

# CHRONICLE

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## MARITIME

**Historical Association, Swansea Branch**

**Promoting History in South West Wales**

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“To reach a port we must set sail –

Sail, not tie at anchor

Sail, not drift.”

— *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

*Cover photo by John Ashley*

*The flag is the command flag for a Vice-Admiral. Lord Nelson was Vice-Admiral of the White at the time of his death on HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805.*

# From the Editor

margaret.mccloy@sky.com



## **I started writing this column in Whitstable, the Pearl of Kent.**

All in the cause of researching Maritime History, I ate a dish of oysters coated in a golden, crispy Guinness batter. The restaurant, a wonderful rustic building, that was once a warehouse, is situated right on the beach and is now now the Whitstable Oyster Company. They sell and cook Royal Native Oysters from Whitstable, which have protected status by an EU Directive.

Oysters have been on the menu in Whitstable, (Witesnestable in the Domesday Book) since Roman times. They thought of them as a delicacy and would ship live oysters back to Rome, towing them in nets behind their galleys. Amongst the many sayings of the Roman Historian, Gaius Crispus, anglicised as Sallust, in 60 BC, he wrote

***‘The poor Britons, there is some good in them after all, they produced an oyster.’***

Although the fashion and taste for oysters has waned over the years, it has always survived and in 1850, an amazing 75 million oysters a year were being shipped to Billingsgate and Canterbury Fish Market. The rich loved them, ate them as a starter before the main meal, but the poor loved to eat them as well and to them it was a good cheap meal.

In Swansea Bay, we have Oystermouth, and oysters are alive and well there again, after dying out nearly a century ago. As in Whitstable, oysters have been eaten there since Roman times. In its heyday, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Mumbles fishermen collected nearly 18 million oysters a year to send to fish markets all around the world.

Recently 40, 000 oysters have been introduced into Swansea Bay, in the hope of reintroducing the custom, and they seem to be doing well and reproducing.

Oysters, are healthy, full of vitamins and contain hardly any calories, a good reason for Queen Mary in the 1920s to eat nine, exactly nine, oysters a day for her lunch.

Oysters are still eaten with relish every day, but as Jonathan Swift said,

***‘He was a brave man that ate the first oyster.’***

Sailors were also brave men when they set off in boats and sailed around Cape Horn, many starting their voyages from the docks in Swansea. In this issue we have two lively tales of sailors and their travels. One about life on a millionaire’s luxury yacht where he worked as a butcher and another tale of a family of Captains who sailed around the world in wooden, sailing boats.



*The next issue is featuring ‘Technology’.*

*Contributions to print will be very welcome.*

**It was a great honour to be chosen to represent the Association and more particularly the Swansea and South West Wales branch at Her Majesty's birthday on the Mall on 12 June.**

As advised, I arrived early to find a orderly queue already forming and stretching into the far distance, though possibly not quite as far as the M25. Everyone was very philosophical and good humoured, especially the police who were constantly posing for 'selfies'. Out of the corner of my eye, I did spot a van of patient police dogs, and some pretty serious weaponry, neither - blessedly - being called upon.

The queue shuffled along and when we arrived at a heavily closed Reform Club, the heavens opened. Plastic ponchos were hastily handed out. These required at least two others to help you get into yours, and the fit round the head was so tight and the rain against the plastic was so loud that your representative for periods of time could hear nothing.

Eventually, we arrived at security. The documents I produced were quickly turned to papier mache; fortunately my passport was not washed away, but for how long will it be valid?

Entering the Mall area - having handed over the sponsored Union flag and collected the approved one - I found that the H.A. had found us excellent seats very close to the processional route. Sadly, the Heavens were still in full flood, the seats were awash (the ponchos were short at the back) and to take shelter under the lime trees made things worse. I think we were mixed up with various other archaeological and historical groups, and there were around eight H.A. representatives present, but the rain on plastic effect made it difficult to determine who was who. Someone from Head Office was trying to record things, but her notebook quickly became a sodden mass.

The rain tended to discourage us from sampling the Red Riding Hood -style wicker hamper provided, but when we did so, we found it to be skilfully arranged and of high quality. The pork pie was good at resisting the rain, though the Pimms quickly became diluted.

After some time, that wannabe royal and queen of the countryside Clare Balding appeared on stage and screen - though well covered - and urged us to laugh off the weather, as the sun was scheduled to arrive, and to look really happy when the parade started and the cameras were on - presumably or else. The more nuanced and witty Kirsty Young tried to intervene, but was cut off.



Then the parade did start. Each section was led by a band, for example the Sutherland Highlanders - excellent. Then came a troupe of dancers; enthusiastic but it is hard to choreograph a procession. Then came representatives from the many bodies the Queen supports, a truly impressive number, from Commonwealth countries as well as the UK. Cheerful police and discreet men in suits joined in.

**And finally.** Ticked off by Ms Balding, the weather did clear, and the Royals moved in. They did a fantastic job, splitting up and moving down the Mall talking to the crowd on both sides. A genuine enthusiasm took over, as did repeated cries of 'Harry!'. They took their time, but - and this was confirmed by later reports - they speeded up, tactfully, as the Duke of Edinburgh was anxious to 'move things along'. The Royals were then followed by the Queen and the Duke standing in an open car and dutifully, but cheerfully, waving to the crowds. When they reached the Admiralty Arch end, they mounted a stage - vacated by Ms Balding. There were some effective musical offerings, and then Prince William and the Queen spoke briefly, but very well. They then processed back to the Palace, to applause. I began to wonder if we have got the balance right between Crown and Parliament; my wonderings have since intensified.

The crowds then melted/soaked away. I was certainly glad to have attended, and it was encouraging to gather from my HA colleagues that the Swansea Branch impresses: its programme, its publications, its presentation of Swansea Castle and *The Chronicle* being mentioned. It would have been useful to be able to talk about things in drier, quieter, conditions. Who knows; the Association may accept the Branch's invitation to meet in Swansea?

I also regret that the official programme had not included the steel band from the Trinidad and Tobago armed forces. I vividly remembered how it chose to samba down the Royal Mile in Edinburgh at the start of a Festival, defying the weather and lifting the spirits.

**John Law**

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**The 10th annual "Symposium by the Sea"** established by the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Research (MEMO), based in Swansea University, was held this year in Sketty Hall, Swansea, on 23rd and 24th June. The Swansea Branch of the Historical Society had made a financial grant to MEMO towards the fees/expenses of the keynote speaker and advertised it on our web page and at our monthly talks.

The two-day symposium was entitled "Art for Historians" and the subject raised some interest in the branch. In the end seven of us attended. We were treated to talks, of between thirty and forty minutes, which ranged from early relief sculptures in the hippodrome at Constantinople (330AD); saints as icons (this one sat on a pole); Saxon carved boundary stones (possibly reused ancient stones); Anglo Norman seals on a wide range of documents in wax, stone or metal; the history of the elaborate Della Scala tombs in Verona was given by our branch President, Dr John Law. The

penultimate session which was scheduled to be a talk on Medici portraits was changed at the last minute and covered the interpretation of a very long drawing (34 feet) of the personages who attended when the Papal Court met the Hapsburg court in Bologna for the coronation of Charles V in descending order of importance. In the last session of the symposium, Professor Hugh Dunthorne covered seventeenth century Dutch landscapes and seascapes that influenced many future generations of painters.

Professor Fabrizio Nevola, of Exeter University, the keynote speaker, spoke eloquently on "Street Life in Renaissance Italy" using examples of contemporary paintings, both sacred and secular, to make his points. This was life in Renaissance Italy.

All the other talks were given by MEMO/Swansea University staff, ably assisted by some of their students; the equipment worked, the coffee was great - so was the food. All in all, an enjoyable experience.

**Carol David**

# 1815 and 1915: Vivians at War

**Historical anniversaries provide an opportunity for remembrance and inspiration** and forge a link between the study of local history and the wider world.

The Royal Institution of Cornwall is preparing to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of its founding in 1818. In the meantime, the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro, which is owned and managed by the Royal Institution, has mounted a splendid exhibition to mark the two hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo at which one of Cornwall's most notable soldiers, General Sir Richard Hussey Vivian (1775-1842), played a conspicuous part. Running from 13 June 2015 to 2 January 2016, the opportunity has been taken to rehang the newly restored portrait of Sir Hussey by Sir Martin Archer Shee, and to display many of his possessions. The connection with Swansea is obvious, though his career has gone unremarked on this side of the Bristol Channel, even as we too mark the two hundredth anniversary of Waterloo. Sir Hussey was the eldest son of John Vivian, the Truro industrialist who was largely responsible for the expansion of the copper industry in the Swansea Valley after 1810. While Sir Hussey made a name for himself in the British army, his younger brother, John Henry Vivian, undertook management of the family's Swansea industrial interests – and arguably with even greater success than his brother achieved in battle. Among Sir Hussey's moments of military glory was his action at Waterloo. He also took part in Sir John Moore's heroic retreat before the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte to Corunna in Spain in 1808. In 1814 he joined the duke of Wellington's army in France where Hussey was wounded; he returned to command a brigade of cavalry at Waterloo. He was mentioned in dispatches for his bravery during the battle and was thanked by both Houses of Parliament. Thereafter he had a notable career as a politician at Westminster and in Cornwall, and in 1841 was created Baron Vivian of Glynn. Excerpts from his diaries were published in his *Autobiographical Memoir* (London, 1832).

John Henry Vivian's brush with Napoleon, in which he interviewed the Emperor while he was a captive on the Island of Elba in 1814-15, has also gone unremarked in Swansea, but it is hoped that the Royal Institution of South Wales, modelled on Cornwall's Institution, will not miss the

opportunity to celebrate its own two hundredth anniversary in 2035.

John Henry Vivian (1785-1855) established his branch of the family at Singleton Abbey, Swansea. One hundred years after Waterloo, his daughter Henrietta's son, Admiral Algernon Walker-Heneage-Vivian, had a distinguished career during the First World War. It too has so far been ignored in Swansea during the numerous celebrations commemorating the war. Algernon came from the military and naval side of the Vivian family. He became expert in the new techniques of anti-submarine warfare at the turn of the twentieth century, and had intervened in the Boxer Rebellion in China and the Boer War in South Africa. On the outbreak of war in 1914 he was entrusted with a secret mission to bring to Britain gold bullion from the South African mines to finance the war effort. In 1915, his most important engagement was in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign, where he had responsibility for protecting the mine-sweepers in the Dardanelles and the Allied landings in preparation for the assault on Constantinople (now Istanbul). The ship which he commanded, the *Albion*, suffered heavy damage and grievous casualties. But Algernon successfully cleared the sea of floating mines so that the Allied fleet could pass the Straits of Salamis, despite constant bombardment. In the years of war that followed he concentrated on important missions in the Adriatic and Greek waters – and he too was mentioned in despatches. Algernon retired from active service in 1920 as a full admiral of the fleet. The following year he inherited Clyne Castle, Swansea, from his aunt, Dulcie Vivian, and lived there for the rest of his life. He deserves to be remembered during the commemorations of World War One. In 1929 he wrote a memoir of his life for his three daughters; it remains unpublished. Meanwhile, see Ralph A. Griffiths, *Clyne Castle, Swansea* (Swansea, 1977), *Singleton Abbey and the Vivians of Swansea* (1988), and *In Conversation with Napoleon Bonaparte: J. H. Vivian's Visit to the Island of Elba* (2008).

**Ralph A. Griffiths**

# A Good Butcher for the Yacht Corsair

*At six o'clock on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1927, Richard Phillip's was lying in his bunk on RMS Majestic a White Star liner which was lying in Pier 59, 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York City. He was wondering how to get back to his home in Pembrokeshire. He was a butcher and about to be laid off as the Majestic had so few bookings for the next trip. The chief butcher called him to his office, he told him that the yacht Corsair was looking for a butcher. He wasn't too keen but that night at 7pm he bid farewell to his workmates.*

**January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1928** I started work on the Corsair, looking after a crew of 45 and any visitors. The yacht belongs to an American millionaire, J.P.Morgan, the banker. She is 304 feet long, 38 beam and 1200 tons. Her sides were painted in shiny black and her deck houses in brown varnish. We sailed away on a beautiful calm sea and in a few hours were out of sight of land. The weather was very good and just a bit of swell rolled the boat a little. On **Feb 9<sup>th</sup>** we saw the first ship, a three masted schooner.

**On the 10<sup>th</sup>** we saw the sea in a little rougher condition, the ship rolled more than before and I felt seasick. A steam ship passed by on our port side, coming from the West Indies. We were warned that there was a storm ahead. All ports were closed and deadlights screwed down. A strong gale of wind turned the sea into a fury. The mountainous waves crashed against our starboard bow, breaking over the bulwarks, enough to sweep a man overboard. The ship rolled so much that she almost put her sides under each time she swayed. We only travelled 249 miles that day.

The next day was bad so we cooked a stew, the easiest thing as the pots and pans flew with the cooks from one side of the galley to another. A shark came very close to the ship and I saw it for about 5 minutes before it submerged from view. The weather brightened and the sea calmed and we travelled many miles.

**On the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb** we were supposed to sight the Gibraltar Rock and we didn't want to miss it. We passed fairly close. We said goodbye to the

Atlantic Ocean as we glided through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean. We passed three schooners.

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>**, we passed the coast of Morocco and later saw the beautiful mountains of Algiers. An Italian liner ran parallel to us. The captain ordered that the flag should be hoisted and as a friendly salute gave three blasts of the steam whistle, while the crowd of people which were on the liner's deck were waving handkerchiefs at us. A shoal of porpoises bobbed up and down in the water as they circled round the yacht.

Next morning we passed a square rigged ship which is very unusual nowadays.

Photo # NH 100882 Steam yacht Corsair, prior to World War I



At 2.40 pm we were opposite our destination. A hundred yards off the breakwater a pilot boat came to meet us. The pilot was soon on the bridge and at the wheel. On our portside was another breakwater and what looked like a small lighthouse. Round the foot of it, lounged three natives picturesquely dressed in the fashion of red rimless hats, yellow shirts, a wide deep red sash about their loins and bright tight knee breeches.

At length we dropped anchor about 200 yards from the shore in Bizerte. From the time when we raised anchor in New York, we had covered 4,300 miles in 14 days 19 hours and 3 minutes so that wasn't so bad.

**Thursday March 15<sup>th</sup>** soon came around. At 10am we went to the oil wharf. The big tanks were about 1000 yards from the wharf and the oil was pumped through 10 inch pipes into the ship by a few Arabs. At one o'clock we were ready to sail away. We turned slowly round and headed for the breakwater. We left the pilot boat just outside and bid goodbye to Bixerte but that didn't worry us much for we had Venice on our minds, and expected to get there about Sunday noon, or as the First Engineer said, "Just in time to see the last Wop take his gondola home,"

At nine o'clock in **the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>**, Venice showed itself on the horizon. It didn't look different from any other place, but as we got nearer, the fine buildings became plainer and the waterways between the islands were more distinct. We put ourselves the other side of the breakwater and were soon in the Grand Canal, five minutes by gondola to the grand Hotel, where we went ashore. On Wednesday, the third steward and I went through the Cathedral and the Ducal palace. Thursday it snowed and Friday it was a dense fog like London, Saturday it rained as heavily as I have ever seen it rain. Later the rain stopped and I went with Sparks for a walk around. We found ourselves in a poorer part. We passed a mean looking café, round the dirty looking tables tough looking men and women sat drinking and smoking. The little bridges over the canals of dirty water looked quite picturesque in the lamplight and the few people that were about, babbling in Italian, added to the strangeness of the scene.

**On the 29<sup>th</sup>** we left Venice as soon as the party came on board, Mr J.P.Morgan, the owner of the yacht Corsair, Viscount and Lady Harcourt and son, Lord and Lady Grenfell and daughter. We sailed away and next morning we found ourselves in Spelato in Yugoslavia. All the flags in town were flying at half-mast. Later that day we arrived in Montenegro on the Serbian coast. We went on further down the coast to Athens. At 4 o'clock we got to the Corinth canal, but there was a ship coming through so we had to wait till 5 o'clock before we could make our way.. The canal was only sixty feet wide, not enough room to be jumping about. We were three quarters of an hour going through, because we couldn't travel very fast. When we got out into the open sea, it began to blow a gale. The disturbed water and the streaky clouds spelled plenty of wind, but we only had 27

miles to go, so it didn't bother us, but we had to close the portholes.

**On Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> February**, we sailed at full speed into a calm sea, we anchored just outside the Dardanelles. We couldn't proceed, Turkey is particular and every ship has to have a permit. In the morning, after a long wait, we sailed into the Dardanelle's. A big fort stood on either side of the water. One was a bit battered after the war. At 6.30 pm we neared Constantinople. As we entered we passed the biggest mosque in the city. We dropped anchor outside the Sultan's palace called Dolma Badgo. At 8pm after a lot of palaver in getting passports, some of the crew went ashore. I went to bed early.

On Tuesday there wasn't much to do, for the party lunched ashore, so Sparks, Tom the mess boy, Mike the Spaniard cook and I went ashore. About 6 o'clock in the evening we were going along a street and a woman told us not to go any further and if we did to watch our pockets. She spoke good English. She showed us up some dirty wooden stairs and into a filthy room, four rickety chairs were around a small table. The floor was bare but for dirt and rubble and paper hung in ribbons by cobwebs. She fetched some bottles of beer and a cognac for herself. When we asked for the bill it was equal to \$2.50. After a little argument we paid the bill and walked out smartly. I was glad to get out in the fresh air .

Next day, **Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup>**, we sailed through the Strait of Bosphorus and a little way into the Black sea. We didn't stay long, for by night we were back in Constantinople. We took the mail aboard, sailed out again the same night. The weather was fair, so by Friday morning we dropped anchor a few miles off Piraeus, the port of Athens.

**Monday the 16<sup>th</sup>** in the evening, the party who had been ashore came aboard and we heaved our anchor and sailed for the Corinth canal once again. Next day it was blowing a gale but the sea wasn't so bad. As we retraced our course through, a few things took my notice. For instance, on each end of the canal was a small ferry boat. It was big enough to accommodate a car and was drawn by donkeys, which were grazing on the grass waiting for someone to take across.

**Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup>** the day brought bad news, though good for us. Details of the Corinth earthquake revealed a terrible catastrophe. A telegraph operator who kept on the wire said, 'Help, all is lost,' till the Post Office collapsed, killing him. The city was partially razed to the ground. It was only five days before the earthquake that we sailed through the Corinth canal.

**On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April**, a wireless message from Gibraltar changed the skipper's mind about going to Bizerte for an oil change and changed course for Gibraltar. We sailed at 12 knots per hour and heard news of another earthquake at Corinth and the only house that was standing collapsed, killing an old lady of 102 years of age.

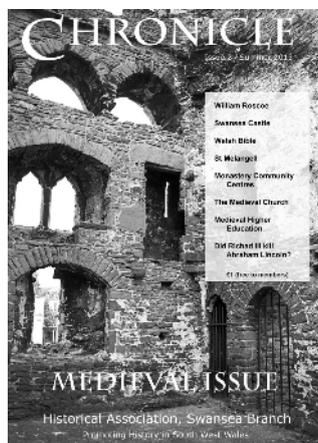
**Friday the 27<sup>th</sup>** blew a gale all day and we struck the sea head on which made the Corsair dip and pitch badly. I was sick all day. Saturday's weather was too bad for anything. The sea ran high and we were still head on to it. The mountainous waves curled over our bows and rushed down the deck, the weather held us back to such an extent that it was **Sunday morning 29<sup>th</sup> April** before we made fast to the oil tank.

Having had all the oil and water we required, at 3'0'clock we sailed out of Gibraltar, where I felt a little at home, it being an English port.

**On Wednesday May 2<sup>nd</sup>** to make up for time we had lost, the engine was put on two boilers instead of one. We were travelling dead west at 14 knots per hour.

The next day **Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup>** we were blessed with favourable weather. The sea was calm. If we had been doing eight miles an hour the ship would have hardly rolled, but since we were doing fifteen miles per hour, by the force she ran into the waves, she swayed over as she hit them. **Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> May begun** fairly well but by evening a tempest raged and as I passed through the mess room, she took a big sea over her bow. So big was it that it filled the ventilator and ran down into the mess room. At the same time she shook herself like a wet dog and then a big thud on the deck startled all below. We went on deck and found that six foot off the top of the foremast could not withstand the violent shaking and had dropped on deck breaking into two pieces and ruining the wireless aerial for that night. We only did seven miles per hour for the rest of the night. We travelled on for days until with fair weather we expected to get to New York by Thursday noon. At 8pm we ran into a bank of fog. We rolled easily as the steam whistle shrieked out every minute. I fell asleep with the steam whistle ringing in my ears. Next morning after a pleasant run we hit New York and with the usual palaver passing through quarantine, we docked at twelve o'clock and no one was more pleased than I.

*The Editor has edited this account taken from the diaries of Mr R H V Phillips. The diaries, published as a book were edited by his niece Brandy Pearson.*



If you would like to read any of the back numbers of *Chronicle*,

they are all available on the Historical Association website. [www. History.org.uk](http://www.History.org.uk)

They have kindly downloaded all the issues of *Chronicle* 1 -12, onto their site so they can be viewed nationally and internationally. A good incentive for our writers and friends abroad.

**Just go to their site, press branches and scroll down to podcasts and publications.**

# The Canal and the Prosperity of Swansea Docks

**The Swansea Canal was constructed during the period referred to in Britain as the canal mania era, and was one of the six larger canals constructed in South Wales;** there were several smaller waterways in addition. The Swansea Canal was built between 1794-98, and was only sixteen and a quarter miles in length. Although only short in mileage, it is of world importance in its canal structures, its water usage and in industrial developments. The Swansea Canal was important to the development and prosperity of Swansea during its first eighty or so years, and more important to the development of urban centres in the Swansea Valley. At the southern end of the canal at Swansea, alongside the Strand, were numerous wharfs and stockyards where goods were imported and exported. The Swansea Board of Health Plan 1852 shows coal yards, iron ore yards and timber wharfs along the lower section of canal adjacent to Swansea Harbour.

Among the larger users of the canal exporting finished goods and minerals downwards to Swansea were the Ynyscedwyn Iron Works, Ystalyfera Iron works, Primrose Coal Company, Ynisgeinon Coal Company, Gwaunclawdd Coal Company, with many smaller users relying on the canal for raw materials inwards. Among those were the Ynysmeudwy Pottery, Morrision Pottery, the Rose Copper Works and William Gilbertson's ironworks. Initially, iron ore was mined close to the Swansea Valley ironworks, but from the 1840 period onwards, richer ores were imported through Swansea Harbour. Over sixty individual companies are recorded as using the canal for transport between 1794 and 1875 owning over 450 barges between them. In the heyday of the Swansea Canal c1870 approximately 18,000 barges travelled along the canal per annum.

Non-ferrous industries such as copper, zinc, nickel smelting was concentrated in the lower Swansea Valley, whilst the heavy industries of iron and steel, tinplate and coal mining were above Morrision. All of them using the Swansea Canal for the carriage of raw materials and finished goods. Another aspect of the Swansea Canal was in supplying clean canal water for industrial processes. As an example the Hafod Copperworks purchased several million gallons of water per year.

The direct influence of those industries was the creation of towns and villages such as Clydach, Pontardawe, Ynysmeudwy, Ystalyfera, Ystradgynlais, Cwmgiedd, Abercraf and the Twrch Valley settlements. Before the Swansea Canal was constructed, the Swansea Valley was agrarian, but afterwards it became a very industrialized valley.

The Swansea Canal had 36 locks along its length to raise the canal 372 feet above sea level at Swansea to reach the coal and iron bearing regions in the mid and upper valley. The canal had to span four major rivers in addition to smaller streams, including the Lower Clydach River at Clydach, the Upper Clydach River at Pontardawe, the River Twrch at Ystalyfera, and the Giedd River north of Ystradgynlais. The largest aqueduct was, and still is, the Twrch aqueduct that carries the Swansea Canal over the river of that name, and out of Glamorganshire into Breconshire. This aqueduct is of world importance in canal structural engineering. It is the first such structure in the world to be constructed using hydraulic mortar instead of several thousand tons of puddled clay to seal the water channel which was normal practice at that time. That is very important in structural engineering which relieved the aqueduct of a great deal of weight. Many aqueducts constructed prior to the Twrch collapsed because of the weight of the structure and inadequate foundations.

## **The locks along the Swansea Canal were also constructed using the hydraulic mortar.**

An important aspect of the Swansea Canal was in terms of its water usage. There were forty-two water-powered installations recorded as directly using canal water to power machinery such as the blast for blast furnaces, grinding stones in corn mills, flint mills in potteries, electricity turbines, power for tinplate works, farm water wheels, saw mills, woollen mills, and iron forges. The Swansea Canal had more water-powered installations per mile than any other canal in Britain.

The Swansea Canal was only sixteen miles in length, yet it was connected to industries several miles from canal wharfs by horse-drawn railways, over sixty such railways with a total length of 140 miles. It was that linked transport infrastructure which enabled industry to develop in remote locations. For example, the Brecon Forrest tramroad was nineteen miles in length, from the Gurnos wharf near Ystalyfera to Sennybridge, crossing into the Dulais Valley before passing through Penwyllt and Defynog. There were ten miles of railways on the Cribarth Moun-

tain above Craig-Nos, which brought limestone and rottenstone down to the canal wharfs at Abercraf.

Among the more important industrialists who worked in canal-side industries was David Thomas. He was born in 1794 and became furnace manager at Ynyscedwyn Ironworks in the 1830's. In 1837 he invented the hot-blast method of smelting iron ore using anthracite coal. That invention led to the expansion of the iron works in the upper Swansea Valley with Ystalyfera Ironworks claiming to be the largest ironworks in the world by 1858 and having the largest continual line of blast furnaces in Wales; eleven of them. David Thomas was poached by iron manufacturers in Pennsylvania in 1837, and went on to become the Chairman of the American Ironmasters Association; they nicknamed him David "Papa" Thomas, the father of the American anthracite iron industry.

Such was the Swansea Canal, an important waterway, innovative architectural developments, the catalyst for urban development, and world famous for its water usage.

### **Clive Reed**



**Not houses finely roofed or the stones of walls well builded, nay nor canals and dockyards make the city, but men able to use their opportunity.**

**(Alcaeus) Greek lyric poet 6<sup>th</sup> century BC**

## Memories of the Aberfan Disaster Fifty Years On

I had started at university in Aberystwyth barely a few weeks before the Aberfan Disaster happened. On Friday October 21, 1966 a colliery spoil tip slid down the mountain killing 116 children and 28 adults in this South Wales Coalfield village. Word of the catastrophe spread through the student body and a meeting was arranged for that same evening. We were addressed by a student who told us that his cousin had been in Aberfan's Pantglas Junior School when engulfed by the tip slide. An appeal had gone out for volunteers to help the Aberfan rescue effort and the meeting decided to send a party to assist from Aberystwyth's student body.

I had no hesitation in volunteering to join this rescue party. Coal mining was then still part of the culture of South Wales in the 1960s and evidence of the coal mining industry, past and present, was still all around. Abandoned local colliery buildings and old coal waste tips had been part of my childhood playground. My uncles were coal miners just as an earlier family generation had been. The infrastructure of colliery buildings, coal carrying railways and the now all but disappeared pit head winding wheels then still defined the South Wales landscape.

Those students who'd volunteered met up late that evening. We found our transport was to be an ex-Army truck which had been used by the College's Exploration Society that summer to travel across the Sahara. We set off late at night to travel to the stricken village near Merthyr Tydfil, many miles south-east of Aberystwyth. I remember it as an uncomfortable, sleep-deprived journey as the truck took us over the Cambrian Mountains in the darkness. I guess each volunteer silently wondered what we'd experience the next day after hearing of the mounting death toll.

We arrived in Aberfan before dawn on Saturday October 22, fifty years ago. Our student party was directed to a community building on a hillside above the stricken village. Here we were kitted out in National Coal Board overalls and wellington boots.

We could see lights piercing the darkness below and hear the hum of heavy machinery. That day dawned bright and crisp but a mist hung in the valley bottom.

As the mist lifted we had an eerily clear view of the valley below with a huge black scar of coal slurry engulfing the school and terraced houses in its path. We set off once it was light enough and trudged through streets running with water and crowded with emergency service vehicles.

The group was put to work in the partially collapsed Pantglas Junior School and in the adjacent Moy Road where a number of its residents had been killed in their terraced homes. On seeing the height and mass of the tip slide close up it seemed unlikely that anyone was still left alive, which proved to be the case. Our task was to pass from hand-to-hand in a human chain hessian bags filled with slurry by the helmeted miners who dug into the tip slide. Every so often a screen of hand-held blankets was formed when bodies were found in the ruined school. A whistle was blown and everyone paused in silence as another blanket-covered small body was stretchered away. I particularly remember one still-standing classroom wall which carried a road safety poster with the message 'Halt, Look and Listen', so sadly ironic in the circumstances.



Photot Courtesy of Alamy photo Agency

Our student volunteer party was later directed to work on the partially collapsed waste tip which had caused the tragedy. A stream that was flowing copiously down its slope needed to be contained by sand bags. On the tip had been installed what looked and sounded like old WWII air raid warning sirens. These were activated as we worked as it was feared a further collapse was imminent. By the afternoon, with professional rescuers pouring in from all parts of the country, we volunteers were told to cease our efforts and leave the disaster scene.

On returning to Aberfan and visiting the long row of hillside graves I am reminded that we students were not much older at the time - some of us were still in our teens - than many of those who perished there half a century ago.

**Jeff Bridges**

## Men of Steel who Drove Beautiful Ships of Wood

**In the 1790's the Jones family from Abergwili, Carmarthen, were busily involved in ship chandlery, and small ship building.**

They were believed to ship masters, out of what was - at the time - the Capital of Wales, which was likely a congregating point for emigration to the Americas.

Perhaps foreseeing the demise of the town and a falling off in its use as a port, the family decided to emigrate themselves, by moving 'lock stock and barrel' to Guernsey in the Channel Islands.

The demise of shipping in Carmarthen was brought about by the huge growth of the industrial revolution developing in the Swansea Valley. This required bigger and better facilities in the South Wales Ports of Llanelli, Burry Port, Abertawe, the River Neath and Port Talbot, in addition to those further east up the Bristol Channel.

During this period, there was a considerable increase in Guernsey's population; new house building was required - especially in St Peter Port - which in turn demanded strong development of the slate trade, emanating, naturally, largely from Wales.

By the turn of the century the Jones brothers and family, including by this time Gt x 4 Grand-ma, Margaret Sneik, were well established in Guernsey and had resumed the family trade of small ship building.

This matriarch Margaret had apparently been captured by a native American (Red-Indian) Tribe in North America being 'rescued' by one of the early Captain Jones's, who subsequently married her, ultimately giving rise to Captain Henry Jones.

It is believed one of their 'newbuilds' in Guernsey, the Brig '*Herald*', started trading about 1820, and developed the coffee trade with Costa Rica, helping put that country on the map of world trade. If my memory serves me correctly, described in the '*Guernsey Courier*' of the time 'she was finished substantially, in a yacht like manner, very well appointed with high quality fittings and gear'.

In 1833 my great Grandfather William Charles Jones was born. In 1855 he made a return trip laden with coffee from Costa Rica. Assisting his father as Mate on the Brig, along with 9 other crew including a brother, Captain Henry Jones, they encountered a storm. *The Herald* was lost on the East Falklands, the Master being the only man drowned.

Mate W.C. Jones saved the rest of the crew by jollyboat and they made Port Stanley after some 10 days of trial and tribulation. Before long they were embarked as a distressed British Crew for return passage to Wales by signing on the iron ore carrier '*Minerva*' bound for Swansea, where she duly arrived in November 1855. This is mentioned in a very small paragraph in the '*Cambrian*' of that date it having been a very busy month for more important news of the time.

The next voyage out for W.C.Jones was as Master on the barque *Times* (then *Irazu*) and then for virtually the rest of his seagoing life he sailed with the Guernsey family line of William Le Lacheur (of London), on the clippers *William Le Lacheur*, *Herradura*, *Nicoya*, and his favourite; *Barranca*.

**Captain W.C. Jones, during his 32 years at sea, sailed around Cape Horn 57 times, crossing the equator 122 times.** He never lost a man or ship at sea, and retired to become Harbour Master of St Peter Port, c1884 until the outbreak of the Great War and later as Lifeboat Secretary, until he died in 1917.

In later years, we found that the sail makers (for the Jones' and Le Lacheur Line, Coffee Clippers) were from Cornwall. Some 40 years ago, I have seen and handled a big intricate sail plans book from their descendants but have unfortunately lost track of the family link.

Myself, I have been fortunate in my 34 years of command. In my sea going career I apparently had my forebears as guardian angels never having lost any crew or ship.

**However, never once in all those years have I experienced sailing around Cape Horn!**

The families and crew members in Guernsey were all extremely close knit, as remain some of our old team today.

There are a great many tales that could be told by these men of steel who drove beautiful ships of wood.

### **Captain Mike Smith**



The Barranca

Painted by my Great Grandfather,

W.C.Jones.

This ship was his favourite command.

Name of ship            Barranca

Official number        63478

Port of Registry        Guernsey

Date of register        1869

Registered tonnage     gross 677

Managing owner        J A Le Lacheur

No of seamen for whom accommodation is certified - 24

Provisions issued as per the 'America' voyage, 1863-64

When 14oz of butter are issued weekly the allowance of meat will be ½ lb less daily. No spirits allowed. Swearing and improper language is strictly prohibited. The vessel shall be considered fully manned with 18 hands all told.

Commencement of voyage August 28 1880 from Port of London. Date of termination of voyage - June 6<sup>th</sup> 1881

Signed by W C Jones, Master on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of August 1880

## Excerpts from the log of the ship Nicoya, Master W C Jones. Voyage to Honolulu and Punta Arenas in the 1860s.

The list of crew and report of character shows all but one member as VG

This one member, Josiah England, a steward deserted. On the **25<sup>th</sup> Feb 1867**, he went ashore in Honolulu and did not return the following day. He was considered a deserter and the HBM consul was informed, also the Marshall, who issued a warrant for his arrest. By the **28<sup>th</sup>**

**February** the police had not been able to apprehend and the ship was on the point of sailing. James Hay Wodehouse, the Consul general certified that Josiah England had been left behind in the port on the alleged ground of his having deserted.

On **January 27<sup>th</sup> 1870** John Robin went ashore in Honolulu and on turning the crew he was still ashore, waited two hours but as there was no sign of him, engaged a labourer in his place at 4s.2d. per day. On **28<sup>th</sup>** no appearance of J Robin again, engaged a man in his room at 4s. 2d. per day.

**Jan 29<sup>th</sup>** J Robin came aboard and went to his duty. **February 14<sup>th</sup>**, J Robin again on shore without leave. **February 15<sup>th</sup>**, got an order from HM Consul for a warrant to arrest J Robin, he not having made an appearance. **Feb 16<sup>th</sup>** J Robin came aboard and returned to his duties. The Captain does not reveal what happened to J Robin whilst ashore, but he seems to have been treated with leniency.



The Barranca moored in the Inner harbour ,  
St Peter Port, Guernsey

Not everyone was so lucky. On **January 30<sup>th</sup> 1870**, Mr Priaulx, Mate, was taken ill with a severe bilious attack. He was offered a little opening medicine but he refused to take any.

**Jan 31<sup>st</sup>** Mr Priaulx not feeling any better, the doctor was sent for and he was found to be labouring under Boowoo (Sandwich island Fever). He was ordered to remain quiet.

**Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>** found Mr Priaulx appeared worse, the doctor found he had caught a cold...and ordered a mustard plaster on his chest. **Feb 13<sup>th</sup>** Mr Priaulx greatly altered for the worse, and the carpenter was sent to fetch the first medical man that could be got. Dr Kennedy was on board by midnight but ere he arrived life was gone.

On February 14<sup>th</sup> Mr Priaulx was buried in the Nauna Valley Cemetery.  
Mr Le Sauvage became 1<sup>st</sup> Mate and the carpenter to the Boatswains.

List of clothes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Mate deceased:

2 cloth suits, 2 cloth trousers, 2 cloth coats 2 cloth caps, 1 hat, 5 serge trousers, 3 serge shirts, 3 serge coats, 1 Guernsey frock

These items were sold for £7.13.3

His 2 lb of tobacco and 1 dozen boxes of matches fetched 5s Total £7.18.3

He had wages of £32 due for 5 months 10 days.

The deductions for washing, tobacco package etc came to £23.14.6

## Contributors in this issue

### Dr John Law

John is the HA Swansea Branch President. He has been a Reader in the Department of History at Swansea University. His areas of research include late, medieval and early Renaissance history. His more recent publications include studies of the Venetian state in the early Renaissance and of the early Medici 'regime' in Florence. He has also contributed to a collection of documents on Italian late medieval diplomacy.

### Professor Ralph Griffiths

Professor Emeritus of Swansea University where he taught Medieval history. A prolific writer, Professor Griffiths's ongoing research lies in the broad field of politics and society in later medieval Britain. He is particularly interested in perceptions and relationships among the peoples of the British isles, the English monarchy and its dominions, the Lancastrian and Yorkist regimes in fifteenth-century politics, towns and the historic environment in Wales and the borderlands, and Anglo-Welsh society.

### Brandy Pearson

Author of her Uncle's Diaries. R.V.V. Phillips, her uncle, left his diaries and photographs in a box that was not opened and studied until many years after his death. Amazed at what she found, Brandy edited and published the papers.

### Clive Reed

Clive worked and campaigned for the restoration of the Swansea canal for over 34 years. In 1980 he moved to a canal side cottage to live and was appalled at the state of the canal. In 1981, canal enthusiasts formed the Swansea Canal Society. Clive joined them and re-organised weekly work parties using his skills and contacts as a craftsman in the Swansea Dry Docks to borrow, buy or hire tools. Clive organised the transformation of the canal between Clydach and Ynysmeudwy into a public amenity. Without Clive Reed, the Swansea Canal might still be derelict.

### Jeff Griffiths

One of Jeff's many interests is with the Land Mark Trust who are trying to save Coed y Bleiddian. This is a Grade 2 abandoned railway cottage in Snowdonia set alongside the Ffestiniog railway.

### Mike Smith

Mike is CEO of the Amman Valley Railway Society, he is involved with trying to bring a tram system, eco friendly and with a low carbon footprint, into the heart of Swansea. Born into a family of seafarers he was for many years a captain in the merchant navy with an adventurous career.

## The Swansea Branch of the HA have organised a series of lectures for the next academic year, starting in October 2106

***Life in the Middle Ages.*** Tutor: Colin Wheldon James

Starting Monday 3rd October 10.30 – 12.30 pm Canolfan y Bont, Dulais Road, Pontadulais  
The Middle Ages was a time of contradiction between poverty and wealth, famine and plenty, ignorance and Learning...



***Poverty, Modernism and Radicalism: the 1930's.*** Tutor: Anthea Symonds

Starting Tuesday 4th October 2-4 pm National Waterfront Museum, Swansea

From mass unemployment to radicalism in art, literature and politics and great changes in family life, work and gender role, this decade set the foundation for the changes that were to envelope the post war world.

***Dynasties, Intrigue and the Hollow Crown, 1397-1485.*** Tutor: Richard Lewis

Starting Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 6.30 – 8.30 pm, Forge Fach Community Centre, Clydach

This was an epic time of bloody rebellion, dark intrigue and bitter family rivalries. During this period in England, Wales and Scotland, there were twelve monarchs of which seven met violent deaths. No wonder this inspired the 'Game of Thrones'.

***Revolution on France, 1780-1848.*** Tutor: Richard Lewis

Starting Thursday 6th Oct 2-4 pm National Waterfront Museum, Swansea

This course will examine a vital and exciting period in European History.

A period which historians widely regard as one of the most important in human history.

Photo by Dennis Jarvis



Each course will cost £30, payable at the first lecture. (If you are unable to attend the first lecture, arrangements can be made). Contact Lisa on 07586 327097 or email the branch on [haswansea@ymail.com](mailto:haswansea@ymail.com) Outreach Learning Group

# Sid Kidwell MBE, Citizen Historian

There was great sadness for the family of Sid Kidwell when he died at the age of 82 last month; but there was a great pride that Sid had been appointed an MBE.

He was Citizen Historian of this branch of the Historical Association, and well known as a historian. He gave many talks on his specialist subject, the *Three Nights Blitz in Swansea in 1941* and was very popular with the children at the schools that he visited.

Born in Sandfields and educated at Dyenvor, School, Sid lived in Swansea all his life. His grandson, writer and author Chris Carra said, 'He was very generous and kind. He had a great sense of humour. He loved Swansea. He was very proud of Swansea.'

Sid was great singer, he had links to seven choirs and would be out every night singing with one of

them or giving talks. He was the last remaining founder member of Gower Chorale.

The last time he sang was *the Messiah* with Gower Chorale at the Brangwyn Hall last December. Besides singing, he was an avid fan of the Whites (Swansea Rugby Club) and a supporter of the Swans.

Sid had served as Lord Mayor's Warden from St Mary's Church. Allan Jeffery, Church Warden and Secretary said, 'He was always full of enthusiasm. He was a very engaging person, especially with schoolchildren whom he used to show around the church. He would always offer a helping hand. He was such a nice person.'

I'm sure everyone who knew him would agree with that. He will be greatly missed.

*Opposite is a reprint of an article that Sid wrote last year about his joy of singing.*



*Sid Kidwell telling Tregwyr Junior School pupils about the Second World War and the Swansea Three Night Blitz.*

**The only thing better than singing, is more singing**  
Ella Fitzgerald

## Be Happy, Sing in a Choir

**A study of 4000 year old bone objects** that were found in Lithuania, revealed that one object, appeared to be a bird's leg bone with holes drilled into it and had the appearance of a flute. A replica was made and a sound similar to a flute's sound was obtained.

Fascinating research, but there is a well-known older instrument, and that is the human voice. As old as man and used for millennia to entertain, inspire and engage spiritually with anyone listening, either willingly or unwillingly. 'Sing lustily', instructed John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, 'and with good courage. Beware of signing as if you were half dead, or half asleep, but lift up your voice with strength'. I have been singing with good courage since the age of eight when I was a church chorister. My life has been richly influenced by chorale music ranging from the 9<sup>th</sup> century to the contemporary music of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has been a journey of self-tuition. A recent study by Professor Sharples, of the Wellness Promotion Unit, determined that group singing is a powerful activity with health benefits such as well being and increased self-confidence, empowerment and interpersonal skills lowering feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety. I have introduced many people to choral music, men and women who had very few links with music but are now enthusiastic members of local choirs who are glad to have new choristers to swell their ranks.

Research has found that 'singing in a choir was better for one than playing sport'. And probably safer too! 'People who sang in a choir had a stronger sense of being part of meaningful groups'.

The quality of music that I have rehearsed and performed with Swansea Philharmonic Choir has kept my brain working continuously. I am a founder member of this choir, having sung with

them for 54 years and at every concert that they have given, which must run into the hundreds.

The friendships made and the social aspects of singing in a choir are tremendous. You can't over-estimate it. It has been the driving factor in my life and is available to everyone. My main reason for writing this article is to stress the value of choral singing for older people which can go a long way to ease their loneliness.

With modern technology, music can be obtained by the press of a button, but research shows that if you can participate in a choir, it stimulates a different part of the brain. When voices soar together, it accentuates involvement and provides a vital way of improving your well being.



As William James said 'I don't sing because I'm happy; I'm happy because I sing'.

And I am happy with the oldest instrument that I have been gifted with, which is still as strong as ever, my voice. Use it or lose it. I would advise everyone to use it.

Sid Kidwell

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Photographers, passport, digital, canvas prints and much more.

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### Bits and Bobs

**The Swiss Navy.....**Surprisingly, for a landlocked country, Switzerland has both a large merchant navy and a long tradition of civilian navigation. Founded in 1941 with the purpose of supplying Switzerland with basic goods during the Second World War it is the largest merchant navy of any landlocked country.

**Tattoos.....**An early reference to maritime tattoos (or tatau), appears in the journal of Joseph Banks (1743) the naturalist aboard Captain Cook's ship the HMS Endeavour. He writes "*I shall now mention the way the sailors mark themselves indelibly, (with needles and gunpowder) each of them is so marked by their humour or disposition*".

Sailors, often by nature superstitious (and at the mercy of the elements) believed that certain symbols and talismans would help survive bad weather and dangerous waters. Common motifs were the images of pigs and hens. Surprising perhaps as pigs can't swim or hens fly. But this exactly the reason they were chosen by the superstitious sailors. It was believed that God would look down upon a shipwreck and see an animal not capable of swimming and guide them to calmer

waters and safety. Another example of a talismanic tattoo was the North Star (Nautical Star or compass rose). Sailors believed by wearing this symbol they would always find their way home.

**Atlantis.....**A legendary island, first mentioned by Plato, said to have existed in the Atlantic Ocean west of Gibraltar and to have sunk beneath the sea. Modern archaeologists now link Atlantis with the island of Thera -the surviving remnant of a much larger island destroyed by a volcanic eruption c1500 b.c.

**Tsunami.....**As early as 426 BC the Greek historian Thucydides inquired in his book *History of the Peloponnesian War* about the causes of tsunami. He was the first to argue that ocean earthquakes must be the cause. He described '*my opinion of this phenomenon must be sought in the undersea earthquake. At the point where its shock has been the most violent the sea is driven back, and suddenly recoiling with redoubled force, causes the inundation. Without an earthquake I do not see how such an accident could happen*'

Kenza Eastwood

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# Book Review

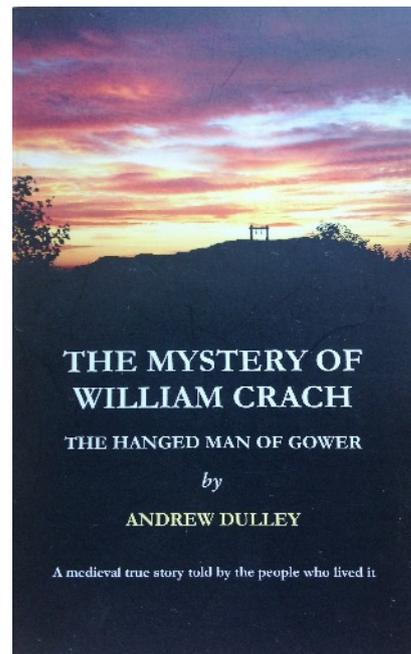
*A Medieval true story told by the people who lived it.*

Written by Andrew Dulley who is the Assistant County Archivist at the West Glamorgan Archive Service in Swansea.

Illustrations by Timothy Dulley.

To buy a copy, please contact:

Andrew Dulley, 23 Belle View Road, West Cross, SA3 5QB



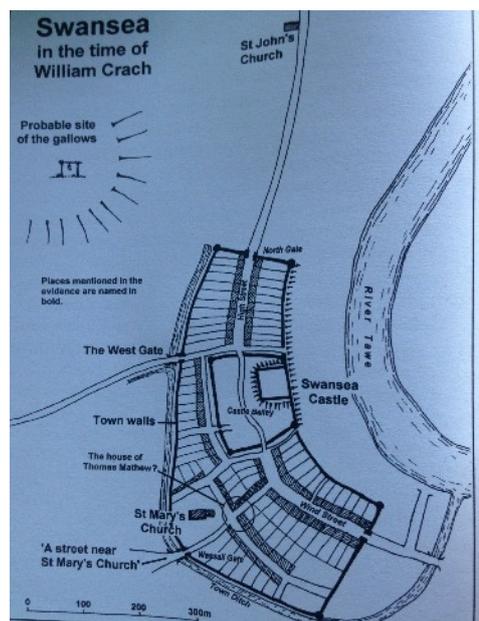
This story is a record of real events that happened in medieval Swansea. William Crach is a Welsh freedom-fighter accused of murder and arson in Oystermouth Castle. He is arrested and hanged, but then he revives. Was this a miracle or a freak occurrence? The church conducts an investigation to find out. Nine witnesses are called to give evidence ranging from a humble labourer to the local ruler. Among them is the hanged man himself. One by one they are called in to tell of what they saw. Their statements were

recorded in Latin by the church officials and the manuscript survives in the Vatican Archives in Rome.

This is a most amazing tale, quite hard to believe but true and it happened right here in Swansea. Not a *who dunnit* but a *how did he do it*.

An fascinating glimpse of the way people lived and thought in Medieval Wales.

**If you have a book that you would like reviewed** and that you think would be of interest to the Historical Association, please let the editor have a copy at one of the HA lectures at the Waterfront museum.



**The next issue of *Chronicle*** will feature historical technology. This will cover a very wide area of subjects. If you would like to contribute an article of 400-800 words please email to the editor:

[margaret.mccloy@sky.com](mailto:margaret.mccloy@sky.com)

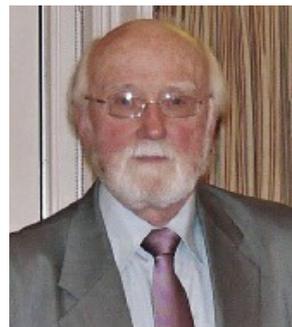
Or if you have any interesting technological photos, they too would be of interest to publish.

## Branch News



Dr Fred Cowley 2014

### Honorary Fellows



Dr John Alban 2015



Gerald Gabb 2016

A very enjoyable evening was held at Sketty hall when local historian Gerald Gabb was made this year's Honorary Fellow of the Swansea Branch. He gave a most entertaining and informative talk to the large gathering of members who attended. A presentation was made to Mr Gabb and he was warmly applauded for his continuing contribution to historical matters. He gave us some interesting excerpts from his forthcoming book. The warm summer's evening started with drinks in the garden and ended with a fine buffet .

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**Saturday 24 September 2016, 10.00am-4.00pm**

History Day at Swansea Museum and the National Waterfront Museum.

*A day of talks and seminars organised in partnership with the Historical Association and the Royal Institution of South Wales*

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**The Swansea Branch has not had a members outing for some time.**

**Next year is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Jane Austin.**

Please let the Editor know if you would be interested in a trip to Bath sometime to visit  
the Jane Austin museum.

Email [margaret.mccloy@sky.com](mailto:margaret.mccloy@sky.com) We would also welcome ideas from members as to where else we might arrange a trip.

# Schools Essay Competition

Exemplary History skills were again very much in evidence during this second year of competition. The winning entry by Ellie Jarvis was of a very high standard indeed, with arguments presented cogently and in considerable depth.

Ellie Jarvis thoroughly deserved the £100 first prize. As in the inaugural year, schools were allowed to submit their very best 6<sup>th</sup> form essays.

The competition reaffirms the commitment of the Swansea Branch to the promotion of excellence in History writing. The Historical Association certificate was presented to Ellie and during the ceremony the values and priorities of the Historical Association were emphasised. Two deputy heads of the school attended as well as the head of the 6<sup>th</sup> form. A special mention must be made of Angele Jones, the head of History at Treorchy and for her support for this competition.

Winning Essay Extracts.

**Chamberlain should be judged as a guilty man for his appeasement towards Germany.’ How valid is this assessment of Chamberlain’s foreign policy, 1937-39?**

I

## Introduction:

The policy of appeasement was characterised by a willingness on the part of Western democracies to make concessions to hostile powers in the hope of securing peaceful relations and preventing acts of aggression. Popularised as a valid alternative to war during the interwar period, appeasement gained notoriety following the 1938 Munich conference, which concluded the Czech Crisis with Czechoslovakia’s coerced capitulation to the demands of Nazi Germany.

## Conclusion:

Although I’m not disputing that following a policy other than appeasement during the time of Chamberlain’s leadership may have had a more favourable outcome, there’s absolutely no way to confirm such speculation. Hindsight may indeed provide alternative policies, but when one considers the position of limited means and knowledge from which Chamberlain was working, it’s easy to see how appeasement appeared the most auspicious. Indeed, I posit that in any era other than the interwar period of fascist expansionism, Chamberlain’s laudable approach to foreign policy would have been an unmitigated success.



Richard Lewis ,who organised the competition ,with winner Ellie. Photograph by Raymond Savage

# HA Swansea Branch Programme 2016

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



17<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Dr Thomas Irish

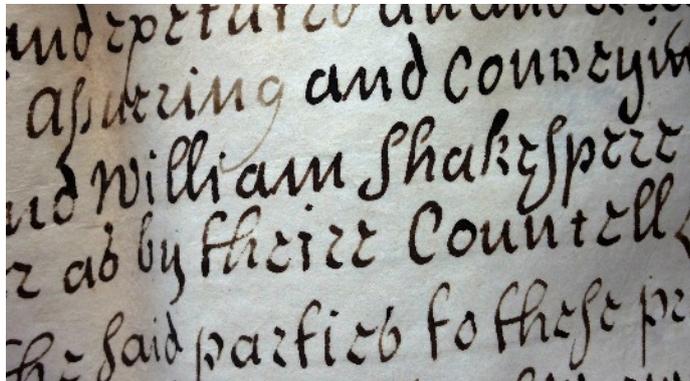
**1916 in Irish History and Memory**

15<sup>th</sup> October 2016

The Anniversary Lecture

Dr Catherine Fletcher

**The Life of Alessandro de' Medici**



19<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Eoin Price

**William Shakespeare**

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 7pm

**Branch Christmas Dinner, Sketty Hall, Sketty**

Members and Guests, Evening wear or lounge suits

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17<sup>th</sup> December

Dr Nigel Pollard

**Heritage, Protection and military Necessity?**

**The 'Monuments Men' and the Allied Bombing of  
Pompeii, Aug -September 1943**

