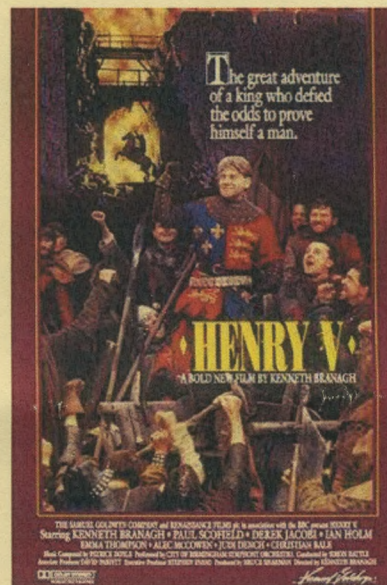


NEWSLETTER

of Cowbridge History Society

25th October is the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt

But who is the more convincing Henry V - Olivier or Branagh?



Autumn 2015

Cowbridge Connections

The previous newsletter once again bore fruit, and Betty Alden was approached by several members, resulting in her being able to piece together a biography of the mysterious Stacie Millman (author of the thesis we featured in an earlier newsletter). Stacie was the daughter of David Millman, grocer in 33 High St until the 1950s in the building that is now Lloyds Bank. Her sister, Nancy Millman, worked for Mrs Wadham at the delicatessen in the 1960s and/or 1970s (the shop is now Country Casuals). Nancy remained unmarried, and lived in one of the Butts cottages in later life.

One member, Diane Lloyd, tells us that she was taught in the 1950s by Stacie (married name Morgan) in the infants' department of Y Bont Faen primary school; Stacie would therefore have taught many people still living in Cowbridge who would know her as Mrs Stacie Morgan. Betty herself remembers Mrs Morgan in the 1960s when the Alden children attended Holy Cross Sunday school where she also taught. Her husband was organist at Holy Cross church and they lived in Eastgate; Stacie later lived in what is now called Thira Cottage, close to the police station. The Morgans had two children, a daughter and a son; Betty now recalls that it was through them that the Local History Studies Room acquired a copy of Stacie's thesis.

Thanks to everyone for helping us to join the dots!

Another of my queries was about interesting ancestors, and Patricia Price certainly came up with one. Patricia wrote:

I am not Welsh but I do have a somewhat tenuous connection through a gentleman who was a half-first cousin of one of my great-great-grandmothers, their respective fathers being half-brothers.

Originally from Cambridge, James Ebenezer Bicheno, who lived from 1785 to 1851, married a Welsh heiress called Elizabeth Lloyd in London in 1821. Sadly, she died in childbirth a year later and presumably the baby died with her. James lived on alone in South Cornelly. The house, named Ty Maen, was built in 1650. It was formerly a grange of Margam. I understand that it was demolished in more recent times to make way for the road to Porthcawl.

James became a partner in Maesteg Ironworks (again, presumably, using the money he inherited from Elizabeth) and - possibly through influence acquired this way - was later appointed Colonial Secretary of Van Diemen's Land, now of course renamed Tasmania. The town of Bicheno on Tasmania's east coast is named after him. He arrived there in 1843, and died there eight years later.



Editor's note: Further research has revealed that Mr Bicheno also has a bird named after him - "Bicheno's Finch", also called the "double-barred finch". Unfortunately I have no information as to whether he was a bird-watching enthusiast.

Meanwhile, the South Wales Record Society has issued a general invitation to the launch of its first bi-lingual publication, entitled "Cas Gan Gythraul: Demonology, Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Eighteenth-century Wales" This event will take place at Swansea Museum, Victoria Road, Swansea SA1 1SN, at its annual Book Fair on Saturday 24th October at 11am. The identity of its author, "T.P.", is unknown but this unique, relatively short, text offers the fullest treatment of witchcraft in Wales in the vernacular, during the early eighteenth century. It is edited with an introduction by Lisa Tallis.

Deborah Fisher
Publications Officer

Ivana Locke: an appreciation

Members of Cowbridge History Society were very saddened to hear of the death of Ivana Locke on 12 August. Ivana died in hospital after a short illness.

She was born and brought up in Aberbanc near Newcastle Emlyn, where her father was headmaster of the primary school. Her mother was also a teacher until the time of her marriage. After gaining a degree in Mathematics and Physics at Swansea University, Ivana moved to the London area, working in quality control at Mullards. She became the first woman graduate working for Phillips Electronics in the UK. She married in 1956 and in 1964 her daughter Sian was born. In 1966 the family moved back to West Wales but sadly Ivana's husband Peter died in 1974. She then worked as a laboratory supervisor until her retirement in 1985, when she left her much-loved Aberaeron and moved to Cowbridge.

Ivana soon began to play a very active part in the life of our community. She became a volunteer driver for the Meals on Wheels service and an accompanist for a ballet school. She was instrumental in setting up the Cowbridge branch of U3A and, as well as acting as its first Secretary, she contributed enthusiastically to several of its group activities. These included wine appreciation, history, Welsh conversation and walking (with the Strollers).

Her lifelong interest in history was reflected in her membership of the Cowbridge & District Local History Society and she was Treasurer for several years before it was subsumed into Cowbridge Record Society by the recent merger to become Cowbridge History Society. She was in addition a keen member of the Cardiff Archaeological Society. She also helped in setting up the Cowbridge Museum in the Town Hall.

In recent years Ivana had delved into her family history and suspected that her ancestry could be traced back (not on the right side of the blanket) to a daughter of King Henry VII. She took great pleasure in passing her love of history on to her daughter, who gained a degree in history at Exeter University.

The accompanying photograph of Ivana was taken during a visit to the historic Cardigan castle only weeks before she died. During the last fifteen years of our companionship we enjoyed many visits to places of historical interest.

Some of her happiest memories of town activities were from the years she spent as a member and 'behind the scenes' supporter of CADS. She was only ever persuaded to take one acting role. No words were involved but she had, I understand, to hit someone on the head with a rolled-up newspaper. I have no information as to how the performance went.

It was a great regret to Ivana that in recent years poor health meant that she was unable to pursue the interests she so much loved. She will be sadly missed by friends and colleagues as well as by her family, to whom we extend our sympathy.

David Pierce

Editor's note: Many of those reading this obituary will remember well how Ivana, as Treasurer, greeted members at the door of the Lesser Hall, and particularly how she guarded our meetings from interruption by noisy Freemasons using the upstairs hall. My personal memory is of the day of the guided walk of historic Colwinston, led by Philip Jones. At the first stile, Ivana was obliged to admit defeat. Being one of few adults I have known who are shorter than I am, she was simply unable to take the height of the step and asked Philip if he would be coming back the same way. He must have misunderstood the question, as we did not meet again for around 45 minutes, when the rest of the group arrived at the village church and I had to sprint up the road to find Ivana. Far from being offended, she was extremely amused by the episode; she had been watching us from her elevated position, as we trudged across the fields, with a growing realisation that we were not coming back for her!



Jeff Alden Prize: Local History Research Grants

For some years, Cowbridge History Society, under its previous title of Cowbridge Record Society, has sponsored the Jeff Alden Prize for schools, under the auspices of the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative. The results have been disappointing, as few school projects have been submitted on the subject of the history of Cowbridge and district, and on several occasions it has not been possible to make the award at all. The committee therefore decided that it had three options:

1. Amend the terms of reference of the Jeff Alden Prize to allow it to be awarded for projects on topics not related to Cowbridge. We felt that this option would stretch the boundaries of our constitutional obligations.
2. Increase the amount of the award to make it more attractive to schools.
3. Discontinue the association with WHSI.

After some discussion, the committee favoured the third option, with the proviso that the money previously earmarked for the Jeff Alden Prize be made available for another award, in keeping with the society's original objectives of encouraging research into the history of Cowbridge and district. It has therefore been decided to offer grants to individuals engaged in such research, with a particular emphasis on the educational aspect. The committee envisages applications from those needing assistance with expenses relating to their research, such as travel, stationery, etc.

Look out for a notice that will shortly appear in the Cowbridge Gem, explaining how individuals can apply for one of these grants.

Local History News

Cowbridge History Society is affiliated to the British Association for Local History, and receives their quarterly publication *Local History News*. Recent editions have included articles of general interest, including:

- "Keeping it all together", an account by Steven Hobbs of the difficulties of maintaining paper archives in good condition, which makes reference to the skills of former Glamorgan County Archivist Patricia Moore.
- A summary of Angus Winchester's lecture on "The local history of common land".
- "Will you share your local story from the Great War online?" in which Alun Edwards draws attention to the Europeana 1914-1918 website.
- Summaries of the activities of local museums throughout the country;
- News of conferences, lectures and other interesting events.

Contributions to our own newsletter can of course be sent to me, either through the Local History Studies Room, through CHS Secretary Dick Tonkin, or at P.O. Box 11, Cowbridge CF71 7XT.

And finally...

Following the success of last season's film show, the committee has earmarked the date of Wednesday 9th December for another such event. We invite our members to choose between the 1944 film of "Henry V", starring Laurence Olivier, and the equally notable 1989 film of the same name, starring Kenneth Branagh. It seems very likely that one or both will be shown on television in the run-up to the Agincourt anniversary, but seeing them on the big screen is quite a different experience. Please let us know what you think!

Deborah Fisher
Publications Officer

Some Recent Accessions to the Local History Studies Room

Betty Alden has been busy, as usual, accessioning new items brought into the Local History Studies Room recently and has sent us this report. The room, located in Old Hall, Cowbridge, was jointly funded by Cowbridge Record Society and Cowbridge Local History Society until the societies merged as Cowbridge History Society, and the united society continues to supply financial support to the efforts of Betty and her helpers.

Hilary Thomas donated a box of slides - photographs that she took around Cowbridge and Llanblethian mainly in the early 1960s; these were subsequently digitised by Frank Hartles, and are now part of our digital local history archive.

Two aerial photographs of Llandow airfield were lent to us by **Peter Merrick** - one taken by German aircraft in 1941 and the other by the RAF in 1946 (again now in the archive).

Monica Dennis of St Hilary has provided us with further information on the Ackland Allen family of that village. Monica continues to compile historical information to add to the village website.

Dave Gooding sent in photographs of Tyla Rhosyr and the surrounding area from his boyhood days there in the 1950s.

Alf Charles has spent hours identifying many of the Grammar School pupils on a 1938 school photograph (now placed in Glamorgan Archives). Alf started at the school that September term, at the same time as Idwal Rees became the new headmaster and the gymnasium and day boys' dining hall building was opened in Town Mill Road. The panoramic photograph has been scanned in sections, digitally 'stitched' together and can now be seen either as a whole, or in two parts for easier printing, with an accompanying document listing names (John Sherwood's work). [Note: You can also now hear Alf's voice, talking about his war experiences, when you visit Room 4 ("the war cell") in Cowbridge Museum.]

Other recent accessions have included:

- photos and documents from **Marion Eveleigh** (the co-founder and first curator of Cowbridge Museum), brought in by her daughter and by **David Pierce**;
- further 'Bovian' (Grammar School) magazines;
- three Grammar School and High school pupil photographs;
- a collection of material from Rodney Bird (which **Frank Hartles** is in the process of digitising).

When town centre properties become vacant, we seem to have a flurry of interest in their history and get contacted by e-mail, phone or in person. (I note 'Xantippe', 39 High St, is now empty, and feel that the interior of this building in particular is important to record before it is radically modernised).

Other recent visitors to the room have been Jane Harvey, daughter of CGS headmaster Idwal Rees, who lived in the grammar school building; and the granddaughter of 'Ma Hague', a Llanblethian "character", mentioned in our publication *Llanblethian Buildings and People*.

At the moment, the History Society's lap-top computer is being used for development and digitising, and this work will be ongoing for some considerable time. The hope is for the Society to have a separate computer in the History Room where people can search the archive - subject to funding! Meanwhile, you can browse through the archive folders (which include copies of all the above) on Wednesday mornings in Room 5 of Old Hall. Visitors, queries and helpers are always welcome.

Should you wish to view anything held on the Society's digital archive, which gradually continues to grow, please let me know and this can be arranged.

Betty Alden
bettyalden1@gmail.com
Tel: 01446 773373

Among the items on display in the Local History Studies Room are some vintage watercolour prints of local landscapes donated by **Lawrie Williams**, who has kindly agreed to allow them to be reproduced for sale. Samples can be viewed on request and are available to order at a price of £5 (A4) or £7.50 (A3). To see them, just visit the Local History Studies Room during opening hours or contact Betty Alden.

COWBRIDGE HISTORY SOCIETY Programme for 2015 - 2016

Meetings take place in the Lesser Hall, Town Hall, Cowbridge

Talks start at 7.30pm on the first Friday of each month unless shown otherwise. Members who have not already paid their annual subscription will have the opportunity to do so at the October meeting.

2015

- 2nd October "1815; Britain, Europe and Waterloo"
Don Gerrard and Patricia Price
- 6th November "Roman Catholics in South Wales in an Age of Persecution, 1603–1689"
Robert Matthews
- 4th December "Dispelling the myths: the career of Henry V, Agincourt and Shakespeare's hidden agenda"
Deborah Fisher
(with wine and mince pies to follow)
- 9th December Film show (see previous page)
Note: This is a Wednesday

2016

- 8th January "Cartooning the 1st World War"
Chris Williams
- 5th February "The Garden Suburbs of South Wales"
Dick Buswell
- 4th March "The Enigma of Richard III"
Professor Ralph Griffiths
- 13th March Charter Day Celebration Llansannor Court and St Senwyr's Church, with lunch at The Red Fox, Penllyn.
Note: This is a Sunday
- 1st April "Drovers, early Banks and the Tale of William Jones"
Beverly Tonkin
- 6th May AGM at 7.00, followed at 7.30 by:

"Dyffryn and the Cory Family"
Gwerfyl Gardner

Local history news items can be sent to dicktonkin@btinternet.com for potential publication in the next newsletter.