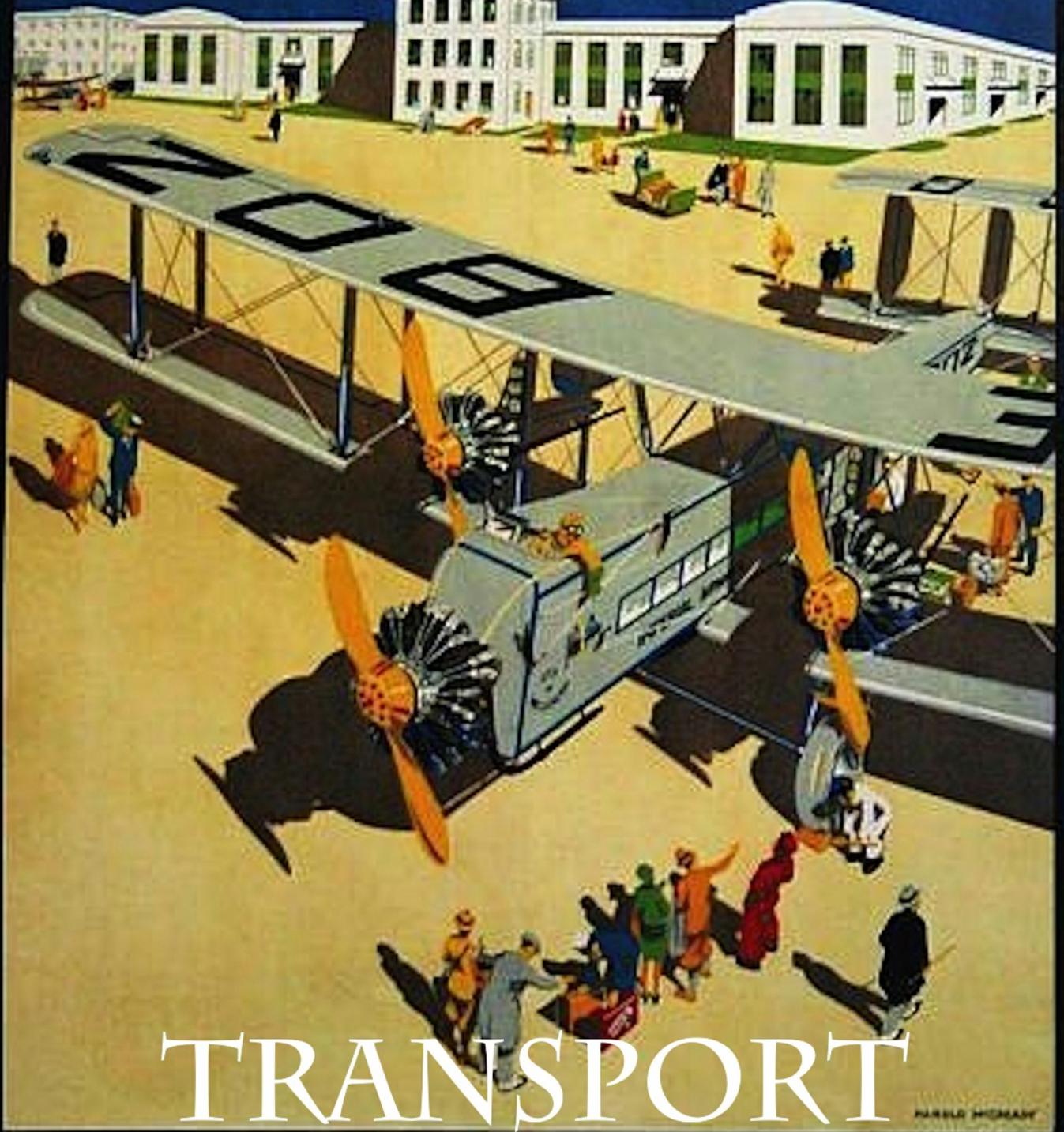


CHRONICLE

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TRANSPORT

Historical Association, Swansea Branch

Promoting History in South West Wales

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

Issue 12 Spring 2016

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The next train has gone ten minutes ago. Punch



If Rosa Parks had not refused to move to the back of the bus, you and I might never have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King. Ramsey Clark



On Sunday, I took a train,
which didn't seem to want to
go to Newcastle.

J.B.Priestley



Friends of the
Newport Ship



Cover: The cover painting is an Imperial Airways poster from 1926, showing an Armstrong Whitworth Argosy on the tarmac at Croydon Airport.

The famous tower with its radio aerials is in the background.

From the Editor

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A Traveller's tale

Much to my surprise, I recently found myself giving a talk in the Coventry Transport Museum .

It was only on researching my subject that I realised how transport and transport maps had so affected my life. Lots of old books on the subject threw up some very interesting tips.

Here is one that you might have forgotten., Especially useful for those who live in Wales and need to drive up a steep hill.

'Should a hill be met that is so steep that the car cannot manage to surmount it, or to do so would mean dismounting the passengers, it is very probable that by turning the car round and going up the hill backwards, in reverse gear, the difficulty will be surmounted'.

This is from the 14th edition of the Motor Manual published in the 30s

More tips, this time on good manners for men on how to behave on omnibuses. Written by Mrs Humphry, 'Madge' of 'Truth' in 1897.

'There have been women so unreasonable to complain of men smoking in the top of an omnibus. Could anything be more illogical? First, they invade the seats that have been claimed by man as his right for many long years and then feel annoyed because he smokes in their presence. A man is justified in so doing. Or, to speak accurately, the women are petulant because his tobacco is often rank, strong and consequently evil smelling. But no man must feel it necessary to put out his pipe or throw away his cigar in these circumstances'.

When not on the omnibus, it used to be considered bad manners to smoke when driving with a lady...

'Permission must of course always be asked of the lady. It is scarcely ever refused, and it is almost an exceptional thing to see a man driving without a cigar between his teeth'.

The good old days. No seat belts or mobile phones to worry about. Articles in this issue will tell of many changes in transport over the years, whether travelling by wagon in the wild west of America, using the new flying machines, driving a car at the giddy speed of 5 mph or just travelling on a trolleybus.

Swansea has a fascinating maritime history. Over the years its been an Elizabethan river-side quay, seaside resort and during the Industrial Revolution a port and dock system was created that enabled the Cape Horners to take Welsh coal around the world in exchange for copper-ore .

Except for the sunken medieval ship *Mary Herberd*, we do not have any articles on ships. Perhaps in another issue of *Chronicle*, we could feature Maritime History. If you would like to email an article to me on this subject, 400-800 words would be welcome.

All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveller is unaware. Martin Buber

Wheels of Wales

When you come into the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea there are usually around 2,000 artefacts for you to see, but this makes up only small fraction of our collection! Even though we refresh parts of the museum periodically there are many objects which ever make it to the display stage. Why do you collect them then? I hear you ask. There are many reasons why something might not be on display. Curators collect things that are important to our heritage and very often these things are in poor condition so an artefact might need a lot of expensive conservation work before it can be presented to the public. When we collect objects our first priority is to preserve them and stop any deterioration to their condition. Restoration for exhibitions or display takes a back seat until finance can be found for projects – especially large objects like cars and buses. In the Industry Collection of the National Museum of Wales are many different forms of transport and each one has to have a strong connection to Wales – by manufacture, inventor or usage. The ones not on display are kept at Nantgarw, near Cardiff until their turn comes.



Not everything in this section is over a hundred years old. You'll find two examples of the Sinclair C5 one for display and one for use by the public to sit in and get the feel for it. On high days and holidays (and weather permitting) this model is used in our garden and any visitor can try it out. The C5 is pedal powered with battery backup for hills or if the driver became tired. With a top speed of around 15 mph the C5 was produced secretly in 1985 at the Merthyr Hoover factory. It was so secret that a tunnel was built under the road between the factories to keep prying eyes

from discovering the design. Different component manufacturers only saw their plans not the whole car. It was launched with wide public expectation but proved a flop as it was deemed too small to be safely driven in heavy traffic. A brilliant concept and years ahead of its time it might yet make a comeback one day when cycle paths are more widespread.



We have many vehicles brought in for temporary exhibitions and displays. In recent years these have included a caravan and a number of boats and quite a few concept electric vehicles but one of my favourite vehicles is actually a child's toy car.

In our 'Made in Wales' Gallery is the Austin J40, a blue pedal car made in Bargoed in 1959. In 1947 Parliament passed an act that recognised that many miners who were suffering from pneumoconiosis (coal dust in the lungs) could no longer work underground. So it was proposed that new factories be set up to provide lighter cleaner work to employ these men. The Austin factory at Bargoed was just one of these.



The factory which opened in 1949 stopped making the little cars in 1971 but between those dates about 36,700 were produced!



The sociable was exactly that, with a side by side arrangement of seats and was a special favourite of courting couples! The Benz was owned by a Dr Cropper of Chepstow who kept it until 1910 when he donated it to the Science Museum. It was taken into the care of the National Museum of Wales in 1911 and once fully restored took part in a number of London to Brighton rallies.

Meanwhile, back at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea one can still see quite a variety of transportation and in our Networks Gallery is the story of transport links in Wales. This gallery has a host of models of vehicles of all kinds and large digital displays of how the transport networks have grown - from sheep drover's pathways to the M4.

The museum has many other things to store besides vehicles.

Delicate objects are stored in acid free boxes or specially made crates, but how do you store a bus or helicopter? Of course they can't be kept in boxes but are lined up like a supermarket car park and are arranged quite randomly as size and shape dictate.

There is access to the stores for group visits by appointment where you will see that some of the vehicles look quite dilapidated whilst they await the magic touch of our conservation team.



From helicopters to horse drawn hearses and electric cars to steam rollers the National Collection Centre in Nantgarw sometimes resembles a child's toy box – but on a grand scale

Hanging overhead is one of the star attractions of the museum. The 'Robin Goch' or 'Red Robin' has a strong claim to be the first aeroplane to fly in Wales. It was built by Charles Horace Watkins, an amateur airman, around 1908. It has a wooden structure braced with piano wire. The cockpit looks distinctly home-made including a kitchen chair for the pilot's seat and simple household objects for instruments. Indeed, Charles navigated by using an egg timer – he would turn

the timer over, fly straight ahead until the sand ran out then turn 90 degrees and fly ahead again and repeat the turn twice more so that he ended up back where he started! To help him judge his height when landing two pieces of weighted string one 20' and one 10' long were hung on the underside so when the first weight touched ground he knew he was at 20' and when the second at 10'.



Egg timer navigation

All the museums in the National Museum of Wales family have free entry. Visiting to the National Collection Centre in Nantgarw is by appointment only, contact them on 02920573560 for availability.

Article written by Ian Smith, curator

The Historical Association is very grateful for all the help that it receives from the Waterfront Museum.

Civil Aviation Between the Wars

In Europe the development of civil aviation between the wars was driven in part by the destruction of the European rail network in World War One. There were plenty of war-surplus pilots and aircraft available to be adapted to civilian purposes, and by 1924 purpose-designed civil transport aircraft began to enter the market. Aviation advanced at first sluggishly in Europe as economies were rebuilt, with aircraft manufacturers often being their own customers as they set up small airlines. These airlines, and others growing out of bus and rail companies, proliferated.

In 1924 the Imperial Air Transport Company Ltd was formed with government backing. It amalgamated Instone Airways, Handley Page Transport, Instone Air Line, Daimler Airway, and The British Marine Air Navigation Company.

Over the decades many more mergers took place, as well as the inevitable failures, culminating in BOAC and now British Airways.



In those days the conventions on suitable toys for children differed from those of today.

Technology and customer service developed from the early days, with some experiences familiar and some thankfully forgotten.

Daimler Airway was the first airline to employ cabin staff. The stewards, known as page boys, served coffee and sandwiches. Everyone had to pay, including the pilots. The weight of the

aircraft and its load was crucial to fuel economy and range.

If a page boy put on weight he was sent to find another job.

The Imperial Airways pilots handbook of 1924 included helpful 'Points for the Passenger' .

“The passenger cabin of an Imperial Airways aeroplane is entirely enclosed; the windows on either side can be opened or closed at will. There is no more need for special clothing than there is on a railway journey. It is possible to view the surrounding country to an extent quite impossible when travelling by train; to add interest to the journey special Imperial Airways route maps are provided on certain routes, whole speed and height recorders are fitted where they can be seen by passengers. Height sickness or giddiness (such as is often experienced when looking down from a high building) is unknown in an aeroplane.”

Concorde had a machmeter in the passenger cabin, and now it is standard for the aircraft's track, speed and altitude to be seen on a channel of the inflight entertainment. There is nothing new under the sun – but we can't open the windows any more.

Hillman's Coach Services was forced out of business in 1931 as the government set about 'rationalising' bus services. Edward Hillman, once a taxi driver, took his £145,000 compensation and set about forming an airline - Hillman's Saloon Coaches and Airways Limited. Hillman was a type of businessman recognisable today, down to earth and frugal (interpret that as you may). He paid his pilots, mainly impecunious former RAF men, little more than his bus drivers. “I don't want no high-falutin' pilots and toffee-nosed flying hostesses. I am going to run to Paris like a bus service, you'll see.” Hillman Airways was a success as a no-frills airline. It went public in December 1934

The Armstrong Siddely 'Argosy' being serviced



Also in 1931 an Imperial Airways HP42, a huge silver four-engine biplane, made a forced landing near Tonbridge. The engineers sent to dismantle the aircraft for transport back to Croydon by road saw an opportunity in the large crowd of spectators that had gathered. They formed the spectators into a queue and charged a shilling a head to go inside the aircraft. The engineers were caught and fired when they failed to recognise some Imperial Airways executives who turned up, and pushed them to the back of the queue. The engineers got their jobs back though, on the grounds that they were 'safeguarding the aircraft' and preventing souvenir hunters from making off with parts of the aircraft!

A 1935 Railway Air Services flight from Le Touquet to Shoreham was reported overdue. The emergency services were alerted and a search started. Eventually the DH89 Rapide, a twin-engine biplane, was found standing on its nose in a field near Shanklin on the Isle of Wight. The pilot had been overcome by the hospitality of the passengers before the flight and became confused when he flew into the setting sun, at one T Communication with aircraft was by Morse code, with three-character sequences telling the receiver what was to follow. QAM was 'here is the latest surface weather report', QBA 'here is the visibility', and so on.

If the transmission came from the aircraft it was a request for information.

point firing a Very pistol as he circled a Swedish ship. No one was hurt in the 'arrival', and the fate of the pilot is unknown.

There was no radar between the wars, and radio communication was still primitive. Once an aircraft was on its way its whereabouts were largely a mystery until it arrived at its destination. At Croydon airport a mechanical tracking, or rather prediction, device was created.

There were three main routes from Croydon – Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. The device had three endless metal bands, one for each route. The bands were driven at different speeds depending on the cruising speed of the aircraft. As an aircraft took off a magnetic indicator was placed on the band and started moving. When the indicator reached the end of the band the aircraft reported it was outside the Croydon control area and became someone else's problem. Sometimes the aircraft travelled at a different speed to that anticipated by the device, sometimes it took a different route, and sometimes the indicator fell off the band before anyone heard anything. From such little acorns grew the air traffic control systems of today.

QBI was unambiguous. 'Instrument Flight Rules Compulsory. Weather unfit for visual landing.' The pilot was going to need help finding the airport, let alone landing. Lookouts, in their regular jobs porters and caterers, were dispatched to the four corners of the tower. Each was equipped with a board carrying nine buttons. MN was 'motor north', MNE 'motor north east', and the ninth button MO 'motor overhead'. The lookouts needed sharp ears to decide where the sound of the motor was coming from. The bearing of the aircraft was relayed to the pilot by the air traffic controller until the pilot was confident of where he was in relation to the tower or he was out of fuel. No information on altitude was available apart from the notoriously inaccurate altimeter in the cockpit.

Eventually the pilot would descend through the cloud and rain to where he hoped the grass runway was located. The passengers may or may not have been oblivious to their plight.

We could learn lessons from the canny passengers of the 1930s. A flight from Le Bourget to Croydon was scheduled for 2 hours and 45 minutes, but arrived half an hour early. A lady passenger marched into the terminal and demanded a refund for the 30 minutes not flown!

That would be a fine thing nowadays ...

John Ashley



Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines, or,

How I flew from London to Paris in 25 hours 11 minutes.

They go up , Tiddley up, up, They go down Tiddley down, down.

In 1910, Lord Rawsley , an English press magnate, offered £10,000 to the winner of the Daily Post air race from London to Paris. He wrote in the *Daily Post*...

'The trouble with these international affairs, is that they attract foreigners'.

Wagons away



Wagons and the Divergence of Empire: The Campaign of General Edward Braddock, February-July, 1755.

As someone who specialises in early American history, it is quite obvious that transport, be that in the guise of the ships that took Christopher Columbus to the New World in 1492 (the Niña, the Pinta and the Santa Maria), the Mayflower vessel that transported the Pilgrim Fathers to the New England region, or the terribly oppressive slave ships that forcibly transported approximately 9-11 million Africans to the New World, played an instrumental role in the development of early European America. Land transport too would also consist a crucial element of colonial American (and later US) history. Indeed, one might recall from twentieth-century films, or even school textbooks, that it was the horse, ox and wagon that allowed early American ‘pioneers’ to uproot from eastern regions of the continent to eventually establish towns, settlements, cities and states in regions far beyond the confines of the original Atlantic-facing colonies of British North America. Such a movement did, of course, come at a cost; not only for those multitudes (particularly in the nineteenth century) who perished on the often-treacherous journey westwards, but for those Native American groups who became increasingly marginalised and dispossessed by perpetual waves of new settlers. It was a process that ended, tragically for many of the surviving tribes, on reservations.

We do not need, however, to look at a grand survey of American history to see how transport, or indeed a dearth of it, can influence the events, great and small, that denote local, national and indeed transnational histories. Certainly, within my own research field, the Seven Years War, and in particular its North American theatre, it is evident that seemingly humble devices of transport, such as the horse-drawn wagon, could have a notable effect not only on the immediate events to which they were connected, but also on the historical epochs that followed.

This was certainly true of the crucial (but today largely forgotten) ‘Braddock Campaign’ of 1755. Many readers of this article may not have heard of this pivotal North American military campaign and perhaps might be surprised to learn that it resulted in one of the most disastrous defeats the British Army suffered in the eighteenth century. Essentially, a mixed force of around 1,500 British and American provincial troops (the American colonies were, of course, part of the British Empire at this time), led by a sixty year old veteran soldier of 45 years’ service, General Edward Braddock, had been ordered by the British government to drive the French from the Ohio Valley; a strategically important region which afforded the main access point to the coveted American ‘west’. The campaign, however, required that the army blast and hack a 110-mile road from their operational launch-pad at Fort Cumberland, Western Maryland, across daunting and unforgiving terrain.

Ascending and descending densely forested mountain ranges, and crossing a region intersected by rivers, swamps and marshes, the rudimentary 12-foot wide path that was eventually constructed to carry the army would, it was hoped, help deliver the French Fort Duquesne--which sat at the confluence of the Ohio and Monongahela Rivers (modern day Pittsburgh)--into British hands. Unsurprisingly, however, the excruciating trials faced by the army as it blasted and hacked its way--mile by painful mile--to the Ohio made the campaign 'unimaginable to those in Europe' as one despondent British officer decried. Conditions were hardly helped by the local wildlife the troops encountered in dark and stifling backcountry forests. Mosquitoes and 'chiggers' tormented the men and camp followers, while the indigenous rattlesnake, encountered by 'Old World' soldiers for the first time, was especially terrifying to those unaccustomed to its cacophonous warning.

To transport vital equipment and materiel across such a hostile landscape, wagons (notably the Conestoga variant) were essential and had, for the most part, to be acquired from within the colonies; in particular, from among the inhabitants of Virginia and Pennsylvania. At first these, for a variety of reasons, were hardly forthcoming and, in the face of what British officers saw as an overt provincial disregard for imperial interests, General Braddock and his senior subordinates attempted to lambast local legislative assemblies and populaces into compliance with his, and the British government's, official orders. Such brash condescension seldom worked among communities as jealous of their liberties as 'freeborn Britons' as were their cousins in the mother country. Ultimately, it was only the intercession of the sagacious Pennsylvanian statesmen and future Founding Father Benjamin Franklin--who knew that colonial politics operated through the sometimes grinding principles of compromise and, importantly, consent--that allowed the army to acquire its desperately needed wagons; and hence allowed the Anglo-American force to progress when even General Braddock himself had given up 'all as lost'. For the disastrous rout at the hands of a smaller French and Native American force which ultimately trumped the British campaign against

Fort Duquesne (the 'ill-starred' General Braddock was mortally wounded and around 1,000 British and allied provincial American soldiers were killed or injured at the 'Battle of the Monongahela', July 9, 1755), the astute Franklin cannot be attributed blame.

In the short term, the Braddock Campaign was, of course, a major setback to the strategic goals of the British government and indeed its American colonies.

Yet what this mission and the quest for wagons (in addition to monetary appropriations and other supplies) also did, on the longer 'Revolutionary-era' timescale, was exemplify growing divisions between Great Britain and its American colonists. The latter, as a result of this (and other) campaigns fought in North America between 1755-1760, began to sense that their vision of 'Britishness' was rather different from that of the mother country. Whereas Britain had been, and indeed was, moving towards a centralised vision of empire, with executive authority (and the central government) holding far greater influence over colonial affairs, the American colonists were equally determined to protect what they saw as their rights and liberties as freeborn Britons. These included, crucially, defending the 'diffused autonomy' provincial assemblies had enjoyed in running local affairs. Indeed, many of the rights local legislatures enjoyed had initially been established through their colonial charters, while the 'privilege' of raising and disbursing monies had been hard-won over the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; a time when Britain and its government, in general, had adopted a laissez faire approach towards its American Empire. It was these political and constitutional traditions that Edward Braddock, in hindsight part of a vanguard of metropolitan imperial reform, infringed upon as he attempted, during the fateful 1755 campaign, to tell the colonists how much money and how many wagons and other supplies they must raise to support a military campaign; one that the British believed was being waged in defence of the colonists.

If the Newcastle-Pitt ministry of 1757-1761 managed to temporarily repair the damage done to the Anglo-American relationship in 1755 (and indeed the early stages of the Seven Years War more widely), then the schisms stoked by British military commanders as they attempted to press the issue of executive and metropolitan authority emerged again, yet with far greater virulence, in the 1760s and 1770s. It was during these latter years that the mother country, in order to meet the huge national debt it had acquired as a consequence of fighting the Seven Years (or in reality true First World) War, again attempted to dictate its will to the American colonists; this time through the imposition of direct taxes passed without the consent of provincial assemblies (and their property-qualified, vote-wielding constituents).

On this occasion, and with the French threat in Canada removed, the gulf that by 1776 had emerged between the Anglo-American vision of 'Britishness' was irreconcilable and resulted in the American Revolution.

From the perspective of this article then, it is evident that the Braddock campaign and the controversies surrounding the acquisition of supplies, money and transport for that general's army provided a mid-eighteenth century portent of some of the notable causes of the break-up of the 'first British empire'. It was a crucial, but today all-too-often forgotten, event in Anglo-American history and a key point on the path to American independence and the birth of a new nation--the United States of America.

Richard Hall

From a Railway Carriage

Robert Louis Stevenson

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And here is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart runaway in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill, and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone forever!

Sketty Hall and ‘Sketty Hall’

Sketty Hall, bordering Singleton Park in Swansea, is of great significance for the social and cultural history of the town, particularly when associated with the Dillwyn-Llewelyns and the Vivians, well known and influential local families.

A lesser known indication of Sketty Hall’s importance may be gauged from the fact that the Great Western Railway Company named one of its locomotives in the ‘Hall Class’ after it. The ‘Halls’ (4-6-0) were very effective, work-horse locomotives designed by Charles B. Collett (1871-1952) chief mechanical engineer for the Company from 1922 to 1941 to take passenger and goods trains on the G.W.R. network.

The locomotive ‘Sketty Hall’ was built in 1929 and numbered 4970. Its final mileage was 1,344,048 before it was scrapped under British Rail management, at the Duffryn yard, Swansea, in 1963.



‘Sketty Hall’ at Exeter St David’s (1962)

The locomotive being taken for scrap. This photo was taken by Val Freidenfelds who remembers seeing ‘Sketty Hall’ chalked on its boiler, the name plate having been removed.

The Halls were themselves based on earlier designs for the Company by George J. Churchwarden, superintendent of the Company from 1902 to 1921, and the class was later modified, into ‘Modified Halls’, for example ‘Thirlestain Hall’. The standard authority is Laurence Waters, *Great Western Halls and Modified Halls*. (Pen and Sword, Transport, Barnsley 2015). I am grateful to Val Freidenfelds and Andrew Treharne (Swansea University, print room) for their help with the photographs. Val Freidenfelds is collaborating with the Branch on a study of pre-Beeching lines, stations and yards in the Swansea area.



‘Sketty Hall’ at Bristol Temple Meads (1959)

The Swansea and South West Wales branch of the Historical Association is preparing a guide to Sketty Hall, its gardens and grounds. Sketty Hall being a popular venue for some of the Branch’s most successful events.

John Easton Law



The Bus Museum

What was Moira thinking of? Lily found herself, in her wheelchair, parked in front of a succession of gleaming but very elderly Leyland buses at the transport museum.

“It’s your era, Mum! Brings back memories, eh?”

She had overheard her daughter saying: “She doesn’t take an interest in anything. Says she’s had enough, that she just wants to die. I don’t know what to do with her.”

Why did people think the elderly wanted to be reminded of their youth? All it did was remind them of the way they were now. It was well-meaning, perhaps. But cruel, too. It was late in the day at the museum, which would soon be closing. The silent buses made her shiver, their headlamps seeming to stare at her. They spooked her in the half-light, the utility bus most of all.

It had been built during the war as an emergency replacement for others destroyed in air raids, and had uncomfortable, wooden, slatted seats. They skimped on direction indicators as well; sometimes in the blackout you had jump on one without really knowing where you were going. The gears made terrible grinding noises, and must have been a bugger for the drivers. They were slower than the usual buses, and that was why she got off at her usual stop five minutes later than usual that night, her home just two streets away. But there was something else that she had tried to forget about that bus ride, and that night, too.

So many crazy things happened during the blackout. She had always been sweet on him. It seemed perfectly natural, somehow, when he took her hand and held it, even though it was rather forward. She suddenly remembered the surge of happiness she had felt. As though it was yesterday.

“You’re home on leave?”

“In a manner of speaking.”

“You’re not,” she whispered, “a deserter, I hope?”

“The very idea! Lily,” he said, hurt in his voice. “I would have hoped you thought better of me than that. If I had the chance, I’d never desert you.”

She had been thrilled, and a little puzzled by his words.

“Hold very tight, please! Move right along inside, if you don’t mind.”

She asked him where he was serving. He mumbled something about it being a bit “hush-hush”, and added: “But if it was lighter in here, you’d see my suntan,” and flashed her a smile in the dark.

They chattered for the rest of the journey, he asking for news of various mutual friends, she hoping all the time that he might ask her out the following night, if he was still home on leave. But he never did. His stop was the one before hers. As he rose he suddenly blurted out: “Give us a kiss!” She puckered her lips, and closed her eyes, and at that moment the bus lurched. When she opened her eyes he wasn’t there any more.

Turning the corner of her street, and seeing a gap, and finding that her home was gone. Mother, father, brother, gone, too. Sleeping for weeks afterwards on the floor of that church hall. And then hearing that he had been killed in the fighting.

about meeting him that night on the bus. His mother looked at her strangely.

“When did you say that was, dear?”

Lily told her. The woman shook her head.

Lily had wanted something to hold on to, a sense of family. She had gone round to see his mother, even though she had not known her that well. She told the woman about meeting him that night on the bus.

“You must be mistaken. He hadn’t been home on leave for many months, not since they were shipped overseas. That’s what makes it harder, somehow.”

Lily was stunned. Her tea cup rattled. She nodded. “People often make mistakes in the blackout, don’t they?” she said. But it was as if she was talking to herself.

In the museum she looked at the ancient vehicles assembled in the gloom, and heard the clank of gears, saw a torch flashing in the dark to flag a bus down, listened to the noise of Leyland engines mingling with the sound of planes above her head. She had buried all memories of him under the rubble of her former home. Now, she found herself wondering, what if ...? After the war there had been austerity, courtship, marriage to Fred, the kids, widowhood, losing her house all over again when she moved into the care home. She had got used to it now, as much as you could. But the first few days there had reminded her of the nights she had spent sleeping in the church hall.

“Hold tight, Mum!” Moira warned, as she eased the wheelchair down the awkward step outside the museum. “I don’t know. There should be a ramp here.” Lily could hear the relief in her voice. The outing was almost over; they were on their way back to the care home.

“Hold very tight please!” Lily cried, apparently entering into the spirit of things. She remembered and savoured his words, “Hush-hush”, spoken to her that night on the bus, and thought: Soon.

Greg Freeman

The Editor would like to thank all the people who have written for *Chronicle* over the last twelve issues. If you have a subject that you would like to write about, please submit to: margaret.mccloy@sky.com

Contributors Chronicle 12

John Ashley	Chair of the Historical Association, Swansea Branch
Roger Atkinson	Author of <i>Blackout, Austerity and Pride</i> , retired L G Officer
Greg Freeman	Poet, former newspaper sub-editor
Ralph Griffiths	Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at Swansea University
Richard Hall	Lecturer in British Atlantic, Revolutionary American & early British History at Swansea University
John Law	President of The HA Swansea Branch and Reader of History and Classics at Swansea University
Ian Smith	Curator of Modern & Contemporary Industry, Waterfront Museum

Is this the Mary Herberd?



No, this ship is the Mary Rose being attacked by pirates and which now rests in Portsmouth, but Newport has its own medieval ship, but the question remains, is it the Mary Herberd ?

Identifying the Newport Medieval Ship

The discovery of the remains of a large fifteenth-century ship at Newport in 2002 was a glorious accident. Since then expert analysis by archaeologists has proceeded apace Built in northern Spain, and with trading links to Portugal, this is the most important late-medieval merchant vessel ever recovered in British waters; images of its recovery are on www.newportship.org and on the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales's website, www.coflein.gov.uk

Public excitement led to public interest locally, nationally and internationally as the Friends of the Newport Ship, Newport City Council and the Welsh Government continue their programme for the ship's conservation and plan its future display. The Ship Centre is open regularly, on Fridays and Saturdays, at its new location, Unit 20, Queensway Meadows Industrial Estate, Newport.

Public understanding of the ship's significance in the maritime history of Newport, the Severn channel and Britain – its working life was 1450-1470 – rests on expert interpretation. Archaeologists were first in the field, followed in July 2014 by an international conference with Bristol University's 'Cabot Project' (www.bristol.ac.uk/history) which enabled historians to catch up.

Significant questions have been asked about the ship's name and its last years in the River Usk: when and why did it arrive there; why was it left to decay; whose was it – and, what was its name? The conference suggested plausible answers, and a major book of essays based on the conference's proceedings will be published in 2016.

Civil war in 1468-71 focussed in the Severn estuary on the rivalry between William Herbert of Raglan, lord of Newport and earl of Pembroke, and the earl of Warwick, lord of Glamorgan. Both were ship owners, and one of Herbert's vessels was the Mary, a common ship's name in the period; when it put in at Bristol it was identified as the Mary Herberd. In 1469 Warwick executed Herbert and there were no further sailings recorded for the Mary (or Mary Herberd). In 1471 Warwick himself was killed. These political convulsions may explain why after 1469-71 the Newport Ship was allowed to decay.

Holes in the ground can contain surprises; but few as significant as the discovery of the Newport Medieval Ship. The hole in question was excavated to accommodate the orchestra pit of the new Riverfront Theatre built on the Usk river bank in Newport, Wales.

The vessel is the most complete surviving example of a Ship from the 15th Century and is of international importance. It was probably one of the larger ships of the period and capable of carrying a cargo perhaps in excess of 200 tons.

Articles found aboard suggest that it was trading with Portugal and possibly built there as well. Dendrochronology makes the likely date of felling of the timbers to be 1465-6.

More information can be found at www.newportship.org. The Friends of the Newport Ship have open days and would welcome your support.

Ralph Griffiths

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Trolleybuses

Broadly speaking, trolleybuses disappeared from British streets fifty years ago;

readers may be rather vague about what precisely they were. They were a compromise between the tram and the motor bus. They did not have rails, giving a fixed course like the tram. They were steered like a bus; they could pull into the kerb at stops and could negotiate other traffic. However, they were powered by electricity and therefore required overhead wires; two wires, one positive and one negative.

The electricity was collected by two long poles or booms on a flexible mounting on the roof. At the head of each boom was a metal wheel or skate that rolled or slid along the wire. This was held in place by a strong spring at the base of the trolley boom.

Trolleybuses were built like motor buses. They had a driver's cab at the front and a rear platform for passengers to board and leave by. As they did not have controls at each end of the vehicle, they needed a turning circle at each terminus, with the wiring normally going round the circle. This could be in a widened section of the main road, or by taking the wiring round a succession of side streets. (Let us ignore odd instances where curious reversing devices were installed). The trolleybus driver simply stayed in his cab and drove round the circle, and the conductor had no walking in the road or repositioning the trolley heads on the wires.

The conductor only had duties when the overhead wiring diverged down different roads en route, and there was a 'frog' to change, or when there was the mishap of a dewirement.

The conductor's duty at a junction where the bus was going down the less-used route was to jump off the back platform and run forward to the metal pole supporting the overhead wiring and pull down a lever which diverted a device in the wiring from the 'normal' route to the divergent route. He had to hold it down until the trolley wheels had visibly passed over the junction and taken the correct course.

He then had to run after the moving bus and jump back on to its rear platform.

By the autumn of 1939, there were times, always in daylight, when, as an 11-year-old, I would stand at the pole in Queen Square and pull the handle for the Victoria Street trolleybuses. The drivers trusted me and the conductors waved their thanks; and no inspector rushed aghast to shoo me away. Would any 11-year-old schoolboy, with so much as a 'by your leave' be allowed to take control of a significant transport hub nowadays? But, of course, with our advanced technology, would any such primitive installation still exist? In 1939, my competence was simply accepted, and there were no dewirements.





Wolverhampton trolleybus

When they did occur, dewirements could cause significant problems. If the trolley boom came off the wire, it shot up in the air. The conductor would have to pull out a long, lightweight bamboo pole that was stowed under the bus and try to catch the boom (or most likely both the booms) which would be flapping about in the air high above him or have become entangled in the overhead wiring. This was not easy and there was, moreover, a hazard that one of the heavy brass trolley wheels might break off. Anyone on whom that weight fell could be killed.

I once saw, in 1941, an incident in Merridale Road, Wolverhampton, where a trolley wheel did fall off a Corporation trolleybus – more likely through poor wartime maintenance than following a dewirement, as it simply fell on the road just behind the bus, landing with a tremendous thud. No one was hurt, but the incident still required the bamboo pole to catch the flailing, headless trolley boom and then to dewire the other boom. There were no radios on buses and no mobile telephones.

The conductor will have had to take out 2d from his cash bag to hand to the driver, who then had to find a public telephone box, or a nearby shopkeeper who had a telephone,

to phone the depot for the towing lorry to take away the disabled bus and for a tower wagon to check the overhead. The passengers had to be transferred to the next trolleybus.

The post-war photograph below, though not of Queen Square, illustrates two interesting features. Firstly, how visually dominant the overhead trolleybus wiring could be. Secondly, that this is post-war, not pre-war, is betrayed by the quite wide gap between the positive and negative trolleybus wires. The wider gap, up to as much as 24 inches, had been gradually introduced over the 1939-1945 period.

Many passengers were blissfully unaware that they were on a trolleybus, not a motor bus.

Roger Atkinson

Taken from Roger's book *Blackout, Austerity and Pride :life in the 1940s*, which can be bought via the internet for £22.50. Visit www.memoir1940s.org.uk

Branch News



The Queen, as a patron of the Historical Association, donated 6 tickets to be distributed between members of all the HA branches to attend the Queen's 90th Birthday Party Picnic in the Mall on Monday June 6th.

Four hundred words had to be submitted by the person advocating their appropriateness to be awarded a ticket. **Congratulations to our President John Law**, who has been invited to this historic occasion. He is the only person to receive a ticket from a branch in Wales. A very worthy winner, a fitting compliment to John who restarted the Swansea Branch and has served it so well ever since, both as Chairman and President.



On the 7th July 2016, 7 for 7.30 pm

The Branch Fellowship Award

will be celebrated at Sketty Hall,
Sketty Green, Swansea.

Gerald Gabb , the writer and historian will receive the award this year
in recognition of his great contribution to history in Wales.

After the event, refreshments and a light buffet will be served.

This event will be for members only.

A good reason to join the branch. You may join on the night or send in the membership form on the back cover of Chronicle.

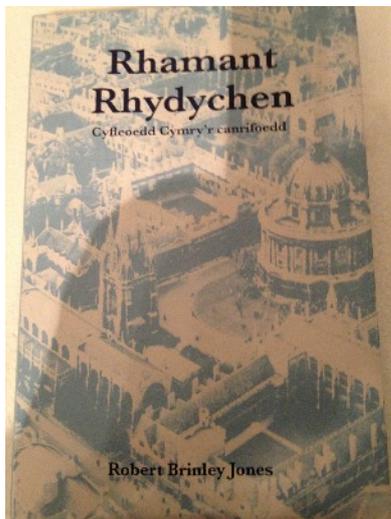
***Rhamant Rhydychen Cyfeodd Cymry'r canrifoedd* gan Robert Brinley Jones**

Yn *Rhamant Rhydychen* mae Robert Brinley Jones wedi edrych ar y cysylltiad rhwng Cymry a Rydychen ers y dyddiau cynnar: darllenodd Gerallt Gymro ei waith *Topographia Hibernica* yno. Mae'n amlwg bod cyfraniad y Cymry i'r Brifysgol a'r byd addysg wedi bod yn amhrisiadwy dros y flynyddoedd.

Dyma ble 'rydym ni'n dysgu mae Henry Gower, Cannghellor y Brifysgol ac esgob Tyddewi oedd myfyrwr cynnar Coleg Merton. Cymro - Thomas Jenkins, graddedig o Goleg Sant Ioan, - dysgodd Lladin i William Shakespeare a Chymro, Thomas James, oedd llyfrgellydd cyntaf y Llyfrgell Bodleian a gasglodd catalog cyntaf y llyfrgell.

Gwaith William Salesbury a Richard Parry at gyfieithad y Beibl i Saesneg a Chymraeg sydd yma a chyfraniad Robert Recorde, Dinbych y Pysgod, Cymrawd Coleg yr Holl Eneidiau a ddyfeisodd yr arwydd =. Trwy waith Dr. Jones gwelom bywyd y Cymry yn Rhydychen dros y Rhyfel Cartref a'r ymryson ynglyn a'r Pabydd a'r Protestaniaid a sefydliad y Llyfr Gwedi Cyffredin.

Yma gallem ni'n darllen am Richard Nash (Beau Nash), a aned yn Abertawe a bu'n efrydydd yng Ngholeg Iesu, a John Dillwyn Llewelyn, Coleg Oriel, Sgweier Penlle'r-gaer, y ffotograffydd arloesol a botanegydd. O ddechreuad Brifysgol Rhydychen hyd at gwaith John Keble, J.H. Newman a David Lewis, Llanilar, am y Mudiad Rhydychen i dychwelyd at ddysgediaeth yr eglwys Gatholig, mae'r llyfr maestrolgar hwn yn dangos fod Cymry oedd ymhlith datblygiad a bywyd Prifysgol Rhydychen.



Gwyneth Anthony

*Robert Brinley Jones is the President of the
University of Wales, Trinity St David*

Rhamant Rhydychen by Robert Brinley Jones

In this scholarly exploration of the historical connection between the Welsh and Oxford University, Robert Brinley Jones offers the reader a fascinating insight into the contribution of numerous Welshmen to the University and to the wider world. This is where we learn that Shakespeare's Latin tutor was Thomas Jenkins, a graduate of St John's College and that we owe the introduction of the = symbol to Robert Recorde of Tenby, Fellow of All Saints College. This is a masterly exploration of the relationship between Wales and the University from the early days until the nineties .

Gwyneth Anthony

The first flight.....

From the earliest times there have been legends of men mounting flying devices or strapping birdlike wings, stiffened cloaks or other devices to themselves and attempting to fly, typically by jumping off tall towers. The Greek legends of Daedalus and Icarus are two early examples. According to Ovid, Daedalus tied feathers together to mimic the wings of a bird.

This legend was said to impress Eilmer, the monk of Malmesbury Abbey so much that he too made an attempt to fly. The eminent medieval historian William of Malmesbury in about 1125. wrote an account of Eilmer's infamous attempt of flight.....

'.....He had by some means, I scarcely know what, fastened wings to his hands and feet so that, mistaking fable for truth, he might fly like Daedalus, and he launched himself from the top of a tower at Malmesbury Abbey, and flew for more than a furlong. But he fell, broke both his legs and was lame ever after. He used to relate as the cause of his failure, his forgetting to provide himself a tail...'

Stained glass window in
Malmesbury Abbey of
Eilmer



In Greek mythology, Icarus is the son of the master craftsman Daedalus, the creator of the Labyrinth. To aid his son's attempt to escape Crete his father constructed wings for his son made from feathers and wax. Before the flight he warns Icarus of the hazards he faces. He warns against flying either too low nor too high, so the sea's dampness would not clog his wings or the sun's heat melt them. Icarus, excited to be flying ignored his father's advice and flew ever closer to the sun, whereupon the wax in his wings melted and he fell into the sea.

Leonardo Da Vinci 1452-1519

Leonardo da Vinci studied birds and how they flew. Through many trials and experiments he developed his ideas for the concept of flight -managing to anticipate many principles of aerodynamics. He understood that "An object offers as much resistance to the air as the air does to the object". His early designs were man-powered types including ornithopters and rotorcraft, however he came to realise the impracticality of this and later turned to controlled gliding flight, also sketching some designs powered by



The Wright brothers 1910



Orville Wright 1871 – 1948

Wilbur Wright 1867 - 1912

Orville and Wilbur Wright, two American brothers, inventors, and aviation pioneers who are credited with inventing and building the world's first successful airplane, and making the first controlled, powered and sustained heavier-than-air human flight, on December 17, 1903, four miles south of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Amy Johnson, 1903 – 1941

A pioneering English woman. In 1930 Amy Johnson was the first female pilot to fly alone from Britain to Australia. Flying solo or with her husband, Jim Mollison, she set numerous long-distance records during the 1930s. Johnson's father, always one of her strongest supporters, offered to help her buy an aircraft. With funds from her father and Lord Wakefield she purchased G-AAAH, a second-hand de Havilland DH.60 Gipsy Moth she named "Jason", not after the voyager of Greek legend, but after her father's business trade mark. She flew in the Second World War as a part of the Air Transport Auxiliary and died during a ferry flight.



A human ornithopter



An **ornithopter** (from Greek ornithos "bird" and pteron "wing") is an aircraft that flies by flapping its wings. Designers seek to imitate the flapping-wing flight of birds, bats, and insects. Though machines may differ in form, they are usually built on the same scale as these flying creatures

Space tourism

Since travel in space has become a realistic – if expensive possibility the race is now on to develop Space tourism for recreational, leisure or business purposes. A number of startup companies have sprung up in recent years, such as Virgin Galactic and XCOR Aerospace. All hope to create a sub-orbital space tourism industry. Orbital space tourism opportunities have been limited and expensive, with only the Russian Space Agency providing transport to date.



**'If a plane may fly on one or two wings,
an aeroplane with many wings will fly better'**

So thought the Marquis d' Equevilly when he built this plane in 1908. As original and inventive as his plane was, it was never to fly

HA Swansea Branch Programme 2016

Talks on Saturdays at 11.00, National Waterfront
Museum, Ocean Room

18th June

Bleddyn Penny

**Stepping into hell: Historical experiences
of work in Port Talbot**



7th July 2016 7 for 7.30 pm

Branch Fellowship Award to

Gerald Gabb

Followed by buffet,

members only event

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16th July

John Richards

The Bayeux Tapestry:

**Celebrating the 950th anniversary of
the Battle of Hastings**



20th August 2016

Professor Justin Champion

The Presidential Lecture

Individual membership: £10

Concessionary membership: £5

Family (household) membership: £15

Student : £5

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