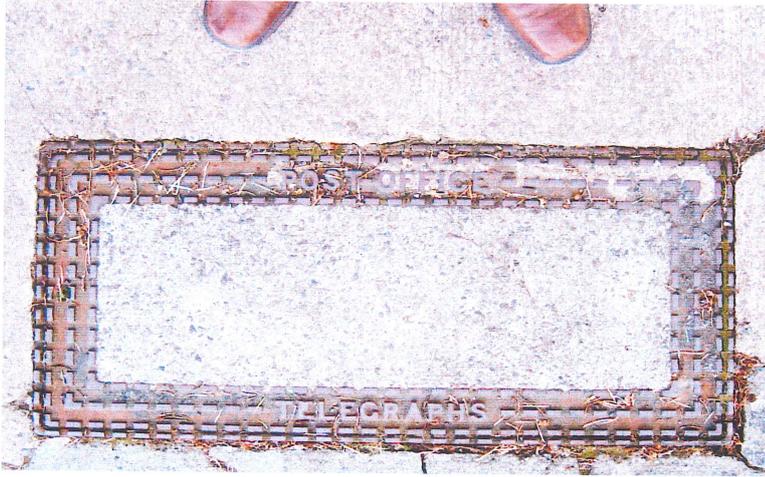
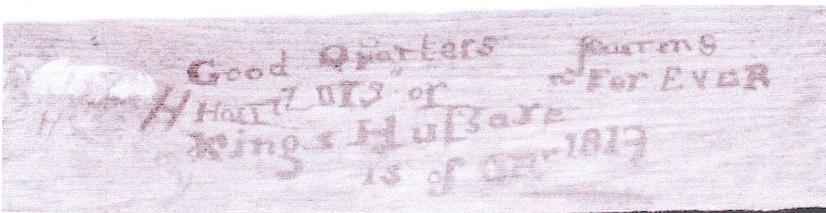


SEEN AROUND TOWN

Avenue Road. There are two of them! Since when have we communicated by telegraph?



Chapel Road/Linden Avenue. Evidence of cobbles



There was no Cwrt-y- Gollen in 1817 and soldiers were billeted in local hostelries. We thought this was lost but it is now set up in prime position in the bar of the Kings Arms near Tudor Gate.
Was it just the food or were there other attractions?

EXCAVATION NEAR PENPERGWM

Sue Jenkins gave ALHS this information. Contact Irena Morgan or Gill Wakley if you would like to help.

We began our dig near Penpergwm in 2005. We have identified the foundations of one building, probably timber framed and the corner of a second building on a low mound defended by a ditch. Pottery finds have been dated from mid 12th century to mid 13th century. Some of the pottery sherds are attractively glazed. Indications are that this was a high status dwelling. I could go into a lot more detail but perhaps it is not appropriate here.

We are wondering whether members of your society would be interested in volunteering to come and dig or to give some advice or support in historical research of the site. We are usually on site on a Thursday and Saturday each week except during Winter months.

Geoff Mein was actively involved with us until his death last year and so we have lost someone who was a competent researcher.

JOHN OGILBY and the 1675 BRITANNIA road atlas

A couple of years ago I gave a talk to the Society on the Ogilby routes in Monmouthshire and Breconshire. Our research has continued and expanded so that it now covers most of Wales and the borders-some 1900 miles. Most of these 17th century routes are still identifiable as roads, tracks, bridleways or footpaths. We have now written a detailed account of the research, providing sufficient information for the reader to trace the routes either on maps (e.g. OS Landranger Series) or on the ground. The resulting book of about 100 pages is being considered by a publisher, but the outcome is not certain and the process will in any case take time. Meanwhile, copies can be made available, either in 'Student files' at £10 or cost bound (to lie flat when open) at £15. A copy is also available for inspection at the museum on request. The monograph contains 45 photographs (monochrome) of sections of interest from the atlas or en route, and reduced copies of the 27 BRITANNIA map plates.

Derek & Ena Bissell

01873 854456

A CONFESSION

In my talk on Samuel Johnson and his dictionary I concluded with a tongue-twister (defining a twister, or rope-maker) attributed by Johnson simply to 'Wallis'. I mentioned that some commentaries suggest that Johnson may have written this himself.

In fact it appears it was penned by Dr John Wallis, a mathematician and grammarian (this might be considered an unusual combination of professions), and appears in 'Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae(1674)'. In turn, it is based on a French verse 'Quand un cordier, cordent, veult corder une cord; (etc)

It is quoted, with comments, in the Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, and it is suggested that it was given as a forfeit in Christmas games!

Derek Bissell.

(What on earth is an octogenarian doing with a dictionary of nursery rhymes?)

DID YOUR ANCESTORS FIGHT AT AGINCOURT?

The service records of 250,000 medieval soldiers who fought in the Hundred Years War have been made available online and include many of the archers at Agincourt.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council funded the Medieval Soldier Database compiled by Dr Adrian Bell, of Reading University, and Professor Anne Curry, of Southampton University. They analysed historic sources such as muster rolls records in the National Archives at Kew and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris.

The database covers the years between 1369 and 1453 and shows which campaigns soldiers fought in, what they were paid, how often they were off sick, and who was knighted. You can search for soldiers by surname, rank or year of service.

Researchers have helped to build up profiles of some of the individual soldiers. In the list is Owain

. Glyndwr and the youngest soldier, Thomas, Lord Despencer, whose career began when he was 12 in 1385.

The service records survive because the English exchequer had a very modern obsession with wanting to be sure that the government's money was being spent as intended. Thus we have the remarkable survival of indentures for service detailing the forces to be raised, muster rolls showing this service and naming every soldier from duke to archer. There are accounts from the captains demonstrating how the money had been spent, and entries showing when the exchequer made the requested payments."

Access the database free at

www.medievalsoldier.org or

<http://www.icmacentre.ac.uk/soldier/database/>

ABERGAVENNY ARCHAEOLOGY

Garnered from *Archaeology in Wales Vol 7 2007*
and Summarised by Gill Wakley

2 Monk Street: An archaeological watching brief for a new electricity sub-station recorded evidence of layers of Roman deposits thought to date from the 2nd century AD. Also noted were structural evidence and pottery belonging to the mediaeval period. *S H Sell. Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust 2006/086*

29 Cross Street also showed pottery and other medieval material.

Park Lodge Farm and The Sugar Loaf/ Pen Y Fal, Abergavenny. *K Laws & I P Brooks, Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.*

The National Trust commissioned archaeological surveys of the farm and surroundings in 2005 and 2006. The boundary of the farm is an earth bank and ditch known as the Park Pale. It is up to 1.5m high and 2.5 - 3m wide with an internal ditch. It is thought to be the enclosure boundary for a deer park which belonged to the Benedictine Priory of Abergavenny. The Priory was founded by Hamelin de Balun, the first Lord of Abergavenny in the reign of Henry 1st (AD 1100 – 1135) but the first written record is in a Minister's Account in 1256. The possessions of the monastery were granted to James Gunter in AD 1546. Prehistoric features were only recorded from the less improved ground of the open ground of the Sugar Loaf. The Twyn yr Allt enclosure is at the western end of the Allt ridge, overlooking Abergavenny. It is an oval area, about 40 x 80m,

enclosed by a low earth and stone bank, disturbed by post-medieval quarrying, and thought to be an Iron Age settlement. The survey was lucky to find a group of possible burial cairns in an area where the heather had recently been burned off on the ridge extending north-east from the peak.

Similar in appearance to the Park Pale are two other substantial banks. One runs south-west from the peak, the other in a north-easterly direction from the south of the mountain. It's thought these may be land divisions of an earlier date.

Within the farm complex to the north-east of the present buildings were at least ten platforms. This may represent an earlier farmhouse and outbuildings, as the earliest part of the present farmhouse are thought to date from the 16th century.

Charcoal platforms were common across both the farm area and the open ground beyond. A total of 147 were identified, from small oval platforms of 3 x 4m to large sub-rectangular platforms of 8 x 12. This would suggest that charcoal burning was an important activity here. Small quarries were mostly found in the upper parts of the farm and in the open areas of the Sugar Loaf. Some had continued until relatively recent times.

Military activity from both World Wars was found. The area was used as an artillery range in WW1 with a revetted stone bank and a circular mound. Three rectangular trenches with earth banks along one edge are thought to be rifle firing butts from WW2.

EWERS GARDEN EXCAVATION IN CASTLE STREET

by Ken Key

It came by chance to my notice that the excavation which I directed in Castle Street in 1968-72 has been written up by M.W Ponsford of Cardiff Archaeological Consultants, Cardiff and published in *Archaeology in Wales* 46 2006.

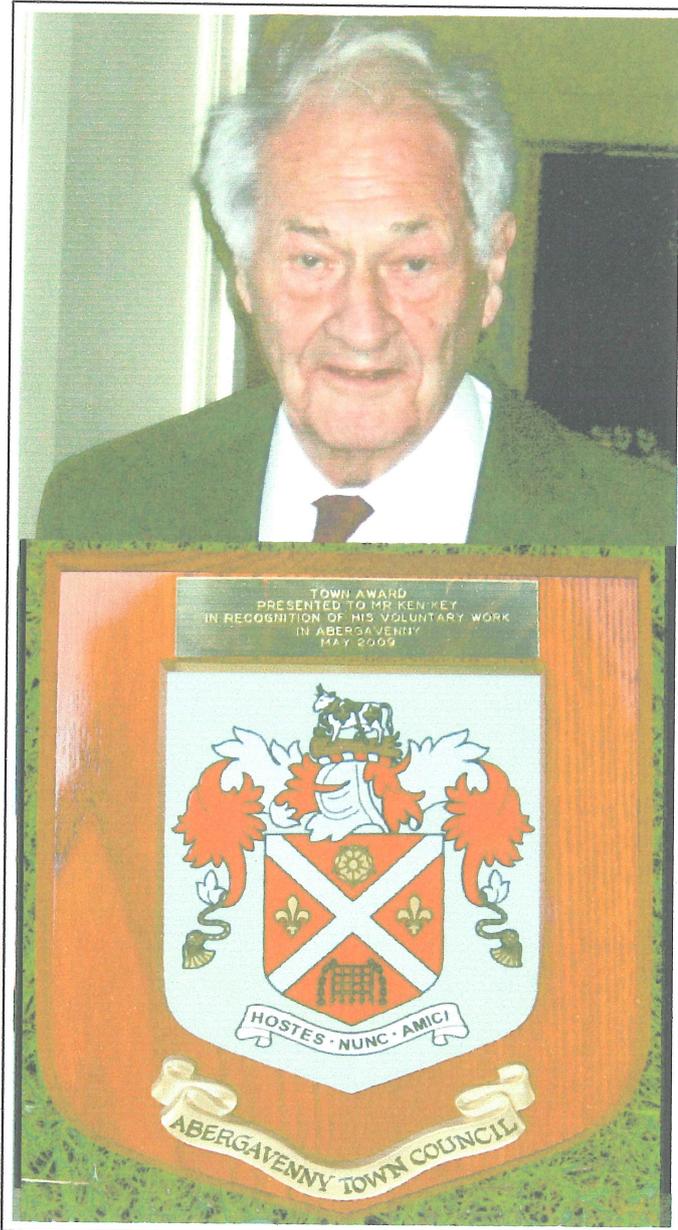
It was unfortunate that due to my redundancy in 1972 I was unable to finish the excavation. However, I was able to compile detailed records as the excavation proceeded and make accurate drawings of the pottery. Many of these are included in the report and the presence of National Grid lines on my site plan enabled proper relocation of the professionally dug Orchard site.

It is gratifying that a professional archaeologist has found so much of my work so useful. Even the sherds which Mr George Boone of Cardiff suggested I should encase in a plastic bag and bury have been meticulously analysed.

I suppose one might expect a professional archaeologist to look down on the work of a mere amateur. I understood that the people looking at my finds in the museum were students on an exercise. It is just disappointing that I was not personally consulted as I could have been of great help. Many of the finds which were allegedly lost are in the museum, some were actually on display. All the 'lost' small finds were in envelopes in the museum and all the bones were analysed by the University of Edinburgh.

I am grateful to my fellow diggers who were meticulous in washing and marking all the finds. An afternoon's digging often involved only one finds tray and I find it difficult to accept that there could have been so much mixing up of finds trays

It would have been nice to have been notified of the report and not to have heard about it second hand but good to know that the information is now in the public domain.



TOWN AWARD

Ken Key received from the Mayor The Town Award for 2009 for his voluntary work in Abergavenny.

Ken says that this award should really be shared among the many volunteers who have helped him. These are the people who sit in the church, write for the newsletter, run the Llantilio Crossenny Festival and the Gwent Beekeepers Association, join him on car park watch, sing with him and move the staging in the Gwent Bach Society, read the lessons in St Peter's, help him with public address and projection systems and who dug with him on the Castle Street excavations in the 1960s We would not have our close knit community without all these volunteers.

Harry Gilbert, another of our members, also received the Town Award. He was treasurer of the Abergavenny Concertgoers. He has been one of our Local History Church Stewards and conductor of the Society's Annual Audit for many years.

CONGRATULATIONS

Ian Smith, one of our co-opted committee members, has graduated with a first class honours degree in History at the Open University. He tells us that it was a most stimulating course with some excellent tutors. He would be happy to discuss his experience with members who might be interested.

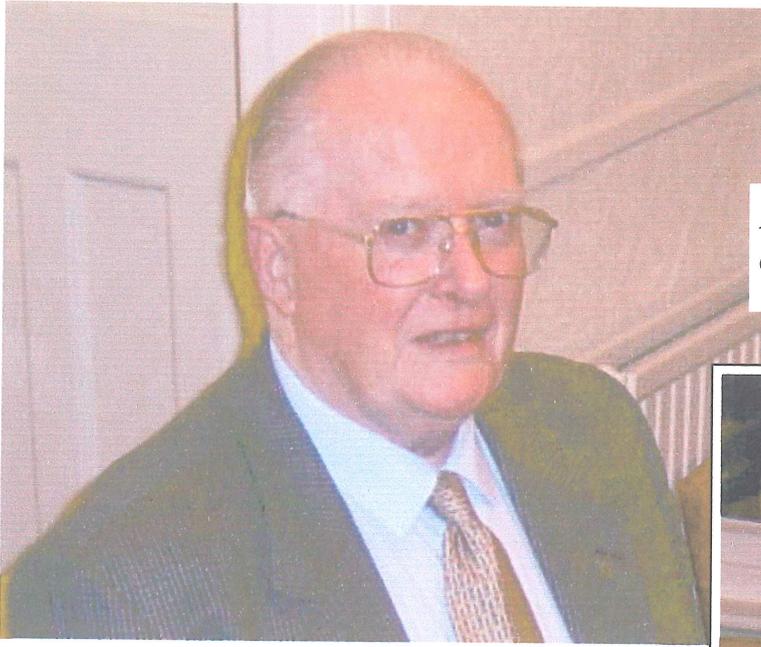
FRANK OLDING'S NEW BOOK

The Society is publishing a new book by Frank Olding - the eagerly-awaited *GOBANNIUM: THE ROMANS IN ABERGAVENNY*.

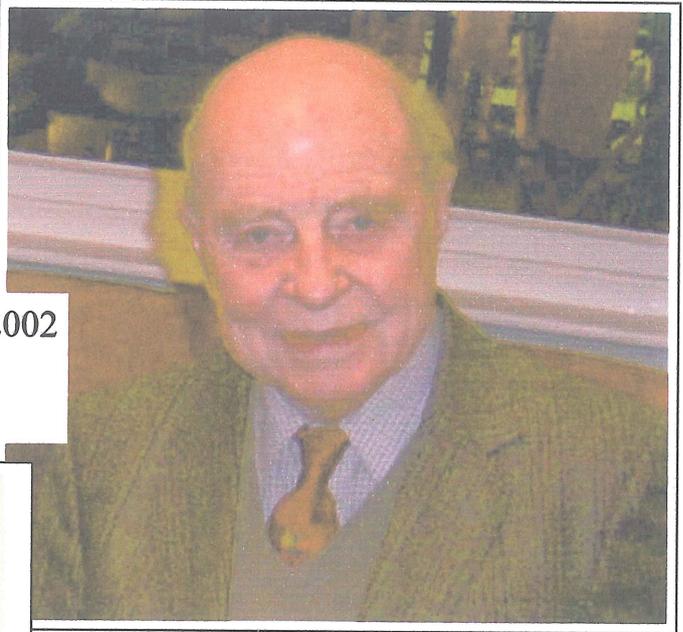
It is about to go into print and a launch will be held at the museum on Wednesday August 19th, between 6pm and 8pm, so watch out for your invitations.

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of four of our founder members.

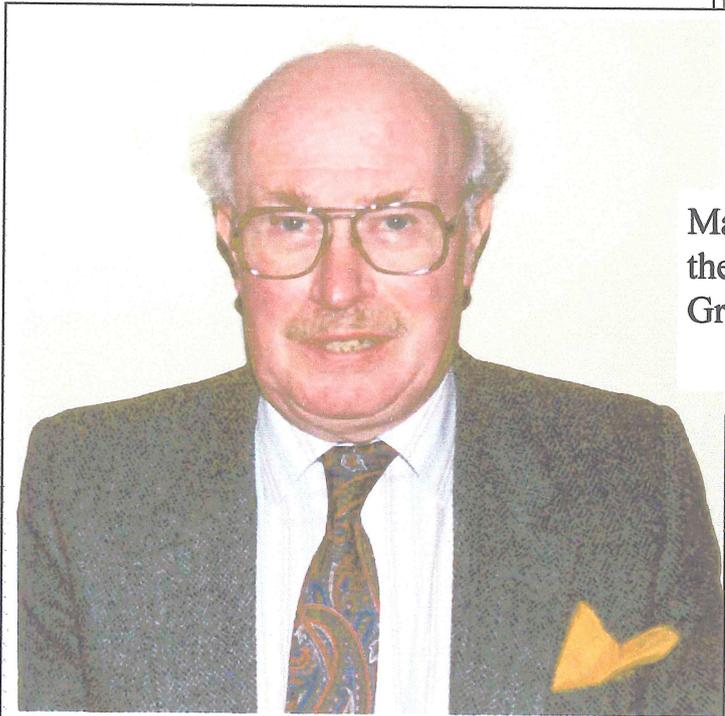
Alan Spink was secretary for 23 years and organised the summer visits for 19 years



Howard Pullan served on the committee till 2002
He was an active member of the St Mary's Research and the Town Survey Groups



Malcolm Wills-Wood was also a member of the Town Survey and St Mary's Research Groups and served on the committee till 1999



Eric Williams was also a keen founder member of the Society



We acknowledge the tremendous service of these gentlemen to our community and we send our condolences to Kath Spink, Mary Pullan, Paddy Wills-Wood and Adrienne Williams who are also founder members of the Society