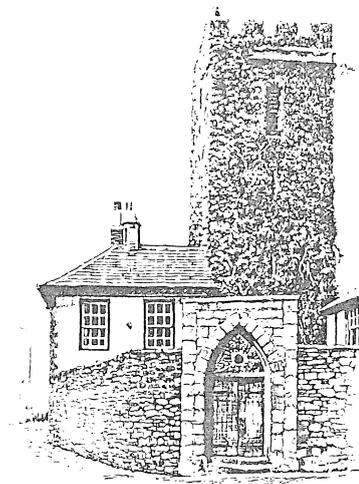


# *Abergavenny Local History Society*



*St. John's, Abergavenny*

NEWSLETTER No 9  
August 1993

SUMMER VISITS 1992

Our visits programme began at the lovely Cotswold manor house at Stanway, when the owner, Lord Niedpath, showed us his delightful home. Arthur Negus considered Stanway House to be one of the most beautiful and romantic houses in England. The showery weather did not spoil our subsequent visit to Kenilworth Castle, sadly now in ruins, but impressive with its Norman keep and 20 foot thick walls.

Arthur Peplow told us of the history of Farleigh Hungerford Castle, a late 14th. century castle with a large 15th. century outer court, and then accompanied us to Laycock to visit the town and the abbey which was founded in 1232.

Our first evening visit took us to Rhondda Heritage, a development on the old Lewis Merthyr Colliery site telling the story of coal. Our second was to Dinmore Manor and gardens originally founded on the site by the knights of St. John of Jerusalem in the 12th. century.

On our way to Norwich University for our three night stay we stopped off for a tour of Burghley House considered to be the finest example of later Elizabethan architecture in England. An early start the following morning enabled us to tour Sandringham House and gardens before lunch and afterwards to visit Castle Rising. This rectangular keep built about 1140 and surrounded by very large earthworks made an impressive sight. There was time on the way back to the university to visit Cockley Cley, the site of a reconstructed Iceni village and Saxon Church.

Our last full day began with a boat trip along the river Wensum followed by a guided tour of Norwich Cathedral. After lunch a visit was made to the 17th. century Blickling Hall and gardens. We made two stops on the way home firstly to tour Peterborough Cathedral with its glorious west front, and finally to have a tour of Rockingham Castle. The castle, used during the TV series 'By the Sword Divided', was built originally by William the Conqueror and it was used by kings of England until 1530 when Henry VIII gave it to Edward Watson. His descendants still occupy the castle to this day.

Last but not least was our visit to Hampton Court Palace begun in 1514 by Thomas Wolsey and presented by him to king Henry VIII. We were fortunately able to see the restored rooms which were damaged in the severe fire of 1986.

As I write this it is about time to begin the 1993 summer visits programme. I hope you enjoy them.

Alan Soink

SIR RICHARD HERBERT OF COLDBROOK

Members will now be well aware of the programme for the restoration of St. Mary's mediaeval monuments. They are the second most important collection of tombs in any parish church in Britain, but experts warn us that they are deteriorating rapidly and that conservation work must begin soon. What is perhaps surprising is that any monuments have survived there at all, since, for up to 700 years they have suffered from neglect and abuse during some of the most turbulent periods in our history. When Owain Glyn Dwr attacked our Norman town in 1404, he is known to have caused damage to the town, church and its contents lying outside the walled town. After the Reformation, protestants did away with many objects which they considered proof of the idolatrous nature of the Old Religion. When Charles I visited Abergavenny in 1645 his companion, Symonds, wrote of the monuments and church as being in good order. But months later, Fairfax's Puritan army, quartered in the town during the siege of Raglan Castle (1), were undoubtedly responsible for some of the disfigurement we see today. The 18th. century graffiti visible on the stalls and alabaster tombs can be traced to the time when the east end of the church was used as a schoolroom. However, more visually offensive is the repair and reassembly work carried out within the last 100 years by workmen who must have been blindfolded, without a ruler to hand and

lacking a basic understanding of jigsaw skills. Even before restoration they are magnificent, each a capsule of our rich past. Worth a close study is the tomb of Sir Richard Herbert of Coldbrook (2) and his wife Margaret. He was the second son of William ap Thomas (3) the Welsh squire who married wisely, fought bravely for his king and traded successfully to achieve great power, wealth and title. He rebuilt Raglan and adopted a royal family name of Herbert. His sons, Richard of Coldbrook and elder brother William Herbert fought for the Yorkists at Edgecote near Banbury in the Wars of the Roses, were captured and executed in 1649.



The tomb clearly shows the qualities and deficiencies of Nottingham alabaster. Skilled craftsmen were able to cut and shape the soft material to produce fine detail. It could be highly polished and took colouring well, but it is easily scratched or broken.

It is not the intention to restore these monuments to their original splendour; they will be cleaned, some of the graffiti filled in and any colouring stabilised. Of great interest will be the work of the art historians who attempt to reassemble and accurately identify the figures. Most important of all will be the measures taken to prevent further deterioration by rising damp and air moisture in the sometimes cold church.

1) When this parliamentary army approached the town after its capture of Hereford, the Royalist castle of Abergavenny was slighted to prevent its capture and use by Cromwell's forces.

2) The house once stood on the lower, western slopes of the Little Skirrid Mountain.

3) His tomb stands alongside the Coldbrook one.

Gwyn Jones.

#### THE KING'S ARMS (29 Nevill Street)

A typical 16th. or early 17th. century building, the King's Arms displays the Royal Arms of Charles II. The earliest reference to the premises is dated 1702 when John Hanbury of Pontypool leased the property 'for three lives to Joshua Jones, Thomas Jones and son' at a yearly rent of £5. By 1735 John Hanbury had moved to Caerleon and had arranged a new lease to William Waters, though the property was described as being 'now in the

tenure of Jehosophat Jones'. In 1788 the pub is referred to as 'The Post Office' with Mr Blashford as landlord.

In 1817 the pub was used to billet a troop of the King's and 15th. Hussars, called into the district in the wake of serious rioting at

Nantyglo and Tredegar in 1816. Over the fireplace in the lounge the soldiers left a permanent reminder of their stay in the form of an inscription which reads

Good Quartering Forever

1817

King & 15 Hussars

Hall Troop 24

The census returns for 1851 reveal that on the night of the count one Joseph Baswin, victualler, his wife and four children, five lodgers, three servants and two coachmen were in residence at the inn. Between 1865 and 1914 the proprietor was Thomas Delafield, who ran his own brewery at the rear of the premises. He also owned and ran several other pubs in the town including the Monmouthshire House in Ross Road.

The King's Arms is reputed to be haunted by 'the White Lady'. According to the legend, she was a serving wench who was taken advantage of by a monk who had sought refuge at the inn during a period of religious persecution. Having died in childbirth, she is said to wander the rooms upstairs searching for her child. The dastardly monk was supposedly hanged, drawn and quartered at Monmouth.

Licencees: Joshua Jones, Thomas Jones & son (1702), Jehosophat Jones (1735), William Waters (1735), Mr Blashfield (1788), Whitmore Blashfield (1816), John W Blashfield (1822-1835), Timothy Wallington (1842), Joseph Brown (1850-1851), Mary Ann Brock (1858-1862), Thomas Delafield (1865-1914), Claude S Atkin (1923), William Rowlands (1926), David William Fenner (1934-1937).

Frank Olding

#### A POSTCARD FROM ABERGAVENNY

At the turn of this century, Abergavenny was blessed with a number of local photographers who either produced postcards of their own or took photographs for a number of national companies. Valentines of Dundee seem to be the biggest national company to produce postcards of Abergavenny but there were many more. Photochrom of Tunbridge Wells, Harvey Barton of Bristol, Stengel of London, Hardings of Bristol and Cardiff, Judges of Hastings, Frith of Reigate, Ralph Tuck of London, Salmon of Sevenoaks, Wrench, Lillywhite Ltd of Sowerby Bridge, E T W Dennis, A & G Taylor of London, S Hildesheimer, F Hartman, W H Smith's & Viners of Acton, who produced one of my favourite series of postcards of the town.

Besides these national companies several local shops produced their own postcards using the talents of the local photographers. Local producers I have come across to date are :-

C J FRICKER, 13 Cross Street, Abergavenny. (Bookseller & Stationer)

T D ROBERTS, 35a Frogmore Street, Abergavenny. (Hairdresser)

G HARRHY, 3 High Street, Abergavenny. (Stationer)

ARTHUR DAVIS, 8 Cross Street, Abergavenny.

JONES & CO, High Street, Abergavenny. (Stationers)

C MINSON, 52 Frogmore Street, Abergavenny.

W J HODGES, 15 Frogmore Street, Abergavenny.

PIPERS BAZAAR

Mrs BEDDOE, 52 Cross Street, Abergavenny. (Fancy repository)

H A CAREY, 3 High Street, Abergavenny.

Mdlle N Courvoisier, 52 Frogmore Street, Abergavenny (Stationer)

As you can see from the number of postcard producers, earlier this century before public transport or the telephone were readily available to the general public, postcards were the main form of communication. Most of the national and local producers concentrated on general views of the area and the town. It was left to local photographers to produce more detailed postcards especially those depicting local events and

notoriety. The following is a list of the local photographers I have come across to date, whose craft has left behind a legacy of social history that would otherwise have been lost for ever. This is by no means to suggest that there were not many more who remain, as yet, undiscovered.

HARRY SHACKLETON, 9 Cross Street, Abergavenny.  
 R H STEVENS, Crickhowell & Abergavenny.  
 EDDIE MADGE, West End Studios, 43a Frogmore Street, Abergavenny.  
 R I HOULSON, 10 Merthyr Road, Abergavenny.  
 H H SALTINSTALL, Abergavenny.  
 H OLIVER, The Portrait Studio, Abergavenny.  
 E HARRINGTON, The West End Studio, 43a Frogmore Street, Abergavenny.  
 F TEMPLE, Gilwern.  
 W J MAIDMENT, 27 Flannel Street, Abergavenny.  
 A HAMPTON, Abergavenny  
 J F LEWIS, 1 Windsor Road, Abergavenny.  
 ? MEREDITH, Gilwern.

These photographers were residents of the town and surrounding areas. However, there was also a large number of non-resident photographers who travelled around the country taking a variety of local scenes and events. Among these we find:- Earnest Bush of Cardiff, W W & C of Newport, The Excelsior Photo Co of Carm, Eastman's of Ebb Vale and several military photographers who followed their local regiments to camps in Abergavenny. Of these, the firm of Chadwick & Allen was the earliest I have recorded. These were to be found at 72 Rosmead Street, Hull and were responsible for covering the visit to Abergavenny by Earl Roberts in 1905. The reason for this auspicious visit was the unveiling of a commemorative plaque dedicated to the dead of the Boer War.

Mezzotint & Co produced a series of postcards of the Cheshire Regiment's visit in 1907/8.

Gordon Whitehead was another who covered this visit, although I have relatively little information on any of his other work or, indeed, on any of the several other unidentified photographers who covered this same visit.

J M Simmet of Guild Street, Burton on Trent covered the 1911 camp of the Staffordshire Regiment, while S G Dunn of Kennington Oval covered the 1913 camp of the London Regiment.

In between the wars A G Price of 12 Cornwall Street, Hereford covered the 1925 visit of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.

The only other series I have in my collection is a series of aerial shots produced by Aerofilm.

With such a large list of producers and photographers it is very difficult to judge how many different postcards of Abergavenny were manufactured. In the 12 years that I have been collecting, I have amassed over 2000 but I've a feeling this is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Louis Bannon

PROGRAMME 1993-94

1993

16 Sept.	Mr Arthur Peplow	THE CATHEDRALS OF WELLS AND SALISBURY
21 Oct.	Mr John Edwards	IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING John talks tidy and gives reasons for this lively lingo.
4 Nov.	Dr Eurwen Williams	THE WELSH FOLK MUSEUM, ST.FAGANS
16 Dec.		MEMBERS' CHRISTMAS DINNER AND SOCIAL EVENING at the Lamb & Flag at 7 p.m.

1994 see next page

1994

20 Jan. Dr Raymond Howell RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH EAST WALES

3 Feb. Dr Keith Strange SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN 19th. CENTURY MERTHYR

17 Mar. Mr Leslie James Newport 1850

7 April Mr Arthur Peplow SICILY - THE NORMAN KINGDOM IN THE SUN

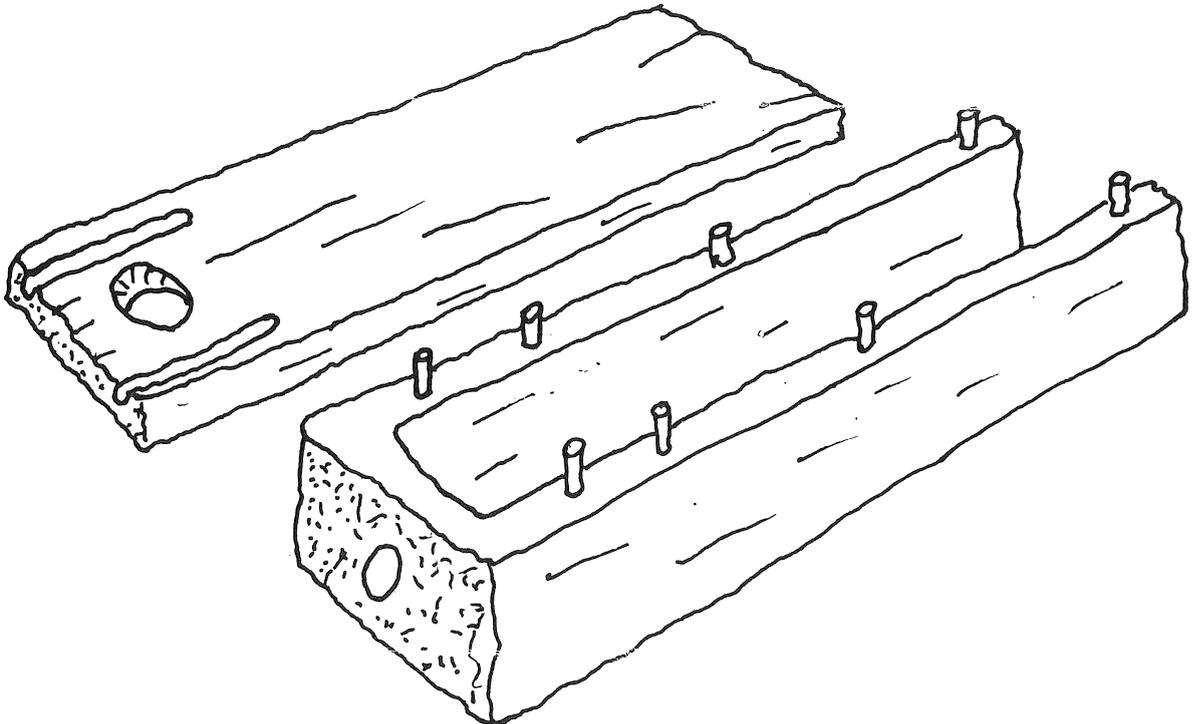
19 May 17th. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by  
Mr John Van Laun INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN S WALES-  
A REVIEW

June 30 (prov) MIDSUMMER PARTY

Members' subscriptions are due after the A.G.M.

ALFRED JACKSON'S MYSTERY TROUGH

Ann Waller has sent me an excerpt from The Countryman of Summer 1962 showing an open ended oak trough hewn out of one piece with an adze measuring 8ft 7in x 14in x 10in deep found 18in below the bed of a small stream near Abergavenny. It had a heavy oak cover pegged to the trough with a gasket of horse hide, presumably to make a watertight seal. One end appeared to be open while at the other end a soft wood plug filled a 2 1/2in diameter hole. Near this in the lid was a 6in diameter hole between two large grooves which had been burned.



The skull of a toothless horse was under the open end. The author of the article, the renowned Alfred Jackson, asked readers for enlightenment. I have not searched for any replies. Has anyone any ideas about what it was?

EDITORIAL

It is quite a bumper edition this year with only a drawing by KAK. Many thanks for all your efforts. Please start thinking NOW about next year's contributions.  
Ken Key.