

# The Llandaff Society Cymdeithas Llandaf

Founded 1977

Patron: Capt sir Norman LloyEdwards KCVO, CGStJ, RD, LLB, JP (rtd)



**2024 events**  
7.00pm In Memorial  
Hall unless stated  
otherwise

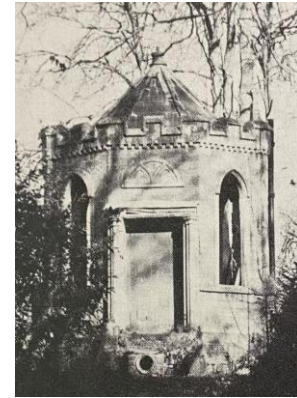
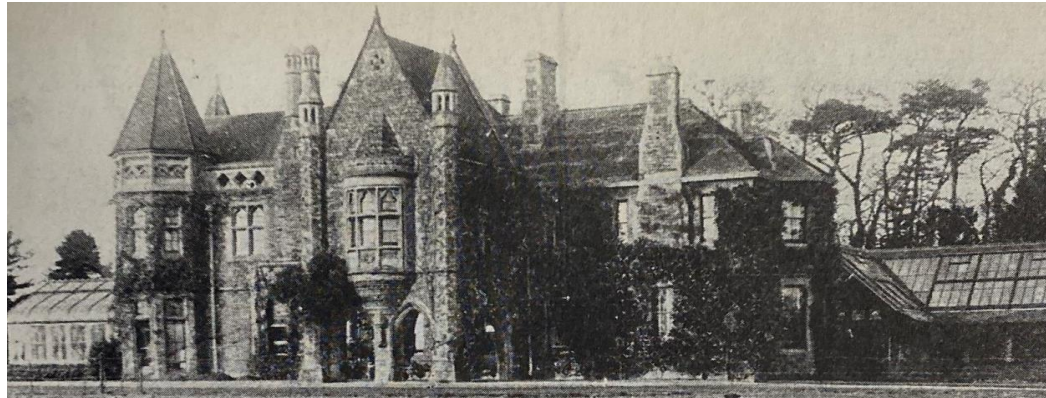
**Newsletter No 147 AUTUMN 2024 (Editor: John Prior-Morris)**

Contact: [info@llandaffcity.co.uk](mailto:info@llandaffcity.co.uk)

**Ar gael yn y Gymraeg hefyd**

11 .00 am NOV 11th ↓
Armistice Commemoration on the Green
NOVEMBER 29 <sup>th</sup> ↓
<b>CHRISTMAS SOCIAL</b>
DECEMBER 13 <sup>th</sup> ↓
<b>CHRISTMAS SERVICE</b> at St Padarn's
JANUARY 31st ↓
<b>SIAN GRIFFITHS</b> "A Seashore Safari"
FEBRUARY 21st ↓
Nick Cornish WW2 on the Eastern Front
MARCH 1 <sup>st</sup> (provisional)
ST DAVID'S DAY DINNER
MARCH 1st ↓
St Davd's Day Supper Venue TBA
MARCH 28 <sup>th</sup> ↓
Peter Fortune The Taff Vale Railway
Thursday April 10th In Howell's School ↓
<b>LISBETH DAVID</b> <b>MEMORIAL LECTURE</b>
MAY 30 <sup>th</sup> ↓
SPEAKER TBC
MAY / EARLY JUNE TBC ↓
<b>HAY FESTIVAL TRIP</b>
JUNE 27 <sup>th</sup> ↓
Tony Moon "THE RHONDDA TUNNEL"
JULY 25 <sup>th</sup> ↓
Nicky Piper "THE CITY HOSPICE"
JULY 31 <sup>st</sup> ↓
<b>ANNUAL COACH TRIP</b> DESTINATION TBA

## TO ALL CONCERNED ABOUT THE FATE OF ROOKWOOD



*"Rookwood house in the 1880's. Built in 1866 by Col Sir Edward Stock-Hill 'near the old summerhouse where Dean Conybeare wrote his sermons'. Early in 1918 it was taken over as an officers' convalescent home, and after the war, presented to the nation as a home for wounded ex-servicemen for as long as needed, and thereafter for the use of the University of Wales."*

**Much of this site is now in the process of being disposed of; putting at risk this fine Victorian listed mansion, the 'Gothick' summerhouse, and its nature-rich parkland (all listed Grade 2).**

**At a public meeting at Insole Court, convened by the Society on June 4<sup>th</sup> attended by 70 people, concerns were expressed about this from various quarters.**

**The Llandaff Society is therefore hosting a community-based group aiming to work with partners to ensure that when this site is developed, sympathetic design, landscaping, and care for biodiversity, are deployed to benefit the health and wellbeing of current and future generations.**

**It is understood that 'expressions of interest' have been invited. However, up to date information is subject to commercial confidentiality. When the group has information to share it will do so to those who attended the meeting and via our website [www.llandaffcity.co.uk](http://www.llandaffcity.co.uk)**

## FORTHCOMING TALKS & EVENTS

After the usual break from activities in August the programme recommenced in earnest in September with two sessionals. On September 20<sup>th</sup>, (Battle of Britain Week) **Carol Walton** talked to us about the distinguished career of her father, **Wing Commander Roland Beamont**. On the following Friday (September 27<sup>th</sup>) **Kate Wise**, consultant to Cardiff Council, spoke about **Caring for our Historic Buildings**. At this meeting there was also the annual opportunity to meet with our local councillors, Sean Driscoll and Peter Jenkins.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) follows in October before a new feature is introduced in November. This is a **Christmas Social**; an opportunity for members and friends to come together, enjoy some food and drink as well as entertainment. Our annual Christmas celebration of readings and music at St Padarns, will be on December 13 when a collection will be taken for the Cardiff Food Bank.<sup>th</sup>

In January **Sian Griffiths** returns to speak to us with another intriguing title "**A Seashore Safari**", and we have a return of **Nic Cornish** in February, this time to talk about the **Eastern front during World War 2**. **Peter Fortune** will talk in March about **The Taff Vale Railway** and the **Lisbeth David Lecture** in April will again be in the Great Hall of Howell's School. Following last year's success we plan once again to organise a **St David's' Day Dinner** at Insole Court. We have yet to confirm the arrangements for May but in June **Tony Moon** joins us to speak about the **Rhondda Tunnel**. Our final talk, in July, is by **Nicky Piper**, about **the work of the City Hospice**. There are again likely to be two coach trips, one to Hay on Wye for the Literary Festival (late May/early June) and traditional summer outing (late July/early August) before our summer recess.

I hope and trust there is enough variety and substance in the programme to interest and engage members and that support as many of them as possible

**Alun Morgan**



# COACH TRIP TO HAY FESTIVAL May 28th

Thirty-six intrepid Llandavians took the coach for the Society's second visit to Hay Festival.



(Photo Sam Hardwick)

It wasn't the best of weather. Rain kept threatening without ever becoming a downpour – but the tented site is so well laid out that once past the entrance it is quite easy to stay dry.

Of course people went their separate ways; to talks, debates, book signings, demonstrations of chainsaw sculpting, Shakespeare performance, stall-browsing, or even going off piste into Hay itself. All re-gathered at the appointed rendezvous and returned home tired but happy at the end of a great day out.

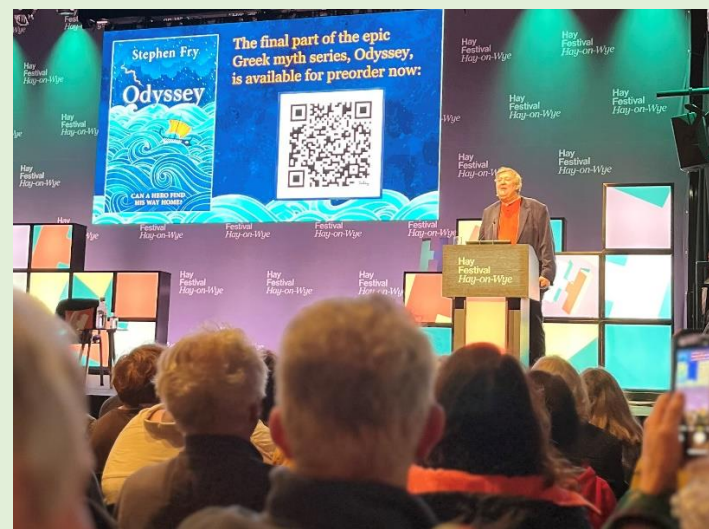
This seems to be on the edge of becoming an annual tradition; and so it may - as long as there's someone willing to organise it (These things don't just 'happen'). Many thanks to Kay Powell for taking it on for the second year in a row.



Llandavians have to eat



One of many exhibits



STEPHEN FRY - Festival President



Chainsaw Sculpture

# COACH TRIP TO LACOCK ABBEY - August 1st

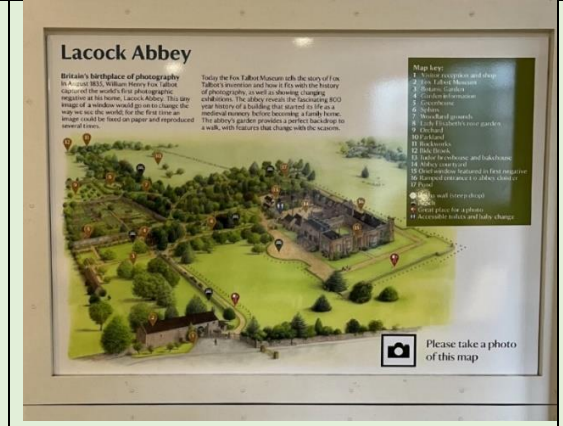
There was the customary good response to the summer coach trip with just under 50 people signing up for a visit to the beautiful Cotswold village of Castle Combe before moving on to stunning Lacock Village and Abbey a few miles away.



CASTLE COMBE WOOL MARKET

The days leading up to our departure had become increasingly fraught as the Met Office had issued a Yellow warning of severe thunderstorms for South Wales and the west country.

Accordingly, despite it being a beautiful morning at the time of departure, most passengers were armed with raincoats and umbrellas. It was a smooth and pleasant journey to the outskirts of Castle Combe in a comfortable coach with our very capable young driver, Kyle. I had done some website research on Castle Combe, and was reassured when I read the following on their website:



***“There is a public car park at the top of the hill provided for visitors to the village.***

***Although it is a little way to walk down the hill to the old village, it is a pleasant stroll under the trees and there is much to see on the way.”***

However, on arrival we met this notice.

### Coaches

**“We welcome many coach visitors to the village but request that coaches drop visitors in the coach park at the public car park and allow them to walk down the hill.”**

I come originally from Merthyr Tydfil, a town built on hills, but I can vouch that most are a casual stroll compared to the steep and winding descent into Castle Combe! With all due respect to our coach party, youth and athletic mobility would not be the first qualities you would identify among us. Indeed, as we neared the village a number were quite understandably struggling. I was feeling increasingly anxious, vowing never to let another coach visit go ahead without a reconnaissance visit. It became clear that, having reached the village many of the party were not going to get back up the hill to resume the journey. There was some consolation in that the village is very beautiful, located in a lovely valley-bottom, river-flanked location. It was dominated by a medieval Market Cross and almost next to it, the magnificent St Andrew's Church, constructed on the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. At the other end of the village there is a lovely scene with a row of charming honey-stoned houses overlooking the river.

Therefore, there was much to see and admire. But two issues were uppermost in our minds—ways and means of getting back to our coach (bus service irregular and unable to accommodate our numbers) and a taxi service that would not meet our requirements quickly enough. The second and perhaps more pressing question was where to get a cup of coffee! For there were, as yet, no pubs or hotels open and no coffee shops to be seen on the High Street other than a take-away and we needed a sit down after that hill! The discovery of somewhere open for coffee and cakes,



tucked away in a long alleyway, brought both relief to the caffeine requirements and a possible solution to the transport crisis. For our Interim Chair and his wife Ann were there, having travelled independently by car. Cometh the Hour, Cometh the Man!

John immediately came up with a plan to ferry groups back to the car park. While bringing a widespread sense of relief there was no avoiding the fact that this would be a lengthy operation and compromise the time we had scheduled for Lacock. But just as operation Volvo was about to commence Jackie Askey came up with the news that, after diligent conversations with locals, coaches could, in fact, come down the hill to collect passengers but could not park there. John immediately drove me to the car park so that I could give this message to Kyle. Even at 12:30, when the coach did collect us, there was very little by way of businesses open. It led JPM to offer the insightful opinion that "This was a village that decided it wanted to increase tourist numbers but had quickly changed its mind!"

I was still feeling responsible for a stressful situation but the contrast with Lacock made me more relaxed. The village is superbly organised and operated through the National Trust and the Abbey and grounds are magnificent. Our coach group could choose between a busy or leisurely afternoon and enjoy a wide range of sight-seeing, shopping, easy walks, sitting comfortably in parks and gardens and a variety of food and drink. On boarding the coach at 16:15 it was clear to me that everyone seemed to have had a really good day out. Despite some motorway congestion we arrived back on schedule, thanks once more to Kyle's driving. And those yellow weather warnings? The only yellow we experienced was lovely sunshine throughout the day!



I wish to conclude by stating that selecting venues and arranging coach transport is the straight forward part of the organisation. The crucial role of collecting names and payment, monitoring numbers, dealing with withdrawals are the critical factors; and I can only thank our Membership Secretary, my wife, Gaynor Morgan for her very efficient management of these tasks.

I am already looking for potential visits for next year and rest assured, there will be reconnaissance visit beforehand!

*Alun Morgan*

***N/B Many thanks are due to Alun for all his hard work on this part of our activities (Ed)***



## **PLANNING "NATTERS" - by our planning adviser, KAY POWELL**

It's always good when owners of properties in Conservation Areas 'do the right thing' and seek to "preserve and enhance" both their property and the surrounding area. That's why it makes me happy when I walk up the High Street past the Minor Canonries and see the wonderful restoration work in progress on St Andrew, and admire previous work undertaken on St Cross. These listed buildings add so much to the character of "our village" and it is heartening when the owners take a real pride in them. That's why your Committee was so disappointed when we saw the botched repair job on the section of boundary wall alongside the Mews at 5 Ely Road. Unfortunately, the Planning Department said they could not take any action re this as the Article 4 Direction which applies to that small section of the Llandaff Conservation Area was not strong enough to enable this. Given the importance of boundary walls to the ambiance of the Conservation Area we urged the Council to rectify Direction applying to this part of the Conservation Area as a matter of urgency.

Green space and trees are also important for biodiversity, to mitigate pollution, and to lift our spirits! We monitor changes in Llandaff as part of Cardiff Civic Society's green "Ward Watch" and would like to discourage people from covering their front gardens with impermeable surfaces. As well as maintaining their own gardens, some of our Committee and members are also volunteer gardeners at Insole Court and elsewhere, helping to keep Llandaff a joy for residents and visitors alike.

Air quality is unseen but is equally vital to our well-being as well-maintained greenery. Whilst not being an issue on which your Committee can have much influence, we can all reduce the amount of nitrogen dioxide and particulates in the air by driving less often along through the Air Quality Management Area along Cardiff Road, and by urging the Council not to allow further development along Llantrisant Road without increased bus services. We will aim to do the latter via our representations on the Replacement Local Development Plan - the next opportunity to do so will be early in the New Year.

I will give a full report on the Planning and Conservation representations which your Committee has made to the Council over the past year at next month's AGM.

**Kay S. Powell**

## **OUR FIRST ST DAVID'S DAY SUPPER MARCH 1<sup>st</sup> INSOLE COURT**

Force majeure, in the form of unavailability of the Memorial Hall on the planned date, led to the cancellation of the 2023 Christmas dinner, and its replacement with a St David's Day Supper; a 'first' for the Society which was attended by 46 people. Insole Court was a more than suitable venue, with the entrance hall quickly filling up for pre-dinner drinks. At 19:00 guests were seated in the beautifully decorated Drawing Room. Following bilingual greetings and Grace by our President, the first course, a delicious Welsh cheese tartlet, was served. The main course, *Lamb Cawl* was followed by a well-organised raffle before a bara brith and custard pudding which completed a very tasty and enjoyable meal.

The catering team, headed by Jon White, did a superb job in providing and serving us at table. After the meal, our President, Sir Norman Lloyd Edwards, gave a fulsome vote of thanks to both Insole Court staff and to Gaynor Morgan and Jackie Askey for their organisation of the event. The evening concluded with coffee and Welsh cakes and excellent entertainment. This took the form of John Prior Morris and Jackie Askey performing two items, "A QUARTER OF AN HOUR UNDER MILK WOOD" (by Dylan Thomas) followed by "UNDER DEAN'S WOOD" or "Lockdown on the Llandaff Time Forgot" (by a Llandaff resident). The script for the latter is included on the next page. It was clear how much the evening had been enjoyed and there were requests, even at this early stage, to organise a similar event next year.

**Alun Morgan**

## “UNDER DEAN’S WOOD”

### a snapshot of Llandaff’s lockdown life by “A Llandaff Resident”

To begin .....at the beginning..... It is Spring ..... Sunlit day in Llandaff:

tarmac’s black and stars asleep; and all the people of this locked-down village city keep their distance now.

Come no closer than two meters now; then hear and see: the High Street - silent; and the hunched dog-walkers’ and fast-cyclists’ route (last tarmac’d for the Queen), tumbling between the covid-closed **Cathedral** and **Dean’s wood**, through green-oak-footway, and across the *shamefully* de-meadowed football fields, to reach the once black, weir-backed, first-time strollers’ hi-jacked, reaches of - **The Taff**, where, In this scorching, locked-down, early-summer day, pebble-skimming boys pick stones to play at spin and toss - all trying, like their dads, to bounce one right across.

Turn from the Taff, and cross a rugby field - to find the **graveyard’s** rows of tree-berooted headstones, pressing down the dreams of those who sleep below. Cross ‘**Prichard’s Bridge**’, and face the ancient walls; wherein ‘**Majestas**’, (who once could roll away a stone), cannot today unlock his Convid confine to bid welcome to his own.

An organ’s diapason rumble grumbles from within, as “David Thomas” at the keys or “Stephen Moore”; each try to thaw by practice of their art The chilled self-isolation of his aluminium heart.

Climb up Cathedral Close and find ‘**The Pound**,’ - Improvement work impounded, and summer’s sunpower going to waste with fifty-plus’s photovolt’ic tiles not yet in place.

At **White House**’ door, self-isolated in retirement ‘**Reverend Holcombe**’ wearing preacher’s black no more, is wond’ring now he’s laid his burden down, when, if ever, he’ll be free to leave the town?

**No entry now to bars** - with all their charms; The Institute, the Maltsters or the Butcher’s Arms; these social melting pots we all rely on, Likewise The Heathcock and the old Black Lion

In **Bishop’s Castle**, well-provided widows walk, to take their daily exercise and maybe distance talk; and later, in the night, the drunken clowns will drain their take-out cans and chuck them down; and caring locals will, unbidden at the dawn, bring bags and gloves, to clear the debris from the lawn.

For reasons of their own **the banks** have gone for good (Seren Diemwnt, Greenberg, and the Traders’ Bar all got out while they could), Garlands and K2 aren’t yet out of the wood. “Halls” and “Hairflair” furloughed; “Hairhouse” gone too soon; “Blush” in lockdown - so too “Kelvie - Gents’ Saloon”. Duncan’s lock’d the doors of “Porro” – and brought a team to seal his floors in preparation for the new tomorrow Chimm’s “Summer Palace” we hope is not for closure, though litigation’s pending from a Lord High Poser.

**Some** signs of life are there for you to see: The queue for medicines at the pharmacy; and further up - a yard or two – not far - the glass-protected staff still serve at SPAR. Babs’s “Jaspers” brings ‘High Teas’ to you direct; and “The Bay Leaf” offers curries to collect; And ever-present - broad of beam and bare of shoulder, Protected by a screen, stands Jean, Post Mistress Calder! She’ll weigh your package and she’ll tell the cost of paying extra so it won’t get lost. Her stocks of food, and cards, and stationery will keep the High Street’s lockdown temporary.

And so we wait for ‘R numbers’ to drop, so Drakeford can permit us all to shop. Then - those of us who still remain alive - will need to spend and make our High Street thrive.

Now as Cathedral clock strikes nine, The Reverend Holcombe - just on time (though wearing *preacher’s black* no more,) Stands beaming at his “White house” door, and sings his morning prayer for God to hear:

1) *Every day when I wake up  
I go downstairs and make a cup  
Of tea to clear my locked down head  
And then I take it back to bed*

2) *And there I dream of many things  
Like cups of tea with angels’ wings  
I’ve laid my priestly burden down  
When lockdown’s done, I’ll leave the town*

3) *We are not wholly sad riff-raff  
Who live in Llandaff by the Taff  
Dear Lord I pray this virus stops  
And High Street opens up her shops*

4) *O let us live to see the day  
When Covid nineteen’s gone away  
Meanwhile to NHS we bow  
And give them thanks – not just for now.*

THE MORNING LIGHTENS, AND OUR COVID-CAPTURED VILLAGE, EASES – STILL- AND SILENT –

INTO ANOTHER LOCKED-DOWN LLANDAFF SUMMER DAY

## DO YOU REMEMBER TALK OF VOKES’ (OR REES’) ROW, IN LLANDAFF?



The History Group in The Pound, has asked us to say that research is being done into the row of small cottages off Bridge Street shown in this picture.

“Pen Pentre” was built against its back wall. You can still see the roof line in this picture on the right.

It was demolished circa 1938 but you may have heard stories about the families who lived there, or the landlord. If so, please contact Donna on [donnahoward4@virginmedia.com](mailto:donnahoward4@virginmedia.com) as it's hoped to produce a Local Leaflet on the cottages.

### THE ROOF-LINE TODAY

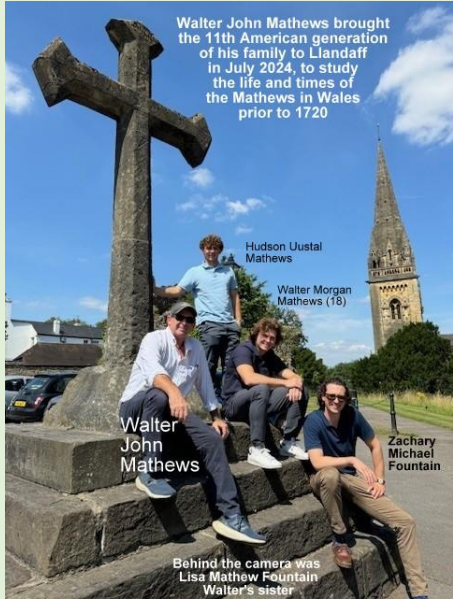




# THE MATHEWS FAMILY OF THE U.S.A. VISIT THEIR LLANDAFF ROOTS

Report sent by Walter Mathews from Florida – leader of the family’s visit

In late July of 2024, the Mathews Family Foundation funded a grant for five family members to complete a trip to Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff to explore the origins of the Mathews family. We attended a historical seminar to get acquainted with 17th and 18th Century history of our forefathers’ emigration from Wales to New York. Thereafter, we visited St. Gwynno's Church, St. Catwg's Church and Byrn Ceira Farm. In Cardiff the highlight of the trip was spent at Llandaff. It began at the historic Celtic Cross and ended with an impromptu visit to Castell-Y-Mynach.



We attended a tour of Llandaff Cathedral, focusing on the Mathew family tombs of Sirs David Mathew, William Mathew and Christopher Mathew (later the family changed its surname to Mathews). We saw St. Teilo's Chapel where the saint’s skull was protected by the Mathew(s) family for several hundred years.

Thereafter we completed a walking tour of Llandaff with John Prior-Morris and enjoyed a pint with him at the Black Lion. It was great to see our family’s heraldic beasts “Lion Rampant” and “Heathcock proper” still remembered in the names of Llandaff’s pubs.\* Next we attended a tour of the Cathedral School. Finally, we visited Castell-Y-Mynach, whose current owner was kind enough to pride us with a quick tour of this historical residence formerly built by the Mathew family.

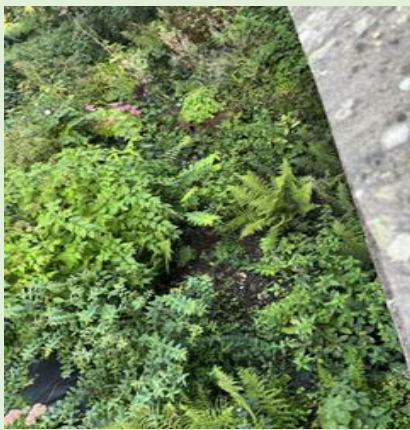
We were deeply touched by the warmth and hospitality shown to us during our time in Wales, where every moment was made special by the genuine kindness and welcoming spirit of the people we met.



*\*Doesn't this just underline the need for legal protection of historic building names to be normalised in conservation areas such as ours? (Ed)*

## PROGRESS ON PRESERVING WHAT IS LEFT OF THE MILL-LEAT

### WEST SIDE



Our progress on the project to prevent nature from totally obscuring this last vestige of Llandaff’s industrial past, is slow but nevertheless discernable. Last year’s planting of ferns and other plants on the western side of the bridge has taken hold and with some (ageing) human assistance competes reasonably well with the previous morass of nettles and brambles, though weeding is still needed.

Attention is now turning to the eastern side where plans are being made to develop a bog garden in place of nettles and brambles. We were grateful for a day’s youthful muscle provided in June by members of the “Good Gym” in clearing the canal bed of weeds in preparation for the laying of a membrane to retain the moisture needed.

### EAST SIDE



## JOHN B. HILLING



1934 – 2024

We in Llandaff have good reason to mark John Hilling’s passing (having managed to reach his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in good health), because his 1978 book “Llandaf Past and Present” (ISBN 0 900807 28 8) published by the Stewart Williams Press in 1978 graces so many of our shelves as a standard reference point for our local history .

After schooling at Tredegar Grammar school, John studied at the Welsh School of Architecture in Cardiff, where he qualified as an architect in 1956 at the age of 21. His career began at Sir Basil Spence’s office before he settled in Cardiff with his wife and family, in order to provide his three children with a Welsh speaking education. In 1960 John won the first prize of £100 in the main architectural competition at the National Eisteddfod of Wales at Cardiff, with a design for for a conference and reception centre. This was sufficient to enable him to buy his first car.

During the 1960s he worked for Sir Percy Thomas architects during which time he was part of the design team responsible for the visitor centre at the Welsh Folk museum at St Fagans, inspiration for which was drawn from John’s love of Scandinavian architecture. The building was one of the few buildings awarded Grade 2 status while the architect was still alive. With the team, John went on to design numerous well-known buildings in and around Cardiff, such as the Billy Banks estate in Penarth and the Tower Building at Cardiff University in Cathays Park.

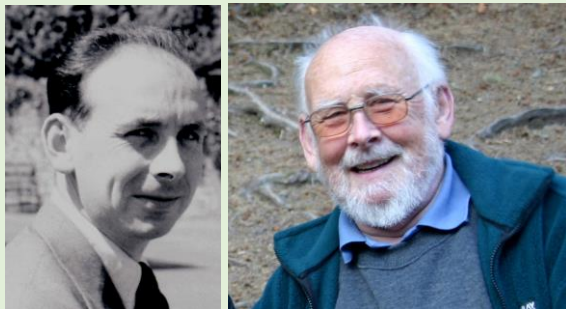
In the 1970s John became a partner with Alex Robertson, Peter Francis and partners in Cardiff, working throughout South Wales. At the start of the 1980s he moved to Cadw, working with historical buildings as a Conservation Architect, until his retirement. In this work, John’s expert approach combined with his architect’s eye.

John was a prolific author, writing a number of ground-breaking books on the architecture of Wales, including: “Cardiff and the Valleys” (1973), “The Historic Architecture of Wales” (1976; revised and updated 2018), and “The History & Architecture of Cardiff Civic Centre” (2016). He also curated the influential 1975 Welsh Arts Council exhibition (held in Cardiff & Aberystwyth) *Plans & Prospects: Architecture in Wales 1780-1914*.

*We are grateful to David Leron for this tribute (Ed)*



# REMEMBERING FOUNDER-MEMBERS OF THE LLANDAFF SOCIETY



## Jill & Nevil James

**M.B.E. awarded to Nevil  
but deserved as a couple**



Jill and Nevil lived almost all their lives within a mile of Llandaff Cathedral, and over many decades this couple contributed to the life of the Cathedral and the wider Llandaff community in many ways. Nevil was born to Arthur and Florence James in October 1929; Jill, to Alec and Gladys Birch in June 1935. Each of them was an only child, but came from large families, providing many aunts and uncles.

Nevil was employed by BT and its predecessors for all his working life. In the early sixties he was recruited to take part in the establishment of the Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station on the Lizard Peninsular, which was at the time the largest satellite tracking system in the world. However, he declined this move, preferring to remain rooted in his native Llandaff and develop his career here. The greatest highlight of that career became his position as chief BT engineer for the Cardiff cable tunnel.

Both Nevil and Jill distinctly remembered the evening of 2nd January 1941 when an air raid on Cardiff seriously damaged the Cathedral and Nevil's school. Nevil's father had been out on patrol as a Special Constable, reporting damage and casualties to Nevil and his mother as they sheltered beneath their substantial dining table. Jill meanwhile, was under the stairs in "Byways", Fairwater Road, when their front door was blown up the stairs by the force of the explosion. Years later, they both added their memories of that night to those of others in Llandaff, when The Llandaff Society published occasional Paper No.6 entitled "JANUARY 2<sup>nd</sup> 1941"

National Service was a formative and memorable experience for Nevil. He spent 18 months in the Royal Signals at Catterick in the late 1940s, latterly as an instructor. During his spare time there he started a Scout Group for the sons of soldiers at the garrison. He later became Scout Master of the 1st Llandaff and Assistant District Commissioner.



Likewise, the Girl Guide Movement was to play a major role in Jill's life. She became a Queen's Guide in 1957; and when the Company Captain moved away, Jill took charge and was described as having been an "inspirational leader" and an "adventurous guider".

Jill had attended the village school before winning a scholarship to Howell's School where she discovered an easy way with words; found a love for Botany, and gained a qualification as a life-saver.



She left with nine 'O' Levels in 1951. Her ambitions to go on to University however, were thwarted by domestic circumstances and she had to go out to work to supplement the family finances - firstly in the steelworks (in the wages office NOT the rolling mill) and subsequently in the Clerk's Department Of Glamorgan County Council where she worked until marriage in 1958.

In 1952 the restoration of the Cathedral turned to the bells, and the recruitment and training of a band to ring them. The Youth Club, Scouts and Guides proved suitable sources of raw talent. More accomplished ringers from St John's Cardiff and other nearby churches took on the task of turning them into capable ringers. Several romances flourished among the new ringers, not least between the Tower Captain, Nevil, and Secretary, Jill, who became engaged in January 1958 (on condition that Jill's dog Bob was the third member of the new household). They got married in Llandaff Cathedral in October that year. Both being only children, they were completely unprepared for the challenges presented by sibling rivalry when David and Nick came along.

Although Jill gave up ringing when pregnant with David, Nevil continued right up to the age of 92, when he rang at the Welsh National service of Remembrance for the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in the Cathedral. He retired having rung a total of 78 peals, 55 at Llandaff.

He also served as Master of the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association in 1971, before taking on the greater challenge of Treasurer from 1973-76. In this role he brought a new rigour to the keeping of accounts and also launched the Bell Restoration Fund which helped fund many projects around the two dioceses. To many in the ringing community, Nevil's crowning achievement was replacing the rather difficult old Llandaff Cathedral ring of ten bells with a sparkling new twelve in 1992; bringing a huge benefit to the Llandaff band and to ringing in South Wales.

Jill could be found on Friday mornings for over twenty years, in Rookwood Hospital - either in the WRVS shop or wheeling the WRVS trolley around the wards. She received the WRVS Service Medal for her contribution.

Once the boys were in full-time education Jill revisited her earlier ambition of Higher Education. The advent Of the Open University showed the way, and she enrolled, bringing the discipline of early morning programmes in both sound and vision, into the family's life. Jill Graduated with a BA in 1978; and then, after more courses and a well-received dissertation on St Winifred's Hospital before its redevelopment into flats (illustrated with plans and drawings by Nevil) she achieved honours in 1994.

Jill and Nevil had a joint passion for local history. They took several extra-mural courses at Cardiff University, taking the boys along on field trips to various sites of industrial archaeological interest in the valleys and the vale.

Soon after Nevil retired from BT in 1986 Dean Alun Davies suggested that the couple should attempt to bring some semblance of order to the mass of papers, books and photographs that remained unsorted – and largely unloved - around the Cathedral. This provided an excuse for visits to Cardiff City Archives and the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. Nevil was subsequently appointed Cathedral Archivist.

From its foundation in 1977 both were active members of the Llandaff Society and, with Lisbeth David and others, were highly instrumental in setting the Society's course in its early years. Both authored well-referenced occasional papers that added to our knowledge of aspects of Llandaff's history as diverse as: the orphaned daughters of an eighteenth-century Llandaff maltster (Jill, 1993, No. 8), or the life of the Venerable James Rice Buckley (Nevil, 2009, No. 16). A paper of particular interest was 'Speed Revisited' (1987, No. 3), a collaboration between Nevil and J M Lewis. Not only did they successfully reconstruct the road map of Llandaff in 1610; they also speculated on the location of a much earlier road – perhaps even Roman. Both Jill and Nevil played leading parts in the editing of the Society's book of historical photographs *Llandaff* (1996, Chalford, ISBN 0 7524 0380 X). And around the turn of the century they were central to a seven-year project to photograph every building in Llandaff. The results are now lodged in the Glamorgan Archives and are reflected in the Society's publication *Llandaff 2000* (2000, Tempus, ISBN 0752416006).

The long fight to restore Insole Court benefitted from the support of both Nevil and Jill, and his drawing of the mansion featured on many a campaign poster. In 2010 both became founder members of the Friends of Insole Court's Archive Research Group.

Their rigorous approach to research set a standard for other members, and their knowledge of local history was a highly valued resource. Before retiring from the Group, Nevil presented to the archive copies of more than 30 drawings he had made of features of the Court, and literally hundreds of photographs, interior and exterior, taken from 1956 onwards. Thanks to this donation, their names will be long remembered at Insole Court.



Jill and Nevil's artistic skills also served the Cathedral. Jill helped arrange flowers for many years and both contributed a range of needlework, including kneelers and seat cushions, many to Nevil's own design. Nevil's fine calligraphy is found throughout the Cathedral, including an explanation of the Lady Chapel reredos, and the Cathedral Remembrance and Visitor Books. His signwriting skills were put to good use on the many peal-boards found on the belfry walls. He was a skilled artist and sketched more than 250 churches, mostly across South Wales.

Although it was Nevil who was awarded an MBE in 2004 for services to local history, their sons, David and Nick know that this was really an award to both of them for their long and distinguished service to the Llandaff Community.

Both Nevil and Jill lived long and fulfilling lives despite several health difficulties. Jill died in Llandough Hospital in July 2018 following an extended illness. Nevil continued to live an independent life for a further five years before his own health started to fail. Care visits were organised, but in October these proved insufficient and he moved to a newly opened care home – Llys Herbert in Lisvane – close to the farm where he had spent time with his Aunty May during the war. There he passed peacefully away in November 2024.

Theirs really were lives well lived. They showed the value of investing in the place, the community and the people around us. Their contribution to Llandaff was truly positive and lasting - and also gave them both great pleasure.



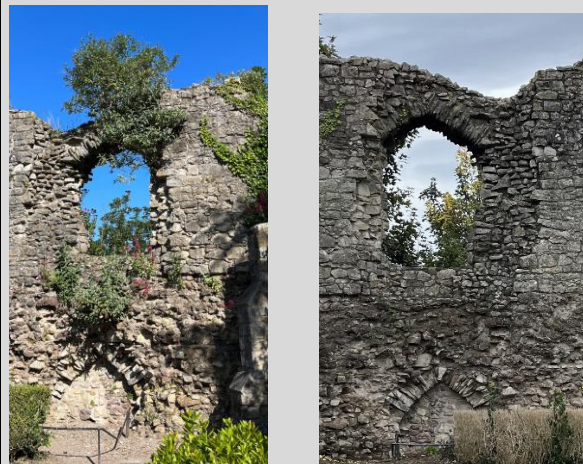
# OUR CONCERN FOR THE STATE OF LLANDAFF'S ANCIENT HISTORICAL STRUCTURES IS BEGINNING TO BE RECOGNISED.

The talk by Consultant engineer, Kate Wise to our September meeting has given us hope that these issues are beginning to be taken seriously by CADW and the Council. Weeds have been cleared from the walls of the Bishop's Castle; and much loose stonework has been revealed and is being addressed. However crude graffiti on the Castle Doors shame our village-City and we look forward to hearing plans for dealing with that.



**KATE WISE**

## CASTLE WALLS



**BUDDLEIA AT WORK ..... AND REMOVED**

**WE BELIEVE THESE HISTORIC STRUCTURES DESERVE A MUCH MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN OUR VILLAGE CITY'S LIFE THAN AS PICTURESQUE BUT DECAYING RUINS, REPAIRED OCCASIONALLY BUT WITH NO CONTINUING VISION OR PURPOSEFUL MAINTENANCE**

## THE 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CAMPANILE



**UNCONTROLLED GROWTH IN STONEWORK**

## GATEHOUSE DOORS



**SHAMEFUL GRAFITTI**

**MANY WILL REMEMBER THE SWEET-SMELLING AROMATIC HERBS THAT GRACED THE GARDENS UNDER THE OLD CITY COUNCIL. VOLUNTEERS COULD HELP TO IMPROVE TODAY'S PLANTING WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT**

We understand that members of "50+" based in The Pound stand ready to deploy gardening labour if only the discontinued system of locking the doors an night to protect their work could be reinstated.

# OUR CHRISTMAS SERVICE HELPS FOODBANKS

Your retiring collection at last Christmas' service in St Michael's Chapel was really appreciated by Cardiff Foodbank. Here is their acknowledgement sent: 21/02/2024

*Dear Llandaff Society,*

*Thank you so much for your kind donation of £350 to Cardiff Foodbank via cheque following your Carols Service and The Cathedral Green Carols at the end of last year. We really appreciate your support. We have been in existence for over a decade and have seen a gradual increase in the need for emergency food provision since we began. Last financial year we distributed 19,253 emergency food parcels to help people in need across Cardiff.*

*So far this financial year we have distributed 13,147 parcels which is a 21.7% increase on the same period last year. Our vision is for Cardiff to be a city where no-one goes hungry because everyone can afford the essentials.*

*While we are unwavering in our commitment to continue to provide emergency food parcels and support to local people, we are also looking to develop programmes that will support our vision to see communities that no longer rely on foodbanks but are able to afford the essentials. This donation will be used to help us with our running costs and to support our provision of emergency food parcels through our 8 client-facing distribution centres across Cardiff and will have a significant and immediate impact on our ability to address food insecurity and support those in need within the community. It will also help us with developing new partnerships and programmes to reduce foodbank usage.*

*Thank you so much for standing with us in this in these challenging times.*

*Sara Redwood (Gweinyddwr/Administrator)*

**LET US AIM FOR £500 THIS COMING DECEMBER 13<sup>th</sup> (Ed)**