

# HISTORIC SITE 'WELL' ON THE WAY TO RESTORATION

**WORK on the historical 'Salmon Wells' site in Penllyn has been forced to a temporary halt due to lack of funding.**

The Salmon Wells restoration project, chaired by Bryan Gillard of Penllyn, has been up and running for just over 12 months. Despite a great deal of clearing and restoration work having already been done, the project has run up against a brick wall until funding is received.

The project has applied to four different groups and will soon begin to get news as to whether it has been successful. Applications have been sent to the Community Action Self Help scheme, the Environmental Partnership, the Heritage Lottery scheme and the Prince's Trust - Bro. The project needs to raise around £8,500 to complete the necessary work.

The work that needs to be done includes covering the medieval path with a semi-permeable membrane to protect it from the elements, putting in new fencing,

allowing wheelchair access and having a large sign explaining the history of the site.

The wells, one of which has been there since medieval times, have been overgrown since the 1930's when Penllyn first received piped water. It is believed that at least one, possibly two, of the wells were put in by a farmer who owned Court Farm, the site of the wells, in 1700.

The land passed over to Dr William Salmon after the previous owner died and the doctor married his eldest daughter. During his time in control of Court Farm, he decided to renovate and confirm the use of the community wells for the villages of Graig and Penllyn.

Dr Salmon was a public spirited gentleman who also helped pay for local schooling and in 1883 he had the wells running for the local community. They became not only a vital source of water but also a meeting place for the villagers.

However their use does not stop there. For the first 30 years of this century, the



*The first well, closest to the road*

third well was used as a place for courting couples because, of the three, it is the least visible from the road.

These days the wells are on the land of Mr J Homfrey as part of Penllyn Court. Mr Homfrey has agreed to rent the land to Penllyn Community Council for a 25 year lease at a 'peppercorn' rent. Bryan Gillard, project chairman and Penllyn resident, told

The GEM of his gratitude: "We are very grateful because once the work has been done we can hand the wells over to the community council to look after their welfare."

The work that has so far been done to the site has been carried out by two groups of people. The less specialised work, lifting, carrying and the like was undertaken by residents of Penllyn. For the more tech-

nical work, retired archaeologist Raymond Caple who lives in Penllyn, enlisted ex-colleagues from the Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Society to help.

Between them, the wells have been brought to the point whereby the expertise of stone masons and similar professionals are needed to complete the job. That is where the funding is needed.

# Well, well, well, what an achievement!



*Mr Smith, helped by two willing assistants, cuts the ceremonial tape.*

Picture by  
IAN DIXON

**THE** historic Salmon Wells at Graig Penllin are again open to public gaze – thanks to the vision and hard work of a small group of dedicated folk.

Led by local historian Brian Gillard, with help from archaeology experts and craftsmen and supported by the Prince's Trust, Cadw and the Heritage Lottery, the project was finally unveiled at a small official ceremony last week.

Vale of Glamorgan MP John Smith ran the gauntlet of a lengthy traffic jam to arrive in time to cut the ceremonial tape (above), in

front of supporters, villagers, official representatives and other VIPs.

Earlier, Mr Gillard gave a fascinating account of the lengthy campaign to restore the three wells once the main source of water for a widespread rural community, and one of which dates back to the 14th century.

Mr Smith paid glowing tribute to the local community's sterling work to help preserve such a vital part of the Vale's rich heritage.

*(See article by archaeologist RF Caple on page 3).*