

THE GOWER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2010

Registered Charity number 258372

www.gowersociety.org.uk

Go-ahead for 'potentially outstanding example of modern architecture'

Swansea Council has finally approved plans for a Penmaen house, whose controversial appearance above Three Cliffs Bay has been likened to a supermarket or a multi-storey car park'.

We have no problem with modern architecture, so long as it is good and appropriate to its location. We do, however, have a problem when a thatched house that merged inconspicuously into the hillside is demolished to make way for a building that shouts out to be seen.

We also have a problem when such a building in such a position is approved without even going to Council - and when the Gower councillor forgets to call it in.

Mr Martin Morgan's representative continues to repeat the claim that they went through all the proper procedures and that the building was endorsed by the Welsh Design Council. She forgets to say that the building erected was significantly different from the plans and that the Welsh Design Council did not support the amended application.

No wonder people have so little faith in the planning system. The whole sad affair gives no credit to the Planning Department, Councillor Lewis or Mr Morgan.

Forthcoming Walks

The walk leaders have created another excellent programme of walks for the autumn/winter programme. A quick perusal reveals some gems.

Regular walkers will be familiar with Mike Lewis' attempts to outwit the tides and this programme is no different! On Saturday **9th October** Mike will lead a walk from Rhossili to Burry Holms, but may not make it to the island! Even if he doesn't, the walk is very enjoyable with only one climb, so we'll forgive him if needs be.

A more genteel outing is promised by Ceri Lougher on Saturday **23rd October** - a guided tour of Ewenny Priory, then a moderate 8-mile walk, followed by tea at the Priory - you don't get invitations like that every day!

If you worry about your carbon footprint, why not join Gerry and Pam Horsey on Saturday **6th November**? Their contribution takes the bus from Swansea to Pontardawe with a walk back to Swansea along canal and riverside paths - 10 easy miles!

Then moving into next year, if like me you love flowers but have difficulty differentiating between buttercups and celandine, or if you know a fair bit but would love to know more, come to Lliw Reservoir with our resident botanist, Joan Darbyshire, on the last walk in the programme on Saturday **26th March**. This walk will be an easy 5 miles, with plenty of time to look for the signs of the spring that we hope we'll enjoy and to get your questions answered by Joan.

The walks programme should have something for everyone - check it out for those that appeal to you and mark the calendar to make sure you don't forget. If you have any queries, the leaders will be only too pleased to help. We look forward to seeing you - happy walking!
L.L.

Autumn/Winter Talks Programme

Once again we look forward to a marvellous range of evening talks - look at the programme enclosed in this posting and you will see what I mean. We start on Saturday **16th October** at Sketty Parish Centre with an eminent journalist and author: **Paul Ferris** has his roots in Swansea and Gower and, apart from his exceptional journalism, has written novels and major works on Dylan and Caitlin Thomas. His latest work, *Gower in History*, published last year, brings Gower's past vividly alive, as I am sure he will do on 16th October. The final talk of the session will be on **12th March**, when our President invites **Jane Davidson**, Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing, to address the Society. Jane has been a formidable and effective champion of sustainability in the Welsh Assembly and her talk on *The move to a more sustainable society* is bound to raise challenging issues.

The 'book-ends' to our programme are impressive, as is the host of variety and quality that comes between them. All take place at 7.00 p.m. at Sketty Parish Centre, starting from Saturday 16th October.
M.R.

Gower Show – 1st August 2010

There was a great atmosphere in the beautiful grounds of Penrice Castle Park for this year's agricultural show, with local families and visitors enjoying the farm animals and amazing array of exhibitions.

Our volunteers - all eighteen of them - worked very hard to fill our marquee with displays of all the work we're involved with on Gower. What a variety that is - grants for schools, youth groups and buildings that promote vernacular Gower, the 56km walk along The Gower Way, the publication of books and journals, the various activities of our members in walks, folk dancing, talks, footpath clearance, planning monitoring and much else!

There were also illustrations of Gower Society Youth Action and fun activities for children, including an interesting display on amphibians and reptiles provided by Mark Barber of the South and West Wales Amphibian and Reptile Group. We were also grateful for exhibits on loan from the National Museum of Wales to illustrate the diversity of wild birds attracted to Nitten Field, which has been cultivated by Gordon and Beryl Howe.

It was an opportunity to meet old friends and meet new people with such an interest in our countryside. We were particularly pleased to welcome our President, Edwina Hart, A.M., and her husband, and also Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs, who was delighted to be invited to the show.

We are pleased to be helping The Gower Agricultural Society, for Sue Thomas, Secretary of the Society commented: 'We really appreciate the support of The Gower Society which helps towards the publication of the Show schedule and programme'.

Gower Show 'Castles' Competition

It seems this year's competition was rather more difficult than intended. Entrants had to identify nine castles and earthworks from photos taken from unusual angles, and answer two questions: *What had some hens helped to uncover, and at which castle?* and *What is the most northerly fortification in the Lordship?* As a tie-breaker, the entrant had to state his/her favourite Gower fortification, and to say why.

The worthy winners of a copy of *Gower in Focus* were Dave Mills and Paul Thornton, for whom Weobley was their best-loved fortification as 'it is so well preserved and shows how Gower residents used to live in a fortified home'.

For those who attempted the competition, the answers are: Loughor, Pennard, The Bulwark earthwork, Oxwich, Penrice, Oystermouth, Weobley, Swansea, Hardings Down earthwork, the brooch was found at Oxwich, and Penlle'r Castell is the most northerly fortification. Well done also to runner-up Susan Edwards. *G.H.*

Photos for the Gower Show 2011

Your Committee is looking for your help for the 2011 Gower Show. With over 1,500 members, we have in theory 1,500 opinions as to what makes Gower so special, and regrettably in parts so bad. We would like you all to reflect and submit photographs showing the following:

THE GOOD: what you consider is still good about Gower. This can be scenery, good building, conservation, etc.

THE BAD: what you think is bad, or what you consider should never have been allowed, or indeed may not even be lawful

THE UGLY: anything that deserves this title!

Please provide photographs (preferably 7x5 inches) with a description and a category that you think it falls into. Tell us exactly where it is (a grid reference would be helpful). If you are not able to get out to take the photograph itself, then tell us the exact location and we can take the picture.

At the moment, this idea is in an embryonic stage. If you respond we could have many photographs to display on large panels in our Gower Show marquee next year. What we want to do is to have a display that speaks for itself and enables you, our members, to have your say. It may even be possible to produce a booklet on the same theme.

So over the next few months, please get to work and submit your entry to The Secretary, The Gower Society, The Orchard, Perriswood, Gower, Swansea, SA3 2HN, as soon as you can (and no later than May next year).

BOOK REVIEWS

The History of St. Peter's Church in the Village of Newton

by Susan Rees, Wendy Cope and Edna Davies, published 18 September, 224 pages, £12.50.

This thoroughly researched book of over 200 pages is lavishly illustrated; for the authors it is indeed a labour of love. Read how in the 19th century members of All Saints church in Mumbles could rent the best seats, and sometimes such was the demand that as many as 100 worshippers were unable to gain admittance to a service – so St Peter’s church in Newton was needed.

You will learn what was inside the time capsule buried beneath the foundation stone in 1901, and fascinating details of the church’s benefactors and their donations. It appears that the Vicar in 1906 was not averse to soliciting further acts of generosity.

As well as the detailed church history, this book tells of schooling in the area and financial constraints involved (nothing changes!), the earthquake, and also general life in the early 20th century village of Newton, with its many notable and imposing residences of more wealthy residents.

This is a most welcome addition to our knowledge of local history; its wealth of contributions is testimony to the need to document this village for the future – this book admirably fulfils this purpose.

Travel with Frances Ridley Havergal

by Carol Purves, Day One Publications, Leominster, 128 pages, £9.95.

Frances Ridley Havergal was a fine musician, poetess and linguist, who wrote compact devotional books for children and adults, and, notwithstanding times of poor health, enjoyed mountain walking in Germany and Switzerland. Several of her 71 hymns are still sung today, such as ‘Take my life and let it be’, ‘Who is on the Lord’s side?’ and ‘Like a river glorious’. She is the subject of articles in *Gower* vol. 30 (*A Consecrated Life*) and vol. 48 (*Devotion, Desire and Heart*), and has a number of memorials in Newton, where she died aged 42 in 1879, in the house which was subsequently re-named *Havergal*.

Carol Purves has compiled a handy 8”x4½” volume, *Travel with Frances Ridley Havergal*, telling her life story with over 150 colour photographs, focusing on places connected with her, mainly in Worcestershire. The author has written on Gladys Aylward and George Müller for the same series, which has companion volumes on such persons as John Bunyan and C.S. Lewis. Frances Havergal’s time in Caswell, and her involvement at one of Lady Barham’s Gower chapels – Paraclete in Newton – are well illustrated in this comprehensive and readable book about an influential Christian poetess and hymn writer.

Seashore Safaris

by Judith Oakley, Graffeg, £9.99.

Rock pooling is a great British tradition; but once we have spotted a couple of tiny crabs, and maybe a small fish, most people’s interest dips. Yet this is one of the richest habitats in Britain, or anywhere, but it is very easy to miss much of the wildlife on the British coastline.

Coral is not just the preserve of tropical seas, it can readily be found on the coast of the UK - you just need to know what you are looking for. Dead man's fingers, scarlet and gold start coral, and Devonshire cup coral all grow around the coast of Britain and Ireland. Long-legged spider crabs are very common, yet hardly ever noticed as they look like sea-weed. This book will help you find and identify a load more than you would imagine actually lives on and around our shores, such as the sharks purses (eggs), all the different sponges and sea weeds, starfish, flatworms, shrimps, fish and anemones.

Beachcombing, beach art, spotting stranded creatures and advice on where to look for certain species is all included.

Seashore Safaris features the author’s own photographs and is aimed at schools, families and amateur naturalists of all ages and abilities. It is a handbook designed to be taken to rocky and sandy shores in Britain and Ireland. It will help you to identify your finds, tell you where to look and encourage you to report your sightings to the relevant authorities.

The author will be speaking to us at 7.00 p.m. on Sat. **13 November** when copies of her book will be available.

Time Passes

by Diane Norton and Robin Pritchard, published by Inklemaker, Trem-y-Mor, Port Eynon, SA3 1NL, £9.95.

Lovers of Wales's beautiful and breathtaking landscape will delight in the poetry of Diane Norton and photography of Robin Pritchard. *Time Passes* records the countryside's majesty throughout the seasons. The poetry is Diane's emotional response to her Gower origins, and Max Boyce's foreword endorses this sumptuous volume.

The book is a fine successor to Diane's first poetry collection *Secret Gower*. To order (p&p approx. 70p per book), please contact Diane Norton direct at dinor150@yahoo.co.uk or telephone Inklemaker 01792-391768.

Help for the Society

Despite my plea in the last Newsletter for Society members to volunteer their particular expertise to the committee, no-one came forward from our large membership. Our one eager volunteer remains alone on our list – so please reconsider whether you can come forward. We know that there is real depth of expertise out there. We get queries about all sorts of matters, and it would be very helpful to have ‘on tap’ persons who could give information on geography, history, war-time Gower, family history, individual villages..... anything in fact!

Aerial Surveys

The Society has continued to fly two aerial surveys over Gower this year – in March and August. The analysis of the photography takes a considerable amount of time and skill. As you will appreciate, this exercise is expensive in cost and time. However, it is necessary to highlight just how many examples of bending of the rules are occurring on Gower. A copy of the file, its annotated photographs and analysis, is delivered to the Planning Department in the Civic Centre. Each survey is followed up with a meeting between local authority officials and Society members. What is disheartening is the apparent slow action to apprehend any misdoing.

Reynoldston Lower Green

Anyone who has driven past the green will have noticed the new seat in place. This stone-based, wooden-slatted topped seat is a much needed replacement for the original rather utilitarian seat. It carries a small slate plaque bearing the words ‘In memory of Robert Lucas, a true friend of Gower...’ Robert, who lived nearby, was a gentleman, a long-time committee member and one-time President of the Society. The seat was dedicated at a small ceremony on a cool and windy evening on 5th April. The Society was pleased to have helped with its costs.

Committee Digest

Since the Spring Newsletter, these are some areas where your committee has been involved:

1. Responding to the Welsh Assembly Government’s consultation on micro-generation and low-carbon energy technologies.
2. Responding with some concerns to the Atlantic Array scoping enquiry re. the proposed 250 wind turbines planned for the Bristol Channel; the nearest would be 16km from the Gower coast.
3. Writing to the local authority about proposals to reduce road speeds to 30mph on some sections at Penmaen, Nicholaston and at Llethrid. The Society welcomes the intention to reduce signage clutter.
4. Three committee members had a further meeting at Welsh Assembly Government with Countryside Council of Wales officials in an attempt to further expedite action on extending the AONB in upland Gower. The proposed extension is still on CCW’s agenda, but progress is frustratingly slow.
5. Grant aid has been promised to the local authority to further completion of the necessary re-routing of the coastal footpath at Slade.
6. Your committee is attempting to involve WAG and Westminster in reconsidering the totally unsatisfactory present definition of what constitutes ‘a caravan’.
7. Now that the amended Unitary Development Plan has been finally published (copies are available from the Civic Centre costing £50), the local authority has embarked in August on the consultations for the new development plan for the County (which is designed to operate until 2025). For those interested in participating or following progress, you can access the website: www.swansea.gov.uk/ldp.

Public Inquiries

Mynydd y Gwair has been under threat for nearly five years now. Nineteen massive wind turbines, each sixty feet taller than the Marina skyscraper were proposed by RWE npower renewables Ltd., together with miles of access roads and tracks, cabling, an electrical substation and other

associated works. In our view, the whole development is entirely inappropriate in such a beautiful area. We argued this case at the public inquiry in July and pointed out that an extension of the AONB to Upland Gower is still on the agenda of the Countryside Council for Wales. SOCME (Save Our Common Mountain Environment) has worked tirelessly since the original proposal was mooted and put a strong case to the inspector. The City and County also opposed the application, mainly on the height of the proposed turbines. The inspector's decision is expected in the autumn.

Biomass

In May we appeared at another public inquiry, this time to support the local residents of SA1 who were objecting to a proposal for a biomass power station at King's Dock, Swansea. In our view the visual impact and the noise and light pollution would be detrimental to the residents and others in SA1 and contrary to the whole ethos of the SA1 development. We were also sceptical of claims that it contributed to Wales' renewable energy programme, when in effect, with 75% of the fuel being shipped from the other side of the world, we would be 'stealing' the biomass from other countries which have their own biomass needs.

As with wind-power, biomass is potentially 'a good thing'. Unfortunately developers are using the global-warming argument (some would say hysteria) to attempt to justify developments that would in normal circumstances be utterly unacceptable. The developers' interests, however, lie more in highly subsidised profits than in saving the planet. We want to keep a planet that is worth saving.

Helwick Bank Update

When Llanelli Sand applied to the Welsh Assembly Government to vary its conditions of extraction from the Nobel Banks, they offered to give up their licence to dredge from Helwick Bank. We supported the proposal since it would give the company more flexibility to meet demand without increasing the total amount extracted. It would have the important added benefit of ending dredging at Helwick. Because the Assembly had not determined the variation application before the Helwick licence was due to run out, they have extended the Helwick licence by a further twelve months. While we don't understand the delay in deciding the Nobel Banks application, we do not see

anything sinister in the Helwick decision (though this, of course, won't stop us watching events very carefully).

Civic Trust for Wales Design Awards

We were delighted to learn that many of our nominations to the Civic Trust for Wales Design Awards received awards or commendations. The Civic Trust's scheme is a national scheme, supported by Cadw and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. The extension to The Nook at Oxwich, designed by Dewi Evans, received a Special Award for a new build in an historic context. The following restorations/extensions received commendations: Brynau in Mayals Road, 23 St James Gardens in the Uplands, Corner House in Pitton, The Towers in Penrice and Mewslade View in Rhossili. Gower received a quarter of the national Special Awards, and no less than half the commendations given for the whole of Wales. We often complain about poor design in Gower, but these awards are a tremendous recognition of the good work that is also going on in Gower. Dr Matthew Griffiths, Director of the Civic Trust for Wales, will present the awards at our Chairman and Secretary's evening on **4th December**.

Gower 61 (2010)

Publications Night is on Saturday **20 November**, when the latest volume of *Gower* will be launched by Bernard Morris and Harold Grenfell, members of our editorial team. This year we feature an in-depth study of the mysterious (but genuine) 'paint mine' which was worked at Porteynon in the 19th century, and there is also mention of the old landslip on Oxwich Point, together with its dramatic recent successor. The Victorian rebuilding of Reynoldston Church is dealt with in depth, and we also present a detailed look inside a long-demolished cottage at Overton - as it was in 1895. Clyne Valley and its industrial history are described, as well as a hard-fought footpath dispute in Caswell Valley over a century ago, the outcome of which still benefits us today. There is a further mention of Cartersford and its families, while medieval Swansea is the subject of articles on the ancient chapel of St Thomas, and on excavations linked to new developments in

Princess Way. All these good things are rounded off with a description of an historical walk through the centre of the city, and, of course, with our Chairman's always idiosyncratic 'Commentary' on the Society and its modern concerns.

B.M.

Gower Journal: partial set available

Copies of *Gower* volumes 1 to 50 have recently become available, apart from vols. 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 22; vol. 14 lacks a cover.

Bearing in mind that early volumes fetch £10 each, and slightly later ones at least £5, then the Secretary would welcome realistic offers for this collection (telephone number at the end of this Newsletter). This is a wonderful opportunity for a person to start their collection – once you delve into the contents of these journals you will be hooked! For many, holding a complete archive of *Gower* is 'a must'.

Get your bids in for this rare opportunity! Then *Gower* volume 61 will appear at our Publications Evening on 20 November.

Nibbled Nuts

The People's Trust for Endangered Species is launching a **Great Nut Hunt** in search of dormice, and would like you to visit your local wood to help them find nibbled nuts this autumn and winter. Dormice love hazel nuts and they leave distinctive tooth marks when they gnaw into the green nuts before eating the kernel and discarding the shell.

We know there are dormice in Gelli Hir Wood, a reserve of The Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales. The wood lies on the northern edge of Fairwood Common. Access is gained by way of a field gate and stile on the east side of the unclassified road, which runs north from the B4271 to Cil-onen. A small car park is inside the gate, with a lay-by opposite.

If you're interested in joining the search, log on to www.greatnuthunt.org.uk for a survey pack, and to find out more about endangered species.

L.R.

Renewing Membership

For those who do not pay their membership subscription by a bank's standing order, in November you should return the form enclosed with the mailing of *Gower* 61, along with your subscription for 2011. If you wish to pay by standing order, or have changed banks, or have a query, do contact our membership

secretary, Mrs Margaret Gillett - address and telephone number at the back.

Oystermouth Castle

Friends of Oystermouth Castle are looking for volunteers to help maintain their local heritage, as one of Swansea's most popular visitor attractions is given a new lease of life.

As you may have read in the *Evening Post*, a grant of £764,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled the castle to undergo major restoration work. Some of this grant will fund the employment of a Castle Community Co-ordinator, to engage the wider community in a new programme of activities.

Founded by William de Londres in the early 12th century, Oystermouth Castle originates from the Norman conquest of Wales, with visible remains from the 12th up to the early 14th century. The historic building is being conserved and a new indoor interpretation centre is being built within the disused chapel block to provide hands-on experiences for visitors.

The aims are to give visitors access to 95 per cent of the castle and to increase annual visitor numbers from 4,500 to 17,000. There is currently a 24-strong group of volunteers, ranging in age from 20 to 77 years old, who manage the day-to-day running of the castle. More volunteers are needed to help visitors make the most of their experience, acting as tour guides among other roles.

Roger Parmiter, a volunteer and one of the Friends for the last 13 years, says: 'I was attending a Welsh History course at Swansea University where Oystermouth Castle formed part of my selected project work. After meeting with the Chairman of the Friends, I was invited to join. Since then I've met people from all over the world, and every day is different. All new volunteers are trained as guides on every feature of the castle and its history. First-time visitors want to know lots of details about the history of the castle - and that's where we can help. Overseas visitors often ask 'Who were the Normans?' Aside from tourists, we also give guided tours to schools, diverse groups and organisations. We also put on medieval re-

enactments for the public with our own living history group – *Gwerin o Gwyr*.

With so much going on at the castle, now is a great time to get involved. There are opportunities to meet and work with archaeologists, historians and researchers and to learn new skills. But what's more, it's a great way to meet people and we have a lot of fun!

To find out more, email: roger.parmiter@ntlworld.com or daipennant@hotmail.com.

Swansea History Journal

After being hanged on Gibbet Hill in 1289 on the orders of William de Breos, apparently William Crach came back to life miraculously! His story can be read in volume 18 of *The Swansea History Journal*, along with articles on subjects as varied as the Swansea artist Alfred Parkman, Georgian Swansea, the Padley family, John Jones of St Helen's House and the memories of a Swansea Jack. The journal (previously known as *Minerva*) will be published by the RISW on Thursday **14th October**. The launch evening, at 7.30 p.m. at Swansea Museum, which is open to all, will include a talk on Swansea History, and refreshments.

Local History Book Fair

This annual all-day event, organised by the Royal Institution of South Wales, will be held on Saturday **30th October** at Swansea Museum from 10 a.m.. Come and meet our Gower Society team on the day – and browse through all the stalls. You might be surprised at the wealth of local history material now available.

News from the Penllergare Trust

Bi-centenary Year

The bi-centenary celebration of the birth of John Dillwyn Llewelyn will be on Wednesday **17th November** at Swansea Museum, with special guest appearance by the Morrision Phoenix Choir. Places are limited, so the £8 tickets should be booked in advance from the Penllergare Trust, Coed Glantawe, Esgairdawe, Llandeilo, SA19 7RT.

Tree planting

Thanks mainly to the work of our enthusiastic volunteers, and despite the unusually cold winter, upwards of 15,000 broad-leaf trees have been planted in Coed Nydfwch. Following Forestry Commission

guidelines, the predominant species are common ash, followed by common oak, with much smaller quantities of field maple, hazel, elder, wild and bird cherries and holly. During the next few years and following J.D. Llewelyn's example, we plan to intersperse some Weymouth pines in the new plantations. Despite some fire damage through vandalism, the priority is now to ensure that they all grow away properly, while maintaining the sight-lines from the viewing points.

The Woodland Centre

Visitors using the Pitstop entrance will have noticed the footings going in for the new Woodland Centre. Designated as 'temporary', this will be a demountable building but, even so, we aim to lessen its impact within the setting. This long-overdue facility is to be a classroom (training) and meeting room, and will be particularly useful in enabling school visits to last longer because, for ten years, we have been limited to half-day visits due to our lack of amenities. Soon there will be a place for children not only to wash, brush up and to have their packed lunches, but also to further their knowledge of Valley Woods by doing practical work and learning about the scientific experiments that went on at Penllergare in the 19th century.

More on Saturday Evening Talks

At each Saturday evening winter talk at Sketty Parish Centre there will be a table of books - a changing selection of second-hand copies of books of local/Gower history offered at reasonable prices – another opportunity for a bargain! Any profits will go to the Society.

Our winter series of talks has been arranged for several years by Gary Gregor, who wishes to hand over this interesting task. He has consistently found speakers of merit to provide stimulating talks on a wide variety of subject matter. There is no compulsion to be on the committee in order to be arranging this! So:

(1) Can you help fill the Society programme by taking this on from October 2011? Gary can provide all the know-how, and talks have been arranged for the winter session 2010-2011 as you see on the programme.

(2) If you have heard an interesting speaker recently who you think would fit into the next Society programme, please give the details to Gary (phone number at the back).

Gower Marathon on 13th November

In the spring Newsletter we wrote about the marathon and the half-marathon that took place on Gower last December. The Society has been in touch with the organisers to ensure minimum disruption for residents, along with safety for runners and other users of the rights of way. On Saturday **13th November** at 9.00 a.m. about 150 runners will leave Hillend to run via Burry Holms, over Llanmadoc Hill, then south-east along Cefn Bryn to Nicholaston, along the coast to Rhossili, over Rhossili Down and back to Hillend. That is the 26-mile marathon route (taking around 5½ hours). The 13-mile half-marathon starts at 10.30 a.m. for about 280 runners. These will run from Hillend via Burry Holms, over Llanmadoc Hill, then due south via Llangennith to Pitton, along the coast to Rhossili, before clambering over Rhossili Down to the finish, after about 2½ hours. A 10k run starts at midday around Burry Holms, Llanmadoc and Llangennith, taking about 1¼ hours. As last year, there will be beach cleaning at Rhossili the following day, along with National Trust staff.

So perhaps the morning of 13th November might be a good time to be shopping in Swansea: later that day Wales play rugby against South Africa. G.G.

A POEM inspired by **Mrs Gwen Llewelyn Jones** of Alveley, Rhossili:

*The biting wind against my neck
Feet pacing against the well-worn path
The house head stands strong and tall
With a tattered cliffside look.*

*I knock against the sky blue door
A smiling lady answers
The solitary ninety-five year old
Seems humbled by my visit.*

*'Sit there lovie' was her favourite line
As I sunk into the old springy chair
Gwen peered down through her watery eyes
She smiled her youthful smile
Though youth was long gone.*

*Sitting there so composed, hands folded in her lap
Living a peaceful existence, content, but still
alone*

*Surrounded by her clutter, amazing old and new
As her elegant hands fumbled over
Multi-coloured cotton, all woven into one.*

*The battleship-grey sky lurks overhead
The sea beneath her feet
House perched upon the jagged cliffs.
The folds of the sea holding her memories.*

*I think of Gwen in bed at night, never
At peace with her restless mind.
Quiet, content, happy, amused. Despite the
isolation.*

*The amazing ninety-five year old,
What an inspiration.*

by Milly Zoefstig, aged 13 of Middleton
(Mrs Gwen Llewelyn Jones is the widow of J. Mansel Thomas and mother of Mrs Hildegard Roberts)

ITV's 'My Long Lost Family'

The Secretary received this communication recently:

A few months ago we emailed asking for help with our new ITV1 series *My Long Lost Family*. This series, made by the makers of the BBC family history series *Who Do You Think You Are?*, reunites long-lost relatives, and with your help we hoped to encourage people who have been searching for a missing family member for years to get in touch with us so we could help them find their relative.

Thank you so much for your help in publicising our search for people trying to find a relative – in the last six months we have been able to trace almost 100 people and have reunited many families over the last six months. However, we still need to hear from more people who are looking for family members. We would really appreciate it if you could publicise this email and the series information below.

Among many successful traces, we have reunited two 65 year-old twin sisters who were tragically separated as children and adopted into different families. Amazingly they had both been living three miles from each other for the last 40 years but had no idea! They were both thrilled to finally meet up for the first time.

We've also reunited a 45 year-old woman with the father she never knew, but had spent her whole life searching for. We traced him in Canada – he had five sons of his own and had always wanted a daughter. He was overjoyed to meet her and they have been in very regular contact ever since.

Anyone searching for a family member who needs some help can approach us directly. They need to go to our website and fill in the application form – we will get straight back to them. The application form can be found at: www.walltowall.co.uk/findmyfamily.aspx

We'll let you know when the series comes on ITV.

Gower Society Who's Who

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