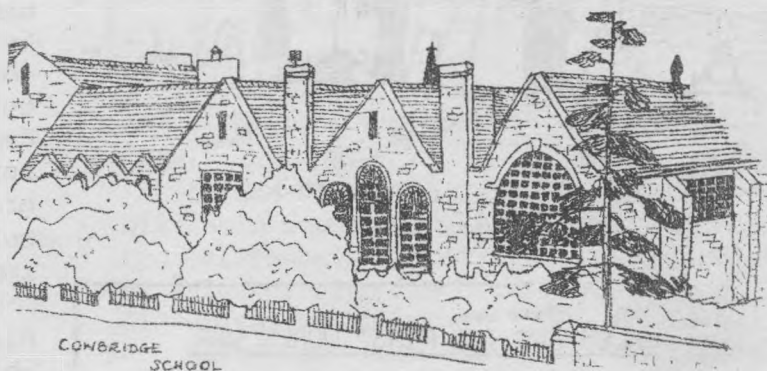


# COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 27

AUTUMN 1987



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The 1987 A. G. M. of the Society brought two major changes to the Committee. We were sorry to say goodbye to our Social Secretary, Diane Lloyd, and our Excursion Secretary, Lillian Carthew.

A Social Secretary was a new idea for the Society and Diane has proved an excellent one. Punch appeared at the Christmas meeting, Charter Nights continued to be an enormous success, and some American Suppers added variety to members' evenings.

Lillian's accident and the prospect of another hip operation have meant a troubled time for her and we hope she will return to full health.

We welcome Katherine Cran as Social Secretary and Jean Dale as Excursion Secretary.

The Society's excursion to Normandy proved interesting, if exhausting, and an account is included elsewhere.

Members will be pleased to welcome the Glamorgan/Gwent Archaeological team dig back to Cowbridge and especially Jonathan Parkhouse. Let's hope they find archaeological treasure in their 'banking' venture.

The restoration of Holy Cross church continues, both internally and externally. Funds are low, so if any member would care to purchase 'Rambling Sketches from the Old Churches in the Diocese of Llandaff', completed in 1896 by the diocesan architect, Chas. B. Fowler, they would be contributing to this.

They would obtain a delightful book which has been out of print for many years and is likely to become a collector's item.

Yvonne Weeding.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

### November 6th

'Cholera - Epidemics in Cardiff and the Vale'

Speaker : Leonard N. A. Davies.

### December 4th

The Maud Gunter Memorial Lecture:  
'Constantine, Helena and the True Cross'

Speaker : Arthur Peplow.

### January 8th

'Antiques - and the effects of history in their Development and Design'

Speaker : Dennis Heal.

### February 5th

'John Batchelor - Friend of Freedom'

Speaker : H. E. Bailey.

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

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

The early part of the meeting was taken up by the A.G.M., business being despatched quickly and efficiently.

Following this, Ray Toogood gave an illustrated talk on the old and beautiful city of Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia, which, he explained, is not a communist state, but a Socialist Federal Republic with a number of capitalist influences.

First of all, Ray told us of the history of Dubrovnik. Founded originally by refugees from the town of Epidaurus (now Cavtat), which was originally Greek but became Roman. Settling, in the 7th Century, on a small rocky island, the refugees built early defensive walls and gradually, by specialising in ship-building and trading, the town grew in importance.

It had various names throughout its history but finally became Ragusa. Meanwhile, on the mainland opposite, a Slav settlement named Dubrovnik grew up. By the 12th Century the narrow strip of water between the two became filled in and the towns united. It became a small city state and eventually an independent republic, like Venice, to which it proved a great rival as its importance as a maritime trading centre increased.

During Mediaeval times there was an unusual degree of religious tolerance and Dubrovnik has many churches dating from this period, including Roman Catholic churches, Greek Orthodox churches and a synagogue.

Ray traced the various political allegiances which the city needed to make so as to remain independent.

so as to stay independent. It remained a republic until 1808 when it was occupied by France and, later, by Austria. In 1918, when Yugoslavia officially became a single state, Dubrovnik became part of it.

Using his own particular photographic and slide technique, Ray showed a series of stunning pictures of the city, accompanied by appropriate music. We saw the walls, the beautiful old buildings and fountains, and the incomparable setting of the city. There were pictures of the colourful market festival and of other sites, notably Cavtat and the island of Lokrum, which was once Turkish.

Sincere thanks were given to Ray for an enjoyable evening.

M. H.



COLWINSTON

### WALES AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

DR. KEITH STRANGE has been seconded by Mid-Glamorgan Education Committee as County History Research Officer for the W. J. E. C. Certificate of Education Course.

'Wales in the Twentieth Century'

He intends to produce a book and teaching material on 'Wales and the First World War'. He would like to hear from anyone who has relevant photographs or written documents and is prepared to interview veterans to build up a tape library on the subject.

Anyone who can help should contact Dr Strange at : Mid-Glamorgan County Council  
Education Department,  
Education Resources Centre,  
Grawen Street,  
Porth.  
CF39 0BU.



LOWBRIDGE ROAD, LLANTWIT Llanfai t Major

Cowbridge and District Local History  
Society celebrates the Ninth Centenary  
of the death of William the Conqueror.

On Friday, 4th September, 1987, forty-five members of the Society gathered at Cowbridge Town Hall to begin the journey to Rouen. Three hours later, the coach arrived at Weymouth and boarded the 'Lord Harold', arriving in Cherbourg in the early evening.

Back on the coach once more, another long journey lay ahead, until we arrived at our destination, the Hotel Campanile, on the outskirts of Rouen. At nine o'clock we were ready for a meal, followed by a good rest, in preparation for Saturday's busy itinerary.

Falaise, Bayeux, Caen! These were the key places in tracing William's story. And finally Rouen – finally, because it was within earshot of this city that William died of an injury in 1087.

After an early breakfast on Saturday, we explored the beautiful Cathedral of Notre Dame in Rouen, the first thing of note being the 'Tree of Jesse' carved above the central doorway. The rebuilding of this Romanesque Cathedral took from 1201 to 1514, when the West Front was completed. The Rose Window, on the West Front is of 16th Century glass and very beautiful.

Later, the 'little train' took us around the interesting 'old quarter', then we were free to wander and sample the delights of Normandy cooking in one of the many fine restaurants.

At 3 p.m. we boarded the coach once more, heading for the Chateau Gaillard and Les Andelys. Richard constructed the former in 1196 to prevent Phillip Auguste from reaching Rouen. Many of the stalwart members who braved the steep climb were rewarded with a soaking, although they were adamant that their efforts were worthwhile and they would not have missed the glorious view from the top.

Passing St. Hilaire Manor House and the ruins of St. Wandrille Abbey, we arrived back at the hotel at 7.30 p.m., where after dinner we were entertained by an arrangement of songs by Jenny Rees, with accompaniment on her guitar.

Another early start on Sunday, through Caen, which William chose as his ducal seat, where his wife Mathilde acted as his Regent and where, in the Church of St. Etienne, all that remains of him – his left thigh bone – is buried.

On to Falaise, the walled town that suddenly appears dramatically from the roadside. To the right, as we entered, the castle's ancient keep crowns a wooded rock above the River Ante. We stopped to look at the spring, below the castle, where Robert, son of Duke Richard II of Normandy, saw Arlette doing her washing, and instantly fell in love with her. Sometime before Christmas 1027, she gave birth to the child, William, who was to become one of the greatest monarchs of the Middle Ages. William spent his youth in Falaise, where beyond the walled enclosure of St. Gervais cobbled streets and timbered houses create a pleasant town.

In the Place Guillaume-ie-Conquerant, William's equestrian statue prances in a typical combatant pose. The old Eglise de la Trinite, with its Gothic points and pinnacles, was begun in 1000. St. Gervais and Notre-Dame were founded in William's day and restoration work is still in progress.

One poignant experience was seeing the effigies of American parachutists, killed by German soldiers during the last war, hanging from the church steeple in another town.

Finally, on Monday, we skirted the Normandy landing beaches, arriving at Bayeux, to visit the Cathedral and the famous tapestry. The Cathedral, founded by William's half-brother, Bishop Odo, is one of the finest examples of Flamboyant Gothic in existence. The Tapestry is displayed in the Seminary where there is an audio-visual display explaining the historical background. This room leads on to the embroidery itself, superbly lit in its bullet-proof glass case. An impressive 230 feet long and 19 inches deep, every detail of the Battle of Hastings is depicted in minute detail.

From Bayeux we travelled towards Cherbourg, where the 'Lord Harold' again awaited us. After a comfortable journey and an interesting weekend we arrived back in Cowbridge at Midnight on Monday.



A. Walker.

## MUSEUM NEWS

The Chairman's Chain and Grant of Arms of the old Cowbridge Rural District Council is in its new home at last. On Saturday, 3rd October 1987, the Museum Trust held a Preview of the exhibit, when the Deputy Mayor of the Vale, Coun. Jack George, and our Town Mayor, Coun. Don Borthwick, ex-members of the Cowbridge Rural Council and Friends of the Museum, were welcomed by the Chairman of the Museum Trust. The first chairman to wear the chain, Mr Joe David, was a very welcome guest and he very kindly gave the Museum an original programme of the presentation ceremony which took place in 1957. He also gave a photograph of the Council members for that year and himself wearing the chain.

There were three other new exhibits on display :

(1) The D.C.M. awarded to A/Sgt. Adams for his bravery in action during the 1914/18 war. The citation which accompanies the medal tells the very moving story of A/Sgt. Adams' bravery. The medal was donated by Mr & Mrs Garfield Adams of Trerhygyl.

(2) An iron hub with part surviving spokes and an iron wheel rim, the remains of a wheel from a Glamorganshire Wagon made in Cowbridge by Richard Aubrey. Mr Aubrey was a wheelwright and publican in the second half of the 19th century. His premises, which were where the old cinema now stands, consisted of an inn, The Wheelwright Arms (formerly The Tennis Court.) which was on Eastgate St., and his wheelwright business and yard behind the inn. Mr A.H. Fairfax of Castle Farm, Barry, donated the Hub and Rim. Mr Fairfax's mother was born Hannah Matilda Aubrey in 1876 at St. Mellons, near Cardiff.

(3) Three medals won for craftsmanship in carpentry by Mr Doug Whyte. Mr Whyte worked on the Cenotaph in Whitehall during his apprenticeship to Sir Bannister Fletcher and on a stone model of the Chapel at Windsor. The medals were donated by Mrs Viv Whyte who has already provided many items which are on display in the Museum.

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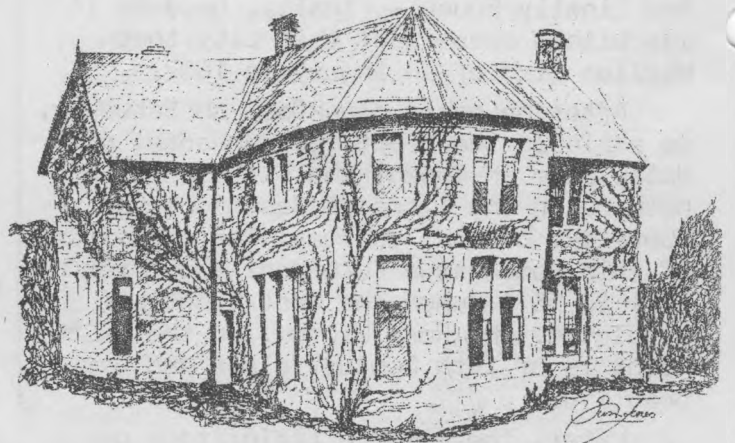
## RAY AND BARBARA TOOGOOD

Members will be sorry to hear that Ray and Barbara are leaving the area to live near Canterbury. They have both been loyal members of the Society and will be missed.

Ray's unique style of slide-show presentation has been very much appreciated and his show 'Road to Bovium' was of particular local interest.

We wish them well in their new home.

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THE VICARAGE ST HILARY

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## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President : Rev. Norman E. Williams  
Hon. Chairman; :: Mrs Yvonne Weeding  
(Cowbridge 2B78)  
Hon. Secretary : Mr John Miles  
(Cowbridge 2270)  
Hon. Treasurer : Mrs Val Shannon  
(Cowbridge 3957)  
Programme Secretary : Mrs G. Keay  
(Cowbridge 2879)

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