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BOOK LAUNCH: AN INVITATION

The Society's new book is to be launched on Tuesday, December 6th in the Lesser Hall of the Town Hall at 7.30pm. All members of the Society are invited to attend, and will be able to purchase copies of the book at the special discount price of £5 as opposed to the standard £6. Light refreshments will be served, and it should be - as is usual for our meetings - a most convivial evening. For members wishing to obtain the book by post, £6 should cover the cost. (Orders to Mrs JP Rawlins, 10 Mill Park, Cowbridge, CF71 7BP)

'HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW COWBRIDGE?'

This is the title of the book which marks a departure from the pattern of our past publications. It is of a larger format, 190 x 240mm, has 64 pages, and has a wealth of illustrations which are largely in colour. I have tried to emphasise the quality of many buildings in the town, and to give an outline of the history of Cowbridge, based on what can be seen in the town today. There are many short chapters; topics include sport, schools, places of worship, inns, road transport, the railway, the bridges, prehistoric and Roman Cowbridge, the charters, etc, etc. The last few chapters could be regarded as a kind of photo quiz of details of the buildings of the town, the aim being to try to see if you can identify the features before reading the descriptions. I hope the approach is enjoyable, and that readers will find the book stimulating and interesting.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Jeff Bird has donated the CADS minute book of 1932, the Cowbridge Mosquitoes cricket club minutes of 1932/3, and The Bull (the magazine of Cowbridge cricket club)

John Phillips has given photos of postcards and other cards.

John Lyons has given photos of the Ystradowen sawmills development, and of the Mari Llwyd in the Hare and Hounds, Aberthin, in 1988

Enfys Brown has donated photos of the 1986 Victorian Day.

Reg Whittle has given photos of Cowbridge Grammar school, especially of staff and the school play, and some of the early years of the Comprehensive School.

Pamela Robson has given miscellaneous mourning cards, and documents relating to the family of Miss E Hopkin

Jeff Alden has given photocopies and extracts of material from Jesus College archives.

COWBRIDGE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

For those members who do not live in Cowbridge, it may be worthwhile to add a comment on the changes in Church Street and in Old Hall gardens.

The restoration work on the Grammar School has come to a temporary halt, and there is still a great deal to do, but the building is now showing its potential. The facade has been cleaned and the upper storey has been repointed. The roof has been re-slatted with best Blaenau Ffestiniog slates. The chimneys have been expertly restored, sometimes with great difficulty, as those at the south end of the building were resting on wooden beams which had nearly rotted through. It is planned to reduce the height of the wall of the tally court so that the view of the church is enhanced. Inside, the carved fireplaces have been cleaned, and the details of doors and windows preserved. When completed, the building will look much as Prichard, the diocesan architect, envisaged it over 150 years ago: we await further developments.

Opposite the school, the Physic Garden (on the site of the old school kitchen garden) has progressed amazingly quickly. *Robert Cope writes:* Phase I of the project has been completed. This entailed clearance of the site, laying out the garden pathways and its geometric display, and the erection of a new Lias limestone west wall. This wall, two feet thick and nine feet high, provides the enclosure of the half-acre walled garden. Services have been installed below ground for water and for electricity. This represents significant progress towards the final target and has been achieved in the remarkably short time of twelve months. The next phase, for 2006, includes installation of mature trees, a central fountain, repair of the old walls and potting sheds - and planting. The Physic Garden Trust has produced an attractive Christmas card showing the Edmond's kitchen garden on this site in the

1920s; a packet of ten cards costs £5 and may be obtained from Cowbridge library.

The other enterprise in this area is the work of restoring the Town Walls around Old Hall garden. A sub-group of the Charter Trust has been formed to co-ordinate this work. The Vale Council has arranged for the ash trees close to the wall inside the garden to be felled, and the hazel coppice wood has also been cleared. Volunteers have been hard at work (10 to 12 every morning except Saturdays, new volunteers always welcome) clearing the ivy and other surface vegetation, so the wall can at last be seen. A detailed survey can soon be carried out; this will indicate the scale of restoration needed, and the costs involved.

This is the only surviving town wall in all the old county of Glamorgan; it is good to see so many people involved in the restoration work, and also in the Physic Garden Trust, as it shows that so many have a concern and care for their environment. The enthusiasm of the volunteers says a lot for Cowbridge.

CONTRIBUTIONS

My particular thanks to Luke Millar who has made a detailed study of the 1820 inventory of Llanblethian Cottage. This house occupied the site of the building which became the vicarage at the turn of the nineteenth century, and which is now known as The Old Vicarage. The inventory was made when Charles Courtenay was selling up and leaving the property; the source was the Throckmorton papers in Warwick Record Office.

I have added some material from the Jesus College archives, which I obtained on a visit organised by Robert Cope during last summer.

Should any members have material suitable for publication, I would welcome it!

Jeff Alden

LLANBLETHIAN COTTAGE INVENTORY, 1819

The attached transcription of this inventory is accompanied by a glossary and notes on those items which might be unfamiliar or require explanation to the general reader. Of several other gentry-house inventories of the same time or area, those from Old Hall, Cowbridge of 1762 and 1778 have been mainly chosen for comparison because some things had changed considerably during the intervening 40 years, and others notably had not.

As one might expect, the furniture was of different periods and styles, although the minimal descriptions made by the inventory takers often obscures such changes. So, a "mohogany chair" could describe two very different items at the two different times, but the "fancy chairs" in 1819 are very much nineteenth century things, as is the "sofa table", not made before about 1790.

The area where no particular differences are apparent is the domestic appliances, mainly trivial items of daily life which have a fascination for us because they seem to put us in touch with the intimate details of people's lives, which thereby seem more real to us. Some such things are specified in detail, such as Sheraton's descriptions of different sorts of tray. Others, such as brewing equipment and the methods one can deduce from them, would repay comparison with a wide range of inventories at different levels.

In general the inventory covers a comprehensive range of furniture and equipment, although rather short on carpets and curtains and entirely lacking tableware and silver. Curtains in particular were fashion items at the time, often elaborately draped on pole cornices or "French rods", with cord pulls. Presumably all these things were retained by the Courtenays.

An Inventory of Household Furniture etc. the property of C Courtenay Esq. sold by auction at Llanblethian on Wednesday the 4th day of August 1819 by John Aubrey Auctioneer

Note: original spelling has been retained throughout.			
1. 6 Pickling jars	0-4-6	20. Steelyard	0- 6- 0
2. 2 Tin coffee pots	0-1-5	21. 2 Knife trays	0- 1- 0
3. Coffee mill	0-4-5	22. 2 Japan waiters	0- 0- 6
4. Pair of iron candlesticks	0-0-8	23. 6 table mats	0- 2- 6
5. Tin candlestick, Snuffers & stand	0-1-2	24. Plate rack	0-11-0
6. Gridiron & 2 forks	0- 6- 0	25. Deal kitchen table	0-16-0
7. Iron footman	0-10-6	26. 6 Kitchen chairs	0-18-0
8. Two Iron boilers	0-10-0	27. 1 Clothes horse	0-11-0
10. Iron digester	0- 5- 0	28. 3 Green chairs	0-13-0
11. Two Iron saucepans	0- 4- 0	29. 2 Elbow Do.	0- 9- 6
12. Bell mettle kettle	0- 4- 0	30. Barometer	1-2-6
13. Tin saucepan and copper tea kettle	0- 4- 0	31. 6 Elbow chairs	1-13-0
14. Frying pan dripping pan & 2 skimmers	0- 5- 0	32. Mahy. card table	1-2-0
15. Japan canister & 1 Do.	0- 4- 6	33. Pier looking glass	1-10-0
16. Cheese bonnet & cullinder	0- 3- 6	34. Sett of fire irons, fender & hearth brush	0-7-6
17. 3 Flat irons & stand	0- 3- 0	35. Sett of mahy. tables	3-3-0
18. Iron box & stand	0- 3- 0	36. Mahy. card table	1-11-6
19. Brass warming pan	0- 6- 0	37. Do. Work table	0-12-0
		38. Do. Celeret	0-15-0
		39. Do. Sofa	4- 4- 0

40. Pair of curtains	0 - 7-0	87. Coal skurtle and box	0 -5- 0
41. Piece of carpeting	0-11-0	88. Plate basket and bellows	0 - 7- 0
42. 8 rush botom chairs	1-15-0	89. Chamber bucket & duster	0- 4- 0
43. A telescope	5-0-0	90. 3 Candlesticks	0- 3- 0
44. Sett of fire irons, fender & hearth brush	0-8-0	91. Pewter dish & 2 plates	0- 2- 0
45. Eight day clock	7- 7- 0	92. Coat jack	0-1-6
46. 2 clothes flasks	0- 6- 0	93. Stable bucket & 2 pails	0- 6- 3
47. Beech tent bedstead	2- 6- 0	94. 4 Doz. Of bottles	0- 8- 8
48. Bed wt. 76 lb. @ 1/6-	5-14- 0	95. 4 Doz. of Do.	0- 8- 8
49. Pair of blankets	0-10-5.	96. 4 Doz. of Do.	0- 8- 8
50. Mahy. Chest of drawers	3-13-6	97. Bottle rack	0- 5- 6
51. Wash hand standbasin & ewer	0-13- 0	98. Chopping board & knives	0- 2- 6
53. Deal dressing table	0- 4- 6	99. Stool and chairs	0- 2- 0
54. 2 Fancy chairs	0- 4- 0	100. Vat	0-14-0
55. Sett of fire irons, fender & hearth brush	0- 6-0	101. Cooler	0- 4- 6
56. Bed wt. 102 lb. @ 1/7 lb.	8- 1- 6	102. 2 Tubs	0- 6- 0
57. Do. Do. 38 lb. @ 1/6	2-17-0	103. Funnel, mashing stick & cross stick	0-2-0
58. Pair of blanketts	1- 6-0	104. Wheelbarrow	0-10-0
59. Bedside carpet	0- 9- 0	105. Large screen	0-14-0
60. Do. Do.	0-12-0	106. Handbarrow	0-4-0
61. Mahy. Bidet	0-6-0	107. Watering pot	0-2-6
62. Do. Night stool	0-14- 0	108. Dog house	0-12-0
63. 3 Fancy chairs	0- 7- 0	109. Flower stand	0- 4- 6
64. Dressing table	0-14- 0	110. Cucumber frame	2- 2- 0
65. 3 Fancy chairs	0- 7- 0	111. Half barrel	0-8-0
66. Bootjack& clothes horse	0- 3- 0	112. Do. Do.	0-9-6
67. Basin & ewer	0-1-6	113. Do. Do.	0-7-6
68. Bedstead & furniture	3- 3- 0	114. 3 small casks	0-9-0
69. Bed wt. 60 lb. @ 1/10	5-16- 0	115. Kneading trow	0-1-8
70. Pair of blankets	1-6-0	116. Safe (of) hops & sieve	0- 4- 0
71. Mahy. Chest of drawers	2-12-6	117. Sett of fire irons	<u>0- 6- 6</u>
72. Deal dressing table	0-13-0		100-18-0
73. Mahy. Night stool	0-13-0	Total amount of disbursements	72- 0- 5
74. 2 Fancy chairs	0- 4- 0		
75. Wash hand stand, basin & ewer	0-7-0	<i>Disbursements</i>	
76.Bedstead	0-7-6	Paid for the carriage of the catalogues	0- 1- 4
77. 6 Fancy chairs	1-1-0	Paid Cryer	0- 2- 0
78. Oak bedstead	0-10-6	Paid Jenkins as per bill	1- 8- 7
79. 1 Table	0- 2- 0	Paid (David) Jenkins	0- 3- 6
80. Dinner service of ware	1-8-0	Duty	5- 1- 0
81. Wooden clock	0-8-0	Making a catalogue, selling collecting the money &c.	4- 4- 0
82. Toasting screen	0- 6- 6	Cash advanced	<u>61 -0-0</u>
83. Plate warmer	0- 4- 9		72 -0-5
84. Coffee (oven)	0- 8- 0		
85. Dinner tray	0- 6- 0		
86. 5 Baskets	0- 8- 6		

Glossary and Notes

7. Iron footman.

"A four-legged trivet, of wrought iron with a flat top, used as a muffin or kettle stand. The top was level with a fire in a grate. Also used to keep plates hot". ** In Old Hall (1762 inventory) there was an "iron footman" in the kitchen. For other references, see under "plate warmer" below.

10. Iron digester

A stock-pot, for boiling down bones etc.*

12. Bell mettle.

Bell metal, a tin, copper and zinc alloy resembling bronze.

15. Japan.

"Japanning, a kind of painting".***. Most frequently black, and in general derived from the Japanese painting, as opposed to lacquering, fashionable from the late 17th century onwards.

21. Knife tray.

"Mahogany knife trays of the best kind have two partitions, with a brass handle which clasps over the edges of two partitions, and screws to the sides, which are 3 or 3½ inches deep; the inside length 14 inches, and the width from 10 to 12 inches; observe, the sides of these knife trays are square up, not sloped as formerly". ***

22. Japan waiters.

Presumably, at only 6d., small painted metal trays or salvers.* In the Old Hall (1762) inventory there were "3 small mahogany waiters" in the kitchen, and in the 1778 sale there were "A large waiter" and "Two small ditto" in the Butler's pantry. Also, in 1762 under "plate", a "Pontypool tea board" (a metal tray with Pontypool japanned decoration) and a "Waiter D[itt]o". Mrs Margaret Gamage had a "small waiter" in the kitchen and another under "silver plate" (Cilybeyll inventory, 1778).

An intriguing item in the Old Hall 1762 inventory is "7 mahogany stands to hold dishes on the table" in the hall. These would appear to be self-service things, perhaps for dessert, enabling the room to be early vacated by the servants; very necessary when business talk and gossip were the rule!

28/29. Green chairs.

Very likely to have been Windsor chairs. Green painted examples were popular in gentry house for casual use, often out-of-doors.

33. Pier looking glass

A tall looking glass, occupying a pier between windows.

38. Mahy. Celeret

A small mahogany chest, probably with sloped sides, having an inner lining divided into six or more partitions to hold wine bottles. An item of dining-room furniture. Many sideboards had "cellaret drawer" for this purpose.

45. Eight day clock.

A long-case movement running eight days before winding. Simpler, cheaper movements were wound every 24hrs, and very superior ones might be month-going or even longer. From its value at 7gns., it is quite likely to have been a Henry Williams, Llancarfan piece.

46. Clothes flasks. Clothes baskets.*

47. Beech tent bedstead.

A folding bed-frame of beech-wood, with a removable canopied tester etc. Tent or camp beds were in general use in bedrooms during the first half of the 19th century. Their attractive "snug yet genteel look" (Boswell 1762) gave them an appeal beyond their original purpose, although they were extensively used for travelling, to avoid verminous beds in inns.

53. Deal dressing table.

Dressing-tables in smart bedrooms were often of deal (pine) because they were entirely covered with a fine cloth, usually white, called a "toilet".

54. Fancy chairs

Light-weight, ornamented chairs, probably cane-seated or upholstered.

56. Bed wt etc

The "Bed" refers in general to the movable mattresses, feather bedding if used, and the bolsters and pillows. *** Unusually, there is no reference to the materials used (eg. Hair, flock) but it was usual for the better class of bedding to have two or more mattresses. The practice of selling by weight is so far unknown elsewhere, and may be simply a local auctioneer's convenient way of putting it together in lots. The different prices per pound (1/6d, 1/7d and 1/10d) must reflect varying quality.

68. Bedstead & furniture.

The bed framing and attached upholstery, as curtains, tester, valance etc., as opposed to the separate bedding laid on it.

81. Wooden clock.

A rare reference at this time. British movements, with wheels cut in hard close-grained woods such as box-wood, were known in the 18th century but the majority found are later 19th century items imported from the Black Forest region of Germany. The low value of 8/- probably indicates a cheap foreign import, even at this date. Wooden clocks were made as early as the late 17th century in Britain, and at least 50 years earlier than this example in Germany (Information from Michael Legg). Furthermore, wooden clocks were brought into Britain by itinerant clock-sellers from Germany as early as 1800. (Information from William Linnard).

So, it is likely that this was a German clock.

82. Toasting screen.

Probably a vertical open rack to hold toast in front of the fire, possibly supported on a metal stand, like a "roaster" or "Dutch oven". Possibly a local auctioneer's term, describing what he saw. In Old Hall (1762 inventory) there is "1 brass toaster" and "4 steel ditto" in the kitchen.

83. Plate warmer.

A device which stood before a fire, holding plates to be warmed or kept warm. There were various forms, a common one being a "cat", six turned spindles projecting from a turned ball centre; which ever way you put it down it stood on its feet (hence the name) and the three uppermost spindles supported the plates. In Old Hall (1778 sale) there was an "Iron cat" in the great parlour, perhaps used there to warm plates before the "Bath stove" in that room. Also in Old Hall (1762) there were "two twig plate warmers", in the kitchen, probably open wicker-work baskets, one later described by the auctioneer in 1778 as "a basket to warm plates before the fire", as well as a separate "wicker plate basket", a "copper plate warmer", and a "footman".

85. Dinner tray.

"The Dinner Tray is for taking up dishes and plates to the dining table; their sides are 3½n" deep all round, with handle holes in each side which may be made of good Honduras (mahogany), but the bottoms should be of Spanish... The length of the largest dinner trays are 32", and width 2 feet; full-size tea trays are nearly the same". *** In Old Hall (1778 sale) there were "One mahogany dinner tray" and "one ditto glass ditto" and "one ditto small ditto".

88. Plate basket.

A china plate basket. "Such baskets, made of mahogany, with fretwork sides and a brass hooped handle, were used for carrying heated plates from the kitchen to the dining-room, where they could be transferred to the haster (aka a plate warmer, or a footman, qv) set down by the fire to keep them warm. The basket had an octagonal base and seven vertical panels or facets, the eighth being omitted to allow the plates to be piled and lifted out easily". **

92. Coat jack.

Possibly one of the uses of this term as a lifting or holding device, ie a coat stand or hanger.

93. Stable bucket & 2 pails.

The terms "bucket" and "pail" were apparently synonymous

100. Vat.

A vessel, probably wooden, for brewing the malt (mashing) and, after boiling and cooling, to contain the fermenting wort. This use of a dual-purpose vessel indicates a modest, farmhouse-scale production, probably making both strong ale and "small beer".. *

101 Cooler.

A shallow vessel, having a large surface area, for cooling the hot wort after boiling with hops and before fermenting it.

103. Funnel, mashing stick and cross stick.

Brewing equipment. The funnel was probably for delivering the loose hops. The "mashing stick" was probably a stick with other short sticks fixed through it, to make a stirrer to stir the hot mash. The "cross stick" was probably a split stick which, laid across the mash tub, provided a spring grip to hold the wort stick as it was gradually raised to allow the wort to run out. See: William Cobbett, "Cottage Economy", 1821.

Old Hall had a brewhouse where we find, in 1762, "3 brewing vates, "2 trandells" (unidentified) and two "brass boylers", together with pails etc.

115. Kneading trow.

A trough for kneading dough.

116. Safe(of) hops.

Hops in a container.

Key to References:

* Oxford English Dictionary

** "A Short Dictionary of Furniture", John Gloag, 1969

*** Thomas Sheraton, "The Cabinet Dictionary", 1803.

Other references named.

Luke Millar

THE REBUILDING OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

A visit to Jesus College archives in the summer proved very valuable in discovering a variety of documents relating to the history of Cowbridge Grammar School. These included a list of names of five pensioners of the school in 1685, the earliest known school roll - that of 1847 when there were only 31 pupils (including Sylvester who was later to be one of the first recipients of the VC), a plan of the pre-1847 school building, details of the acquisition of the cottages which were sited next to 6 and 7 Church Street, and considerable information about the rebuilding of the school. Extracts from some of the letters concerning the rebuilding are included below:

Three letters from the Diocesan architect of Llandaff, John Prichard, to the Bursar of Jesus College, Oxford:

4/3/1847: Prichard stated that he had done a requested survey of the Grammar School buildings which were "so bad they cannot be improved and must be rebuilt"; "in a ruinous state and so ill arranged as to require extensive alterations". He also considered that should any portion of the present building be left, it would "have a tendency to prevent a more desirable arrangement".

"All the apartments on every floor are of insufficient height varying from only 8 to 6 ft. To raise the rooms on the ground floor to the moderate height of 10 ft, the first floor to 9 ft and the attic to 8 ft will require an additional height of walling of about 10 feet, the present height of the eave course being only 14 ft."

He wrote that it would be unwise to put such additional height on old walls, though they may be strong enough, especially "when it must be borne in mind that under several apartments commodious (?) it will be necessary to remove the position of most of the present ill-shaped doors and windows, the apertures thus left, however well they may be rebuilt, must naturally have a tendency to destroy that bond of union which is so essential to the strength and durability of a building". Prichard had calculated that retaining any portion of the old walls would not amount to a saving of £50; he had prepared preliminary sketches to send forward for inspection.

4/6/1847: A letter detailing plans for the new building, which had taken longer than anticipated. It "provided comfortable accommodation for the Master and for the Boarders, the number of forty, with such ...appendages as ...considered essential to an establishment of this description."

Prichard felt that the sum Jesus College wished to spend was inadequate to provide the required accommodation, so he was obliged to adapt the plan "having regard to strict economy".

In determining the style of architecture he stated: "the schoolroom is the only important part of the present building I propose to retain in precisely of the same character. (In fact, he did not retain the old schoolroom, which was built at right angles to Church Street). The houses in the immediate neighbourhood possess much of the same style. It cannot fail to harmonise with the church which is hard by on one side, and the ancient town gateway which abuts against the building on the other. The great irregularity it admits of, frequently increases the picturesque effect externally while it often affords a most convenient internal arrangement. It is economical and substantial, which I imagine must be a good inducement to you . . . to meet the wants of the present day and also to provide also for the exigencies of generations yet to come."

"The picturesque effect I expect will be produced by the varied disposition of the several gables, chimney stacks, etc, but by a careful comparison of the play with the elevations you will be able to form a tolerable idea of the light and shade which will be produced by those parts of the building which project and the others which recede."

Regarding the manner "in which I have disposed of the dormitories, I thought that to arrange the beds as they are generally done in a hospital or an infirmary would not be very agreeable to the feelings of young gentlemen, for it is not pleasant for the occupant of one bed to be staring at that of another. It is proposed to divide the room by means of boarded partitions which are not to be carried up to the ceiling but only so high as to give an air of privacy to each division, thereby preserving the advantages of one large room for the purpose of due ventilation.

"The apartments of the boarders are quite distinct from that of the master, yet ready access is provided both above and below. The amount of accommodation in these premises is so great that to execute them satisfactorily will require the sum of £2500."

18/12/1849: "On the annexed leaf you will find my account what you were kind enough to say you would send me . . .

To providing plans, specification and estimate and to supervise the erection of the Cowbridge schoolroom, at 5% commission	£93. 0. 0
travelling expenses	£13. 0. 0

(Prichard was to receive this £106, and a further £112 for the remainder of the building)

JA

STOP PRESS

The next study meeting will deal with the 'repopulation' of Church Street, and will be held in the Duke (upstairs) on Monday 16 January from 10.00 to 11.45 am. All welcome!