



# GELLIGAER TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
No. 43 MARCH 2020

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This newsletter is produced by GHS officers and committee in the absence of a newsletter editor. If anyone would like to volunteer to edit the next issue, please contact GHS website to discuss it.

## RECENT EVENTS

**21 February** GHS was represented at a talk on Richard Trevithick, given by Huw Williams, in Redhouse (Town Hall), Merthyr Tydfil.

**GHS February meeting** – The country was hit by Storms Caira (on Sunday 9 February) and Dennis (on Saturday and Sunday, 15 and 16 February), but, fortunately things had settled down a little before the last Wednesday in the month when members and visitors heard an interesting and well-informed talk from Dr. Daryl Leeworthy, entitled *The life and times of Elaine Morgan*.

Prior to this meeting, the last for Diane Walker to attend in her role as General Manager of Llancaiach Fawr, the Society gave her a small gift as a token of thanks for all she has done for GHS since September 2007 when the Society started to hold its monthly meetings at Llancaiach Fawr. The meeting concluded with GHS Chair wishing Diane well as she moves to the next stage in her life.

**March onwards** --- Before the end of the second week in March, the progress of COVID-19, a new illness caused by coronavirus, was making such progress in the UK that GHS officers and committee decided to postpone the conference planned for Saturday 21 March, and the GHS meeting arranged for the following week. Within days, such was the seriousness of the situation, that the April, May and June meetings were also postponed.

## GHS PROJECTS

**GHS WWI project** closed in winter 2018-19, but the database of names on local war memorials is still on the Society website. It will be appreciated if anyone with any amendments or additional material contacts [www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk).

After WWI, many communities commemorated local casualties on *village green* type memorials, but there were also memorials within buildings including places of worship and education as well as at workplaces – see *Gelligaer* vol 25 (2018) pp 54-69. GKN erected memorials at their Fochriw and Bedlinog pits, and, sometime after the collieries closed, these two memorials were displayed in what is now Rock UK's Summit Centre. They are no longer there, but GHS officers have been informed that the Fochriw tablet is mounted on the wall of Fochriw Community Centre and the Bedlinog tablet is in Bedlinog Community Centre. If any readers visit either of these places, please take photographs of them in their present positions for inclusion in the next newsletter and/or on the Society website.

It was not possible for GHS to be represented at *Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918* Final Partnership Event, planned for the afternoon of Monday, 9 March, in Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay.

**GHS Diamond project** will run until the Society celebrates this milestone in 2021-22 season.



Some members and friends are researching aspects of life and work in various parts of the parish during the nineteenth century in preparation for a publication in Diamond Jubilee year. More volunteer researchers will be welcome. Readers with access to the internet may like to look at some of the websites listed below for information about local people and places in the nineteenth century, a century that saw industrialisation and urbanisation roll southwards through the parish. (N.B. if you do not have internet access at home, it is available in your local library.)



USEFUL WEBSITES	
Website link	What to look at
<a href="https://newspapers.library.wales/home">https://newspapers.library.wales/home</a>	Newspapers 1804-1919
<a href="https://www.ancestry.com/">https://www.ancestry.com/</a>	Genealogy
<a href="https://places.library.wales/">https://places.library.wales/</a>	Parish tithe maps (dated about 1840)
<a href="https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/printed-material/thebluebooks/">https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/printed-material/thebluebooks/</a>	The Blue Books (education report 1847)
<a href="https://rcahmw.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-search.pl?q=Gelligaer">https://rcahmw.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-search.pl?q=Gelligaer</a>	RCAHMW catalogue search for Gelligaer
<a href="https://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/">maps.nls.uk/geo/find/</a>	National Library of Scotland resource which has many OS maps (1870s - mid 1950s). It can take a bit of getting used to but has most, but not all, 19 <sup>th</sup> century OS maps covering Gelligaer.parish.
If you find other useful websites, please send link to <a href="mailto:chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.cco.uk">chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.cco.uk</a> so it can be added to this list in a future newsletter.	

### **YSTRAD MYNACH LIBRARY**

GHS has secured a booking of the display cabinet in Ystrad Mynach for March 2021. If anyone has any ideas for this, please contact GHS website.

### **GEO PHYSICAL STUDY AT CAPEL GWADLYS**

Phill Loveless, RDP Development Officer, CCBC, is currently preparing for a geo physical study at Capel Gwladys. When completed, not only will this add to GHS's already extensive research into the history and heritage of the old parish of Gelligaer, but also help guide the Society's future work.

### **GLAMORGAN ARCHIVIST**

Susan Edwards, County Archivist, retires at the end of March 2020. On behalf of GHS, a message has been sent to Susan, thanking for the ways in which Glamorgan Archives has supported GHS during her years in charge, and wishing her well for a happy and healthy retirement.

The following is taken from <https://glamarchives.wordpress.com/tag/susan-edwards/> which also has brief notes on Susan's predecessors (Emyr Gwynne Jones [1939], Madeline Elsas [1946 -73], Patricia Moore [1973-93] and Annette Burton [1993-96]).

*Susan Edwards took over in 1996 and led the project to relocate the service into its present purpose built accommodation with vastly improved facilities for service delivery. The Archives has achieved the Welsh Strategic Leadership Award, has bronze level Investors in People recognition and a thriving volunteer and skill sharing programme. Staff work in mutually beneficial partnership with a range of organisations including local universities, museums and libraries, Cardiff People First, the Parliamentary Archives, and agencies such as Quest and Go Wales.*

GHS looks forward to a similarly good relationship with Glamorgan Archives under her successor, Laura Cotton, currently working at Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies.

### **AUSTIN JUNIOR CAR FACTORY IN BARGOED**

GHS has received an email from a BBC RADIO WALES Assistant Producer who is looking for someone with knowledge of the old **Austin Junior Car Factory in Bargoed**, for a potential radio feature.

GHS Newsletter 37 (see publications page on [www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk)) includes an item on this. It will be appreciated if readers with any information can contact GHS before we respond to this email.



## **OLD GIRLS' SCHOOL, COWBRIDGE**

GHS has received an email with this message from Dr. Tudur Davies.

*Dear Sir/Madam,*

*I'm contacting you on behalf of a community group campaigning to save a historic school building in Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan. This was the first school built specifically for the secondary education of girls throughout both England and Wales following the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889. There is currently a planning application seeking to demolish the school. Despite objection from the local community, the developer has refused to retain the original building and Cadw have refused to list the building. We have independent experts who have contested Cadw's decision, however are yet to persuade them to change their position.*

*In response, we are trying to obtain a debate in the Welsh Assembly to either persuade the Welsh Government to list the building or provide additional funds to the developer to convert rather than demolish the building.*

*I appreciate that this isn't the primary focus of your society and that it is not a local issue for you, but as a group interested in heritage issues it would be appreciated if you could help us on a matter of national importance by forwarding this email to your members to direct them to the online petition:*

<https://www.assembly.wales/en/gethome/e-petitions/Pages/petitiondetail.aspx?PetitionID=1741>

*If it makes it any easier to put in front of your members/friends/family, please find attached a printable copy of the petition. If you do use the form attached or would like a hard copy sent to you, please let me know and I will send you a copy with a self addressed envelope to get the hard copy back from you as this will be needed to hand in to the Petitions Committee.*

*Further information about the school and our campaign can be found at <http://oldgirlsschool.wales/school/> and I can be contacted by this email address or by phone on 07833168247 if you have any queries.*

*Many thanks,*

*Dr Tudur Davies*

## **CYFARTHFA CASTLE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY and JOSEPH PARRY'S COTTAGE AND MUSEUM**

Congratulations from GHS to these two Merthyr Tydfil bodies who, in March.2020, learned that they have gained Full Accreditation in Museum Accreditation Scheme, administered in Wales on behalf of Arts Council England by Museums Archives and Libraries Division Welsh Government.

### **SOME CLOSURES DUE TO CURRENT COVID19 CRISIS**

**GHS has been notified of some closures, and as other similar places may also have (or will have) closures, please check before you attempt a visit.**

**NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES** -- Closure of the Building to the Public, 17 March 2020

Due to concerns over the spread of COVID-19 and the well-being of readers and visitors, the Library building in Aberystwyth will close to the public for an indefinite period from 5pm Tuesday 17 March. As part of this decision, all public events on Library premises will be postponed or cancelled initially for a period of three months. The Library's digital resources will be available throughout this period <https://www.library.wales/discover/library-resources/library-resources>

For updates see social media and <https://www.library.wales/index.php?id=1>

**THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES** -- In response to the coronavirus pandemic -- The National Archives (in Kew) closes to the public from 5 pm on Tuesday 17 March until further notice. All scheduled events have been cancelled until at least the end of May.

There will be updates on TNA website <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> and TNA can be contacted via email and social media ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) and their online services will remain active.

**GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES** -- This is the message from Susan Edwards, Glamorgan Archives *In the light of government advice Glamorgan Archives will be closing its public searchroom to all but essential users from 5pm today (18/03/2020). If you need to come to the Archives please contact us in advance to make sure staff will be available to help you. We will respond to remote enquiries and are, for the present, able to carry out searches in the Collection. This is a rapidly changing situation and updates will be posted on the website and social media as they happen.*



**GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY** studying history and heritage since 1961

[www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk) Gelligaer Historical Society is on Facebook and Twitter

Some of your enquiries may be answered by the catalogue and other resources on the website.

This step has been taken to support our staff in maintaining the social distancing recommended to reduce pressure on the health service and we ask for your patience in these difficult times.

**CAERPHILLY LIBRARY SERVICE** -- This is the message posted on Caerphilly Library Service page on 19 March

All libraries are closed from 3:30pm tomorrow Friday 20th March.

In recent weeks, we have taken a number of precautionary measures to ensure we can provide a safe environment for our customers. However, due to the ongoing spread of the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) and updated Public Health Wales guidelines – we have taken the decision to close all of our facilities with immediate effect, for the foreseeable future. This is not a decision we have taken lightly but at this time our user's safety must take priority

## **BLACKWOOD BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

### **'THE STORY OF BLACKWOOD'** **200 YEARS OF HISTORY & PROGRESS**

**APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> 2020**  
**BLACKWOOD MINERS' INSTITUTE**

PontMerthyr & District Local History Society & guest speakers presents a series of illustrated talks on the auditorium screen.

1. History & history of buildings & monuments – from the early 19th century
2. John Walter (1793-1868) – the man who built the village of Blackwood
3. The Blackwood Revolution – the early 19th century & the rise of the mill
4. Housing – 19<sup>th</sup> century, development of the village and growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
5. Social conditions – from coal to welfare, education, recreation and more
6. Religion – industrial era, the church, the chapel and the school
7. Day and night in the village of Blackwood – from the 19th century

To accompany the programme there will be slides, audio and video clips, and a book of photographs, maps, plans and other material. There will also be a book of photographs, maps, plans and other material. There will also be a book of photographs, maps, plans and other material.

Exhibition starts at 9.00 am and presentations start at 10.00 am.

Bar open for the purchase of tea, coffee and alcoholic drinks.

Tickets at £7.50 including lunch available from the Institute.



**ALL EVENTS PLANNED FOR  
BLACKWOOD BICENTENARY  
CELEBRATIONS ARE SUSPENDED DUE TO  
CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** – you may find the following websites useful to keep up-to-date with developments:-

<https://gov.wales/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/>

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/>

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

See [www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk) or the end of this newsletter for GHS programme which, with its postponement banner, illustrates the current situation.

From time-to-time, GHS is informed of events and activities relating to history and heritage as well as the performing arts. These are frequently announced at GHS monthly meetings and readers will find **up-to-date information and contact details on the following websites as well as posts on social media:-**

- <http://www.merthyr-history.com/> (blog, *The Melting Pot*, about heritage and culture of Merthyr)
- <http://merthyrtydfilheritage.blogspot.com/2013/10/forthcoming-events.html> (calendar of events in Merthyr Tydfil and surrounding area including Rhymney, Merthyr and Cynon Valleys)
- <http://www.mths.co.uk/?LMCL=uuMTAI> (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society, scroll down for calendar of forthcoming events)
- <https://vanguardcaerphilly.org/> (Vanguard Centre, Van Road URC, Caerphilly – contact 02920 866578 or [Hello@VanguardCaerphilly.co.uk](mailto:Hello@VanguardCaerphilly.co.uk) -- lunchtime and evening concerts)
- <https://glamarchives.gov.uk/> (Glamorgan Archives host some interesting talks)
- <http://www.gwentarchives.gov.uk/> -- (Gwent Archives host some interesting talks and short courses).



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GHS has been informed of the following, but, in view of the current situation, readers should make their own checks as to whether or not they are to be held as advertised or postponed/cancelled.

<p><b>DISCOVER</b></p> <p><b>THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOUSE</b></p> <p>Have you ever wondered how old your house is? Who built it? Who lived here and the stories they could tell?</p> <p>This talk will introduce you to a wide range of archival documents and help you get started.</p> <p>Come and discover the history of your house!</p> <p><b>Wednesday, 22 April 2020</b></p> <p><b>11.00am - 12.00pm</b></p> <p><b>BOOKING ESSENTIAL</b> as places are limited £5 per person (payment in advance, non-refundable)</p> <p>For further details and to book your place please contact Gwent Archives</p>	 <p><b>Gwent Archives</b> Standwick Road Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent NP23 5EA Tel: 01495 355965 enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk www.gwentarchives.gov.uk</p> 
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**Glamorgan Family History Society**  
**Family History Fair**  
At Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre, CF48 1UT  
**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2020**  
**10am – 3pm**

### RECENT PUBLICATIONS

No information about recent publications has been received.



### A REMINDER ABOUT DAN SNOW'S WARGEN PROJECT.

If you have any memories of WW2 or you know someone, a family member, a friend or neighbour, please check out the website and consider participating in this project.

## SELF-ISOLATING

Why not use the time to look at some of the websites mentioned on the second page of this newsletter. Perhaps you will find some useful information for GHS Diamond Jubilee project on 19<sup>th</sup> century Gelligaer parish. Please contact GHS website or [chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk](mailto:chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk) if you want to be actively involved in the project.





### GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Studying the history and heritage of the area covered by the former Gelligaer parish and Gelligaer Urban District since 1961

PROGRAMME : 2019-2020

2019	Speaker	Topic
Sept 25	Les James	Zephaniah Williams
	<i>Gelligaer</i> volume 26 will be launched before this meeting (refreshments from 6.15 pm)	
Oct 30	Huw Williams	Merthyr Tydfil and the Heads of the Valleys: 1830s and a Decade of Crisis
Nov 27	Carwyn Hughes	Patagonia, where Welsh meet Spanish, 1865 -2019
Dec 11	A Winter Medley -- Short Portraits of Decembers Past, a quiz and raffle	
	An informal evening with Christmas refreshments	
2020	Speaker	Topic
Jan 29 <u>11.00 a.m. start</u>	Carolyn Jacob and Steve Brewer	A Merthyr Miscellany -- Two talks (one before and one after lunch)
	Lunch can be purchased at Llancaiach Fawr	
Feb 26	Dr. Daryl Leeworthy	The Life and Times of Elaine Morgan
	<b>CONFERENCE</b>	
Saturday March 21	<i>The Wars after the War: the long-lasting effects of the Great War upon Wales and the world in the months after the Armistice</i>	Matthews University
	<i>The Llangorse crannog: a unique vision of Wales in the Viking Age</i>	Dr. Alan Lane Cardiff University
	<i>Knights Hospitaller</i>	Roger Morgan
	<i>Workers He...</i>	David Maddox O.B.E.
	Book...tion form available on <a href="http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk">www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk</a>	
March 25		A Victorian Valleys Village School
April 29	...mfield	Pontlottyn and the Irish/Welsh riot of 22 August 1869
May 2	<b>GELLIGAER PARISH LECTURE</b>	
	...dith Jones	140 years of sheep-shearing matches in Gelligaer parish
June 24	<b>A.G.M.</b>	
	Dic Felstead	1913 Pengam Pageant
<b>MONTHLY MEETINGS:</b>		
<b>WHEN?</b> Last Wednesday most months ( <b>EXCEPT December</b> [second Wednesday] and July and August [no monthly meeting])		
<b>START TIME</b> 7.00 p.m. ( <b>EXCEPT January</b> when it is 11.00 a.m. start)		
<b>WHERE?</b> Llancaiach Fawr [CF46 6ER]		
Membership for 2019-2020 is £10. Meetings are open to non-members (who are invited -to contribute £2)		
<b>FOR FURTHER DETAILS</b> of GHS events, activities and publications visit <a href="http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk">www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk</a> or follow GHS on Facebook or Twitter		

POSTPONED DUE TO CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC.  
FOR UPDATES, PLEASE CHECK [www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk)



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