



**MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN
MR ALAN HENSHALL**

It is hard to believe I have been your Chairman for one year doesn't time fly?

The National Trust have now been managing Tredegar House for two years this April. Visitor numbers have vastly increased during the last year as everyone wishes to visit Tredegar House.

Many of the "Friends" have become volunteers in the House and Gardens and volunteer on a regular basis but, they are always looking for more.

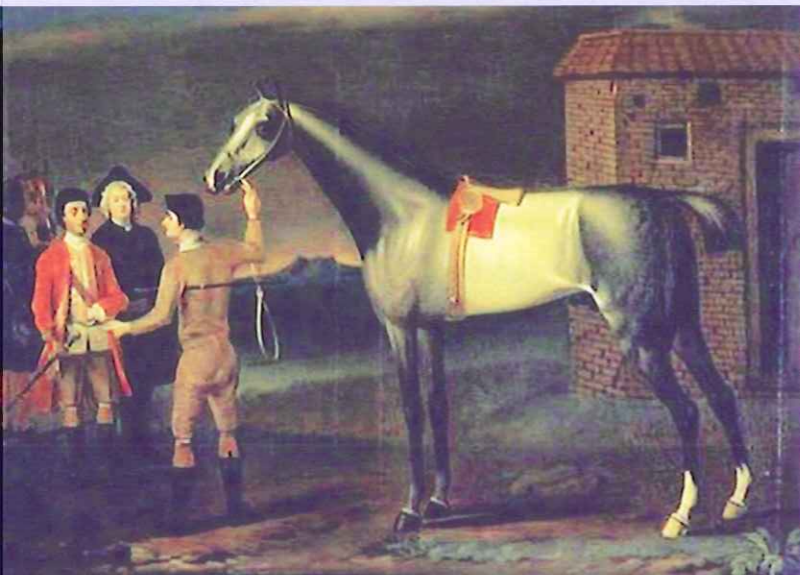
Our day trip this year in June sold out within one month. So please look out for details of our midday trip in September (organised by Pam Netherway) not to be disappointed.

Our talk in March given by Steve Morgan (Head Gardener) of Tredegar House was a great success lets hope future talks will also be well supported.

Finally, "Friends" we received a poor response to our recent survey submitted in January Newsletter. In order for The Friends of Tredegar House to continue to grow and flourish, we need your participation and support. We also need your ideas and opinions so please contact either myself or Mrs Judith Rice on the usual numbers.

**FROM FRIENDS ARCHIVES – NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1992
LAMPREY COMES HOME**

A painting of great importance to Tredegar House has been returned to the very place where it once hung. It was commissioned from the artist, John Wootton, by Sir William Morgan (1700-1731) and shows the grey racehorse, Lamprey, surrounded by Sir William, his jockey, trainer and groom.



The painting can be seen hanging over the fireplace in the State Dining Room in photographs published in Country Life in 1908.

FEEDBACK

We would really value your feedback on the articles in the newsletters. Please contact Judith Rice either by...

Telephone: 01633 894108 or
Email: judithrice@btconnect.com

**PHYLLIS ROBERTS – NEWPORT
(ONE OF OUR FOUNDER MEMBERS)**

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Phyllis Mary Roberts (nee Soffe) at the age of 91 in The Royal Gwent Hospital on Tuesday 21st January. She died peacefully in her sleep after a short illness.

Phyllis Mary Soffe, was born on 23rd October 1922 as the fourth child of five to Sylvester Jesse Soffe and Frances Emilina (nee Williams). Sylvester Jesse worked as a ships plumber and sheet metal worker at Newport docks and the family lived conveniently close in Pottery Road in the Pill district. It was also conveniently close to Alexandra Road primary school which all the children attended. Tragically, Sylvester Jesse died in 1934 of Tuberculosis at the early age of 51. It was around this time that the family moved into 6 Price Street and Phyllis's mother later remarried to a Mr Alf Moulton. Phyllis was a bright girl and had passed for St Julian's High School where she did well and had ambitions of becoming a pharmacist. However, her widowed mother was in such dire financial straits that Phyllis had no option but to leave school before taking her exams and find work to supplement the family income. Her elder brothers Jack and Frederick (Ted) had both enlisted in the armed forces, Jack in the tank regiment and Ted in the RAF where he was a wireless operator on Sunderland flying boats. After a spell in the Far East, Ted returned to the UK at the start of the Second World War and was stationed at Pembroke Dock. He became one of the war's earliest casualties when his aircraft crashed with the total loss of the crew.



During the war Phyllis worked at the Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) in which Bofors Guns were manufactured. Her grammar school education got her an office, rather than a factory floor job and she recalls night shifts with dancing during the mid-shift meal break. She had a boyfriend called Brynley Capel who was in Bomber Command but he was shot down and killed over Germany. She remained close friends with his sister, Edna, all her life.

In 1945 she married Frederick Roberts and bore him two children, Christopher and Jane, the family moved to Edison Ridge, Malpas and later to Sheridan Close on the Gaer. Career ambitions thwarted she committed herself to the family, though she did work part time in various jobs. After retirement, she and husband Fred became founder members of the Friends of Tredegar House and were very active as stewards and Phyllis also became part of the team of sewing ladies who made and restored many of the soft fabrics which adorn the house to this day.

In her eighties she moved into Monmouth Court on Bassaleg Road and although suffering some recurring health problems she continued to lead an active life. She always loved poetry and could recite many from memory, including Shakespeare's Sonnets. Even during her final spell in hospital she would do this, if asked, often to the astonishment of the listener.

Phyllis will be sorely missed by Christopher and Jane as well grandchildren Daniel and Chloe and the rest of the family. Phyllis lived just long enough to hear of the birth of her great granddaughter Cordelia Lily (Dilly) on 20th January.

FOR YOUR DIARY TALKS

WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY 2014

Speaker – John Sheen
Subject – Five boys and a pasty.
Humorous reminiscences of a South Wales childhood.
Illustrated with some mind-jogging memorabilia.
Commencing at 7.30pm in the Morgan Room at Tredegar House.

WEDNESDAY 11TH JUNE 2014

Speaker - Monty Dart
Subject - Servants in 1900cc
Commencing at 7.30pm in the Morgan Room at Tredegar House

WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2014

Speaker - Tim Ryan
Subject - The Return and Restoration of the Severn Princess Aust Ferry.
Commencing at 7.30pm in the Morgan Room at Tredegar House

DAY TRIP

Thursday 19th June 2014
- COMPLETE SELL OUT -

MID DAY TRIP

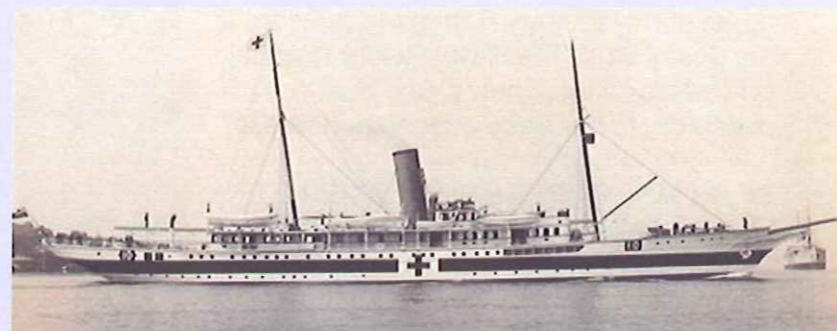
Wednesday 17th September 2014
Dewstow Garden and Grottoes.

Dewstow House was built before 1804, when John Proctor (d. 1837) lived there. Dewstow Gardens were built after 1895 and buried after World War II. Rediscovery and large scale restoration of the gardens began in 2000.

Leaving Tredegar House Car Park
12.00noon prompt

LIBERTY

Courtenay was the first to offer his yacht, Liberty, to be converted to a hospital ship.



An article in "The Daily Mirror" 22nd August 1914 stated 'I hear that Lord Tredegar's magnificent steam yacht Liberty has completed its fitting out as a hospital ship, and has gone to Portsmouth for inspection. Lord Tredegar is bearing the whole expense of the ship himself, and the Admiralty has given him a commission in the Royal Naval Reserve, for he is going to command his yacht himself.'



The Crew of The Liberty

Courtenay Morgan's portrait in the Blue Room at Tredegar House shows him in his Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve uniform. He is holding a telescope – one of more than forty items which were returned to the the House in 2010 by Mike Smith whose father and grandfather worked for both Courtenay and Evan Morgan. The collection came into Mr Smith's possession because his father Henry worked as valet to Evan Morgan, who was Lord Tredegar from 1934 to 1949, while his grandfather William Sayzeland was butler to Courtenay Morgan - Lord Tredegar between 1913 and 1934.



GILT ROOM PAINTING CONSERVATION FEBRUARY 2014



In February conservation work was carried out on 3 of the panel paintings in the Gilt Room. One of conservators, Rachel Howells, has been used in the past by Tredegar House and the Friends so we know her well. The other, Rebecca Ellison, was new and they made a great team.

Before the National Trust took over, condition surveys were carried out on the majority of the collection at Tredegar House. These looked at the condition of the object, its stability and what a priority the work is. Three of the panel paintings in the Gilt Room were rated highest priority: a vertical landscape with figure to the right of window, a central landscape above window and 'Justice' the figure draped in blue.

BACKGROUND

As the Friends well know, The Gilt Room has problematic environmental conditions. It gets the full blast of the sun. Fluctuations in humidity are the biggest problem. It is particularly bad for organic materials (not just wood but ivory, leather etc). It causes such natural materials to swell in the damp, and shrink when it's dry. Relative humidity would ideally be between 45 & 65%. On the morning the conservation work started it was 76% in the Gilt Room. We are fixing double blinds in mid March which will help us to control the amount of light, and heat that comes into this room. That will go some way to helping reduce fluctuations.



Photograph... Justice

THIS PROJECT

The panels in the Gilt Room are fixed into place. Instead of being removed and taken to the studio to be worked on, Rachel has brought her studio to us!

Painted panels will often bow. This is partly due to the cut of the panel. It is also because the bare wooden back can respond more quickly to fluctuations in humidity than the front can as it's covered in paint. Additionally these panels haven't been able to bow, because they are held securely in place - but they still want to. That creates pressure, which will eventually cause the panels to split, and that's what had happened in the Gilt Room.

Over time oil paint becomes brittle. As the panel moves because of the changes in humidity paint can fracture and flake off or form small blisters. Rachel and Rebecca are dealing with these new paint losses, but also some areas which have been treated in the past and retouched - including one area which had been retouched in purple!