

Tredegar House

For your Diary

Talks held in Morgan Room

Wed. 11th April: 7:30 pm
 Speaker: Richard Davies
 History of Ancient Cwmbran & Bronze Age to Medieval Age



AGM

Thursday 19th April: 7 pm
 Meeting free
 Dinner £8 per head
 (Complete form in insert)



Wed 16th May: 7:30 pm
 Speaker: Catherine Philpot
 Newport Twinning Agreement
 With Kutaisi – Independent State of Georgia



Wed 19th Sept: 7:30 pm
 S.A.R.A.
 Severn Area
 Rescue Association

'The Hon. John Morgan Affronted – No Invitation for Royal Tour'



Frederick Charles John Morgan, 6th Baron Tredegar born 26th October 1908 was the last person to hold the title of Lord Tredegar. Known as John he was the son of Frederic George Morgan (5th Baron) and Dorothy Syssylt Bassett. John Morgan married Johanna Law-Smith in 1954 – he was her third husband (she went on to have two more). He didn't spend much time at Tredegar House preferring the

bright lights of the casinos of Monte Carlo. He shunned Monmouthshire having felt slighted at not being invited to be presented to The Queen, when she visited Newport in July 1953. In the words of the South Wales Argus 'The Hon. John Morgan, heir to the Tredegar Estate and owner of a considerable acreage in the county may never have any connection with Monmouthshire in the future'. Having been left off the list, either by design or default the Hon. John promptly resigned from (amongst others) the St. Mellon's Agricultural Show, Tredegar Farmer's Hunt, Tredegar Rugby Football Club and the Mynyddislwyn Agricultural Society. The Argus reporter asked Lord Raglan, Lord Lieutenant, about the perceived slight – 'the number of persons to be presented was limited to the holders of definite offices in the county, bishops, chairmen of councils and the like. The Hon. John Morgan just did not hold any of these offices' he said. The Mayor of Newport Councillor William Pinnell B.E.M. said 'I have no statement to make'. So the Hon. John currently living in Edinburgh chose never to support the land of his forefathers. He died on 17th November 1962, without issue.

Breaking News

The House opened to visitors on a cold and blustery April morning and they poured in, from all over Britain. Expecting just to meet Newportonians on such a miserable day the volunteer guides were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the general public. In fact many people were breaking their journey at Tredegar House, often on route to somewhere else. Some people stayed all day and it was particularly popular with those staying at the caravan site at Tredegar Park, indeed two couples from Oxfordshire said they were coming back the next day. The Director General of the National Trust, Dame Fiona Reynolds made a surprise visit and was thrilled with the response from visitors.



Hello everyone – Anne thought it might be a good idea for the rest of the Executive Committee members to introduce themselves via the newsletter, so 'pleased to meet you' from your newsletter Editor and Deputy Chairman, Monty Dart. By the time you read this, Tredegar House has moved into an exciting new era and its care has been handed over to the National Trust for the forthcoming fifty years (see you all at the hand-back). The transition for the permanent Tredegar House staff has been hectic, as job contracts were exchanged and we are thrilled to see familiar faces in the offices and the House – as well of course a lot of new faces. Here you see the front door key in the hands of Matthew Evans, Leader of Newport City Council. Justin Albert, director of the National Trust in Wales, said: "The

National Trust aims to build on the fantastic work already undertaken by Newport City Council. "We want Tredegar House to be a place that all Newport's people



feel a great pride in and show off as part of the exciting changes taking place in the city." Matthew Evans replied "I know the National Trust will treasure this Newport gem on behalf of the city while introducing it to a new audience around the world. I look forward to what promises to be a long and fruitful partnership which will be of benefit to the Trust, the city and, most importantly, Tredegar House."



If you look on the back of the 'Events' section from Judith Rice (Hon. Sec) you will see a message from Sandy Clubb of the National Trust who, in this issue is explaining the role of the volunteer. It is not too late to register an interest in being a volunteer. This note from the National Trust will now be a regular feature of our newsletter. It has been a busy few months since the last newsletter. An excellent talk and tasting by Susan Flanders-Woodhouse the Blaenafon Cheddar Cheese Co and a fashion show by June Ashton-Mears 'Period Costume Fashion Show and Historical Presentation' with a difference by when (unprepared) members of the audience were invited to dress up in vintage costumes. Anne Pegington our Chair looked very regal as Queen Victoria.



St Josephs High School One of the projects the Friends are working on with Emily Price (Housekeeper) is a database of 'Old Girls' of St Joseph's, though I'm sure they won't bless me for describing them thus! We have had one meeting of ex-pupils so far, organised by our membership Secretary Annie Parker during which we recorded four ex-pupils. Annie

Parker nee Lavender, Michele Lewis nee Morgan, 'Keeper of the archive and all things relevant to the School and Girls' & a retired Schools & Universities Librarian. Paddy Landers – Patricia McClenchy was at first a teacher and then became Deputy head of the new St. Josephs, she retired 18 months ago. Veronica Walsh taught at St. Michael's School and St. Josephs. Michele was also generous with her photograph album and let us copy photos So, were you a pupil or a teacher at St Josephs during its 'Tredegar House period'? Would you be happy for your memories to be recorded (or of course you can write them down)? Annie Parker annie.parker@friends-of-tredegar-house.co.uk tel 01633 422693 would be thrilled to hear from you. Photographs are also appreciated – we won't keep them, we can copy them while you wait if "you have made an appointment beforehand". Here you see a photograph of the young Annie Lavender (right hand side, second from front – with Sr. Michael Joseph standing next to her). Eight young strewers were chosen to walk in the annual Corpus Christi Procession, held in the grounds of Tredegar House, (Corpus Christi is a festival in honour of the Eucharist).



Volunteer Opportunities for FOTH As a result of our recording sessions Friends of Tredegar House are looking for two or more volunteers. A transcriber and someone willing to edit our photo gallery (photos are often copied from albums and need a bit of tidying up). Could you take on one of these important archive jobs? If so, contact Annie Parker.



Myrna Brown Sue Powell writes: It is with deep regret that the committee of the Friends of Tredegar House has to inform its members of the death of Myrna Brown. We offer our sincere sympathy to all her family.

Myrna was a long - standing member of the 'Friends', frequently helping out with stewarding, catering and children's craft. However, Myrna will be best remembered for her work as a member of the sewing group which she joined when it was formed in 1997. Her fellow members admired her skills as a gifted embroiderer and calligrapher but above all they valued her as a loyal and caring colleague. We will miss her. Here you see some of our wonderful sewing team *Grace, Kathleen, June, Myrna and Marie.*

Sayzeland the Butler Readers may recall that the Friends donated £10,000 in 2010 to Tredegar House to buy the items Courtenay Morgan had given to his butler William Sayzeland. The collection of objects was returned by Mike Smith (all the way from Australia) whose father Henry and grandfather William worked as household staff for two successive Lords Tredegar. A daily book reveals that Sayzeland ran the household of Ashford Court, Ludlow when Courtenay and Katharine Morgan were in residence. He kept the account book and recorded that 'Major Morgan' as Courtenay was known had 'borrowed £2' from Sayzeland for dinner in January 1901. Further expenses show Courtenay on his way to the Boer War in February of that year. He gave 1 shilling to the porter at Durban Station and spent half a crown on breakfast. Sayzeland had packed, amongst other things 4 dozens matches, (2/6d), 2 boxes of soap (3/6d), and 8 small and 1 large fowl for the journey (12/6d). At the front, he sent his laundry back to Durban (12/6d). Meanwhile Katharine his wife was on her way to Berwick in Scotland from their London home in Portland Square. She caught a cab to Kings Cross Station 2/- and promptly sent it back for a forgotten item – return journey 2/6d. Back at Ashford Court Sayzeland had bought a bottle of Bay Rum (2/-), a bottle of hairwash (2/-) a box of soap (2/6d) and a bottle of varnish (2/6d). Further purchases – a box of silver pills were 2/6d. Courtenay was short of cash again – the book records 'lent Major Morgan £4/3/4d'. At that time Sayzeland was earning £5 a month whilst the boot-boy Alfred received £2/18/4d. Sayzeland's devotion to his master was reflected in the wonderful gifts he received and in Courtenay, Lord Tredegar's Will. £2,369,685 WILL OF LORD TREDEGAR - Bequests to Servants



Viscount Tredegar's will showed "so far as presently be ascertained "unsettled estate £169,685 and settled estate £2,200,000- a total of £2.369,685. He left £500 each to his house steward at Tredegar Park, Sloman, his groom of the chambers, Sayzeland, and his housekeeper at Tredegar House, Mrs. Williams.

It may be of interest that the Daily Book was found more by luck than judgement as the name 'Sayzeland' is incorrectly recorded in the Archives where it is kept. Despite offering indisputable proof of the correct spelling to the Archives in question, they have so far refused to correct their mistake. I'm pleased to tell you that it isn't a local Archive.



Here come the girls! What with the derring-do of the male members of the Morgan family - Godfrey at Balaclava, Courtenay offering his yacht Liberty as a hospital ship and Evan being a mad, bad lad with his mysticism, poetry and wild parties we hear little of the women of Tredegar House. In the next few newsletters we will try to redress the balance. Here you see the main staircase at Tredegar House. Notice a spade on the far left of the photo? This was used by a female member of the Morgans'. Rosamond, Lady Tredegar 1810-1883 was invited to cut the first sod for the building of Alexandra Dock in Newport, with this solid silver spade. Taking up the spade Lady Tredegar cut into the earth and deposited a clump into the special oak wheelbarrow made for the purpose. She then cut another sod of earth and adding it to the wheelbarrow took the handles and walked along a wooden plank 'in the manner of a navy' said the South Wales Argus 'with much applause and handclapping from the workmen and dignitaries present'. The spade can be seen currently in Newport Museum.

Titanic and Tredegar House – what can these two have in common? It is the centenary of the sinking this month. Survivors of the RMS Titanic disaster on 14th April 1912 included Lady Lucy Duff Gordon (1863-1935) and her husband Cosmo. The hearing into the sinking of the Titanic heard that the Duff Gordon's escaped in a life-boat, built to take forty persons. However it carried only twelve people most of them crew. The story was that Duff Gordon had paid crew members £5 each to row away, out of the reach of survivors in the sea, fearing that their life-boat might be swamped by people in the water trying to scramble aboard. Lady Duff Gordon was dress designer of note (see one of her drawings on the left). Her fashion house 'Lucile' had a prestigious clientele including aristocracy, royalty, and theatre stars, (Mary Pickford wore 'Lucile' dresses). She is credited to be the first to introduce the cat-walk and fashion models. The connection with the Morgan family of Tredegar House is that she designed the debutante dress for the 'coming-out' at Buckingham Palace in 1914 of Hon Gwyneth Morgan (1895- ? 1924) only daughter of Lord and Lady Tredegar. The dress was described in The Times newspaper as being made of 'soft white satin draped over an underskirt of fine lace, with a bodice of chiffon and satin, embroidered in pearls'. News of Gwyneth's beauty was reported in the Washington Post, USA. 'Among the most attractive of the debutantes to be accorded that honour is the Hon. Gwyneth Morgan, only daughter of Lord and Lady Tredegar, and one of the Kingdom's most charming buds...'. Gwyneth died in mysterious circumstances; she went missing from her home in Wimbledon on a foggy night in December 1924 – only to be found dead some 5 months later, floating down the Thames. Was it suicide or did she suffer a more sinister death. The book 'A Beautiful Nuisance' by Will Cross and Monty Dart, telling of the life and death of this beautiful heiress will be published this summer. Watch this space.



A Beautiful Nuisance
The Life and Death of
The Heiress
by Will Cross & Monty Dart