



Abergavenny Local History Society

Summer Newsletter 2025



The Ken Key Birthday Edition

**A Special Edition Celebrating
the ALHS President's 100th Birthday**

Introduction

The 2025 Summer Newsletter is published to celebrate the one hundredth birthday of ALHS President, Ken Key. Because he published, printed and posted (or delivered) every one of the thirty-five Summer Newsletters which appeared between 1985 and 2019 we thought that a 100th Birthday Newsletter was a suitable contribution to the celebrations. In this special edition you will not only see the variety and extent of the activities undertaken by the Society over the years, but some of the many ways that Ken Key has been involved in all those activities. He was not only involved in the activities but many of them were initiated, undertaken and written about by him and, until her sadly early death, his wife Freda.

So here we have an exclusive selection of articles all written by Ken Key. With the exception of *Reminiscences of Childhood* they were all previously published in Summer Newsletters. We think you will be struck by the variety of the subjects covered which provide just a hint at Ken's wide-ranging interests.

We hope you enjoy the 2025 Summer Newsletter.

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REMINISCENCES OF CHILDHOOD Previously unpublished

My childhood was rather different from that of Rev H.A. James. My children and grandchildren are persuading me to write my life story and this is a very severe editing of a very small part of my life.

I WAS BORN HERE (TAKEN CIRCA 1940)



I was born in 1925 in 3-storey Maude Terrace at 38 Godolphin Road, Shepherds Bush, built in 1857. Minnie Terrace was across the road. I wonder who were Maude, Minnie and Godolphin.

My grandfather was possibly the first owner and my Grandmother used to say that once one could see all the way to Shepherds Bush Green. The Lime Grove Studios and many other houses are now in the way. My sister and I were almost certainly born in the room above the bay window. The place next to this room was called the 'Gas Cupboard' and stored the gas meter and all the old oil lamps and gas mantles which probably lit the house before the advent of gas and electricity.

Second floor back was the winter living quarters. When summer came the whole household decamped to the back semi basement next to the garden. Everything was washed and brought downstairs and my father moved his workshop up to the winter living quarters. The whole operation was reversed when winter came.

My father built the 'wireless', a three-valve Mullard reaction receiver housed in a musical box called a Polyphon, which took large steel discs. In the summer, two loudspeaker leads went down the back of the house to the semi basement and it was necessary to go upstairs to switch on and tune. Two secret loudspeaker wires led up to my bedroom. I don't know if they were ever discovered! It was my job to take the lead-acid accumulator to be charged. I once spilled it over my coat with disastrous results. In 1936 my father purchased a McMichael mains operated superhet receiver. This was really top of the range and cost £10 - a lot of money in those days. The original wireless would pick up a loud buzzing noise that was known as "The television" It was the Logie Baird mechanical version (below). I never got to see a one of those devices working.



The wooden draining board in the scullery covered a copper. Grandma lit a fire under the copper early each Monday morning. She grated a bar of Sunlight soap and pummelled washing with a copper dolly. She rinsed by hand and ran clothes through an enormous cast iron mangle. On a shelf on the front of the mangle was a Vono knife cleaner. It was my job to put black powder on the felts and clean knives.

When I was about four I developed mastoid. During my stay in hospital my father constructed a board with a bulb, a battery and a switch to keep me amused. I was destined from the start to become an electrical engineer!

I started in the 'Babies' Class' at St Stephen's school where Miss Marsh, Miss Webb and Miss Winifred taught us the Catechism. In the hall, third of a pint milk bottles warmed on a stove. Several different teachers took the babies' class and although I can remember reciting multiplication tables I must have missed a lot of schooling because I developed mastoid in my other ear. My recovery was long and I got whooping cough, scarlet fever and German measles. Later the mastoid returned for a third time and I was in hospital for 11 weeks. I don't know why I was in for such a long time. I cannot imagine what my poor mother was going through but when I came out I found I had a new baby sister Janet. My curly hair went straight and was parted on the girls' side because my left ear stuck out and made a poor photograph! I returned to school and I can remember a particular date, 1st Feb. 1934 (or 1234), when I was in Miss Webb's class. From Miss Winifred's class I moved to the Boys' school... stone steps with no railings at the end of the top floor accessed Mr. Wilcox's classroom. The toilets at the opposite side of the playground took the form of a long ceramic pipe with holes and seats at intervals. The flow of excrement from the far end under one's seat was not a pretty sight. The popular playground game involved the bigger boys lining up against the wall head to buttock and the more agile boys seeing how far they could leap along the line of backs.

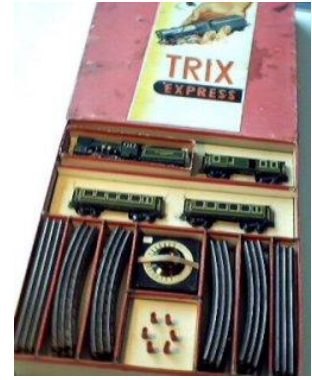
Mr. Bond taught us joined up writing and science. He showed us how to make gunpowder and burn it on a boiler shovel. One could buy sulphur, potassium nitrate and carbon black from Shirliffe's the chemist on the corner of Lime Grove. I made a firework by laying a wire from an old electric iron element on stiff paper with a sprinkle of gunpowder on top rolled up tightly and secured with gummed tape. A current through the wire would set it off with a terrifying bang! Later I laid several explosive toy gun caps along the wire. This would enable me to have several separate explosions at intervals with the same package. A pair of wires led from my bedroom down the front of the house to the garden where I was able to give the local cats a bit of a shock. Mr. Nowell, the headmaster, was a fearsome character rarely seen but I rather wish I had taken up his offer of violin lessons as I might



have learnt something about music. I had pocket money of 3d each week and spent 2d attending the second class swimming bath each Saturday morning. This was at the Public Baths and Wash Houses (left) where women would take their washing. Twice a year I visited the dentist. The Eastman Dental Clinic was a vast room containing about 20 dentist's chairs full of frightened screaming children. There was no injection before a filling, you grinned and bore it.

I was not a model schoolchild. I joined Macnamara's gang. At lunchtime we explored every nook and cranny and knew our way along the tops of the garden walls between houses. On one occasion a vacant house caught fire. For some fortunate reason I was not with the gang that lunchtime but the police came to the school and many questions were asked. Stink

bombs, little glass phials in sawdust in a wicker box, did not improve the atmosphere in Mr. Weton's class. He tried hard to teach us history and geography. Several of us were selected to take the London County Scholarship and for us he did a good job. I sat what was the forerunner of the '11 plus' and went to Latymer Upper School in King Street Hammersmith in September 1936. Latymer was a good school with lots of tradition. I walked to school for half an hour through what is now called Brackenbury Village. At Christmas the physics lab was turned into a vast model railway. I had a Trix Twin set but this was not the Hornby standard so that I had a display on my own.



However, the war changed everything. I was 13 in September 1939 and with gas masks and small rucksacks pupils boarded a train at Ravenscourt Park to Windsor where we were taken by bus to Iver Heath. We sat in someone's garage while landladies came to choose which evacuees they would take. I was not a pretty sight and with a boil on my backside I felt very sorry for myself. The school took over an old girls' school in Slough. I cycled each day the 4 miles to Slough and back.

In January 1940 my father suddenly died of heart failure in the Air Raid Wardens' post. The ensuing months were not happy and I would cycle home 20 miles to mother each Friday night and back to Slough early Monday morning. My landlady, finding that I had no father to top up her rent, dismissed me and I ended up with another family. Mother had lost a loving husband and my sister Janet was evacuated to Hertfordshire and she could not travel like I could. The Germans were about to invade us and mother had already endured one war and was not inclined to endure another. I think, if the family had been more sympathetic, we might have saved her but Grandad found her in May in the scullery with her head in the gas oven. So, I was an orphan. It helped my grieving to work hard and to cycle and walk in the countryside and take up cross-country running. I rowed from Eton Excelsior boathouse opposite Windsor Castle in fours and eights and once in Egham Regatta and often swam the river over to Windsor. Industrial Slough was not the ideal place for evacuees. One morning on the way to school at George Green a German dive-bombed us. The crater in the cabbage field next to the road was enormous and we were covered in soil. We took hot pieces of the bomb to the chemistry class and had a good excuse for being late. A German land mine fell on an anti-aircraft gun on the hill close by. One night a bomb demolished part of the school opposite my billet. I was fast asleep and only heard of the drama next morning.

After my father's death the family decided they could not live together as they had in the past. There were eight of us at one time, Grandparents, parents, two aunts and two children, With four people now missing, they divided the house into flats with separate electricity and gas meters. When my mother died there was then a sudden change of plan and it was decided that Aunt Ruby and I should move somewhere else, Grandad should go to Brighton to live with Aunt Phyl and the house should be sold. The bombs rained down and blew a great hole in the road and almost demolished the church. Grandad could not even give away his house and decided to stay. Aunt Ruby and I rented a flat in what posh people called Kensington but was actually in a sordid part of Hammersmith. Our entrance to 6 Addison Park Mansions was actually in Raleigh Road but Richmond Way sounded a lot nicer. I had a choice of the school army cadets or the air training corps and chose the ATC. I served from February to July 1941 and learned a lot about internal combustion engines but my discharge paper recorded that I had "not fired".

My guardian uncle Jeff, my mother's brother, lived in Colchester. I can remember cycling the 60 miles to see him just after Christmas, when St Paul's cathedral was almost destroyed. Everything in London seemed to be on fire and I bumped through the city over the fire hoses. I had no idea at the time that this was such a momentous occasion. At Harold Wood a policeman stopped all people going towards the coast and I had to bypass the town through the back streets. Further up the A12 the spitfires downed a German plane and I was lucky to escape the police furore when the pilot landed in a nearby field.

I sat my matriculation in 1941 as I was coming up to sixteen and apart from Art I did quite well. They gave me a gas mask to draw. I could just about manage tulips and daffodils but a gas mask!! My father who was an engineering draughtsman with Babcock & Wilcox designed boilers for power stations and I think it was intended that I should get a job at Fulham Power Station. However, since my scholarship continued to pay for my education, my wise guardian Uncle Jeff decided that I should attend the Polytechnic Regent Street and study for an electrical engineering degree. There seemed to be none of the difficulties we have now. No applying to universities or clearing schemes.



The Maths and Physics department had evacuated to Lancaster and taken over part of the Storey Institute, a local college endowed by the makers of Linoleum. I found lodgings with Miss Hunt and Miss Ball, two elderly spinster ladies and their pug dog. Someone had stolen my bicycle so I cycled to college on a rusty sit up and beg machine that my uncle had bought in a jumble sale for half a crown.

It quickly became apparent that I had already covered the first year of the degree course at Latymer so I skipped the 'prelim inter' and only did the one-year intermediate course. This involved working very hard. I was not good at drawing and would lock myself into my room for three hours and do the past engineering drawing exam papers.

There was very little social activity but I joined the gramophone club and I shall be eternally grateful to Denby Richards who introduced me to music. We would make the occasional foray to Morecombe Winter Gardens to hear the Halle. I also joined the Rowing club and would row on the River Lune underneath the Lancaster canal aqueduct. I also joined the photography class and what I learned about photography stood me in very good stead in future employment... I had very little spending money and did not drink although I smoked the occasional pipe. I became great friends with a German Jewish girl, Ellen, who was the Art School secretary. There was no sex, in those days one didn't do that sort of thing, but I was a pretty naïve orphan and what Ellen taught me about women probably laid the foundations of my 40 happy years with Freda.

When I returned to London I did not last long with Aunt Ruby. She was a peculiar person who had no idea how to deal with a teenager even in the 1940's when we were nowhere as difficult as teenagers are nowadays. Uncle found me digs just north of Brook Green. I was excused military service because of my course so I had to join either the Home Guard or the Air Raid Wardens. I took after my father and joined the Warden's post just South of Brook Green. The bombs continued to fall and quite a lot of my homework was done in the shelter of the wardens' post... The normal bomb would crash through a house and explode in the basement or cellar and if one took that sort of shelter one would either be gassed, drowned or crushed. One therefore felt fairly safe in bed upstairs. The heavy gang

would come with a crane and lift off the roof and, with any luck, and I saw a lot of lucky courageous people, one would survive with a severe shaking amid the dust. The bomb would come down with a fearsome rushing noise and one would hardly have time to cross fingers and hope for the best. Incendiary bombs would rain down in large numbers so that one did not know which one to tackle first and when the Germans started putting a small explosive in the casing one had to be quite careful and hide behind a wall or door with one's stirrup pump.

We were warned that Pilotless Aircraft were on the way. These "buzz bombs" or "doodlebugs", unlike dropped bombs, would arrive slowly and there was a creepy silence when the engine cut out and one held one's breath for several seconds. They would crash into the side of a building and could remove the front walls of a street of houses and end up securely wound round a lamp post... Bed was not the safest place and one night I actually took fright and took my blanket to a seat on Brook Green. That night a flying bomb demolished a street near Olympia. I saw things I wish I had never seen and eventually it was my job to call in a refuge centre nearby and tell people that we had found their loved ones either dead or brutally injured.



The Polytechnic in Regent Street (left) was actually a gentlemen's club founded by Quintin Hogg and the college was a bit of an unwanted attachment. The engineering department was on the "Second Floor Back". In the bowels of the building was the laboratory that had steam engines, oil engines, motors, alternators, tension and twist testing machines, calorimeters, overflowing hydraulic experiments and a variety of bridges and other electrical devices. We parked our bicycles on the balcony above an empty swimming bath. The lecturers were good and had contacts with the professional institutions and with numerous engineering firms who donated unwanted items to the laboratory.

Denby Richards and I played gramophone records to a student audience in the Fyvie Hall during lunch time. I used to cycle through Hyde Park with a spare turntable and records in my rucksack and with discs pressed with alternate sides (Autocoupling) or if we had two copies, we could join one record into the next. We got quite clever at this. We would make forays to the proms at the Albert Hall and I can remember my friends standing against the brass rail and flicking cherry stones into the orchestra. There were student dances and I learned the waltz and quickstep in a dancing school further down Regent Street but never managed the slow foxtrot. There is no doubt that I should have worked harder but forays to Henley to see Ellen were a welcome distraction and a relief from the air raids.

At the end of my two years in London came the finals at Imperial Institute in South Kensington. We were at our desks in an upstairs room and the sirens had gone as they did almost every day. The windows had been covered with a sticky mesh to stop flying glass but they had already been blown out and shards hung in the breeze. Shortly after we had started the measurements paper, the engine cut on a flying bomb. We dived under our desks and waited for what might come. There was a very loud explosion quite close nearby which blew out what remained of the windows and covered the whole place with broken glass. We picked ourselves up, swept the glass from our desks and got on with the rest of the paper. We felt we had earned our degrees. To my great relief I actually passed and was a B.Sc.(Eng). at age 19.

WHICH WAY GOBANNIUM?

Newsletter No 8, 1992

In 1964 the Abergavenny Archaeology Group excavated in Flannel Street on the site of what was to be the Post Office. It discovered, among other things, a Roman ditch and gateway.

In 1966 the Group excavated mechanically at the rear of the King's Arms across what was to be the Police Station and the Magistrates Court. It found nothing and thus established that the Roman fort extended in the direction of the Methodist Church. The gate was, therefore, the West Gate of the Roman Fort but unfortunately the plaque on the Post Office names it as the South East Gate. The Local History Society, I must emphasise, did not erect this plaque!

In 1969-72 the Group excavated in Mrs Ewer's garden opposite the undertaker between Castle Street and the bluff. The most exciting discovery was a hole in the ground indicated by a slightly different coloured soil which was the sleeper beam trench of the corner of a Roman building. This led to a professional archaeologist, Patrick Ashmore, in 1972 excavating the adjacent Orchard site. He discovered, among other things, the timber slots of the Roman rampart and of a Roman granary.

I have made some careful measurement to ascertain the alignment of the Roman fort. The Flannel Street gate points 52 degrees west of north and the Ewers Garden building points 60-65 degrees west of north. Patrick Ashmore states that the Roman features on the Orchard Site are at about 10 degrees (which side unspecified) to the present bluff. While he says that the Flannel Street ditch is at right angles to the bluff, I would place the bluff at 40 degrees rather than the 52 degrees west of north. This would make his fort point 30 or more likely 50 degrees west of north.

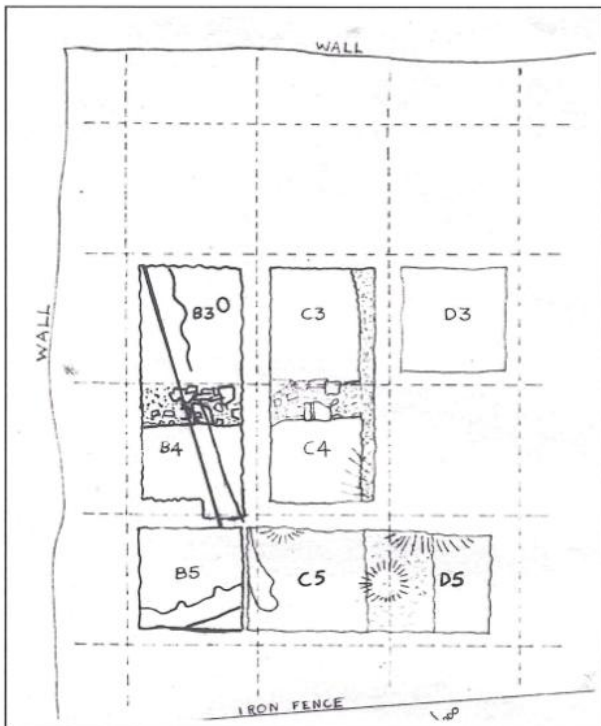
It is quite possible that the Roman fort was not precisely rectangular and the river has probably eroded the bluff so that the figure of 52, 60-65, and 50 degrees west of north for the three sites are compatible. However, Patrick Ashmore's diagram in his interim report would indicate an alignment of only 14 degrees west of north. I await his final report with considerable interest.



EXCAVATIONS IN 'EWERS GARDEN' 1969-72

Newsletter No 21, 2005

The Society and the town are deeply indebted to Frank Olding for publishing 'Abergavenny the Urban Archaeology' which brings together so much of the town's history. He mentions on Page 6 that the Castle Street II site SO299140 which I started in 1969 was not fully published. I make no apology for this. Sadly I was made redundant in 1972 and had suddenly to change myself into a schoolmaster in order to support my wife and children. However, I handed all the finds to the Museum which continues to display the important items. All my maps and detailed drawings are in the Museum and the professionals have the things which they felt were important.

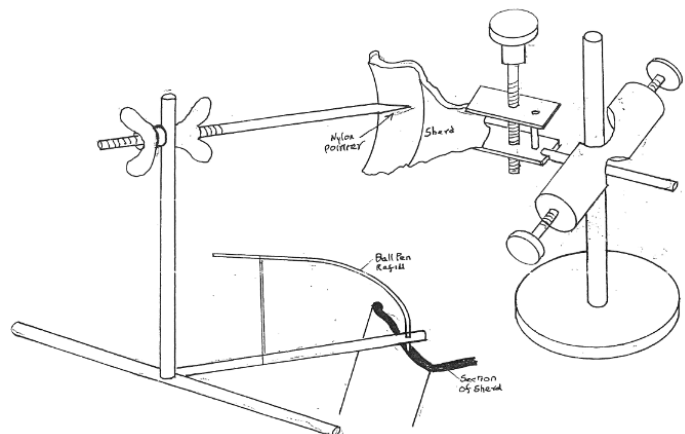


The story of this excavation is part of local history. The Archaeology Group founded by my wife Freda and Gwyn Jones, having dug Flannel Street in 1964 were digging on the Iron Age Hill Fort of Twyn-y-Gaer under Alan Probert. Alan became interested in archaeology while renovating the archaeology room in the Museum and found the time to turn himself into a professional archaeologist. It was a long way up the mountain and there was a clamour for a dig in town. Alan found the site called 'Ewers Garden' and the committee, in the absence of any site directing volunteers, said that "Ken Key would do it!"

I perused Mortimer Wheeler *et al* and in 1969 we opened a 6ft square trench. We expected a lot of rubbish (which we got) and 'Natural' within a very short time. However the foundation of a mediaeval wall appeared

together with a collapsed stone tiled roof which had been insulated with straw and had probably been burned down. The presence of potash glaze suggested a domestic chimney and daub without the wattle suggested a wall. We learned quickly about mediaeval green glaze and slipware and various items imported from Holland and Germany which needed to be drawn. As one who failed matriculation art (they gave me a gas mask to draw) I found some difficulty.

The classic method is to press cored solder wire against the sherd and use this to trace an outline. This produced inconsistent results no better than my 'art' so I devised a jig for drawing pots accurately which I described in Newsletter No 7 1991 (right). The most exciting find was a slight discolouration of the soil revealing the sleeper beam trench of a Roman barrack block or granary.

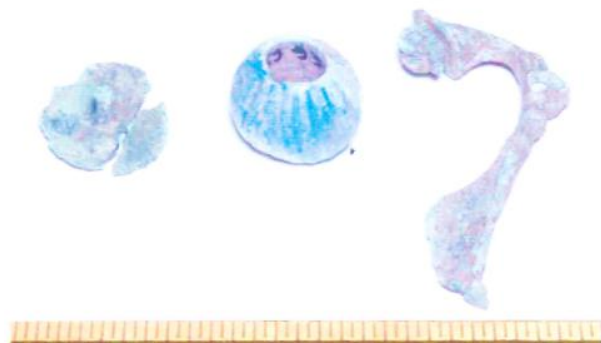
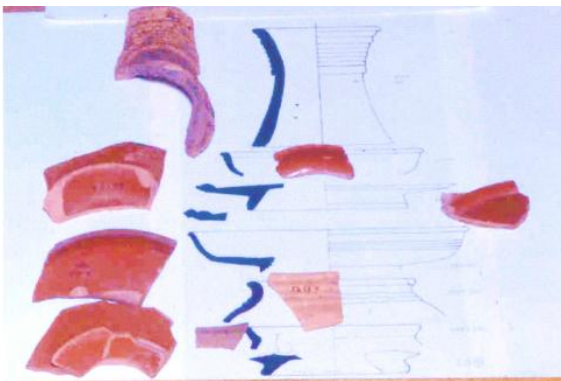


This led to further trenches where we discovered several pieces of Samian ware (below).

In the Newsletter of 1996 I related how I got lost in Millau in France where recently a large new bridge has opened across the River Tarn. Down by the river I chanced on the place where Samian was made. All the moulds and stamps were in the museum and much of one of the kilns had survived for nearly 2000 years.



Among our other finds were oval slingstones, two brooches, a melon bead, some coins, the largest piece of Roman window glass found in Wales and many other things. It was sad to leave the Ewers Garden site so suddenly as not to be able to fill back but no one wanted to take on the leadership.



Fortunately, probably as a result of the excavation, money became available for Patrick Ashmore, a professional archaeologist, to excavate the adjacent 'Orchard Site'. I gave him all my drawings but unfortunately I could not spare the time to help him dig.

The map of my site included adjacent buildings and the National Grid lines. Its position was thus doubly certain. I commented on Patrick Ashmore's interim report in the Newsletter of 1992 where I pointed out that either the Roman town was not rectangular or Patrick's drawing was wrong. It was left to Blockley to complete the Orchard Site final report some years later. Frank Olding, who was investigating which part of the ramparts had been excavated prior to building work, compared my drawing with that of Blockley who placed his site some 45 metres from where it actually was. Bully for amateurs!

THE EWERS GARDEN EXCAVATION IN CASTLE STREET

Newsletter No 25, 2009

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 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 the 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.



Some of the many items unearthed in the Castle Street and other Abergavenny digs are currently (2025) on display in Abergavenny Museum Keep Gallery

CHAPEL ROAD

Newsletter No 14, 1998

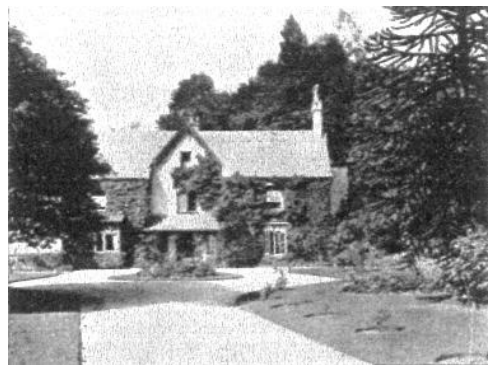
My friends and relations in England who have never visited my house in Chapel Road imagine that I live in a deeply religious sabbath-keeping community centred on an ecclesiastical building typical of Welsh nonconformity. Chapel Road has always puzzled me and I vowed that when I retired I would research the name. However, in desperation for Newsletter copy I have turned my thoughts very briefly and temporarily to the problem.

The nearest place of worship is of course Christchurch in North Street which, when I came here in 1956, was made of corrugated iron and has always been known in my family as the 'Tin Tabernacle'. There is a lot of history to this place which would warrant an article in this journal but it seems unlikely that it is in any way connected to Chapel Road.

Avenue Road changes into Chapel Lane which joins Chapel Road near The Chain. Here is another piece of history. There is a sort of by-pass from the Old Hereford Road running above the council estate and into Chain Road which crosses Chapel Road and along Pentre Road to Brecon Road. This must have been quite an important thoroughfare since a chain was drawn across it for the purpose of collecting tolls.

On the side of Chapel Lane remote from Chapel Road there is a long tithe barn now converted into separate residences. There is more history here since the barn belonged to the monks of the priory. The Cybi brook nearby is made into several ponds and it maybe was that this was where the monks bred fish.

If you venture through the arch you will discover behind the tithe barn a house known as The Chapel (right). There is little doubt that this is a dwelling house and according to Bradney's History of Monmouthshire it was a dwelling house as far back as the early 1400's. Bradney suspects that there may have been a chapel to St David on the site or nearby or even in part of the barn. It may be that before the Chapel Road houses were built there could have been some access from Chapel Road across the fields. I think this may be stretching imagination.



There is one more remote possibility. My daughters used to keep two horses in a field next to Newhouse on the approach to St Mary's Vale. They walked up Chapel Road past Llwyndu Lodge and picked up a short cut on the left up through the fields to the farm. I can remember a large cider press in the field. I wonder if it is still there? Just below our field at Newhouse there was the shell of a building with no roof known as St David's which some years ago was converted into a house of the same name. I wonder if this was the chapel which gave my road its name?

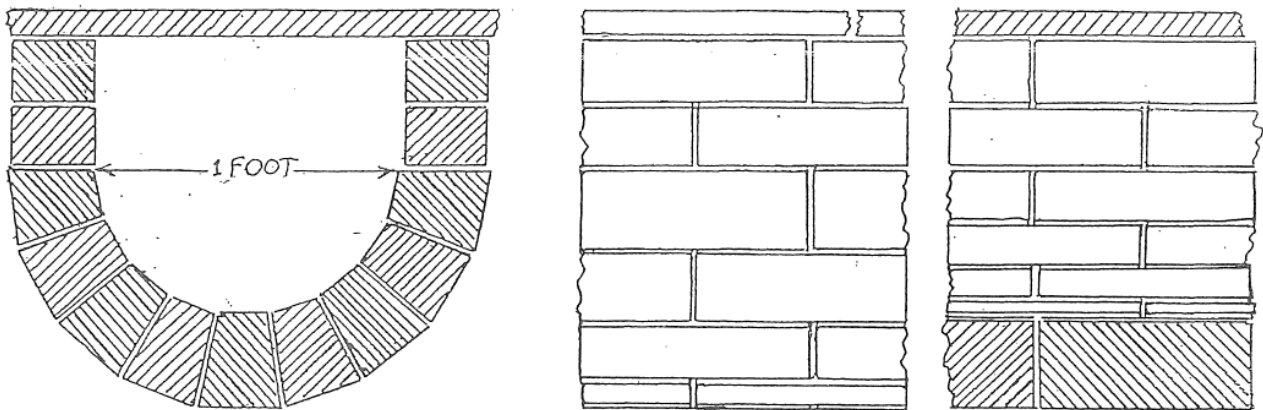
I have been retired now for more than ten years. I have never been busier but it really is time to visit the Records Office to find out which Councillor or Improvement Commissioner decided that my road should be called Chapel Road.

THE CHAPEL ROAD CULVERT

Newsletter No 6, 1990

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 handmade 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.



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 $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches at the wide end. The thickness is $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The bricks were made in a trough shaped mould and the round end trowelled off. They were cut to between 9 and $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length.

These dimensions give the culvert an internal radius of 6 inches and an external radius of $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches. On this semicircular base rest two rectangular bricks $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and $2\frac{3}{4}$ 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.

THE CHAPEL ROAD CULVERT

Newsletter No 12, 1996

This handmade brick culvert described in detail in the 1990 Newsletter is said to have fed the fountains in Nevill Hall. The excavations for water mains have enabled me to trace it from Western Road down as far as 9 Chapel Road near the now demolished railway bridge. Unfortunately, the excavations remained open for a very short time and I missed the place where it might have crossed the Brecon Road. The workmen reported a similar culvert at the junction of Mount Street and Orchard Street but I missed it. There has been a lot of disturbance over the years so it is necessary to identify the particular kind of brick to establish the culvert's presence.

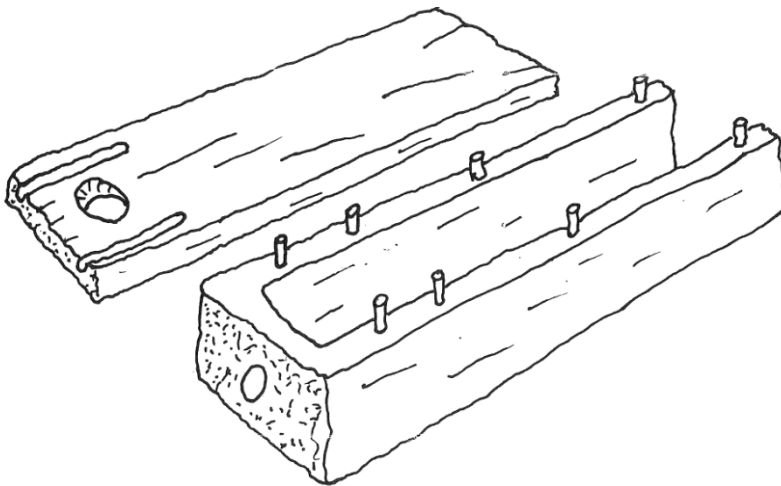
THE CHAPEL ROAD CULVERT

Newsletter No 18, 2002

The Council has fitted manholes on this culvert along its length. Since the culvert is blocked in many places by services to new houses it seems odd that this should have been done. However, it does show that the Council knows about the culvert and has some interest in it.

ALFRED JACKSON'S MYSTERY TROUGH

Newsletter No 9, 1993



Ann Waller has sent me an excerpt from *The Countryman* of Summer 1962 showing an open ended 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 2½in 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 searched for any replies. Has anyone any ideas about what it was?

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYING

Newsletter No 15, 1999

The Abergavenny Local History Society is providing £500 for Archaeophysica to survey the ground between the castle curtain wall and the lodge and the ground behind 29 Castle Street. This area is shown on the right. It is an interesting area since the Roman and Mediaeval walls may traverse it and many other things may be revealed. The survey will extend our knowledge of the 'Orchard Site' excavated by Patrick Ashmore in 1972 and my own excavation of the 'Ewers Garden' site for the Abergavenny Archaeological Group in the late 1960s.



It is important to know something about what lies under the ground before any expensive and destructive excavation is attempted and there are several ways in which this might be done. Any disturbance of the soil will alter its granular properties and therefore its water retention. Vegetation will reveal its success in getting water by 'Crop Marks' visible from the air at certain periods in its growth.

Television viewers will have seen the 'Time Team' carry out 'Resistivity Surveys'. Disturbance of the soil changes its ability to pass electrical current. However, there are difficulties. Two electrodes in the soil have a variable contact resistance of their own and also constitute a battery which, with stray currents from other electrical systems can confuse the measurements. The use of four electrodes and alternating current provides some measure of compensation. The method is not good in wet conditions and in fact the ideal conditions occur when a farmer has growing crops and is unlikely to want them trampled on. Computers have reduced the formidable task of processing thousands of results and using various forms of image processing can print out a map showing anomalies on the ground.

The earth's magnetic field will magnetise the slightly magnetic substances in the soil. The disturbed soil in a pit will then consist of small magnets pointing in random directions which will weaken the magnetic field in that area. Conversely the earth's field will magnetise more strongly the components of a kiln or fire which has slowly cooled down which will strengthen the magnetic field in that area. Measuring such small changes is very difficult but one method relies on the fact that water when suitably treated is slightly magnetic. A coil of wire wrapped round a bottle of water and carrying an electrical current will magnetise the water in one direction. When this current suddenly stops, the dipoles or little magnets of water will swing round like compass needles to align themselves with the local magnetic field. In fact they overshoot and oscillate back and forth with a frequency depending on the strength of the local field. The clever trick is to put this bottle very near the ground and to place a similar bottle at the end of a pole high up where the soil anomalies do not affect the earth's field. The difference between the signals from the two bottles will cause a 'beat' which suitable electronics can measure and record.

I still have the two polythene bottles which I wound with wire in 1972. We were going to look for pits on Alan Probert's excavations on Twyn-y-Gaer. Sadly I was made redundant and never got round to building the electronics. I shudder to think how, with the primitive state of electronic computing at the time, we would have got round to processing the results!

LLANTILIO CROSSENNY

Newsletter No 16, 2000

In 550 AD the Saxons were plundering the area. Iddon, a local ruler, asked St Teilo, who was in Llanarth, to pray for help. St Teilo stood with a cross on the pre-Christian mound where the church now stands and put the Saxons to flight. Iddon gave the land to St Teilo in return for answering his prayers. Llantilio Crossenny is a corruption of the name 'Church of St Teilo at Iddon Cross'. St Teilo became Bishop of Llandaff and is buried there.

The first church was probably a long low timber building usual in Wales. The oldest thing in the present church is the 12th century Norman font discovered in the churchyard early this century. The tower arches and the two lancet windows in the west wall are 13th century (early English) when the church was rebuilt in stone in the form of a cross.

St Teilo's is a relatively large church because the mediaeval bishops travelled with a large retinue between their manors and used it as a cathedral. In the 14th century the roof was raised and the north transept was enlarged to form a Lady Chapel. The head on the right of the altar is thought to represent Edward II (1307-27) having a hairstyle typical of that time. There have been several changes to the chancel wall which has a blocked doorway and a squint for the priest to see the high altar where gifts were laid and where there may have been relics of St Teilo. In the 17th Century the Lady Chapel came to be called the Cil-Llwch chapel after a local manor house. The Green Man is a Celtic pagan and was permitted in churches as a symbol of death and resurrection. Its date is unknown.



In 1708-9 the great timbers in the tower, each made from one tree 60ft high, supported a ringing chamber with six bells – increased to eight in 1978. The door high up on the wall once led to a rood screen which held a cross and from which the gospel was read. This vanished in the Reformation and the pulpit vanished only a few years ago. This unique church has a great many other things to interest the historian who may consult Bradney and the literature of the church.



The Abergavenny – Monmouth Road once came to the church and turned left along the wall towards Hen Cwrt where it joined the present route at the original site of the Hostry Inn. A new road past the vicarage was made in 1459 but the present by-pass is relatively modern. There was a brewery on the old post office site. Llantilio Court or Great House was probably built from the remains of Hen Cwrt around 1459. In 1775 it was described as a fine Georgian house with terraced gardens and occupied the terrace to the north of the church. It was sold to a Mr Jackson in 1873 and demolished in 1930.

The Llantilio Crossenny Festival

Thirty-eight years ago Charles Farncombe the conductor, Mansel Thomas from the BBC and Dorothy Adams Jeremiah the County Music Organiser, living in the nearby village of Treadam, started a festival in St Teilo's church. It was a modest affair. Mansel played the organ and his wife Megan played the cello. Dorothy had a choir consisting mainly of reverend gentlemen and Jean Adams, Head of Music at Pontypool School for Girls had a choir consisting mainly of teachers. The festival has become very professional as the years have passed and people from Norway, Sweden, Germany and even the Bahamas come specially to this centre of excellence. Visitors from 'The Smoke' had no idea that things like this could go on in 'The Styx' and have returned impressed and brought their friends the next year. This year we engaged the Carnival Band, put on Handel's Julius Caesar, had a concert by Raglan schoolchildren and an orchestral concert ending up with Festival Evensong.

Our private sponsors are very generous and we get help from the Arts Council of Wales. We have about a hundred 'friends' who for a small fee learn about the festival before the others and also enjoy a special Friends' Evening which takes place in one of the larger country houses. The small band of dedicated volunteers which runs the Festival would welcome some young strong helpers, particularly from the village, since it is, after all, the *Llantilio* Festival. What about joining us?



CASTLE FLOODLIGHTS

Newsletter No 17, 2001

It must have been some 15 years ago that my wife Freda canvassed the businesses in town and raised enough money to install floodlighting of the Castle. The County engineers and Howard Pullen were closely involved and obtained discounts on both labour and materials.

Members of the Society sponsored weeks of floodlighting, as they do now, for occasions like birthdays. Someone who shall be nameless suggested it was one old ruin celebrating another old ruin!

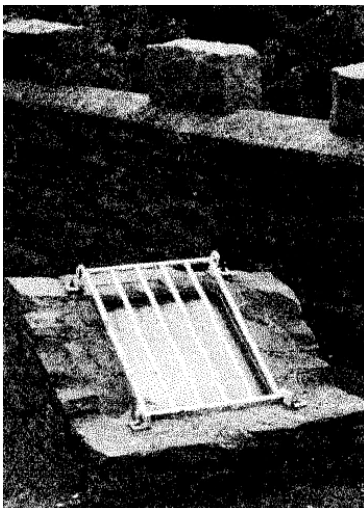


It was not long before the lanterns attracted the attention of local vandals. The Society arranged for stone walls to be constructed around each lantern with a massive iron grill on top which fortunately did not obscure much of the light.

The real vandals now are the moles which fill the cavities with soil and the ants which make maintenance an extremely itchy business.

It is amazing how long the system has survived and one lantern which recently failed obviously contained its original lamp. There have been three failures recently and unfortunately these have been the control systems and starters within the lanterns. It seems that when a lamp fails it must be replaced very quickly or the starter fails in trying to start it. I think I shall have to institute a Floodlight Watch.

One lantern has been replaced at a cost of £105 +VAT and, as I write some new pieces have just arrived costing only £40. I feel I owe it to Freda's memory to get it all working as soon as possible and keep it maintained so in a few days I shall get out my screwdriver and soldering iron.



Two of the lanterns are controlled from the Lodge which the County has now sold, so it is not easy to get in to read the meter or adjust the times when the lights come on and off. The Society is trying to get permission from all the bureaucracies like CADW and the County to reroute the cable so that everything is controlled from the Castle but this will take time and money. Howard Pullen is coordinating this.

Mary Pullen is arranging sponsorships and some very pretty official looking certificates. If you need to celebrate someone's birthday or other occasion your £5 will pay for the electricity and the expenses we are incurring for maintenance.

MORGANS

Newsletter No 34, 2018



Margot and Bryn Seabourne on holiday in West Wales encountered a meeting of the Morgan Three Wheeler Club involving some 20 of these iconic vehicles. This was of especial interest to me since my first car was a 1933 Morgan purchased in 1950 for £85.

This encounter prompted Bryn to wonder what the collective noun for such a gathering would be and his suggestions are:- *A swarm, a frolic, a festivity, a congregation, an admiration, a sparkle, a pride, an envy, a rumble, a rustle, a rash, a roar, an elixir, a growl, a shoal, a plague, a parley, a chatter, a dash, a sprint, a parade, a procession, a convocation, a temptation, and a Noddy (as in the kids' cartoon T.V. character.)*

It also prompted Bryn to break into verse as follows: -

*A Morgan for me, a Morgan for me!
If it's not a Morgan, it's no use to me.
Yes, your Daimler is neat,
And your Rolls-Royce a treat –
But my sporty wee Morgan
Just cannot be beat.*

Tune. "A Gordon for Me."

My Morgan travelled to the continent on several occasions by air (Silver City) and by Ferry, between 1950 and 1955, doing 2500 mile round trips. The pictures show it on the top of the alpine passes with my wife Freda (who, with Gwyn Jones founded our society). The third picture shows me on a comic mock up in an apprentices' revue in about 1953.



I have news that my Morgan is now in America. The proud owner imagines that he has an original car.

The truth is that as an apprentice I had many workshop facilities and access to a wonderful scrap heap. This provided transformer cooling tubes for the exhaust, insulating board for a new dashboard with new switches and controls and a small rotary converter providing a 250V supply for shaving. The oversized headlights came from an old Rolls Royce. A hood and sidescreens protected me from the weather.

Two years ago I had the privilege of visiting the original Morgan factory in Malvern Worcs. where Morgan three-wheelers are still made.

I have had a Renault Megane for the last 18 years. It is getting a bit long in the tooth (like me) and I think the authorities would like to see it, together with old boys like me (age 93!), off the road. I have just bought myself a scooter known as the 'Noddy Car' It is a brilliant piece of kit and I will run it in parallel with the Renault. I think these may be my last vehicles.

THE RESTORATION OF THE ST MARY'S MONUMENTS

Newsletter No , 1996

We are grateful for the skill of Kate Woodgate-Jones for the new restoration of the Queen Anne arms of 1709 and the hatchment of Pritchard of Grosmont.

Mike Eastman and his team have restored the effigy of John de Hastings (1325, formerly known with affection as 'George') which now stands on its original tomb case which had been used as the Hastings Chapel altar front. This product of the 'Westminster' school is probably the finest piece of mediaeval wooden sculpture in Europe. The Jesse Tree, probably part of the altar reredos, now reveals traces of its original colour and stands on a new oak plinth. These are on display in the church but behind the polythene, Judge Powell (1638) and his wife Margaret Herbert, although with the alabaster partly washed away by the leaking roof, are clean and on a new plain case. Laurence (1348) the last of the Hastings on the matching limestone case is finished. William ap Thomas (1445) is in position and his wife Gwladys is about to join him. Work progresses on the Baker tomb. 'Sir' Richard Herbert of 'Ewyas' delighted everyone by the beadsman at his foot which will disappear when the effigy returns to its niche. Modern technology in the form of a laser has been used with great success to burn off pollution from the alabaster.



There is hope that the Herbert Chapel will be open by the end of the year. Work will then start on the Lewis tomb.

(Ken Key was assisted by Gwyn Jones in the writing of this article)

THE LAST VISIT OF 2016 WITH FRANK OLDING

Newsletter No 33, 2017

We took the Heads of the Valleys route and it was most interesting to see the new road developing from the extra height of a bus seat. We stopped for coffee at Llancaiach Fawr. We visited this house many years ago but is now obscured by a pleasant new development with restaurant and coffee shop and, of course, the inevitable gift shop!



From there at Parc Penallta we visited Sultan, a remarkable pit pony carved in the landscape from colliery waste and designed by Mick Petts. We climbed to a metal grid representing its ear and walked the length of its body and down the tail to the ground level.

At Gelligaer we saw a tablet commemorating David Lewis School and glanced into a green space, which was once a Roman fort very similar to the one at Abergavenny. There was a most interesting glass window depicting what the fort looked like.



From there we visited the old Penallta coal mine. The winding house was too dangerous for us to enter but Frank provided a photograph that showed a very elegant interior. The workshops had been converted into dwelling blocks. The site was derelict and not very pretty but it could form an important relic of the past if it were suitably cleaned up.



We then took a narrow lane on to Gelligaer Common, a large and very muddy open space, and walked from the bus to a small ring that enclosed our party but we did not notice it until Frank pointed out where we were standing.

Further up the hill we encountered a strange standing stone leaning at an angle. This commemorated an Irish warrior of the dark ages C6th-7th and bore his name in Ogham script NEFROIHI meaning 'Champion of the heather'.

We returned to the bus and back to Gelligaer where at the Cross Inn on the edge of the common we had an excellent buffet lunch. We wrapped up what was left and took it home for tea!



Thanks are due to Frank who with his great humour always provides us with interesting information.

LOOKING BACK

Newsletter No 35, 2019

It seems incredible that our Society is 42 years old. Freda and I came from Knutsford to Croesyceiliog in January 1956 and moved to a house of our own design (Mark 2) in Abergavenny in 1957. The Manchester Guardian came the day after publication if you were lucky. There were no supermarkets then but the Stanhope Street corner shop fulfilled most of our needs. It would even deliver if there was no room in the pram with the girls. However, there were many expeditions across the border to England to pick up things not available here.

It was a new experience to live in "Wales and Monmouthshire" and although the Abergavenny Chronicle published a little Welsh, we felt that Wales didn't really start till one got to Brynmawr. We tried hard to pronounce the Welsh place names. An old OS map showed a place called Cae Pyscodlyn but on the new OS map it was 'Cape of Scotland' so we tended to give up! In 1959-60 a large swathe of the town in Tudor Street was demolished. Unfortunately many things were lost for ever but in July 1959 Alfred and Earnest Jackson, with encouragement from the Round Table, started the Museum Society, expertly curated by Duggan Thacker. They invited my wife Freda to join their committee, a great honour for someone from across Offa's Dyke. My young daughters Rosemary and Margaret, keen pony clubbers, regularly cleaned and preserved the display of saddlery and tack.

The formation of the museum was very timely and much of our history was saved. However, in time it was apparent the museum would benefit from a more formalised structure so the Council took over the museum in 1971 and has made it one of Abergavenny's star attractions. Another of Freda's activities was to teach at Christchurch Sunday school and to start a Wolf Cub pack where she was Akela. Sadly, the pack had to transfer to Lewis's Lane affecting the younger church members.

Then Gwyn Jones and Freda started the Archaeology Group and between 1962 and 1969 with help from Jeremy Knight, Father Fabian Radcliffe, George Boon and others excavated in Castle Street where the Post Office now stands. Alan Probert was engaged to equip an upstairs room in the castle for the Archaeology Group. He became fascinated by what we were doing and in 1966 started an excavation on Twyn-y-Gaer. He turned himself into a professional archaeologist and became a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1977. People tired of trailing up Twyn-y-Gaer each weekend and so Alan found a site in town. A site director was needed and I read up what I could and in 1968 opened up trenches in Ewers Garden in Castle Street. A vast amount of broken pottery and the corner of a Roman barrack block were discovered.

The year 1972 caused a great upheaval in life for both Freda and myself. ICI made me redundant and I turned myself into a physics master at Croesyceiliog school. I had to abandon the dig which was filled in to make a car park. I was most disappointed not to have time to take part in the professional dig which took place next to Ewers Garden. We had two young children to support on a greatly reduced income so Freda returned to her profession as a librarian and was rapidly promoted in the November to Regional Librarian for Rural Monmouthshire. In the same year Freda became a magistrate and was also President of the Townswomen's Guild.

So! 1972 was hardly the moment to start something new but Freda and Gwyn Jones started our Abergavenny Local History Society. The enthusiastic committee included Freda as Treasurer, Alan Spink as Secretary. We met originally in the Girls school in Harold Road and in time we moved to the Scout Hut in the Fairfield. The Society grew rapidly and we moved to the Angel Ballroom. I was able to offer practical assistance by providing six small loudspeakers to help with the acoustics. Regular memorable speakers were Arthur Peplow and Frank Olding.

Our next venue was, I believe, in 1994 although I cannot be sure. Having arranged our programme, we were astonished to find that a dance class had taken over our Thursdays. We had not heard of the change from the Angel but were able to move to the Town Hall. This proved very comfortable until this last season when proposed renovations moved us to King Henry's School. We are now back in the Borough Theatre and will meet on Wednesdays as that seems more popular with members.

In 1985 Freda organised enough money to install floodlights for the Castle. I cared for them for some years, but by law had to relinquish this task as I am only a Chartered Electrical Engineer and not an 'electrician'! Paddy Beynon has for many years tended the Local History Victorian Garden in the Castle grounds.

Freda started the annual newsletter in 1985 and I typed it out. In 1987 I acquired an early computer with a word processor and a dot matrix printer. For issue No 13 in 1997 I acquired a Windows computer. It was not until 1998 that I was able to publish photographs.

St Mary's Priory church contains a great deal of our history and Freda asked me to organise a rota for members to help visitors and also to watch for any undesirables. Michael Pryce-Williams has now taken over this task and welcomes volunteers. Several of us went regularly to Newport Library to scan the 'Close Rolls', originally to research St Mary's Priory. This resulted in our finding out a great deal about our town's history. Sue Smith and our Research Group continue this work. The history of the Hereford Road cemetery and photographic records of the town are just a few of its projects. We have visited many historic sites both locally and throughout the country. Alan and Kath Spink would always visit the site beforehand so that the visit went smoothly

For some years the Society has organised Town Tours where we walk a crowd round our town and point out its historical features, many of which are identified by 23 or more blue plaques and QR Points. The success of our Society is due to the tireless work of the many members of the committee. I look back on them as good friends and there have been so many of them that inevitably many have been missed out and I ask for their forgiveness.

In April 1989 tragedy struck when Freda suddenly died of a brain tumour. My feeling was confirmed that this was not just a History Society but also a large group of real friends, closer and even more helpful and sympathetic than my local church where I had been a lay reader.

I was honoured in 2009 to receive the Town Award for my services. It is also a great honour to be made President of our Society. My wife Freda did an enormous amount for our Society and for our town. and I am sure, had she survived, she would be the one occupying these roles.

The newsletter is now in its 35th edition. I am grateful to all those who have proofread my copy and pointed out errors and omissions. I am particularly grateful to Sue Smith who for some years has e-mailed coloured copies to members and printed black and white copies for those not on line. I have tried to make the newsletter interesting and although for one or two editions I have had to write a lot of it myself, I am grateful to so many members for their contributions.



I wonder if, as I reach my 94th birthday, it might be time for me to let someone else have a go at it!

CRAWSHAY BAILEY'S ENGINE Newsletter No 30, 2014

John Owen aged 18 in 1854 composed words and music to 'Y Mochin Du', 'The Black Pig', a sad tale of the demise of a well-loved pet. It was published with bawdy additions without his permission and sung at fairs and in bars throughout Wales. He was so deeply ashamed that he prayed God to forgive him. One of the Crawshay Baileys, on his tomb, also asked God to forgive him. The Crawshay Baileys were not popular with their employees and the following verses were sung in pubs and clubs to John Owen's tune throughout South Wales. This anthology is far from complete.

Crawshaw Bailey had an engine
It did puff and it did blow
And it carried lots of people
All the way to Nant-y-Glo

Crawsher Bailey had an engin'
It was always needin' mendin'
And dependin' on its power
It could do four miles an hour.

On the night run up from Gower
She did twenty miles an hour
As she whistled through the station
Man, she frightened half the nation.

Cosher bought her second hand
And he painted her so grand
When the driver went to oil her
Man, she nearly burst her boiler.

Cosher Bailey's sister Lena
She was living up in Blaina
She could knit and darn our stockings
But her cooking it was shocking

Cosher Bailey's brother Rupert
Played stand off half for Newport
When they played against Llanelly
Someone kicked him in the belly.

Cosher Bailey had a daughter
Who did things she didn't oughter
She was quite beyond the pale
But over that we'll draw a veil

Cosher Bailey went to Exford
For to pass matriculation
But he saw a pretty barmaid
And he never left the station.

Oh the sight it was heart rending
Cosher drove his little engine
And he got stuck in the tunnel
And went up the blooming funnel.

Cosher Bailey's little engine
Couldn't even sound its hooter
So to make the steam go higher
He made water on the fire.

Yes, Cosher Bailey he did die
And they put him in a coffin
But, alas, they heard a knockin'
Cosher Bailey, only jokin'

Well, the devil wouldn't have him
But he gave him sticks and matches
For to set up on his own
On the top of Barford Hatches.

Cosher Bailey's auntie Lily
Who lived down Piccadilly
She ran an institution
Teaching young girls -- elocution.

Cosher Bailey's cousin Morgan
Played a very large organ
It was long and it was narrow
And he wheeled it in a barrow.

Cosher Bailey's cousin Jake
He thought he was a snake
While crawling through the grass
One bit him on his--elbow.

Cosher Bailey's brother Daniel
He had a cocker spaniel
If you tickled in his middle
He would lift his leg and --scratch it.

Cosher Bailey's cousin Roger
Played a mean game of soccer
When he tried his hand at rugger
He looked a silly --billy.

Cosher Bailey's cousin Paul
Had but one eyeball
By design or by desire
He sang soprano in the choir.

There was a prince called Charlie
And he visited the valley
He got drunk in Tonypany
On a glass of cherry brandy

Mrs Jones, she had a mangle
She did wind it with an 'andle
When she turned it at full power
She did twenty sheets an hour

Cosher's older brother Diar
Wished to join the village choir
But the vicar said 'No fear'
'We don't want no Diar 'ere!

Crosher Bailey had a sister
Laughed like blazes when you kissed'er
Couldn't knit nor darn a stocking
But what she could do was shocking

Cosher had a sister Ella
Who did have a fine umbrella
And she thought so much about it
That she never was without it.

Then one day she had a date
With her best friend's cousin's mate
'T would have been a tale of folly
If she hadn't had her broolly.

Cosher Bailey's brother Matthew
Had a job at cleaning statues
But when he was cleaning Venus
He slipped and broke his--elbow

Cosher Bailey's Uncle Reg
He did go behind an 'edge
Uncle Reg is feeling better
But the 'edge is somewhat wetter.

Cosher Bailey's sister Hanna
Well, she played the grand pianna
She went hammer, hammer, hammer
Till the neighbours said 'Goddamn 'er'

In the choir on Sunday night
We sing better when we're tight
And our version of Cym Rhondda
Makes the angels jive up yonder.

Cosher Bailey's auntie Mary
Did something in the dairy
(It must be more than kissing
Because these lines are missing.)

Cosher 'ad an auntie Meia
She was sitting by the fire
She was making contraceptives
From an India rubber tyre

Johnny Jones he wants a missus
To keep him warm at night with
kisses.
Take him round to Bailey's sister
She's so hot she'll raise a blister

Crawsher Bailey's sister Margaret
Was working in Carmarthen
When the gaffer came and slapped her
For chewing dirty backer

Crawshaw Bailey's sister Moriah
She was sitting by the fire
When the fire gave a flicker
Burnt a hole right through her --
Jumper

Crawshaw Bailey's sister Grace
She plays the double Bass
She also plats the fiddle
Both up and down her middle

CHORUS

**Was you ever see
Was you ever see
Was you ever see
Such a funny thing before.**

There is much more but most of it is quite unprintable!

EPILOGUE

Newsletter No 34, 2018

Our world has always been in a bit of a mess because of incompetent or tyrannical leaders.

Our Local History Society, on the other hand, has been extremely lucky. For several decades, committees of willing hands have produced excellent lectures, visits and publications and endowed many students and good causes.

However, rather than being a democracy we have been more of a press gang and often we are elected en bloc without many changes. Many of our committee members are feeling, righteously, that they have done their bit and would like to retire with honour; we recently had a crisis when we could not find a treasurer and were nearly forced by law to wind up.

The newsletter this year has no visit reports because although I swim 20 lengths of the pool each morning, I find walking difficult and have not been on this year's visits.

It seems incredible that with some 300 members, many of whom are qualified professionals, we find difficulty in getting people to run such a successful Society.

I enjoy the work that I do. Fortunately I can still do it and it is easy for me to continue out of loyalty to our late founders, my wife Freda and Gwyn Jones but I am well past my sell-by date and sooner or later you will be looking for a replacement.

THINK ABOUT IT!