



Autumn
Newsletter
2011

THE PRESIDENT WRITES

It is with sadness that I record the deaths, over the past few months, of two long standing RI members.

Michael Gibbs who died so suddenly made a significant contribution to the RI. Michael had been a Past President, a Council member for many years and a well respected member of the Museum staff. He will be sadly missed. An obituary will be found within this Newsletter **Anne Morris** a RI member for many years and an avid supporter of art, music and historical associations within South Wales will also be sadly missed.

Outreach – over the years the RI has provided support for young people through activities organised by the Museum. A new initiative – “Know Your Area” for 14 to 18 year olds – has been devised by a small group of RI members and an excellent programme has been devised. You can read about

this in an article that Dr Vernon Williams has written for the Newsletter.

Links with The Friends of Glynn Vivian Art Gallery

Members will be aware of the informal discussions that have been taking place between Glynn Vivian Friends and the RI and as a result the September Evening Lecture will be a joint event when Oliver Fairclough will talk about Welsh ceramics, including also reference to the work of Mr Grant-Davidson.

President's Invitation Lecture will be on Thursday evening 17th November at 7.00 p.m. The RI Council has been extremely fortunate as Professor John Harries, Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales has agreed to give the Lecture – “A Forward View of Welsh Science”. Professor Harries is due to present his in depth report to the First Minister and the Welsh Assembly Cabinet in September. Full details can be found in the Newsletter.

Scott Centenary Celebrations 2012 Next year throughout the UK the Centenary of the Scott Expedition to the Antarctic will be celebrated. This will include a range of events in Swansea during February linked to Edgar Evans. Further information can be found in the Newsletter.

Members Email Address – there has been an encouraging start to my request for members' email address so that members can be kept informed of “late news items”. If you are on email and have not advised me then please do so – lyndonchris@btinternet.com.

Annual Membership Subscription was increased last year to cover increases in administration such as postage, printing

etc. There are a number of members who have not updated their standing orders or cheque payments. I would ask those who receive reminders to address this shortfall so that their membership subscription covers administration costs. There will be a period of grace to enable the people concerned to make good the shortfall but then those still in arrears will not be included in future mailings. I am certain members will understand the RI's position.

I take this opportunity to wish all members a pleasant time during the summer and I look forward to seeing you all when the new season's programme of lectures and events gets underway in September.

Lyndon Morris

LECTURE REVIEWS

Thursday, 17th March 2011

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE IN SOUTH WALES

By Mr Richard Keen, landscape historian and heritage consultant.

Our speaker began by emphasising that although it was obvious that there were many varieties of landscape, it might perhaps be less apparent that there were also many differing concepts of what constituted a landscape. For example, open mountains might be considered amongst the finest landscapes, but to some they were just barren and dangerous places to be avoided and ignored. In Wales, the iconic status of Snowdon is such that not long ago four million pounds was raised by subscription from the general public to purchase large areas of that wild area for protection and preservation. It was the early scientists who began to see the interest of such places, both for their unusual flora, and as aids to the

understanding of geology. One commented that the evidence of glaciation at Nant Ffrancon was "as clear as a house burnt down"! They were followed by artists and tourists but here again responses were not always favourable. One nineteenth century writer commented of the remote Abergwesyn valley in mid-Wales, a particular favourite of our speaker, "that the soil being barren it was an excellent place to breed a famine"! A modern visitor might be expected to have very different views of such a now-treasured landscape from that of its former natives. As early tourism became established in Britain in the eighteenth century, the concept of romantic ruins was formed, and even Tintern Abbey, it was suggested could perhaps be rendered more pleasing by the judicious use here and there of a mallet. Turning from the wilder scenes Mr Keen showed us the softer and richer Towy valley, home of the Dinefwr and Middleton estates, and included details of the remarkable 1660s view of Newton House. The Vale of Neath was next, with several of Thomas Hornor's fine early nineteenth century panoramas of the wooded slopes and meandering river. Our speaker is one of Wales' pioneers in industrial archaeology, and he next turned to the way in which the changes to an industrial society have altered and created our modern landscapes, which even when not beautiful, are always of interest and full of the history. The terraces of the Rhondda form their own distinctive panoramas and the designation as a World Heritage Site of Blaenavon, with its iconic structures from our industrial past, is an overdue recognition of yet another aspect of landscape change in south Wales.

B.Morris

Thursday 7th April 2011

SWANSEA IN COLOUR - IN 1783. THE SKETCHES OF
LIEUT. WILLIAM BOOTH

By Mr Bernard Morris, topographical historian and Past President, RISW.

In 1774 William Booth, a young Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers (later the Royal Engineers) was posted to Gibraltar. In 1779 France and Spain began the great siege and intermittent blockade which lasted for nearly four years. At this time Booth was appointed 'Director of Mines', and as superintendant of the defence works he spent eighteen months under canvas in extreme weather in such exposed places as 'the Devil's Bowling Green'. After these exertions he was granted leave in Britain, and spent the summer of 1783 at Swansea, then a popular retreat for officers on half-pay. Engineer officers were trained to make accurate sketches of landscapes for use in their military duties and noted artists were often their tutors. William Booth's skills in this respect are evident from his sketchbook, now in the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. It has many sketches of buildings and landscapes in our area, most of them attractive watercolours in their own right, and they are also accurate in their detail. Many of these were shown by our speaker. Booth's interests were wide, and his subjects reflect this. Several of Swansea's gentry houses are included in his sketches, including Hill House, Cockett; Rhyddings, Brynmill; and nearby St Helen's. There is a very finely-detailed drawing of Sketty Hall, showing it before the bow-fronted addition was added by Jernegan, and also an attractive watercolour of Clasemont, Morrision, seat of John (later Sir John) Morris). This includes as a foreground figure a smartly-dressed gentleman with gun and dog, with the artist's note "My friend King's brother in law". Edward King was deputy Comptroller of Customs at Swansea, and his brother in law was John Morris, owner of Clasemont and leading Swansea industrialist. This seems to be the only surviving depiction of this notable character. His sketches and notes show that the artist was also interested in more ordinary people and places. He shows "Farmer Rosser's Cottage", which was clearly a traditional 'longhouse', in what is now

Singleton Park. He has also drawn examples of the wheel-less 'slide-cars' used in the locality, quoting Farmer Rosser's outlay in making one (it cost 2/6d). Farmer Harris' house at Sketty Green appears twice, and was evidently much newer. A Welsh cheese press, a mobile knife grinding machine, with operator, and measured details of various farm gates confirm Lieutenant Booth's interest in, and his eye for, fine detail and practical things. We can indeed be very grateful that his well-earned rest from war-service brought him to Swansea.

The new Programme, 2011-2012

The new Programme is circulated with this Newsletter and is full of good and interesting entries describing our coming events at Swansea Museum, covering the period from September to May.

We begin on the 8th September with a major event which is also a new venture, for this is a joint meeting with the Friends of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery. For this special occasion we have been fortunate to have as our speaker Mr Oliver Fairclough, Keeper of Art at the National Museum Wales and a leading expert on matters relating to Welsh ceramics. He lately undertook the substantial task of editing for publication *The Pottery of South Wales*, the major work by the late W.J. Grant-Davidson, the RI's Hon. Curator of Ceramics, which had remained unpublished at his death. Mr Fairclough will be drawing on his unique knowledge of the study and collecting of Welsh ceramics, including also reference to the work of Mr Grant-Davidson.

October sees the launch evening for the latest volume of *The Swansea History Journal* which is the subject of information and order forms now enclosed,

In November comes the President's Invitation Lecture, to be given this year by Professor John Harries, Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales, who provides scientific advice for the First Minister and Cabinet, Welsh Government. His subject

will be 'A Forward View of Welsh Science'. This lecture commences at **7.00 p.m.** and will be held in the **Faraday Lecture Theatre, Swansea University** (*by kind permission of the Vice-Chancellor*). It is an open meeting and members of the general public are welcome.

For the Christmas month we revert to the former practice of having a short talk followed by seasonable refreshments, the latter provided by the our Social Committee, chaired by Mrs Christine Morris, with the former being presented by Mr Raymond Walker who will be describing some interesting objects (and stories of people) revealed by his researches in the Museum. We start the New Year with Dr Geraint Owen of Swansea University giving us a geologist's description of the origins and consequences of volcanoes and earthquakes, violent natural events which have become rather too familiar as major news items. Then, on the 28th January, comes our AGM, which starts at 7.00m p.m. (not our usual 7.30). Comments on subsequent lectures will be included in the next Newsletter which will accompany the AGM papers.

RISW ANNUAL OUTING

**“YOU ARE CHARGED WITH NOT
BEING HERE ON THE 16TH JUNE”**



"Courtesy of Llancaiach Fawr/Caerphilly CBC"

The RISW annual outing took place on the 16th June with a visit to Llancaiach Fawr Manor and Castle Coch. On a bright sunny morning twenty seven members gathered outside the Museum at 9.30 and travelled to the venues in a very modern comfortable coach provide by Thomas's of Neath.

On arrival at the Manor we were greeted by a guide who outlined our tour which projected us back to the troubled times between Royalists and Parliamentarians in the year 1645. Colonel Edward Pritchard who was Lord of the Manor at first gave his loyalty to the Royalists. However, when Charles 1st visited the Manor hoping to maintain the Colonel's loyalty this was not to be and the Colonel's loyalty transferred to Oliver Cromwell. The Colonel's prestigious visitor was to die four years later under the executioner's axe. During the tour of the house we learnt from the guides that thirty servants were employed in the household. Typical salary for a house servant was two pounds ten shillings – some of which was sent home to the parents.

Rats proved a problem which was solved by using them in cider making rather than more expensive meat! The scullery boy would roast pig on the spit which could take twelve hours, the fire being kept alight at all times in the kitchen. Blackbird pie was very popular with the birds claws remaining on the bird. The pie was cooked with the claws protruding out of the pastry and used after the meal as toothpicks!

The great hall was used as a court room as Colonel Pritchard was a JP and as a major landowner he would gather taxes for the King. In the

bedchamber we learnt as a general rule the master and lady of such a household would sleep apart in separate rooms for cleanliness and holiness! The children's bedchamber was also used for the birth rituals of the lady. The latrine system left much to be desired from today's standards with dried moss used as toilet paper! As regards cosmetics the lady of the house would use babies' urine as part of her cheek blush mixture which would stop wrinkles but gave a not very pleasant smell at close quarters! In such troubled times a small armoury was well equipped and included a pigeon relay system to summon help if needed.

Having toured the garden we all enjoyed a well provided buffet lunch in the Barn Function Room.

After a short journey we arrived at Castell Coch (Red Castle) near Cardiff. Our guide explained that the original castle was built in the 12th century. It was a wooden structure in Norman times around 1270 and included a tower for defence against Welsh vagrants. In the 15th century the castle fell into disrepair. In 1870 the Marquis of Bute rebuilt and restored the castle. He was the wealthiest commoner in the world. It was his architect William Burgess who was given a free rein to create a rural retreat to be in keeping with his main opulent residence of Cardiff Castle. What we see to-day was finally finished in 1891 ten years after Burgess's death in 1881.

Members enjoyed light refreshments in the Castle Café and continued the journey back to Swansea Museum. An excellent annual outing was enjoyed by all – what a pity we were not going home to enjoy at least some of the servant support that Colonel Edward Pritchard and his wife enjoyed!! DJ

SOCIAL COMMITTEE NEWS

Our summer social evening went really well and quite a number of people said it was the best ever! The tickets as usual were a bit slow to sell in advance but there were about 60 people in the very appreciative audience. "Young Hemiola"

are a talented group of young musicians who sang music ranging from Handel to Howard Goodall (the Black Adder theme music) and sang and played a variety of solos with their choral music and included a harp recital in their repertoire. They are a wonderful credit to their conductor and director Delyth Holland. After the musical programme we retired to the Education Room for our extensive buffet supper which the Social Committee had worked hard to prepare – the home made cakes always disappear very quickly! Our proceeds amounted to £371.

We have several busy catering occasions planned – National Archaeology Day on 16th July, the Journal Book Launch on 13th October and the Book Fair on 29th October.

Our thanks as ever go to the Museum staff for their unfailing cheerfulness and for the help they give us for all our events – they make our efforts so much easier.

Christine Morris – Chair Social Committee

Programme 2011-12

PRESIDENT'S INVITATION LECTURE

Professor John Harries.
Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales
Providing scientific advice for the First Minister
and Cabinet Welsh Government

A Forward View of Welsh Science

On Thursday 17th November 2011

**In the Faraday Lecture Theatre,
Swansea University**
By kind permission of the Vice-Chancellor

**Lecture commences at 7.00 p.m.
and is open to the General Public**

Lunch Time Talks at

Swansea Museum
Scott Centenary Celebrations 2012

Tuesdays from 1 o'clock until 2 o'clock

7th February
Julian Salisbury
Past Chairman Capt. Scott Society (Cardiff)

Scott and the Cardiff Connection

**14th February
Gary Gregor**

***Worms Head to the South Pole –
the Welshman with Captain Scott***

**21st February
Martin Price**

Dr Edward Wilson and the Antarctic

**28th February
Dr. Peter Jones**

Chairman Capt. Scott Society Cardiff

***Coping with illness and disease
during the expedition***

Scott Centenary Celebrations 2012

Saturday 18th February at 11.00 a.m.

Book Launch – Swansea Museum

Dr. Isobel Williams book

***Captain Scott's Invaluable Assistant
– Edgar Evans***

Swansea Museum – opening February

***An exhibition to commemorate the expedition
reaching the South Pole***

Friday 17th February 2012 at Mid day

St. Mary's Parish Church

***Civic Service to commemorate the anniversary of
Edgar Evans Death***

Saturday 11th February 2012 at 2.00 p.m.

Edgar Evans Walk

***Join the Gower Society four mile circular 'Edgar
Evans walk' starting from Rhossili Church to go
around the cliffs and up onto Rhossili Down***

***Led by Gary Gregor
Obituary***

Michael Gibbs, 1942- 2011



It is with great sadness that we record the death in June,

suddenly but peacefully, of Michael Gibbs, Past President of the RISW, former Secretary, former Hon. Curator of Art, long-serving Council member, and for even longer a dedicated supporter and member of the Institution.

He served as our President from 1984 to 1990, and it was during this time that a major threat arose to the very existence of the Swansea Museum, maintained by the RI since 1841, . It was not the first of such crises - there had been increasing financial difficulties in running and maintaining the Museum since the Second World War, but financial lifelines from the Pilgrim Trust and later the Industrial Museum of South Wales Ltd (a consortium of local industries) kept the Museum alive through some dark days. In the early 1970s it seemed that the future had become assured when the University College (as it then was) of Swansea entered into a partnership with the RISW, whereby the buildings and staffing became the UCS's responsibility, whilst the RI remained responsible for the collections. This worked well, until in the 1980s the finances of academic institutions also began to feel the cold winds of economic and government imperatives, leading first to reduction of the money available to the Museum, and in due course to formal notice from the UCS to discontinue the partnership, thus ending the financial support which had kept the Museum in being.

This was during Mike's presidency, putting him at the centre of a very worrying crisis. It was common ground that the Museum was one of the city's major assets, but it appeared that no one was able to take on the financial responsibility for it, at a time when public bodies were all having to reduce expenditure, including of course the Swansea City Council. Mike responded characteristically with a high profile campaign alerting the people of Swansea to the threat to 'their' Museum, using banners across the building's frontage, ample press coverage and a massive petition to the City Council seeking their intervention. Despite this success, none of the bodies which might have replaced the lost finance would or could

make any move to do this, and Mike had to endure the burden of this frustrating and worrying period, which he did with his usual good humour.

That says something of his role with the RI, but he was also a man of many other parts, descended from a very old Gower family whose name he was proud to bear. His interest in family history, his own and other people's, led to him becoming one of the most knowledgeable genealogists regarding the peninsula and the adjacent parts of south Wales. He was also expert in matters historical relating to ceramics and art, and was interested in local archaeology. His support was crucial when, in the 1960s the RI arranged two excavations, one on the Berthlwyd post-medieval pottery kiln and the other on a Romano-British site on the northern slopes of Kilvey Hill.

It was at the latter site that he was instrumental in providing a contingent of pupils from Gowerton School, where he was Head of Art.

A few years later he worked with a small group of RI members and others (including the caretaker's family) in recovering a large and interesting group of Swansea ceramics from surface water drains beneath the lawns of Sketty Hall, once the home of an owner of the Cambrian Pottery works. The items recovered are now in the Museum's collections.

Apart from his rewarding academic pursuits and interests Mike was, as might be expected from his west Gower background, an expert crabber and gatherer of laverweed, and was also skilled at preparing delicious laverbread ("Welsh Caviar") from the weed, often shared with fortunate friends.

As well as his contribution and commitment to the RI, many of us will miss his friendship and his knowledge of and enthusiasm for, local genealogy and history, also his long-standing skill in finding and sharing information about useful old manuscripts and documents which, but for him, would have remained unknown.

B.M.

RISW Outreach to Swansea Schools and Colleges.

The RI Council has recently been considering ways in which the vast and rich reservoir of knowledge and experience of members of the RI could be productively used in developing links with local Secondary schools/ Colleges. There are a range of opportunities for the RI to provide support in extracurricular programmes which are nowadays considered very important in broadening students understanding and experience and an essential foundation for entering Higher Education and the World of Work. This would also be an excellent way of engaging with Schools/Colleges and promoting the RI's aims as a Learning Society and as Friends of the Museum making students more aware of the wealth of resources available at the Museum. The longer term objective would be to interest young people and encourage membership of the RI. The establishment of a programme of attractive events could eventually lead to the reviving of the Junior Membership Scheme.

The RI was recently approached by a Swansea Secondary School enquiring whether members with experience in Higher Education and Business would undertake mock interviews for students intending entering University. Arrangements made

were much appreciated by the School and students felt that the feedback received was extremely useful. Council have agreed to extend this arrangement to other local Schools/Colleges that would like to be involved. Consideration is also being given to a programme of talks/seminars offering a range of topics to Schools/Colleges.

In line with one of the original aims of the RI namely to promote a greater knowledge and understanding of the local area especially in the natural sciences, a programme of workshops including practical laboratory work and/or fieldwork is being arranged for this summer. These will cover for young people in the first instance studies in local history, biology, geology and geomorphology (landform formation). These activities will be based at the Museum using its resources and the local environment.

Clearly if these and other developments are to be successful and the work of the RI publicised to maximum advantage it will need the support and positive involvement of members of the Institution.

Council has given the initiative their wholehearted support but it can only achieve its goal with the involvement of members who are prepared to give even a little time to pass on their knowledge and expertise by engaging with young people. Please consider some contribution to this scheme, however limited, or if uncertain of the demands contact the President, or myself expressing your interest for more information.

Vernon Williams

MUSEUM NEWS

The museum has been very busy with many visitors coming especially to see the Copperopolis Exhibition.

New objects are being added to the exhibition due to kind donations, including photographs of early Swansea prospectors sent by the Vivian Company to America!

The Buttonhook Society has a wonderful display of their collections and related objects and their stories in Gallery1- if only buttonhooks could talk!

The Welsh Childrens Society – Tros Gynnal will be holding their annual Welsh art and crafts exhibition at the Museum this summer - all the auction proceeds will go to the charity. Last year several Swansea based artist, including members of the Museum staff, donated works for sale.

Early this month the Transport Festival was held in the Park and Ride area adjacent to the Collections Centre at Landore. It attracted over 1,600 visitors to the Centre, making a very busy day for staff who had given up their Sunday to work there.

This was followed the following weekend by the Classic Motorbike Show, organised by the Museum and held in Dylan Thomas Square. Once again the event was blessed with sunshine and attracted over 1,000 visitors.

School visits are booming and groups have currently been enjoying traditional 'Days out at the Seaside' with a Punch and Judy show. More details can be found in the report from the Education Officer

The South West Wales Museum partnership was successful in obtaining another grant from CyMAL to fund the second phase of the 'Medwyn Mole – Museum detective' project.

The new website which is designed for schools to plan solo visits to the museums and to interact with staff was previewed at the National Eisteddfod

In June but will be launched at the end of September.

Time Team will be filming from the Museum's Collection Centre in July whilst carrying out investigations into the industrial archaeological heritage of the lower Tawe valley. 'Olga' should return to Swansea in early August. Restoration work below deck is still ongoing in Gloucester - the transformation is amazing and the workmanship outstanding!

The next big event on the Museum calendar is National Archaeology Day on July 16th. The RISW Social Committee team have very kindly offered to do refreshments for the day, and I would like to thank them for their support.

Gareth el Tawab: Museum Curator

Education Programme

It has been a busy and varied term for schools at Swansea Museum. Sessions have included Transport Tours at Landore, Toys, and Swansea at War.

For the Summer Term we have also seen the return of 'Off to the Seaside' with storytelling on the tram and the welcome return of Matt the Magic Man, who puts on a traditional Punch and Judy show. As ever the two have proved extremely popular with the children having a great time.

I have been preparing activities for the Swansea Museum and Theatr na Nog project which will take place this autumn.

The performance this year looks at the story of *The Arandora*

Star during WW2.

When Italy entered the war in 1940, Italian men living in the UK - including those whose families were living in the South Wales valleys - were viewed by the authorities as enemy aliens.

The play follows the story of Lina, who witnesses her father being arrested, and dragged from their cafe in Neath. He was taken along with his brother to Cardiff, and then the Isle of Man and eventually to Liverpool and aboard *The Arandora Star*.

On 1 July 1940, *The Arandora Star* left Liverpool with 800 Italian internees aboard, bound for Canada. During the first night, she was torpedoed by a U-boat off Ireland, and sunk with 446 Italian men lost.

The play, based on a true story, will look at the life of immigrants living in Wales during the Second World War, and follows Lina's search for the truth.

These evening performances always popular and last year we had to turn groups away, because the performances were sold out. The RISW are of course invited and I hope they can attend!

Barry Hughes; Education Officer

The Swansea History Journal/Minerva

The ***Swansea History Journal (Minerva)*** Volume 19, 2011-12, is with the printers. It will be launched at Swansea Museum on Thursday 13th October at 7.30. There will be a

local history talk by the editor, Gerald Gabb, and refreshments. It's a pleasant evening - do come along!

The Journal has gone from 96 pages to 112, and for the second year running is in full colour throughout. (We are able to do this through the generosity of an anonymous donor, and are immensely grateful).

What's in it? In the Mayor's parlour in the Guildhall hangs an 1840 view of Swansea by A.F.Rolfe – it has never been reproduced in colour before, and it had to be our cover picture. It links closely with an excellent article about the Swansea artists, Paul and John Weir Padley. The Journal has a name for publishing on ceramics, and we are delighted to include a fine piece on Swansea Etruscan ware and a note a Cambrian Pottery caberet set. (And W.J.Grant Davidson's remarkable *The Pottery of South Wales* is reviewed.) On music, there is a biography of the noted Plasmarl-born cellist David Ffrangcon Thomas. We have a very thorough investigation of the horrific wreck of the Swansea-owned copper ore vessel the *Queen* on Gull Island, Newfoundland in 1867, and the alleged cannibalism that followed. Does the architecture of the Civic Centre (formerly County Hall) entrance you? - we have an account of it which may well help you look with new eyes. It being seventy years since the blitz on Swansea, there are the memories of a man who tangled with the barrage balloons above the town and its docks, and of a town lad evacuated to Pennard, where he had to tangle with horses and a bull. Swansea Bay was guarded by batteries of guns at Mumbles from at least 1663 – we have the story up to 1918. You can also read the history of the observatory at Penllergaer, beloved of John Dillwyn Llewelyn and his daughter Thereza. And there is a fascinating 1947 drawing of Swansea, an interesting photo of the North Dock basin, information on the Clyne Valley Community Project, Llandarcy oil refinery and recent museum acquisitions. As well as other book reviews covering the Grand Theatre, copper works, stained glass and

the Home Front....

A warning! Last year the Journal sold out by Christmas – people often give them as presents. How do you get one ? There is an order form in this mailing – your order can be picked up on the launch evening, or afterwards from the Museum (don't forget it's closed on Mondays). An order can be posted to you, though obviously this is more expensive. You can buy one at the RISW table at the Local History Bookfair (Saturday 29th October, 10-4.00). After that, you can buy them at Swansea Museum, the National Waterfront Museum, West Glam Archives, Uplands Bookshop, Cover to Cover (Mumbles), Pennard Stores and the Gower Wildflower Centre (Blackhills). If you have trouble obtaining one, try the editor at 38 Woodland Avenue, West Cross, Swansea, SA3 5LY or on g.gabb@ntlworld.com

The price. With the rise in the cost of printing, it has been decided to raise the price of the Journal to £7.50. We are most unlikely to make a profit, but this gives us a chance of breaking even. The continuing discount of £1 gives a special members' price of £6.50.

BOOK FAIR

The ***RISW Local History Bookfair*** will take place at Swansea Museum on Saturday 29th October between 10 and 4.00. By 17th June, twenty seven people had already signed up to tables at this, and one email reply, from the Historical Association, came twenty minutes after it had been sent out ! This event is well-established and popular, attracting 1,500 people last year. It's a place to buy new books, antiquarian books, maps, old postcards, greetings cards...with half an eye on Christmas. Why not go to the RISW table and see if you can fill the gaps in your collection of *Minerva/Swansea History*

Journal? Some are very reasonable, and stocks are dwindling. Or talk to authors (there are a couple of new ones this year), publishers, booksellers... Or consult experts on local history, archives, library provision, canals, Gower, archaeology, family history... As well as all that, though, it's a place to meet old friends and interesting folk of all sorts, in good surroundings, and with refreshments provided by hardworking RI volunteers. You might even be waited on by the President himself!

The BP Angle Bay Project and Llandarcy

The April 2011 edition of *Pembrokeshire Life* contains on pages 16 and 17 an article to celebrate the Jubilee of the BP Angle Bay Project with which I was privileged to be associated at the time. While the direct impact of the Project was located in Pembrokeshire, it provided a lifeline to Llandarcy which in turn comes (or came) within the purview of the RISW. The article aroused memories of others involved, as seen in the June issue of the magazine (which is a very informative monthly publication).

Though the refinery is no more it played an important, almost crucial, part in the history of the Swansea and Neath areas in the twentieth century and does therefore deserve to be recorded in the annals of the RI while still within living

memory. Clearly this needs to be done by someone with full access to the Company's records, and perhaps the article referred to will spark the process.

In retrospect it is apparent that the completion of the pipeline from Angle Bay came at a peak of the development of the Refinery. At that time expansion was all in the wind and the immediate follow on was the construction of the Chemical Works at Baglan Bay by British Hydrocarbon Chemicals Limited. This company was initially owned jointly by BP (who provided the feedstock of oil from Llandarcy by pipeline under the river Neath) and by Distillers (who provided their expertise on fermentation derived from their business in alcoholics). The site purchased at Baglan Bay was quite substantial as it was envisaged that the Chemical Works should be a nucleus spawning off a whole series of subsidiary operations who in turn took their feedstock from BHC.

This process started by the building of a plant by Pfizer. Sadly the whole conception was overtaken by events elsewhere and is no more. It does however deserve to be remembered.

One of my memories of the Project was its opening at Baglan Bay on 18th October 1963. The date is well-remembered as this was the day on which Harold Macmillan resigned as Prime Minister and was succeeded by Sir Alec Douglas-Home. As you can imagine the events of the day created a buzz around the reception!

Hugh Morgan

Swansea Museum

Collection Centre Landore

***The Centre is open to the General Public
on Wednesdays between 10 and 4 p.m.***

***A number of RI Members have enjoyed a
fascinating 2 hours guided tour around
this Aladdin's Cave***

***Why not organise a group of 6 to 12
and pay a private visit***

Arrange your date via the Museum – 653763

***Access through the Park & Ride Landore
Top left hand corner – free parking within the Centre***

Officers Contact Details 2011/2

President	<i>Lyndon Morris 01792 232282 email lyndonchris@btinternet.com</i>
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History Journal**

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READERS OF THE NEWSLETTER

are encouraged to submit

Contributions of

**Local interest and museums or other places of
interest they have visited.**

**Material for inclusion in the New Year edition
of the RISW Newsletter must reach the editor**

**by 15th November 2010 at;
marian.funnell@btinternet.com**