

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Saturday 17th July, Archaeology Day** at the Museum 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
All Welcome. Free Entry. Talk to Owain Glyndwr, enlist in the museum's Home Guard unit, storytelling, dressing-up, mini-excavation and more. Parents to accompany children at all times. Sensible shoes and old clothes for digging.

**Thursday 23rd September, 7pm, Antiques with Rev Dr Felix Aubel**  
All are welcome to come along to the museum for a discussion on antiques, and you are welcome to bring items of your own for our guest speaker to examine and discuss. (Please note new date)

**Monday 4th October 10.30am, A 'Friendly' Get Together at the Museum.** Everyone is welcome to join the Friends at the Museum on Monday 4th October from 10.30 - 12. Tea and coffee, a chat and a talk given by one of the museum staff.

**Wednesday 13th October, "The Roman Goldmines at Dolaucothi - An On-Going Debate" with Heather James.** A joint event with the Civic Society held at the museum. Limited number of tickets available. Details tbc.

**Monday 8th November, Curry Evening** at the Shish Mahal. Details tbc

For more diary dates and up-to-date details please check the events page on the website [www.carmarthenmuseum.org.uk](http://www.carmarthenmuseum.org.uk).

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JULY

# THE FRIEND

2010

*The Newsletter of The Friends of Carmarthenshire County Museum*



## THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

JULY 2nd 1566—Nostradamus, French Astrologist dies aged 62.

JULY 8th 1884— The N.S.P.C.C. is founded in London.

JULY 24th 1969—Neil Armstrong first walks on the Moon.

Dear Friends,

Hello and welcome to the July issue, and my first Friend as Editor. I would firstly like to extend my thanks to Jill who has been a great help in transferring the Friend into my hands, and I hope I can continue to provide a newsletter that you will enjoy and find informative.

I would like to put my own stamp on The Friend and to this end you may find a few changes over the coming months. However, I have no intention of changing anything for changes sake, and I would very much like to hear your thoughts.

- What would you like to see in The Friend or on the website?
- Do you have any articles, comments, pictures or experiences that you would like to submit?
- I must apologise that I am not a Welsh speaker, so any articles written in Welsh would be especially appreciated.

After an enjoyable Get-Together on 5th July more will be arranged at the museum throughout the year, so we can chat over a cuppa to discuss what it is to be a Friend. Thanks go to Ann Dorsett who gave an interesting talk on the B.A. Lewis exhibition before we retired for a coffee.

Your feedback, views, pictures and articles would be greatly appreciated so please keep in touch, and have an enjoyable summer.

**Tracy**

[www.carmarthenmuseum.org.uk](http://www.carmarthenmuseum.org.uk)

## VISITING THE PAST—MARY BAKER

I take people from all over the world on tours around West Wales and show them our wonderful historical and archaeological sites. It saddens me that quite often someone from Kansas has more knowledge and enthusiasm for our past than we who live here. I suppose we take things for granted unlike our overseas cousins for whom anything over 100 years old is a National Treasure.

Ancient Monuments are all around us and are sought out by visitors; the cameras are out in force at burial chambers such as Pentre Ifan (see picture) and at Carreg Cennan. These iconic places are much loved, visited and photographed and have become etched into our national psyche. We are rightly proud that we are the modern day guardians of our visible heritage.



What about the role of the museum though? The Museum collects, cherishes and displays a past that is relevant to our community. It is a collection though that stretches out beyond the locality and has national and international relevance. The objects and artefacts talk to us, they tell us about the sites, the lives lived, the battles, the mundane, the exciting, each has a story. It is up to us to listen to the dialogue and engage with the excitement that can be found by investigating the past.

The museum is the powerhouse that brings together the information and interpretation. It is a dynamic living resource. I often bring tour groups to the museum; they may have a keen interest in a particular period of history, or want to see one particular artefact but I always find that they soon become engrossed in the whole story as they stroll through the galleries and explore everywhere with delight.

We start with wonderful stone axes (it would be superb if we could actually handle some though!) and work our way through the Bronze and Iron Ages and into the Roman. The Romano British Stones really capture the imagination and are such rarities that the British Museum must look on with envy!!

The upstairs sections bring familiarity and memories back to many. Some who are seeking ancestral roots reach an understanding of the lives of their forefathers. The displays consolidate the knowledge we have gained through site visits and greatly enhance our interest and understanding. My visitors and I love the museum and we are so grateful that it is there.

If we take too much for granted however the axe may fall and the past will be seen as an expensive irrelevance in today's cost cutting harsh financial climate. But it is during the hard times that we should look to the past for encouragement, education, and just plain awe and admiration. So let us sing the praises of our heritage and defend to the hilt our right to celebrate and share our wonderful past.

Mary runs Archaeotours, a tour company based in West Wales.

[www.archaeotours.co.uk](http://www.archaeotours.co.uk)

## FISHBOURNE PALACE, CHICHESTER

I have long known about the Roman Palace at Fishbourne, and despite often visiting relatives in Chichester it wasn't until recently that I had the opportunity to visit one of the most interesting and complete high status Roman villa's in Britain.

On a sunny autumn day in 2009 I dragged my family kicking and screaming to the palace. What is it about the word 'museum' that sends teenager boys cowering into a corner, vowing never to speak to you again if they are forced to go in? We left them in the car.

Unfortunately the two youngsters didn't have a choice. They were coming with us, like it or not. 9 year old Aimee loves museums. It must be a girl thing, because 11 year old Jack definitely does not. An apprentice teenager, he was less than enthusiastic. However, once we managed to drag him inside and he saw the displays of Roman soldiers, armor and weapons, he changed his mind completely. Aimee went off exploring with her dad, and I took Jack with me.

As he had learnt about the Romans in school, he had a fair basic knowledge of the subject, so it was great to chat about how the hypocaust worked, and how long it must have taken to put together all of the tiles in the magnificent mosaics. The garden was equally interesting with great big bunches of grapes hanging from vines, and espalier apple trees trained to regimental precision.

Back inside, and both children enjoyed tile rubbings, sorting pot shards and coins from rubbish, and putting together mosaics, before moving on to every boys idea of fun – checking out the skeletons! (See picture) A final stop at the shop for us girls and then it was time for home.

When we reached the car, the teenagers were complaining they were bored – no surprise there. We, on the other hand, had enjoyed an interesting, educational and enjoyable hour in the presence of the Roman's.

It was well worth the visit, and I for one would love to go back and spend more time there.

Tracy Dyson



## A.G.M. REPORT 27th MAY 2010

Carmarthenshire County Museum held their AGM in the old Bishop's Chapel on the first floor of the museum at Abergwili. Retiring chairman Brenig Davies, whose term of office had come to an end, reviewed the work of the past year. The programme's intention is to present events which are sociable, entertaining and educational while at the same time raising funds to support the work of the museum; in this it had been very successful. There had been few demands on the society's funds this year as a bid to purchase artefacts at an auction had been unsuccessful and the expected major contribution to the conservation and display of the Roman Coins Hoard is delayed. The usual contribution to National Archaeology Day in July was made.

Brenig spoke of his regret that vice-chairman Arwyn Price had had to resign due to ill health. He thanked the committee for their support and energy, particularly retiring treasurer Hazel Martell.

David Grindrod was elected unopposed as chairman with Brenig as vice-chairman. The new treasurer will be Ann Evans with Glyn Worthington continuing as programme secretary. Jill Davies takes over as minutes secretary and Tracy Dyson as editor of The Friend with Gwyn Nethercote remaining as events organiser.

After a suitable pause for refreshment members gathered in the main hall for a talk by Sulwyn Thomas. The enthusiasm he displays on Radio Cymry's Stodin Sulwin was well in evidence as he enthralled his audience with tales from his life as a broadcaster. The story of the National Eisteddfod being taken to the States raised many laughs and set the tone for the whole enjoyable evening.

National Archaeology Day will take place at the Museum on Saturday 17 July. There will be activities to interest adults and children and entry is free. Friends' events will restart in September. For information on Archaeology Day contact curator Gavin Evans on 01267 228696.

**Jill Davies**



"When this Oak is fallen down,  
then shall fall Carmarthen Town! "

Picture taken c. 1900 / 1910

## WALES LAUNCHES NEW MUSEUM STRATEGY

Swansea Museum, founded in 1841, is Wales's oldest - an appropriate place last month for the Heritage Minister Alun Ffred Jones to launch Wales's first-ever museum strategy.

Around 160 organisations hold collections and display them to the public in Wales, and therefore could be called museums. 'A Museums Strategy for Wales' looks to the next five years and calls on museums to contribute towards communities and promote lifelong learning opportunities; continue the preservation and development of collections; and effective working to maintain relevant, robust and sustainable organisations. They are also being asked to recruit more volunteers, play a greater role in tourism and be more inclusive.

Alun Ffred Jones said museums had a role to play beyond preserving Welsh history and culture. Museums could make an important contribution to education, developing skills and social and economic well-being.

"Wales is a unique and enriching place in which to live and work, with a distinctive character," he added.

"The museums of Wales play a critical part in both preserving this rich heritage and in sharing the excitement of their stories locally, nationally and internationally.

"Museums need to build on their tradition of working together to make effective use of resources.

"I urge museums to develop different ways of working and look beyond existing structures, to explore further joint working and innovative ways to generate income."

"Our first national museums strategy for Wales offers realistic actions that museums can take to improve services and demonstrate the benefits of museums to everybody."

Museums Association president Stuart Davies said, "The process of bringing the strategy together is as important as the final document. Museums in Wales have restated their shared vision and shared values." The strategy "should now be held up as an exemplar to the other home nations, who should follow suit without hesitation."

**Gavin Evans**

## The Museum and the Contemporary Art Society for Wales Exhibition

In July the Contemporary Art Society for Wales (CASW) is holding its annual general meeting in Carmarthen. The members will be taking the opportunity to visit the Museum prior to their meeting. It seemed appropriate then for the museum to provide a small exhibition of paintings gifted to it by the Society. The exhibition, of six paintings by modern Welsh artists, or those working in Wales, can be seen in the museum's cafe.

The CASW was founded in 1937 '... to foster and promote the development of artistic taste ... and appreciation of the arts amongst the people of Wales.' To this end, the Society purchase artwork, which is gifted to appropriate institutions throughout Wales. Carmarthenshire County Museum has around fifteen works gifted by the Society, including the work of leading practitioners of the latter half of the twentieth century and the twenty first century.



Daniel views portrait by Harry Holland, gifted to the museum by the Contemporary Art Society for Wales.

Research for the exhibit was carried out by Pete Dutton, an MA Art History student.

Included in this exhibition are works by leading living artists Harry Holland, Geoff Yeomans and Jacqueline Williams; and works by Tony Goble, Leslie Moor and John Petts. The art works encompass a wide range of technique and style, from Moore's sunny watercolour composition *Yellow Flowers with Curtains and Park*, 1973, to Tony Goble's vivid but challenging acrylic composition *Little Haven*, 1995, and Harry Holland's delightful oil study *Head of a Young Woman*, 1983, sketched on a cross channel ferry between England and France.

**Pete Dutton**



**MYSTERY OBJECT** In each newsletter I intend to find an artefact from the museum's collection to test your knowledge and imagination. This first object can be found in the Tudor and Stuart school's loan box. It is a hollow pottery 'vase' but was never designed for displaying flowers. It has a piece of wood pushed into the top which also has a hole in it.

So the question is—what is the object? The answer will be in the next issue of the Friend.

## LLANARTHNEY – SCENE AT A FUNERAL 1913

The funeral of the late Mr David Thomas, landlord of the Troedrhwiogoch Inn, Llanarthney, took place on Wednesday, when some extraordinary scenes were witnessed. The deceased's widowed mother, brother and sisters are advanced revivalists. The funeral was announced to take place at one o'clock but half an hour previously the deceased's brother and brother-in-law took the coffin containing the body and placed it on a milkcart, and proceeded in the direction of Llanarthney, where the burial was to take place. They were met on the way by the people bringing the bier. These claimed the coffin in order to bear it in the ordinary way. The brother and brother-in-law were unwilling and the coffin was transferred with force. The coffin was of common deal, plain, with no fittings and no nameplate was attached thereto. Ultimately the procession was formed and the funeral proceeded in the ordinary way. After the party returned to the inn they pulled down the sign and emptied the beer casks. The deceased was a widower and left 8 children.

**WELSHMAN 21/2/1913**

**DIWRNOD  
ARCHEOLEG YN YR  
AMGUEDDFA  
Sadwrn, 17 Gorffennaf**

**11:00 yb – 4:00 yp**

**Siaradwch â Owain Glyndŵr,  
ymunwch â'r Gwarchodlu  
Cartref, adrodd stori, gwisgo i  
fyny, cloddio i blant â ragor.**

**Croeso i baw  
Am ddim**

**Dylai rhieni gofio na ddylid  
gadael plant are u pen eu hun.  
Hen ddillad ac esgidiau addas  
ar gyfer cloddio.**

**ARCHAEOLOGY DAY  
AT THE  
MUSEUM**

**Saturday 17th July  
11a.m—4p.m.**

**Talk to Owain Glyndŵr,  
join the Home Guard,  
storytelling, dressing up, mini-  
excavation and more.**

**All Welcome  
Free Entry**

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at all times, please.  
Old clothes and sensible shoes  
for digging.**