

BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS UPDATE

November/December 2021. Issue 24 – The green issue

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Our meetings have resumed and we have had quite a good attendance for both lectures. The October talk was given by Dr Gill Wakley who had joined the Abergavenny Local History Society after retiring from the post of Professor of Primary Care at Staffordshire University. She utilised her other qualifications and experience in landscape archaeology and research to explore the history of the local area. She is the chair of the Abergavenny Local History Society, a member of their Research Group and the co-ordinator of research into the Gunter Mansion. Her talk was very illuminating, who would have thought that there was a medieval mansion in the middle of a street of shops in Abergavenny. To those of you who didn't attend, the mansion is more or less on the opposite side of the road to what used to be W. H. Smith newsagent; it's now a bridal shop just below The Angel Hotel. You can visit their H.Q; they've taken over one of the shops to show what they've found including photos of the wall paintings. Well worth a visit but only on a Tuesday and Saturday between 10am and 4pm.

Our last meeting was a talk on November 17th by Janet Karn titled "Murder most foul". Janet used to work at the Tredegar Library; I think she's now down in Blackwood library. I'd heard this talk and I immediately snapped her up for our society.

Thinking ahead, on December 15th Andrew Brown will deliver his talk on Shipwrecks. The December meeting is when we normally have our Christmas Buffet. The committee have decided we go ahead with this and Amieoccasions have been booked to provide

the food at £7.50 per person. If you wish to be at the buffet after the talk please give your name and payment to our treasurer at the November meeting.

Talking of food (and I'm now hungry) the committee had agreed to an annual lunch at the Hall Inn at Gwehelog. Why change when you have such nice food? As many will not travel by coach due to Covid and social distancing, those who wished to attend had to travel by car. 22 members and friends came and we did have a lovely meal, it was nice to be out with others gossiping and putting the world to rights. Thanks to Merryl (next year's Chairperson) who thanked everybody and the staff at the Hall Inn.

The Brynmawr museum (sadly closed at the moment due to some structural problem) had two visitors on Thursday, December 9th. I only had contact with Owen who was organising the visit for his friend Michael and the visit went very well, they were very grateful that we opened the museum especially for Michael (the friend) as his mother was born in Brynmawr and lived at No 62 Bailey Street until her 20s when she moved to London. No 62 would have been at the top end of Bailey Street between Boundary Street and Hatter Street, all the house there were demolished. (I found No 62 using C2BG website).

During the visit I realised that Owen was Owen Smith, ex M.P. for Pontypridd but who was Michael? Turns out he's Baron Michael Levy, a Labour peer who sits in the House of Lords and is the chairman of a finance company among other things. Their visit to the museum followed a lunch at The Walnut Tree. I gave Michael some museum literature about the

Jewish riots and Brynmawr's retaliation. After the visit they were heading for the Jewish Cemetery where Michael thinks family members may be buried. And before you ask, they both signed the visitor's book.

They were not able to see all of the museum but what they did see impressed them and hopefully they'll return when the museum is back to its former glory. I wonder if Baron Levy will tell everyone in the House of Lords about the Brynmawr Museum.

The 2022 programme has been completed though I am still waiting for a reply re the November talk. Hopefully we will have our programme printed ready for the January meeting which is also our AGM. (This will of course depend on whether COVID restriction return or not). The programme looks like this:

January 19th;

A.G.M and Chairman's evening

February 16th,

John Webb. "The Webb Business at Crickhowell"

March 16th.

Mike Woodward on Blaenafon Iron Works.

April 20th.

Mark Davies. Droving in the Brecon Beacons.

May 18th;

Raymond Stroud. Talk to be confirmed

September 21st,

Industrial gardens .

October 19th,

Dr Joan Allen. "Legality and Injustice in the age of the Chartists.

November 16th

Awaiting reply

December 14th.

Stephen Rowley "In comes I... a history of Mumming", (originally booked for 2019)

Membership will be due at the start of the year and it is still only £6 per person. We didn't take any membership during 2021 for obvious reasons. If paying by cheque please make it out to Brynmawr Historical Society.

How many of you have heard of a singer/songwriter named Mark Nevin. You will certainly be aware of some of the songs he's written as he had a No 1 hit some years ago

with a group named Fairground Attraction and the song was "Perfect"....

The songstress in the group was Eddi Reader who went on to have many hits, some of them written by Mark Nevin.

Fairground Attraction broke up and Mark formed a band named Sweetmouth, with the Irish singer named Brian Kennedy on vocals, and released the excellent album "Goodbye To Songtown. It really is a lovely album, I know as I have a copy. Mark went on to write and perform his own solo albums such as "Insensitive songwriter", "My unfashionable opinion" and "Stand beside me in the sun". He has had hits as co-writer with Morrissey. His songs have been recorded by David Bowie, Ringo Starr, Joe Cocker, Mica Paris and loads of others. He also wrote extensively with the late, great Kirsty MacColl.

What you may not know (but you do now) is that Mark is originally from Beaufort. I wonder if any of you know or knew the family and if you do/did please get in touch.

Well, the Christmas season is upon us and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Let's hope COVID does not give "Lockdown" a reason for returning, but if it does make sure you keep safe and follow the guidelines.

Those of you receiving this news Update by email may be confused as to why it's called the Green Issue. Hard copies of the News Update have been printed on green paper. We had a few reams of paper free from the Borough Council as they were getting rid of some stationery. We also had some large envelopes, a stapler (that doesn't work) plus staples, a two hole punch that does work, some clips etc to keep us going for a few more years, so many thanks to the Council for thinking of us.

And finally, the Cosy Flats on King Street (Brynmawr) were officially opened last week by our A.M. Alun Davies and he also unveiled the plaque which will be on the wall of the flats facing the streets so look out for it. At the opening some nice things were said about the Historical Society as well.

The Secretary.

