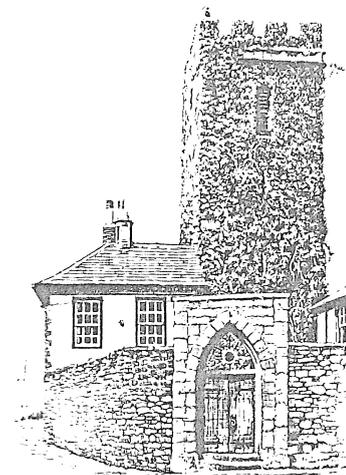


# *Abergavenny Local History Society*



*St. John's, Abergavenny*

NEWSLETTER No 6  
August 1990

SUMMER VISITS 1989

We picked probably the hottest weekend of the year for our weekend visit to Nottingham. We felt sorry for the people who were working alongside the red hot kilns at the Royal Crown Derby Porcelain Works. Watching the girls working on the intricate hand painted designs and sculptures made us realise why their china is so expensive.

The little known Southall Minster just north of Nottingham is a very good example of Norman architecture and it was beautifully described to us by the guides.

For some members, the highlight of the week end was the visit to Boothby Pagnall where the Norman house and her local church were so lovingly described to us by Mrs. Coltman. Some even enjoyed seeing Maggie's original 'den' on the way through Grantham.

Belvoir Castle, the home of the Duke of Rutland, has been used as a background in a number of films and TV productions. It was visible from several miles away and, fortunately, the coach was able to take us up the hill and right to the door of the castle.

We were able to enjoy the fruits of several years of tidying up by the National Trust at Calke Abbey before a short stop at the Roman site at Wall on our way home.

Our summer visits began at the very historical Berkley Castle and in June Mr Peplow was at his usual best when taking us around Clehonger church, Leominster Priory Church and Croft Castle.

Our evening visits took us first to Treowen near Raglan where the owner and his wife showed us around their four storied mediaeval home.

Memories of old packaging were brought back to us at the Opie Museum at Gloucester, as well as examples of old black and white TV adverts. Our last visit was to the new interesting Industrial and Maritime Museum at Swansea followed by a guided tour of Kidwelly Castle, which is still in a remarkable state of preservation, probably due to its isolated position.

Let's hope the weather is as kind to us this year, but perhaps not quite so warm.

Alan Spink.

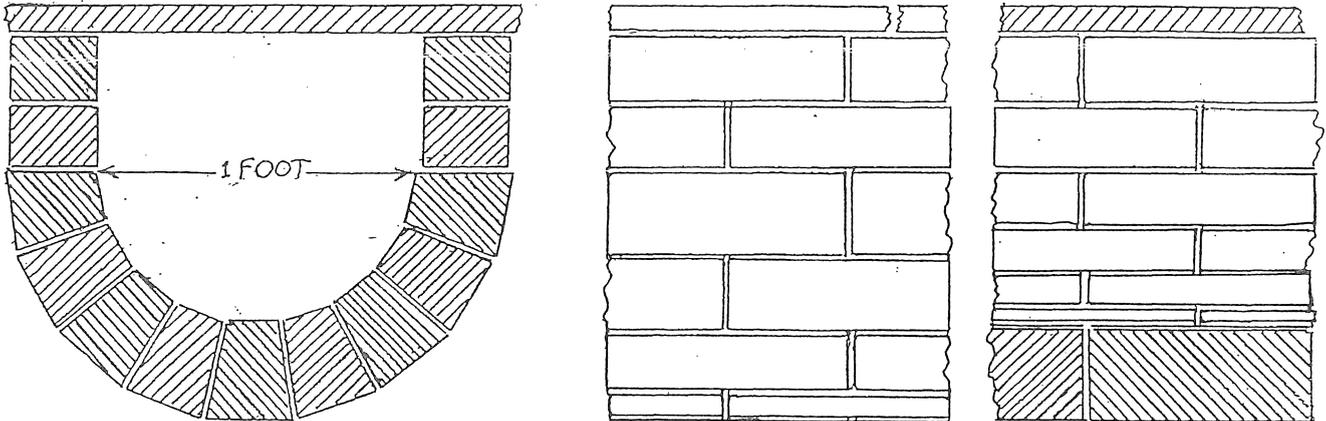
LECTURES 1990-1991

20 Sept	Mr Arthur Peplow	Kilpeck and Norman Sculpture in Herefordshire
18 Oct	Mr Eric Talbot	The impact of the Normans upon the Welsh landscape
15 Nov	Mr R E Child	The mediaeval wall paintings of Llandeilo Tal-y-bont Church
6 Dec	Members' Christmas Dinner and Social Evening. Admission by ticket only	
17 Jan	Mr David Whitehead	The early work of John Nash, Architect, in Gwent and Herefordshire
21 Feb	Mr Peter Humphries	The three castles of Skenfrith, Grosmont and Whitecastle
21 Mar	Mr Leslie James	The growth of Newport 1800-1914
18 Apr	Dr Joseph Gross	The industrial archaeology of Merthyr Tydfil
16 May	14th Annual General Meeting followed by Mr Howard Pullan The Pullans in India.	

## THE CHAPEL ROAD CULVERT

There is a culvert running under the pavement on the west side of Chapel Road. I first saw it in 1958 when services were run to my new house at No 105. The workmen said that it carried water from the Sugar Loaf to the fountains at Nevill Hall.

The culvert is constructed of hand made red brick topped by slabs of red Deri sandstone. This at some time was covered with concrete paving slabs and accumulated a thin layer of soil over which tarmac was laid. Motor cars often caused this to collapse so that in the nineteen sixties the council overlaid this with new paving slabs and made concreted entries to garages.



## THE CHAPEL ROAD CULVERT

In August 1987 the Electricity Board renewed the poles carrying their overhead wires and the culvert was once more exposed. The base of the culvert is semicircular and made of nine wedge shaped bricks measuring 2 inches at the narrow end and 3 1/4 inches at the wide end. The thickness is 3 3/4 inches. The bricks were made in a trough shaped mould and the wide end trowled off. They were cut to between 9 and 9 3/4 inches in length. These dimensions give the culvert an internal radius of 6 inches and an external radius of 9 3/4 inches. On this semicircular base rest two rectangular bricks 3 1/2 inches wide and 2 3/4 inches deep. These have also been made in a mould and cut to about 9 inches in length. The bricks were probably laid with a thin layer of mortar. This has leached away so that in places the construction appears to be dry and in others it has obviously been repaired to make it watertight.

The culvert extends as far as North Street but pole excavations beyond Western Avenue do not reveal it. At the other end the culvert is present in the first pole excavation past Orchard Street although it is completely silted up. No more excavations were planned but it may well extend to the end of Chapel Road.

Members should watch all excavations in its possible path to Nevill Hall and towards its source which may have been the Cibi brook or a spring on the Sugar Loaf.

Ken Key.

### 15th CENTURY GOSSIP COLUMN (From the Calendar of State Papers 1698)

Now let me tell you something of my Lord Abergavenny (George) (Who is really a worthy gentleman). He lodged at a relative's of my last wife's in Leicester Fields (who let lodgings) who bred up her daughter modestly, who (with her finger ends and with the dexterity of her needle) made a tolerable figure, with whose prudent behaviour my lord was so taken that he hath married her. Her best features are her virtue and goodness which must serve for fortune also.

St Mary's Priory Research Group

BYE-GONE BOOKS

The second-hand bookshop in the television series 'After Henry' gave the impression that working (if that is the right word!) in such a place consists of having lots of jolly little chats, selling very few books and compensating for the lack of trade by finding the occasional rare first edition worth thousands of pounds enabling the owner to pay off his mortgage!

'Jolly little chats' there certainly are and, fortunately, more than a few books get sold, but the treasures discovered are more likely to be worth very little in cash, but a great deal in memories and associations. I recall with great pleasure such a find which occurred last year.

It was a small insignificant black book, obviously a hymn or prayer book, similar to many others which are discarded in their hundreds over the years. Looking at the title page revealed it to be published in the Midlands by a local printer, and containing a collection of hymns popular at the time, and intended for the use of local churches. So far there was nothing special about it, and it was about to be cast aside. However, I chanced to open it at the end paper and saw that the name of the owner was SECRETAN. You may recognise that name. I certainly did.

Frederick Secretan, a gentleman from Greenwich, in about 1830, built the house now known as Triley Court, on the old Hereford Road near Pantygelli. He called it Arcadia (a typical touch of Victorian romanticism) and the family lived there until about 1840. This little book had belonged to the wife of William Secretan. I felt that there was only one thing to do with it, so it was passed to the vicar of St Teilo's church in Llantilio Pertholey, where the Secretan family were buried, and he was delighted to add it to the church's archives, returning it to its home after over 150 years. I was very happy about this, feeling that the episode had a very pleasant ending.

Much to my surprise, this was not the end of the matter. Within days of the hymn book being returned to the church, visitors came to the village. In the words of the vicar "They came from the parish of Probus, near Truro in Cornwall, and had hopes of discovering a little of their family history. An old friend of St Teilo's, Miss Tresawna, whose father is buried here, told them to make enquiries at the vicarage. So David and Thea Datson called. It turned out that Thea is a great-great-great-grand-daughter of William Secretan of Triley Court. At the church they enquired about the Secretan graves. William Savagar who was working in the churchyard at the time was actually standing on one of the Secretan graves while tidying that section. They were able to visit Triley Court and see the old family home, and they were able to worship at St Teilo's. We arranged to use the Triley Chapel for the Eucharist that morning, and before the service itself, read a hymn from the book which had been used in that same chapel by Thea's great-great-great-grand-mother."

How strange that my chance (or was it chance?) finding of a little book became part of a chain of events linking Thea Datson with her ancestor.

Cyril Feldwick

TREASURE\_TROVE

On a country estate at Keithley, in Yorkshire, there were some cottages with the rather curious name of Uncra. Being rather dilapidated and inconveniently sited, they had to be demolished. Three pennies were found built in above one of the inside doorways. They enabled the cottages to be dated as early eighteenth century. Coins were sometimes built into houses in this manner for luck. There was then always money in the house, and money was thought to attract money.

When Abergavenny's Tudor Street was demolished, a collection of twenty pennies was found in one of the houses, but it is likely that these were intended for the gas meter!

Arthur Fleet.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR COMMUNITY CHARGE ?  
(From the Close Rolls 1386)

Order to command singular the lords dwelling upon the marches of Wales in the diocese of Llandaff to take with them sufficient power of the marches and to take all and singular the abbots, priors and men of the church hereinafter mentioned and commit them to prison until they shall make full payment of four moieties of tenths granted to the king by the clergy of the realm, and writ of supercedas in favour of the prior of Berg[avenny], the abbots of Mans and Grace Dieu and the Vicar of Berg[avenny] who have incurred a sentence of greater excommunication for contumacy in not contending the king of the said moieties which they ought to have paid to the abbott and convent of Tinterne the collectors, and that they have persevered forty days and upward under that sentence, with hardened hearts, despising the keys of the church.

St Mary's Priory Research Group

ABERGAVENTNY 900 LOCAL HISTORY COMPETITION FOR SCHOOLS

The Abergavenny Local History Society invited schools in our area to enter a LOCAL HISTORY COMPETITION as part of the celebrations for Abergavenny 900. The entries were to cover any aspect of Abergavenny and District, as defined by the NP7 postcode, between the dates A.D.1090 and A.D. 1990. The competition opened during the Autumn term of 1989 and closed on 31 May 1990.

Projects could include a study of a local village, church, castle or old building and could also involve a study of well known personalities, reminiscences of old people in the area, local transport, industry, agriculture or crafts.

There were three age categories and schools could submit any number of entries in one or more categories.

1) Infants ages 4-7

A group, class or school project which may take the form of collage, painting, models or any other medium and in any format. It must, however, include some explanatory writing.

2) Juniors ages 7-11

A project comprising the original work of a group, class or school. It may take the form of poetry, prose, maps, photographs, drawings or illustrations.

3) Seniors ages 11 plus

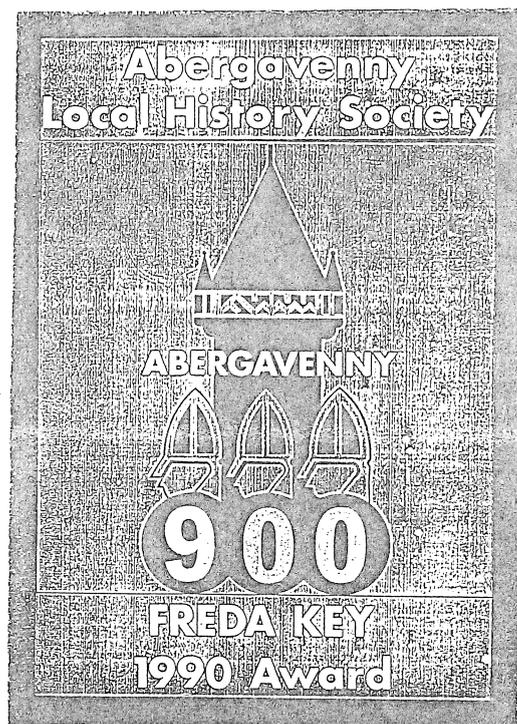
Work may be carried out by an individual, group or class and may be presented in any size, shape or format. Judges will be looking for originality of research and the use of primary sources of information. Primary sources include, for example, maps, original documents, census returns, person to person interviews (in the case of oral history), old newspapers etc.

A panel of Museum Staff and Local History Society members have now judged the entries. Winning entries will be exhibited in Abergavenny Museum during the summer and will be considered for publication in the Gwent Local History Journal.

The Abergavenny Local History Society is presenting a special ABERGAVENNY 900 award in memory of FREDA KEY for the schools local history competition. It will be given to the person or school offering, in the opinion of the judges, the best overall entry. This award will be the plaque illustrated on the right.

Freda was one of the founder members of our Local History Society and was also its Treasurer. Freda came into close contact with schools in the Abergavenny area in her profession as a librarian and the Society felt it appropriate that in this special year Freda should be remembered in this way.

The winner of the Freda Key Award is Harold Road Junior School.



Prizes donated by the Abergavenny Local History Society have been presented to the following:-

Larger Primary Schools

Joint 1st prize

Harold Road Junior School and  
St Michael's Junior and Infants School

Joint Runners up

Llwynu Junior School and  
Llantilio Pertholey Junior and Infants School.

Smaller Primary Schools

1st prize Norton Cross Junior and Infants School.

2nd prize Llanover Junior and Infants School.

3rd prize Llanfair Kilgeddin Junior and Infants School

Individual prizes

O. D. Bowen  
Sally Jones  
Abigail Reed  
and Charlotte White.

Eric Finney

EDITOR'S PLEA

Once more I hope I have been able to fill the newsletter with some interesting items. I do depend upon members contributions. Don't leave it till next year. Think about your contribution now!

Ken Key