



FUTURE MEETINGS

OFFICERS 1980-1984

All meetings are held on the first Friday of the month, at 8 o'clock, in the Lesser Hall, Cowbridge.

February 3rd: Welsh Country Workers' homes in the Nineteenth Century - Mr Jeremy Lowe.

March 2nd: The Brecon and Monmouthshire Canals - Mr R.A. Stevens.

April 4th: (Please note change of programme) The Valley of the Incas; The Archaeology of the Cusichaca valley, Cusco, Peru - Ms Gillian Hey

May 4th: (Another change:) Old Pontypridd and district - Miss Lettice Thomas, J.P., Chairman, of the Pontypridd History Society.

CHARTER DAY CELEBRATIONS

There is more reason than ever this year to celebrate Charter Day- if you don't know why, see my note on another page! - so get your tickets as soon as possible from Gwynneth Keay. We are having the same caterers as last year, so we will have a three course meal, with plenty of home-made wine. Saturday 10th March, in the Town Hall; tickets are £5.50p

THE ROAD TO BOVIUM

Another chance to see Ray Toogood's audio-visual spectacular - at Colwinston Village Hall, on Saturday February 18; 7.30 for 8. Entrance £1 (children 50p; includes coffee or tea. Don't miss it this time!

President: Revd Norman Williams, C 2107
 Chairman: Mrs Yvonne Weeding, C 2878
 Hon Sec : Mr John Miles, C 2270
 Hon Treasurer: Mr Neil Shannon, C 5957
 Programme Secretary: Mrs Gwynneth Keay, C 2879
 Excursions Secretary: Mrs Barbara Toogood, Bridgend 5256
 Museum Curator: Mrs Marion Eveleigh, C 2495
 Newsletter: Mr Jeff Alden, C 3373
 Publicity: Mr James Keay, C 2879.

Committee: Mr Geoff Burrows, Mr Len Davies, Mrs Dianne Lloyd, Mr Geoff Pratt, Mrs Dorothy Sewell, Mrs N Shannon, Mrs Viv Whythe.

Members will note some changes in the list of Officers, caused by Val and Simon Nicoll's move to Cheltenham. They both worked very hard but unobtrusively for the society; we will miss both their efforts and their cheerful company. We wish them and their family well in their new home.

Mr John Hollings.

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of John Hollings, our first Chairman. It was due to John's unfailing energy and enthusiasm that our Society got off the ground; he, more than anyone, was responsible for the organisation in those early days in the Library. His work was much appreciated, and he will be solely missed.

500 YEARS OLD ON 27TH FEBRUARY!

The illustration on the first page is of the seal of Richard III. This seal, in red wax, was affixed to a charter granted by Richard III as Lord of Glamorgan, for a chaplain in the church of the Holy Cross in Cowbridge. There are not many churches in Wales which have benefited from such royal patronage. Richard, you may remember, is traditionally held to have been responsible for the death of the Princes in the tower so that he could become king; this charter at least presents another side of his character.

In 1472, Richard - then Duke of Gloucester - married Lady Anne Neville, who the previous year had inherited all the Welsh marcher lordships of Glamorgan, Abergavenny and Elfael from her father Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. In 1473, Lady Anne paid for the building of the Llanquian aisle in Cowbridge church, and she also paid for the construction of the tower of Llanblethian church. Richard then maintained this connection with Cowbridge when he gave permission for a chaplain for the church.

'Richard by the grace of God, King of England and France and Lord of Ireland, and Lord of Glamorgan and Morgannoc in Wales, to the reverend Father in Christ by the same grace Lord John, our bishop of Llandaff, greetings. Whereas our well beloved townspeople and tenants residing in and inhabiting our town or borough of Kowbrygge intend to make and procure a suitable chaplain for the purpose of celebrating divine worship and the holy sacrament in the church of the Holy Cross of the aforesaid Kowbrygge, which service will be administered out of the proceeds and products of the tithe.....'

Cowbridge, you will remember, was built within the manor of Llanblethian - and Llanblethian church was the mother-church; Cowbridge was the responsibility of the vicar of Llanblethian. There would have been ministers of Cowbridge church before 1484, but this charter put the chaplaincy on an official footing - granted by the King in the first year of his reign, and financed by the tithes.

M O R E C H A R T E R S !

The big news for Cowbridge historians in the autumn was the discovery of 1421 Borough Charter. This was unearthed - or undusted? - in a solicitor's office in Chard in Somerset; this unexpected location for a Cowbridge document may well have been linked with the Gwyn family of Llansannor, who moved to Forde Abbey, not very far from Chard. On the Table of Benefactions at the back of Cowbridge Church is an account of how Francis Gwyn of Forde Abbey had left £200 to the Vicar and Churchwardens, etc....

Well, the charter - in excellent condition - is now in the care of the Glamorgan Archive service; it is a charter of inspection and confirmation given by Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Worcester, dated at Cardiff 1st May 1421. Among the witnesses I was pleased to see the names of Robert Walshe of Llandough, and Walter Moreton - constable of Cardiff Castle and husband of Gwenllian Walsh (whose brass lies in Llandough Church).

The first charter 'confirmed' by this new discovery is the charter of Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hereford, which granted to the burgesses of Longa Villa all the liberties held by the burgesses of Kerdiff. (Did they have that funny accent then, I wonder?) The nice thing is that the date given - 13 March, 1254 - is the date which we had suspected was the date of our first charter - and now we know it really is.

In addition, our newly discovered charter gives full details of the charter of 1340; it states the liberties of the burgesses, and also gives the ancient boundaries of the town - "from the highway from Cowebrugg to Seynthillary and to Bewreper (Beaupre) on the east as far as the bridge called Cowebrugg on the west, and from the land called Milleforlong on the south as far as the fulling-mill on the north."

Mrs Moore, when talking about this discovery in a recent meeting, gave out copies of a transcript, but if you would like more details in the newsletter, please let me know.

EXTRA - MURAL DEPARTMENT - Local History Day School, 10th March

"Industry in the Welsh countryside"

Speakers include John Williams-Davies on Traditional Rural Crafts and Craftsmen in Wales; William Linnard on Woodland industries in Wales, and Elfyn Scourfield on Farm Implement Makers in Wales. The Day School will be held in St Fagans Castle on Saturday March 10th, from 10.30 to about 5.30; you'll just have time to dash back for Charter Day!

Course fee including coffee and tea is £2.25; with lunch included it is £5.00. Early application is recommended, to the Admin. Officer, Dept of Extra-Mural Studies, University College, Park Place, Cardiff.

Southway - County Council Old People's Home

Mrs Patricia Moore, the Glamorgan Archivist, has written to our chairman about a meeting which she had had with the Matron of Southways:

One thing which the Matron was talking about was day-time sessions when they try to encourage the elderly residents to reminisce about past times. Residents at Southway come from various places, between Llantwit Major and St. Mellons, so that they are not necessarily locals of Cowbridge. Nonetheless I wondered whether there was any possibility of members of the Cowbridge History Society associating themselves with a project based on the residents of Southway? I know that in the past the Society has taped and typed the reminiscences of several elderly people. In Southway you have people on your doorstep. It is possible that some of the reminiscences may not amount to much, on the other hand it seems to me that we have here the opportunity of the History Society perhaps gathering a certain amount of useful information, while at the same time providing a useful therapy for the old people, and involving the Society itself in a useful project relating to part of the community.

I know that it is often difficult to persuade members to undertake something active, but I push out this idea, just in case there might be a single person who could make a start.

Is anyone interested?

Our Secretary has received the following advert, which may be of interest:

Are you looking for a short holiday with a difference? The Industrial Heritage Break gives either you or a club member the chance to join other people with your interest and see the more famous features of industrial development of the North.

How early did coal mining develop? Where and when was rail used for transport? Which is the oldest railway bridge? These and other questions will be answered with the help of Frank Atkinson, Director of Beamish Museum. Frank has designed these weekends to show particularly how the Coal, Lead and Rail industries have developed and still allow you time to explore the beautiful City of Durham, which will be your base for the weekend.

Demand is high and places are strictly limited, so book early. Cost includes all meals from Friday Dinner to Sunday Lunch with an extra night's Dinner, Bed and Breakfast available for as little as £18.00 each. Either telephone (0783) 294666, Department PAJ1, or write for further details of these weekends -

March 9/10/11	Durham - Three Tuns	£65.00
April 27/28/29	Durham - Three Tuns	£65.00
October 19/20/21	Durham - Three Tuns	£65.00

to: Swallow Activities, Department PAJ1, Freepost P0 Box 8 Sunderland SRI 3BR.

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN !

It must have taken a lot of courage in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to decide to cross the Atlantic in a small sailing vessel, when the time taken for the crossing would be long, the food supply limited, the probability of storms great and the possibility of death ever-present. That, however, is what the Bevan family of Tref-y-rhyg near Llantrisant did in 1685. John Bevan was a most moving preacher in Welsh; he and his family were Quakers, and became interested in William Penn's settlement in Pennsylvania - and so they emigrated to the 'Welsh Tract' where large numbers of Welshmen purchased land on an extensive scale. Twenty-one years later, John Bevan, his wife and youngest daughter returned - but the other Bevans left behind in America may well have bumped into, or at least attended the church services of, the first missionary appointed by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to non-English settlers. Now he was a Llanblethian man, Henry Nichols by name - the son of that long-serving and long-suffering vicar of Llanblethian, Jonathan Nichols, who was vicar from 1665 to 1717.

Henry was born on April 1st 1678. He was educated at Cowbridge Grammar School, just after the school had been bequeathed to Jesus College, Oxford, by Sir Leoline Jenkins, himself an Old Boy of the School and a former Principal of Jesus. Thus it was not surprising that young Henry went up to Jesus College in 1597. Now in Sir Leoline's will, it was laid down that two fellowships were to be founded at Jesus, open to those born in the dioceses of St Davids and Llandaff, preference to be given to scholars of Cowbridge School. (These fellowships, alas, do not exist today.) The holders were to take Holy Orders, and either go to sea as Naval chaplains if summoned by the Lord High Admiral of England - or if not required for that service to go to the colonies if called upon by the Bishop of London. The first two fellows were appointed in 1702; they were both Old Boys of Cowbridge. One was Robert Powell, later to be headmaster of the School; the other was Henry Nichols.

However, the Lord High Admiral did not issue a summons - but the bishop of London did call upon the Revd Henry Nichols, B.A. Oxon., to minister to the Welsh and English communities in Chester, Pennsylvania. So he too had to make the perilous journey to the American colonies as the Bevans had done. He served Chester and the other Welsh settlements at Concord, Radnor and Montgomery in Pennsylvania from 1703 to 1708, and converted many Quakers and people of other faiths to the Church of England.

As a Welsh-speaking minister, however, Nichols was not a success. His command of Welsh was poor - not surprisingly, as even at this time Cowbridge and Llanblethian were among the most Anglicized parts of the Vale - and the settlers made sure the Bishop of London was aware of the problem. " I have been very much called upon by the Welshmen in Pennsylvania who are pretty numerous, and some of them understand not a word of English", he wrote in 1707, "... they beg they may have one sent over to them that can preach in Welsh".

So in 1708, Henry moved to become rector of St Michael's, Talbot County, Maryland, on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, where he died in 1748. He married twice, and had six sons, and was no doubt happier with the English-speaking congregation in St Michael's than he had been in the 'Welsh Tract' of Pennsylvania.



A. J . L. A.

SOCIETY EXCURSIONS

Sat., April 28: Aberdulais Copper Works
(2.30 - 4.30; pub nearby for lunch; may be muddy; guided - we hope - by Richara Keen.

Sat., June 2: Bowood House. Calne, Wilts -
house, Capability Brown garden, art gallery, etc.
Coach leaves C. Town Hall 9.00; back 8ish.
Restaurant & cafeteria. Details - Barbara Toogood.