

November '78



CHANGE OF VENUE

Will members please note that the next meeting of the Society - on Friday December 1st at 8pm - will be held in the Sixth Form Block of Cowbridge School (the old Girls High School building, on the Cowbridge side of the bypass). The talk, the second Maud Gunter memorial lecture, will be given by our honorary vice-president, Mrs Patricia Moore, B.A., the Glamorgan Archivist, on 'Margam Orangery and the Mansell family'. We hope to have coffee, mince pies and a raffle afterwards!

OTHER COMING EVENTS

All subsequent meetings will be in the Lesser Hall at 8pm.

January 5: The first Cowbridge Printers, Rhys Thomas and Henry Walters - Mr Brian Ll. James, Sub-librarian at U.C., Cardiff.

February 2: Were those the days? - Mr Philip Bradshaw.

March 2: Nanteos and the Holy Grail - Mr Ray Toogood.

\*\*\*\*\* Also in March, Charter Day celebrations, probably in the Town Hall, to commemorate the 725th anniversary of the granting of a charter to Cowbridge by Richard de Clare. More details later.

MEMBERSHIP

costs only £1 a year; students and OAPs 50p. Visitors are welcome at all meetings: fee 20p. During Society excursions, a charge of 20p is made to cover the guide's expenses.

OFFICERS 1978 - 9

President - Mr Norman Williams, C 2107  
Honorary Vice-Presidents -  
Mrs Patricia Moore  
Canon S.H. Mogford  
Chairman - Mrs Yvonne Weeding, C 2878  
Secretary - Mr John Miles, Cardiff 36490  
Treasurer - Mr Jeff Alden, C 3373  
Programme Secretary - Mrs Gwynneth Keay,  
C 2879  
Excursions Secretary - Mrs Nona Ginn,  
C 3058  
Publicity - Posters - Mrs Val Nicoll  
Newsletter - Mr Jeff Alden  
Committee - Mr S. Davies, Dr I. Griffith  
Mr A. Jones, Mrs D. Sewell,  
Mrs V. Whythe.

BUILDINGS GROUP ARRANGEMENTS



The next meeting for the Buildings Group is at Welsh St Donats Church on Saturday 20th January 1979 at around 2.30pm. Please ring Mr Griffith at Cardiff 561118 to confirm the time and date.

No definite February meeting has been arranged, but a visit to Colwinston will be arranged in March. It is hoped to visit Coity in April, St Fagan's Church in May, and Llangynwyd Church in June 1979.

THANKS to our contributors this month - pressure of space has meant that some articles have to be kept to the next issue. Keep the contributions coming!

## REVIEW

Everyone who is interested in local history or uses printed, manuscript or microfilm sources of information for business or private study is bound to find very useful the only publication devoted solely to information sources throughout Wales. This compact booklet of fifty-one information-packed pages is 'Library resources in Wales : Adaoddau lyfrgelloedd Cymru'.

All the libraries have been listed in one alphabetical sequence and, besides the usual details of name, address and telephone number, considerable attention is paid to listing times of opening, conditions of admission, classification and types of catalogue used, the number of books, periodicals and other material such as sound recordings, films, filmstrips, slides, illustrations, prints and manuscripts, specifying what is available for loan. Main and special subjects or departments are listed, together with the publications and services offered such as photocopying and availability of microfilm readers.

A wide range of libraries is included, from the county and other large public libraries with lists of their branches and headquarters, university colleges and the Polytechnic of Wales, institutes of higher education and colleges of further education and technology to state libraries such as the National Library of Wales, private industry, government departments and archive services such as Gwynedd's which includes the Record Offices of Anglesey, Caernarfon and Merioneth.

The editor has wisely provided topographical, type-of-library and general indexes. The last is a subject index which enables the reader to find those libraries which, for example, have special local history collections, or which specialise in church history, Welsh literature or theology.

This work is indispensable for the researcher or enthusiast who needs to know where to look for his information. 'Library resources in Wales', edited by M. June Maggs, is published by the Reference, Special and Information Section (Western Group) of the Library Association, and is available from the Library Association, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE at £3 (including postage).

JOHN L.S. MILES

JOHN WALTERS - LEXICOGRAPHER.

Kneeling down in a dusty corner of one of Richard Booth's book havens at Hay-on-Wye, my eyes fell upon an old dictionary in two volumes. How long had these been hidden and unnoticed in this corner, I wondered, as I rescued them from being a feast to moths and bookworms. They were on the shelves forgotten, just as John Walters who compiled the dictionary lies forgotten in Llandough Church, near Cowbridge, No headstone marks the spot where he was buried in the Church yard and I searched in vain for any memorial in the Church itself.

Yet, it was whilst he was Rector of Llandough that John Walters compiled his magnum opus - The English Welsh dictionary.

Indeed he was one of the great son of Glamorgan in the 18th Century. He compiled the dictionary in order to give Welsh writers an adequate vocabulary to treat all subjects in the brave new World of the 18th century. It was a great achievement and scores of words formed in his house - The Cottage at Llandough - are today an essential part of the Welsh language.

The dictionary was one of the major scholarly productions of the period in Wales and one of the largest books published in Wales in the 18th Century. It is interesting to note the full title of the Dictionary :

"An English and Welsh Dictionary wherein not only the words, but also the idioms and phraseology of the English language, are carefully translated into Welsh, by proper and equivalent words and phrases with a regular interspersion of the English proverbs and proverbial expressions, ranged in their alphabetical order and rendered by corresponding ones in the Welsh tongue".

This monumental English - Welsh dictionary was published in parts at Cowbridge and finally at London between 1770 and 1794. In order to get it published, John Walters was instrumental in establishing at Cowbridge the first printing press in Glamorgan so that he could over-see the production.

Parts I - XIV were published between 1770 and 1733 bringing the work down to the word "Stain" on page 1344. Nothing was then published for 10 years owing to the numerous difficulties which affected the printing press.

The letters between John Walters and his friend, Owain Myfyr - a London Welshman-are very interesting in tracing the difficulties of the output of the printing press at Cowbridge. These letters are preserved in the British Museum and the National Museum of Wales.

Part VIII appeared in March 1774 and part IX should have appeared at the end of the year but Rhys Thomas, the printer, was involved in a law-suit in London. In 1777 the bailiffs were in the printing office. It is assumed that the Rector bought the press but things did not improve although John Walters' son, Henry, was now in charge of the printing. Part XIV was the last part to be printed at Cowbridge because towards the end of 1733 Rhys Thomas's affairs reached their ultimate crises and he was imprisoned at Bristol for debt. He died in 1790 and was buried at Llandough Church. In 1791 the press was sold to John Bird of Cardiff for 77 guineas.

In 1774, Owain Myfyr began distributing parts of the dictionary in and around London and in 1794, Owain had the rest of the dictionary printed at his own expense in London for £86.16.6d. So after a quarter of a century the work was complete.

John Walters was now an old man and in bad health. His spirit was saddened by the loss of his three most able sons. It is said that they were among the most brilliant pupils who had ever been at the Cowbridge Grammar School. He had five sons in all, John, Daniel, Henry, William and Lewis.

John, is known to literary historians because among the books he published when he was a student at Jesus College, Oxford, was an anthology of English verse in 1780 and translations of some of the odes of the Gogynfeirdd. He died a young man of 29.

Daniel kept a diary at the age of 15 which gives us a good insight into the life of a Clergyman and his family in the Vale in the 18th century. Copies of parts of this diary are in the National Museum of Wales. Daniel was also a Poet and having studied at Jesus College, Oxford, he was appointed headmaster of Cowbridge Grammar School in 1785. He died in 1787 at the age of 25.

John, Daniel and William died young. Henry's business as a printer was a failure and as he grow older he became more and more a hermit. He spent his time sitting in filth and meditating among the books and papers of his father and brothers. Lewis, the youngest son was rather simple and spent his time roaming about the district like a tramp.

It is sad therefore that the three most brilliant of John Walters's sons died before the completion of the dictionary and nothing brings this home more poignantly than John Walters's own words in the preface to his dictionary:

"I hoped - but often - how vain are the hopes of man! - I hoped, that, when I should have finished my wearisome task, I should have the happiness to enjoy that high gratification, which none but a father can fully conceive, the approbation and applause of my dear sons; the prospect of which had cherished and supported me in the tedious prosection; and which I would have deemed more than a sufficient reward for all the pains I have taken and fatigue I have undergone, had Heaven been pleased to have spared their lives to the period of the work - early, ardent and successful in the pursuit of knowledge, the universality of their acquaintance with literature was far beyond what most would have expected from years so few: and their judgement critical, exact and such as is not frequently found in maturer age and experience - as often as I consulted them upon any difficult point (and that was not seldom in the course of the Undertaking). I received their modest, yet decisive answers with heartfelt pleasure -

