

Gelligaer Times

Newsletter of the Gelligaer Historical Society

No 3

July 2006

Summer is upon us! Like many other societies and activities Gelligaer Historical Society goes in to relative hibernation during the summer months, a time when many members go off on holidays, some of which manage to integrate a bit of history into the activities. History is an essential part of the leisure industry these days, something recognised by most holiday centres, both at home and abroad.

However, the last season of lectures finished on a positive note, when the inimitable Brain Davies (Pontypridd Museum) told of the origins of Hen Wlad fy Nhadau and the respective roles of Evan James and his son James in its composition in 1856. Brain explained the traditional story about its origins, but went on to tell us of the letters (provided by David Williams – Dr Dai! – of Bargoed) from two of Evan’s brothers who had emigrated to the U.S.A. Hen Wlad fy Nhadau, was, it was suggested, Evan’s response to their encouragement to join with them in the prosperity that was the U.S.A. In short, he was happy where he was! It is not certain when it became Wales’ anthem, but it had been acclaimed as such by Evan’s death in 1878.

The programme ended with a successful visit to the Glamorgan Record Office and an A.G.M. that was better attended than usual and at which there was much lively and positive discussion about the future direction of the Society. Present too, was Chris Morgans, Caerphilly County Council’s Heritage Officer, who made some very useful suggestions and gave us an update of progress on the County’s Museum development at the Engine house in New Tredegar.

And so to summer! Next year’s programme is ready to go and we welcome all comers. Members and potential members to Bargoed Library on the last Wednesday of each month.

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.

Report of the AGM Held Wednesday 31 May 2006 – Bargoed Library

As AGMs go this one was quite well attended, provoked wide-ranging, but positive discussion. Once the customary minutes of the last meeting were read, officers reports delivered, accounts analysed and officers elected appointments for 2006-07 on the front page) the meeting turned to the proposed development plan, comprising seven sections:

1. Future funding:

Membership fees remain at their present level (£5) , but to advance as a society additional funding must be sought. Publications generate little income, but they give the society a purpose and recognition, both essential to our survival. Sponsorship is one avenue, especially for our journal. Indeed, the sale of advertising space was accepted. Probably more productive will be the quest for grants etc.

By happy co-incidence the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) organised a funding event in July, at which Clive Andrewartha represented GHS with our wish-list. Many of our projects could attract grant help, consequently Clive and Terry McCarthy will be following-up the contacts made, hopefully to fund some specific projects, notably the GHS website and Vol. XVI.

2. Increase Membership:

We need more members, of all ages. A Target of a 20% increase next year was accepted, but this was only a start. Discussion revolved around ways of attracting younger members, perhaps by promoting some school projects.

3. Meetings Calendar:

Satisfaction was expressed with the programme negotiated by Jean Kember – she has already started the programme for 2007-08! Outings were also discussed, especially in the light of the success of the Record Office visit. Various possibilities were suggested and will be worked upon.

4. Web site:

This was considered a priority by those present. Issues of constructing and maintaining a web site were considered, plus costings and content of the site. Much useful input was received from Chris Morgans and Judith Jones, on Training and time needs. It was agreed we should go-ahead to the next stage in the process, i.e. finding courses, software, the person and, if necessary the hardware. Clive Andrewartha's findings could be apposite here.

5. Publications:

The meeting was keen to publish Volume XVI of Gelligaer in 2007 subject to funding – articles ready for 31/10/06 please. The Index would also be duplicated and sold.

6. Conference:

The proposal to hold a conference for all C.C.B.C. local or family history societies was supported. June 2007 was suggested with Llancaiach Fawr as the venue.

7. Golden Jubilee:

2011 – various projects were considered – Best of the Best from Gelligaer, an update of Gelligaer Story that started it all and publication of an album of Arthur Wright's photographs were discussed appropriate objectives. A celebration dinner, with guest speakers? Llancaiach Fawr?

Who knows what will be, but we left feeling we could it make it all happen.

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.

Sales are going reasonably well and copies are still available – the editor has a number available for sale.

Furthermore, there are 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 - £1. The Society does not have a complete collection of its own, but there is a complete set in Bargoed Library and between us the membership have a full set. If articles from past issues are required, we can arrange photocopies to be produced at 50p per page.

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

Happily, GHS have been invited to participate. Judith Jones is 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.

Ceremonial Re-opening of the Old Bridge, Pontypridd, 12 August 2006

This year the old bridge celebrates its 250th Anniversary and to mark this event various activities have been organised. At 12.00 a collection of historic vehicles will process through the town, which will be on display in Ynysangharad Park from the afternoon. To mark the re-opening of the restored old bridge (the 'new bridge' which gave Pontypridd its original name – Newbridge until 1856). In addition, a pack horse will be led across the bridge to remind us of what transport in the area was like in 1756.

Other attractions will be available in Ynysangharad Park.

'Chronicle' CCBC Web site – www.caerphilly.gov.uk/chronicle

It is not only GHS who wishes to 'go on-line'. The above-mentioned web site has been established and launched by Chris Morgans' Heritage & Museums Service. It is a young site, but it has the potential to become a significant resource for both local and family history studies. Indeed the advice offered to new and existing students of family history is to be commended offering, as it does, a number of useful links. There is the potential to develop for the borough the sort of archive available on the RCT Libraries site, with its wide range of historic photographs. Chronicle wishes to go beyond that, but its progress depends upon input from the public at large.

Chris Morgans is anxious to get all local/family history societies involved, especially those who have already established web sites. Even if this not the case, Chronicle could provide a very useful forum for the publication of society programmes, besides increasing awareness of who is doing what and where in the borough.

Gelligaer Historical Society

Visit to Glamorgan Record Office – Wednesday 3 May 2006

10 members and friends met on the steps of the National Museum in Cardiff, to visit Glamorgan Record Office. Our guide and mentor for the evening was Archivist, Laura Russell, who provided us with a very comprehensive tour.

Initially we were given an outline of the aims of Record Office, the range of resources in the archive, plus an indication of the future – a new purpose-built Record Office, to be started in 2007. We were then shown the archive storage facilities, i.e. those retained in the Record Office itself – there is another store, hence the need to pre-book resources in some cases. We returned to the reading room, where Laura had laid out a range of resources, mostly relating to the Gelligaer area, including maps, school registers, documents, lists of electors etc. Finally, we paid a visit to the room set-aside for family history studies, where again we were provided with a comprehensive explanation of the resources available.

All too quickly, our allotted time for the visit passed and we said our farewells and thanks to Laura and the Record Office. So ended the first Society visit, in a long time, but one all who participated, enjoyed. Indeed, the question most proffered as we left was ‘Where next?’ Where indeed!

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.

2007

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

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