



Gelligaer Times

Newsletter of the Gelligaer Historical Society

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Message from the Chair

A belated Happy New Year to readers. 2015 started well for the Society with the well attended January meeting, lunch and tour at Llancaiach Fawr (reported on elsewhere in this newsletter). I hope the interesting programme of talks will continue to attract people to the monthly meetings. In addition, I take this opportunity not only to remind you of the 2015 conference to be held at Llancaiach Fawr on the last Saturday in March, but also to point out that due to unexpected circumstances the title of one of the talks has been changed and up-to-date information appears both on the website www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk and in this newsletter. Please do not leave it too late before booking in as we have to submit numbers ten days before the event.

The Society continues its research into the names on the local war memorials. While it is fairly easy to glean information about some of the names, others are far more challenging, especially when surnames like Williams, Thomas and Jones are accompanied by just one initial and no reference to regiment or rank. Even when regiment and rank are shown and the surname is uncommon (as in the case of Private P. Leageian, DCM, Welch Regiment named on Troedrhifwuch war memorial), we hit the *brick wall* that local and family historians know so well.

As far as publications are concerned, GHS intends that *Gelligaer* Volume 22 will appear in September 2015 and will include articles of a general interest, while Volume 23 planned for 2016 will be a WWI commemorative issue. If any readers wish to submit material for consideration for inclusion in either or both volumes, we will be pleased to hear from you.

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the importance of libraries, museums and archives for local or family history research. While many people are familiar with libraries and museums, they may feel that a visit to one of the county or national archives is outside their comfort zone and so you will find a brief GHS GUIDE TO VISITING ARCHIVES IN WALES AND ENGLAND elsewhere in this Newsletter. In addition, this newsletter carries information, including contact details, about Gwent FHS's visit to TNA in Kew.

Best wishes from Annie

Monthly Talks

Pre-Christmas Social Evening

The Society is fortunate to have friends who are always prepared to help out. Two such persons are Steve Kings, Librarian at Bargoed Library and Graham Oxlade who has helped the Society in the past with his knowledge of The Romans and in particular their coins. Both attended on the December 2015 meeting, together with Iris Owens, a member of the Society. The three were able to entertain and inform the audience with items they had brought along

Steve Kings brought along some ordnance survey maps from Bargoed Library which he felt were a good way of examining the creation of Bargoed. As always Steve showed his enthusiasm in explaining what sources are available at Bargoed Library for any budding (and also fully fledged) historians! A visit to Bargoed Library is always a pleasure thanks to Steve and his staff. The Library has also been very helpful in selling some of the Society's publication, in particular the Bargoed and Gilfach book.

Graham Oxlade brought along an un-bound, but original copy of Archdeacon Coxe's *Tour of Monmouthshire* printed in 1804. Colt Hoare had accompanied Archdeacon Coxe on his tour in the late 1790s. Another old book Graham now owns *Gerald's Tour of Wales* which was also on display. Colt Hoare undertook the first translation (from Latin to English) of this book published in 1806. Sir Richard Colt Hoare illustrated both books. Graham demonstrated his versatility (he is better known by members for his Roman expertise) by giving some facts about Colt Hoare

Iris Owens has provided a note of her "efforts" on the night which explains what went on and gives advance notice of her talk to the Society in January 2016. Her note appears below

WW1 - A different perspective.

Much has been said, and rightly so, about the men and women who gave so much from 1914 to 1918, the heroes and heroines, both the decorated and the unsung. What about the villains? I don't mean the enemy, in the opposing trenches and battleships, but the enemy within.

Copies of the *Daily Sketch* from October to December 1916 have come into my hands recently and have been like opening Aladdin's cave. The articles and reports from the front and the excellent photography are the answer to the researcher's dream. Unfortunately there were very few reports about Welsh soldiers and nothing about soldiers from Gelligaer Parish.

What caught my eye, however were the articles on how unscrupulous individuals were profiting from the war while others gave up their luxuries, day to day necessities and forfeited their health, their limbs and their lives.

I was pleased to bring the bound copies of the *Daily Sketch* to Gelligaer Historical Society's December meeting and share their contents with other members. Although fragile, the papers are in very good condition for their age- being nearly 100 years old and printed on cheap newsprint. Members were keen to read them and handled them very carefully.

My next project is to look more closely at the articles and advertisements and analyse their content and style and present a talk to the society in January 2016 about the unscrupulous villains and their tactics to profit from the war.

Iris Owens

January 2015 meeting

Following last January's successful experiment of meeting in the morning, the same idea was carried forward to this year. Again, it proved very successful with FORTY members and visitors attending. The success may also have been partly because the meeting was about the project undertaken by Lewis' School Pengam in relation to WW1. It was very pleasing to see a number of old boys of the school (some not so old) in attendance and it is hoped they will come again



Photograph showing the "OLD" Boys and three members of staff, who are :-Second from left Mike Oliver, second from right Tim Burmeister and extreme right Dave Harding

Mike Oliver (Assistant Head) explained that the school was very fortunate to have carried out the project with a number of outside organisations/individuals; he paid particular tribute to Gill Levy of Winding House museum who he said threw her heart and soul into the project from day one. He had been impressed with the way in which everyone had treated the project as a labour of love. He mentioned two books produced, one by Kay David and the other by Paul Williams. Paul is continuing with his research and it is hoped that an updated version of his book will be available at some time.

Tim Burmeister (School Librarian) showed the audience some video clips of the trip to the WW1 battlefields and cemeteries in northern France. This was an intergenerational trip with school pupils and staff being accompanied by slightly older people from the school's Wednesday luncheon club.

Tim explained how the school wished to widen the project by looking at things from the German point of view and investigating the effects the war had on the ordinary families.

Dave Harding (Head of Art) showed some photographs from the production "Yesterday Never Returns" put on by the school at The Miner's Institute at Blackwood on 12th and 13th November 2014. The photograph on the right shows one such photograph with Dave Harding captured in silhouette



Mike Oliver concluded the excellent presentation by mentioning some on-going projects, which include research into the life and work Alun Lewis.



Part of display at the talk

Hopefully the next newsletter will contain more details about those projects at LSP

After the presentation, THIRTY people sat down to a very convivial meal. Later 16 joined a tour of Llancaiach Fawr Manor House, led by Diane Walker, General Manager of the house and a member of Gelligaer Historical Society. Diane explained the conservation work that has been on-going for the last year and members of the group were shown some of the significant changes to the exterior and interior of the Manor House

(Thanks to Carwyn and Menna Hughes for providing photographs.)

Talks yet to come

7.00 pm Wednesday February 25th The Glamorganshire Canal

Stephen Rowson who (with Ian L Wright) authored a book on the Glamorganshire Canal. He is a member of Oxford House Industrial History Society.

7.00 pm Wednesday March 25th Visualising the past -Architectural Reconstruction Drawings

Chris Jones-Jenkins who studied at the Welsh School of Architecture (1973-77). Having decided not to become an architect, he worked at the Welsh Folk Museum, St Fagans, on analytical drawings.

Annual Conference Saturday March 28th

9.15 Arrival, registration of delegates (tea & coffee available to purchase from 8.45)

10.00 Welcome and Introduction to day

10.05 David Jones, the author of 'In Parenthesis' (1937) *Dr Toby Thacker* (Cardiff University)

11.05 From showmen to businessmen - cinema entrepreneurship in the south Wales valleys *Angela Evans* (Cardiff University PhD Student)

12.05 Light Buffet Lunch

13.05 Glamorgan Ancestry *J Barry Davies*

14.05 'The troublous question of the married women teachers': The Case of Aberdare, 1908 *Dr Sian Rhiannon Williams* (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

(This talk tells of the dismissal of married women employed by the Local Authority in Aberdare in 1908)

15.05 Tea/coffee

15.30 What Has Merthyr Ever Done For Us? *Joe England* (historian, author, broadcaster and Chairman of Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Forum)

16.30 Conference Ends

7.00 pm Wednesday April 29th Silurian Update

Ray Howell is Professor of Welsh Antiquity at University of South Wales and has talked to us previously about on-going research into the Silures and their association with Caerwent.

7.00 pm Wednesday May 20th Excavations at the lost city of Trellech

(Due to Urdd at Llancaiach this talk is being held a week earlier than usual)

Stuart Wilson is an archaeologist. His main work has been related to Trellech, a village in Monmouthshire. He believes he has discovered the ruins of the lost medieval town of Trellech, at one time one of the largest settlements in Wales, although his views are contested

7.00 pm Wednesday June 24th Annual General Meeting

FORTHCOMING EVENTS/VISITS BY LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Gwent FHS Trip to The National Archives

There will be a trip to The National Archives in Kew on Saturday, 18th April. The cost is £27. You will be able to buy a cup of tea or coffee (50p) on the coach during the journey. This saves valuable time by not having to stop on the way. There is a toilet on the coach.

Entry to the Archives is free. To view original documents you will require a reader's ticket. These are also free but you have to have certain items of identification with you. Please see the GHS GUIDE TO VISITING ARCHIVES IN WALES AND ENGLAND at the end of this newsletter

This visit may interest those who wish to visit Kew Botanical Gardens as it is about a fifteen minute walk from the Archives. Non-members are welcome.

Unlike previous years, there will be no trip during the summer as there were not enough passengers to cover the cost of a coach last year. If this trip is sufficiently supported, then perhaps another will be arranged in September.

The pickup times are:

- Blackwood Showfield 6:20 for 6:30 am;
- Newport Civic Centre 6:50 for 7:00 am;
- Hampton Hotel, Magor 7:20 for 7:30 am;
- For those who would wish to join the coach near Pontypool please ask.

For more details or to book please contact trips@gwentfhs.info or 01495 223995. If you are unable to board and alight from a coach unaided, please make this clear when booking.

Fleur de Lys History Society have organised three trips, details are

10th April 2015 - A trip to the Roman Legionary Museum. Transport arrangements are yet to be made but if the numbers increase coach hire will be considered; otherwise transport will be by shared cars.

10th May 2015 - A trip to Pontypool Museum, leaving, by cars, from Mount Zion Chapel, Fleur de Lys at 10 a.m. There is an entrance charge to the museum

July 31st to 3rd August 2015 - This involves bed and breakfast accommodation and a trip around all the various sites at Portsmouth historic dockyard (including *Mary Rose*).

For details of this and the other trips please telephone Allan Jones 01443 813285

MORGAN JONES, conscientious objector, M.P., Government Minister

Wayne David M.P. will deliver his talk on Morgan Jones at the following venues

- BARGOED LIBRARY Hanbury Road, Bargoed on 16th March 2015 at 7 p.m.
- CAERPHILLY LIBRARY, The Twyn Caerphilly on 19th March 2015 at 7 p.m.

Tickets are free but it is essential to book in advance, as numbers are limited, by contacting the relevant venue:

libbarg@caerphilly.gov.uk or
libcaer@caerphilly.gov.org



Rhos House, Gelligaer – birthplace of Morgan Jones.
It was on the common adjacent to Rhos-yr-irfa farm.



SAINT PETER'S CHURCH, BARGOED

On Friday 3rd September 1915, at the height of World War 1, St. Peter's Catholic Church held its first service in Bargoed. The Parish will celebrate its centenary on SATURDAY 5th SEPTEMBER 2015 when Archbishop George Stack will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m.

A booklet about the parish history is being prepared and the Peoples Collection Wales hope to make photos etc. available on the web site www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk.

Anyone who wants information about the celebration or who has photos or information about St. Peter's is invited to contact angelawilliams31@gmail.com

URDD NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD - 25 - 30 May 2015.

GHS May meeting is a week early because Llancaiach Fawr is hosting the Urdd National Eisteddfod when it comes to Caerphilly County Borough.

If any Welsh-speaker wishes to help as a guide in the House during Eisteddfod week please contact (01443) 412248 or WALKED1@CAERPHILLY.GOV.UK

FROM THE PAST BY DAVID MILLS

Public Meeting at Newport following the Chartist march on that town, reported in 'The Monmouthshire Merlin' 30th November 1839

Extract from comment by Mr Powell of The Gaer, Newport

"I myself was marked out as a victim, my property at Gellygaer was to be seized and divided among the spoilers. One of the persons who had assisted in the council of rapine, when this arrangement was made, happened to enquire what was to be done with Mr Powell "Oh" said someone "what shall we do with him?, why he **may** come to work and cut coal for a living"

Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette 29th August 1840

"It is not generally known that there is a post boy running between Cardiff and Quakers Yard. For each letter a half penny is charged, instead of, as formerly, two pence upon the receipt of delivery. The inhabitants of the parishes of Gelligaer and Llanvabon wish, publicly, to return thanks to the Rev. Price, Curate, Gellygaer for his exertions in establishing an accommodation so much called for."

Cambrian 24th June 1843

Death by Drowning

"The inhabitants of Rhymney Iron Works were thrown into the greatest consternation on Sunday night in consequence of a report that Mr Harry Watkin Harry, the well-known cattle dealer was missed since the preceding day. It appears that Mr Harry left his home at Heol Evan Wynn, or, as it is called by some GOMORRAH, situated in the lower part of Rhymney to go to Gellygaer Hill to look at his sheep and cattle. In vain did his family expect him home to have his meals, but his faithful and sagacious dog was back and forth from his house to the pond continually. It seems that some of the men employed at the Works saw him near the pond. It occurred to some of them, at last that notice should be taken of the howling dog and his staying at a certain place by the pond"

The rest of the report goes on to explain how the pond was drained from a depth of 12 feet to 6 feet and how the body was found in a perpendicular position with the head in the mud and the feet up to the surface.

PHOTOS FROM OLD GELLIGAER COUNCIL/PARISH AREA- CAN YOU IDENTIFY THEM?

The names of the locations will appear in our next Newsletter and on FaceBook, no prizes are being offered for getting the names correct; other than the satisfaction that you know the area!

As a reminder, the Society welcomes any photographs of places of interest and events/people that are in the old Parish of Gelligaer. Please send them to our web site or hand them to any member of the committee

A



B



C



D



E



F



GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY BAG IN MEXICO - Is this the greatest distance the bag has travelled?



←For sale? Happy Customers?

They received an offer they could not refuse? →

(Thanks to Ruth and Neil for the photos)



GHS GUIDE TO VISITING ARCHIVES IN WALES AND ENGLAND

Most people who visit archives in Wales and England do so to find information. They may already have visited a local studies section in a library but they should be aware that visiting an archive office is a little different.

<http://www.mytimemachine.co.uk/visitarchive.htm> is one of a number of websites that include hints and tips for first time visitors to archives and although directed at family history researchers, it is relevant for first time researchers into other aspects of history.

You will find that most archives in Wales and England have very useful websites and it is **very important** that you check these before you make your visit. The last issue of *Gelligaer Times* (number 32, November 2014) mentioned some of those you may be most likely to use. I cannot stress enough how **essential it is that you spend time studying the website of the archives you are planning to visit well in advance of your visit** so that you can make the best use of what may be limited time in the archives.

Make sure that you know:-

1. How to get a reader's ticket, including what ID you need to take with you.
2. How the catalogue works and how to select documents that will help your research.
3. What documents are available online -- it may be cheaper and more convenient to pay for them online rather than visit the archives.
4. Whether the documents you want to see are available on the day you plan to visit.
5. How to order documents ahead of your visit to the archives.
6. How to order documents while you are at the archives.
7. Opening days and times
8. How to get there (car, public transport or walking). Car park facilities and costs.
9. Costs of locker and photocopying, and if there is a charge for using camera and/or laptop computer.

Having done your homework on the website and made all the practical arrangements to visit an archives office (ladies, this includes planning to wear something with pockets as you have to leave all bags in a locker), check that you have the following before you set off:-

1. Relevant ID for reader's ticket.
2. Coins for car parking, a locker, refreshments and photocopying.
3. At least 2 ordinary lead pencils (hb or softer) ready sharpened without an eraser attached.
4. A notebook (A4 size is probably the best) rather than loose sheets of paper.

AND, having checked the rules for their use, you may want to take

5. Camera (make sure you know how to switch off the flash) with charged battery(ies) and a spare camera if you are likely to spend all day photographing documents. You are usually allowed to use the camera on your mobile phone.
6. Laptop computer (with all sound turned off) with charged battery.

It is also worth mentioning that the following are usually not allowed in an archives office:-

7. Food and drink, including chewing gum. If you have taken a packed lunch you should put it in the locker.
8. Pens of any sort, coloured pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers.
9. Children.