

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Thursday 11 February**

**Annual Fun Quiz** (or as it is known by now, Trevor's Quiz)

**Thursday 11 March**

**Nigel McCall:** Illustrated talk, *Antarctic Adventures*

**Thursday 15 April**

Evening visit to the "painted church",

Trinity Church, **Pontargothi**

Contact Glyn Worthington 01267 234841

**Thursday 27 May**

**A.G.M.**, followed by a talk by **Sulwyn Thomas**



**Antiquarian Society**

**Saturday 20 February**

**Day School** in association with Lampeter University, 10.30am

**Demetia to Dyfed: the end of Roman rule in West Wales**

**Halliwell Centre, Trinity University**

Contact Heather James 01267 231793

**Saturday 20 March**

Darlith; **Enwau Teulu'r Cymry**/Welsh Surnames

**Prof. Prys Morgan**

**Llandeilo** Civic Hall, 3.00. Buffet tea and translation facilities.

**Saturday 24 April**

AGM followed by lecture

**Llanelly Railway Strike Riots 1911**

**Selwyn Samuel Centre, Llanelli. 2.00** Buffet tea.

**Friends of the Archives**

**Wednesday 10 February**

**Slave of the Russians:** Laurence Macpherson & Julian Baster

**Wednesday 10 March**

**London County Council's Plan to steal the River Towy**

Richard Rees. Both meetings at the Archives, 7.00.

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# THE FRIEND

*The Newsletter  
of  
The Friends of  
Carmarthen  
County Museum*



*February  
2010*

## **The Annual Arbour Stephens Lecture *The Real Saint David***

Please come along to hear

**The Right Reverend J. Wyn Evans, Bishop of St. David's**  
give this year's lecture

Mount Voluntary Centre, Carmarthen at  
**2.30p.m on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March**

The lecture will be followed by tea and cakes  
Please ring the museum to book your place: 01267 228696

### **BEST WISHES FOR 2010**

The New Year did not get off to a good start as a committee meeting and the January event had to be cancelled. It was disappointing that the 'cheese and wine' party could not be held as it has been such a success in the past. Perhaps next year?

**Don't forget Quiz Night on the 11th of February.** It is not only an important money raiser for our funds; it is also great fun. Teams are a maximum of four, at least one should be a member of the Friends. Perhaps non-members could be persuaded to join! Cost per team £10.00 There will be no prizes but you can have a glass of wine or orange juice during the interval. Teams can be formed when you get to the Museum as there are always groups which can do with one or two more. Start at 7.00 **SHARP**, doors open 6.30.

## Nimble Fingers

The museum's samplers are some of its most treasured objects. A selection from the sampler collection is on view again in the temporary exhibition gallery and the exhibition will run until the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. Samplers cannot be permanently exhibited because prolonged exposure to light damages them greatly. However, we do try to show some of them every few years, for short periods of time.

In this year's show we have concentrated on showing samplers that have been acquired in the past thirty years. One of the most interesting is one completed by Elizabeth Lodwick in 1798. Elizabeth was eleven years old and her sampler tells us that she was "Taught by Miss Gwynn Newcastle Emlyn". Her sampler had been treasured and passed down through the family, until eventually it arrived by bequest at the museum. Learning how to sew was a vital part of the education of girls. In the eighteenth century, girls such as Elizabeth Lodwick, who received an education, were pretty privileged. Even so, becoming a proficient needlewoman was essential for all girls.

As education became available to all, so sampler making became an everyday occurrence in schools throughout the country. In the days before mass-produced garments and sewing machines, who else could make household linen and underwear but a housewife and her daughters? Girls who went into service were also expected to do their share of mending or sewing. Making a sampler played a vital part in acquiring these needlework skills. The first samplers were made to record stitches and patterns. By 1800 they were beginning to turn from reference tools into display items. Embroidering the alphabet, numbers and Biblical or pious verses was also seen as part of an 'improving' process. However, the little sampler maker may well have had greater enjoyment from sewing borders and motifs, such as houses, birds and butterflies. Large numbers of samplers have survived from the 1850s until the 1890s. They are often large and very brightly coloured and embroidered in wool using only cross stitch. They mark the begin-



ning of the end of school sampler making. Ideas about the education of girls changed and the need for needlework skills diminished.

Sampler making survives today as a lovely pastime. Nothing illustrates better the enormous changes that have taken place in the education of women over the years than the history of the sampler.

**Ann Dorsett**

## Christmas at the Museum

Our picture shows Councillor Tyssul Evans, Chairman of Carmarthenshire County Council and our guest of honour on the first night of the Friends' Christmas concert, addressing the congregation during the interval. Councillor Evans and his sister, who acts as his consort, were very



welcome guests who took a great interest in some of the galleries, particularly the Bishop's Kitchen, when they were shown around before the concert began. No less welcome was Councillor Lynwen Williams, our guest on the second night. Mrs Williams has been a staunch supporter of the Friends since its foundation and has attended almost every Christmas event for the last dozen years or more.

The Myrddin Chorale, who always give their services freely, have by now become "part of the family", as our chairman Brenig Davies said, and like us, look forward to the event

We have a new and enthusiastic committee member.  
A warm welcome to Tracy Dyson.

as being the start of Christmas. Under their conductor, Dr Dulais Rhys, they performed a variety of settings of carols, both traditional and modern, and, a new venture, a selection from *The Messiah*. Light relief, which was much appreciated, judging by the gales of laughter, was provided by a reading from Gervase Phinn's account of a Yorkshire primary school's Christmas.

Brenig and the committee would like to thank the staff for their help in getting the hall ready, the members who ran the bottle stall and sold raffle tickets, and above all, our guests of honour, the Chorale and its conductor and accompanist. They all helped to make the two evenings very enjoyable and very worthwhile for the Friends, and, of course, ultimately the Museum.



## The Tanner-boy

As the railways pushed westward in the mid-1800s so began the decline in river traffic that brought goods of all kinds to Carmarthen and west Wales. For centuries ships had come to Carmarthen from England, Europe and beyond. The decline in river trade was gradual to begin with but dwindled away rapidly after the first World War.

In the late 1930s the opening of the Bascule 'White Bridge', to allow ships to pass under the railway line, became an infrequent happening. By this time the only visiting cargo ships were those bringing timber from Canada to the Robinson David sawmills, flour to the Western Counties Association dis-

tribution centre and cement to the P.G.Davies builders' yard on the Quay. The ships relied on spring tides to make their way from the sea. Skippers unfamiliar with the meanderings and sandbanks of the river Towy called upon the services of a pilot who would board the ship at Ferryside, having rowed out to meet the vessel and tied his dinghy to the Barrel Post protruding from the water. The Barrel Post remains to this day, albeit at an angle, marking the main channel in the river.

A ship, under the command of the pilot, would make its way up stream on the rising tide, tie up just below the White Bridge until the lifting section opened to allow passage up to



the town's Quay to unload its cargo. Unloading was always carried out at high water to avoid strenuous hauling from ship to shore. A small army of labourers would be engaged to get the job done in the limited time available.

Once the unloading was complete the crew would then have a twelve or twenty-four hour wait before turning the ship around to make their way downstream in day-light, on an ebbing tide. Time to kill, therefore, and most of it spent in one of the many local taverns - the *Sloop*, the *Jubilee*, the *Pelican*, the *Red Cow* and, most popular of all, the *Jolly Tar*. With the cargo unloaded and the water level falling as the tide ebbed away, the mooring ropes would tighten and require constant easing until the keel settled on the river bed. Keeping a watchful eye on tightening ropes encroached on valuable drinking time ...so, to get over the problem, local youngsters would be allowed to play on the open deck if they promised to run into the tavern to let the skipper know when the warps needed attention. One boy, usually the oldest or the biggest lad, would

be promised a silver sixpenny piece if he did the job properly and kept the rest of the boys in order.

He was called the "TANNER-BOY".

