

## COMING EVENTS

Friday, February 3: The History of Cardiff - Mr G.A.C. Dart, County Librarian.

Friday, March 3: Glamorgan in the early Christian period - Mr J.M. Lewis, Assistant keeper of the Department of Archaeology in the National Museum.

Saturday, March 18: Charter Day celebrations in the Town Hall at 8pm. Bring some 'eats' - would members please let Mrs Vera Griffith (Cowbridge 3408) know what food they intend bringing?

Friday April 7 : Nantgarw Pottery - Mr J. Jones.

On Friday, May 5, we hope to hold an extra meeting, a members' evening when a number of members will give short talks, or discuss photographs and slides. More details later.

## WHAT'S CHARTER DAY, ANYWAY?

In Mr Norman Williams' December lecture we heard of the practical advantages in the past of living in a borough. In the Middle Ages, the burgesses did not have to rely on (or pay for the use of) the lord of the manor's bakeries, breweries and mills for baking their bread, for brewing ale and for fulling and dyeing cloth, and in addition they were allowed to trade without paying tolls in the borough market. People living outside the boroughs did not usually have these advantages; thus the establishment of a borough was a significant event. It seems, according to a survey of 1570, that Cowbridge was granted borough rights by Earl Richard de Clare in a charter of 13 March 1254: so we are celebrating Charter Day on the first Saturday after 13 March.

Good food, good wine (Chateau Pont de la Vache '77), good conversation - come along and enjoy yourselves!

## CHURCH MEMORIALS

Work has now started on copying the 88 memorial stones in Holy Cross Church (prior to using the information), and children have been busy making rubbings of some stones. Next meeting - 19 February (Sun) 3pm - all interested are welcome.

## OFFICERS

President - Mr Norman Williams, C 2107  
 Chairman - Mrs Yvonne Weeding,  
 Secretary - Mr John Miles, Cardiff 36490  
 Treasurer - Dr Iolo Griffith, C 3408  
 Programme Secretary - Mrs Gwynneth Keay, C 2879  
 Excursions Secretary - Mrs Mary Collins, C 3662  
 Publicity - Mr Jeff Alden, C 3373  
 Committee - Mrs A. Arnott, Mr D. Busher, Mrs N. Ginn, Mr A. Jones, Mrs V. Whythe.

'EXCAVATION OF MEDIAEVAL AND ROMAN COWBRIDGE' . . . some brief notes on progress so far.

The building line of the Coopers building opposite Old Hall extended to the pavement. When this was demolished, the foundations of a thirteenth or fourteenth century building (perhaps a merchant's house) were found about a yard back from the pavement. The mediaeval walls running at right-angles to the road have a post-mediaeval facing, and on the wall adjoining Llwynceilyn a mediaeval aumbrey (stone cupboard) and traces of windows can be seen. A pointed archway has been lost.

Underneath the floor and foundations of the fourteenth century house is considerable evidence of Roman settlement. There appear to have been at least four phases of building, in the second and third centuries. Traces of burning over much of the site suggest the destruction of wooden structures by fire during the occupation; a small tiled area and some stone floors have been exposed, and a north-south road visible at the front of the excavation, at right angles to the main Roman road, suggests that the settlement may have been extensive. Much pottery - both the hard red Samian ware imported from Gaul, and the local grey earthenware - has been found.

A number of members of the society have helped the team from the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Society.

1977 saw the felling of a number of trees in the Cowbridge area. The pines at the High School were, according to the woodmen, past their best, and were a danger to the houses in Slade Close. They appear to have been about 80 years old and so were probably planted when the High School was built in 1896. Let us hope the County Council will replace them.

Considerably older - about 130 years old - were the elms affected by Dutch elm disease in Colin Williams's field off the Llantwit road. So they were probably planted in the 1840's. Now, in the Tuesday evening Extra-Mural class on Discovering Cowbridge, we have been examining the 1844 Tithe Map and the 1851 census, so we have some idea of what was happening in Cowbridge then.

The chief landowner was Thomas Edmondes, who was the Vicar, and lived in Old Hall; the Bowling Green was owned by Jesus College, Oxford; the landowners were uniting in opposition to the routing of the South Wales railway through the town. Where the Bridge Garage is today, there was a Kiln Yard (hence the name, The Limes?); the 'Duke' was known as The Coach and Horses, and the Butchers Arms (Master Brewer now) was occupied by a butcher and publican, David Morgan. The Coopers opposite Old Hall was a house, occupied by James Turner, with a Malthouse (for the malting of barley) behind, occupied by Samuel Howells; and only two of the four cottages in Malthouse lane were occupied - by Joan Davies, laundress, and David Richards, tailor and pauper. Some changes there!

Back to the dendro-chronology or tree-ring dating : if you do see trees being felled, count the rings (one ring = growth for one year) and let me know the age, so that a record can be kept.

#### BOMIUM LIVES?

The old theory that Cowbridge is Bomium, the 'lost' Roman station mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary as being 27 Roman miles from Caerleon and 15 from Neath, may once again be revived in the light of the finds from the dig.

Some members of the society attended the first South East Wales Local History Conference - organised by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies - at University College, Cardiff on October 22nd. Arising from this, a one-day meeting has been arranged for Saturday 25th February, with the theme 'Land and Community in the Sixteenth Century'. Among a number of speakers, Dr J. Gwynfor Jones will deal with South Wales - it should be a useful opportunity to learn about the Tudor countryside. Registration costs £1 (Administrative Office, Extra-Mural Dept., University Coll., 38-40 Park Place, Cardiff).

In addition, a residential weekend at Dyffryn House is being organised for June 23-25.

(Thanks to Philip Riden for this information.)

#### LLANTRITHYD RINGWORK

A report has now been published on the excavations which were carried out by the Cardiff Archaeological Society at Llantrithyd in the 1960s. A horseshoe-shaped enclosure discovered from an aerial photograph was found to contain remains of several buildings of stone and timber. The finds from the site suggested an early Norman settlement, perhaps a hunting lodge, judging by the considerable numbers of bones from birds of prey.

The most spectacular find was probably a hoard of silver coins from the reign of Henry I. At an inquest in Cowbridge in 1962 the coins were deemed to be treasure trove.

An order form is attached for anyone requiring a copy of the Report. Alternatively, if you wish to save postage, apply in person to 2 Brookfield Park Road, Cowbridge.

J.R.

#### GREAT HOUSE, LLANTWIT MAJOR

Visited by the Buildings Group on 4th December. Our thanks to Mr and Mrs Baxter-Jones, not only for their kindness, but also for their work in restoring Great House to its former glory.

#### The Maud Gunter Memorial Lecture.

The December lecture, in memory of Miss Maud Gunter, was given by Mr Norman Williams. This is a summary of his lecture; we thank Mr Williams for allowing us to publish it, and apologise that it is such a shortened version.

#### THE F R E E D O M W A S G I V E N .

To understand the reason for the presentation of the Freedom of the Borough of Cowbridge, one has to appreciate its historical significance. Boroughs were important in that they enjoyed exemptions from the authority of the county for a variety of functions. Cowbridge claimed borough rights both by ancient prescription and by charters; the charters conferred detailed privileges (including the right to hold real estate, to trade, to return a burgess as M.P., to hold quarter sessions and to levy taxation) and some obligations.

Before the Reform Act of 18-32, the Freedom of a Borough was particularly valuable because every freeman and burgess had a vote. In Cowbridge, burgesses acquired the title to their freedom by birth, marriage (to a freeman's daughter), apprenticeship (7 years to a freeman) or by gift. It is not difficult to understand why there are so many town houses in Cowbridge; for instance, the Carnes, Edmondes, Wyndhams and others kept up their town houses and their rights as burgesses to enable them to register their votes. After 1832, Cardiff, Cowbridge and Llantrisant jointly returned one M.P. until the Representation of the People Act of 1918 changed the principle and the basis of the franchise.

Thus to be presented with the freedom was an honour signifying that the Borough wished to confer its greatest privilege on the person concerned.

\* \* \*

The Freedom presented in 1911 to Edward Henry Ebsworth, Esq., of Llandough Castle.

Mr Ebsworth was one of Cowbridge's most generous benefactors, and had helped considerably in the restoration of the Town Hall and the Market Place, the provision of public baths, the gift of a cricket and sports field, the establishment of the Young Men's Institute and Library, and other worthy schemes. Thus it was that the council made a resolution conferring the freedom upon Mr Ebsworth, and the date fixed for the ceremony was October 26, 1911.

The Town Clerk, Mr W.T. Gwyn, had a great deal of work to do with the organisation of the ceremony, including the preparation of the specification for the casket to contain the freedom scroll (... oak or ebony, with suitable silver mounts... of highest class of workmanship and finish... a miniature representation in silver of the Maces of the Borough on the lid; the crest and arms of the borough, and Mr Ebsworth's crest and coat of arms to be placed in prominent positions on the casket. The following enamelled pictures to appear on the casket - Cowbridge Town Hall, Cowbridge Old Town Hall, the Southgate Arch, Llandough Castle, and enamelled portraits of Mr Ebsworth and the Mayor). The cost of the casket was not to exceed £40. Tenders were to be delivered before 5th September 1911. A number of gold- and silver-smiths were invited to tender - the successful tenderers were the Alexander Clark Manufacturing Co. of London.

The speed of the whole operation was quite amazing. A telegram was sent on October 24th by the makers to the Town Clerk, Cowbridge 'Sending casket passenger train tomorrow morning, now photographing' and on 25th October it was confirmed that the casket was forwarded by the 1.10 passenger train for Llantrisant, and 'we hope that it will catch the necessary connection for Cowbridge and arrive in good time' - with the ceremony due for the following day.'

Quotations for the luncheon were obtained both from the Duke of Wellington Hotel, and from the Bear Hotel. The Bear menu at 2/6 (Pigeon pie, roast chicken, York ham, sirloin of beef, ox tongue, roast lamb, galantine of turkey, salads, apple tart and cream, fruit salad, claret jelly, clear wine jelly, French and Swiss pastries) was accepted, and 102 luncheons ordered. Tickets were however sold by the council at 3/- a head - and even the invited guests were expected to pay!

The freedom would have been presented at a meeting of the Council presided over by the Mayor, Mr David Tilley, and in addition to a full attendance of Aldermen and Councillors, Mr Ebsworth, Mrs and Miss Ebsworth, the Lord Mayor and Town Clerk of Cardiff, Archdeacon F .W. Edmond (the oldest freeman of Cowbridge), Colonel and Mrs Picton-Turberville of Ewenny and Colonel and Mrs Homfray were also present. The Town Clerk read the resolution of Council conferring the freedom upon Mr Ebsworth and administered the ancient form of oath taken by the freeman. Mr Ebsworth then subscribed his name to the roll of honorary freemen, and the script signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk was placed in the casket and presented to Mr Ebsworth. The company then partook of luncheon in the Town Hall at which the Mayor again presided, and various toasts were proposed and drunk, and responses made. This concluded the ceremony.

(With an Act of 1972. Parliament robbed the ancient boroughs of their right to confer freedoms. This right has been passed on to the district councils - but this can only be regarded as a travesty. When they confer a freedom what exactly are they conferring?)