

# Gelligaer Times

Newsletter of the Gelligaer Historical Society

No 2

April 2006

The pilot issue of Gelligaer Times seems to have been received favourably, so here is number 2. Since publication of the January edition, there have been some developments, notably the publication of Gelligaer Vol. XV. Once again initial feedback is favourable. All we have to do now is sell them!

Three meetings have also been held, since Gelligaer Times was first published. The first was Alan Thorne's discourse on the Windsor-Clive family, whose local connections were fully examined, especially their uncanny knack of benefiting from the fruits of the industrial revolution, mainly by owning land in strategic places; notably Barry.

Tudor Fisher continued with his story of Sir Francis Drake - focussing on his early manhood. We were told of the people whose support and financial backing enabled or sponsored Drake's unintended circumnavigation, 1577-1580. This and succeeding enterprises laid the base for the development of Britain as a trading and ultimately political power of world-wide proportions. In her analytical presentation of Fleur-de-Lis, Annie Owen dealt swiftly with one long-held myth - the link between the name Fleur-de-Lis and French settlers - there is no documentary evidence to support it. Nevertheless, Annie demonstrated clearly the impact on the growth of the village on three things - the influence of John Moggridge, a landowner in the area, the Rumney Tramroad and the coal industry. Maps and simple statistical analyses showed clearly the influence of these factors in attracting people and industry to the area. What was significant, was the number of incomers from Somerset, people whose 'different' names helped in understanding the processes contributing to the establishment of what was shown to be a distinctive settlement.

## **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**

The programme was duly broadcast in March, and a very good job Hywel Davies made of it too. A number of members (amongst others) have asked about the possibility of the programme being produced on video or DVD. Hywel Davies responded quite firmly to my enquiry - no! There are too many issues relating to copyright to make it worthwhile, or even feasible.

### **Rhymney Valley Diesel Gala - December 2005**

I spoke too soon! In mid February locomotive-hauled trains resumed, because Arriva Trains Wales are short of rolling stock! Once again, 37411, appropriately named 'Caerphilly Castle' operates on the 07.44 Rhymney to Cardiff train and the 17.01 Cardiff to Rhymney service.

### **New Museum for the Rhymney Valley - Elliot Colliery Winding House.**

The winding house at New Tredegar was for many years just an isolated building standing amidst the remains of Elliot Colliery, which closed in 1967. Within the building was preserved a splendid example of the ancillary equipment which made deep shaft mining feasible and practical i.e. a steam powered winding engine. After many years, work began to conserve the engine restoring to a state which permitted it to operate, albeit using electrical power.

To assist with this the Elliot Colliery Friends and Volunteers was set-up, which aimed to maintain and demonstrate the engine. Once established, it soon began to reinvent itself as a local history museum, involving itself in the display of artefacts donated by well-wishers, and latterly an exhibition commemorating the demise of Bedwellty Comprehensive School in 2005.

At the beginning of April the museum they had developed was closed ... for reconstruction. The enlarged museum will open in winter 2007 and will be dedicated to the display of and research into 'local history, heritage and culture'. There will be a range of new facilities, including a resource library and activity room for use by historians of all ages and abilities.

Quite what the scope of the new museum will be is not stated, but it will aim to preserve, and presumably research into, the history and culture of 'traditional coalmining communities such as New Tredegar'. Just New Tredegar? Or will all Rhymney Valley communities be involved, for there is no equivalent in any other part of the valley? Will it be something like the Oxford House Museum in Risca? Might we of the GHS have a role? Whatever the outcome, I am sure all members of GHS congratulate Elliot Colliery Friends and Volunteers for securing significant funding and wish them every success in their enterprise.

### **Gelligaer Roman Fort**

At a recent meeting discussions about the site continued and, as Chairman of GHS, TM was asked to write on behalf of the Society in support of an application for funding for the feasibility project to proceed. This has been done.

How refreshing to see some positive thinking about the Rhymney Valley's historical heritage - after all, a development such as that being considered for Gelligaer Fort is taking advantage of one of the area's few realisable assets for future economic growth.

## Gelligaer Volume XV

Published January 2006 - cost £4.

Contents 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.

We still have copies of Vol XIV available - £4. The editor has spares of Vols. VI, IX and XII - prepared to swap for Vols. II and VII.

An index for Vols. I-XV has been produced - copies can be produced - £1

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

### **Family & local history day Llancaiach Fawr 12/13 August 2006**

GHS have been invited to participate. Judith Jones will be co-ordinating our display on the days, but I am sure additional help would be appreciated - contact Judith, please. We shall be selling our journal and putting on a photographic display, amongst other things.

### **Preserving our past:**

We hear much about the contributions of public museums etc. recording, conserving, preserving and displaying historical items, but what about those private individuals or groups who are actively engaged in retaining our links with our past? There is a veritable army 'out there' researching and recording family history, local history and all sorts of other history, at their own expense. There are those, too, who have saved significant artefacts, e.g. vintage and veteran cars, buses and commercial vehicles, who gladly share their efforts with us at a range of local events. If you hear or know of any such events, let the editor know for the July and October issues of Gelligaer Times to publicise them so that we can support those who work hard on their own, without grants etc. to provide us with the pleasure of nostalgia.

## **Gelligaer Historical Society**

### **Visit to Glamorgan Record Office- Wednesday 3 May 2006**

To date 10 members and friends have indicated their wish to visit the Record Office - we have 'space' for 5 more! Cost - £2.50 (reducing to £1.70 if all 15 places are taken). Participants should make their own way to Cardiff- meet 17.45 on the Museum steps. Proceeding to the Record Office thereafter, for a prompt 18.00 booked start. Anyone interested, please give your names to Terry McCarthy (01443 833318).

### **Meetings 2005-06**

Only one meeting left in this season's calendar, arguably the most important - the A.G.M.

**Wednesday**

**31 May**

**A.G.M.**

In addition to the normal business of an A.G.M. we welcome the presence of Mr. Chris Morgan of the Caerphilly County Borough Council's Museums & Service.

Draft Agenda:

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of Meeting held 25/05/2005
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Chairman's Report 2005-06.
5. Treasurer's Report 2005-06.
6. Secretary's Report 2005-06.
7. Election of Officers 2006-07.
8. GHS Action Plan 2006-07 and after:
  - Future funding and funding sources.
  - Increase membership,
  - Meetings calendar 2006-07 and beyond.
  - Construction of a GHS Web site (NB. Paper produced earlier in 2006)
  - Publications:  
Gelligaer Vol. XVI and beyond.  
Golden Jubilee Album?
  - Index for Gelligaer Vols. I - XV - sales etc.
  - Conference/Summer School 2007?
  - Golden Jubilee-2011?
9. Any other business?
10. Questions and Answers - including Mr Chris Morgan CCBC Museums & Heritage Officer.