

of the Masters Dressing Room, a scheme which is being based on one of the surviving late 17th century inventories.

A 19th century Japanese porcelain bowl decorated with a 'famille rose' design was purchased at the same sale and is on display in The Red Room. A fine mahogany wardrobe of the 'Biedermeir' period (c. 1820, German) has also been bought for display in The Red Room to match the Biedermeir mahogany washstand. Another washstand, originally made for Courtenay, Viscount Tredegar when he was living at Ruperra Castle and skillfully disguised as a kneehole desk has also been purchased and is displayed beneath the recently restored portrait of him now hanging in the Kings Room. The Edwardian Bathroom has also been enhanced by the acquisition of an adjustable shaving mirror on a brass and mahogany stand and an exquisitely shaped caned and gilded chair (c. 1810) has been acquired for The Morning Room.

'Below Stairs' has seen the addition of a 'sugar loaf', yet another item presented by the 'Friends'. This will be displayed in the Housekeepers Room. The Butler's Pantry has been enlivened by the acquisition of an enchanting early print dated 1704 depicting an exceptionally busy farmyard.

Gardens:

Work has begun in earnest on the restoration of the Sunken Garden. The new scheme is being modelled on a similar garden laid out in the 1920's at Packwood House and it will incorporate a rose garden, colourful herbaceous borders and box hedging. The stone paths are to be repaired and relaid and the soil is to be changed. Restoration work will also be carried out to the ornamental stone font and 'tempietta'.

Events:

The main autumn function in the House this year was a concert given in the New Hall on 10th December by Huffed, a group of four very versatile instrumentalists who have quite clearly mastered a whole host of traditional musical instruments. They presented a lively programme entitled 'Christmas Past' incorporating traditional Christmas melodies from the medieval period and from later centuries interspersed by a series of delightful readings of a Christmas flavour complemented by a selection of appropriate slides. The New Hall was decked with holly, ivy and yards of red ribbon arranged by Mrs Barrett who on this occasion quite excelled herself and enthusiastically assisted by Diana Such and Stephen Sully. The evening was rounded off in the Brewhouse with Christmas fare which included mulled wine and mince pies. Altogether a most unusual and memorable occasion.

HELP!

Free Flow:

We again require volunteers to staff the House on Easter Monday from 12.45 pm until 6.15 pm. Each volunteer will be responsible for a particular room, acting as a 'security guard' and as a 'room information service'. Now don't go thinking that you won't be able to cope. Those 'Friends' who kindly volunteered last August thought that they wouldn't be up to it but generally they coped very well and enjoyed the experience even if they were surprised to be so exhausted at the end of it all. Each volunteer will be

given a short breather during the course of the afternoon when light refreshments will be provided. The permanent staff of the House will of course be on hand to deal with any problems that may arise or detailed enquiries and there will be a briefing and training session at which guideline notes will be distributed on Wednesday 30th March at 7.30 pm in The Smoking Room. It is important that all volunteers should attend this meeting.

'Friends' who are interested in helping to staff the House on Easter Monday should contact the Keeper of Tredegar House.

Oral History Project:

As the new Chairman, Tony Coxson, has pointed out at the beginning of this Newsletter, it is of great interest and importance to record all information relating to the day to day running of the House and its Estate. To this end Bernard and Bobby Derrick are compiling a card index system of former servants, estate workers and tradesmen under the supervision of the Keeper of Tredegar House. If anyone has even a scrap of information relating to the House or Estate; the name of a visiting tradesman perhaps, what he delivered, when he delivered, how he delivered and where he lived; then please contact either the Keeper of Tredegar House or Mr and Mrs Derrick. The Keeper would also be most interested to know the whereabouts of any old photographs of the House or Estate Buildings or of former servants, estate workers or tradesmen. Such material can help so much to help bring the history of the House alive but if anyone is reluctant to part with a treasured photograph, copying can always be arranged.

'Brush up the Brown Room':

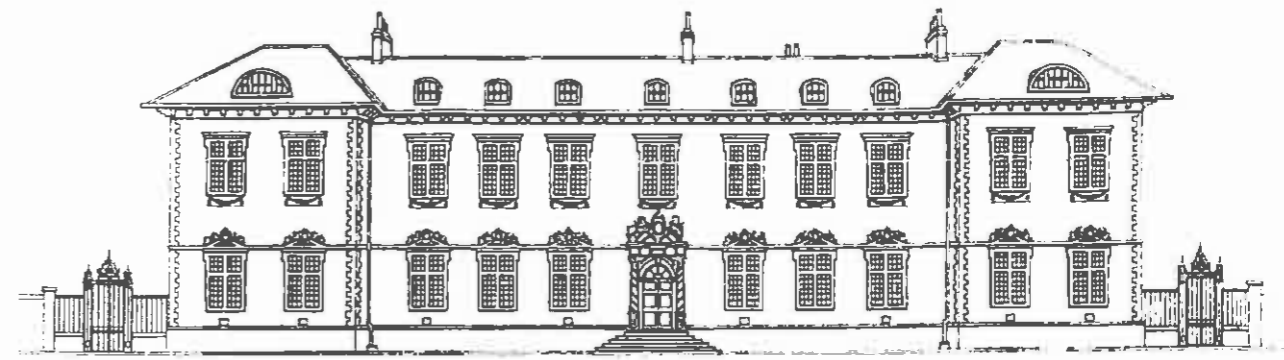
The carved panelling in The Brown Room, The State Dining Room, is looking particularly sad, especially now that The Gilt Room has been so thoroughly cleaned and restored. The panelling and intricate carvings are covered by a thick layer of plaster and masonry dust resulting from structural work. The cleaning of the panelling and carvings is a time consuming and delicate task but one which is necessary if the room is to look truly magnificent and if the valuable paintings and textiles are to be protected from harmful sporadic dustfalls. Once 'brushed up', the oak panelling and carvings can then be waxed and brought back to life; yet another gargantuan task for the future.

If any 'Friend' would like to help 'brush up The Brown Room' would they please contact The Keeper of Tredegar House. It is hoped that a small task force could tackle the problem before the House opens at Easter.

The Wanted List:

The following items are still urgently required for The Housekeepers Room.

Stone storage jars, white damask table cloths, tray cloths and napkins, whole pistachio nuts, whole almonds (blanched and unblanched) and cocoa beans. Please contact the Keeper of Tredegar House if you can offer these or other items.



THE FRIENDS OF TREDEGAR HOUSE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1983 No. 5

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In this my first message to you as Chairman, may I begin by thanking Brian Forde for his sterling efforts as our inaugural Chairman. The early days of any Association are crucial and Brian has led us for two years with imagination and enthusiasm. I know that we can look forward to his continued support for our work.

I should also like to pay tribute to our Committee. Without its dedication and hard work the Friends would not be able to function.

At this stage of the development of the Friends there is no doubt that our main need is to increase our membership. We need the additional people to assist us to further the aims of the Society, to swell the coffers and to reduce the workload. We hope they will also share our enjoyment of the House and join in our various activities. Everyone who has attended our functions seems to have derived great pleasure from them.

One of our successes this past year was the arranging of the donation of a sugar loaf by Messrs. Tate and Lyle. It is worth reminding ourselves how effectively the Friends can act as 'brokers' by informing businesses and individuals of the various needs of the House.

Undoubtedly 1983 offers us many opportunities. Remember that when the Tredegar Estate was dispersed in the fifties much of the furniture and effects were sold locally and many interesting items from the House must still be in the area. Present owners could be contacted to see if they are willing to sell or loan some of them back to the House.

Other fascinating work that remains to be undertaken is the recording of the recollections of the past House and Estate staff. Fascinating work indeed and essential if we are to expend our curiously sparse knowledge of the House.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held at the Civic Centre on 26 November 1983. The retiring Chairman, Mr Brian Forde, presented the Annual Report and thanked the Committee for their help and support. A new Committee was subsequently elected and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of Committee Members are listed below.

THE FRIENDS OF TREDEGAR HOUSE

CHAIRMAN	A Coxson, [REDACTED]
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN	F Roberts, [REDACTED]
HON. TREASURER	J M Hastings-Trew, [REDACTED]
HON. SECRETARY	Mrs W P Gidden, [REDACTED]

Committee

Mr B Derrick, [REDACTED]
Mrs P Roberts, [REDACTED]
Miss S Powell, [REDACTED]
Mr C J Highman, [REDACTED]
Mr A Davies, [REDACTED]
Mr M Parsons, [REDACTED]
Mr B Forde, [REDACTED]
Mr I Butterworth, [REDACTED]

Co-opted Committee Members

Mrs G Fisher, [REDACTED]
Mr & Mrs J Wall, [REDACTED]
Mr D Butler, [REDACTED]
Mr David Freeman (Keeper of Tredegar House)

NEWS OF FRIENDS

Sadly we have lost one of our most stalwart supporters, Mary Gwilliam, who has emigrated to Australia. Mary single handedly organised the last Bring and Buy Sale which raised over £250, and her help and enthusiasm will be severely missed. We wish Mary and her family good luck and much happiness and prosperity in their new life 'down under'.

We were sorry to hear that Bobby Derrick has been in hospital following a severe fall. We all wish her a successful and speedy recovery.

Fred Roberts hasn't been able to resist the call of a

paint brush and has been smartening up the barrier posts within the room interiors of the House. The posts have been painted to match the new rope fittings and the whole arrangement now looks quite elegant and relatively unobtrusive.

EXTRACTS FROM COUNCIL MINUTES

The House –

A severe outbreak of dry rot in the South-East Wing just outside the cedar closet has now been treated, 50% of the cost being met by the Historic Buildings Council (Wales). The steps outside the main 17th century entrance to the House (the New Hall entrance) are to be repaired and a quantity of old Welsh slates have been purchased, again with the support from the HBC (Wales), in readiness for the re-roofing of the surviving medieval wing.

The Stables

The structural repair of the Stable Block is to be given priority in the financial year 1984-85 once structural work to the South East and South West Wings of the House itself has been completed.

The Edney Gates

Work has commenced on the restoration of the Edney Gates and it is hoped that they will be re-erected sometime in 1984.

The Gardens

The reinstatement of the Sunken Garden is now well under way. The new scheme will incorporate a rose garden bordered by box hedging and herbaceous borders. It is intended that work should commence in 1983-84 on the restoration of the walls enclosing the Cedar Garden.

Friends of Tredegar House

The Council expressed their gratitude to the Friends of Tredegar House for their efforts over the past year and agreed that any 'Friend' should be granted free admission to the House during normal opening hours on production of their membership card provided they were accompanied by one or more paying visitors.

DIARY

Friends Events

February 26th (Saturday) – 'Coffee and Chairs'
A Coffee Morning in aid of a pair of late 17th century cane chairs. Coffee, cake stall and raffle and a 'Chat about Chairs' by David Freeman, Keeper of Tredegar House.

Venue: The Morgan Room, The Old Brewhouse
Time: 10 am – 12 noon (Talk 11 am)
Tickets: 50p available from any Committee Member or on the door.

Donations of cakes and raffle prizes and help with the running of this event would be much appreciated. Please contact Mr and Mrs Roberts.

April 7th (Thursday) – 'What's New'

An informal tour of the House with David Freeman to see at first hand the developments that have taken place in the House during the winter, followed by supper in The Brewhouse. Proceeds to assist with the purchase of a pair of late 17th century cane chairs.

Venue: Assemble outside the Side Hall entrance by the Porch
Time: 7.30 pm prompt
Tickets: £3.75 available by completing the form at the end of the Newsletter and forwarding it to Wendy Gidden. Tickets are also available from any Committee Member or from The Visitor Centre, Tredegar House. Numbers are limited so book early.

April 30th (Saturday) – 'Bring and Buy' Sale
'Bring and Buy' in aid of a pair of late 17th century cane chairs. Books, Bottles, Cakes, Garden Produce, Handicrafts, Raffle.

Venue: The Morgan Room, The Old Brewhouse
Time: 2 pm

Donations for stalls and help with running this event would be much appreciated. So now is the time to clear out those cupboards and attic lofts, sort out those bookshelves, empty the greenhouse and pot up those cuttings, resurrect that dormant creative spirit and contact Mr and Mrs Roberts.

June 5th (Sunday) – 'Victorian Tea'

Details in the next Newsletter.

Venue: The Orangery, Tredegar House

September 22nd (Thursday) – 'What Else is New?'

Details in the next Newsletter.

Venue: Tredegar House and The Old Brewhouse

October 22nd (Saturday) – 'Balaclava Dinner'

Details in the next Newsletter.

Venue: The Old Brewhouse

November 25th (Friday) – A.G.M.

Details in the next Newsletter.

Venue: The Civic Centre

December 18th (Sunday) – 'Wassalling Party'

Details in the next Newsletter.

Venue: Tredegar House.

Associated Events

March 18th (Friday) – 'Collecting for the Country House'

An illustrated lecture by David Freeman, Keeper of Tredegar House, to end the Winter Lecture Series at Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

Venue: Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Time: 7.30 pm

Tickets: Admission Free

April 1st (Good Friday)

Tredegar House, Farm, Visitor Centre and catering facilities re-open to the public.

May 7th (Saturday) – 'Welsh Festival of Dressage'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park.

May 14th (Saturday) – 'Peterstone Horse Show'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

May 22nd (Sunday) – 'Country Sports Fair'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

May 27th – 30th (Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday) – 'Potters Camp'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

June 18th and 19th (Saturday and Sunday) – 'Antique Collectors Fair'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

June 25th and 26th (Saturday and Sunday) – Festival of Castles'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

September 2nd, 3rd and 4th (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) – 'Newport Show'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

September 10th and 11th (Saturday and Sunday) – 'Antique Collectors Fair'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

September 18th (Sunday) – 'Vintage Car Rally'

Venue: Tredegar House and Country Park

September 23rd (Sunday)

Tredegar House, Farm, Visitors Centre and catering facilities close to the public.

October 29th (Saturday) – 'Hoffed – A Halloween Concert'

Venue: Tredegar House

NOTES FROM THE KEEPER

The House:

October saw the commencement of the exploratory contract on the South East and South West Wings. The ground floor of the South East Wing (the Kitchen and Service Wing) has been cleared of the assortment of rubbish which had accumulated with much ease over the past few years, and the floor of the Kitchen and Pantry Room has been stripped of a nasty red rubberised compound (its proper name eludes me) installed by the School Authorities to reveal a splendid set of stone flags, though these have yet to be cleaned. A gargantuan kitchen grate has also been discovered, largely intact, and a monumental hot plate has also been exposed.

Across in the South West Wing (the surviving medieval Wing) more exciting and dramatic discoveries have been made. The walls of the Servants Hall have been stripped of their plaster to reveal a magnificent medieval stone doorcase and a contemporary fireplace at first floor level, confirming that the 'Hall' had originally been divided by an upper floor. It is too early to make any further comment on this exciting discovery but undoubtedly it will make a significant contribution to our understanding of the historical and architectural development of Tredegar and shed further light on the general development of medieval domestic architecture in South East Wales.

Just adjacent to the Servants Hall another stone doorway has been revealed but this time at ground floor level. The doorway was masked by the lavatory facilities added by the School Authorities in the 1950's but these have now been demolished. The doorway dates to a later period, the 17th century, and is probably contemporary with the rebuilding of Tredegar in the 1660's. The stone work was in a very crumbly state and is now being restored. A new pair of panelled doors are also in the process of being made. Their design has been based on a pair of late 17th century doors from the New Hall.

Considerable attention is also being given to the exterior treatment of the Medieval Wing. Concrete rendering on the garden side has already been removed to reveal further medieval window casements and stone work and it should not be long before the somewhat later metal casements (c. 1950) are removed. Indeed the whole aspect of this side of the House will have been much improved and should provide considerable interest to the architectural historian and casual visitor alike.

Conservation:

The past few months have seen the commencement of a concerted effort to ensure that the interior decoration and contents of the House are properly conserved once all structural and restoration work has been carried out. Considerable progress has been made but, sadly, steps have been taken backwards as well as forwards. Towards the end of the season one of the Tredegar Hall chairs was accidentally damaged by a visitor and the victorian pole screen in the Blue Room inexplicably fell to pieces. The central heating boiler, which had given such a marvellous performance during the course of the severe winter of 1982, had clearly exhausted itself and finally gave up the ghost in November just as the temperatures were beginning to fall. A new gas boiler is to be installed later in the year but in the meantime a dozen or so convector heaters are battling to keep the rooms – and the staff – at a constant, but often somewhat low, temperature level. Sudden changes in the temperature and relative humidity levels can cause severe damage to paintings, furniture and textiles and it is always important to monitor and, where possible, to correct these changes. To this end a thermohygrograph, a piece of equipment which monitors temperature and relative humidity, has been purchased with a grant from the Council of Museums in Wales. This organisation has also provided financial support towards the installation of ultra-violet filters to all the windows of the ground and first floor rooms in the two 17th century wings and towards the installation of a number of Holland Blinds. These measures are to ensure that the decoration and contents of the individual rooms are not damaged by light.

But perhaps the most visually stunning conservation work which has been carried out at Tredegar over the past few months is to the Gilt Room. The decoration of the room had inevitably suffered from the necessary structural work carried out to the ceiling and floor above and the radiator bursts of last winter had temporarily turned the room into a luxury sauna. The gilded decoration, mouldings, panelling and paintings were covered by a thick layer of dust and dirt and there was considerable cracking to the panelling and flaking of paint and gold leaf. The entire walls from floor to ceiling, including all moulding and carved decoration, have now been brushed and vacuumed, all surfaces have been cleaned and waxed and where necessary the panelling and panel painting, including the ceiling painting, restored. The resultant effect is stunning.

A couple of family portraits have also been cleaned and rehung. A needless to say eccentric portrait of Evan, Viscount Tredegar, painted by Cathleen Mann in 1941, has been hung over the entrance to The Red Room, Princess Olga's bedroom, and a portrait of Courtenay, his father, in naval uniform, is to be hung in the Kings Room, Evan Tredegar's own bedroom.

Acquisitions:

A number of items have been added to the collection over the past four months, most notably an early 18th century gilded and painted leather screen. This was purchased for £594.00 from Hill Court, a country house near Ross-on-Wye, the contents of which were sold by Christies last December. The purchase was noted in 'The Times' for 14th December 1982. The screen has been paid for out of funds raised by the 'Friends' during 1982. It is their first contribution of major importance and will make a very significant contribution to the refurbishing