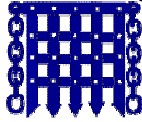


THE GOWER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

Registered Charity number 258372

www.gowersociety.org.uk



'Protesters' joy as wind turbine bid blown down'

This headline, from the *South Wales Evening Post* of 23rd February, which appeared just as we were going to press, announces very significant news - news which at times we feared we would never hear. For some seven years we have lived with the prospect of nineteen giant wind turbines being erected over the wide expanse of open common and undulating hill country north of Swansea known as Mynydd y Gwair. These turbines and the associated roads, tracks and structures would have completely altered for the worse this fine recreational and environmentally-important area. It lay in the heart of the northern part of the Lordship of Gower, and the Gower Society has been active in the long campaign against granting planning permission.

The people of the area, residents and farmers, and the City and County of Swansea, have all been in the forefront of the fight against this scheme and we are proud to have been involved also and to have given our evidence at the public inquiry in July last year.

Now we welcome the news that the planning inspector appointed by the Welsh Assembly has dismissed the appeal by the energy company, RWE npower renewables, relating to the wind turbine scheme for Mynydd y Gwair.

Prince Ivanhoe – 30 years ago

August 3rd this year will be the 30th anniversary of when the *Prince Ivanhoe* ran aground on Horton beach. The vessel, first launched in 1951 on Clydeside as *M.V. Shanklin*, had been renovated by Waverley Excursions in 1981 as a pleasure cruise ship, and re-named *Prince Ivanhoe*. On her first excursion along the Gower coast she sailed close to Port Eynon Point and struck a submerged object (possibly a submerged wreck). As she was taking on water from a 25-metre gash in her hull, the ship was run aground on Horton beach and the 400 passengers brought ashore. However

two persons suffered heart attacks, and one of these was declared dead on arrival at hospital.

There were various salvage attempts during the next three years with much of the wreck being removed, though some wreckage still remains and the area used to be marked by two buoys.

A photo of the *Prince Ivanhoe* is the frontispiece of *Gower* volume 32 (1981).

Margaret Hammond

It is with very great sadness that we record the recent death of committee member Mrs Margaret Hammond.

Ninety years old, Margaret had been an active member of the committee for twenty-one years and remained so right up until her final illness. She was our joint Membership Secretary (along with Amy Hore) from the late 1980s until 1997. She took over the role of Oral History Group co-ordinator from J. C. Wyn Lewis and ran this until recently, including overseeing the digitisation of the records by West Glamorgan Archive Service. With her sister, Betty (Lowe), and Dave Gillett, she started our attendance at the Gower Show, in a borrowed Scout tent at Fairwood Airport; when the Show moved to Penrice, Margaret unfailingly assisted with sales, as she did at Swansea Museum's book fair and similar occasions. Margaret was not only always willing to help if asked, but actively sought opportunities to help. She had a wide range of interests and led U3A groups in walking (though not recently), in politics and in research. She had high principles and standards, by which she lived, a great strength of character and a wide and genuine concern for other people. She was a fine ambassador for the Society among her large circle of friends and acquaintances. Above all, Margaret was a lady, a dignified and gracious lady who, while thoroughly embracing the new (though not computers!), still held dear the traditional values of courtesy, loyalty and reason.

Coastal Archaeological Sites

Gower is rich in known archaeological sites and there are certainly many more waiting for **you** to discover them.

Archaeological sites on the coast, whether known or as yet undiscovered, face two dangers that most

inland sites avoid. With more stormy weather and predicted sea-level rise, sites on cliff land and at near sea-level are threatened by increased erosion and inundation. The same forces, however, may equally well reveal new sites. The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust has launched a new community archaeology project to record and respond to these changes, and to preserve those sites most at risk.

Here is how you can help. The Trust is aiming to set up groups of volunteers, each monitoring its own section of coastline. Anyone who is regularly out and about along the coast would be ideally suited. The Trust will give training and guidance and can even lend equipment. For further details or to volunteer, please contact Ellie Graham at ellie@ggat.org.uk, tel. 01792 634226, Heathfield House, Heathfield, Swansea SA1 6EL.

Ancient and Modern judged excellent by Civic Trust for Wales

A thatched cottage in a Gower village has received a prestigious national design award. A modern extension to *The Nook*, a Grade II listed building in the centre of Oxwich, has received The Civic Trust for Wales' *Special Award for New Build in an Historic Context*. The extension has been praised for the way it complements the older structure through its choice of materials, its straightforward modernity and its sympathetic scale and proportion. Kate and Adrian Lewis's family were outgrowing their tiny cottage. They approached architect Dewi Evans, who, by designing the extension separate from but linked to the cottage, provided an elegant solution without compromising the character of either the extension or the original building.

The Nook had been nominated for the award by The Gower Society. Other buildings or restoration work put forward by the Society received commendations from The Civic Trust for Wales including: Brynau in Mayals Road, 23 St James' Gardens in the Uplands, Corner House (Pitton), The Towers in Penrice and Mewslade View in Middleton. The awards were presented by Dr Matthew Griffiths, Director of the Civic Trust for Wales, at a Gower Society ceremony on 4 December.

Candidate Sites

Candidates for the forthcoming Assembly and local elections might well welcome a mention in our Newsletter. But they are not getting one!

The candidate sites we are talking about are sites that anyone in Swansea City and County can put forward for consideration for the *Local Development Plan* which will supersede the current Unitary Development Plan in three years' time. If you have a specific area you think should be designated, for example for recreational use, then you can submit this to the City and County for their consideration in preparing the LDP. The best way to do this is through the website www.swansea.gov.uk/ldpcandidatesites, but you can also write to the Planning Department at the Civic Centre. The deadline is getting close, so don't delay.

Equally important, other people will have been registering their candidate sites for business, industrial, housing, caravan or other uses. One could be next door to you. If you go to the City and County website or visit the Civic Centre, you will be able to see what others are claiming for candidate sites. If you don't like what they are saying, you have two months to submit your comments for the Local Authority to consider. It will be no use complaining in a couple of years' time if your favourite part of Swansea or Gower is allocated for a housing estate, a holiday camp or a supermarket if you haven't made your view known now. (NOW = today, or this week or at the very most, the end of the month!) Good intentions are laudable, but unless you act on them, they achieve nothing. Do not 'weep like a woman for what you would not defend like a man', as Boabdil's mother would have said. (*See the Chairman's Commentary in Gower volume 61 if you are puzzled by that reference – Ed.*)

Getting to Paviland Cave

Anyone watching the BBC2 programme *A History of Ancient Britain* on 9th February saw Neil Oliver abseiling over the cliff top to reach Goat's Hole. But you don't have to go that way! If you want to visit the cave where the bones of the 'Red Lady of Paviland' were discovered, it can be reached from below – at low tide, and with a fair amount of scrambling over rock. It's best to go with a group like the Gower Society or Swansea Ramblers (formerly West Glamorgan Ramblers) or Mawr Walking Club. Do look at their programmes or enquire from other walkers.

Committee Digest

Since the last Newsletter, your committee has maintained its dialogue with the Local Authority in an effort to have an AONB designation conferred on upland Gower and a few adjacent areas. This has been ongoing for over five years. We now know that nothing will be done on an extension of the Gower AONB in this current *Welsh Assembly Government* term, but this is not precluded for the future. We shall continue to urge for this.

In the meantime, we have initiated with Countryside Council of Wales the setting up of a project with the Valleys Regeneration (a WAG initiative). Both the Local Authority and Mawr Development Trust are also involved with us.

Hopefully, this will focus attention, interest and greater understanding on this fascinating area of upland Gower, increase visitor numbers and lead to an appreciation of its rich history, geology and landscape. It could even lead to a designation as a Country Park. This will not give it any more protection but will enhance its perceived value and status.

The Society has also worked with the local authority (and given grant aid) to safeguard the south coastal path at Slade, where further erosion threatened. All is not yet agreed, but we hope that 2011 will bring completion of this section of path.

Apart from matters raised elsewhere in your Newsletter, your committee has looked at many other issues and documents. These are a few of them:

- the Shoreline Management Plan
- the R.N.L.I. Mumbles scheme
- unsympathetic advertising that is counter to the Local Authority policy for Gower
- the Local Boundary Commission proposals for Mawr
- the Atlantic Array wind turbines

Gower AONB Partnership Group

Members may have seen in the local press that after over 30 years the old Gower Forum has been replaced by a new *Gower Partnership Group*. The Gower Society was represented on the old Gower Forum since its instigation, and played a leading role in all of its activities. Gordon Howe has been your representative for the last 14 years, and we are pleased to announce that he was nominated and approved to continue this representation on the new Partnership Group. This

Group is the body set up by the City and County of Swansea to fulfil a legal obligation to 'look after' and safeguard the AONB.

It is not yet clear to us as to how this new Group will function. The old Gower Forum used to meet four or five times a year, with smaller sub-committees meeting more often to deal with more specific matters. The new Group held an AGM in Oxwich Village Hall on 24th January at which nine members were nominated and approved (no election was needed as up to ten places were available) to meet with officers, representatives from CCW and five local councillors on a more regular basis to discuss and make decisions on matters relating to the AONB. These decisions and recommendations will be fed through into the political system that will hopefully enable the Local Authority to comply with its legal obligations regarding the AONB! The nominated/elected group is made up from those representing such interests as local history, nature conservation, land ownership, farming, commoners, tourism, recreation, The National Trust and amenity groups such as The Gower Society. Previously about 24 groups were represented, but this has been significantly reduced. Hopefully the Group will be more proactive and productive in managing and controlling the very first AONB in Great Britain, but this will result in a larger workload for the members. It is hoped that the officers and councillor members will be more influential in planning applications that effect the AONB as well as having more say at both officer and council level. Indeed the Partnership Group has a planning protocol that will assist it in this important role. There is also a smaller additional group, The Interpretative Sub-Group, to look into advising about interpretation within the AONB.

Councillor John Hague was voted on as Chairman for the next three years and we complimented him for his interest and success in managing Gower in the past (he chaired the Gower Forum for a number of years), and we look forward to even greater success in the future.

However the new arrangements appear to fall short of the recommendations that were made in a thorough and comprehensive consultant's report of about five years ago that was based on successful arrangements in operation for other

AONBs in Wales and England. Time will tell if this new Partnership Group will live up to our expectations, but we hope that the City and County of Swansea and its elected members support the new arrangements and safeguard and protect the AONB for future generations to come. We were encouraged as to how the business was conducted on 24th January, and to see Mr Phil Holmes, Director of Economic Regeneration and Planning, present at the well-attended meeting.

Nibbled Nuts – part 2

Bryan Taylor is volunteer warden of Berry Wood, owned by the Wildlife Trust, though he says the true owners of that wood are the dormice. He writes: 'Berry Wood is one of Gower's hidden treasures. It consists in the main of fine oaks planted by C.R.M. Talbot in the early 19th century, though some trees are over three hundred years old. The lower ground cover is a mix of holly, ash, and masses of hazel, the latter being the favourite of the dormice. I have never seen these little ones, but I do have in my keeping a small nutshell, found in the wood, with the circular hole and the tell-tale tooth marks.

'Access to Berry Wood is fairly easy. From the Port Eynon road at Scurlage, just before the turning right to Rhossili, take the lane on your left marked 'Berry'; follow this for half-a-mile to the T-junction, turn right and park. Follow the track/path north on the left [alongside the house] to a stile on the left, cross the field to the bottom left-hand corner and on to the wood ahead. Enter the wood, follow the path, and half-way through take a trail marked on your left. Go silently ... it's magic!' (*Many thanks, Bryan, several readers will surely follow up your suggestion – Ed.*)

Contributions for Gower 62

This year's volume of *Gower* is due out in November. We have a number of excellent articles in hand but further contributions are invited for consideration. They can be sent to the editor, Bernard Morris, at 39 Roman Court, Blackpill, Swansea SA3 5BL, to arrive before mid-July 2011; earlier submission is welcome. Articles should be prepared in clear double-spaced print, with a computer disk in standard format if available. Electronic transmission is also acceptable - please discuss this with the editor. Good, relevant illustrations are welcome, particularly if in colour.

Have you seen a sand lizard?

Mark Barber, Chairman of the South and West Wales Amphibian and Reptile Group, has contacted us about sand lizards in south Wales.

He writes: 'For the last 40 years, a national captive breeding and reintroduction programme of the endangered sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) has been running. The populations in Wales had nearly become extinct, but now new populations have been released in north and west Wales, but not the south. This has been due to a lack of historical evidence.

'Only recently have I come across Dr Mary Gillham's publications *Swansea Bay's Green Mantle* and *The Natural History of Gower*, in which she briefly mentions the presence of this species at Whiteford (possibly during the '70s) and at Baglan (1940s-50s). Nobody involved in the reintroduction programme or at the Countryside Council for Wales even knew about this anecdotal evidence. I have been in contact with Dr Gillham and unfortunately these were not her sightings and she doesn't know where the records came from.

'We have been through Swansea Museum and Swansea Library archives on many occasions, looking through all available evidence including Glamorgan Naturalists' Society publications and any other wildlife-related documents we could locate. Sadly we have not been able to find any records for this species in south Wales.

'I am contacting the Gower Society to ask if any of your members have ever heard of any records of sand lizard in south Wales? Do they know of any naturalists who may be able to assist me or any other locations of historic records I haven't searched?'

If you can help, please contact Mark at the Department of Pure and Applied Ecology at Swansea University (tel. 0780 181 6715; or email: 368544@swan.ac.uk)

Are you on e-mail?

We are fond of our Newsletter. Unfortunately, because it only comes out twice a year, it is sometimes more of a history letter.

But if you have access to email you could receive *up-to-date* Gower Society news electronically. We are setting up a Gower Society members' email group, so that we can let you know what is

happening in the Society and in Gower, as and when it is happening.

If you join, we promise:

1. never to pass on your email details to a third party
2. not to inundate you with trivia

So if you would like to receive occasional information from us, please email your address to: gsmail@gowersociety.org.uk. Please include your name and postal address (or name and the reference number on the address label). Do it now, so you don't forget!

This will be a 'non-reply' service as we don't have the resources to enter into long dialogues with 1,500 members. Of course you can still contact committee members via the website or by post.

Address Check

Steve Davies, who prints your address labels, is anxious to know whether he's got it right.

So please check the address on your envelope and if it is not 100% accurate, do write to the Membership Secretary (whose address is at the end of this Newsletter), or email it via our website or, if you are joining the email group, include any corrections with your email to gsmail@gowersociety.org.uk.

Gower Society Lunch

So successful have been the two celebratory lunches which your committee organised (for the AONB diamond anniversary in 2006 and for the Society's own golden anniversary in 2008) that it has been decided to have another - on **Sunday 27th November** in the Avalon Suite of the King Arthur Hotel, Reynoldston. Please note that this venue is disable-friendly and has easy access. This is likely to cost £21 per head, with a menu offering several choices for each course.

There is no particular milestone to mark – it is just an opportunity for members to celebrate Gower and the Society, to enjoy a delightful meal together and to socialise.

Full details of time, menu, booking forms, etc. will appear in your next Newsletter in September. Make sure you put the date in your diary NOW so that you don't double book yourself.

Guides for Gower

It has been 20 years since the Local Authority first asked the Society's advice on a *Design Guide for Gower*. At last, as you will see in Gordon Howe's

Planning Report, the draft Guide is out for consultation. We also had some input into the *AONB Lighting Guide* which was introduced in the autumn. We hope that these two guides will bring an early and noticeable improvement to planning in the AONB.

Old Gower Journals

It has been noticed recently just how many of our members are interested in completing their sets of the Gower Journal. In one week we had requests from four people – all looking for the same handful of early numbers.

This is a plea to those of you who have shelves groaning under the weight of these prized editions (or even spare copies). Don't let them gather dust or get thrown away – there are members out there eagerly awaiting ownership. Some volumes seem to be scarcer than others, e.g. numbers 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 32.

If you should wish to free up some shelf space - and at the same time help other members - please contact either Peter Hutchison (01792 233223) or our admin secretary Ruth Ridge (01792 371665).

Dr Jeff Jones from Cambridge is eager to buy volumes 11 and 12, or to exchange them for volumes 3, 6 (no cover), 7, 16, 18 and 19. His telephone number is 01954 211417.

Mumbles Pier and Headland

The proposed developments for Mumbles Pier and Headland have, not surprisingly, caused a large amount of controversy. While they are two separate issues, they have been inextricably linked from the beginning. The new lifeboat station is necessary and the proposed design appears acceptable, although the Society is far from satisfied that the kittiwake colony at the pier will be protected from disturbance.

Mr Bollom has said that renovation of the pier cannot go ahead without the money generated by the headland development. But why has the pier been allowed to degenerate to such an extent? Why haven't the owners maintained it properly over the years? If you or I neglected our houses until they were in a desperate state, would we expect to be allowed to build and sell off a block of flats in the garden to finance the renovation?

We would all like to see the pier in good condition, but it is wrong that planners and councillors should be expected to approve an inappropriate development to enable the pier owners to repair their neglect.

The view of Mumbles Head across the bay is one of the iconic views of Swansea. Mumbles needs development and we are not totally against some modest development at this site. We feel, however, that this proposal is too large, too high, too intrusive and too isolated from the rest of the village. Other issues include the building on common land and in the AONB, the proposed exchange land and the adequacy of the road system. The overriding argument against the current plan remains, in the final analysis, its unacceptable impact on this important landscape.

Viva la Presidente

We have been so impressed with the work that Edwina Hart AM does for Gower and for the Gower Society that we have invited her to stay on for another year. In the early days of the Society, presidents held office for either one year or two. In the 1980s the pattern changed and presidents usually served for three years, subject, as the constitution demands, to annual election. If Edwina is re-elected at this year's AGM, it will, therefore, be unique in the Society's history. It is said that 'if you want something done, ask a busy person'. We are amazingly lucky that someone as phenomenally busy as Edwina still finds time to work for the Gower Society. It is a measure of her dedication to the people and area of Gower.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Footpaths (Lynne Lock)

The emphasis in this year's quota of footpath alterations has been on the coastal access zone - those paths linked directly to the All Wales Coastal Path. The Local Authority has received specific funding for this from the Welsh Assembly Government as part of the drive to have the path around the whole coast of Wales opened in the near future. The section around Gower's coastline was opened officially by the minister Jane Davidson in September. Although there is one small section around Cheriton still to be completed, it is expected that this will be done early next year. We hope that many of our members will be among the first to walk the whole Gower coast path.

Our work parties have been involved, together with the local Ramblers group, in much of the work on the path,

installing gates, way-marking and, notably, building the bridge over the pill at Nicholaston. We've been pleased to note that most of the comments on the new structure have been positive - what do you think?

A regular feature of this report in recent years has been a plea for people to join our work parties, and this year is no different. In fact, with the current round of spending cuts it may be that volunteer labour will be the best way of keeping our paths open and accessible. We need new recruits of all skills and none; we can always find a job for hands that don't want to be idle, so please, get in touch - we'd love to hear from you.

Planning (Gordon Howe)

Despite the recession, 2010 has not seen a huge reduction in planning applications. In fact we will have seen in about the same number of planning letters as in 2009. At the time of writing this report (December 2010), I estimate that there will once again be about 2,000 planning applications that will have been submitted to the City and County of Swansea and examined by our Planning Search Team. There is an increasing trend to knock down a perfectly good house in order to erect a much larger modern property. If you stop to consider the environmental and sustainability aspects of such a proposal, you will appreciate why we are generally against such applications (as is the Welsh Assembly Government policy).

Gower is seen as 'the place to live' and this puts considerable pressure on planners and elected members. A new *Design Guide for Gower* is to be published by the Council and a new *AONB Lighting Guide* is also now in operation. Both should assist our efforts to ensure that new buildings fit into the AONB and that the trend for more and more intrusive lighting is reversed. My usual thanks go to our current and past team members who assist with the planning search, and our long-suffering Secretary who 'tweaks' my letters. If any member is ever concerned about a particular planning application, do not hesitate to contact me and we will always look into it, even if we cannot always achieve what you want!

The Society's website is trialling a section containing information on current submitted

planning applications - visit it to see what is happening in our area.

Gower Society Youth Action

(Joan Darbyshire)

It was the 10th anniversary of GSYA this year and this was celebrated with a combined craft activity and party by inviting the GSYA founder Dr Angela M. Brunt as well as our Chairman and Secretary. Dawn Thomas, our Youth Leader, made a beautiful anniversary cake!

The Youth Action events have been consistently well attended with a growing number of regulars. Activities included rock-pooling, geo-caching, sketching, fishing for newts (which were returned to their ponds), a Knights' Day at Oystermouth Castle, foraging for wild food and looking closely at the natural environment. A total of 202 children and 140 parents have attended the activities up to November 2010 (with a total for each event ranging from 25 to 51 people). We also had a Youth Action presence at the Gower Show, which was very well attended. We now have a total of 123 members who have attended since February 2008, and a dedicated core of some 40 regulars. The children are learning more and more about Gower, its history and environment. Many of the parents attending have commented on the fact that they have never been to some of the sites we visit.

Through the Gower Society's support for Dawn's work in schools, a total of 1,118 pupils from 26 schools have benefited from field trips on Gower, or days within their own school grounds. The age ranges from 3 years old (nursery) to A level at 16 plus.

GSYA grants were awarded to schools and other organisations for work on projects done by young people. These ranged from an eco-research project at Kilvey Forest to planting to enhance wildlife and pond areas in schools and communities; grants were also given for transport to Gower for field trips. Once again it was a successful year for GSYA.

Membership (Margaret Gillett)

Membership continues to thrive; the Society numbers remain steady at over 1,500, with many life members and several from overseas. We also have groups who are members of the Society - these include schools, museums, libraries and universities. We inform local community councils by sending newsletters and programmes to them on a regular basis.

At the Gower Show, 39 new members joined, no doubt enticed by the offer of joining there and receiving membership for the remainder of 2010 and also 2011 (not quite *buy one, get one free!*)

Your newsletter and programme are sent out by the mailing team in March and September. The Journal is mailed in November to all those members unable to attend the Journal launch earlier in that month. Anne Burton-Davies and Ros Satchell co-ordinate the mailing team, and approximately 16 members meet at St. Paul's church hall to fill the envelopes (and also enjoy a coffee and chat). Steve Davies prints the labels. Thanks to all these people who make the mailing possible.

Publications Report

(Bernard Morris MBE)

Last year we published the 60th volume of our Journal *Gower* and it is our practice to change the external design after every fifth volume. Therefore in November 2010 *Gower* 61 appeared with a completely new style of cover. Our Honorary Photographer, Harold Grenfell, is a long-standing member of our Publications team and we are again indebted to him for the latest design which uses one of his fine photographs, a panorama within Clyne Woods, set eye-catchingly within the two broad bands of plain white which carry the title.

Contributions to our pages continue to be of high quality, well-researched and often explore completely new topics. It is good to note that as well as our regular contributors, each year sees articles from new writers. Needless to say, the editor is always glad to hear from prospective contributors to future volumes.

Subjects covered in *Gower* 61 include the paint mine at Porteynon, early watercolours of Oxwich, the rebuilding of Reynoldston Church, a long-vanished cottage at Overton, Clyne Valley's industrial history, and the families of Cartersford Farm.

Swansea, as the Lordship of Gower's capital, is not neglected, for there are articles on archaeological excavations in Princess Way, on the history of the ancient chapel of St Thomas - which gave its name to a Swansea suburb, and on an historical walk along Wind Street and High Street. All is rounded off by our Chairman's

commentary, giving an overview of the Society's current concerns.

Publication Sales (Hildegard Roberts)

Sales of books have been, I'm told, lower this year than last, although I seem to have been just as busy supplying our various outlets, as have my helpful team - Peter Hutchison, and Ruth and Malcolm. As usual we had interesting P.R. days at our Gower Show stand in August and also at the Annual Local History Book Fair at the Museum in late October. We have had no new publications this year, apart from, of course, our 2010 *Journal* which is always popular and selling well. Perhaps volume 61 will be one of the rare ones in future! *Rhossili* has been reprinted with an additional acknowledgement. *Gower in Focus* initially sold well, though now sales have dropped off, so please bear this in mind if you are looking for that special present as a reminder of what Gower has to offer.

We are thinking of ideas for future publications, so please let us have any good suggestions.

Programme (John Williams)

Thanks to the untiring efforts of our group of volunteers, the winter programme continues to offer a range of activities. Walkers are catered for with 27 Saturday walks, 13 longer rambles on Sundays, and eight weekday walks. Dave Bird, who has been responsible for Sunday walks, is 'retiring', and his experience will be missed. John Ashley has agreed to organise the Sunday walks in future.

As part of our commitment to support improved means of accessibility, we are seeking advice from Baytrans regarding use of the Gower Explorer bus service. As a result, we might be able to organise extra linear walks.

This winter we enjoyed Saturday talks on topics of local interest. Since 2005 Gary Gregor has been an excellent organiser of these, but he will be standing down at the AGM. At the time of writing, we still hope that a volunteer will emerge to take over from Gary: if not, then we may have to abandon our talks' programme for the forthcoming winter programme. Two people have volunteered to assist, but could not take on full responsibility at present.

Folk dancing continues at Brynmill Primary School during term time. Frances Wood has arranged for parking in the school yard on Thursday evenings for her group. This is a very sociable gathering, so if are

interested do ring Frances for further details - her phone number is on the first page of your programme.

A benevolent William de Breos?

When it comes to Gower history, we can say that several of the De Braose (or De Breos) family were, like Lord Byron, if not 'mad' then certainly 'bad and dangerous to know' - especially those named William De Breos. One of these was publicly hanged in 1230 in north Wales on the orders of Llewellyn Fawr, after indiscretions with Llewellyn's wife: this was the background to the Saunders Lewis play *Siwan*, see the article in *Gower* vol. 56. Another Marcher Lord of that name, Sir William de Braose (c.1255-1326), is the subject of an article in *Gower* volume 43.

But at the east end of Llandaff Cathedral, beyond the Lady Chapel, stands the tomb of a William de Breos who was a *Bishop* of Llandaff! We know little of this person beyond the fact that he was consecrated Bishop in 1266 and died in 1287, and he is thought to have built the Lady Chapel in the Cathedral. Of course there have been popes, bishops and clerics who have disgraced the church that they presumed to serve, but it would seem that this William De Breos was a very different character from some of his namesakes. Perhaps he will merit research for an article in *Gower* one day?

Gower Walking Festival

The seventh annual Gower Walking Festival takes place from Saturday 4th to Sunday 19th June. The Festival will be opened by BBC weatherman Derek Brockway, who will lead the first walk, and it closes with a Tŵmpath at the Linden Christian Centre in West Cross. In between is a wide selection of over 50 walks and similar activities, as detailed in a colour brochure and on the website www.visitmumbles.co.uk - click on *gowerwalkingfest*.

Smallest churches in Scotland

One of our members, John Kinross, has brought out a book *Discovering the Smallest Churches in Scotland*, following his earlier guides to small churches in England and in Wales. These are published by The History Press - www.thehistory

press.co.uk. His latest book, with photographs, drawings and location maps, is a 128-page paperback costing £12.99 - available from most bookshops and from Amazon.

Gower Broadband

A local community group is seeking to improve broadband services and trying to ensure subscribers on the Gower Exchange aren't left behind as broadband is upgraded elsewhere and websites become more resource-hungry. Subscribers on this exchange have telephone numbers with the format 01792 39xxxx. The group has commissioned a feasibility study to consider the possibility of upgrading the exchange and its network so that superfast broadband can be made available. This is a community-based solution, only available if sufficient local people express an interest. If you have online access you will find further information, including the draft report of the feasibility study, at www.gowerbroadband.com. You can also sign up on the Contacts Us page to be kept informed of public meetings and other updates. If you don't have online access, please contact Dave Harvey during normal office hours at the Old Pharmacy in Monksland Road, Scurlage, or on 01792 390209.

The Heart of Wales Walk

Do you enjoy long linear walks and train rides? Then try the Heart of Wales walk. This walk, appearing on both the Gower Society and Swansea Ramblers programmes, will start at Gowerton and follow the general route of the Heart of Wales railway line. Initially the walks will be on Sundays, walking away from Swansea for 10-15 miles each day, and returning on the train. As we get further from Swansea we will take the train out as well as back – probably on Saturdays – and eventually we will need to use whole weekends. But remember, these are not our usual railway rambles that happen to be on a Sunday. These are **long and quite strenuous** walks which make use of the train. *If the group is too slow we could miss the train home...!* For details see the Gower Society and Swansea Ramblers programmes.

The Macmarathon: 22-mile Gower Cliff Walk in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support

For the 14th year this very popular sponsored walk takes place on Saturday 10th September. It starts at Rhossili car park and ends at Mumbles Cricket Club, with many optional pleasant stopping points on

the way. Free buses will transport walkers from Bracelet Bay car park to the start for those wishing to leave their cars (with free parking). We have now added a signing-in at Port Eynon for any wishing to walk a *shorter* distance. Certificates are presented at the end.

Approximately 1,000 walkers took part last year, and to date £48,000 has been raised. We do hope you will join us again and bring your friends. Last year was perfect weather for walking and our spectacular coastline was enjoyed by people from many different parts of the UK. We hope for good weather in 2011 so you will again be able to end by basking in the sunshine and enjoying refreshments and the carnival atmosphere at the Cricket Club.

The entry fee is £6. All details, including registration forms, itinerary and sponsor forms can be downloaded from

www.macmillan.org.uk/gowermacmarathon, or send an SAE to: Kathryn Morgan, Macmillan Cancer Support, Gorseinon Hospital, Brynawel Road, Gorseinon, Swansea SA4 4UU.

We suggest you register very soon as numbers are restricted!

News from the Penllergare Trust

The Friends of Penllergare Valley Woods

Formed in 2006 as a support and fundraising group for the Trust, the Friends currently have a membership of around 200. They have their own newsletter 'Pen-Friends' and an annual programme of meetings, guided walks and visits to places that have connections, or similar aspirations, to Penllergare and/or the Valley Woods project. This year they have been celebrating the bi-centenary of the birth of John Dillwyn Llewelyn with a series of themed talks and events that linked to JDL's interests and achievements. The 2010 programme concluded with a JDL Celebration Concert at Swansea Museum with the guest appearance of the Phoenix Choir. Anyone wishing to join the Friends, to enjoy shared activities and Penllergare-related information, please contact Jennie Evers (tel. 01558 650416).

Stepping Out

Walking for Health and Well-Being continues regularly every Monday at 12.30 p.m. (though not on bank holidays) for approximately one hour.

Most weeks the Trust offers two walks – one at a moderate pace and the other being more challenging. If only one leader is available, the walk reverts to moderate. A different route is taken each time so that walkers gradually get to know the valley with its many permutations of paths, zones and habitats.

Community Outreach

Illustrated talks about the history of Penllergare and the work of the Trust are frequently given to groups and organisations in and around Swansea. The much-praised website (www.penllergare.org) also gives valuable information about the history and the project. The Archive page has recently been enlarged to include, on a base map, an interactive interpretation of Penllergare's main features and identity icons, showing the viewpoint and photographs taken by John Dillwyn Llewelyn.

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