



**NEWSLETTER**  
**New Year 2010**

## **The President Writes**

We are well into the current season and members will be able to read accounts of Lectures and events that have so far occurred within this Newsletter. For a variety of reasons numbers were down for the Annual President's lecture by Peter Davies. The Lecture proved to be most interesting and thought provoking and was followed by many good quality and informed comments and questions.

Although good progress had been made on the installation of the lift and other related work within the Museum the lecture had to be held in the Education Room as an art exhibition was being set up in the Lecture Room. This was a disappointment for many of our Members. The Museum should be fully functional in the near future.

In the last Newsletter mention was made of Gerald's Gabb retirement from the Museum Staff and how fortunate the RISW is in his continuing membership of the Council. This has proved to be a blessing in disguise for us as Jenny Sabine, who has been Editor for the past 17 years of Minerva – now known as Swansea History Journal – felt it was an appropriate time to stand down. The fruits of her labour are the yearly publication of the RISW's excellent Journal and for this we are most grateful. We are extremely fortunate that Gerald Gabb has agreed to become the new Editor bringing with him a wealth of experience.

*Matters discussed at Council Meetings* included my report to Council of a meeting held between Councillor Graham Thomas, Cabinet Minister for Culture and Tourism, Iwan Davies, Head of Culture and Tourism and myself. It was an opportunity to share the historic and strong links between the RISW and the Museum and the willingness of the RISW to continue to promote the status and future development of Swansea Museum. I did express concern about the delay in filling the vacancy left by Gerald Gabb but because of financial restraints this post and others within the City Council are subject to a three month freeze.

*Swansea History Journal* was discussed by Council and also the need to explore ways of increasing sales of this excellent journal in order to defray costs. Council were updated concerning the *John*

*Speed Maps* and the emails between the President and Pete van de Gohm.

The *Book Fair* was a great success with over 2,200 entrants to the Museum. Our *Secretary Wendy Norris* has indicated that because of her many other commitments she will not be able to continue. Wendy agreed to become secretary when the RISW was finding it difficult to identify a replacement for Jenny Sabine and we are extremely grateful to her for taking on this role over the past few years. We wish her success in her many other commitments. With this mailing will be papers for the *Annual Meeting to be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January*. Your attention is drawn to a resolution that the annual membership fee should be increased in order to cover the rise in administrative costs. Members will be able to express their views on the proposed rise and vote accordingly.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter are accounts of the BAfM Annual Meeting and Conference, the Social Committee, Catrin Aur Davies, and lecture reviews.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your support over the past year and to wish you good health and fulfilment in the New Year.

Lyndon Morris

## Lecture Reviews

Thursday, 10th September 2009

THE GROWTH OF THE PENLLERGARE ESTATE  
IN THE ANCIENT PARISH OF LLANGYFELACH

**By Mr Jeff Childs, joint editor of the Glamorgan  
History Journal *Morgannwg***

The Penllergare Estate (spelt in the old way to distinguish it from the relatively modern village of Penllergaer) had its principal mansion in the valley of the Afon Llan north-west of Swansea. In its heyday in the nineteenth century it comprised over 16,000 acres spread over Glamorgan, Breconshire and Radnorshire, but most of its land lay within the parish of Llangyfelach. This parish, the second largest in Glamorgan, ran to almost 30,000 acres, so large that in Tudor times it was for administrative purposes subdivided into four units; Clase; Penderry, Mawr and Rhwyndwyclydach. A map, compiled by the speaker, of the main landholdings in the parish as in the mid 1700s, showed these shared between the Popkins, the Prices (at Penllergare), the Morrises, and the Briton Ferry Estate.

His map of the same area for 1850 showed the Popkins and the Briton Ferry Estate had gone, the Morrises (of Morryston) still strong, but even more of the parish was now owned by the Dillwyn Llewelyns of Penllergare mansion, who had ultimately succeeded the Prices and added to their inheritance by judicious purchases in all four

divisions of Llangyfelach parish.

The owners of the estate from its early years were referred to by Mr Childs, some as far back as the sixteenth century, but including the notable Griffith Price (1718 - 87), barrister, and thorn in the side of Gabriel Powell, the doughty steward of the Duke of Beaufort. Griffith Price's will caused problems, for he divided the estate, so that the ancient mansion and valuable lands of Nydfwch were separated from it, though they were eventually recovered. The speaker included slides of portraits of several of the owners of the estate and also showed how well he knew the ground within it. He described in detail many of the farms, their location, their appearance and their fates - so many now just sad ruins, and many surviving only in our speaker's invaluable record of this vanished estate.

Thursday, 8th October 2009

MANSIONS AND OTHER HOUSES IN WEST WALES

**By Mr Thomas Lloyd, architectural historian and joint author of the *Buildings of Wales* volumes for Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.**

Fresh from his part in the demanding task of writing and producing a definitive two- volume survey of the buildings of south west Wales, Mr Thomas Lloyd introduced his RI audience to a selection of the mansion houses in that area, and also some

over the border in Glamorganshire. Sadly many of the buildings he described had not survived modern changes, yet his collection of images presented a comprehensive overview of their appearance and architectural significance. He also gave us a few asides on some of the owners, such as the unloved William Powell of Glanareth, Llandeilo, murdered in his house in January 1770, his murderers found by their tracks in the snow and subsequently hanged. Early houses described included the ruinous Green Castle near Carmarthen and Pembrey Court, both displayed in detailed reconstructed views.

A house which still retains elements of its original gardens is Glyn Hir, Llandybie, with its ornamental canal, octagonal pigeon house and an ice house. In Gower the Georgian mansion of Penrice, designed by Anthony Keck, was illustrated from a view by Thomas Horner. Keck had also designed Slebech on the shores of the western Cleddau, and its exterior appearance evoked thoughts of Kilvrough in Gower. He was also responsible for Iscoed in Carmarthenshire, remarkable for being built of red brick. It was once the home of Sir Thomas Picton, who fell at Waterloo. Keck has long been accepted as the architect for the wonderful Orangery at Margam, though our speaker revealed that there were now good grounds for attributing that to Sir Robert Taylor of London, whose work in Wales included the Guildhall at Carmarthen. Llangennech House, by William Jernegan, the prolific Swansea architect, was shown in a fine early nineteenth century painting. This strange and bulky building

may have been inspired by surviving parts of Swansea Castle. For this and other insights into a wide and varied range of buildings we were indebted to our speaker.

Thursday, 5th November 2009

## **THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION LECTURE**

**TURNING THE TIDE: A CRITICAL POINT IN OUR HISTORY**

**By Mr Peter Davies, Commissioner for Wales, UK Sustainable Development Commission.**

Our speaker made clear the serious consequences likely to result from a continuing increase in global temperatures. It appears that this began in the mid-eighteenth century and has continued with increasing momentum to the present-day. Its origin seems to coincide with the industrialisation of western Europe, led by Britain and soon joined by the USA. 75% of the present increase in temperature has been attributed to the creation and use of energy in the most developed countries. Now these countries are raising concerns that newly developing nations, such as China and India, are adding to global warming. But these nations fairly respond that much of the existing problem comes from western economies, created when they expanded their own economies. Also, that much of the new production is eagerly consumed by the western world. Although ways of containing the growth of global warming will be hard to agree, time for action is already limited. Present assessments

expect an increase in global temperatures of 4°C by 2060, but above even 2° life on earth could be moving towards catastrophe. Mr Davies emphasised that the time available for action was very short, for unless the move to a greener environment made significant progress now it would be too late for alternative measures to have any worthwhile effect. A major shift was needed in the pace of reduction. CO<sup>2</sup> production was increasing from transport and power and this was a major worry. Emissions from building and general industry were declining slightly (ironically, due to the effects of world-wide recession). Energy-saving is vital, via effective insulation of premises, and development of efficient electric cars, lower speed limits on roads, and road-pricing policies. A basic need was to reduce emissions from energy-creation, moving from coal, gas and oil to wind, and nuclear, though both of these had opponents. However, the power of the sea, via barrages or tidal flow turbines, offered the possibility of other more acceptable sources once the technology developed further. Following Mr Davies' stimulating overview, we were left with the thought that the Severn Estuary may yet make Wales a world leader in such tidal developments.

## **The Winter Programme, Part 2**

Our Autumn Newsletter carried some notes on our programmed events up to Christmas 2009, and here we continue with the balance of our 2009 - 2010 season.

The first event of the New Year, on 14th January, is an account of a Swansea mansion whose name is still very familiar, even though the building was demolished well over a century ago. The name of the mansion was St Helen's and its story and that of some interesting people associated with it will be the subject of this talk by Bernard Morris, illustrated by early views, plans and photographs.

On 11th February Professor Prys Morgan will speak on 'Gower in the Eighteenth Century', exploring aspects of this fascinating area in a period when it was almost a world on its own.

Our St David's Lecture will be on 25th February (St David's Day is a movable feast in our Programme!) and we are fortunate to have as our speaker someone who is one of the present-day explorers and discoverers of the past in Wales. Dr Toby Driver is a leading exponent of the use of aerial photography on archaeological sites (known and otherwise unknown) and he will be coming from Aberystwyth to tell us of his work.

Friday 5th March sees our ever-popular St David's Day Coffee Morning, arranged by our very active Social Committee, a regular and welcome harbinger of Spring.

On 11th March we are pleased to have as our

speaker Dr David Jenkins, from our neighbour the Waterfront Museum, where is he one of their specialist curators. He will be dealing with a voyage from Swansea to Chile in 1872 made in one of the town's famous copper ore barques.

Our last evening lecture of the season is on 8th April, when well-known Gower historian Mr Rod Cooper will be directing our attention to the large Gower parish of Llanrhidian and its two distinct parts, showing the interaction of the two cultures which historically share this part of the peninsula. Then on 13th May comes the final meeting on the printed programme, the 'Spring into Summer Party' with music and a buffet supper. Organised by our Social Committee, this promises to be, as always, a delightful occasion. Additional lectures and events may be arranged in the summer, to be mentioned in our Newsletter or on the Museum notice board.

## **Catrin Aur Davies**

At the National Eisteddfod held in Swansea in 2006, the RI gave a £1,000 prize in the Towy Roberts competition for singers. The winner was Catrin Aur Davies a soprano from Newcastle Emlyn, a full time student at the Royal Academy of Music.

After completing her studies in London, she attended the Academy of Voice in Cardiff under the tutorship of Dennis O'Neill, with a view of furthering her career as an opera singer.

This year she was chosen Welsh Singer of the Year. We congratulate Catrin and wish her every success in the future.

Eirwen Davies

## **Social Committee News**

Over the summer and autumn we were extremely busy providing refreshments for National Archaeology Day in July and also for the RISW Book Fair in November. In the tiny kitchen with limited facilities the willing hands of the Committee work wonders, and always seem to satisfy the “workers” and the visitors and also have fun whilst doing so.

As I write, Christmas is coming so our Christmas Social Evening is occupying our thoughts. This event will be a talk by Raymond Walker followed by mulled wine and mince pies and is always an enjoyable occasion.

The first event in 2010 is the St. David’s Day Coffee Morning on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March. Hope to see you there – do bring some books, bric-a-brac or cakes if you can.

Christine Morris

Chair Social Committee

## **Museum News**

A new era is about to begin at Swansea Museum! As I write the hand over procedure for the completion of the passenger lift installation is being organised.

The lift will give all our visitors access to all areas of the museum, offering the opportunity to experience and enjoy the diverse displays and exhibitions. The new layout for the toilet facilities are a great improvement and mean that all our visitors can access toilets within the building.

As is always the case when an area is newly decorated it shows up the surrounding paintwork so an ongoing programme of refurbishment will follow this project.

Staff are currently busy decorating areas of the Cabinet of Curiosities and organising new displays there, ready for the Super Science Sleuths trail next year!

The Tros Gynnal Art exhibition has been a great success with the subsequent auction raising funds for the charity.

Our next two exhibitions will be 'Sail Swansea', a reflection of the glory days of the 1909 Regatta and a look at the development of the leisure sailing facilities within the City. Skin Deep will examine the origins and cultural meaning of skin decoration – past and present.

Many interesting public donations have been made to the collections ranging from Peruvian fertility

figures to gas cookers! All with fascinating stories involving local communities.

The Museum is currently working with Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot museum services to explore ways in which all partners can benefit from working together. Consultation relating to the delivery of formal education in museums in south west Wales has just been completed. A CyMAL grant was used to fund the research.

The museum received a visit from Dame Jenni Abramsky the new Director of HLF UK to learn more about the HLF funded Young Roots project Olga – All Aboard! The museum staff have been working with a group of disadvantaged young people enabling them to acquire recognised sailing qualifications, explore local and British maritime heritage and to crew on Olga. The project has been highlighted in a recent HLF publication as an example of good practice.

The BBC have been busy filming with the museum –Nick Crane has sailed with Olga around the Gower coast for the Coast series. Olga has also been use as part of a programme about Pilot Cutters and their work , contributing to a series on Working Boats – to be shown next year.

Objects from the collection have been selected for a BBC4 series on how Wales changed the world - so lots of television coverage to help boost visitor figures.

Karl Morgan the museum's Virtual Interpretation Officer has been selected by the University of Leicester for a new master's degree course in Digital Heritage. He is one of only 6 students to gain places and the only one from Wales.

Other staff have attended seminars on Welsh Costume, Conservation initiatives, Working with the Foundation stage and Making the Most of your Outside Space. The Curator attended the International Congress of Maritime Museums in Esbjerg, Denmark which provided many opportunities to network, exchange experiences and learn from colleagues around the world.....

A busy year so far and despite the disruption of the building project our visitor figures are very much on a par with last year – probably due to the dreadful weather this summer.

Gareth El-Tawab

## **Education programme**

Our latest project with Theatr na n'Og is entitled 'Halt! Who Goes There?'. It is a unique event which combines the best of Welsh theatre for young people and the exceptional educational resources of the oldest museum in Wales. The story is based on the largest WWII POW escape attempt in Britain

On the night of the 10th - 11th March 1945, 67 German Prisoners of War tunnelled to freedom

from Camp 198 in Bridgend. It was the biggest escape attempt made by German POWs in Great Britain during the Second World War.

The whole community take part in the hunt for the prisoners, including four children armed with sticks, catapults and knitting needles. Their excitement is short lived however, when they discover a much darker secret!

The exciting drama is aimed at years 5&6, with over 5,000 pupils attending between September and December. Over recent years the audience has widened to adult evening performances with 7 evenings held specifically for local community groups. This in terms of figures will mean that over 400 people will have enjoyed watching the play, having a slice of fruit cake and a peak at our brilliant Anderson shelter!

Other 'regular' school sessions have of course continued with overall visits exceeding 3,000 pupils for September and October. Work on lift has required some changes and cancellations but the museum and staff have coped exceptionally well.

Gareth El-Tawab

## **British Association of Friends of Museums Conference**

The Annual Conference of BAfM was held this year in York, hosted by the Friends of York Art Gallery. The theme of '**Challenge and Change**' addressed problems facing museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: under-funding; attracting wider public interest, especially younger people and children; creating a balance between meeting the demands of local government and the interests of local people and other museum visitors.

We met in the Hospitium – a beautifully refurbished medieval building in the grounds of York Museum, and were welcomed by the BAfM Chair, Norah Dunbar. She then presented the **Robert Logan Award**, which is given to a young museum professional or volunteer for an essay on innovative work.

The first session dealt with **Museum Trusts**. I was particularly interested in this talk because some years ago the formation of museum trusts was a very hot issue in the museum profession. Some saw it as the salvation of local authority-funded museums, while others considered it an opportunity for local authorities to jettison their responsibility for museums. In York's case, Trust status had proved a great success. The Museum Service, with help from their Friends and Trustees, obtained inflation-proof funding from York City Council of £1.2 million for 10 years to carry the Trust through until it

achieved self-sufficiency. They had also managed to get European grant aid. This enabled the Trust to invest in more staff and increased professional training. Museum buildings were refurbished and the exhibition programme increased. Having independent control of its money allowed the Trust to capitalise in its property. Altogether, 7 years after the establishment of the Trust, York's museums, together with their Friends group, had raised professional standards, increased visitor figures, and established a good relationship with the city council, which benefitted all parties and the public at large.

The Chief Executive of Bradford Council spoke on **Local Government and Local Culture** in a multi-cultural context. He saw the city's cultural services as central to broadening people's horizons, raising personal aspirations and building bridges between the different communities. The role of local government has changed from its former paternalistic pattern to working with local people, opening doors and facilitating inter-cultural communication. In this the work of the Friends of Bradford Museums – a group of articulate, passionate and challenging people – is a vital element.

Richard Faulkner (Lord Faulkner of Worcester) then spoke about **Securing our Heritage for Everyone – the challenge of free admission**. He began by stating the Government's case for providing free admission to national museums:

- Moral – the collections belong to the people
- Social – providing access to all sections of society
- Welfare – giving people a pride in their heritage and a sense of identity
- Economic – boosting tourism

He refuted the case against – that museums are elitist and visited only by the middle class and wealthy tourists while being subsidised by the less well-off. In a recession, museums are particularly important, giving opportunities for relaxation, learning and reflection, and boosting the national morale. He confirmed that the present government had no intention of re-introducing entry charges, but said that Simon Jenkins's campaign to reinstate charging should be viewed seriously.

The final speaker was Dea Birkett, Director of Kids in Museums. Her talk was entitled **Everybody Welcome? Why all museums should be family friendly**. This is an organisation which campaigns for museums to be more aware of the needs of children as well as disabled or elderly people, more tolerant and welcoming. She became involved when her two-year-old reacted to an Aztec mask by shouting 'Monster!', and was evicted by a museum attendant. Museums, she said, should be aware that children see things differently, and sometimes act unconventionally. The Kids in Museums manifesto lists 20 ways a museum can be more user-friendly, over half of which are practical. There

is more information on their website:  
[www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk)

The Conference ended with the BAfM Annual General Meeting, chaired by BAfM President Loyd Grossman

BAfM conferences are not all work and sober discussion, there are social occasions too. Delightful as these occasions are, they are also a vital opportunity to talk to Friends from other museums, compare ideas, learn from their experiences and raise the profile of Swansea Museum and the RISW to people from all parts of the UK.

Next year's conference will be on the Isle of Mann, hosted by Friends of Manx National Heritage (more information at [www.storyofmann.com](http://www.storyofmann.com) ). All RISW members are automatically also members of BAfM, and eligible to attend their events and conferences. If you would like more information, my email is [jennifer@sabine5.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@sabine5.wanadoo.co.uk). BAfM's website is [www.bafm.org.uk](http://www.bafm.org.uk)

Jenny Sabine,

RISW's BAfM representative.

## **"At the end of the line - Gerald's leaving Do".**



Gerald's leaving 'do' showed how respected he was throughout the community. Numerous agencies were present and without exception they expressed their admiration for his work and how he would be missed.

This photograph is a reminder of the very close links between the Museum and the RISW. Jenny, Bernice, Mike and now Gerald were all employed by the Museum as well as being RISW Council Members. Gerald's departure marked the "End of the Line" with this unique close relationship which was to the benefit of the Museum and the RISW. The good news is that Gerald, like Jenny, Bernice and Mike continue to be respected RISW Council Members.

## **ACCESSING RECORDS AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES**

Members living in Wales are able to access historical documents etc. by registering on their website – [www.llgc.org.uk](http://www.llgc.org.uk) then opening the External Resources section and registering their details

### **St. David's Day Coffee Morning**

**at Swansea Museum**

**Victoria Road, Swansea SA1 1SN**

**Friday 5th March 2010 - 10.30 a.m. to  
midday**

**Coffee – Cakes – Books - Bring and Buy - Raffle**

**Ticket £2 to include Coffee and a Welsh cake**

**Tickets available from the Museum or telephone  
232 282**

# **LUNCH TIME TALKS AT THE MUSEUM**

***From 1.00 until 2.00***

**Note the Dates**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010**

**Theme – *Swansea – Past – Present – Future***

**Titles:**

***The Changing face of Religion*  
–The Venerable Robert Williams**

***The Changing Face of the Media*  
To be confirmed**

***The Changing Face of Sport and Leisure*  
Geoff Haden – Consultant for Tourism  
Swansea Bay**

***The Changing Face of Industry,  
Commerce and Business*  
Ian Price, Assistant Regional Director, CBI  
Wales**

**Note programme details to be finalised**

## **CRAIG-Y-PAL**

### **EXPLORING THE DERIVATION OF ITS NAME**

Hugh Morgan's Monograph sets out to explore the derivation of the name Craig-y-Pal assigned to the spur of the mountain known as Graig Ola which dominates the central reach of the Swansea Valley on its eastern side.

Local tradition has it that the name derives from a visit by St. Paul the Apostle and a "Preaching Stone" so called is indeed located half way up the slope but well below the crest of the spur.

As a definitive attribution is not possible enquiries have pursued three possible explanations, first that the tradition is feasible, secondly that the preacher was a later generation person named Paulinus and thirdly that the name comes from the location of the spur on a historic boundary. These are looked at in greater detail in Hugh's Booklet.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COMPILMENTARY**

**COPY OF THIS MONOGRAPH**

**PLEASE TELEPHONE HUGH MORGAN**

**ON 01792 842289**

**COPIES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED WITH THE  
NEXT NEWSLETTER**

## **ACCESS FOR THOSE WITH LIMITED MOBILITY AND VISION**

**Members can use the rear entrance to access the  
Museum and is on one level.**

**The lift is available to gain access to the first and  
upper floor.**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 2009-10 were due in June 2009. If you have not received your new membership card it could be that this may have slipped your mind. Subscriptions can be 'Gift-Aided' if you are a UK taxpayer. Please contact the membership secretary, Bernice Cardy, if you have any membership queries

**Material for inclusion in the Spring 2010 edition of the RISW Newsletter must reach the editor by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010, preferably via e-mail to; [marian.funnell@btinternet.com](mailto:marian.funnell@btinternet.com) , or by post to ; Mrs M.Funnell. 6, Hael Lane , Southgate, Swansea, SA3 2AP**