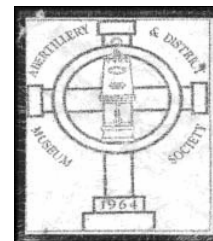


ABERTILLERY & DISTRICT MUSEUM SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

May 2007



Lecture Programme – The Ralph Robinson Lecture in May brings the current lecture season to an end and the Society would like to thank Marge Selway for arranging a varied programme with something to suit all tastes. Please call at the Museum for updates and to collect your Newsletters.

Contact Names

Mrs Peggy Bearcroft, Chairperson	01495 213806
Mr Don Bearcroft, Curator	01495 213806
Mr Ron Selway, Vice Chairman	01495 215775
Mr Trevor Cook Secretary- c/o Museum	01495 211140
Mrs Margaret Cook Assistant Secretary	
Mr Bernard Jones, Treasurer	01495 213185
Mrs Enid Dean, Fund raising Secretary	01495 212880
Mrs M Gilson, Schools Liaison	01495 212413
Mrs M Selway, Programme Sec	01495 211960
Mr Roy Pickford, Social Events Sec	01495 213377
Mr Bernard Hill, Asst Curator	01495 212864
Mrs Jen Price (Newsletter)	01633 482851

Museum opening times

The Museum is open to the public, **free of charge**:

Monday - Thurs 10am - 1pm 2pm - 4pm

Friday 10am - 1pm

Saturday 10am - 1pm

Museum phone number **01495 211140**. Visitors and volunteers are always welcome so please call in as often as you like.

100 Club April winners

1 st	No.70	John Selway	£25
2 nd	No.134	Athrina White	£10
3 rd	No.14	Jeanette Fowler	£5

Volunteers Needed! Our regular volunteers are fully occupied with the refit of the Museum which means we are unable to man stalls at a number of events without more help:

20th May – Communities First, Six Bells

16th June – Aberbeeg Hospital fete

7th July – Six Bells Fete

If you can help please contact Peggy Bearcroft.

Diary Dates

Wednesday 2nd May – *The Crawshays of Cyfarthfa Castle* by Scott Reid.

Saturday 2nd June – trip to Warwick Castle
NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

Wednesday 5th September – *Solemn Sabbaths and Faraway Sundays* by Pete Strong

Wednesday 3rd October – lecture by Don Bearcroft

Wednesday 7th November – *From Camera to Canvas* by Nora Lewis

Wednesday 5th December – *1804 Ship's Surgeon* by Roger Morgan

The lectures are now held in the Metropole Theatre, starting at 7.00pm, with tea and coffee and a chance to chat downstairs in the Museum after each lecture. Entry is £2 and the public are most welcome. Details of coffee mornings and other events can be found on the notice board at the Museum or at the following websites (where you can also read the Newsletter):

www.cwmtillevy.com

www.abertillery.net

Spring Trip – Saturday 2nd June, trip to Warwick Castle, cost £16.50 including entry and bus fare. Please contact Roy Pickford on 01495 213377 for details and to book your place.

You may wish to note the following events upstairs in the Metropole:

Tea Dances on 25th May, 29th June, 27th July from 1.30pm - 3.30pm;

Art for All 10am - 4pm on 7th May, 2007;

Music, Music, Music 10am - 4pm, 28th May to 1st June;

Forgotten Skills and Crafts 10am – 4pm, 16th and 17th June.

Phone number for queries and prices for Metropole events - 01495 322510

Fund Raising April 2007 - £320

2 ABERTILLERY & DISTRICT MUSEUM SOCIETY GWENT LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL

The last meeting was held at Llanfoist Village Hall in April, having been postponed from February, when a fall of snow made it too difficult for members to get there. I am a co-opted member, but when no other member of our society is there I give a report on our behalf. The Gwent History Association was set up by the council to produce the five volumes that will make up the written history of Gwent, and Volume two will be out at the end of the year.

Items of note from Meeting

Secretary attended meeting at Aberystwyth Archives Dept. where he was told that they wished to store our Journal as a digitised record and make available on their website. The new edition of the Journal is about to be circulated. GLHC is a member of the South Wales Records Society, which mainly exists for publishing projects. They published Bradley's Monmouthshire, etc.

Planning is under way for a new building to house the Gwent Record Office, Cost estimated at £7 million to £9 million.

Chris Barber has published a new book, named '*In the Footsteps of Alexander Cordell*', to mark the tenth anniversary of Cordell's death.

The Societies represented at the meeting gave interesting reports of their activities. Caerleon HS has now disbanded, and Pontypool is struggling to attract enough people, but Cwmbran, Shirenewton, and Abergavenny continue to expand.

The Day School is proposed for September 15th at Usk, the theme to be Historical Environment. Lectures will be on Landscapes, Literacy, History of Wentwood Forest and Gwent Levels.

AGM to be early December at Shirenewton Village Hall.

Award for work done for local history to be made to Richard Davies of Abergavenny at next AGM. Richard Davies' book *Abergavenny: A History & Celebration*, was Published by Ottakars Book Stores in 2005, and went into a reprint, but Waterstones took over Ottakars, and pulped the books left in stock, because they had Ottakars name on them. It would have been a better public relations exercise to have given them to the local history society.

Gordon Rowlands

Book Corner

The Valleys; a good place to live

This DVD, narrated by Peter Morgan Jones and sponsored by Tredegar History Society, tells the story of life in a valley mining town; although this film is based in the Tredegar area it will evoke many memories for the people of Abertillery and the surrounding district.

Those who recall the sight of miners walking to and from work with coal covered clothes before the days of the pit-head baths are becoming fewer. The pits have now gone and the valleys changed beyond recognition but the older generation will recall the remarkable characters of this industry, the hardship they and their families suffered but also the comradeship and friendships that were forged.

The characters in this film are from the Tredegar area but they can be mirrored throughout the Abertillery area.

For the younger generation it is a reminder of a life that is long passed and the debt that we owe to those who worked in the mines.

Beyond the March Wall by Peter Morgan Jones The Breconshire Black mountains dominate the Welsh March in the frontier region between England and Wales. The area lies between the rivers Wye, Usk and Monnow and is steeped in legend.

Peter Jones has given us an outline of the history of this area and how the hilltops and valleys have changed as individuals and events have opened these places to the outside world. In this interesting book he has brought together legend and fact, people and places including Father Ignatius and Llanthony Abbey, Gerald of Wales' travels through the Black Mountains and the Rev. Francis Kilvert's life in Clyro and the diaries which have become a literary treasure.

This book whets one's appetite for further reading and stirs a hankering to revisit these places.

The DVD (price £10) and Book (price £5) are available from Peter Jones Tel 01495 722789. Peter has donated a percentage from any sales to the Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum.

Jean Colwell

Well done, Bethan! Bethan Roles, grand-daughter of Elaine and Dennis has raised £2.60 for Museum funds by saving pennies and two penny pieces in her 'museum' money box.

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More from 'Cartref' - the little newspaper produced for local members of the armed forces during the war. This extract from the October 1944 was sent to us by Marie Carter.

Football Flash by Jack Hayward

Abertillery Rugby Club is still running under war-time difficulties, but the main point is that they are still functioning.

A feature of this season's team is the number of young players in it, all of whom live in Abertillery. Two thirds of the side are under twenty years of age. It is true that the Club is not registering many victories, but this is due to the lack of experience of the youngsters. The policy of the Club in playing these lads is a right one, and there is certainly promise for the future.

When normal conditions return, Abertillery should have one of the finest rugby sides in Wales.

FOOTNOTE: The Club extends an invitation to any service lad home on leave to join in a game. Don't wait to be asked, just go along and you will be assured of a warm welcome.

More next month.

Poet's Corner

'Suddenly'

Within my heart all suddenly
Joy kindled into flame,
Nor could my startled spirit see
From whence such glory came;
Yet suddenly as shooting stars
That stab across the night,
My heart undid its bolts and bars,
And dusty grief took flight.

Yes, suddenly my heart was lit
By joy's bewildering glow,
So fierce and proud the flame of it,
And yet I did not know
By what strange fancy 'twas beguiled
Nor whence its glory came -
I only knew that when You smiled
Joy kindled into flame.

Myfanwy Haycock

Myfanwy Haycock 1913 – 1963 was a celebrated Monmouthshire poet. Her poems, drawings and sketches featured in national and local newspapers and magazines, and her poems and plays were broadcast on radio and television. Gwladys Haycock and Wynn Williams have prepared compilations of her work, available at Torfaen Museum among other places.

The Salt Saga continues After the service on Easter Sunday morning at Ebenezer Chapel, we were invited to the lecture hall for a cup of tea. When I went in I noticed several large stones inscribed by past people while the lecture hall was being constructed in 1904. I immediately noticed one that said:

**F.T SALT ON BEHALF OF PRESENT
PASTOR Rev. D COLLIER**

Apparently this F.T. Salt was a deacon of the chapel and the father of Cyril Salt. Keith Dykes also told me that Cyril Place on Old Blaina Road was named after Cyril Salt. Cyril's name is also on the remembrance plaque in Ebenezer Chapel.

Enid Dean

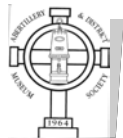
Shopping in Six Bells in 1945

Mrs Brown had the newspaper shop on Brown's Corner and the Post Office was in Bridge Street. Mrs Webster had the sweet shop, Mrs Leach had the greengrocers and next was the Coop. Across the road was another greengrocers run by Bessie Tossell whilst her husband kept the fish and chip shop next door. You had to walk about a hundred yards to the next shop – Rees' Golden Crust. In a little house next door was a barbers and then Bill Tossell's shoe repair shop. Back over the road to the main shopping centre and you had a butchers, Mr Maddels sweet shop (where you could buy 'Vimto'), a bakers and the greengrocers run by Mr and Mrs Blacker. Moving along the street you came to Mr Flook who repaired shoes, a sweet shop run by him and his daughter, a tobacconist, and then Mrs Thyers cake shop where you could have the edge off the ice slices for a couple of pence.

Yet further along you had Cooks the draper, Trigg and Bennett grocer, Mrs Adams the hairdresser, Dr Scanlon's surgery, Arnold the butcher, Trevor Croad butcher, Pritchards chemist, Bardell Bros greengrocer and then another sweet shop, and an ironmongers run by Emil Wilson. Along from them was Mr Phillips' grocery shop, the Rediffusion office, C.H Price grocer and Ernie Wilson's car showrooms.

Ghost Writer

What a fascinating account! Someone clearly has a photographic memory.



Abertillery & District Museum Society Newsletter May 2007

Museum Matters

On the 19/4/03 John Cavaciuti donated a marble soda fountain which was originally on the counter of the Express Cafe. The fountain dates from the early 1900s and was in situ when the cafe was taken over by John's family in 1926, it was in use up until the 1950 when it was removed to accommodate a newer device.



The cafe was sold following the death of Andrew Cavaciuti in May 1997.

The marble counter was subsequently sold by the new owners.

The marble soda fountain matches the marble counter and the round marble tables; the floor was also made of marble.

I decided to display the fountain on our cafe counter with a suitable notice on it. Little did we realise the train of events that this would later set in motion.

Some time last year Jane White a regular visitor and admirer of our museum came into the museum and noticed the marble soda fountain. It was then that Jane generously offered us the marble counter complete with the brass fittings from the Express Café. We were overwhelmed and excited at the prospect of having an original Italian Café installed over the Café counter in our museum.



Collecting the counter for storage

The marble counter required conservation and treatment to protect it as it is to be a working exhibit.

A marble conservator was needed to carry out this restoration. After much searching we found the right man for the job, his name is Panico Theodosiou. He works in marble and other similar

materials and carried out work on the Millennium Centre, Hereford Cathedral as well as outdoor work in the Brecon Beacons National Park where he is one of the Trustees. His enthusiasm for our project is equally as great as our own and could not wait to get started.

We first had to obtain a grant aid to pay for the restoration we applied to CyMAL the governing body of museums in Wales and a division of the Welsh Assembly Government. The application was successful and not only that they also provided money to pay for a heater de-humidifier for our archive store.

Thanks to BGCBC the marble slabs of the counter had been collected and stored in the old gymnasium at the Bowls Centre. It was from there that Pan collected it taking it to his workshop at his home in the Brecon Beacons.



Pan collecting the counter for restoration

What I find amazing about all this is the generosity of the people involved;

John Cavaciuti for donating the marble soda fountain, Jane White for donating the counter and other items from the Express Café., CyMAL who provided the money to have the work carried out, Walter Syrett and his team from BGCBC, Frank Olding for his help with the application and lastly the museum members of "F" Troop who not only work hard for the museum but have to put up with me while doing so.

All we need now is the original round marble tables to complete the café

Don Bearcroft Curator.

