Railway Station.

The original pump in West village was situated on the northern side of the road (the stone work may still be seen beside the road) but this was later closed for drinking purposes owing to contamination and a new pump with a concrete well was erected near the site of the County Police Station.

During periods of drought most of the pumps ran dry and the townspeople had to carry their water from the Town Hall pump.

Gas company

The Cowbridge Gas Company was formed in 1850, some of the original directors being John Llewellyn, Pharmaceutical Chemist, Thomas Rees, Lawyer, and Mr Thomas, Auctioneer; the Company Secretary was Mr Parsons, Grocer of High Street. The Gas Works were constructed on the site of Choice's Court at the Limes in 1851, the first manager being John Jenkins from Bodmin. Owing to the fact that it was expensive, gas lighting and cooking were not in general use in private houses for many years. Gas lighting was installed in St Mary's Church in 1853, in the Town Hall and Justices' Court in 1856, and in the streets about 1855.

Owing to the age of plant and lack of consumers, the affairs of the Cowbridge Gas Company were far from healthy even in the 1920s. In 1931 the directors served notice upon the consumers stating that the Gas Works were to be closed.

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WIRELESS

On the November 15, 1922 the original British Broadcasting Company (Corporation in 1927) transmitted the first wireless programme from London, Manchester and Birmingham, this was shortly followed by transmissions from Cardiff.

The first complete wireless set sold in Cowbridge was probably a Fellows one valve set with loud-speaker, sold by Mr Bird at his ironmonger's shop opposite the Town Hall.

Pavilion cinema

The Pavilion Cinema was designed and built by Alderman A T Mills in the year 1924. It was built on the site of the tennis court and Wheelwrights Arms. A fine ballroom was erected on the first floor and this was the scene of many dances and public functions

DID YOU KNOW? Telephone

In the year 1898, E.W. Miles approached the National Telephone Company with a request that the telephone service should be introduced to the town.

He was informed that providing he obtained at least eight subscribers, the company would install telephones at Cowbridge at an annual rental of eight pounds per year for each installation.

He was, unfortunately, only

able to obtain seven prospective subscribers within the town; these included Messrs Rees and Gwyn, and Alderman Edward John. Mr Miles then appealed to Mr Thurston Bassett, who lived at Crossways, to make up the complement.

In spite of the fact that his installation entailed a much higher rental, Mr Bassett affably agreed to make up the numbers, and Cowbridge had its first telephone service installed in that same year.

In 1912 the Charter held by the National Telephone Company expired and the GPO took over all local and trunk telephone services.

Cowbridge telephones were converted to automatic working in January 1930, and the automatic exchange is housed in a small building in the West End of the town.

Sewerage scheme

After grants had been made by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Glamorgan County Council, under the Rural Water and Sewerage Act, work was commenced on February 9, 1953, on a public sewer to serve the borough and part of the rural district of Cowbridge, the contractors for the work being Messrs. Davies Middleton and Davies Ltd.

Thirteen thousand yards of public sewer were laid, with a pumping station at Llanblethian and biological filtration plant near the Lake Farm. The system which is on the rising main principle came into use in the latter half of 1955.

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BANKS

The first bank was opened at Cowbridge in the year 1835; prior to that date the drovers or cattle dealers conducted the financial transactions with the outside world for the local inhabitants. Cattle and other animals were handed to the drover on trust and commissions were discharged from the proceeds of the sale of the animals at the markets in England.

In early times money was rarely carried in cash because of the danger of encountering robbers while on the road. The National Provincial Bank of England was founded in London in 1833, for the purpose of extending banking in the provinces.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first branch in Wales was opened in 1834 at Brecon and the second at Cowbridge in the year 1835 on the site of what is now Barclays Bank.

For a short period it occupied the premises of the present Midland Bank but of the 1861 census it was firmly established in its present position, now known as the National Westminster Bank.

About 1872 the London and Provincial Bank opened a branch at Cowbridge, this was later taken over by Barclays Bank Ltd.

A little later the National Bank opened a branch, with Mr Robert Thomas as manager, on the site

now occupied by Chamberlains furniture shop. Six months later this office was transferred to Oakley House next to the old Post Office.

There the Bank was acquired by the Metropolitan Bank of England and Wales in 1893 and later taken over by the London Joint City and Midland Bank.

In 1923 the title was shortened to Midland Bank and a few years later new premises were erected on the site of the old Post Office next to the Bear Hotel.



ORATORS

Christopher Norton was appointed Town Crier in the year 1857, and being a tailor by trade, he was given cloth with which to make a uniform suit. Unfortunately his failing eyesight prevented him from making the clothes properly and the Corporation was compelled to hire another tailor to make the suit for him.

Traffic lights

The traffic lights, operated by vehicles passing over rubber pads set in the roadway, were installed at Cowbridge by the Glamorgan County Council in the year 1932. At that time they were one of the first set of lights operated by the traffic in this part of the country.

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| | 1.30 - 4.00 | BARRY Sports Centre Calcot Road | |
| <hr/> | | | |
|  | 10.00 - 12.30 | BRIDGEND Leisure Centre | PORT TALBOT Shoppers Car Park |
| | 1.30 - 4.00 | COWBRIDGE Leisure Centre | |

For further information contact either our

Cardiff centre -
Tel. (0222) 488235

or our Swansea Centre -
Tel. (0792) 873558



Cowbridge's greatest son, Edward Williams of Flemingston, is better known by his bardic name Iolo Morganwg.

While being best-remembered as the most learned Welshman of his day, his self-taught academic excellence was coloured by his romantic and undisciplined imagination.

Born in 1747, Iolo was the originator of the Gorsedd of the Bards which he managed to introduce at an Eisteddfod held at Carmarthen in 1819. In doing so, he established an entirely fake theory that the Welsh bardic order had originated in the ancient order of Celtic druids.

As a great scholarly figure, admired for his honest loyalty to and vast knowledge of Welsh literature and toasted by the poets and writers of his day, his theories were accepted unquestioningly - even his claim to be the only living inheritor of the mysteries of the bards and the only surviving druid were believed and it was not until much later, in 1916, when his roguish ingenuity came to light.

The Bard of

He is certainly the strangest and most eccentric man to have brought fame to the Vale of Glamorgan.

Accounts of his life written shortly after his death proved that all his wild theories on 'druidism' and his invented alphabet and interpretation of Welsh literature were treated with great respect and bedevilled the study of Welsh history and literature for more than a century after his death.

It was the late Professor G. J. Williams who finally exposed the true character of Iolo when he launched a major study of the Bard's numerous notebooks and documents deposited in the National Library Of Wales. Evidence of forgery and outrageous fiction was discovered which cast doubt on previous books written about the Bard's life and works.

He was born at Pennon, just outside Llancarfan, the first son of the local stonemason, Edward Williams. He later claimed that, not having the advantage of a formal education, he was first introduced to the written word by watching his father at



Cowbridge Community College-Old Hall

Old Hall, Cowbridge is primarily an adult education centre but a large number of Community groups are based at the college, including Art/Craft Guilds, societies and clubs. The college has been in existence since 1975 and is based in an old private residence fronting the High Street with parking to the rear. It is modernised to a high standard. Last year including all classes, extra mural groups, societies and users in excess of 2000 students were members of the College, which is available for use for 48 weeks of the year.

An exhibition programme is promoted, and in Old Hall there are two venues

- (a) The Old Hall Gallery, located in the college
- (b) The Old Hall Library which adjoins the main building

An art co-ordinating Committee exists to promote the main exhibition programme. Old Hall is available for hire and full details of the programme of activities can be obtained from:

Keith James - Principal - Tel:(0446) 773831

CCG/CS

Y Bont Faen

work on the tombstones.

His mother was his only source of schooling and she took great pride in teaching her favourite son to read from her small, but much cherished collection of English books. He soon developed a fascination for Glamorgan heritage and became engrossed in studying its history, dialect, poetry, culture and folklore.

Of his vast body of work, very little was published until after his death, although his great knowledge was demonstrated in periodicals of the day and several collections of his poems were published during his life.

It was very disappointing for local people, especially authors who had been tricked by Iolo's wit, to accept the reality of his deception: Elijah Waring faithfully documented Iolo's achievements in a biography in 1850 and the last scholar to support the Bard was probably the Rev Dr Hopkin-James of Cowbridge. Even up to the present time

some of Iolo's perverted sense of history crops up in modern works.

He must have been a fascinating man to know: he was addicted to the drug which kept his asthma at bay and he was well-known in the county as a poet who could turn his literary skills to attack his enemies. He was a master story teller and loved spicing up tales of his experiences.

He tried to follow in the footsteps of Robert Burns, the darling of the salons of Edinburgh, by moving to London to live the life of a literary figure.

Having failed to make much of an impression in the big city and having experienced life on the wrong side of the wall at Cardiff gaol for being unable to pay his bills, Iolo set up a bookshop, believed to be where Bird's shop now stands, where he sold groceries alongside books and stationery. His contribution to the commercial life of Cowbridge is commemorated by a plaque erected in 1926 at the shop on the centenary of his death.

It is perhaps ironic that the remains of the great Cowbridge Bard, son of a stonemason, should remain buried in an unmarked grave.

Sarah Hoss

CORNUCOPIA



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CGJ/MCB

THE CORPORATION GOES TO COURT

In October of 1894 the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Cowbridge brought an action against Mr Lewis Jenkins, an Alderman of the Corporation, to recover damages for trespass.

The case was tried by Judge Gwilym Williams at Bridgend County Court. The action was brought to decide the ownership of a small piece of land that formed a part of the pavement outside the house of which the defendant was the owner, the Masons' Arms Inn.

Mr Jenkins had erected three iron posts upon

the pavement in front of the inn, and these were the posts of which the Corporation complained.

The Corporation claimed that, in putting the posts there, Alderman Jenkins had committed a trespass on property of which they were the owners.

One of the lawyers conducting the case described the site as being opposite the Eagle Stores which had formerly been the place of education of many distinguished men, to which the Judge replied that he did not claim distinction but that he had in fact been educated

there in early life.

The Corporation stated that since 1873 they had collected tolls for stalls on market and fair days for this site, and also that sheep pens and stalls on the pavement in question. Unfortunately the Corporation were unable to produce any evidence of having collected the tolls or

shilling per year rent within living memory, and the Judge was unable to pass judgement in their favour. In fact the Judge advised the Borough Corporation to 'wake up' and to revise their method of looking after Borough property. The three iron posts in question may be seen outside the inn today.



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The walk starts from the Town Hall car park outside the old South Wall of the town. Features numbered on the map are picked out in **BOLD** type in the text, whilst route directions are underlined.

Proceed into Old Hall Gardens, access to which is available, except at night, through a modern gate in the walls. The area was formerly the grounds of **OLD HALL** (1). Old Hall is of 16th century origin, it became the home of prominent lawyers, the Edmondes, whose motto "Vincit Veritas" (Truth Conquers) is displayed over its front entrance on High Street. It was reconstructed in 1974 as a Community College and the stables converted to flats. The rear wall to the garden has been retained.

Turn to the right, on entering High Street and, at No. 58, is **CAECADY HOUSE** (2) the early 19th Century town house of the squires of Caercady, Welsh St Donats. Note the doric porch on this Grade II listed Building. The door plate reveals Caercady, was for over 50 years, the home and surgery of the famous local doctor, Charles Meller. Cross over High Street to THE BEAR HOTEL (3) which is of medieval origin, in its central frontage and rear connecting building, and has been extended in a piecemeal fashion over subsequent centuries.

Proceed towards Westgate until reaching **COOPERS YARD** (4) Archaeological excavations here in 1977 proved conclusive evidence of a relatively extensive Roman settlement. They revealed a series of shops and homes from both medieval and Roman times. The Yard was built around 1800 and was known as Malthouse Lane, the site of the first brewery in Cowbridge (c. 1830). Previously inns had made their own beer from malt supplied locally. Further west at 83 High Street is **WOODSTOCK** (5) This was the 18th Century Town House of the Wyndhams of Dunraven. It is a Grade II Listed Building with three storeys that have been converted into flats.

At the junction of High Street and Eagle Lane, in the middle of High Street, was the

THE WALK

SITE OF THE WEST GATE (6). It was demolished in 1753 by the owner of Old Hall as it was an impediment to the growing volume of trade and traffic.

On the south side of High Street is **YE OLDE MASON'S ARMS** (7). Its main wing comprises a hall house, dating from Circa 1400 abutting the town wall which has been combined into its foundations.

Across the lane **THE EAGLE** (8) is another Grade II Listed Building of 16th Century origin, with a rear hall added along the lane by 1720 which became the town's ballroom and assembly room. It was probably used by John Wesley twice in 1758. By 1805 it had ceased to be the fashionable Spread Eagle Inn but was the renowned private Eagle Academy catering for children of artisans and farmers.

Turn right into the Lane, and proceed along the line of the Town Wall to **BEARLANE** (9) Eagle Lane and Bear Lane (North Road) follow the line of the open town ditch, once the moat around the medieval walls, which was filled in 1853 following a typhoid outbreak and replaced with a covered drain.

Excavations here have revealed evidence of Roman settlement and industry. Off these lanes in the past workmen toiled in the numerous courts and alleyways at a wide range of rural crafts. The Cowbridge Athletic Club's field, below the by-pass, has been the home of cricket in the town since 1895. Travel along Bear Lane to the Bear Hotel, at the side of which was located **THE SITE OF THE NORTH GATE** (10), the town's smallest gate giving "footway" access to the meadows.

Further along Bear Lane, the pattern of the medieval **BURGLAGE PLOTS** (11), or building units, is still visible.

The car park area of the agricultural stores, to the north of the lane, was excavated prior to development and revealed extensive reminders of **ROMAN COWBRIDGE** (12). Finds included a 13 room

building which may have been a community bath-house. Roman finds in Bear Field suggest the main Roman settlement may have been aligned along this area above the river's course.

At the end of the lane turn right and proceed to the front of the TOWN HALL (13) The cells and facade of the County Prison (closed 1829) were incorporated by Isaiah Verity, into a new Town Hall, built in 1830 to replace the Guildhall in High Street. It was restored and enlarged in 1895 and renovated in 1974. Note the inscribed clock and the cupola which were presented in 1836 by the Bishop of Llandaff. The cells of the old prison now house the town's history museum. It is a Grade II Listed Building. Immediately to the east of the Town Hall, on High Street was **THE SITE OF THE EASTGATE** (14). This gate lasted in some form until 1786 - 1775 when it was removed or finally crumbled.

Travel east on High Street to the River Thaw whose present course was created in 1954 alongside Old Mason Yard, now known as Penny Lane. **THE RIVER'S OLD COURSE** (15) is marked by a bridge erected in 1911 when the main road was widened. Cowbridge has used the river for brewing, baptism and also as a bathing pool, opened in 1911 at a site just north of the present by-pass. Turn back and retrace your steps to the west side of the Town Hall where other memories of the old town still remain in the public **WATER PUMP** (16). **THE MOUNTING BLOCK** (17) outside 27, High Street was used in the 18th Century to climb onto one's horse. This building was formerly the White Lion Inn.

Take the pedestrian crossing at the Town Hall to the south side of High Street. Number 14 is the site of the recently demolished **HOME OF IOLO MORGANNWG 1747-1826** (18) to whose memory the wall plaque was erected by the local division of the National Union of Welsh Societies. He was a

poet, manuscript collector, bookseller, and as the most learned Welshman of his day, the leader of a thriving literary circle in the town. The first printing press in Glamorgan had been established in Cowbridge in 1770.

Further west, at numbers 32-34 is **GREAT HOUSE** (19) a Grade II Listed Building of mid 16th Century origins with 18th Century extensions to the rear. It was the town house of the Carnes of Nash Manor having similar external features to St. Fagans Castle in its mullioned windows and conjoined gables and parapet. In the 1920's it became Franklen House, an additional boarding house of the grammar school, a gift of Sir Thomas Franklen.

Proceed along High Street to its junction with Church Street and the **SITE OF THE GUILDHALL AND TOWN CROSS** (20). They stood in the middle of the High Street and were removed, following the construction of the present Town Hall (1830), to improve communications.

THE DUKE OF WELINGTON (21) has a frontage which dates from early 16th Century with later extensions along Church Street and is probably one of the oldest inn sites in Cowbridge. It was probably renamed on his death in 1852. To journey down Church Street, is to travel through a group of protected buildings. The two stone rubble **16TH CENTURY COTTAGES** (22) opposite the inn were originally a two unit house and have fine dressed stone archways. An alms-house row was once located to their south side.

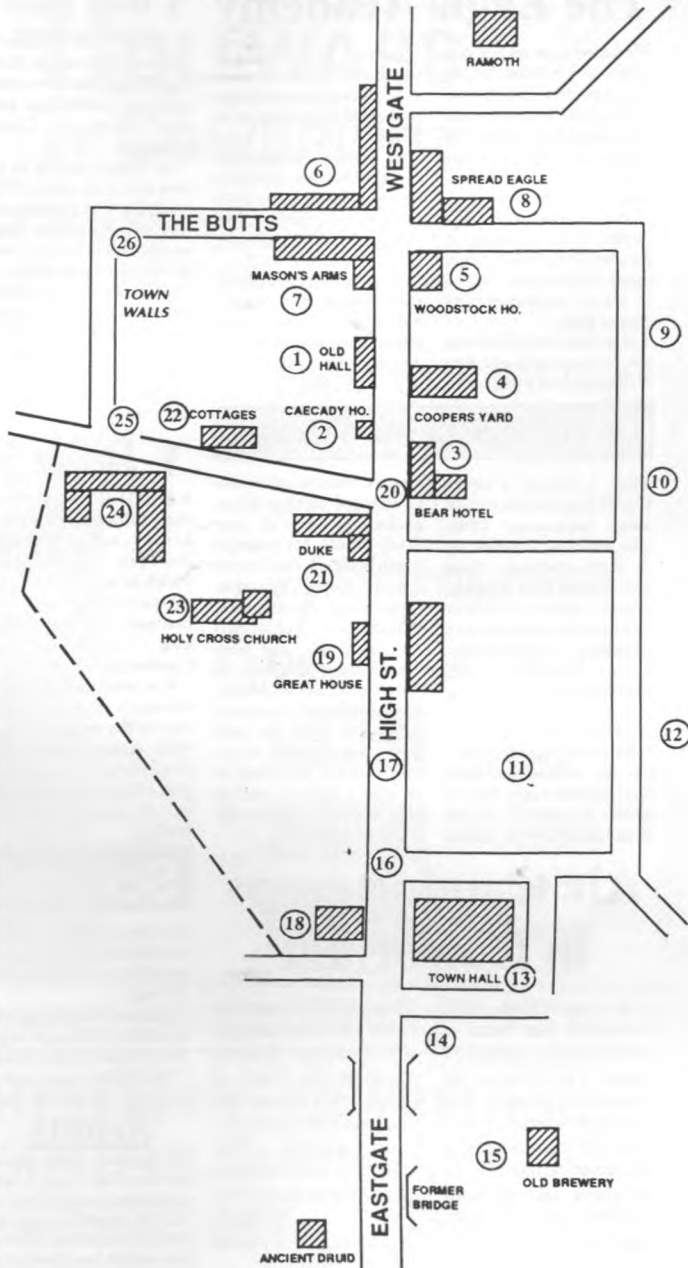
HOLY CROSS CHURCH (23), a Grade II Listed Building, reflects in its erection and extensions the growing wealth of the Borough. The nave and chancel date from the late 13th Century, but the cruciform plan was never completed. The north and south transepts were never built, nor the intended spire on the tower was remodelled and a semi-circular stair turret and buttress were added at a later date. Restoration work to the Church was undertaken by the architect, John Pritchard between 1848 and 1853, and, in 1926 the

interior nave's roof was replaced. Numerous local dignitaries are buried in the Churchyard; the Churchyard walls and gates, which are also protected, date from an Act of Vestry (1815) necessitating the enclosure of burial grounds.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL (24) was founded in 1608 by the Stradlings of St Donats and has occupied its present site from 1617. The present buildings date from 1847-1852, achieving a pleasant harmony between the adjoining Church and South Gate, all three buildings are listed, Grade II. It catered for pupils "of mature age and members of wealthy families" and from 1685-1919 was under the governance of Jesus College, Oxford. It is used today as a youth centre, a new comprehensive school having opened in 1974. At the end of Church Street is **THE SOUTH GATE (25)** which is the only existing medieval town gate in Glamorgan. It possible dates from the early 14th Century. It was originally vaulted, being some 19 feet wide, 20 feet high and 21 feet deep. The Town Mill was located some 200 yards south of this gate. Pass through the Gate. The adjoining building on the east of the gate is the old Boot House of the Grammar School and dates from c. 1745. Rose cottage, to the west of the gate, is also a Listed Building being a 19th Century cottage built against the line of, or incorporating the structure of **THE MEDIEVAL SOUTH WALL (26)**. It is not certain to what extent the town walls behind the car park are original. In part they appear to be garden walls of 18th Century origin comprising elements of the old wall. However, a surviving section of the wall and its bastion is clearly revealed in the south west wing. To the south west of the walls, on Llanblethian Hill is the iron age fort of the Silures, which may have been one reason for the establishment of the Roman settlement.

A map showing local footpaths is on display in the library and leaflets detailing walks in surrounding villages can be obtained from the Tourist Information Office, 79 Eastgate.

A WALK ABOUT COWBRIDGE



YOUTHFUL PURSUITS

The Eagle Academy Y Bont Faen Primary School

We know from an old race notice in 1769 that the Eagle was then the Spread Eagle Hotel. When it ceased to be such is not certain, but in the year 1805 the Eagle Academy was already established in the building.

This school was soon famed for its teaching of the three R's, the speciality being handwriting, which in many instances was copper plate.

About 1860 the school was conducted single handed by William Lewis a teacher of

renown; farmers' and tradesmen's sons and a few of their daughters comprised the complement of about 60 scholars.

The Academy was considerably affected by the Board School established in 1876 and was not continued after the death of William Lewis, a few years later.

It was then an agricultural stores where the old Inn ballroom, later the schoolroom, may be seen to this day.

Y Bont Faen Primary School is situated in Borough Close and serves the town of Cowbridge and the village of Llanbleddian.

The school moved to its new site in the early 1970s when the 19th Century village school became inadequate in size to cope with an increased population.

There are three hundred and thirty pupils in Y Bont Faen supervised by twelve teachers and a Head Teacher. The pupils are well motivated and enjoy the wide range of activities

which result from National Curriculum guidelines.

Parents lend great support to the school as a result of PTA activities and the Governing Body too is supportive and influential.

The school is proud of its association with the Town of Cowbridge and often uses the local churches or Leisure Centre as venues for concerts and services.

Visitors to the town who are interested in educational provision are more than welcome to visit the school by appointment. (Tel: 772374).

Cowbridge Leisure Centre

The Leisure Centre Cowbridge has been open since September 1986. The building consists of: A multi-purpose Main hall, Lesser Hall, weights/fitness room, outdoor football field, all necessary changing/toilet facilities, a bar, cafeteria and meeting room.

The centre attracts approx 70,000 people a year.

The most popular activities are, badminton, aerobics, football and children's parties. It is situated off The Broadshoard in a central

location and is therefore able to attract a number of organisations from all over South Wales, for example South Wales Radio Control Society, South Glamorgan Badminton Association, Welsh Volleyball Association etc, and from Llantrisant, Bridgend, St Athan, and Llantwit Major. One of the centre's success stories has been the children's party facility. A two hour package consisting of an hour's activity and an hour in the party room with a chosen menu.

Air training corps in Cowbridge

The Cowbridge ATC Squadron has been in existence for the last 17 years. It provides an enjoyable outlet for youngsters over 13. Cadets undergo training in aeronautics, basic flying in glider and powered aircraft, mountaineering, shooting and first aid.

They visit RAF stations in the UK and throughout Europe. Cadets complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and this year four have won Gold awards. The Squadron was recently given the rare Royal Humane Society Testimonial for a rescue in Snowdonia.

Y Bont Faen P.T.A.

Y Bont Faen school counts itself fortunate in having a very active Parent-Teacher Association which is most generously supported by parents, teachers and the people and businesses of Cowbridge.

It is able to raise some thousands of pounds each year to buy equipment and other materials thus supplementing to a major degree what can be afforded out of Local Authority funding.

As well as providing financial support to the school, the P.T.A. adds greatly to its social life. Events such as the Christmas bazaar, Summer fete and ever-popular disco's are eagerly anticipated by the children, while the quiz nights, supper dances and fashion shows to name but a few, bring the parents together and encourage the friendly community spirit which is so much a part of Y Bont Faen.

School of Ballet

The Moya Vahey school of classical ballet has been established in Cowbridge for 23 years.

Children from the age of 3 to adults of all ages enjoy their Tap and Ballet classes.

The children take examinations annually and

perform in charity concerts and Eisteddfods.

Many pupils have become professional dancers and teachers.

Classes are held in Cowbridge and Llantwit Major.

All enquiries on 774080.

Scouts

All sections of the Group Beavers, Cubs and Scouts meet at the Scout Hall which is at the rear of Cowbridge Market. For further information contact Jose Rawlins on (0446) 772750.

Brownies

The five Brownie Packs in the area are all well attended but they do desperately need more adult help. Please contact Mrs Nettleship on 0656 79300.

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