



Cymdeit has Hanesyddol Llanelli

Llanelli Historical Society

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

Newsletter
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Founder member: Caroline De Abreu

Established 1999

February Meeting

The February meeting of the LHS turned out to be an overwhelming success with an attendance that filled the Lliedi Suite of the Selwyn Samuel Centre to capacity.

Members of the LHS brought to life the lost communities of Machynys and Bwlchygynt with a collection of black and white photographs and a DVD presentation.

Today, this area has a championship golf course and a development of 240 new houses, but that evening members and visitors were transported back to the 1950s and 60s, to a thriving community with its own school, shops and surrounding industries.

The collection of photographs was the work of the late David Hopkins who died



After viewing the collection of photographs on DVD, the exhibition was opened and the audience was able to examine the prints in more detail.

Subscriptions Due

Members present at the AGM paid their annual subscription of £10 to John Williams, our treasurer, some who were unable to attend have sent him a cheque, so if you haven't done so yet, John, I am sure, would love to hear from you!



LHS members and visitors who gathered for the February meeting.

in 1970 at the young age of 38. David, a passionate amateur photographer, recorded the environment and people of his childhood. Ron Cant describes what then happened to the community in his article in the South Wales Evening Post covering the February meeting:

“South Llanelli was once dominated by steel and tinplate works but as the town's industrial base declined many of the factories disappeared. In 1968, the former Llanelli Borough Council decamped 127 families from Machynys and Bwlchygynt to council houses in Morfa and New Dock. They were promised they would be allowed to return when the industrial dereliction was cleared and new homes created. But it was a promise that was never kept.”

The strong feeling of community that has survived the 40 years was evident at the LHS meeting when well over 300 people turned up, many having to be turned away as the venue failed to accommodate them all.

The exhibition of photographs was the work of Derek Newton Goverd, supported by Peter Francis and Joyce Mollet. The original collection was digitally scanned, enhanced and enlarged, and Derek then produced a very professional DVD of the collection.



David Hopkins' brother, Gerald Hopkins (seen here with the chairwoman and Derek Newton Goverd), donated the photographs to the LHS and was delighted to see the enlarged and enhanced prints.

Addition to the Library

Local historian and LHS member, John Edwards has kindly donated a copy of his television interview on the history of Llanelli to the Society. The interview takes the form of a conversation with David Parry-Jones and was recorded in 2001. Derek Newton Goverd has transferred the video on to DVD and this is now available on loan from the LHS library. Many thanks John for your kind donation.



Awards For All Wales

The LHS has once more been successful in its application for a financial award.

The Society received a cheque for £4,707 from Awards For All Wales and members were delighted to welcome the town's MP, Nia Griffith to the April meeting where she made the official presentation.

Chairwoman, Caroline DeAbreu made the announcement to members at the AGM and explained:

"The money will be spent on a sound system and video cameras. The sound system will make it much easier for future speakers to address a large audience, and the cameras will enable us to record future talks and have them available in the LHS library."

Caroline thanked our MP on behalf of the Society with a gift of a print of Llanelli in 1820 and in reply Nia said,

"I am delighted with this framed print and know just the place in my Westminster office where I shall hang it."



Ulrike Ellguth, covering the event in the local paper, the Llanelli Star, quoted Nia Griffith as saying,

"It is a society with good management and good ideas. A lot of people benefit from what it is doing."



At the AGM in April Pamela Raikes joined the existing committee members, bringing the present committee up to eight members. From left to right, Derek Newton Goverd, Pamela Raikes, Peter Francis, Caroline DeAbreu (Chairwoman), Joyce Mollet (Secretary), William Rees, Benita Afan Rees and John Williams (Treasurer).

Lost Communities Exhibition

Immediately after the February meeting and the Lost Communities Exhibition, members of the LHS received many requests to repeat the event .

One showing took place at a reunion of the residents of these communities held on Saturday, April 8th at Morfa Social Club when again there was a large attendance.

Communities First is organizing another event on Saturday, May 13th when the exhibition of photographs (now including many additional contributions donated by local people) and the DVD will be shown continually from 11.00am to 4.00pm. At Morfa Social Club, admission free.

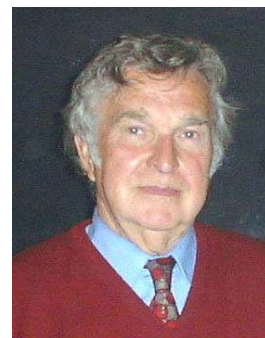
Your Society needs you

The committee is still looking for someone to take on the role of webmaster for the Society. This would not be an onerous task for a person with skills in this field. The web site needs only to be a modest production with the minimum of "tending". So, if you could undertake this task or know of someone who might "have a go", please contact a member of the committee to discuss it. Content and photographs would be supplied by committee members.



March Meeting

The Society welcomed back Roy Hagger to the March meeting. Many members had been requesting another talk and opportunity to watch the very early Hagger film footage ever since his visit in November 2001. Close to 80 members had a very entertaining evening and learnt a great deal about the early film industry and Llanelli's involvement.



LHS Trip in June

Our social events organiser, Pamela Raikes, has organised a trip to St. Fagans for mid June. Those interested would be advised to give Pamela their names as soon as possible in order to secure a place. If it seems that we are unable to fill the bus we shall be opening it up to friends and family and places will then go quite quickly.

Members will be free to follow their own interests but Pamela is arranging a guide for a tour of St. Teilo's Church for those interested. Let's hope the weather will be kinder to us on this visit!

Date: Thursday, June 15th
Time: Leaving the Selwyn Samuel Centre at 12.30pm

Please send any contributions for future newsletters to the editor, Joyce Mollet.
 News, views, short articles, letters, photographs - all welcome!