



**SPRING**

**NEWSLETTER**

**2011**

### **THE PRESIDENT WRITES**

By the time you receive this Newsletter the season's programme will be coming to an end. Summaries of lectures and other events will be found within the Newsletter.

The **Annual General Meeting** was non controversial as is the norm for such meetings, all reports were adopted and Officers and Council members were re-elected. Some of the issues discussed will be covered in this Newsletter.

**Ellie Graham from Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust** gave details of a pan-Wales project to identify and record new and existing archaeological sites in Gower at the conclusion of the AGM. If you would like to volunteer please contact Ellie – Tel: 01792 634226.

**RISW Website** ([www.risw.org.uk](http://www.risw.org.uk)): Council agreed to change the format, font style, colouring and other related matters. These changes will be introduced during the year.

**Historical Bound Volumes** held in the Museum Library are being assessed with a view to their refurbishment. There will be a cost implication.

**Links with Friends of Glynn Vivian:** matters of mutual interest continue to be discussed and plans are progressing for a joint lecture in September arranged by the RI.

**Outreach:** Council is looking at new initiatives to engage with senior pupils in local schools and colleges. Further details can be read in Dr Vernon William's article.

**BAfM Regional Representative for Wales:** Jill Bell is the new representative. She has already circulated a Newsletter and is planning to visit one of the future RI events.

**Recent acquisition for Museum:** the RI successfully purchased a Photographic Plate of Oystermouth which might have been used by James Harris for his oil

painting of the same scene which is held by the Museum.

**Richard's Morris' "The Journal of Sir Henry De la Beche"**: due to unforeseen circumstances there will a delay before this journal can be published

**RI History Project:** I am pleased to report that two RI members – Bryan Taylor and David Jordan – have agreed to help with the project. If you feel you could help then please contact me.

**Lunch Time Talks:** the series of lunch time talks, on aspects of the Swansea Blitz, was very well attended with between 70 and 100 people present each week. The talks were well received and resulted in six new members joining the RI. Reports on the talks can be read in this Newsletter.

**Annual Outing:** this is scheduled for Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June to Llancaiach Fawr Manor, Further details in the Newsletter.

**Members Email Address** – if you are on email would you be prepared to let me have your address? This would only be used to keep you informed, especially when there is a unforeseen change for a coming event. It would not be a substitute for the current mailing of hard copies. You can send your email to me – [lyndonchris@btinternet.com](mailto:lyndonchris@btinternet.com)

Lyndon Morris

## LECTURE REVIEWS

Thursday, 13th January 2011

JOHN JONES (1751-1828): CITIZEN OF SWANSEA AND THE WORLD

**By Professor Huw Bowen, History Department, Swansea University.**

Captain John Jones of St Helen's House has always been an intriguing figure to historians of Swansea, not least because until the recent work on him by our speaker, what was known of him was rather disjointed, episodic and even slightly lurid. Confusingly the local records refer to him as a commander in the East India Company and also as a Captain in the Royal Navy, also that he had a noisy falling-

out with Lewis Weston Dillwyn in the streets of Swansea, and that he died from falling out of his coach near White Stile (now steep Brynymor Hill). Professor Bowen has not only solved the mystery of the Captain's maritime double life (he did indeed serve in both the East India Company and the RN) but his researches have produced an amazing amount of detailed information on the ships which Jones commanded for the Company, the trading methods and economics of the time, the places to which he sailed and the profits which he and his fellow captains could legitimately make (provided that they survived). The Company allowed its captains to trade on their own account up to 56 tons per vessel (provided the Company was not itself trading in those products). Competition for command of its vessels was fierce, for there were only 200 such positions available. The speaker stressed that it was necessary to be aware of global history to see local history in its context, and we were introduced to the great sweep of trading links used by the East India Company, not only with the sub-continent, but with south-east Asia and China. Swansea copper was much sought and used in these areas, being seen as superior to Japanese production. In the 1790s and early 1800s Jones commanded the Company's vessels, amongst the finest merchantmen in the world, on voyages to Madras, Java, China, returning via St Helena, where convoys for Britain would gather during the Napoleonic wars. His log books detailing his voyages, and also his records of his personal trading, have survived in local archives and are major sources of economic and maritime information. It is known that Jones was made a commander in the RN in 1798, but his naval service has yet to be researched by Professor Bowen. Those who heard this lecture will hope that one on the Captain's naval service will soon follow, for John Jones of St Helen's is no longer a figure in the shadows.

BM

Thursday, 10th February 2011

SWANSEA, GOWER, AND THE WARS OF THE ROSES

**By Professor Ralph Griffiths, formerly of the History Department, Swansea University.**

Professor Griffiths began by reminding us that in the six hundred years following the Norman Conquest there had been at least seven civil wars, of which the series of linked but intermittent conflicts between 1450 and 1500 are known to us as the Wars of the Roses. These were disputes over power and kingship, and armed conflict over matters of religion came later. In the second half of the fifteenth century Gower, though not a large lordship, was a prosperous one with Swansea as its capital. The lordship's history provides a good example of the effects of civil war and of how local people reacted to national events. Our speaker gave as an example of high-handed actions by the south Wales gentry the case of Lady Margaret Malefant, widow of the lately deceased lord of Wenvoe. Under pretence of escorting her from Pembrokeshire to London, Lewis Leyshon, a servant, brought her through the Gower peninsula, where, near Parc le Breos, the party was ambushed (probably 'by arrangement'). Lady Malefant was held against her will, and taken to Ewenny, where an attempt was made to force her into marriage with Leyshon. She was able to escape and reach London, where she petitioned parliament for redress. She was well-connected, and her ordeal may have implicated several prominent men, including Griffith ap Nicholas and John Mowbray.

Other events affected the lower orders more closely, as when John Mowbray marched his tenants away to fight for the Lancastrian cause, only to be decisively defeated at the battle of Mortimer's Cross (1461). Despite this and other setbacks,

the Gower Lancastrians ended on the winning side and Jenkin Mansel of Oxwich Castle was able to see his son, the future Sir Rhys Mansel, christened in Oxwich Church in the presence of Rhys ap Thomas, the most powerful man in south Wales (the son of Griffith ap Nicholas, who may have had a hand in the ordeal of Lady Malefant).

By the end of the Wars of the Roses Swansea seems to have been prosperous. Merchants and ship owners prospered and the weakening of the administration of the absentee lords of Gower did the town no harm. Swansea and Gower had had an exciting time - but by no means an unprofitable one.

BM

Thursday, 10h March 2011

THE ST DAVID'S LECTURE. THE WELSH COTTAGE

**By Dr Eurwyn Wiliam, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales.**

Cottages in the countryside have long been appreciated for their tendency to look 'picturesque', but they are also a source of essential information on how people lived in past centuries. Many have been demolished or drastically upgraded as living standards have risen, but as Dr Wiliam showed us with his fine display of illustrations and maps, they have been extensively recorded by the Royal Commission and others, whether surviving today or not. The 'old' cottages are rarely older than the late eighteenth century, and indeed many were built throughout most of the nineteenth century, when there was something of a 'building boom'. These were the homes of the rural poor, built by the people who lived in them, or, less widely, by the owners of the great estates for their employees. They would have replaced older versions, but for these we must usually rely on archaeological evidence. In these two centuries population growth led to the large-scale enclosure of common land, either officially by Parliamentary Acts or informally by local squatters. The former led to the laying out of regular field boundaries and roads, whilst the latter resulted in much more of a jigsaw pattern, a distinction readily apparent on aerial photographs. The surviving cottages built in this period usually fit well into their landscape, perhaps because the essence of such vernacular buildings was the absence of an architect. The average cottage would have 2 to 3 acres of land, from which the tenant could augment whatever he earned from his employment. However, there is evidence that similar cottages could serve as the dwellings for farms of 20 acres and more, before being replaced by houses in the later nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century the recording of buildings was concentrated on mansions and the like, but in 1937 Cyril Fox, then Director of the National Museum of Wales, was engaged to record 18 cottages on the site of what we know of as the Trecwn ordnance depot, and his work set a benchmark as a standard for the recording of such previously overlooked buildings. Having dealt with the various forms and layouts of rural cottages in Wales, Dr Wiliam concluded his comprehensive account by describing the ways in which such buildings were put together, dealing in turn with thatched roofs, mud ('clom') and stone main walls, wattle and timber partitions and traditional floors of earth mixed with lime and coal ashes ('better than concrete').

BM

## LUNCH TIME TALKS

1<sup>st</sup> February 2011: ***'The U-Boat Campaign in South Wales, 1939-45'*** by Nigel Robbins

There was a large audience assembled in the Lecture Room for this the first talk in the 2011 lunchtime series. The speaker had done a lot of research on his topic using both British and German sources. The u-boats are believed to have numbered 300, though at any one time only 100 were in action, with another 100 under refit and a further 100 in use for training. They were commanded by Admiral Donetz, who early in the war identified the Atlantic seaways as being of prime importance and so concentrated his attacks in this area. However, the UK Western Approaches command whose headquarters were in a small street in Liverpool, with the assistance of *Enigma*, became aware of u-boat positions and movements. Having identified the importance of the west coast ports, especially those of the Bristol Channel including the South Wales ones of Newport, Cardiff and Swansea for the docking of Atlantic convoys u-boat attacks in this area were intensified.

Early in the war the magnetic mine was used extensively. It was a technically advanced weapon and laid across the entrance to coastal ports was most effective and feared. Fortunately, an unexploded magnetic mine was recovered at Shoeburyness which enabled Britain to devise an anti-mine programme.

The u-boats' second weapon of attack, besides the torpedo, was its gun which was used when the u-boat surfaced. As the war progressed the lone u-boat in the Atlantic became a pack and 1941 saw the maximum activity against the Atlantic convoys. At the time of the allied landings of 1944-45 the u-boats' role in the Bristol Channel was to attempt to disrupt troop movements through the South Wales ports. The u-boat of 1945 was very different from that of 1940. The gun was now on the conning tower and the torpedoes had been much improved. The talk had an unusual ending – appropriate music!

The success of the talk could be judged by the number of comments and questions from the audience which had to be drawn to a close when the clock registered 'full time'.

GD

Tuesday February 8th ***'The Railway System in Swansea'*** by Alan Williams

For the general audience, talks on railways work best when there are lots of photographs. The speaker had some of quite excellent quality –

\*High Street Station in 1950 with the terraces of Pottery Street and Jockey Street still in the background,

\*The 'Dryslwyn Castle' in 1949 (just 9 days old and the first to carry the British Railways emblem),

\*A train on the New Cut bridge,(opposite Sainsbury's !!)

\*A 50 seat diesel railcar at Peniel Green in the 1930s

\*Landore loco sheds, showing improvements made in the thirties and more. However, railway photography in wartime was rare. Even timetables were published in the hope that enemy agents would not make too much use of them. So pictures were supplemented with maps (showing a complex network of lines which has all but disappeared), copies of original documents and complex tables of train data assembled by the speaker.

He emphasized the enormous part played in the war by the railway system, and by the South Wales Ports, which were run by the Great Western Railway. The four "grouping" companies operated under the informal title of "British Railways", even though nationalisation did not come until 1948. Freight and workers' trains were crucial to the war effort. Ordinary passengers were asked "Is your journey really necessary?", and passenger services and buffet cars were vastly cut back. The speaker explained very clearly how crucial signal boxes were to the system, and how they were strengthened - or, as at Landore, replaced when hit. He told us of the emergency underground control centre under the turntable on the Strand.

He concluded with two less predictable themes - the effort made by the U.S. to send senior officers to thank railway and port workers after the war for their efforts, and the series of Sunday strikes on the railways between August and November 1945 - he described the work expected from fire-droppers, fire-raisers and coal men, the latter being expected to shift 16 tons each in an 8 hour shift!

GG

#### February 15<sup>th</sup> 2011: **'The RAF Aerodrome at Fairwood'** by **Steve Jones**

Steve Jones outlined the history of flying in Swansea from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to recent years. In 1911 Edward Sutton, the first Swansea man to fly, displayed his replica of Blériot's aircraft in front of Swansea Museum. During the 1920s planes took off from Swansea beach to give local people a first experience of flying. From 1928 until 1938 Swansea's first airport was built on the sand dunes of Jersey Marine, where air displays were held during the 30s. Also during the 1930s a group of model aircraft enthusiasts built and flew a glider, the 'Cloud Hawk', from the site on Fairwood Common of the future airport.

By the late 1930s Swansea Council purchased the land on Fairwood Common to build a modern airport. However, with the commencement of World War II the Air Ministry requisitioned the site and construction began on the wartime airfield in summer 1940. In June 1941 the airfield was declared operational. The airfield saw active service throughout the remainder of the war, being used by 'Defiant' night fighters, the amphibious craft of the Air Sea Rescue squadron, 'Hurricanes' used for ground attack, 'Mosquitoes' which patrolled the shipping convoys and attacked enemy aircraft and other strategic objectives in France, and on occasion the heavy 'Bullfighter' bombers. As well as RAF squadrons, Polish, Czech and Canadian squadrons were based at Fairwood at various times.

There were tragedies: during the last blitz attack on Swansea in February 1943 a

stray bomb hit an accommodation hut used by some of the WAAFs based at Fairwood, and three women were killed\*, and there were narrow escapes when craft were caught in bad weather.

Fairwood was classed as a disposal site – one of many airfields scattered across the country to limit damage. Accommodation for personnel was also dispersed over a wide area and three local houses requisitioned for aircrew: Kilvrough, Parc le Breos and Fairwood Lodge.

In 1943 a gliding school was developed and 'Cloud Hawk' returned to service. From D-Day (June 1944) on, the site was mainly used as an armaments practice camp, in conjunction with the camps at Pembrey and Broughton burrows. In 1946 the 595 squadron was one of the last units at Fairwood and by November 1946 all flying had ceased.

Since World War II the airfield has had a chequered career. 1949 saw the founding of Swansea Flying Club, and car and motorbike races were held during the 1950s. In 1956 the Ministry of Defence returned the site to Swansea Council and in June 1957 it was officially opened as Swansea Airport by Douglas Bader. Cambrian Air and other airlines flew to London, Birmingham, Jersey, Isle of Man and Europe. After the opening of Rhoose International Airport Swansea ceased to be used for commercial flying until 2001, when Air Wales operated flights to British, Irish and some European airports. This only lasted for three years and the airfield is now used for pleasure and private flying, and by the Gliding School.

JS.

*\*See also Minerva vol. 2 pp. 15-19.*

February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011; **'Memories of an ARP Warden in the Blitz'** by **Elaine Kidwell**

Once again the Lecture Room was filled to capacity and the audience was fascinated to hear Elaine Kidwell's first hand experience, given with great clarity, of the Three Day Blitz in Swansea. At the time she was an Assistant Librarian in Swansea Museum, which was owned and run by the RISW, and taking exams to qualify. She volunteered to become an A.R.P. Warden when she was 17 years 2 months old and as she was in her eighteenth year she was accepted so she was the youngest Warden in the country. She did her training in Sketty Hall which involved handling bombs, jumping from first floor windows and going through burning buildings. She was issued with a tin helmet, an armband and one uniform which had to be extensively shortened for her. Her post was at the bottom of Wind Street. At the end of her working day she would always check the Museum building looking on the floor with her torch for broken glass which would indicate damage. She missed the bomb which fell into the museum because the broken glass fell onto a table and if she had been bigger and heavier it would have exploded as she passed it.

Elaine recalled in graphic detail the many rescues from damaged buildings that were

achieved, the distress of telling people including her own mother their homes were destroyed, the horror of dealing with severely injured people while waiting for whatever kind of vehicle to take them to hospital and sadness of seeing whole families killed by the bomb blast who seemed to be sleeping peacefully. She described watching the Ben Evans store burning and waiting to help people emerging from the smoke and the flames to take them to a shelter at the bottom of Wind Street. She remembered St. Mary's Church ablaze and all the church bells ringing – not because of an invasion but because of the heat. The noise was so great that the Wardens could not speak to each other and had to mime their instructions. Throughout all this it was her duty to smile and be reassuring to people in distress.

She paid tribute to the bravery of the nurses, the firemen and policemen who worked tirelessly through the horrors of the trauma. She remembered the stamina and kindness of people trying to help each other and how the dead were all identified and buried in their own graves with dignity. The raids on Swansea were not limited to those during the Three Day Blitz – the last one was 2 years later in 1943. During those three days and three nights however, she and many others existed in a daze of tiredness and grief.

It was gripping account of those dark times and her personal asides and touch of humour made for a compelling talk. At the conclusion of the session she was surrounded by many people either sharing their own experiences or seeking further information.

CM

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE NEWS**

Our St. David's Day Coffee Morning was on 7<sup>th</sup> March this year. The Lecture Room was bright with daffodils and the Social Committee resplendent in new red aprons.

About 60 people were there to enjoy the refreshments, friendly chat and the short interlude when once again Ffion Davies delighted us with a lovely harp recital. This is the third year that she has played and it has been good to see her blossom both musically and in personal confidence through the opportunities she has been given. Support for young people in education is one of the important objectives of the R.I.S.W. The event attracted several people who had not attended our meetings previously and who expressed a wish to become members.

We want to thank all those who contributed books, cakes, bric-a-brac and raffle prizes and the Museum staff who are so helpful to us. We raised approximately £320 for our funds.

We are now planning our Spring in to Summer evening on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May at 7.0 pm when Delyth Holland and the Hemiola Young Musicians will provide our music. They played and sang for us some years ago and were greatly enjoyed by everyone. We look forward to seeing you there.

Christine Morris

## **SPRING INTO SUMMER PARTY**

**An Evening of Music with**

**Delyth Holland**

**and Hemiola Young Musicians**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011 7.00 p.m.**

**at Swansea Museum, Victoria Road**

**Ticket £7.00 (includes buffet supper and a glass of wine)**

**from Swansea Museum or Christine Morris - 232282**

### **Backnumbers of *Minerva/Swansea History Journal***

The stock of journals from previous years is diminishing. A great many went at the last Local History Bookfair, and there have been several recent instances of people buying a full set....insofar as we have one!

Volume 1 was published in 1993. Volume 19 will come out next October. We ran out of Volumes 1, 3 and 7 some time ago. Now stocks of Volume 6 and 10 are exhausted, and Volume 9 is nearly gone. Volume 18 came out last October and has run out already, though some shops still have a few.

If any member would like copies, please get in touch with Gerald Gabb on 01792/613262 or [g.gabb@ntlworld.com](mailto:g.gabb@ntlworld.com) or 38 Woodland Ave., West Cross, Swansea SA3 5LY. We still have Volumes 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 11 at £1 or £2 a copy, and Volumes 12-17 at between £4 and £6 each

**PHOTOGRAPHY** In connection with putting together the Swansea History Journal (Minerva), we quite often have to make **photographic copies of paintings and drawings**. None of the editorial group has much skill in this area. Do you have experience of this sort of thing, and might you be willing to help? It would not be a frequent call - possibly 2 or 3 times a year.

If you are willing to help, could you contact Gerald Gabb on 01792/613262 or [g.gabb@ntlworld.co](mailto:g.gabb@ntlworld.co), or write to 38 Woodland Ave., West Cross, Swansea SA3 5LY

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

Winter is at last over and the daffodils are out in the Museum garden and the young fig, peach and olive trees seem to have survived the frosts!

The Museum has two new exhibitions 'Ugly, Lovely Old Town' and 'Copperopolis' – both of which are built around the Museum's collections and had very well attended

previews

The commemoration 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Blitz in Swansea has attracted a lot of media attention and interest in our artefacts. Both our Education Room and 'Ugly, Lovely Old Town' have been used for TV and radio interviews with members of staff and survivors of the Blitz!

The partnership with Create Solutions continues and a new DVD featuring reminiscences of the Swansea Blitz should be launched in the near future.

Cartoon workshops, run during half term by the Swansea Comics Collective and survivors of the Swansea Blitz, have resulted in some excellent comic strips relating the 'Blitz' and stories of Swansea during the Second World War which we hope to publish.

'Copperopolis' has also attracted a lot of new visitors and will be incorporated into a new learning opportunity for schools. Copper Day on March 5<sup>th</sup> was celebrated at the Museum with Copper Gilding workshops and with a series of talks and guided walks at The Swansea Museum Collections Centre, Landore!

A display of new acquisitions to the Museum's Collections, especially featuring those bought from public donations can be seen in the long corridor. The painting of Swansea Castle by The Reverend Calvert Richard Jones and photo plate showing Oystermouth and Mumbles from the sea purchased for the collections by the RISW were on display at the RISW AGM – once again a big thank you to members for enabling these objects to be added to the Museum's collections.

The Swansea Community Boat is now moored at the Museum's Pontoon and hopefully will be making trips up the River Tawe before too long! Helwick and Canning are awaiting their spring clean and painting should resume in the near future. Volunteers always welcome! Olga is still up in Gloucester dock being refitted below deck. Additional grant aid was obtained to enable a new engine to be purchased to complete the work. The Bristol Channel Pilot Cutters Owners Association will be holding their spring race meeting in Swansea – they will be arriving on Tuesday May 3<sup>rd</sup> and racing from Swansea Bay on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Museum will be closed on April 29<sup>th</sup> to give all staff the opportunity to celebrate the Royal Wedding.

Garethe El-Tawab – Curator

### **School visits to Swansea Museum.**

The first half of spring term has been very busy for school visits with over 2,100 pupils visiting during January and February. The autumn project with Theatr na Nog

has of course finished which allows a wider range of topics to be offered to schools such as Toys, Mrs Mahony, Romans, Alice Francis Transport Tours at our Landore Stores among many others. All available spaces have booked up very quickly.

To commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the devastating 3 night Blitz on Swansea a month of special visits was held in the Education Room during February. There were a number of activities to help children engage with the WW2 collection and we were very kindly visited on each day by someone who had lived through the war years in Swansea.

17 local schools visited bringing over 700 pupils into the museum. The available spaces were booked up in just a few days, with many other schools on the reserve list. The pupils have also had the opportunity to see some original Will Evans war-time paintings in the 'Ugly, Lovely Town' exhibition.

For the summer term the usual programme of school sessions will be offered, with the appeal of a new session 'John Jones, The Copperman'. This aims to make the most of the very nice new Copperopolis exhibition in the Main Gallery. John will be brought back from the past to tell his tale of his work as a Cape Horner when a young man to his later life in the Hafod Copperworks.

Summer will also see the return of the very popular 'Off to the Seaside' sessions with storytelling and songs in the Tramway Centre. There will also be a Punch and Judy show, with performances running throughout the day.

Barry Hughes – Education Officer

### **More old bones from the Ice Age in Swansea Museum: Dr Nicholas Riall** Archaeologist Swansea Museum

In May 2010 I was taken on a tour of the museum cellars, which for many years were storerooms for much of the museum's collections. All old museums have their nooks and crannies, Swansea museum being no exception. Today the cellars are hardly used. We came eventually to the museum's east wall. Here was a pile of rubble, and beside it a wooden box from the top of which spilled some bones. It only took a glance to realise that I was looking at Ice Age bones. What were these bones doing here and why had they been left, in this out-of-the-way part of the museum's cellars?

The box in which the bones had been stored was rotted through, but there was nothing written on it, nor a note in it, to tell us anything about its contents. There was just a tantalising scrap of newspaper that suggested the bones were in this box sometime before World War 2. An intensive search of the museum catalogues archives has not shed any light on this puzzle.

The box contained 315 pieces of bone, representing a range of different animal species that are listed in the table below. Amongst them was a single scrap of human skeleton. This is from the base of the skull of a very young child. It is the only piece of human skeleton in this group of bones, but why it was amongst them is a

puzzle. Human remains from the Ice Ages are incredibly rare and thus very exciting when we find them. If this piece proves to be from the Ice Ages, it will be a significant addition to the remains of early man found in the UK. It is currently being examined by experts at the Natural History Museum in London.

There are two peculiar aspects about this collection that must be mentioned. First, there are no teeth or pieces of animal skull, or any vertebra in this collection of bones. All of it, apart from six pieces of antler and one fragment of jawbone, appears to represent animal limb bones with just a few shoulder blades. A second factor is that most of the bone, around 80%, shows evidence of having been gnawed by hyenas.

This curious mixture of bone attracted the interest of Dr Andy Currant, a leading expert on animal bone from the Ice Ages, based at the Natural History Museum in London. He visited Swansea in November 2010, identifying what the bones were and the animals from which they came. A lot of the bone, 160 in all, cannot be identified at all as they are too small, but they are nonetheless interesting. Most of these pieces measure around 100-150 mm long (about 4-6 inches) and are slivers of bone that have been chewed and broken down from complete sections of bone. Many of them have the distinctive teeth-marks left by hyenas. Giving an idea of just how much a hyaena can reduce even very large bones to almost meaningless and small lumps, we have one piece of bone that was once the lower jaw bone of a woolly mammoth. All that remains is the "chin" – the rounded end of the jawbone. Although we have lots of evidence for hyaena activity, such as teeth marks on bones, we have no recognisable hyaena bones. To a hungry hyaena a dead hyaena was just another meal. A good few of them have pitting on their surfaces. It is thought this might be the result of chemical damage, perhaps caused by hyaena urine. Also, quite a lot of the bone seems to have been "rounded", and this might have been caused by hyaenas licking them. All in all, these bones offer lots of evidence for hyaena activity.

Of the bones that can be identified, only 117 pieces can be confidently assigned to particular species (see table). Some bones can only be described as from an animal of a certain size, large or small, but we cannot tell what species it is. Andy Currant has suggested that this collection seems to represent a "cold climate" fauna and perhaps dates to around 35,000 years ago. We will know much more when some of the bones have been subjected to scientific dating techniques.

None of the bones had been cleaned, and many had mud and silts from the site where they were found. We kept a few bones unwashed, and preserved a lot of the mud and silt, in the hope that someday it may be possible to identify where this collection came from using these soil samples. However, it is most likely that these bones came from one of the Gower caves.

Another question concerns how these bones came to be brought together. Almost all of it represents animal limb bones, and the majority shows evidence of hyaenas. This is unusual when compared with collections of animal material from known Gower caves, which all have a few teeth, at the very least, whilst some individual groups are dominated by the presence of teeth. Similarly, no other collection has such a high percentage of bones that show hyaena activity, especially chewing.

There remains much work to be done of these bones, and much of this will

take place in London and Oxford. Perhaps in due course some of the puzzles will be solved and we will have some definitive answers. I am grateful to Jim Walker and Caroline Dale, both volunteers who give their time helping in the museum, for their assistance in sorting, cataloguing and boxing this material.

N.R.

Table showing the distribution of animal species/types amongst the Swansea museum "cellar" bones (SWAM 2010.40.)

Species	specific	possible
Bovid (cow)	7	5
Cervid (deer)	2	1
Coelodonta antiquitatis (woolly rhinoceros)	50	9
Equus ferus (horse)	18	1
Homo sapiens (modern man)	1	
Mammuthus primigenius (woolly mammoth)	12	18
Megaloceros giganteus (giant deer)	1	
Rangifer tarandus(reindeer)	6	
Ursus arctos (cave bear)	0	4
Large sized animal	15	
Medium sized animal	3	
Small sized animal	1	
Totals for identified species	116	38
Bones with evidence of hyaena gnawing/licking etc	259	
Identified/classified bones by specie	154	
Unidentified bones	161	

Total number of bones	315	
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**ANNUAL SUMMER OUTING**

**THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011**

***VISIT TO INCLUDE***

**Coach and Guide Tour of**

***Llancaiach Fawr Manor***

**One of the finest examples of a semi fortified Manor House in Wales**

- 9.30 a.m. Depart Swansea Museum
- 11.30 a.m. Guide Tour of Manor
- 1.00 p.m. Lunch (\* \*see note below)  
and free time to explore  
Visitor Centre, Grounds etc.
- 4.15 p.m. Depart for return journey
- 5.30 p.m. Arrive Swansea Museum

Cost per person - £15 (not including lunch) Please let Eirwen Davies ( 01792 403146 ) know as soon as possible if you intend to make the visit

Cheques made payable to RISW

\*\* The coach is a 49 seater. Refreshments are available – for a group booking of over 20 a 2 course meal would cost £10.50 (menu available if interested) or for an individual lunch menu prices start from £3.25 for soup.

contact Eirwen for further details

The views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily endorsed by the RISW

**Please send contributions for inclusion in the  
Autumn Edition of the RISW Newsletter to the editor**

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**by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011**