

For your Diary Talks held in Morgan Room

Wed. 15th Feb: - 2.30pm
Speaker: Susan Fiander-Woodhouse
Blaenafon Cheddar Cheese Co.

Wed. 14th March: - 2.30pm
Speaker: June Ashton-Mears
Period Costume Fashion Show
and Historical Presentation

Wed. 11th April: - 7.30pm
Speaker: Richard Davies
History of Ancient Cwmbran
and Bronze Age to Medieval Age

Day Trip

Friday 29th June: 2012
trip this year is to Stourhead, House
and Gardens Nr. Warminster
Leaving Tredegar House
Car Park at 10.00am
(Complete form in the insert)

AGM

Thursday 19th April: 7.00pm
Meeting free dinner £8 per head
(Complete form in the insert)

Stewards Required

Easter Monday

Monday 9th April: 10.30am - 4.00pm
(Complete form in the insert)

Pirates Day Spring Bank Holiday

Monday 4th June: 10.30am - 4.00pm
(Complete form in the insert)

A Message from Anne Tame

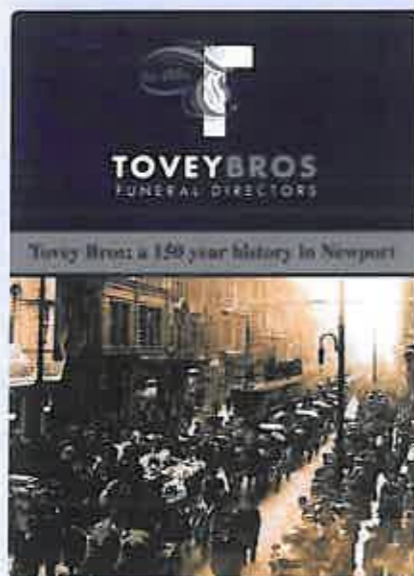
The Friends are sad to hear that Anne Tame, House Manager at TH will be retiring in March.

In a letter to the editor she said 'By March I will have been here over 10 years and it is fair to say this has been the most interesting 10 years of my life. Not only because of the many different events which have passed through, the Eisteddfod and The Ryder Cup to name just a few, but also all the fascinating people I have met. Every day has been different from hosting dinners for the First Minister to dealing with blocked drains, excited children off to see Santa and those terrified at Halloween. It has been a pleasure to have worked with the Friends and I would like to thank them for their support over the years.

We say, 'Thank you' Anne for your advice and the enthusiastic help you have given to The Friends. Ten years at TH? There is definitely scope for a book!

Your Say

As always we are pleased to hear and publish stories of TH, currently we are collecting stories of those that went to St. Joseph's School. Newport Library has some old school magazines (there are photos in them) available to look at in the Reference Library. Plus of course there is 'Birth of a School 1967-1976' by J. Alan Shewing which looks at the latter days of St. Josephs.



Tovey Bros. Funeral Directors

The Friends would like to thank Tovey Bros for their generous donation of £1,300 given as a celebration of their 150 year service to the citizens of Newport. A book looking into the six generations of the Tovey family gives a fascinating insight the work of a funeral director and includes funeral customs, funerals in the news and describes how funerals have changed throughout the years. It is richly illustrated

with historic photos, plus three specially commissioned paintings by Steve Alport of Tredegar House, the Transporter Bridge and St Woolos Cathedral - all of whom have benefited from the generosity of Tovey's 150th Anniversary. The book is a must for Newport historians and no, it isn't morbid but full of interesting stories. The book can be obtained direct from Tovey Bros 01633 266848 and is a limited edition £6 plus £1.50 post and packaging.



Happy New Year from our Chairman

Happy New Year to all the Friends and their families. This year our Newsletter Editor and Deputy Chairman Monty Dart will produce 4 newsletters in order that we can keep you all up to date with the developments regarding the National Trust which will commence managing Tredegar House mid March 2012. Dame Fiona Reynolds who is the Chief Executive of the National Trust addressed the Cardiff Business Club's first meeting of 2012, she said 'today the Trust is an enterprise with a £400m turnover four million members 18 million visitors, 5500 staff and 62000 volunteers'. She also mentioned the latest Welsh properties to benefit Trust stewardship namely Tredegar House and Dyffryn Gardens in Cardiff which will attract nearly half a million people per year. 'Each property must have an endowment to cover future work and subsidise running costs' she said.

Therefore you will all appreciate how important it is to continue to Fund raise for Tredegar House and please be reassured all money raised is ring-fenced for enhancement of Tredegar House. Although Friends will continue to raise money, that is not our only role. We aim to support the management of Tredegar House with our Educational and research responsibilities for visitors and the community at large.

I am sure you will all know that Councillor Les Knight died just before Christmas. Mr Knight, was once the Mayor of Newport and also Chairman of the Friends. He will be sadly missed and we at FOTH send our sincere condolences to his wife Betty and her daughters.

Lastly may I extend my grateful thanks to all the Friends who helped with the Christmas stewarding particularly the new members who joined us for the first time.

Ruperra Castle - 70 Years ago - a Tragic Happening

Ruperra Castle was a Morgan residence. Situated in Draethen, it was built by Sir Thomas Morgan, one of the most powerful men in Wales at that time, as steward to the Earl of Pembroke. As Surveyor of the Wood to King James I, he had been knighted in 1623. After the death of Colonel Fredrick Morgan in 1909, his son Courteney embarked on a programme of refurbishment to include a new east entrance porch, new stables, a new power house fitted with duplicate steam-driven generators dynamos and boilers and a new reservoir and pump house in the deer park. The brew house, laundry and dairy range built in the 1840s, were converted to accommodate the valets, footmen, chauffeurs and garden staff.



In spite of the splendid building works, Ruperra was now very much only the second home of the Morgan family. Courtenay, the current Lord Tredegar lived at Tredegar House and his son Evan did not make Ruperra his home as previous 'sons in waiting' had done. With only a small domestic staff installed, Ruperra was used for hunting and shooting and weekend parties. By 1935 the fortunes of the Morgan family had declined and the 3000 acre estate was put up for sale. But there were no offers. The contents of the Castle were disposed of in a three day sale. What remained was taken to Tredegar House, the Castle abandoned and the gardens left to go wild.

On December 6th 1941 when British troops were billeted at Ruperra Castle, an electrical fault caused a fire which burnt out the Castle. It happened on the same night as the attack on Pearl harbour. In all the years since, nothing has been done to protect the Ancient Monument.

Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust commemorated the event with the help of some re-enactor soldiers and Home guards. One of the veteran soldiers from the Castle, Mr Jack Senior originally from the Cardiff TA Signals unit, attended the event.



Participants watched a ritual burning of a model of the Castle at Rudry Parish Hall, enjoyed a buffet, which included spam sandwiches and an eggless cake, and then watched a DVD. It showed pictures taken at the time and voice recordings of some of the soldiers and local people who remembered the war years.

One of the Tyne and Wear Electrical Engineers who escaped unharmed from the Castle that night said in a letter "We were very upset the day after the fire to see the place gutted. We had some beautiful parks up in South Shields but coming to a place like Ruperra with no houses around was really outstanding for us. I am very sorry to see that it has been left to neglect."

For more on the work of the Ruperra Castle Conservation Trust see <http://www.ruperratrust.co.uk/>

Remembering Councillor Les Knight

Councillor Les Knight was a passionate advocate for Tredegar House and former Chairman of Friends of Tredegar House, so it was with sadness that we heard of his sudden death on 11th December 2011. He held many council roles throughout his career, including mayor, deputy mayor and chairman of the planning committee. He was fondly known as the 'The Father of the Council' having served 42 years as a member of Newport Council. In this photograph he is seen with a copy of the Gainsborough portrait of Sir Charles Morgan that he fought so diligently to be returned to the House.



Some 500 mourners attended his funeral at St. Mark's Church, Gold Tops - a church where Les and Betty his wife were regular worshippers.

Friends of Les from FOTH can only echo the words of his daughter Helen in a letter to her father, read by Gerald Davies, family friend at the funeral "We will miss everything about you, your charm, your sense of humour, knowledge, love, understanding and time you gave us all." (thanks to the South Wales Argus for photograph)

Did your Relative work at Tredegar House?

Following a request in a previous newsletter we were thrilled to hear from Martyn Evans of Christchurch, Dorset who worked at Tredegar House. His great-great grandfather John Evans worked at TH as a stud groom until his death in 1861. John was the first of the Evans dynasty to serve and a valued by the Morgan family. He was followed by his son also named John Evans.

This John met and married in 1922 another TH servant, Beatrice Mina Louise Coombs whose cousin was Maud Williams the Housekeeper. John became chauffeur to Lord Tredegar and lived with his wife at Tredegar Park Cottages where two previous generations of the family had lived, the cottage a gift of the Morgans'. He was a keen sportsman and played rugby for Newport for two seasons prior to WW1. He then signed up and was captured by the Turks in 1916. A fascinating family and you will see and read more of them in subsequent newsletters. In this photograph you see John Evans, Martyn's grandfather.



During the General Strike in 1926 Lord Tredegar sent his three chauffeurs and a footman to assist the Newport Police. Left to right Special Constables J. Evans, E. Henley and T. Gear. Seated Special Constable T. Barnes.

The National Trust

Did you know that the National Trust first looked at Tredegar House 60 plus years ago? In a letter written by the Morgan solicitors Rider, Heaton, Meredith and Mills in August 1950 it was discussed that 'owing to the cost of carrying out the necessary work upon the property and putting it in repair and providing for requirements which the National Trust would need for their particular purpose and to provide for its upkeep, it has not been found practicable to proceed with the scheme for their taking over the House and premises'.



However a later letter written by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning didn't entirely rule out an NT takeover. A further letter in September 1950 talked of 're-opening the offer and 'we would be most grateful if you could explore the possibilities with the solicitors of the estate. In particular if there is any possibility of the offer being re-opened, it would be most helpful if arrangement could be made for the ministry of works architects to inspect and report on the House. It is essential that they should know the probable cost of repairs and maintenance before they commit themselves to accepting guardianship. They are prepared to send someone to inspect the House at once if this can be fixed up'.

So welcome NT, it must have been a very thorough inspection.