

CRICKHOWELL & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 1 ~ JULY 2010

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the first edition of the Society's Newsletter. Your Committee thought it would be helpful to members if we published during the summer and at Christmas to keep you up to date with our activities at the times when we do not have monthly meetings.

We have had a very successful first half of the year. Our membership numbers are up and our talks have usually been well attended. We are trying some new activities. We had a very successful walk around Clydach Gorge on 14 June and we look forward to our coach trip to St Fagans on Saturday 25 September. The Committee is also starting some work to trace the history of the pubs in Crickhowell. We welcome input from members on this project.

We hope that you are happy with these activities. The Committee welcomes your comments on the way the Society is run and your ideas or suggestions for future walks or visits. In addition if you know of speakers who you think would appeal to our audiences or if you give talks or presentations please let us know. Finally, if you can encourage your friends or colleagues to come to our meetings, or even better, to join the Society we should be delighted to see them

Regards,

Robin Williams

Society's Activities ~ February to June

Monthly talks-We have had an interesting and eventful series of talks. For our meeting in March we had the unfortunate, and unique in our experience, occurrence of our original speaker and his replacement having to cancel at short notice. We were extremely fortunate that our President stood in with only a couple of days notice and entertained us with his history of shipping in the Severn Estuary.

In April a disappointingly small audience welcomed back Brian Davies, the Curator of Pontypridd Museum, who regaled us in his usual humorous style with the story of Cardiff's lost castle.

In May Tim and Serena Raikes, assisted by Graham Paton gave a fascinating insight into the history of their home, Latham House. Their painstaking research was a wonderful example of how to proceed with projects of this kind.

The first half of our year ended with Bill Cainan, resplendent in the uniform and kit of an eighteenth century redcoat soldier, telling us about the life of an army private in campaigns in Scotland and Canada. The evening ended with a bang when Bill discharged his firearm in the open air to the delight of the assembled members. We were also very pleased to welcome to our meeting a Zulu Chief who is a professional tour guide on the Zulu battlefields and who was staying with Bill while visiting the regimental museum in Brecon



Bill Cainan swathed in gunpowder smoke after firing his musket.

Annual General Meeting

Some 36 members attended the AGM on 24th. February when it was all change at the top with new post-holders being elected. After the formalities, members had the opportunity to chat over a glass of wine and they were then entertained by Robin, our new President, showing slides of business premises in the Abergavenny of years gone by.

Membership

We currently have 51 members and are pleased to note that several new members have joined this year including 2 from Western Australia.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining or coming to our talks please encourage them to do so.

Our membership secretary Mal would be happy to speak to potential new members.

Walk around Clydach Gorge

On 14 June our President led 17 members on a fascinating walk around the historical sites of the Gorge. On a glorious summer evening we started at the remains of the Clydach ironworks and made our way, sedately, down to the canal at Gilwern following the old dram roads. Robin's detailed knowledge of the area made for an informative evening which was much appreciated by all those present. We intend to arrange a further walk next year.

Crickhowell Walking Festival

for the third successive year the Society led a walk around the town as part of the Festival. Beginning at the Castle, We took eighteen rambles on a circular tour via Porthmawr and the Church to the bridge and then up Bridge Street to the Market Hall pointing out the sites of historical interest and giving participants an insight into the history of the area.

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We now have a website.
We can be found at

www.crickhowellhistorysociety.co.uk

Society's Research Project-The Pubs of Crickhowell

In the early 1800s Crickhowell supported 21 inns and pubs. Today just 7 remain. These hostelries played an important part in the town's social history. There appears to be little known about many of them and the Society would like to record any information we can find about them. Some of you may have had family connections with these establishments. If you have any information about these hostelries listed below please let Clive know. We would be particularly interested to know when they opened or closed and to hear of any interesting events or personalities connected with them.

High Street ~ The Bear Hotel, The Cambrian Arms, The Britannia Inn, The Corn Exchange, The Queen's Head, The Dragon Hotel.

Bridge Street ~ The Butcher's Arms, The Bridge End, The King's Arms, The Three Salmons.

Brecon Road ~ The White Hart, The Crown Inn.

Beaufort Street ~ The Beaufort Arms, The Bush Inn.

New Road ~ The Six Bells, The Greyhound Inn

Llanbedr Road—The Swan

Location unknown—The Star Inn, The Wine Vaults, The Cross Keys, The Talbot Inn.



The cover of a booklet found in the back of Brian Burson's drawer. It states that

“The Bear is under the personal supervision of Mr. Fred Millidge.”

Can anyone provide us with an approximate date for this booklet?

Society's Activities ~ July to November

Monthly talks

22 September ~
'Memorials to the Fallen'
by David Woodliffe

20 October ~
'Something must be done',
The Quakers in Monmouthshire during
the Depression of the 1920s and 1930s
by John Evans

24 November-
'Exploring Kilvert Country'
by Chris Barber

Bus trip

As you may know, for the first time the Society has organised a bus trip to St Fagans National History Museum. This will be on Saturday 25 September and cost £11 per person. The trip is open to both members and non-members. Entrance to the museum is free.

St Fagans is the most popular heritage attraction in Wales with 40 original buildings having been erected in the 100 acre parkland. It holds demonstrations by craftsmen of traditional skills, it has native breeds of livestock and has exhibitions of costumes and Welsh life. There are ample catering facilities including a self service restaurant, an award winning tea room and a café.

Bookings for the trip can be made through Sheila Harris at her shop in Standard Street.

Society Calendar

For the last three years the Society has produced a Calendar which has been well received and has made a significant contribution to our funds. This involves a considerable amount of work in selecting 'photos and arranging printing and, more importantly, we are reliant on the goodwill of certain traders in the town for distribution. We are reluctant to impose undue burdens on them and the Committee has decided that we will not produce a Calendar for 2011, but we will reconsider the position next year.

And finally.....

It is your Society and the Committee welcomes any comments you may have on the way it is run or any ideas for doing things differently. In particular, if you have suggestions for topics or speakers for our monthly meetings, Janice would be pleased to have them.