

COWBRIDGE OFFICIAL TOWN GUIDE 1996/1997



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COWBRIDGE OFFICIAL TOWN GUIDE 1996/97

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COWBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

The Council offers its sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the production of this official Town Guide.

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Colwyn Jones/Vic Eveleigh - Photographs

Marion Eveleigh - History Jeff Alden - Education

Geoff Cox - Llanblethian Church Colwyn Jones - Cowbridge Markets

Brian J. Roberts

- Cowbridge In Bloom

A THANK YOU FROM THE PUBLISHER

It has been a great pleasure for Kenrich Publications, a local company established in Ogwr, to have been commissioned by Cowbridge Town Council to produce this Guide.

This Guide, which is free, has been produced for you, the reader, by ourselves, Cowbridge Town Council and the support of the local business people who advertised in the Guide.

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FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

High Street, Cowbridge, including the Town hall.

MAPS

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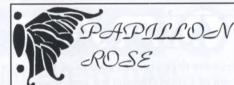
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A WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

Welcome to the second edition of the Cowbridge Town Guide and the Historic Market Town of Cowbridge and the picturesque villages of Llanblethian and Aberthin.

Cowbridge lies in the heart of the Rural Vale and still operates as a Market Town, farmers from miles around bring their stock to the Town every Tuesday. The Town's origins are in the First Century AD, and much of its history is evident in the Town Hall. The Hall houses the Cowbridge Museum and was the former House of Correction. The High Street retains its historic atmosphere, but now houses many exclusive shops and wine bars.

Cowbridge has now been accepted into the Walled Town Friendship Circle. This can help to promote the Town and surrounding areas.

In recent years Cowbridge has developed a reputation for Welsh Crafts made to your specification, these can be viewed in the Old Wool Barn. The old and new blend together and give the town its unique atmosphere.

I sincerely hope you enjoy your visit, and this guide will leave you with happy memories of your visit to Cowbridge.

Councillor Brian Dobbs, Town Mayor (1995-96).

Cowbridge Community College

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COWBRIDGE, MEDIEVAL BOROUGH

Cowbridge was granted its first charter in 1254 by Sir Richard de Clare, Lord of Glamorgan. Some short time before this Sir Richard de Clare had built the township more or less as a business venture, laying out the Burgess plots and leasing them on fixed rents to responsible citizens, as business or residential premises. The town seems to have been a modest success and plots were taken up both to the east and west of the town, the east side being the most popular. The town walls date from about 1266, there were 4 gates, the north gate appears to have been mainly for cattle.

The Medieval Borough was not the first occupation of the site. In recent years after several archaeological digs, the foundations of Roman structures including a Bath House and many Roman relics have been found. It now seems fairly certain a small Roman fort occupied the site in the 1st Century and by the 14th Century this had developed into a township. Historians are now beginning to accept that Cowbridge has a strong claim to being the missing Roman fort of Bovium.

The Medieval Guild hall stood in the middle of the High Street between what are now the Duke and Vale of Glamorgan Inns. There was a Town Cross in front and a Market Hall to the rear. The site of the Town Cross is marked by a brass cross in the road at the corner of Church Street. In 1576 permission was given by the Houses of Parliament to build a House of Correction in Cowbridge. This was duly erected by the eastgate. By the late 1700's the building was in a sorry state and the Prison authority built a new prison roughly on the site of the old one. It was completed in 1806 but by 1829 a large new prison had been built in Swansea and the one at Cowbridge was closed and the site put up for sale. The Burgess who had for some time wanted to pull down the old Guild hall because it restricted the passage of Stage and other coaches, immediately stepped in and bought the site by public subscription. In the course of the alterations the building was much enlarged but a lot of the old House of Correction remains, including two blocks of cells which now house the Town's Museum.

The last Royal Charter was granted by Queen Victoria in 1886, this gave people of Cowbridge the right to elect their own Councillors and Mayor. In 1974 when the local Government Reorganisation took place the Town was granted permission to retain its Mayor.

Sometime previous to 1886 heredity freedom of the Borough ceased but the granting of the Honorary Freedom of Cowbridge was continued. One of the more famous Freemen of Cowbridge is David Lloyd George. Some well known personalities while not born in Cowbridge, lived here and added to the richness of life in Cowbridge, these are, Iolo Morgannwg, historian and poet, he had a shop in Cowbridge. Judge Jenkins of hensol is buried in Cowbridge church yard and there is a monument to him in the church. Sir Leoline Jenkins, endowed the Grammar School and was the cause of the school's long association with Jesus College, Oxford. Dr. Benjamin Heath Malkin, social reformer, lived at Old Hall. Edward Stirling (The Thunderer of the Times) lived in Llanblethian and his son John Stirling went to school in Cowbridge, at the Eagle Academy.

Thomas Carlyle stayed in Llandough and in his life of John Stirling refers to Cowbridge with affection. Cowbridge was acknowledged as the unofficial capital of the

Jane Hodge Resort Hotel

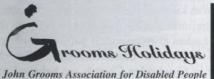
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Vale and was known for its Market and Fairs, but up to 1965 it was famous for its long traffic queues.

This all stopped when the Cowbridge bypass was opened. For a time local trades people feared Cowbridge was finished and another dark age had begun but instead we have the busy, attractive Town you see today.

In 1982 Cowbridge Town Council joined with Llanblethian community Council to become the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council.

LLANBLETHIAN

Llanblethian Parish incorporates and surrounds Cowbridge, but the village itself lies to the south of the town. On the hill behind the church are the remains of an Iron Age Fort, Caer Dynnaf. This site has never had a major excavation, but evidence has been found of occupation during the Roman period. On the perimeter of the fort the remains of a fortified house of the dark ages have been identified by the Council of Ancient Monuments.

Early in the 14th Century the Lord of Glamorgan, Gilbert de Clare built a castle on the opposite hill but before it was completed he was killed at the battle of Bannockburn.

Future Lords of Glamorgan continued to be interested in Llanblethian and as in some cases it was a daughter who inherited, the Ladies also gave their patronage. Anne Neville who became the wife of Richard III, was a generous benefactor and the Tower of Llanblethian Church and the Llanquian aisle in Cowbridge Church are believed to have been her gift. Another Lord of Glamorgan who had fought with the Black Prince and was one of the first Knights of the Garter, died at the castle.

Today the nearest inn is the Cross Inn on Llantwit Major Road, but there used to be two inns in the village, the General Picton which was next door to the church, and the Kings Head. The landlord of the Kings Head was John the Weaver and the Inn was commonly known as such.

The woollen factory, near the ford, was famous for its flannel and a special black flannel with narrow scarlet stripes was woven for the cockle women of Swansea. Some of the weavers worked in their own cottages in the village. There has never been a Manor House in Llanblethian, Great house being the nearest equivalent but there are several large houses with notable families connected with them.

As there is no common in the village, the Cowbridge side of Llanblethian Hill, known locally as Mount Ida serves this purpose and several cottages used to have grazing rights on the hillside.

The church is dedicated to St. John the Baptist and on the green in front of the church stands an old Cross.

Since the Post Office closed there is no shop but in a 19th Century will there was an inventory of a shop in Llanblethian which was surprising in its diversity and quantity. Besides the expected food and household goods there were barrels of brandy and even ladies hats.

Situated in a hollow and surrounded by softly rolling hills with the River Thaw running through the village from north to south and a stream which runs past the old woollen factory and along the road, joining it at the bridge.

Llanblethian is an attractive village in all seasons but in the spring it is at its best when daffodils seem to carpet every grassy space.



Circa 1730

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COWBRIDGE SHOPPING CENTRE

Cowbridge has much to offer as a shopping centre, both to regular shoppers and to tourists. You will find beautiful clothes for ladies and gentlemen, sports wear, antique shops, furniture, electrical goods, crafts, a garden centre, shoes and numerous interesting places to eat, or just meet friends for coffee. Cowbridge serves the farming community of the area and there are businesses to cater for country wear and farming supplies,

Most of the businesses are run personally by their proprietors which makes a welcome and refreshing change from the impersonal atmosphere of the multiple stores, Goods on offer tend to be unusual and really different from merchandise in large towns and cities, making a special visit well worthwhile. There are several gift shops and a delicatessen for a special present.

Although giving the impression that it consists of one main street, if you take the time to explore Cowbridge you will find lovely gardens, arcades, a leisure centre and many interesting buildings.

A busy little market town with all the facilities of the modern age, but with the pace and atmosphere of bygone times.

Most businesses belong to the Chamber of Trade which joins other organisations to provide floral decorations in the town during the Summer months. This is being built over the years and with the present level of enthusiasm from traders and residents alike should give better shows each year. The Christmas trees in the festive season also provide a welcoming opportunity to show off Cowbridge at its best as the Chamber of Trade organises the spectacle of trees on both sides of the High Street from one end of the town to the other.

COUNTY MARKET TOWN OF COWBRIDGE

Cowbridge, situated virtually in the heart of the Vale of Glamorgan, has always been regarded as a Market Town. The Livestock Market and Fairs were held in the wide part of the High Street as was the original Town Hall and Cross.

In 1889 a new market was provided adjacent to the Masons Arms and abutting the old Town Wall and Ramparts.

Between the First and Second World Wars the Livestock Market was held on Mondays and operated by three firms of Auctioneers, Messrs John David Watts and Morgan, Messrs Herbert R. Thomas and Messrs Seth Phillips. A second privately owned market was sited in land adjoining the old railway goods depot at the rear of Eastgate Street.

From 1952 onwards the Livestock Market has been run by Messrs John David Watts and Morgan and Messrs Herbert R. Thomas and Edwards. In the 1950's when the market was rebuilt and extended, Market Day was changed to Tuesday.

The tradition of Cowbridge September Fairs and Christmas Fatstock Shows have continued for well over a Century.

The town has now become a member of The Walled Towns Friendship Circle and expects this to lead to greater exposure of its attractions and increased tourist visiting.

Andrew Lucas z

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THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

The Vale of Glamorgan is without doubt one of the most beautiful places in which to live and work in Wales and the ancient town of Cowbridge is at its heart.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is determined to work tirelessly on behalf of its residents to ensure that our customers receive the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost.

The Council provides a number of essential services including:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

As the Council's primary objective, we are encouraging and promoting measures to diversify and strengthen the local economy and protect employment prospects. At the same time we are keen to ensure that any development is compatible with the Council's objectives in relation to the protection of the environment.

HOUSING

We aim to ensure as far as resources permit, that residents may occupy accommodation which is adequate for their needs in terms of size, fitness for occupation and cost.

THE ENVIRONMENT:

We are striving to achieve the best possible environment for both residents and visitors by ensuring that environmental considerations play a key part in decisions affecting the Borough.

LEISURE:

To cater, as far as possible, for all areas of recreation needs, through both direct and indirect provision of facilities, to encourage increased participation for all in sport and recreation and to improve appropriate opportunities for access to the countryside.

The Leisure Centre is situated at Bear Field, Cowbridge and is open to the public 10am - 10pm Monday - Saturday, 10am - 5pm Sundays.

The Centre boasts a main hall where football, basketball and badminton can be played and a small hall where gymnastics, childrens parties and keep fit are catered for. There is a weight training room and numerous sporting classes are available.

Any information on these activities is available from the Cowbridge Leisure Centre by ringing Cowbridge 775533.

COWBRIDGE AREA OFFICE:

John Arnott, Information Assistant, is available at our Cowbridge District Office, 79 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF7 7AA on Cowbridge, Monday-Thursday 8.45 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Friday 8.45 a.m. to 4 p.m. to answer all enquiries relating to the services that the Council provides.

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CHARTERS AND REGALIA

The first charter was granted to Cowbridge in 1254 by Sir Richard de Clare. At that time the town was called Longa Villa, but in the charter granted in 1340 it had become Cowebrugg and in subsequent charters variations of the name were used until Cowbridge was finally settled upon. It was thought all these early charters had been destroyed but in 1983 a solicitor in Somerset found a Cowbridge charter dated 1421 among other old papers in his files.

This charter was granted by Sir Richard de Beauchamp and confirms all previous charters back to the first charter of 1254. The County Archivist, Mrs. Patricia Moore, purchased the document and it is now safely housed in the Glamorgan Records Office.

The Archivist had a facsimile made and presented to the Town Council. It now hangs in the Council Chamber.

The last charter granted to Cowbridge was by Queen Victoria in 1886, this gave the town the right to elect the Council and from among these, the Councillors elect a Mayor. In 1888 Cowbridge was granted a Coat of Arms and a copy of this Grant of Arms is also in the Council Chamber. Between the Grant of Arms and the 1421 Charter hangs a large oil painting of the Cowbridge Seal which was in use from 1762 to 1887.

The first elected Mayor was Alderman Thomas Rees, a Cowbridge solicitor. Alderman Rees presented the Mayor's chain and pendant to the Council. The Mayoress or Consort has a lighter more delicate chain and pendant. Since the amalgamation of Cowbridge Town Council with Llanblethian Community Council the Deputy Mayor wears the chain and pendant of the chairman of Llanblethian Council, the Deputy Mayoress or Consort wears what was the Deputy Mayor's pendant on a simple ribbon.

The two Mace Bearers accompany the Mayor on all ceremonial occasions carrying the silver maces which are inscribed, Cowbridge Villa 1606 and The Royal Coat of Arms.



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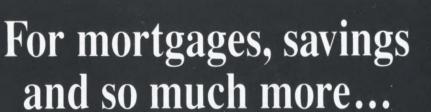
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TWINNING

Since 1991 Cowbridge has been twinned with CLISSON in the Deportment of LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE, near NANTES.

This twinning has proved to be very successful with exchange visits taking place each year between various sporting, cultural and youth groups, as well as between members of the respective Twinning Associations.

Clisson is a very picturesque town situated on the banks of the SEVRE in the heart of the MUSCADET wine producing area.

Its population is broadly similar to that of Cowbridge and district and it also has a long and sometimes turbulent history.

There are many other similarities, both cultural and economic, and the Tourist Office in Clisson (telephone 40 54 02 95) would be pleased to provide information regarding the holiday village, camp site and activities, including canoeing etc.

Anyone interested in the activities of the Twinning Association may contact any Committee member, current details being available at the library.

French visitors to Cowbridge may wish to note that a French language translation of the "Cowbridge Town Trail" is available from the Town Clerk's Office.

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COWBRIDGE WITH LLANBLETHIAN **TOWN COUNCIL**

The Council is based in the Town Hall which it owns. The Council provides a range of services and facilities which complement those of South Glamorgan County Council, and the Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council.

The range of services provided directly by the Town Council are:

Town Hall, facilities for: Concerts, meetings, receptions and general club and group activities. The building is licensed for music and dancing.

Control and administration of the Town Cemetery.

Maintenance and administration of Allotments at Aberthin Road and Cae Rex.

Care and maintenance of Play areas at Llanblethian and The Twt.

The Council maintains a close liaison with local organisations in order to ensure that the quality of life continues to be of the highest standard.

The Council always welcome suggestions for improving the efficiency, quality and scope of its services in the Town. For any enquiries telephone 773385.

STAFF OF THE COUNCIL:

Town Clerk: Mrs. Ruth Lane Clerical Assistant: Mrs. Wendy Pearce Amen. Supervisor: Mr. David Lewis

Caretaker: Mr. Bernard Cook

COWBRIDGE WITH LLANBLETHIAN **TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The Town Council consists of 15 Councillors elected every four years. The Officers consist of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Council meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

1 Sunnyside, Aberthin, Nr. Cowbridge CF7 7HE	Tel: 774450
6 Bessant Close, Cowbridge CF7 7HP	Tel: 773798
27 St. Johns Close, Cowbridge CF7 7HN	Tel: 773637
Whiteladies, Broadway, Cowbridge CF7 7EX	Tel: 772495
10 Church View, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF7 7JJ	Tel: 773219
Stepaside, River Walk, Cowbridge CF7 7DW	Tel: 774257
66 Broadway, Cowbridge CF7 7EW	Tel: 773287
42 The Verlands, Cowbridge CF7 7BY	Tel: 773249
27 St. Johns Close, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF7 7HN	Tel: 773637
Sefrou, 19 Cae Rex, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF7 7	Tel: 773441
6 Greenside, Cowbridge CF7 7EU	Tel: 773788
Moorlands Hall, Penllyn, Cowbridge CF7 7EP	Tel: 774279
Moorlands Hall, Penllyn, Cowbridge CF7 7RQ	Tel: 773913
2 Brookfield Park Road, Cowbridge CF7 7HJ	Tel: 772179
Ynys Fach, Cardiff Road, Cowbridge CF7 7EP	Tel: 773858
	6 Bessant Close, Cowbridge CF7 7HP 27 St. Johns Close, Cowbridge CF7 7HN Whiteladies, Broadway, Cowbridge CF7 7EX 10 Church View, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF7 7JJ Stepaside, River Walk, Cowbridge CF7 7DW 66 Broadway, Cowbridge CF7 7EW 42 The Verlands, Cowbridge CF7 7BY 27 St. Johns Close, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF7 7HN Sefrou, 19 Cae Rex, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF7 7 6 Greenside, Cowbridge CF7 7EU Moorlands Hall, Penllyn, Cowbridge CF7 7RQ 2 Brookfield Park Road, Cowbridge CF7 7HJ





Above: Town Mayor, Councillors and Staff 1995/96

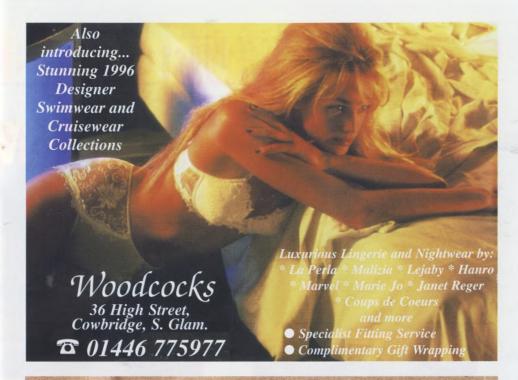


Left: The Freedom Casket

Right: The Council Chamber

18











Discover the delights



Featuring:

Above Centre: Twt Play Park.

Top Left: Holy Cross Church. Centre Left: Llanblethian Ford. Below Centre: Old Masons Yard at Cowbridge

Top Right:: Roman Road Centre Right:: River Thaw

Bottom Left:: A Row of Cowbridge cottages with a beautiful floral display

Bottom Right: The Library/Health Centre









BLOOMING COWBRIDGE!

Cowbridge in Bloom arose from an idea conceived by the Rotary Club of Cowbridge and the Cowbridge Chamber of Trade. The Committee had its inaugural meeting in 1991. Its aim, quite simply, was to enhance this historic and attractive town with extensive displays of flowers and

plants. The Committee and its band of 'gardeners' are all volunteers and funds are raised from local organisations, businesses and individuals. It is in essence a Cowbridge enterprise.

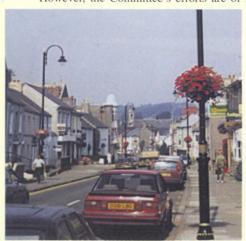
For the past five years the Committee has been responsible for planting and maintaining, throughout the year, a number of containers in the town; principally alongside the River Thaw. Some of the Committee's containers have been 'adopted' by local organisations, who themselves, take on the responsibility of caring for 'their' container.

The installation, in 1995, of new Edwardian style lamp-posts along the main street offered the opportunity to greatly extend the floral displays. The Committee took the

The photograph shows Mrs. G. Watkins of Westgate, Cowbridge - overall winner of Cowbridge in Bloom Competition 1993.

brave decision to buy and erect containers on most of these new posts, and it plans to complete this project by fixing containers to the remaining posts this year.

However, the Committee's efforts are of necessity constrained, not only by the level of



A typical street scene in Cowbridge with lampposts adorned with displays of hanging baskets

funding available, but also the number of suitable locations available to it. Therefore, the Committee actively encourages individual people and businesses to plant baskets, boxes and troughs on their own premises. Each year it holds a competition, for the best displays in a number of categories, which is usually judged in the last week of July.

Committee members are willing to give advice on planting and maintaining containers and they are always seeking volunteers to help with the enjoyable work arising from the maintenance of the Committee's own containers.

> Brian Roberts, Committee Co-ordinator

A summer scene from the Vale of Glamorgan Show



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EDUCATION IN COWBRIDGE

"The Education Capital of the Vale" may be considered a somewhat pretentious description - but think of what Cowbridge offers: Welsh and English medium nursery schools, Welsh and English medium primary schools, and a comprehensive school that ranks among the best in Wales!

The private nursery schools in Aberthin, Cowbridge and Llanblethian are well thought of and well supported. The Ysgol Meithrin is also in Cowbridge, next to the Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg, a Welsh medium primary school which caters for children from a large part of the Vale. Most of the children from Ysgol Iolo go on to secondary education at Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf in Cardiff, but some prefer to transfer to Cowbridge School. The English language primary school is known, somewhat contrarily, as Y Bontfaen: it is large, popular and successful.

The comprehensive school is Cowbridge School; it was formed in 1974, taking pupils from the former Grammar School, High School and Llanhari Secondary Modern School. Its catchment area has changed somewhat over the years, now extending to the county boundaries to the north and west; the popularity of the school means that people are drawn increasingly from further afield. Indeed, some years are over-subscribed, and the school is bursting at the seams.

The historic Grammar School building is no longer used, but the Lower School (years 7 and 8) occupies the buildings adjacent to the Grammar School; the Middle School (years 9 to 11) is on the Aberthin road, fairly close to the Sixth Form which is housed in the former Girls' High School building. Academic standards are high - GCSE and 'A' level results are excellent - and sporting achievements are considerable, with about 40 Welsh internationals (in an amazing variety of sports) among its students.

Cowbridge has long been noted for its schools, being best known for its Grammar School founded in 1608 by Sir Edward Stradling of St. Donat's. Its 'second founder' was Sir Leoline Jenkins, an Old Boy of the school who became Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, and Secretary of State to Charles II. Sir Leoline purchased the school from the Stradlings, and bequeathed it, and many of the Stradling estates, to Jesus College. Hence the school was owned by Jesus College from 1685 to 1918: there is still much land in the Vale owned by the College. The school has produced a stream of academics, doctors and lawyers, and some other notabilities like Alun Lewis the war poet, Anthony Hopkins the actor, Patrick Hannan the broadcaster and Huw Weekes the newscaster.

In the nineteenth century, the School was rivalled to some extent by the Eagle Academy which was housed in the former Spread Eagle Inn and Assembly Rooms (off Eagle Lane, which is nearly opposite the Mason's Arms). This is supposed to have provided a more commercial training than the classical education of the Grammar School, but a number of distinguished lawyers, writers and clerics studied there. There were also many other private schools at that time, notably that of the Misses Culverwell at Great House (today's Pharmacy).

The house named 'The Old Schoolhouse' on Cardiff Road was the National (Church) School, opened in 1839; the Board School (now Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg) opened on Broadway in 1876 - and hastened the decline of the private schools. These all provided primary education, and so great pressure then developed for secondary education for girls. Thanks particularly to the work of John Bevan and Edward John, the Girls' High School was opened in 1896 to cater both for boarders and day girls. It widened the horizons of many of the girls of the Vale of Glamorgan, giving academic success and opportunities undreamed of in the nineteenth century.

The use of the Girls High School building by Cowbridge School means that the tradition of academic education in Cowbridge has been maintained. Long may it continue!

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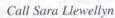
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Old Hall	Tel: 773941	Broadshoard	Tel. 772595
Cowbridge Leisure Centre:		Cowbridge Squash Club:	Tel.774142
Bear Field	Tel. 775533	Charles and another them.	

Tel: 773385

Tel: 774460

Tel. 772302

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council

Old Hall, Princ. Mrs. G. Walters Tel. 773831

Town Hall

Cowbridge Youth Centre:

Old Magistrates Court

Rector R. M. E. Paterson

St. Cadocs RC Church:

Holy Cross Church:

United Free Church

Fr. Dewi Davies

Mrs. G. Armstrong

Parish Office

Community Community College:

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Dr. John C. Jemmett
Dr. Teresa M. O'Hanlon
Dr. Paul Arnold

Tel. 772237

Dr. Richard Jones

Tel: 772926 Dr. Janet Taylor Dr. Timothy Pardoe

Tel. 772383

Tel. 792381 Dr. Jon Dallimore

SCHOOLS

Y Bont Faen Primary School: Cowbridge Comprehensive School Borough Close, Cowbridge Tel. 772374 Upper School, Aberthin Road Headteacher: Mrs. S. Dodds Headteacher: Mr. J. Dawson Tel. 772311 Lower School Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg Headteacher: Mr. Lewis Tel. 773948 Welsh Medium School: Llanfair Primary School: Broadway, Cowbridge Tel. 772358 The Herberts, St. Mary Church, Cowbridge Headteacher: Mr. A. W. Jones Headteacher: Mr. R. Thomas

LISTS OF CLUBS AND SOCIETIES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE LIBRARY

NOTABLE EVENTS

Town Council Meeting	3rd Tuesday of Month
Market Day	
Fat Stock market	
Mayor Making	3rd Tuesday in May
Civic Sunday	
Vale of Glamorgan Show	
Cowbridge Festival Week	
Armistice Day	
Christmas Lights Switch On	
	•

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PLACES OF INTEREST IN AND AROUND COWBRIDGE

CHILDREN'S PLAY PARK:

One of the most popular areas in Cowbridge during the fine weather is the children's play park, tucked away between the old Grammar School and the River Thaw. It is approached from the town by an entrance near the South Gate, a narrow passageway between two shops opposite the Town Hall and by a pleasant walk along the river bank from the Limes.

It is well equipped with the latest swings etc., and is a pleasant sheltered place to sit. Like almost every other place in the town it has a long history. The area is known as the Council Twt or Counsel Tutt and is mentioned in surveys and deeds as far back as 1630. Tut in Welsh is hassock, perhaps some significance can be read into this but we are on safer ground with Council as the land seems to have always been the property of the Council.

OLD HALL:

Old Hall was the home of the Edmonds family for a number of generations. The Reverend Thomas Edmonds was the Vicar of Cowbridge from 1835 until his retirement in 1883. During some of this period Dr. Benjamin Heath Malkin lived in part of the Old Hall.

In the early 1930's it became part of the Grammar School but it was vacated when the building became dangerous. For some years after this the Old Hall was derelict until in the 1970's the house was converted into an Adult Education Centre. The facade fronting the High Street was left almost intact but it was completely rebuilt inside, reducing the size of the original house. A Health Centre and Library are built in the grounds. These modern, purpose designed buildings blend well with the original gardens and fish pond which are bordered on two sides by the medieval town walls. Another corner of Cowbridge where a quiet stroll or pleasant rest can be enjoyed.

COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT MUSEUM:

In the centre of the Town Hall are two blocks of cells, the remaining evidence of the building's early life as a House of Correction. Today these male and female blocks of cells house the Local History Museum. It is a fully Registered Museum organised by a group of Trustees and run by a committee, all volunteers.

The aim of the Museum is to portray the history of Cowbridge and surrounding area in such a way as inhabitant and visitor can identify with life in a small town, whether Victorian, medieval or Roman. Perhaps taking a glimpse even earlier to the Iron and Bronze ages. Not forgetting yesterday which, is after all, History tomorrow.

The museum opens on the first Saturday in the month, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Group and school visits can be arranged with Marion Eveleigh, Cowbridge 772495.

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ANCIENT DRUID:

The Ancient Druid is of Medieval construction and though it has had many uses and changes over hundreds of years it still retains one medieval doorway and other interesting features of its earlier history.

It is reputed to have been a Hostel for pilgrims and its name dates from the days when it was an Inn

IOLO MORGANNWG:

Opposite the Town Hall is the site of the shop run by Iolo Morgannwg during one period of his varied life. In 1926 a plaque to his memory was placed on the site by the National Union of Welsh Societies.

CIRCULAR WALKS:

Two circular walks into the surrounding countryside have been devised by South Glamorgan County Council. The Eastern Walk takes you via St. Hilary and Aberthin and the Western Walk via Llansannor and Penllyn.

Plans of these walks can be obtained at the Town Council Office, at the Vale of Glamorgan Office and are displayed at the entrance to the Town Hall Car Park.

STALLING DOWN:

Or Cowbridge Common as it is often called is on the Eastern side of the Town and the A48 bisects it as did the Roman Road nearly 2,000 years ago. The Roman Road is still visible but not as clearly as it was only 10 years ago.

A famous landmark is the ring of trees on Stalling Down planted by one of the Traherne family of St. Hilary. It is roughly in this area the prisoners from Cowbridge House of Correction were brought to be hanged.

A little way from these trees and nearer to the main road is a memorial erected in 1922 to the memory of the officers and men of the Glamorgan Yeomanry.

In the 18th and 19th Centuries race meetings were held on the Downs starting and finishing near where the War Memorial stands today. Taking a further step back in time, Owain Glyndwr is reputed to have fought a victorious battle against the King's troops in the early 15th Century.

ST. QUINTINS OR LLANBLETHIAN CASTLE:

Gilbert de Clare, Lord of Glamorgan commenced to build a castle in Llanblethian early in the 14th Century, but when he was killed at Bannockburn in 1314 it was unfinished. St. Quintins was one of the many homes of the Lords of Glamorgan and until 1886 the Constable of the castle was automatically the Mayor of Cowbridge, though this office was generally delegated to a local dignitary.

Very little of the walls remain to be seen but there is a very fine gate house. In 1944 the castle was taken into care by CADW and is in the process of being prepared for visitors to the grounds by 1997. It will be a further two years before the gate house is made safe for visitors.

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LLANCARFAN:

The Conservation village of Llancarfan is set in a wooded valley formed by the Nant Carfan stream approximately 8 miles east of Cowbridge. At the heart of the village is St. Cadoc's Church, a Grade A Listed Building, mainly C14th and C15th with evidence of C12th origin. The area has great historical importance to the Celtic Church and Celtic Monasticism, in the C6th Cadoc founded a monastery at a site south of the present Church with a college for monks and scholars the first of its kind in the country.

The village has rural charm and character, and retains many interesting old properties and features including the Fox and Hounds Public House, and a picturesque road ford across the Nant Carfan. Outside the village can be seen the Ancient Monument, Castle Ditches, an iron age univallate hill fort with remains of an earlier enclosure. In 1747 Edward Williams (Iolo Morgannwg) was born at nearby Pen-Onn.

LLANTRITHYD:

The Church of St. Illtyd, in the Conservation village of Llantrithyd, dates mainly from the C13th and C14th. In the chance, beyond a delicate contemporary wooden screen, can be found the tomb of the Basset family. The tomb was erected in 1597 and is both memorable and quite exceptional, the like of which cannot be seen elsewhere in South Wales. A mural monument shows the painted figures of John Bassett and his wife at prayer; below them lie the life-sized recumbent effigies of their daughter and her husband, Anthony Mansel, in full armour, with their children.

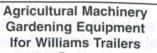
The ruin next to the Church is the remains of an Elizabethan manor house, called Llantrithyd Place, built about 1540 on the site of an earlier mansion.

ABERTHIN:

Aberthin is in the Rectorial Benefice of Cowbridge and illustrates the encircling nature of the parish as it lies to the north east of Cowbridge. Although it is much smaller it boasts two inns and a community hall. The community hall was in years past a very thriving chapel.

The village wanders along the banks of a brook and is a mixture of cottages, old houses such as Sweetings, two large houses, Aberthin House and Great House, and a number of modern dwellings spreading out from this nucleus. It is believed there was a Monastery here in the 12th-13th Century. In the same period, in what was the manor of Llanquain and now mostly comprises Holly Bush Farm, was a Castle, Castell Coch (Red Castle), also a chapel. After the chapel fell into disuse an aisle was built at Holy Cross Church.

Connecting Holly Bush Farm and Aberthin is a large tract of common land known as Stalling Down. Owain Glyndwr is reputed to have fought and won a battle here. Until 1830 it was notorious as the site for hanging prisoners from Cowbridge gaol. In more recent history it was the venue of the Cowbridge Races. Special excursions were run from Cardiff to these events. Now it is a favourite place for summer picnics and kite flying.







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LLANBLETHIAN CHURCH:

The Church, which dates from Norman times, stands high above the village of Llanblethian. It was first dedicated to St. Bleddien and later to St. John the Baptist. From the 12th Century until the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII the church was under the control of Tewkesbury Abbey. It was then transferred to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral before eventually becoming part of the Diocese of Llandaff.

The font constructed from Sutton stone and a small window in the north wall of the church are believed to be Norman.

An interesting feature in the nave is the 15th Century oak door to the former roof-loft. The walls of the church are decorated with numerous memorials and a funeral hatchment from an unknown family.

Anne Neville, wife of Richard, King of England, built the tower in 1473 and it houses a ring of six bells, the oldest of which is the tenor bell dated 1685, the gift of Sir Leoline Jenkins. A monument in the naive recalls that he was a Judge of the Court of the Admiralty and Principal Secretary to Charles II.

The church was extensively restored in 1896 when a new chancel arch and a stone pulpit were constructed. This restoration uncovered a number of interesting features such as a piscina constructed from 12th and 13th Century stone coffin lids. The south chapel now contains in what was probably its original position a stone effigy which was found buried, acting as a foundation for a tower buttress. A crypt was located under the chapel which contained the remains of some 250 people, together with a number of early stone coffin lids. These lids, including one inscribed in Norman French have been placed on the inside walls at the base of the tower. A priest's grave was also found under the chapel, and buried in a niche near the skeleton was a 14th Century pewter chalice.

More recent changes include the installation of an organ and wooden chair screen presented by Lord Aberdare in 1907, and an oak reredos erected in 1911 in memory of Frederick William Dunn, Churchwarden.

The church is well attended and Services are held every Sunday at 9.20 a.m.

WELSH SAINT DONATS:

St. Dunwyd's Church is thought to stand on an ancient religious site. Much of the present building dates back to the middle of the 15th Century. The Sanctuary and the Nave both have very fine wind braced roofs; the Nave has a very wide span.

Hensol Forest is to the east of Welsh St. Donats village. The forestry roads in the woodland to the north of the road which runs towards Pendoylan, provide the facilities for a very pleasant short stroll or for a longer walk of one or two miles. The more adventurous will find the lake on the south side of Pendoylan road - where they can look for tadpoles in the spring and water lilies later in the year, also - if they are very lucky - they may see a heron.

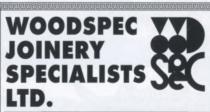
HOLY CROSS CHURCH:

There is no record of when a church was first built in Cowbridge but it is believed parts of the nave, chancel and tower of Holy Cross date from the late 13th Century. The fortified Tower is a feature of the church and its peal of eight bells was first rung in 1722. During the 700 and more years of its life there have been many changes made to the fabric and decoration of the church. One of the major changes was in 1473 when the Llanquain or South aisle was added. It was a gift of Lady Anne Neville wife of Richard, duke of Gloucester.

In 1844 when Richard had become Richard III, he granted by charter a chaplaincy to Holy Cross. The Grammar School and Church were closely related and many headmasters were also Rectors of Cowbridge and Llanblethian. Famous names associated with the church are Lewis Morgannwg, the 16th Century Welsh poet, Judge David Jenkins of Hensol, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London during the Civil War, Sir Edward Stradling of St. Donats, Founder of the Grammar School, Sir leoline Jenkins who endowed the Grammar School and Dr. Benjamin Heath Malkin. The Church Notice Board details services.

ST. CADOCS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:

The dedication Mass was conducted by the Most Reverend Michael McGrath, The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Wales, on Sunday 29th January, 1956. The church was enlarged in 1991-92.



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