



CYMDEITHAS HANESYDDOL LLANELLI

LLANELLI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: Sir David Mansel Lewis, KCVO, JP, FRCA, KStJ

Founder member: Caroline De Abreu

Established 1999

**Newsletter
December 2008
Volume 6, Issue 3**

Xmas Party 2008

The Xmas party held on the first Monday of December was a resounding success. Fifty members and guests gathered in the function room of the Halfway Hotel and enjoyed good food and good company. There was an excellent array of raffle prizes and the after-dinner entertainment was a popular event. Unfortunately, Benita and William Rees were not able to join us but they left with us the quiz they have devised, "So you think you know Llanelli?" Groups poured over the pictures of odd little corners of Llanelli buildings to see if they could recognise the location. Some were easily recognised while others (although seen daily in the town) proved too challenging for even those who had spent their entire lives in the town. However, it caused quite a noisy stir, with much debate and wild guessing until we were all brought to order by an authoritative chairman, whose past profession could not be doubted!! It was an enjoyable evening that we hope to repeat in 2009.

Coed Cefn Padrig

In the March newsletter this year it was reported that the LHS had been successful in naming the new area of woodland that has a sculpture trail running through it at the Llanelli Sandy Water Park. Coed Cefn Padrig is now complete and is a delightful woodland walk that we would encourage you to explore, if you haven't yet done so. Since then members of the committee have been working with the project officer, Simeon Jones, (Millennium Coastal Park countryside ranger) providing him with some historical information regarding the site of Coed Cefn Padrig. Simeon, using this together with his own research has produced an information board for the area, recording its rich history. The Millennium Coastal Park has now had another grant approved



The completed information board.

and are starting a similar project on woodland further along the coast, between the Water Park and Burry Port. The committee has again been asked to become involved and they would like to extend this invitation to other members of the LHS. This project will be discussed at the next committee meeting and so if there is anyone who has an interest in the history of this area, and feels that they would like to make a contribution, or just join the discussion, then please approach a member of the committee for the date and time of the next meeting.





Additions to the LHS Library

Byron Davies has presented to the LHS library a copy of his research into the Ledger of Davies and Rees, Drapers, of Llanelli. The document contains a section that places the Ledger into its context,



Byron and his wife seen here at the Xmas party.

the Llanelli of 1832 – 1834, and in it he interprets the pattern of entries. There is also a

directory of all the customers mentioned in the ledger making it a very valuable social history document.

There have also been other additions to the LHS library over the past few months. Andy Taylor of Artdesign, Carmarthen, that produces Benita and William Rees' popular series of CDs on Llanelli history, has donated to the library scanned copies of:

1. Francis Jones Archives Indexes held by Brawdy Books
2. Fenton's Tours in Wales 1810
3. History of Caio by Fred S. Price published 1904
4. St Illtyd's Church Pembrey, Its History & Its Architecture, With Illustrations by Ed Roberts and H. A. Pertwee published 1898

These are all an extremely valuable addition for researchers and anyone who would like to borrow copies should see our treasurer, John Williams to arrange this.

Financial Help From The Rural Council

Llanelli Rural Council has once more made a generous donation to the LHS which will be a great help towards the costs involved in running the Society. As always we are very grateful for their kind support.

Llanelly House

Ever since the Llanelli Town Council, the Carmarthenshire Heritage Regeneration Trust and other supportive partner organisations were successful in obtaining Heritage Lottery Funding to restore Llanelly House, they have made every effort to involve the community. They very soon formed **the** Llanelly House Community Partnership, a body that brings together representatives from most of the Llanelli groups and societies. Our chairman, Peter Francis and Secretary, Joyce Mollet are the LHS representatives on this body and meetings are held on a regular basis. The LHCP has a blog that is regularly updated and invites everyone to visit frequently to keep abreast with developments.

<http://llanelly-house.typepad.com/llanelly/>
You will find items of particular interest to LHS members at :



LHS Committee

Chairman:	
Peter Francis:	759920
Secretary:	
Joyce Mollet:	755388
Treasurer:	
John Williams:	810677
Committee Members:	
Derek Newton-Goverd:	775943
Pamela Raikes	
Benita Afan Rees:	775320
William Rees	775320

3 November
14 October
and also the minutes of the Llanelly House Community Partnership meetings.

New Dock Cinema/Astoria

In November William Rees showed his video record of the demolition of the New Dock Cinema/Astoria and it was during the filming that he discovered and subsequently saved the very large paintings that once adorned the walls. We are able to show in this newsletter two of these lovely paintings.





Any LHS member who happened to spend time, as I did, as a patient in Cilymaenllwyd when it was a convalescent home in the 1950s will undoubtedly remember that one of the little walks we were allowed to make while gaining our strength was up to the dog cemetery where innumerable Stepney dogs were buried, each with a carved headstone. I often wondered what became of these interesting artefacts and the following contribution by Benita Rees contains some news on the present whereabouts of these relics (Editor)



The final resting place of the carved headstones of the Cilymaenllwyd pet's cemetery at Fingask Castle, Rait, Perthshire (<http://www.fingaskcastle.com/index>)

William and I became interested in the town's history in the early 1990s when we arrived in Llanelli and settled in Craddock Street. We found the town's history fascinating and after reading many books, including Major Francis Jones's Book about Carmarthenshire's Historic Homes, we became hooked on Llanelli's historic homes and the families who lived in them.

Following the success of the CDROM Llanelli Birth of a Town, we gained in confidence and produced Parc Howard from Mansion to Museum, followed by Melin Mynach, the Old Monks Mill, and The Reverend Ebenezer Morris Vicar of Llanelli. Our latest project and, probably our last, is Cilymaenllwyd and Soho, once home to the Rees family, said to be descended from Uren Rheged.

Along the way we have met many interesting people including, the grandchildren of Lady Meriel and Sir Stafford Howard, namely, Mark Stepney Murray Threipland and Nicholas Howard. Sadly, Nicholas died earlier this year, but fortunately, not before members of the Llanelli Historical Society were able to meet him and his delightful wife, Bethan.

Mark and Nicholas were kind enough to share their memories of Cilymaenllwyd with us and provided interesting photographs for our project. Lady Meriel and Sir Stafford renovated the

mansion following their marriage in 1911; the work was completed in 1913 and they moved from Thornbury Castle to Pwll, with their baby daughter Marged Fach, to take up residence.

Over the years the family buried their beloved pets in a cemetery in the grounds of Cilymaenllwyd. A year or so ago, Mrs Elaine Unstead, Honorary Secretary of Holy Trinity Church Pwll, arranged for us to visit the grounds of Cilymaenllwyd, which is now a nursing home. Unfortunately, we did not find the Pets' Cemetery and were told the stones had been removed to Scotland. But where in Scotland and by whom?

It has taken a long time, but finally, we made contact with Andrew Threipland of Fingask Castle, Rait, Perthshire, half-brother to Mark. Andrew very kindly sent a photograph of the Pets' Cemetery, which unlike, Old Road cemetery, where the memorial to the Stepney and Howard family stands, is well maintained and cared for. Sadly the Old Road cemetery which houses many important memorials is neglected and in much need of some TLC.

(Benita Rees)

Please send any contributions for future newsletters to the editor, Joyce Mollet.

News, views, short articles, letters, photographs - all welcome!