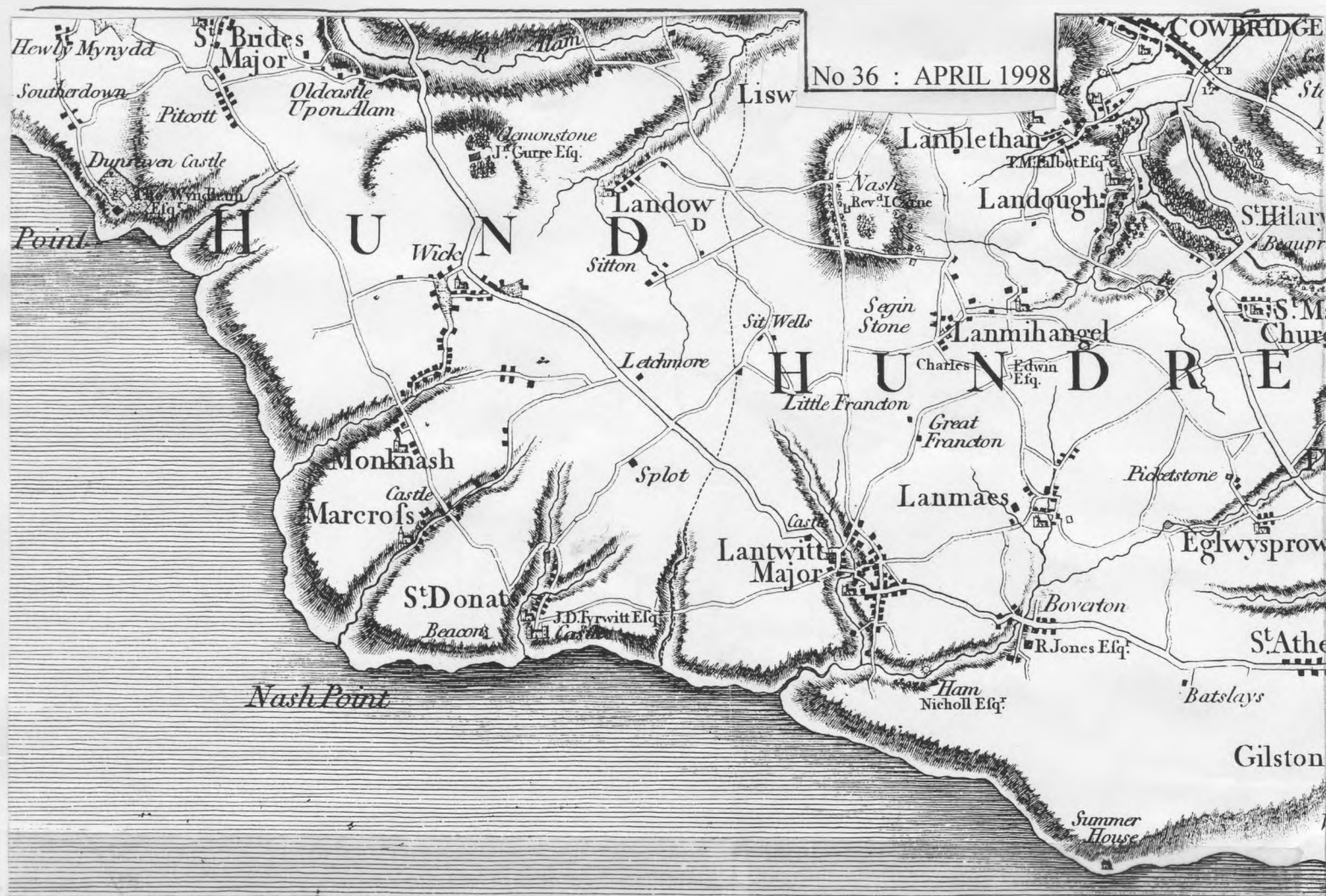


# COWBRIDGE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### OFFICERS, 1997-8

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Chairman: Jeff Alden, 773373  
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01443 228889  
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Haynes, 772415  
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Committee: Betty Alden, Arlene Boulton,  
Nicole Burnett, Gwynneth Keay, Bruce  
McGovern, Dorothy Sewell, Val  
Shannon, Iris Simpson, Viv Whythe.

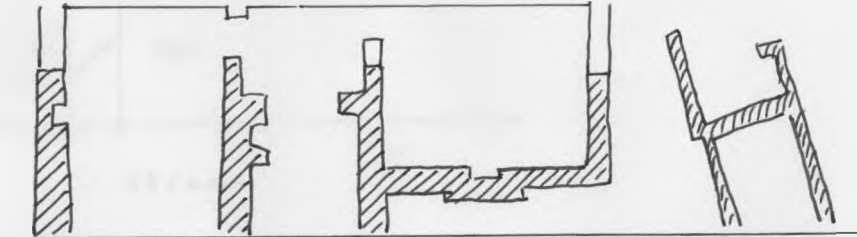
**Spring Bank Holiday** weekend will see the celebration of the centenary of the death of Geo T. Clark:  
Sat May 23 at 2pm - Centenary Service at St Anne's Church, Talygarn; the preacher will be the Bishop of Llandaff. All are welcome at this service and also at the garden party in the grounds of Talygarn House, starting at 3pm. Throughout the weekend there will be a flower festival at St Anne's.

**Saturday, July 11 - Roman Theme Day** at the Cowbridge & District Museum (see article in this newsletter)

**Friday, September 11th** - first meeting of the 1998-9 season; put the date in your diaries now!

## OLD HALL, COWBRIDGE

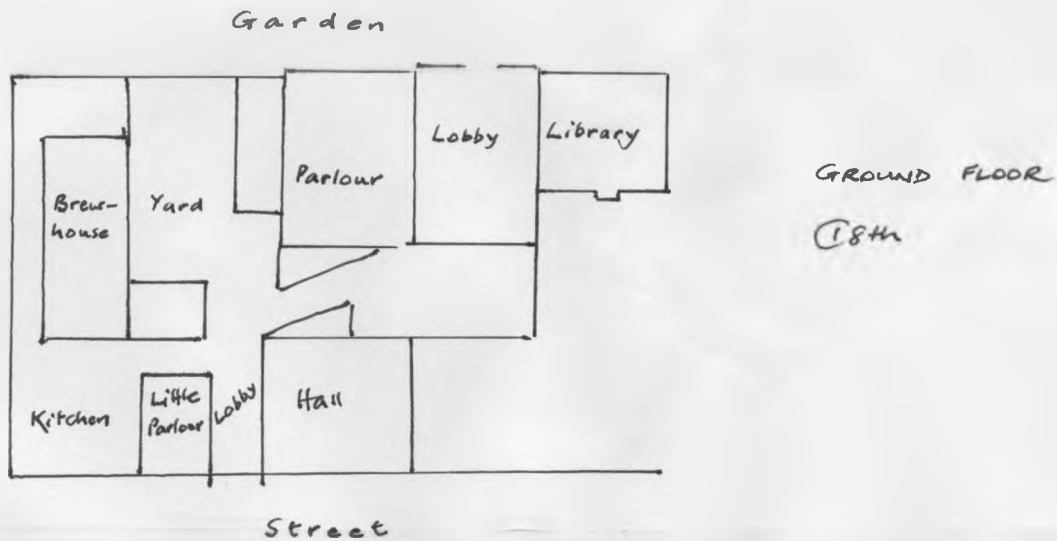
Have you ever considered what was the purpose of the stonework which is outlined in the paved area outside Old Hall - between the Adult Education Centre and the walls which formed the facade of the eighteenth century building? It looks like this:



The building - which had been used by the Grammar School - was deemed to be unsafe in 1964. The architect's report in 1970 confirmed evidence of death watch beetle, powder dust beetle and woodworm, with wet and dry rot throughout the building. There was cracking and spoiling of stonework particularly on the garden front; major structural cracking indicating movement of the garden elevation wall; the roof structure of the main block was unsafe. "The building is in a very poor state." So only the lower part of the exterior wall on the garden side was preserved, and the internal walls in that part of the building were demolished - but the bases of the walls and the outlines of the rooms are what we see today.

This article is an attempt to trace the development of the house from the time of its construction in the seventeenth century, and to show the changing uses to which the rooms were put.

In the early house, the RCAHM envisage the main room, the hall, as being on the left hand side of the building when looking at it from the street - i.e. next to where Barclays Bank is today (but separated from the bank building by a narrow passage. There is still one small seventeenth century window visible in the wall overlooking the passage). There were other rooms on the street side, and behind; but by the mid-eighteenth century the Edmondes family had added a suite of rooms with a Classical frontage and venetian windows on the garden side of the building. In an inventory of 1762, done for John Edmondes, we find a library, hall and two parlours, a well-equipped kitchen and brewhouse, and ten bedrooms (but only three of which could be considered to be elaborately furnished, the remainder, presumably, being for the children and the servants). Of interest in the two lobbies are two orange trees in tubs, and a Sedan or bath chair - which gives us an idea of life in Cowbridge at that time. There were lots of maps, prints and pictures on the walls, curtains on the windows of the main rooms, and enough good furniture and china to show that this was the home of a family which was comfortably well-off. We can also make a pretty good stab at working out which room was which.

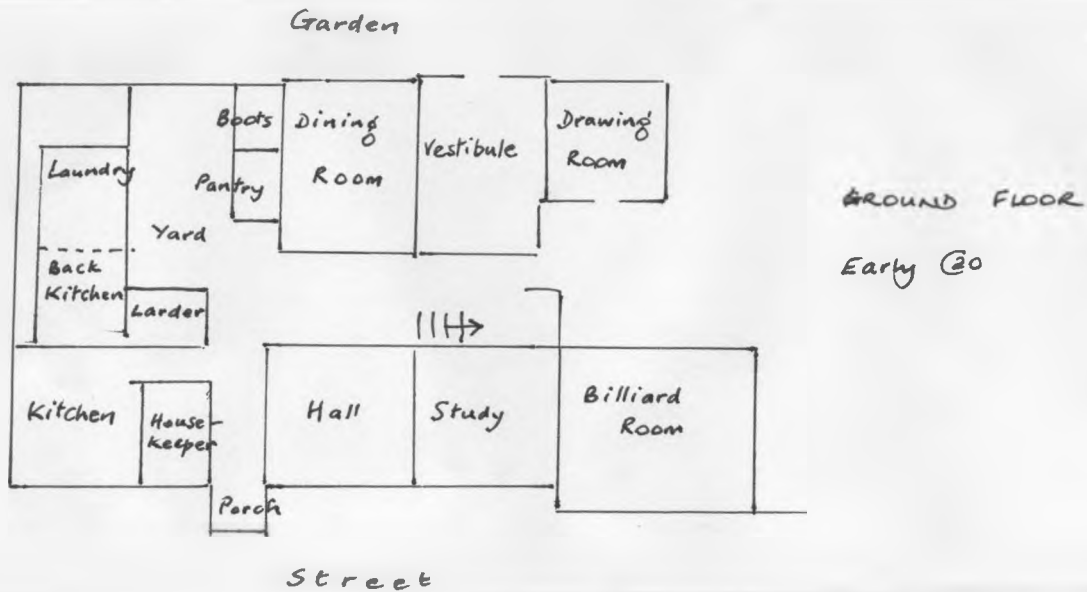


A watercolour of the middle of the nineteenth century shows the Classical frontage overlooking a pleasant garden, with croquet hoops on the lawn in front of the building (no pond or sunken garden then). The Archdeacon's diaries, to which I made reference in an earlier newsletter, describe Archdeacon Edmondess playing croquet with his father, the Revd Thomas Edmondess, on summer afternoons on the lawn.



A photograph taken later in the century shows the street side of Old Hall, with a small porch, oriel window above, a doorway on the left (Barclays) side of the building, all separated from High Street by a low ornate fence linking impressive stone pillars. Study of the census returns for 1861 and 1881, together with plans of the building before the changes near the turn of the century, suggest that not all the building was occupied by the Edmondess family - but that the Stockwoods (of Woodstock House opposite) used the right hand side as a sort of overspill for younger married members of their family. It is likely that this part of the building is an early nineteenth century addition to the main block. The stables beyond (where the flats are today) housed a variety of vehicles - hansom, gigs and dog carts - and the horses.

After the death of Revd Thomas Edmondson came a major rebuild of the street frontage of Old Hall in a heavy Tudor style; the new porch being faced with stone, as was the north-west gable in that part of the building which had been used by the Stockwoods. The major changes internally were the addition of a study and billiard room, with bedrooms above, in this "new" part of the building.



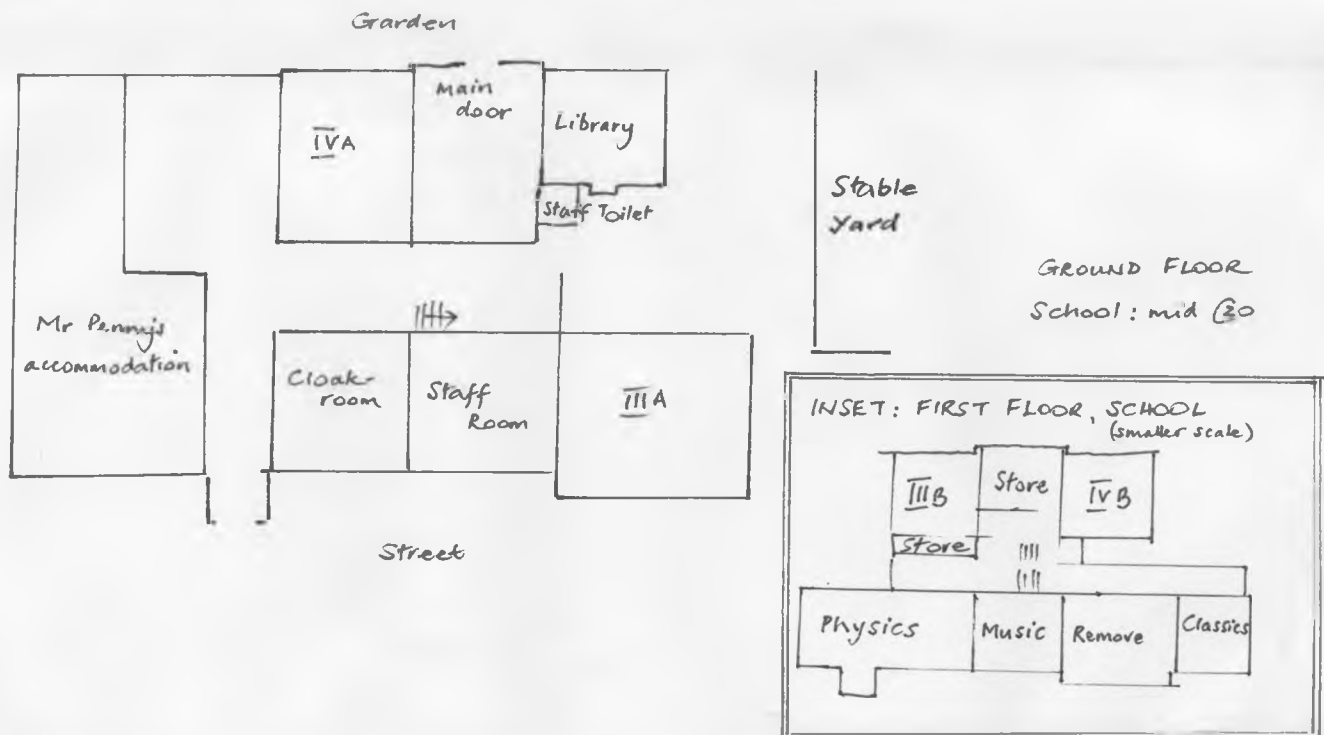
The Edmondson family continued to live in Old Hall until the late 1920s; but then came a major change.

The increase in the number of pupils at the Grammar School made it essential that more classrooms were provided, and so the school moved into Old Hall in January 1932. Initially, a new Physics laboratory, an extra staff room and a changing room were provided; however, the *Bovian* of December 1933 recorded "the migration of IIIA to the upper region of Old Hall, and IIIA in its turn has caused the banishment of IIIB to the old nursery. We hope this is in no wise a reflection on the work of the Lower Third, and we are ready to believe that those pictorial representations of nursery rhymes, that do so much to break the monotonous mural expanse of green, have been considered unworthy of notice by at least one member of the form." Eventually five form rooms, the Physics lab, a Music room, and the library on the ground floor were in use. During the war, blast walls were erected on the garden side in front of the two ground floor rooms; otherwise the garden remained peaceful and beautiful, with a sunken garden where the lily pond is today, a grass tennis court where the library building is, and large trees - including beech, yew, monkey puzzle, mulberry and walnut. (Beyond the town walls, where the surgery car park now stands, was Mr Pratt's orchard, full of apple trees with lovely red juicy apples...)

Adrian Trotman, who was a pupil of the school in the 1940s, has worked out the plan for me, and has given me a lot of information about the building at that time - and

later, when he came back to teach there. Most of the left hand side (earlier the kitchen, larder and wash house, with servants' quarters above) was occupied by Mr Penny the groundsman and caretaker. On the ground floor, to the right of the porch on the street side (the former Hall) was used as a cloakroom, and was designated the air-raid shelter in war-time. Next to it was the staff room, with a wonderful carved mantelpiece (reputed to have been by Grinling Gibbons), and in the adjacent IIIA classroom was a stag's head on the wall - a souvenir of its days as a billiard room, with fine Delft tiles around the stove. There were also Delft tiles in the staff lavatory. The other main room on the ground floor, the library, had wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling shelves, white-painted and well-equipped with books; the room was mainly used for Classics teaching. Upstairs, the Physics lab occupied the room which includes the projection over the porch.

The stable yard was, certainly in the time of Mr Idwal Rees, used to garage the headmaster's car - and some of the outbuildings were used to store the many and varied props for the school play productions in the Town Hall, or earlier in the Pavilion.



So if we go back to the outlines of the rooms - there are in effect three main rooms shown. In the school they were IVA classroom, the entrance hallway and the library; in the nineteenth and twentieth century family home they were dining room, vestibule and drawing room; in the eighteenth century the great parlour, lobby and library. Before that, Old Hall was a smaller house, and these rooms did not exist! In the present-day adult centre, the only room which preserves some fragments of the earlier house is the large room upstairs, over the porch, where the massive fireplace is clearly visible.

A.J.L.A.

## History of St Quentin's Castle : Extract II

Guy de Saint Quentin was a minor 'seigneur' based at Saint Quentin d'Elle, about 12 kms North-East of St Lo in Normandy.

It is not possible to know the extent of his land holdings, but they certainly extended to the village of Couvans, which is 5 kms away. Guy's holdings also included some of the Cerisy Forest of which a large area still exists.

Guy's feudal lord was Bishop Odo of Bayeux, the half-brother of William the Conqueror and later Earl of Kent. A near neighbour was the Baron of Creully, Robert Fitzhamon, who was later to employ the Saint Quentins in the conquest of Wales.

There is a castle at Saint Quentin d'Elle but this is of a much later period and was built by a family called Dodin who assumed the name of Saint Quentin.

However, in the grounds of the castle there are the remains of a medieval chapel which has now been carefully restored by the castle's owners, the Levard family.

The chapel is orientated E-N-E and W-S-W in such a way that on Saint Quentin's day (31st October), the setting sun, shining through the doorway, will illuminate the altar.

The people of Saint Quentin d'Elle have enthusiastically followed the research here into the Saint Quentin family and a panel in the chapel traces some of this history which has resulted. The floor contains what are

probably two very large gravestones now worn smooth.

Guy de Saint Quentin left another record. Towards the end of his life, as was often the custom of the time, he entered the church as a monk.

He chose the nearby Cerisy Abbey, which had originally been founded by St Igor in the 6th century and was refounded in 1030 by Robert, Duke of Normandy, the father of William the Conqueror. In 1040, William's own charter placed the Abbey directly under the jurisdiction of the Pope.

Guy gifted the tythe of Couvans to the Abbey. More recently, Couvans was to become better known as the centre of the murderous 'Battle of the Hedges' fought during the liberation of Normandy in 1944.

Cerisy Abbey still stands to-day. A magnificent, almost white stone building, with a backdrop of green fields. It is remarkable for the lightness and delicate lines of its structure. The protestants sacked the Abbey on Whit Sunday 1562 and it gradually declined further until the work of restoration was started at the beginning of this century. As indicated in the Michelin Green Guide, it is 'well worth a visit'. The view from below, on the other side of the village pond, is particularly striking.

What is very significant is that Guy's charter to Cerisy Abbey is witnessed by William and Mathilda, not as the Duke and Duchess of Normandy but as King and Queen of England. This is some indication of the importance the Saint Quentins were to take in the service of William during and following the Conquest.

Guy had two sons. The first of these was Alured. The only trace of him is a second charter, which Alured made, confirming his father's earlier charter. He did this before he also entered Cerisy Abbey as a monk.

Despite a considerable amount of research in several places in Normandy, the National Archives, the Mazarin Library and the National Library in Paris, very little further history of the Saint Quentin family in France has come to light. Unfortunately the bulk of the Manche Department archives were destroyed during the bombing in 1944.

In 1120 there was a William de Saint Quentin in Normandy and an Osbert paid 20 shillings in tax in 1198. In 1263 another William seems to have been associated with Robert de Sorbonne who gave his name to the Paris University.

The absence of any important activity by the Saint Quentins in Normandy is probably explained by the considerable Saint Quentin interests amassed across the Channel. These were initiated by Guy's second son Hugh.

Later, in 1204 when King John lost Normandy, the Saint Quentins were probably amongst the Anglo-Norman knights who decided that the cost of trying to protect their Norman possessions was not compatible with the time, effort and money required. Their interests were best served by developing what they had here.

Hugh de Saint Quentin's name appears, as a companion of William the Conqueror, on the three rolls of Dives, Falaise and Battle Abbey.

*To be continued...*

George Haynes

## COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT MUSEUM ROMAN THEME DAY SATURDAY JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> 1998

This year, "Roman Cowbridge" will be the theme for the summer openings of Cowbridge and District Museum. The season will start off with a Roman Day, which should prove to be a fun and educational day for all.

The Town Hall will come alive with a "Roman Experience" in the Main Hall, where visitors will have the chance to meet Secundus, a Roman Legionary Soldier and his wife Agrippina. There will be demonstrations throughout the day of a Roman Marriage, a Roman Feast around a triclinium, what a Roman Lady would use for makeup and military tactics and drill. There will be a chance for children and adults to dress up, taste Roman style food and have a go at various activities such as playing Roman children's games, making mosaics and grinding corn on a Roman Quern. There will be a temporary exhibition about "The Romans in Cowbridge" in the Lesser Hall and the Museum will be open as normal.

Anyone interested in helping with the preparation of the event or who can offer help on the day can contact Nicole Burnett on (01446) 773430.

### ST MARYCHURCH

Thanks to Douglas Turner for identifying the location of the Talbot Arms, mentioned in the last newsletter. It was at the side of the road leading into the village from the St Athan road (the Herberts side). No news of the Gwyns, though!

# A HISTORY OF COWBRIDGE POLICE

BY NICOLE BURNETT

In my dual roles as Curator of The South Wales Police Museum and Development Officer for Cowbridge and District museum, I have decided to combine the two and write a history of policing in Cowbridge.

## HOW THE POLICE BEGAN

Sir Robert Peel established The Metropolitan Police, the first professional police force in 1829.

Cowbridge fell within the catchment area of the Glamorganshire Constabulary which was formed in 1841, the first County Police force to be established in Wales. The Magistrates of the Quarter Sessions were responsible for the government of the County, and in 1839 the "County Police Act" was passed giving them the power to establish a police force paid for by the general county rate. For years the magistrates fought against the idea of a county wide force, they felt that the less affluent rural areas of the county would be unfairly forced to pay for the policing of the rapidly expanding industrial areas. It was also felt that rural communities had no need for a police force and that the old system of policing using annually elected parish constables was sufficient.

At this time Cowbridge was a part of a thriving agricultural area which was served by 6 Parish Constables. These men were both unpaid and untrained. Each was given a Truncheon and a Stave as "Staffs of Office", which acted very much like the Warrant Cards of today (These truncheons and Staves can be seen on display in the Council Chamber of Cowbridge Town Hall).

On the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1841, after much persuasion from the Second Marquis of Bute, the Magistrates of the Quarter Sessions resolved that :-

*"It has been made to appear that the ordinary officers appointed for preserving the peace within this County are not sufficient for the preservation of the peace and for the protection of the inhabitants and for security of property within this County"*

Therefore the Glamorganshire Constabulary was formed. The new force comprised of one Chief Constable, Captain Charles Frederick Napier, one Superintendent for each of the 4 divisions of the County, and 34 constables.



**Sergeant Thomas Thomas.**

**This image is taken from a daguerreotype measuring 2" by 2" in the collection of the South Wales Police Museum. In 1854 an advertisement was placed in the Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian stating that a Monsieur Jacquier a daguerreotype artist would be at the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge and that the first customer would be presented with a free miniature 2" by 2" image of themselves.**

**It looks likely that Sergeant Thomas made sure that he was the first in the queue on that day!**



## **SERGEANT THOMAS THOMAS**

Cowbridge belonged to the Ogmore Division and was initially policed by just one constable, thought to be a P.C. Adams. In 1853 he was replaced by Sergeant Thomas Thomas, who remained the Cowbridge Policeman until 1868. It is likely that Sergeant Thomas was a native of the area and he may well have been the same Thomas Thomas mentioned as a parish Constable at Penllyne before the force was formed. A description of Sergeant Thomas from the 1850s states

*"... Sergeant Thomas was a man of fine physique, who wore a Dark uniform and a tall glazed hat, generally known as a box hat. He lived at the base of the Town Hall on the western side, and the Justices Court was in the anteroom of the Hall, now the platform... .. This Sergeant Thomas was friendly with my father, and when I was a child I went with him to see the cells, when the Sergeant, as a joke closed the ponderous door and left me alone in practically total darkness, though only for a moment or two."*

These cells can still be seen today in their original condition, however, they now hold the town's museum as opposed to prisoners.

## **COWBRIDGE POLICE STATIONS**

The Cells were remnants from the days of the House of Correction or Bridewell, over which the Town Hall was built in 1829. Even in Victorian times they were thought to be outdated and inappropriate for police use as can be seen from the Chief Constable's Report below.

### *Chief Constable's Report 31<sup>st</sup> March 1859*

*"For some years the constable stationed at Cowbridge has been permitted to use the cells under the old Town Hall for police purposes. They are very damp and badly ventilated and without the usual convenience generally supplied to cells. After heavy falls of rain there is ½ inch or more of water on the floor and of course at these times the*

*cells are unavailable. I consider them as quite unfit for the temporary confinement of prisoners"*

At the Easter Quarter Sessions of 1859 the problem was discussed and it was resolved *"That a Police Station with cells and accommodation for two constables be erected at Cowbridge."*

By Michaelmas 1860 a parcel of land had been leased from Rev. Thomas Edmondes for £8 per annum for a Police Station. Finally in the November of 1862 Cowbridge's new Police Station was opened with three cells, and accommodation for two constables. Sergeant Thomas would have been the first officer to be stationed there.

Information for this article has been taken from the extensive South Wales Police archives held at the Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff.

South Wales Police Museum is situated at Police H.Q. Cowbridge Rd. Bridgend. Visits are by appointment only. For further information telephone (01656) 86931

## **CHAIRMAN'S NOTES**

This has been a successful year, with some excellent speakers (our thanks to Derrick Kingham for arranging such an interesting programme) and a very pleasing Charter Day celebration when everybody enjoyed the food provided by Mrs Bloy of The Cowbridge Kitchen. I would like to thank those who worked hard but unobtrusively behind the scenes on that occasion - and indeed at every meeting.

We could do with some more members, however: if you've enjoyed this year's events, tell your friends and get them to join! Ideas for changes, etc would be welcomed by any member of the committee.