



LLANDAFF SOCIETY CYMDEITHAS LLANDAF

Affiliated to The Civic Trust for Wales

www.llandaffcity.co.uk



Newsletter 130 Autumn 2014

FUTURE EVENTS

Unless otherwise stated sessional meetings take place at:-
The Parish Hall, High Street Car Park at 7.30pm sharp.

For latest information see the Notice Board outside 'Spar', High Street, Llandaff

Admission: £2.00;
Non-members: £3.00

October

Friday 24th

AGM followed by Cheese and Wine
(NB: No charge, members only)

November

Tuesday 11th @ 10.45am:
Great War 100th Armistice Ceremony, Cathedral Green War Memorial

Wednesday 26th :
Lights on in High Street with Celebrity guest

Friday 28th :
Charles James Longford, Archaeology Cymru: 'Roman Times in Cardiff'

December

Friday 12th
Annual Dinner
6.30 for 7.00pm
St Michael's College: Speaker- Very.Rev. Gerwyn Capon, Dean of Llandaff

Wednesday 17th
7.00pm
Candlelit Carols at St. Michael's with 'Oriana' . Mulled wine and minced pies to follow.

MOVES AT THE MEMORIAL HALL



Following last edition's report of the sale of The Memorial Hall to Cathedral School for use in connection with reception and infants school activities, our Chairman met with the School Bursar , Mr Robert Leek, who has advised that there are no immediate plans pending a full building survey of this non-traditional building.

A visit to the Memorial Hall, now stripped of its adaptations for 'Jazzy Jungle' children's play use, found it reasonably wind and weather proof and in a surprisingly original state. The marvellous teak dance floor; well-remembered for the frisson of those strictly formal first encounters, is largely intact and still ready for that '78 'on' the Dansette'. It was, however, distressing to find that the bronze plaque dedicating it as a War Memorial has DISAPPEARED ! Although enquiries are proceeding, and it is hoped that it will re-appear, the price of non-ferrous metal scrap suggests that this is unlikely.

It is reassuring to know that the TCPA Section 106 planning agreement negotiated with Cardiff Council safeguards the future availability of the building for community use outside school hours. These requirements will be regulated by a joint management committee, on which LS will have a place. Accordingly the spirit in which the Memorial Hall was originally conceived will be carried forward in its new incarnation as a useful facility for the young at Cathedral School with wider community uses restoring its rightful place at the heart of the Llandaff scene.

Events Held

Saturday 2nd August: CHAIRMAN'S TEA PARTY 2014:

This popular 'thank you' to those stalwarts who ensure the newsletter gets through your letter box (if you are not on e-mail) and Llandaff Society Committee members was much enjoyed, not just for the delicious refreshments, lovingly prepared by Jenny B-G and Diana Langmaid, but for the splendid Summer weather that accompanied the event.



Tuesday 2nd September: Spicing it up at The Bay Leaf!

A new High Street Lighting fundraiser venture was introduced when the restaurant management kindly offered to host a curry evening. The event proved to be a great success with 64 people enjoying an excellent meal, served by pleasant and helpful staff. As with other restaurant venues the financial basis enabled one third of the ticket price to be paid to funds. Thank you to the Bay Leaf and to all who supported the occasion which raised over £300.

Friday 26th September: SOPHIE RASHBROOK, WNO DRAMATURG

A fascinating insight into her specialist field which is central to the interpretation of operatic works for contemporary productions rewarded those present. Having achieved two language degrees at Cambridge, Sophie informed and entertained with facts and anecdotes from her career with enthusiasm and considerable animation, delightfully delivered and interspersed with selected operatic extracts.

GRASS COULD BE TURFED OUT AT BISHOP OF LLANDAFF HIGH SCHOOL AND HOWELL'S SCHOOL

It is curious to find that school playing fields are under threat from their very popularity in the 2014 Capital of Sport due to the current vogue for floodlit Astro turf, artificial all weather surfaces to counter damp and dark Welsh winter conditions. This sort of provision not only allows the particular schools to use their facilities more extensively but opens the way for what is called community involvement by way of out of hours use on a commercial basis.

Those living in the vicinity of Glantaff Welsh Comprehensive School and Taff Trail users will already have seen the high fenced compound intruding into the former open grass playing fields bordering the river bank and may well have witnessed the noise and intrusion especially on winter evenings. This phenomenon is infectious and similar schemes are currently proposed at Bishop of Llandaff High School where local clubs are understood to be queuing-up to use the planned all-weather and all day and all evening pitch and even the hallowed grounds of Howells School may go the same way. What price progress?

STOP PRESS !!! LLANDAFF ROWING CLUB COULD MANAGE THE PADDOCK !

The landscape value of the Strawberry Fields paddock at Bridge Road within the Taff Green Corridor is obvious and is greatly enjoyed; especially as a natural screen to the jarring developments at Glantaff School on the other side of the river.

Hence it is of concern that Llandaff Rowing Club are seeking to take over routine maintenance of this strip from Cardiff Parks with a view to warm-up training; bankside coaching and better spectator access. Enhanced spectator views from the river bank are envisaged but this could only be achieved by thinning of the tree belt and is likely to raise safety issues requiring potential construction work and 'landscaping'. Discussions between Council officials and the club are proceeding but isn't it time that The Llandaff Society and councillors were brought in on this ? What do you say Llandaff Society members?

GETTING IN A DANGEROUS SPIN !

Yet again an unsuspecting motorist cut it too fine when turning from Bridge Road into Llantrisant Road recently and was stranded on top of the mini roundabout with wheels spinning. For some time Llandaff Society has been urging the location of a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of 'the Heathcock' at the junction of Llantrisant Road and Bridge Road, where traffic racing to

negotiate the mini roundabout puts pedestrians at risk. This is especially so at this time of year, when a new generation of 400 or so Cardiff Met students, need to pass back and forth from their halls of residence on Llantrisant Road to the

Western Avenue campus and Llandaff village. Schoolchildren at Bishop of Llandaff and Glantaff High School and increasing numbers of cyclists also need to negotiate this difficult junction and frequently encounter or create problems crossing. Parents of children at Ysgol Gyfan Pencae are pressing for a crossing to reduce the problem and Llandaff Society thoroughly agree that it is time for action. With constant increase in traffic volumes we cannot wait for the uncertain consequences of BBC HQ redevelopment and the LDP!



CARDIFF PEOPLE'S HUB GATHERING AT LLANDAFF FIELDS

This annual event took place on Sunday 31st August when over 500 people gathered to show their support for continued public use and improvement of this popular public park the future of which is in jeopardy due to shrinking Parks finances and ambitious, perhaps predatory, proposals for creation of an 'all singing, all dancing' sports complex which have been aired by Clwb Rugby Cymru, Caerdydd in partnership with

expansionist Cardiff Met University. Their plans are for a state of the art, commercially driven scheme to be constructed on a site in the vicinity of the existing tennis courts . Apart from new changing and club rooms this would include substantial indoor sports provision; licensed bars; function rooms and 200 parking spaces plus service bays etc. No planning application has been made to date but it is un likely that parties will let matters drift.

Llandaff Fields was the subject of charitable gift to the citizens of Cardiff by Herbert Thompson and intended for their perpetual benefit. The Llandaff Society is therefore firmly opposed to such further erosion of our city's green spaces and was therefore present at the Hub event with Donna Howard and Jenny B-G staffing an information point and offering our in-house publications to attendees.

CARDIFF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROGRESSES

When adopted, sometime in 2015, the Local Development Plan (LDP) will be the most important consideration in planning decisions. As well as keeping track of planning applications affecting the Society's area of interest and inputting comments and objections as appropriate in relation to the Llandaff part of the electoral ward - your Chairman and I have been putting great effort over the past 2 years into engaging with the LDP.

The Society has held 2 public meetings at key stages in LDP consultation. We have input on your behalf our clear views that the proposals for over 11,000 houses to be built in the next 13 years will have an adverse impact on Llandaff and adjacent areas without substantial investment in fixed track public transport and other community facilities. We have pointed out the lack of evidence that the LDP is sustainable. We have also asked for the Conservation Area Appraisals to be given higher status as Supplementary Planning Guidance. All our representations appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

Geoff. B-G and I have been inputting from our experience and expertise in strategic planning into the work of the "North West Cardiff Group" to reflect the concerns of the communities of Llandaff and Danescourt; Pentyrch, Creigiau and Gwaelod-y-Garth, Radyr & Morganstown and St Fagans. We were instrumental in arranging for the Group to receive very valuable' pro bono' legal advice.

The Society has benefitted from the resources available to the 3 Community Councils of Radyr and Morganstown, St Fagans and Pentyrch - who initiated the work by commissioning a professional transport report to underpin their submissions - and by the able coordination of the Clerk of Radyr and Morganstown Community Council - Helena Fox. We have also linked with Cardiff Civic Society, which has put forward sensible proposals for a "Garden City" or "New Town" approach to enable provision of facilities from some of the enormous increases in land values in prospect for landowners - from £10,000 to £1m+ an acre.

Together we have taken our concerns to Cllr Patel, recently appointed Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport and his staff at Cardiff Council, as well as Mark Drakeford AM and Kevin Brennan MP. They have listened and sympathised, but so far no changes have been made to the LDP. Our last hope is that the independent Planning Inspector who will examine the Plan in public next January will make changes to reflect our concerns.

Meanwhile, planning applications are starting to be submitted - in advance of the plan being adopted - including one for 1,500 houses, substantial employment land, Park and Ride car park, and "world class cycle parking facility" (sic) to take advantage of the fact that Cardiff does not have a 5 year housing land supply. We are objecting to this and a totally inadequate draft Environmental Statement for Strategic Site C - at least 6,100 houses on an area between St Fagans, Pentreban, Radyr, Rhydlafar and Creigiau and as far as we can see all feeding out onto Llantrisant Road!

We all recognise the need for new housing, but this headlong rush for "jobs and homes" at any price, the lack of phasing to ensure transport and other facilities are in place before housing, and the uncertainty of delivery, is the antithesis of good planning. Cardiff Council says that the necessary transport, schools, community facilities, local shops and open space will be delivered because of its "master-planning" principles, but they cannot guarantee what will be delivered, how or when!

The fight continues..... Watch this space!

Kay Powell, LS Committee Planning and Conservation Advisor:

HIGH STREET SWANSONG: John Isaacs writes.

At a Llandaff Society meeting in the autumn of 2008 matters of traffic and parking in the High Street and the lack of both seasonal and general decorative features were raised. Little or no effort was making the High Street a place that would attract shoppers and visitors with very few floral decorations or hanging baskets and no planters; street furniture was sparse; what there was largely unsatisfactory and the Christmas tree initiative started by Mary Grainger lapsed when she had moved out of the district.

The inevitable happened: Those who had raised the matter were asked to do something about it, so on December 15th 2008 Muriel Jeremy and I set about forming a committee. A letter to all traders in the High Street invited them to a reception at St. Michael's College, leading to formation of a High Street sub-committee. Over the subsequent 6 years its' membership has remained fairly constant, with The Society's originals, Muriel, Pauline, Geoff. B-G and myself still serving, joined subsequently by Diana Langmaid, Hon. Treasurer and by John Prior Morris. Traders representative; Peter Hall was soon replaced by Kevin Gear (K2), but Tracey Enright from the Surgery, John Williams, the eponymous estate agent and pharmacist Steve Howarth; an increasingly convincing Father

Christmas, were in from the beginning. Llandaff Institute has varied its representation; Jacqui and Roger James being replaced by Mick Capel and now Marion Tylk;, who would have joined us at our last meeting had I not got her e-mail address wrong.

Ward Councillors, Kirsty Davies and Gareth Aubrey have been fairly good in their attendance and kept us in touch with Council thinking (sic). Following Alun Salisbury's sterling early work on the technical side, Rhys Bevan, ex 'Avanti', has provided truly professional lighting and P.A. system over recent years, Solicitors, Watkins and Gunn, genuinely intent on being an asset to the community have joined the committee for the last 3 years; now represented by Abigail Cumpstone. This year the firm will be sponsoring the Cheese and Wine evening on October 8th at the ' Off the Wall Gallery' on Cardiff Road.

Whilst Christmas lights have been our main focus, we have also sought to improve the use and appearance of our High Street where car parking facilities, provision of trees, benches, planters and troughs. Floral displays have been getting better and better and the plants changed more frequently and for this we are grateful to Cardiff Council's Robert Jones. Peter Hamblin and Mark Cummings; also to the traders and Llandaff

Society members who have conscientiously watered over the years. All we need now is for the traders to invest in some hanging baskets and we can add to our "City within a City" signs the French appellation "Ville Fleurie"! In 2012 the whole of the High Street had a makeover and now has a positively continental appearance with its pavement cafes. It was a happy coincidence that both of the Brains' houses; first the Maltsters, then the Black Lion were impressively refurbished at about the same time.

At our first switching-on ceremony in 2009 we had just 2 strings of lights across the street and 8 establishments with Christmas trees outside but this year, 2014, there will be 5 sets of LED lights across the road and 27 Christmas trees! The Llandaff Society met the one-off cost of purchasing the across the street lights and the annual costs of the tree outside No.17, where the Palmer family has kindly let us use their forecourt as our stage, Although insufficient funds were available at the outset, by organising coffee mornings, lunches, suppers and teas we have managed to pay the bills and we have been fortunate that our supporters were, and still are generous in paying over the odds for tickets for these events. The residents of Pegasus and Prichard Court have been particularly supportive in this respect and the caterers, Jaspers, K2, the late, lamented Kalla Bella, Mulberry Street and, on one occasion, the Llandaff Institute, have given their ready cooperation. This year we have added The Bay Tree to the list. Funds have been boosted by generous donations from IERA, Pidgeons and Spar with much of the cost is defrayed by the traders paying for their own trees, lights and erection, after negotiating with the indefatigable Ben Doonan to achieve this end. For most of the events we have been led in the carol singing by the choir from Howells School and the Cathedral School Brass Ensemble. 'Oriana' ladies' choir, has also added its voice. The Community Police have proved cooperative, conscientious and competent on every occasion so we have had no problems with street closure or crowd control.

Largely thanks to the good offices of Tracey, Kim and Kevin, we have been successful in persuading an interesting variety of celebrities to open the proceedings; Derek, the weatherman assisted by newsreader Sian Lloyd in 2009, First Minister Emeritus Rhodri Morgan in 2010, record holding Wales and 'The Lions' rugby international, Steven Jones and singer/comedian, Frank Hennessy in 2011, Connie Fisher, the delightful musical comedy star in 2012; doughty Charles Dale, of the 'Casualty' cast in 2013, and for 2014, - Patrick Robinson, Strictly Come Dancing and Casualty, we hope!

Writing this account of our work over the past 6 years as a swansong, I think that I have come to the end of this particular journey. It's been very enjoyable, I have met many pleasant people and made lots of new friends but once the Nov. 26th switching-on of lights is over I intend to give up my role as chairman of the High street sub-committee. It is time for a younger (not difficult to find) person with fresh ideas to take over as I begin to run out of steam!

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