

COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 25

FEBRUARY 1987

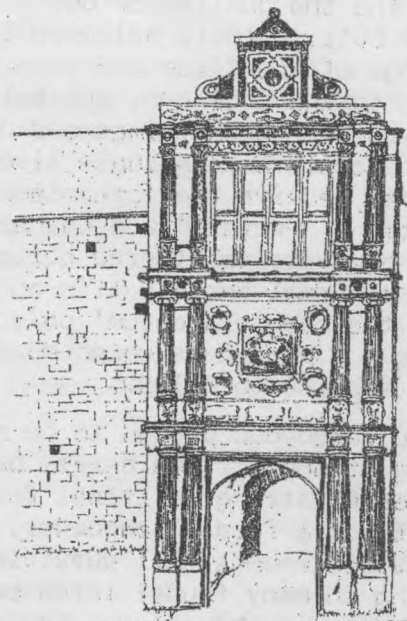
MISCELLANY

Lie are now well into the winter season and monthly meetings continue to be very well attended. It is intended to extend the programme by holding an informal meeting on the 8th May, 1987.

The Charter Day Dinner this year is to be arranged for Friday, 13th March. Details of menu and cost will be announced later, but please book the date.

The Chairman, Mrs Yvonne Weeding, intends to arrange a guided visit to Beaupre Castle for any members who may be interested, on a date to be decided later.

We have at present a membership of around 90, and new members will be very welcome.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

February 6th

'Recent Work on Prehistoric Sites'
Speaker: Henry Owen-John.
(Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust)

March 6th

'Hunters & Gatherers - the First
Affluent Society?'
Speaker: Vivien Turner.

April 3rd

'Two Views of Wales : a German in
1856 and a Gentleman Farmer in 1797'
Speaker: Dr William Linnard.

The Society meets on the first Friday of the month at 8.00 p.m., usually in the Lesser Hall Of the Town Hall.
All are welcome.

DECEMBER MEETING

Friday, 5th December, 1986, was the occasion of the annual Maud Gunter Memorial Lecture, which was again given by Arthur Peplow.

The Lesser Hall was filled to capacity to hear him talk about the Cathar heresy which spread into Southern France from the middle of the 11th century. The town of Albi, in the Languedoc, became one of the main centres and therefore the heresy is also known as the Albigensian heresy.

Catharism is a Manichaean heresy, maintaining the dualism of God as both Good and Evil. Cathars believed that all the things of the flesh and material world belonged to the Evil one, but believers could renounce these things and determine to live ascetic and celibate lives. They would then receive the 'consolamentum' and become a 'Parfait' - a Cathar priest. It was, however, considered quite fitting to lead a normal earthly life and to receive the 'consolamentum' only on one's deathbed - a procedure which most adherents chose to follow.

The Languedoc proved to be a suitable breeding ground for the heresy because there was no strong political force. On the death of a feudal landowner, estates were divided amongst all surviving sons, resulting in many feudal lords constantly warring amongst themselves. The success of the Albigensians became an affront to the Roman Catholic church, and in 1208 Pope Innocent III instigated a series of Crusades against it, the first led by Simon de Montfort (father of the opponent of Henry III).

The ferocity and barbarity of the Crusaders was matched by the steadfast determination of the Albigensians, who held out in various towns and mountain citadels in the area until 1255, when the fortress of Queribus finally fell.

Mr Peplow showed magnificent slides of the remains of buildings of the period, including the bastide of Carcassonne and the towns of Toulouse and Albi. There were also slides of spectacularly situated hill castles, notably the four castles of Lastours, the fortress of Queribus, and the citadel of Montsegur, where 200 Albigensians were burned alive.

It was a fascinating story, well told, and a vote of thanks by John Miles was enthusiastically endorsed. The now-traditional hot punch and mince pies were served at the close of the meeting.



Hensol castle

JANUARY MEETING

In Yvonne Weeding's absence, John Miles chaired the meeting on 2nd January, 1987. Mr Miles announced that Mr W, Selwyn Davies, one-time Mayor of Cowbridge, had died and members were asked to stand as a mark of respect.

The Speaker for the evening was Dr. Jane Clarke, who is on the panel of extra-mural tutors, University College, Cardiff. Members were entertained to a lively lecture on 'The Vikings', illustrated with slides. The word 'Viking' in Scandinavian meant 'pirate' and this they certainly were.

Evidence obtained from carvings on stone showed Pagan scenes such as the god Odin on a horse taking the slain in battle to Valhalla. Horns were not worn on their helmets, as is commonly supposed. The god Thor protected humans from evil spirits. The early Scandinavians were pagan and human sacrifice continued into the 11th century in Sweden.

Dr Clarke went on to explain how our present day language had been influenced by the Viking invasion. For example, 'Hof' meant a temple; 'Holme' meant an island - i.e. Flatholme. The word 'by' denoted a town or dwelling place - i.e. Grimsby, and 'Thorpe' was a hamlet or village - as in Scunthorpe. They were unable to pronounce a 'ch' sound, hence the word 'kirk'. In Yorkshire there are three Ridings, a riding meant one-third.

Pictures of ancient carved grave-stones were next on the screen, depicting boats and houses which were thought to be useful articles in the next world, as were ship's timbers which were placed inside the graves. Next the Oslo Ship Museum was explained, with pictures of burials in ornate ships, carts and sleighs. Also carved bedheads with designs to keep out evil spirits.

(continued...)

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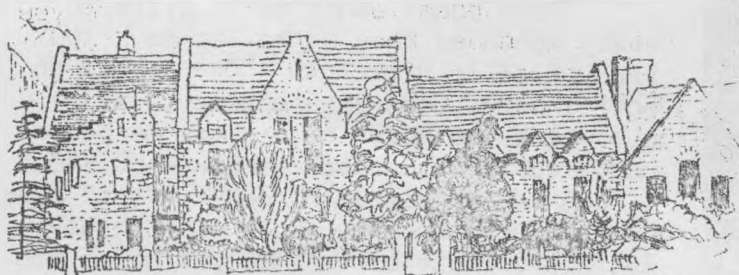
Jewellery was left on female corpses, and weapons on the male corpses. There were highly ornamented swords and reconstructed merchant ships. Coins were not used. The weight of metal was their only concern.

The Viking influence spread further than any other nation's; to Russia, Great Britain, the Mediterranean, Greenland and Newfoundland. The first Viking invasion into Britain was in A.D. 793 at Lindisfarne. Smash and grab raids took place in the summer, the monasteries being the chief targets for their valuable metals. The beautiful workmanship was ignored and ornate chalices etc. were melted down. Corn and slaves were also on their 'shopping list'. In Tipperary in Eire, 100 foot high, round watch-towers were built so that the population could be warned of the approaching marauders.

In 855 the Vikings overwintered in Southern England. In 865 a large Viking army of 40 ships with 100 men in each, and known as The Great Host, landed and demanded what can only be described as protection money and then departed. Saxon King Alfred, in Wessex, offered the most resistance, and in 886 the Treaty of Wedmore was signed giving Alfred domination over the S.W. part of the country, and by 902 Danelaw was established elsewhere.

A picture was shown of a slate monument in the Isle of Man depicting the end of the world when all the gods fought each other. Finally, many artefacts found in York were illustrated; wattle, weapons, evidence of the diet of the time, wooden bowls, combs of bone and antler, leather shoes, metal jewellery, stone carvings and minted coins of 950 A.D. Swain and his son, Canute's political influence up to 1032 was mentioned, and the stimulating lecture finished with a slide of a stone carving from St. Paul's Cathedral.

Barbara Toogood



High School, Cowbridge

MUSEUM NEWS

LATEST ADDITIONS

After the successful exhibition on for the Victorian Charter Celebrations, many objects were either donated to or left on long loan at the Museum. We now, therefore, have a permanent exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian artefacts.

In a different vein, within a few weeks of each other, two interesting objects were given to the Museum which rather dent the image of a peaceful Vale. One is a Cannon Ball of the Civil War period found at West Orchard, St. Athan, and the other a Mediaeval Spear Head found at St. Hilary. Both have been authenticated by the National Museum.

A donation which portrays the more rustic image of the Vale was made by Mr David Newton. It is a collection of Farriers' Tools and Equipment, Including a Moleskin Apron, all of which belonged to his late father who owned and worked the Vale Forge in Bear Lane for many years. Mrs Jankovitch has given a Christmas Card of the early 1300's and a Memorial Card for Queen Alexandra. The very latest item is a Charles I shilling found in a garden in Seys Close by Master Huw Davies. This also has been identified by the National Museum.

If you would like to become a Friend of the Museum and help to maintain and improve the exhibits, forms can be obtained from The Museum, the Museum committee and Trustees, or at History Society meetings: £3 for ordinary member, £5 for family membership, 50p under 18.

Mari on Eveleigh

DINOSAURS FROM CHINA

The National Museum of Wales has mounted a most interesting exhibition in collaboration with The Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, Beijing (Peking), China. Imaginatively presented, the exhibition shows spectacular fossil dinosaur remains from China and, in addition, many exhibits from the Museum's own geological and mineralogical collections.

It will be of interest to most people of all ages. Admission price is £1.50 for adults, 30p for children, and the Museum is open from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday; 2.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Sundays. (N.B. Closed on Monday)

DOES ANYBODY KNOW THE SANDLANDS?

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Lanblethian

September 29 1856

From time to time, members of the Society receive requests from people elsewhere in the country who are trying to trace some details of their family history; occasionally we manage to get some information in return.

One such interchange of local history occurred last year when I received a letter from a lady living in Sussex, who was researching the Sandland family tree. I quote from her letter.....

"...the ancestor in question, George Sandland, was listed as a Gamekeeper on the 1851 census (living at Broadway). He married Ann Deakin in Lichfield in 1821 when he was recorded as 'of the parish of St Nicholas, Glam'. They returned to St Nicholas and had two daughters (both died young) and a son, Charles Deakin Sandland, all baptised at St Nicholas. On the 1841 census they were living at Daff(?) Lodge. George was 50 years old and listed as Gamekeeper. Incidentally, do you know of Daff Lodge - does it still exist?

Charles, who studied at the Eagle Academy - his school books are in the possession of my friend in Australia - later became a bookseller and is believed to have had a shop in Cowbridge. Charles emigrated to Australia sometime between 1851 and 1856."

I managed to obtain for this lady some photographs and details of Cowbridge, Llanblethian and St Nicholas (but she would welcome any further information on the Sandlands, especially if anyone has come across any reference to Charles Sandland's bookshop in 'New Cowbridge' about 1850, or George Sandland's life as a gamekeeper). The bonus for us was a copy of a letter written by Ann Sandland of Llanblethian to her son Charles in Australia, with a lot of interesting gossip in it. There's enough hers for a couple of episodes of 'The Archers'

Jeff Alden.
(Cowbridge 3373)

My Dear Son,

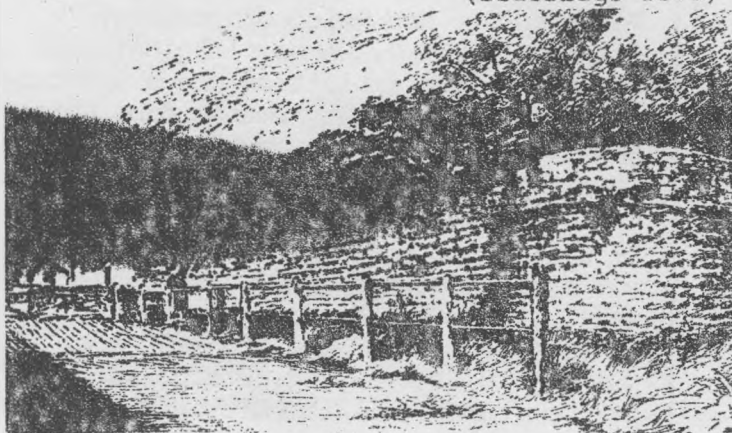
I embrace the opportunity of sending a letter direct to you which I hope will find you in perfect good health. We are both well in bodily health. Your father's lameness is better. Our peas were blighted this summer but there was good crops of everything else. The potatoes are very fine both early and late, large in size and so mealiey.

August 23 at Cottrell died Charles Frederick Tyler esq aged 30, second son of Sir George. Miss Sullivan, Lewis Bruce wife, has had another baby born. The late Dean's wife is dead so the property all comes to Lew now: he is going to live at the Great House, so John Evans is going to build a house where old Thomas Griffiths, Ann Reece and Eules live. They're all to come down. Simpleton Evans to spend all his money to build on other people's land,

Herwain Monster blast of Penderyn Limestone quarries 147 feet high was cleared out to a length of ten yards and the small quantity 10 cwt of powder exploded. The match was fired and in eleven minutes from the time, the bottom of the quarry a mass ten feet thick for 20 yards square was literally ejected and the superincumbent mass of 120 feet high came rolling down like a flood and filling the quarry with its torrent of stone to the amount of 12,000 tons certain. Many compute it at 15,000 tons. There were stones from 150 to 250 tons each thrown quite distinct separate.

T. Crawshay (signature?) Barnes has left the post office and he's gone to live in the Bush (Inn). The person he has married is a native of Berkshire. Her father has been over here this summer, James came down to Cowbridge a few weeks back to go a sea bathing and they thought he would have died whilst he was here. He went to London on Saturday, the Doctor told him he was fit to go, now Jane is very poorly. Charlotte Whapham at Pendhieland (Pendoylan) is keeping a boarding school. There cannot be many children there.

John Jones wants me to write to you every month as they do to Thomas, "You know where to direct to Thomas and I do not" I said, then John begins to point out where you must look in the Melbourne paper to find out Charles Sandland, "But I hope to see him soon, John", "Yes" says John, "But I know he would like to have letters". Their brother is six miles now





The Old Town Hall and High Cross
(copied from an old painting).

from Ballarat, a Master Shoemaker.

I suppose you have heard from Mrs Owen of Cymmer Colliery accident, 140 killed. William Thomas, as did live at Duffryn, Waggoner, and his brother Jabez Thomas, two of the name of Rowlands, five men in all, are committed for trial but it appears Jabez Thomas is the chief in fault. Old Jacobs of the Red Lion by the toll gate is paying off his debts in Cardiff Gaol. Jenkin Morgan has left the Greyhound and gone to live in Cardiff. He has been beating his wife so much, near killed her several times, so the people of Cowbridge will not support him.

We keep the other cheque until I hear from you what we are to do with it, but I hope my dear son I shall see you soon. Numbers of people have left Wales this summer for Australia; sixty three went out of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Last week young Jane Edwards had liked to been confined of a baby in the Parson's house. S. Harbottle says Mrs Bruce found it out on a Saturday and the parson questioned Jane and it was by a poor boy at Whats the butchers, so then Mrs Bruce went to him and told him he must marry her on the next day, so he married on the Sunday and she went to old Betty's and was confined in an hour.

The late Road Surveyor Allixander's wife has been in prison in Cardiff this last fifteen weeks for stealing a sheet off Tom Lidmer the Butcher's hedge or line to sell to buy drink. She is waiting for her trial but I think she

has had enough. What will them fine people at the public house at Dowlais think? Young Jenkins has deceived poor Mary. Harbottle is going fast. The doctor has told him he will not attend him if he drinks so but he says he will drink. The shopman at Parsons is relat(ed) to him. He says he cannot live long. I told you he would not prosper. Margaret George has now two children and she is not eighteen. I am very lonely here Charles. Sometime I see no-one nor speak to anyone for months together. All my wish and hope is to see you. I hope to have a letter from you soon. Please to give my love to Mrs Owen. Neither you nor Miss E. Frood sends me word whether Mrs Owen has a little child. Your father often brings me tales of people praising you but I cannot always relate what some people('s) tongues say. I have had enough of lies long since. He says Davey Jones wants to write to you.

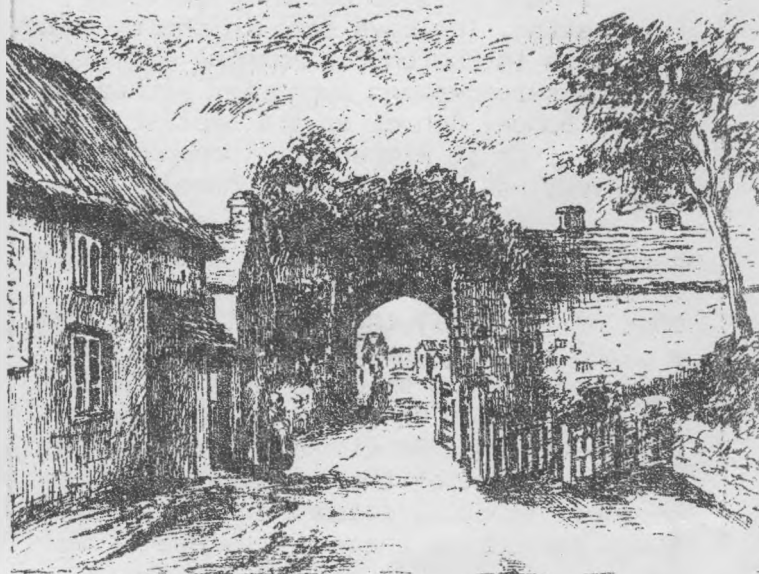
I must conclude with both our dear love to you. I remain your ever affectionate

Mother Ann Sandl and

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Any comments or information would be welcomed.

Jeff Alden



The South Gate and the TOLL Gate
(copied from an old painting).

LLANBLETHIAN YESTERDAY

The following is an extract taken from an article appearing in the February Parish Magazine. The Church Hall in Llanblethian is 100 years old this year and the writer, a present-day inhabitant of the village, has been asking some of the older residents about its history. There must be a wealth of information available to anyone prepared to spend a little time talking to older people in the area, and further-articles of this kind would be welcomed by the editors.

One sturdy Llanblethian inhabitant remembers how, sixty-five years ago or more, the Church Hall echoed to the Sunday School "bun-fight" - when there was a spread tea of lemonade, jellies and blancmanges and prizes were awarded. A vicar's wife (Mrs Gilbert Williams) took the G.F.S., every Thursday evening in the Church Hall. What was the G.F.S.? you ask, as I did. It was the Girls' Friendly Society - an organisation run in many villages, between whom friendly competitions were arranged. Girls of up to fifteen years went along to enjoy skipping to music, singing in choirs, country dancing, and acting in plays.

"Oh there was always something to do, in the village."

And what were the boys doing, while the girls were thus occupied, you wonder. Well, there were the seasonal games, of course, but a number of boys were hanging about outside the Church Hall (as boys do) waiting to torment and tease (as boys will).

I have this on Walter's reliable information. The boys sang in choirs too. They were in Church for morning and evening services and supported either the Church Sunday School or the Baptist one, by the river in Piccadilly (depending on whichever was nearest their home).

There were concerts. Packed to the back with an adult audience, and with the children standing on benches at the very back of the Hall, the Concert opened with a piano item played by Winnie. This was followed by solo dancing, solo singing and the One-Act Play, put on by the men of the village. So vivid is the memory of keen enjoyment of these happy times that pleasure is still evident in the faces of those recounting these bygone scenes to me.

Then there were the 'Sixpenny Hops', when either Milton or Winnie would be on the piano, accompanied by violin and drum: there were the Harvest Festival suppers, when the village gathered to give thanks to the Lord for all "safely gathered in". There were the Whist Drives, run to make money for the Church, with a vicar who got cross if he felt he had been let down by his partner. (How AWFUL to have to partner the vicar if you knew your whist was dodgy!) At Christmas-time there was a special poultry whist drive.

Probably in August, the Llanblethian Flower Show was held in the Hall, with vegetables, dahlias and chrysanthemums being shown. A special prize was awarded for the best wild flower arrangement. (The greatest number of flowers and the most artistic arrangement of them.) In more recent years our Church Hall has provided a haven of noise for the Boarders from Cowbridge Grammar School. Supervised by the Rotarians, they were allowed to come over on a Saturday evening for singing and a dance. They had to be back in school by nine o'clock but the event must have been a welcome relief for the lads.

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OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President : Rev. Norman E. Williams
Hon. Chairman : Mrs Yvonne Weeding
(Cowbridge 2878)
Hon. Secretary : Mr John Miles
(Cowbridge 2270)
Hon. Treasurer : Mr Neil Shannon
(Cowbridge 3957)
Programme Secretary : Mrs G. Keay
(Cowbridge 2879)
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Museum Curator : Mrs Marion Eveligh
(Cowbridge 2495)
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Editors of Newsletter : Marjorie &
Alan Hey
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