

**Old  
Cowbridge**



### 3: The Great House, Cowbridge

One of the most charming features of Cowbridge High Street is its row of individual shops nestling under the high built houses - but what of the houses themselves? It is easy to miss the distinctive attraction of these buildings and with them interesting features of Cowbridge's history. This is certainly true of the Great House - the ground floor of which is probably better known as the chemist's shop until recently the business of Mr E.T. Griffiths, who still lives above it.

The Great House, which was probably built in the sixteenth century but may even be older, has had as many additions to the structure as changes of occupants and use. It was first owned by the Carne family who also owned Nash Manor and much of the land in the district - they may even have had links with Corntown (Carnetown?) near Ewenny. There was an important motive in their owning the Great House as it enabled them to acquire borough and voting rights.

During its vague and often fragmented history, the Great House has had several links with education. At one point it accommodated a respectable school for young ladies run by the Misses Culverwell, who had organised the school's move from Eastgate. Earlier than this - in 1764- Daniel Durel, headmaster of the Grammar School, bought the house for £256..5s. From that time the house continued its close association with the Grammar School, as Durel's daughter married John Franklen and the Great House remained in the possession of their descendants including Richard Franklen. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was the property of Sir Thomas Mansel Franklen of St Hilary. He conveyed to the Glamorgan County Council those parts of the house which made up 32-38 High Street for the use of the Grammar School.



In this way part of the Great House became Franklen House, the boarding house of the Grammar School, holding about 20 boys. Part of its garden was given over to the school tennis court, which proved useful to late risers, who could nip across it into the back of the school. Even today the top floor of the Great House remains much as the boys left. There even exists in one room an early fire escape - a contraption of ropes and pulleys to lower the boys out of the window. The unfortunate boys of the second room had only a rope for their escape!

Meanwhile the other parts, i.e. No 32, were handed down in the Franklen family. Its ground floor was used as an Art school and the wall panels (still to be seen inside the dental surgery entrance) are to be noted, for many of the works were displayed there; some may still exist.

About 1946, the ground floor was taken over as a chemist's shop - which Mr Griffiths took over in 1966; it is continued today by Mrs Sylvia Williams.

Each century has left its mark, not only in the history of the house but in remaining features. In No. 32 there is still a kitchen pump connected to a well, while No. 34 has a well in its disused cellars, but a newly built kitchen. The two stone balls (like those of Old Hall) which now lie somewhat obtrusively in the back garden once crowned the seventeenth century roof line, but had to be removed as they were a danger to the passers-by below. Gone too are the iron railings - taken for scrap in the war.

The room which maintains the most atmosphere of the Great House in its early days is the sitting room. The tall windows overlooking the High Street, the high, beamed ceiling complete with chandelier hook, and the craftsmanship of tongue and groove flooring all retain an air of gracious living. Behind the present fire is an ingle-nook fireplace in which many local historians, as well as a group from Aberystwyth, have shown great interest. Even such small features as the L shaped, handmade door hinges reflect some aspect of the past.

Each room is linked by flights of steps signifying the four levels of structure. These constructions are better seen from the back of the house. Outside also, the thickness of the walls and the traces of an archway, apparently Norman in style, can be examined, and adjoining it an archway connected to the neighbouring house has the more recent assurance of a construction in 1832 - explained on its stone tablet.

So much of the history of the Great House could have been lost through time, yet a great deal remains: the Great House is a fine 'town house' of which Cowbridge should be proud.

(Many thanks to Mr and Mrs Griffiths for their

help and hospitality.)

Caroline Inson and Julie Curtis.

C O W B R I D G E    Q U I Z

- 1. From what century does the original Cowbridge charter date?
- 2. What was the name of the Roman station said to be sited at Cowbridge?
- 3. What is the alternative name for the South Gate?
- 4. How many bells are there in Cowbridge church tower?
- 5. When was St Quintin's castle built?
- 6. Why is Old Factory Road, Llanblethian so called?
- 7. By what name was Edward Williams the stonemason better known?
- 8. Where was he buried?
- 9. When was Glamorgan's first printing press established in Cowbridge?
- 10. When was the old Town Hall demolished?
- 11. When was Old Hall converted into a community centre?
- 12. Where did the congregation of the Ramoth chapel first hold their baptisms?

(Answers on page 6)

Julie Curtis.



## SCOUTS AND GUIDES

The Scouts are involved in many different kinds of activities, and excursions. Their most recent trip was a visit to Bridgend Police Museum. At the moment some of the older boys are looking forward towards receiving their mountaineering badge. During the winter months they tackled six of the hills of the Brecon Beacons, and on March 4th, they climbed to the highest peak there - Pen y fan, via the most difficult route, the upper snow-field gully.

They are in the middle of repainting the Institute, their meeting-place, to prepare for a service project. The senior boys are planning to camp in the Gower for four days around Easter, but the most time-consuming task at present is preparing for a district Patrol competition, which will be held in April. This will include all sorts of tests on scouting activities such as map-reading, first-aid, cooking, compass work, knots, etc.

The group will be setting up camp in the Forest of Dean, during the first week of the summer holidays. Their contribution towards Cowbridge Week will be to man the hot-dog stalls (promising that this year they won't serve up half-raw sausages,) and they will also build some sort of weird and wonderful contraption for the Carnival field.

There are now 36 members, who meet every Thursday, and welcome newcomers! They badly need to start a third cub-pack, to cater for the impatient, young outdoor enthusiasts, but they need another cub-leader. So if you are prepared to take control about two dozen 8 to 11 year olds, contact Rodney Ferriman at Cowbridge 2417.

The Guides movement of the district is also a hive of activity. On February 22nd the Guide and Brownie Groups of Cowbridge and the surrounding areas met in the Town Hall to hold a 'thinking day' celebration. Each group represented a different country; for example, the third Guide group was representative of Greece, and so they learned a Greek modern dance, a Greek guide song, and hung Greek friezes on the walls of the Town Hall.

Recently the first Guide group had a sale of work which raised £91.50 for the Guide Friendship Fund, and two girls were chosen to travel to the Guide H.Q. in London to present the cheque to the representative of the Institute for the Deaf. A 'Pie and Pickle Lunch' and a book sale are also planned for the near future, and of course all groups will be going on a summer Welsh adventure camp, which will leave them with some outdoor training and camping experience!



### OTHER CLUBS IN COWBRIDGE

COWBRIDGE BOWLS CLUB meets at the Town Hall; competitions usually take place on Sunday afternoons, and according to general report "there is never a dull moment." They play in two sessions, with 30 to 35 members playing during each session. Look out for a special competition during Cowbridge Week.

THE GINGERBREAD CLUB is specifically for one-parent families and is open to both men and women. The group meets every Tuesday at members' homes, and once a month they have a special speaker to visit them at Old Hall. For the summer, they have plans for a barbecue and for a treasure hunt. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact Mrs Sue Kent at Cowbridge 4654.

Debra Williams.



## CRICKET

1st Innings	To
Border	14
and b Haug	59
c Wright b Bowler	16
Haug	44
Hogg (sub) b	

With summer just around the corner (?), the members of Cowbridge Cricket Club are now looking forward to the 1979 cricket season. Members of the club have been attending indoor nets at Cardiff and Bridgend during the winter months, but all are hoping that the weather will improve soon so that they can use the outdoor nets at the Athletic Ground, and so be ready for the matches to be played.

The season opens on Saturday 28th April, and on the following day the Club is away to St Fagans in the first round of the Haig National Village Championship.

Derek Cleaver, son of the well-known Welsh Rugby international, is the captain of the 1st XI again this season, while Keith Wetherall is the skipper of the 2nd XI. The Club also fields a Youth XI, with matches played mid-week. This XI plays in the Bridgend and District Cricket Youth Association, and also in matches arranged by the W.C.C.C.

New players will be welcomed. When the weather improves, nets will be held at the Athletic Club, on evenings to be arranged. Matches are also played mid-week, with quite a few against clubs who are touring South Wales.

The Club is looking for a lady or ladies who will assist with teas provided at home matches - to make the tea, and afterwards clear away. Any volunteers? - for further details, please contact the Hon. Secretary.

C.A.

### FAME AT LAST

The BBC made the long journey from Cardiff to talk to two of our veteran contributors. The interview, and talks with a number of Cowbridge people, will be broadcast in Noreen Bray's programme between 10.30 and noon on a Tuesday, probably in April. The programme is a kind of Welsh 'Down Your Way' - 'Up your alley'? - and has some magnificent record requests between the talks.

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### WHAT'S ON IN COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT

#### FENCING LESSONS

are held on Fridays, 6.30pm to 8.30 pm at Llanilltud Fawr Comprehensive School. For details, contact Dr G.A. Kingston, Llantwit Major 2833. (Minimum age: 11 years.)

#### THE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

welcomes anyone interested in walking; for details, contact Mr Bill Whitelegg, Llantwit Major 2434.

#### WELSH AND MARCHES GOAT SOCIETY (Glamorgan Area)

hold instructional monthly meetings at Ty Dafydd Goat Farm, Bonvilston. For information, phone Mr B.J. Gulliver, Bonvilston 363.

#### A NEW YOUTH CLUB

has started on Sunday evenings in the Institute, behind the Town Hall. Meetings start at 8pm. For further details ring Rev. Neil Davies, Cowbridge 2213.



## INDUSTRY AT MISKIN?

The original proposal for this 174acre industrial development project, to include industrial warehousing, came from the landowner himself, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, M.P., of Miskin Manor. The Land Authority Wales has already made three separate planning applications for the land and is now seeking compulsory purchase powers. The proposals are being supported by Taff-Ely District Council and also by Mid Glamorgan County Council.

The public enquiry into the scheme, adjourned on February 9th, will be re-opened on May 1st, when South Glamorgan County Council will present the case against the proposals. All members of the public are welcome to attend.

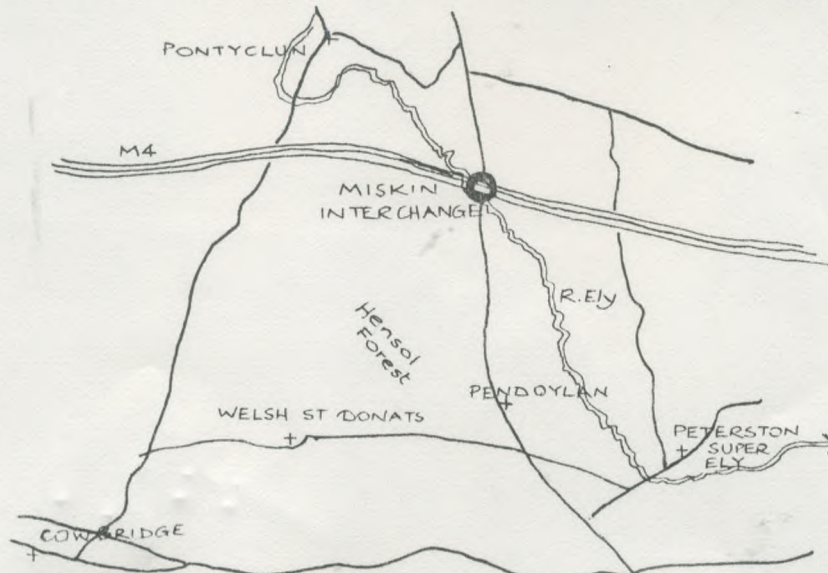
The plans are being strenuously opposed by pressure groups, such as the Vale Residents Action Committee; the plans have met with what can only be described as universal opposition from the Community Councils of Welsh St Donats, Pendoylan and Peterston-super-Ely, the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales and the Association of Local Councils.

The objectors maintain that the proposed development would have a detrimental effect on the various features of the site - the areas contains trees subject to preservation orders, a scheduled ancient monument, and a site defined as being 'of special scientific interest' by the Nature Conservancy. They state that it would constitute a major intrusion into this part of the Ely Valley, identified by the Countryside Commission as "being particularly important in landscape terms".

On the local authority front, the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council is joining with a number of local authorities in Mid Glamorgan in opposing the applications. Councillor Tony Williams, Chairman of the Vale Borough Council Planning Committee, which has unanimously agreed to oppose the plans, said that the far-reaching proposals were a matter of concern for the entire Vale, as well as those areas directly affected. To give the go-ahead to this huge "general industrial development" would set a major planning precedent which would, if approved, give carte blanche for almost any type of further industrial development, no matter how objectionable.

"There is no doubt that this proposed industrial development in this isolated area at Miskin can only proceed at the expense of other industrial sites in far more suitable locations, many of which have the benefit of existing planning permission for industrial use," he said.

It is clear that South Wales needs more industry; it is apparent that a site next to a motorway interchange is much more attractive to industrialists than some of the coalmining valleys where unemployment is so high. However the comparatively unspoilt Vale is not only a pleasant place in which to live, it is one of the attractions that Cardiff and the valleys can offer their residents, and is important agriculturally. The inspector's role at the enquiry, in evaluating the arguments of both sides, is crucial: we hope he makes the right decision!





A discussion group for young people has recently been formed in Cowbridge. It meets at the home of Rev. Neil Davies in Gray's Walk; the members so far are mainly Sixth formers at Cowbridge School.

The topics discussed to date have been on a religious theme - one such topic was 'The attitude of the Church towards divorce'. The group also invites people to come and talk on various subjects: a very interesting talk was given in January by 'Louise', a member of the Bridgend branch of the Samaritans.

The Group, however, does not only hold discussions. In February, we were shown around St Michael's College in Llandaff, and in the same month we visited the Cardiff New Synagogue, where we were given an informative talk by the Rabbi.

At either the beginning or the end of each meeting, everybody enjoys a cup of coffee and a general chat.

In April, the Group proposes to hold a 'Meditation on the life of Christ' in Holy Cross Church - we hope it will take place on Maundy Thursday, April 12, at 8 o'clock, and anyone wishing to attend will be most welcome.

Christine Charles.

CONGRATULATIONS .... to Tim Halpin of Llanblethian on winning an Exhibition to study Physics at Magdalen College, Oxford

.... to the Bontfaen recorder group who have won a place in the Urdd eisteddfod in the summer

.... to the Cowbridge All-Stars football team for their letter of commiseration from Buckingham Palace!

INTERCOM

Editor: J. Alden  
 Advertising: Caroline Inson  
 Contributions from Julie Curtis, Caroline Inson, Debra Williams, Irene Brown, Peter Davies, Sian Lock, Christine Charles and Colin Adams.  
 Correspondence to Julie Curtis, Cowbridge School.

The Red Cross 'Voluntary Aid Detachment' in Cowbridge was formed in 1916, though its numbers have fluctuated over the years. With the eight week training courses, members ensure the highest possible standards while on voluntary duty at public outdoor activities. During the summer months some members put in a hundred hours of service to meet the public need.

Ten beauticians who have been trained in Cowbridge, go out for 2½ hours weekly to work in two venues in the district. A ward at Hensol was been 'adopted' with Red Cross members becoming the 'family' for some elderly ladies. When the need arises the group supplies friendly visitors for the community; also, a Housebound Club and a club for young mentally handicapped adults have been established. The young cadets are now rehearsing a panto for April. Their ages range from 11 to 18, and they meet every Wednesday in Cowbridge at 6.30 pm. Due to lack of help, the young links, of 5 to 11 years of age, are limited in number. (Anyone interested in assisting or willing to train as a leader should contact Mrs Jean Roberts at Cowbridge 2179.)

The Red Cross Society relies on money given by the public to finance their activities, and the people of Cowbridge and district have been very helpful in this respect. The Society seeks to give service to the community, and relies on its members to perform such a service.

Sian Lock.

Answers to Quiz on Page 2.

1. Thirteenth.
2. Bomium or Bovium.
3. Porte Mellin.
4. Eight and a sanctus bell.
5. Early fourteenth century.
6. There was a flannel factory at the end of the road.
7. Iolo Morgannwg.
8. Flemingston.
9. 1770.
10. 1830.
11. 1974.
12. In the river Thaw.