

FOR YOUR DIARY TALKS

WEDNESDAY 16th OCTOBER 2013

Speakers - Paul Busby & Goff Morgan
Subject - "House of Curses":
The Dark Side of Tredegar House
Commencing at 7.30pm in the
Morgan Room at Tredegar House.

WEDNESDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2013

Speaker - David Freeman
(a former Curator of the House)
Subject - "The survival of a Country House"
Tredegar Rescue and Revival
Commencing at 7.30pm in the
New Hall at Tredegar House
(Members come early to get a seat)

ENTERTAINMENT

TUESDAY 29th OCTOBER

A Musical Evening not to be missed
The Life and Times of Ivor Novello
performed by Christine Purkiss
In the New Hall at Tredegar House
Commencing at 7.30pm

WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER

The Dolman Theatre are pleased to perform
Everyman written by PNG adapted from
a work by Phillips Morris in the
New Hall at Tredegar House
Commencing at 7.30pm

WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER

Christmas Celebrations and
Christmas Fayre
In the New Hall at Tredegar House
Commencing at 7.30pm

SOCIAL EVENTS -

Mr Clive Hard a member of the Friends was our speaker for July and what a talk you all missed! Clive's information on being a Physiotherapist was very amusing and very formative.

On 27th June we took a coach of Friends to **Lacock Abbey, Museum and village**. This picturesque village, by the banks of the River Avon, is often seen in films. At its heart is Lacock Abbey, with its tranquil, golden cloisters and medieval nummery coins rooms. It was fascinating to be able to walk through. As one wandered through the village one had the feeling of times gone by and of being one of the villagers in Cranford or even *Pride and Prejudice*. The weather was very kind to us until 3.00pm when the heavens opened. A day enjoyed by everyone.

Visit to **Dyffryn House and Gardens**: on 17th July a full coach of Friends visited this property, recently acquired by the National Trust. We went on a hot summer's day and enjoyed a most interesting visit, including seeing some restoration work in progress in the House. It was once the home of the Cory family, whose money was made in coal. For years it was a police training college and a conference centre, but the house had been unused for a long time and had deteriorated badly. The Trust has done enough work to allow six rooms on the ground floor and three on the first floor to be viewed. There are some spectacular fireplaces and a magnificent carved, wooden, cantilevered staircase. The gardens are a real treat with many different areas to explore including a wonderful Walled Garden, plant conservatory and the 'bothies' – accommodation for the gardeners – stacked with tools of the past and hundreds of terracotta pots of all sizes. There is a light, airy café/restaurant, serving very acceptable food, as is usual at Trust properties. Further visits are recommended to watch the restoration in progress.



BANK HOLIDAY AT TREDEGAR HOUSE -

On August 26th we celebrated the Home Farm Event. An overcast day turned brighter and a very enjoyable day was had by all participants. The coconut shy, name the cuddly toy, the tombola

and the apple bobbing all contributed to raising £75.00 towards National Trust funds. A footfall of approximately 1000 visited on the day and a lot of interest was shown by the public to the Friends stand. Many thanks to – Ruth, Pam, Ken, Ynys, Wilma, Rosemary, Julie, Gene, Jean, Norman, David, and Alan for all your assistance during the day.

**RHODRI AND CATRIN
HAVING GREAT FUN**

Friends of *Tredegar House* Newsletter



www.friends-of-tredegar-house.co.uk

ON 1ST JULY 2013

Mary Courtney (MBE) of Aneurin Bevan Court, woke this morning to scores of 'happy birthday' cards. It isn't every day that you are 101 years old. When she joined her fellow residents in the lounge for morning coffee, little did she know that not only would she receive a present, but that she would be making a presentation herself, to Newport's Mayor, Councillor Cliff Suller, who was accompanied by his wife Christine.



Last year an email was received by Monty Dart archivist for the Friends of Newport Transporter Bridge – coincidentally, she is also archivist for the Friends of Tredegar House. The email read:

I am the current Historian for the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSMT), American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) chapter. Our chapter recently acquired what appears to be a cigar cutter from the Newport Transporter Bridge. An alumni of SDSMT bought this cigar cutter at an antiques store and had it on his mantle for several years. In 2007 he donated it to SDSMT. He recently sent us a letter and was wondering if we still had it. We found it. The alumni would like us to get it to someone who will appreciate it, hopefully its rightful owner. SDSMT ASCE Historian.

Brian Ruppelt

The cutter ties two famous Newport icons together - Tredegar House and the Transporter Bridge, or three icons if you include Mary!

The cigar cutter was given to Viscount Godfrey Morgan by the contractors Alfred Thorne Ltd of Westminster on the occasion of the opening of the Transporter Bridge. Godfrey Morgan was of course Viscount Tredegar of Tredegar House. The handle that opens the cutter is a replica of the handle Viscount Tredegar would have used on the Transporter Bridge, to send it on its first journey across the Usk on 12th September 1906.

Mary worked as a volunteer for the Friends at Tredegar House for over 30 years, until the age of 98. She was a founder member (now honorary member of the Friends of Tredegar House) and, on the occasion of her 101th birthday, was pleased to present the cigar cutter – on behalf of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology – to the Mayor, who accepted it gratefully on behalf of the City of Newport. He then led the assembled company in a rousing chorus of happy birthday. Mary acknowledged the singing saying that 'she was very pleased to be able to present the Mayor with such a unique gift'.

For info about Friends of Tredegar House contact Judith Rice 01633 894108

For more info: contact Mary's daughter, Ruth Knight, on 01633 781749

Some photos by separate mail 'marked Mary Courtney' For further photos contact monty.dart@ntlworld.com

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN MR. ALAN HENSHALL

I am delighted to report once again to members on recent events and things that we need to do in the near future. I hope that you are all enjoying what has been an unusually pleasant summer.

The refurbishment of the Sir Briggs monument in the Cedar Garden has begun. Even one initial day of cleaning with water and scrubbing brushes has made an astonishing transformation. All necessary lead work has been completed in the last few days. The Friends are funding this work, which will eventually cost between £3,500 and £4,000.

I am particularly keen that we should try to **increase our membership**: partly by winning back previous members who have not renewed and also by recruiting new members, especially younger ones, to ensure a succession into the future. A plea to past members brought no success, but eleven entirely new members have recently joined. The future of the House for the enjoyment of people locally and beyond is our shared delight and aim.

Further initiatives, including a possible article for *Newport Matters* and other ideas, were put by me to the Executive Committee on 3rd September, but any ideas from existing Friends would be warmly received.

Question -

Would the Friends be interested in attending a dinner in October 2014 to commemorate the 160th Anniversary of the battle of Balaclava? Please contact either myself or Judith with your thoughts.

Finally, just a reminder that the electric bus is still available for Friends to use when attending talks and events in the House. Please advise myself or Judith prior to any events if you wish to use this facility.

Dr Lindsay Roblings

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Lindsay on Sunday, September 15th. Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers go to Marjorie (Marge) and their two children, John and Siân, and the extended family.

Lindsay and Marge are long standing members of FoTH and Lindsay served many years on the committee, always willing to do any task given to him. We, at FoTH, will miss his kindness, wisdom and humour.

He was a 'gentleman' in all senses, greatly loved by his family, friends and patients. Lindsay had many interests outside 'Tredegar House'. He was a devout Christian, who lived his faith; he played golf, loved classical music and, of course, was passionate about rugby. His family and many friends will miss him sorely.

MEMBERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR - ANNIE PARKER

It's that time of year again, when we put summer behind us and look forward to autumn and think about Membership renewal for 2014 for The Friends of Tredegar House. Your support is so valuable to Tredegar House and being involved is very special. Your membership runs from January until December and will include free parking (limited to 4 hours per day), quarterly Newsletters and invitations to attend many interesting talks and events in the House.

I hope you agree that our programme of events for 2013 has been really special. I can tell you that 2014 has many more talks than in previous years and these will be printed on your membership card and published on our web site.

So as a reminder for those who pay by Standing Order, please check that the renewal date is 1st January. Fees are as printed on the Renewal form. Those paying by cheque should please make them payable to **The Friends of Tredegar House**

Subscriptions remain the same as for 2013. For further information, please refer to our Membership Renewal Form enclosed with the October Newsletter or one may be downloaded from our very interesting web site at :- <http://www.friends-of-tredegar-house.co.uk>

THE MORGANS AND NEWPORT MUSEUM BY STEFFAN ELLIS



This year Newport Museum and Art Gallery has been celebrating its 125th Anniversary. When the original opened in 1888, it was very much a temporary arrangement, located in a news-room at the rear of the Free Library and it soon outgrew this space. When new premises were sought, Newport's greatest benefactor of the day, Godfrey Morgan, Lord Tredegar came to the rescue and donated an adjacent plot of land. The new building was opened on August 15th 1895.

Another Morgan who helped with the opening of the temporary museum was Godfrey's uncle, Octavius Morgan. A great collector, antiquary and horologist, Octavius had donated some items to the nascent collection at Newport. Following his death there was a bequest to the museum, although most of his collections went to the British Museum in London. Octavius had also been one of the founders of the Roman Museum at Caerleon and took a lead in some of the early excavations.

In later life Godfrey Morgan also developed an interest in Roman archaeology and was President of the Caerwent Excavation Fund. Indeed, he purchased a large part of the land in Caerwent that was to be excavated. Although Octavius had been involved in some early excavations in the 1850s, it was in 1899 that annual excavations began in earnest under the patronage of Godfrey and continued each year until his death in 1913. These excavations were funded, to an extent, by public subscription, but they were heavily subsidised by funds from Tredegar House. In 1903 the Caerwent Four Seasons mosaic was presented to Newport Museum for public display.

Godfrey Morgan's successor at Tredegar House was his nephew Courtenay, who donated most of the remaining finds from the Caerwent excavations to Newport Museum in 1916. Although not a popular decision in Caerwent itself, these donations became a hugely important part of the Museum's collections and form the centrepiece of the display to this day.

The family also contributed to the Museum's art collection. Courtenay officially opened the Fred Richards Room in 1923 and his son Evan Morgan presented Epstein's bronze of the Newport poet W. H. Davies which he had commissioned. The bronze is still a favourite with Museum visitors.

Evan became the next Lord Tredegar in 1934 and, an artist himself, some of his paintings and of his cousin John (the last Lord Tredegar) became part of the Museum Collection. Strangely, however, the largest item to become part of the Museum's collection was Tredegar House itself. The property has now been leased to the National Trust, but many of the works of art inside are loans from Newport Museum and Art Gallery. An example of how Newport Museum and Tredegar House are working together to tell the story of Newport to its people and visitors.

The latest item to go on display this year was donated by the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology via Monty Dart. It is the cigar cutter presented to Viscount Tredegar at the opening of the Transporter Bridge in 1906.