

**For your Diary****TALK**

Wed. 21st September 2011  
7.00pm for 7.30pm  
Speakers: Mr & Mrs Thomas  
The Welsh Air  
Ambulance Service

**GALA EVENING**

Wed. 28th September 2011  
at 7.00pm  
Artists: see insert for details  
St. Joseph's RC High School  
Tickets £8 pp

**A LIVELY & AFFECTIONATE PLAY  
The Just-William Lady**

Written & Performed by  
Alison Neil  
Thurs 27th November 2011  
at 7.30pm  
in The New Hall  
(see insert for full details)  
Tickets £8 pp

**HALLOWEEN**

Sat 29th Oct - Sun 30th Oct  
& Mon 31st Oct  
5:30 am - 9:00pm  
Stewards Required  
(Complete form in the insert)

**CHRISTMAS**

Saturday 10th Sunday  
11th December 2pm-5pm  
  
Thursday 15th Friday  
16th December 6pm-8pm  
  
Saturday 17th,  
Sunday 18th December  
2pm-5pm  
(Stewards Required)

**HOW OLD IS TREDEGAR HOUSE?**

On Open Days when 'The Friends' are invited to act as Stewards - the age of the House is a popular question from the visitors.. So here is the breaking news from the recent dendrochronology report.

**Emily Price - Curator writes:**

The red brick Tredegar House is normally dated to 1664 - 1674. This is through guess work rather than concrete evidence. For example there is an 19th century copy of a bill for building work dated 1664 - 1674, and the painted sundial in the Cedar Closet window which is dated 1672. This information can act as a guide, but can't be relied upon. The bill could have been altered when it was copied, and the sundial could have been brought from another property. There is even less certainty about the dates of the earlier grey stone building, what we call the Servant's, or Medieval Hall.

In March we were contacted by Richard Suggett and Nicola Roberts from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. They wanted to know if they could send the Emergency Recording Team of the Royal Commission to date some of the roof timbers, as part of the national tree-ring dating (dendrochronology) programme. As you can imagine we jumped at the chance for some precise dates. From samples they can date the wood to a season of a year! These were analysed by the Oxford tree-ring dating laboratory.

We had a really good day with Richard and Nicola, who were a mine of information. We even learnt that the Cedar Closet, so called because it is made of cedar to keep moths away, is in fact only a cedar wood veneer! It would have been an expensive wood, so the Morgans were trying to keep costs down.

After a nervous couple of months, wondering if we would find out that Tredegar House actually dates to the mid 1980s, we were very pleased with the results. The felling dates for the roof timbers in the red brick house range from winter 1666 - winter 1672, so our end date of 1674 isn't unlikely. What we have been calling 'The Medieval Hall' should now be called the Tudor Hall, as the primary timbers date from 1544 - 74. There are also beams that date from 1624-54 in that part of the House. Some charred beams perhaps indicate this was a result of rebuilding after a fire. The Royal Commission and the Oxford tree-ring dating laboratory marked areas in the outbuildings and stables which would be ideal for samples to be taken from. Fingers crossed, in the future, hopefully we'll get dates for those buildings too.

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

Shaun Maquire has sent us this photo taken about 1962/63, he says 'it shows one of the two lions that were each side of the gap in the lake wall near to the boat house. These went missing years ago and may have been purloined! The photo subject obviously was of the swans and cygnets on the lake but it also shows the lily bed that was alongside the boathouse and in the water on the surface can be seen the weed that literally took over the lake. He also recalls the canon ' from the

Crimea that Lord Tredegar brought back and was part of the memorial to his horse, Sir Briggs'. Shaun also remembers the Gondola and the other boat on the lake, believed to be a former life-boat and a sun-dial. The Newsletter Editors were all set for a Crimewatch reconstruction but thought they ought to check first - good job we did - as Emily Price, Curator at Tredegar House was able to tell us that the sun-dial was the only artefact remaining - broken but safe in one of the out-buildings. Of the other objects - they were long gone before the Council took over the house.

# FRIENDS OF *Tredegar House* Newsletter

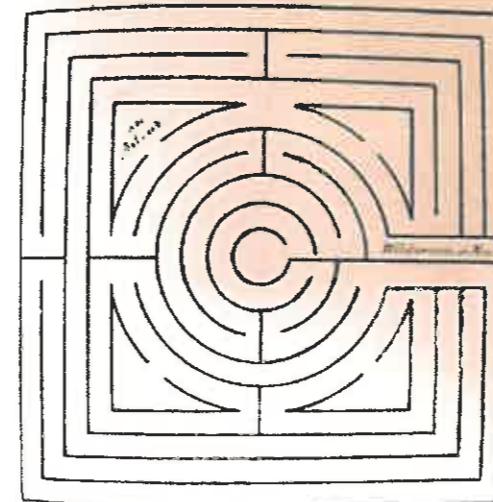
**A Message from Anne Pegington OBE**

Chair of The Friends of Tredegar House

In June, 49 Friends and friends of Friends enjoyed a very pleasant day at Hampton Court - Hereford.. We also made a small profit. Hugh Clatworthy our Treasurer in the last News Letter informed us that our financial year has changed to March 2012. Therefore I am sure many of you realise that our **annual General Meeting** will now be in **March 2012**. Because we do not have another Newsletter this year there will be a mailing of all our Christmas festivities in October. It is hoped by the time of our October evening talk we will have a speaker from The National Trust who hopefully will update us on the current situation.

**Don't forget our Gala concert on the 28th September.** We need to sell lots of tickets.

Prof. Brian Peeling has kindly donated a beautiful framed photograph of Tredegar House, we hope to auction it at our October evening talk he has also donated two big boxes of white linen and lace belonging to Audrey his late wife. There will be a sale of these items at our Christmas Fayre. Enjoy the rest of the Summer.

**THE MAZE**

In the archives of Newport Reference Library can be seen a drawing by Octavius Morgan (Charles Octavius Swinnerton Morgan 1803 - 1888) he was the 4th son of Sir Charles Morgan 2nd Baronet. It is a plan of a 'Wilderness' or Maze which had existed in the ancient gardens of Tredegar House. He traced the drawing from some old plans of the gardens, house and other premises on the Estate which he said were made in around 1600. Octavius Morgan was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, President of the Royal Archaeological Institute and Fellow of the Royal Society. He lived at The Friars, on Belle Vue Lane - which is now part of the Aneurin Bevan Trust.

Photographs of The Friars during Octavius occupation there show every wall and surface covered in his precious collection of clocks, keys, plates etc. On his death in 1888 he bequeathed his fine collections of clocks watches, scientific instruments, chamberlains' keys, Papal rings and a number of items of glass and ceramics to The British Museum.

**THE GREEN FLAG AWARD**

The grounds of Tredegar House and Belle Vue Park are two of the best in the country - and that's official. Both will receive the Green Flag Award, a sign to visitors that the park is well-maintained and well-managed, with excellent facilities. A high-quality green space in Newport.

Phil Barton, Green Flag Plus Partnership chairman, said: "I would like to congratulate this year's winners, who have worked hard throughout the year to keep their parks and green spaces at a high standard and ensure they are pleasant and enjoyable spaces for the whole community. All award-winning sites now have the chance to receive a further award, The People's Choice Award. This is voted for by the public, so vote for Tredegar Park. Contact The Green Flag Award, Keep Britain Tidy, Elizabeth House, The Pier, Wigan, WN3 4EX, by telephone: 01942 612621 or email: greenflagawards@keepbritaintidy.org

## The Sewing Group

Little did I think, when I was a pupil gazing through the classroom windows of Tredegar House in the 1950s that one day I would be making curtains for those same windows!

As some of the older members of the "Friends of Tredegar House" will remember the first sewing group was formed in 1981, shortly after the "Friends" was established. It was a very informal group, only meeting when the keeper of the house needed help to make a particular item of furnishing. Sewing, however, was not our only occupation. We did some painting and we cleaned and brushed the carved woodwork in the Brown Room. It was because of the odd jobs we did that the group was called the working party, rather than the sewing group.

The sewing group, as we know it now, was set up in 1997. At present we have seven members, mostly retired ladies who in the past have followed various careers including nursing, teaching and business management. Among our members we have a skilled lace maker, an embroiderer and an upholsterer.

Our most recent work has been making curtains for the Library. Our next task is to make curtains for the Morgan Room.

Almost every room in Tredegar House has samples of our work. Curtain making sounds simple but at Tredegar it involves more than the usual careful measuring owing to some uneven floor levels. There is an example of this in the Master's Bedchamber where each curtain is slightly different in length. Handling and cutting long pieces of expensive cloth is one of our most difficult tasks. We frequently have to lay the cloth on the floor in order to check measurements before cutting. The Library curtains, for example, were laid out on the floor four times, so that we could check for pattern matches and fit the lining and interlining. In spite of having two sewing machines the curtains are usually hand stitched as the cloth is often too thick to go under our domestic machines. Also hand sewing gives a more authentic finish in a period setting. It should perhaps be mentioned here that funding for the material is generally supplied by the "Friends".

The sewing group meets every Monday afternoon at Tredegar House where we meet Emily and staff who make us welcome and support our work.

Any member of the "Friends" interested in solving the world's problems, drinking tea, eating home made cakes and doing a little needlework should contact Sue Powell Tel. Newport 815924.

## YOUR STORIES

Tredegar House and Park has always played an important part of the life of Newportonians. Childhood days exploring the Park, outbuildings and House feature in some of the queries and stories sent to the Friends. So tell us your story, did you go to school there, play in the grounds or do you know someone who worked at the House?

We will be pleased to share your stories and reminiscences in the newsletter and on the website.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

30th October 1832

Chas Morgan Esq MP for Brecon has given to each of his workmen 37 in number, from a quarter to half an acre of land, for potatoes which is already worked and manured for planting, and Mr Morgan allows each man two days for setting and two days for rising the crop, paying them as usual, their labour. We would say to the wealthy 'Go though and do likewise'. Every married man had half an acre and a single man a quarter The labourers and domestics of Ruperra, in upwards of 60, speak with praise and gratitude of the kindness they receive from their master and mistress. *Cambrian Newspaper.*

## 'Death at Tredegar House of a Crimean Hero'



The Western Mail headline paid tribute to 'an old war-worn veteran, one who had lingered beyond his allotted span'. Sir Briggs the horse that carried Godfrey Morgan into the Battle of Balaclava died in 1874 having lived in 'ease and quiet dignity' in one of the paddocks of Tredegar House. The bay horse, standing some 15.3 hands high had been wounded on the head in battle but, like his rider was saved. He also went on to serve Frederick Morgan when Godfrey returned home, finally returning to Tredegar Park in 1855. There is a portrait of him in the Military Museum

Visitors to the Cedar Garden at Tredegar House can see a monument commemorating him. He carried his Master the Hon. Godfrey Morgan, Captain 17th Lancers boldly and well at the Battle of Alma, in the first line of the Light Cavalry Charge at Balaclava and the battle of Inkerman, 1854. He died at Tredegar Park February 6th 1874. Aged 28 years.'

Despite being a hunting and fishing man Godfrey loved his domestic animals and a memorial for Mr. Peeps can also be seen. 'In loving memory of Peeps. Fondest and most affectionate of Skye terriers who died Sept 6th 1898. His heart was all his Master's own. There are some both good and wise men who say dumb creatures we have cherished here below shall give us joyous greeting when we reach the Golden gate. Is it folly that I hope it may be so'.

