



# Cymdeithas Hanesyddol Llanelli Llanelli Historical Society

## Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

June 2004

### May was Local History Month

The LHS celebrated Local History Month with two open days; May 14th and 15th, and the event was, once more, a resounding success. Most of the exhibits covered the historical research that various groups and individuals had been involved in during the year, and there was also a display on the history of Llanelli House that had been shown in the Parish Church at the time of the BBC 2 programme, "Restoration."

There were a few items from last year's open day, brought back by popular request, and these were of particular interest to the school groups that had not had the opportunity to visit last year.



*The chairwoman, Caroline De Abreu and the Secretary, Joyce Mollet welcoming the town mayor, Cllr. Edward Skinner and the Deputy mayor, Cllr. Nigel Bevan.*



*Mr. William Wilkins once again did a splendid job of officially opening the exhibition and brought us up to date on the recent developments concerning Llanelli House.*

Friday morning was spent on setting up the displays and at

lunch time students from the local schools began to arrive. Groups came from Ysgol Dewi Sant, Furnace C.P. School and Bigyn C.P. School; over 100 in all.

Saturday was the day for the public, and more than 300 people made a visit. We had a number of specially invited guests including the Town Mayor, Cllr. Edward Skinner, Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Nigel Bevan, the town AM, Catherine Thomas and the Town Clerk, Lyn Davies.

We had a number of visitors from out of town, some coming from quite far afield. Ken Jones, a descendent of Vicar Ebenezer Morris, visited from Cardiff, and shared, with some of us, his very extensive family tree, and also some anecdotes about the somewhat notorious old vicar. Graham Tomkinson came over from Beaconsfield, Bucks and brought with him his

recent publication on Stické Tennis that has a section on the court at Cilymaenllwyd built by Sir Stafford Howard and Lady Stepney Howard, and we were able to purchase a copy for our library.

The Llanelli Family History Society and the newly formed Burry Port Historical Society had a presence throughout the day, and a great deal of interest was shown in the material that they had on display.



*Peter Francis welcoming students from Ysgol Dewi Sant. He explained that the question and answer sheet they had been given covered only part of the display and he encouraged them to explore other areas, and above all, to enjoy their visit.*

*Members of the Llanelli Family History Society, Ifor Griffiths, Gerald Thomas, and John Parry, were at hand on Saturday to answer questions, and in the background can be seen the BBC camera that filmed some of the day's events.*

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## Friday was students' day

Students visiting the exhibition were given illustrated question and answer sheets relating to the material on display. Touring the display boards, with their sheets and pencils, they learned about shipwrecks along the Llanelli coastline, the purpose and location of Mediaeval mills in the Llanelli area, the year when Llanelli House was built and the people who lived there, and a great deal more.

Dylan James displayed part of his extensive collection of old bottles, and these were very popular both on Friday with the students, and on Saturday with the adults. One of the questions on the student sheet was, "What did you like the best in the exhibition?" Invariably the answer was, "The bottle collection."

The prize draw for completed answer sheets was won by a student from Ysgol Dewi Sant. The CD, Llanelli Birth of a Town (kindly donated by Benita and William Rees) went to the school, and a copy of John Edwards' book, Llanelli, Story of a Town (kindly donated by the Llanelli Star) to the student.



### Subscriptions are due

May we remind those who have not renewed their membership that subscriptions are due and you can pay them to our treasurer, John Williams, at the June monthly meeting, or post your £10 annual membership fee to him at:



Gwynfryn, Mountain Road, Trimsaran SA17 4EU

We would like to keep our treasurer smiling so if you haven't yet renewed, please do it soon!



We thank the James family for the way they looked after the workers and visitors throughout the two days. The teas, coffees and snacks they provided ensured the smooth running of the event -

thank you the James Family.

## Awards for all Wales presentation

We were delighted to welcome Sir David Mansel Lewis, our President, to the May monthly meeting. He kindly made the official presentation of the cheque from Awards for all Wales. This award of £3,000 helped to



make our Open Days such an unqualified success. The money covered the cost of purchasing display boards, the raw materials to produce the display posters and photographs, and all the additional expenditure that is incurred in an event of this nature. It will also help in the work of the Society in the future. Members of the Society who address various local organizations on local history, now have the display boards and visual aids they need to illustrate their talks.

### A Change to our Programme

Due to unforeseen circumstances the July talk on the Boer War will be replaced by an "Evening of Nostalgia."

Also, part of our Open Day exhibition will be on display that evening, with those involved in the various working groups at hand to answer questions.

Plus lots more!!



## A Library for the L.H.S.

We shall see a change of roles at future monthly meetings. This has come about because of the society's need for a librarian. The Society's collection of local history books, magazines, and manuscripts has grown over the last few years and the committee has been anxious to make these available to members.

Many of these are valuable items and some irreplaceable, and so the operation needed to be planned and organized. This is now in hand and as from the June meeting items will be available for loan. Madge Witty has agreed to take on the role of librarian, and Pam Raikes is to replace her in the role of selling raffle tickets. Thank you both.



*Pamela and Madge seen here at Open Day*

## Llanelli Firm of Newark

One of the items that attracted a good deal of interest at the Open Day was a short history of the old Llanelli firm of Newark. This was taken from a longer article, researched and written by Byron Davies (seen below visiting the exhibition). This kind of social history adds much to our understanding of Llanelli's past, and it is hoped that more members will take up a similar investigation of long standing businesses in the town so that we can display more items of this nature at next year's open day. Included here is a short extract from the text of the posters.

Generations of Llanelli people knew Newark's China Shop in Market Street as one of the longest established business premises in the town until it closed in 1963.



The founder of this family business was William Newark, born in 1808 and the story begins in Stoke-on-Trent on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1838, when William Newark, aged 30, and Mary Plant, 21, both working potters, married at Bucknall Parish Church. Two years later, they left their native Potteries to begin a new life in Llanelli.

William had secured a contract to work at the newly built South Wales Pottery owned by William Chambers, Junior, when it began production in 1840. He was engaged as a printer at a rate of pay of 5½d per dozen for all patterns, and he was one of the first Staffordshire potters to be employed there. This trend was to continue and many other families from the same area migrated to Llanelli to work at the Pottery.

In addition to his job at the pottery,

William was, for a time, a constable and his baton from those days is still in the safe keeping of a family member. In John Innes' book 'Old Llanely' we read, "On Falcon Bridge in 1843 stood, night after night, Newark, senior, baton in hand. The town was full of soldiers for Rebecca was up in arms and special constables were here, there and everywhere."

The Pottery encountered financial difficulties in the mid-1850s and the firm was assigned to Coombs and Holland in 1855; the latter taking sole control in 1858. By 1856 William was the landlord of the King William Inn in Park Street, and was preparing to open the shop in Market Street. The shop was rented from

Lieutenant Colonel Stepney and William began trading in a business familiar to him – that of a china warehouseman.

In succeeding years, Newark's business flourished in a thriving town and continued trading for a hundred years, being renowned for the high-class quality of its wares.

Much of the information on the firm of Newark comes from a collection of bills dated from 1856 that was discovered at the firm's derelict shop premises during general redevelopment of the area. These bills allow us a brief glimpse into the transactions of a trader who first established his business in Llanelli nearly 150 years ago.





## Visit to The National Museum of Wales July 2004

The Society has been invited to visit the "Buried Treasure" display at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff on 16th July 2004. If there are enough members interested, a bus will be organised, a guide will be arranged, and a 'hands on' demonstration will be made available to us, (allowing us to handle various items).



There will also be time to visit other areas of the Museum, and there is a good restaurant within the Museum that we can book for lunch. Depending on numbers the cost will be around £10.00 per member; those interested should contact John Williams (our treasurer).

There is also a trip planned by the "Field Trips group" for late September/early October. Details of date and venue will be given at the June meeting.

### LHS Committee

<b>Chairwoman:</b>	
Caroline DeAbreu:	756141
<b>Secretary:</b>	
Joyce Mollet:	755388
<b>Treasurer:</b>	
John Williams:	810677
<b>Committee Members:</b>	
Peter Francis:	759920
Derek Newton-Goverd:	775943
Benita Afan Rees:	775320

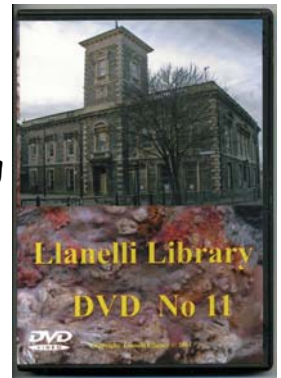
If you have any news you wish to share please pass it on for future newsletters.

Contact the editor, Joyce Mollet

## L.H.S./Llanelli Library DVD

### Project

Derek Newton Goverd has been beavering away behind the scenes and is continuing the work of transferring the Public Library's collection of videos on to DVDs.



This collection is due to the foresight and hard work of Harold Prescott and we are sure he would be pleased to see this new technology benefiting his collection. It is a time consuming task but Derek has produced 11 DVDs that have now been deposited in the library. Samples from these will be shown at the June meeting.

### Obituary

## Harold Prescott

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Harold Prescott who passed away on Saturday, 1st May 2004.



Harold Andrew Prescott was the Llanelli Borough Librarian from 1950 - 1983 and we, as local historians, owe him a great debt. His important contribution to the town was not confined to the written word, but extended to audio visual records of the town. He did much to preserve old film footage, recording life in Llanelli from the beginning of the 20th century, and he carried on the tradition by recording many events on cine film. His love of music, and his vision of making it accessible to the people of the town, resulted in the establishing of the music library, and many of us, in our young days, had our love of music nurtured with vinyl records brought home, on loan, from the Public Library.

The Society was represented at the funeral service by the chairwoman and secretary. LHS member, and friend, Paul de Abreu, was one of the bearers. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mr. Prescott's wife and family.

(Caroline DeAbreu, Chair)