

Gelligaer Times

Newsletter of the Gelligaer Historical Society

Introductory issue

January 2006

Welcome!

Communications – the bane of modern living! The aim of this new venture is to improve communications between the Society, its members and the wider community, including other organisations involved in some way with the research, recording and dissemination of historical material, particularly, but not exclusively, locally.

It is hoped that this publication, possibly published quarterly, will keep the membership and others informed about the Society's activities - meetings, excursions, publications and events. To achieve this the newsletter editor will require a steady flow of information, including that from organisations with similar aims as our own.

A significant aim is raising awareness of historical issues, encompassing all aspects of historical expression. Hopefully this might include the generation of informed 'pressure' to bring to the 'authorities' notice of artefacts under threat – let us try to avoid repeating the destruction, without any public debate, on the scale of the nineteenth century core of Lewis School, Pengam, for example. Better is to emphasise the positive and be agents of support for historical projects, whether by volunteering to help, putting our collective hands in our pockets or simply show interest and support to those striving to do something new – i.e. not always considering what a project can do for you, but what you can do for it!

To be effective information is needed, thus the membership and the public at large are invited to send any information they view as being of interest to fellow historians to Terry McCarthy at terry.mac@btinternet.com, when it will be considered for publication.

Officers of Gelligaer History Society 2005-06:

President	Mr Islwyn Hughes
Chairman	Mr Terry McCarthy
Secretary	Mrs Jean Kember
Treasurer	Mrs Hazel Waters

Membership - £5 per year - non members are welcome, but a contribution of £1 per lecture would be appreciated to defray expenses.

‘Your Century’ ITV Wales

Research for a programme on Bargoed is being undertaken – filming scheduled for week beginning 30 January 2006. If anyone can contribute film, photographs, artistic works, or would be prepared to make an oral contribution Hywel Davies of HTV would be pleased to hear from you by the end of this week (27 January) at the latest – 078 75 868 232. Alternatively contact Terry McCarthy (01443 833318)

Rhymney Valley Diesel Gala

In early December railway history was made in the Valley. For 10 years, many peak hour services were operated by locomotive-hauled trains, an operation unique to the Rhymney Valley on Valley lines, and it ended on 11 December 2005, when Arriva Trains Wales introduced their ‘standard pattern timetable’. Significantly, the latter has given Bargoed the most frequent and fastest train service to Cardiff that it has ever had.

Marking the event Arriva Trains Wales organised a Gala on Sunday 4 December, when representatives of the types of diesel locomotive that had worked these services since 1995 worked to a special timetable. Many hundreds of railway enthusiasts flocked to the Valley, which with the extensive photographic coverage in the Railway Magazine and other publications certainly put the Rhymney Valley ‘on the map’ for a short time. Indeed, there have been few issues from the enthusiast press that have not contained a picture or two of these train, some in amazingly photogenic locations in the valley – Bargoed viaduct was one favoured location.

How many other historical events have attracted so many people from outside the area for one day? And, as many chilled passengers will testify, these trains had been an attraction for enthusiasts (who liked to travel with windows wide open!) for several years, bringing recognition and income to the Valley.

Is there a special railway event in the future to bring enthusiasts in? 150 years since the opening of the Rhymney Railway in 2008 perhaps? A steam celebration would be really special ... Arriva Trains Wales, Caerphilly County Borough Council – what about it?

Gelligaer Roman Fort

Two members, David Mills and Clive Andrewartha were invited to attend a meeting called by the Communities First Co-ordinator (Gelligaer & Penybryn) about the Roman Fort site. The meeting was chaired by Chris Morgan (CCBC Museums & Heritage Officer) and included the owner of the fort site.

The meeting considered processes of raising public awareness about the site and accessing funding to do this. It seems that Communities First cannot apply for funding itself, but were contacting organisations who might help – including Gelligaer Historical Society.

It is suggested we become involved:

- to raise our profile;
- to have an input into the working group who will deal with a consultant;
- we are associated with whatever scheme emerges;
- Communities First might look favourably on us, in applications for funding - publications etc.

What do you think?

Gelligaer Volume XV

Publication day - Wednesday 25 January 2006.

Articles include: Royalist or Puritan, and Melin Cylla and Penrhiwfelin both by Jean Kember; Mystery of St. David's relics, Prof. Bernard Knight; Morgan John Rhys, Nesta Jones; Railways in the Rhymney Valley 1920-21, Terry McCarthy; Excavations at Dan y Gaer and Gelligaer 2004, Dr Edith Evans; The Llanfabon and Cascade Hounds, Dr. T. Fred Holley.

Cost - £4 a copy.

We hope you enjoy it! Now our thoughts can turn to Gelligaer Vol XVI – publication target date mid 2007? Suitable articles based on personal research or reminiscence would be welcome, probably by the end of 2006, assuming the committee feel confident about committing the Society to another publication.

Publication of Gelligaer XV would not have been possible without generous financial support from our past President, Dr Fred Holley. Future issues will require financial support from elsewhere, e.g. grants (you find them, we'll apply for them!), sponsorship (any offers?) or advertising.

We still have copies of Vol XIV available - £4.

Future possibilities regarding 'Gelligaer' include:

A anniversary special edition in 2011 (only five years away!), comprising the 'best of the best' from previous issues, plus some new articles.

A service offering photocopies of selected articles from volumes I – XIII – we shall have to do an index first, but one could be available at the AGM.

Meetings 2006-07 - Bargoed Library 19.30.

Wednesday	27 September	Coins, Mr Besley
Wednesday	25 October	The Parish of Llangyfelach, Jeff Childs
Wednesday	29 November	Queen Victoria, Edwina Slack
Wednesday	13 December	Recollections of the Renovation of Llancaiach Fawr. Jeremy Lowe

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Wednesday	31 January	Tribal Princes of Senghenydd Supra & their Descendants, Jean Kember
Wednesday	28 February	Heraldry - The Shorthand of History 2, Anthony Jones.
Wednesday	28 March	The Vikings in Wales, David Wyatt.
Wednesday	25 April	South Wales Railways in World War II, Terry McCarthy
Wednesday	30 May	AGM

Visits? Any suggestions for Society outings would be welcome – why not come to the AGM and offer your ideas.

Other activities? Again – join us at the AGM 24 May 2006 – 19.30 Bargoed Library.

Gelligaer Historical Society – A brief history

The Society was formed in 1961 by many of those who had collaborated in research for 'The Gelligaer Story', published in 1959 to celebrate 50 years of Gelligaer Urban District Council. Although the G.U.D.C. disappeared in Local Government reorganisation in 1973, the Society has continued exist up to the present day.

In recent years the Society has limited itself to the organisation of monthly meetings on a range of historical topics, in Bargoed Library. 2004 saw the revival of the Society's Journal, Gelligaer, when volume XIV was published – 14 years after volume XIII was produced. This new volume was greeted with pleasing enthusiasm and has sold quite well, consequently the committee, emboldened by this success are set to publish volume XV early in 2006.

It is hoped that this increased dynamism will be reflected in other ways, including an increase in membership and attendance at our meetings – happily attendances have been increasing over the past couple of years. It is hoped that we can 'go on-line' before too long, thus bringing the Society into the 21st century – who said you cannot bring history up to date! Other potential ventures include reviving Society visits – one likely project is outlined overleaf and organising a history conference along the lines of those which last took place in the 1980s.

More immediately, we are presently half way through the lecture programme for 2005-06. Subjects to date have included Heraldry, Furniture at St. Fagan's, Weather in the Rhymney Valley, plus Islwyn Hughes' Christmas showing of Kings and Queens of England. Still to come, starting at 19.30 are:

Wednesday	25 January	The Windsor-Clive Dynasty, Alan Thorne
Wednesday	22 February	The Boyhood of Sir Francis Drake, Part 2, Tudor Fisher.
Wednesday	29 March	Fleur de Lis, Annie Owen.
Wednesday	26 April	Speaker's Choice, Brian Davies (Pontypridd Heritage Centre)
Wednesday	31 May	A.G.M.

Proposed visit to Glamorgan Record Office:

A provisional booking has been made for a formal visit to the Record Office in Cardiff, on **Wednesday 3 May 2006, 18.00 – 20.00**. Up to 15 members can be accommodated – there is a standard charge of £25 per group - those attending should expect to pay at least £1.70. Participants should make their own way to Cardiff - meet at 17.45? Proceeding to the Record Office thereafter. Anyone interested, please give your names and a deposit of £1 to Terry McCarthy, by **22 February 2006** – first come first served.