

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

News from the Manor

by Diane Walker (General Manager)

It has been lovely to see so many "Friends" at events and visiting the Manor this year. It is definitely an exciting time to be a "Friend". The project to develop the interpretation and increase access to the Manor is the biggest thing to happen here since we opened to the public in 1991. It will certainly mean we will have a very high profile locally and nationally in the coming year. Sam Baker, the HLF funded Development and Outreach Officer will be ensuring the media and people in the community are kept up to date with progress and encouraged to come along and get involved.

Sam is busy developing activities for schools, children and the general public which will give them an insight into the conservation work that is going on. Activities such as how to construct a roof (in miniature, of course!), how to lay slates on a roof, how to build stone walls and so on. The activities are being carefully designed to be usable by a wide range of ages and abilities so that they can be undertaken by anyone. He is going out to teachers' conferences and briefings to let schools know what we will be offering to meet their curriculum needs. Part of his role is also to raise our profile locally and so he has been out delivering leaflets and meeting people and talking about what is happening at the Manor.



In particular, whilst the building work is going on, Sam will be training up volunteers to help people do the activities on weekdays and weekends - so if you have a practical nature and like meeting people, have some time to spare and don't mind getting a bit grubby, then you might be just the person we are looking for to support the project! You can contact Sam on 01443 414016 or bakers2@caerphilly.gov.uk.

As far as the actual building work goes - we should be starting in January. We have to get the roof part of the work done by 30th April as that is when the 'Licence to Disturb' the bats expires and any further work on the attics has to stop until after 31st August, when they have finished breeding. So the pressure is on! We had a small scale archaeological excavation at the back of the Manor, where the staircase tower will go, in early November. We had to make sure there is nothing of note underneath it before the builders arrive.

As your Friends membership gives you access to the Manor all year round, please pop in regularly to see how the work is progressing. Students from Ysgol Cwm Rhymni will be curating a temporary site exhibition which they will update regularly with news, photos and interviews with the conservation builders, so there will be plenty to keep you interested!

In the meantime, do have a look at the Friends Shopping List and see if there is something you would like to sponsor - it's a lovely way to be part of the history of the Manor itself by helping to provide an item that will be enjoyed by thousands of people in the future. Sponsorship will be recorded in the special ledger that Lee Jessup has made as a lasting record to be kept in the Manor.

HLF launch Open Day

by Sam Baker (Development and Outreach Officer)

Hi, I'm Sam Baker – the new Development and Outreach Officer for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project. I recently graduated from the University of Glamorgan, with a degree in Construction Project Management and I will be responsible for co-ordinating between the construction team and the public/volunteers.



The Open Day to launch the HLF project was very successful, with over 350 visitors attending. The purpose of the event was to increase awareness of the development work. Free activities, such as dry stonewalling, woodcarving and pole lathe turning, copper smithing, lead working, stone masonry, roof slating, lime pointing and plastering were public, as well as free tours of the manor.

The general atmosphere of the visitors engaging with the traditional building skills, as well as many showing a sense of pride in their section of dry stone walling or feedback sheet explained that the activities were demonstrated that day would be utilised on a property development, practical.



I would also like to thank all the volunteers who give up their time to make this event happen. The efforts of the Friends of Llancaiach Fawr were rewarded with over £100 in donations and a further (approx) £85 raised in a raffle. The money raised by the Friends of Llancaiach Fawr will go towards furnishings for the manor attics.

The King's Fayre 2013

Of recent years, King's Day has become a smaller and smaller event with fewer public attending. It had actually reached the point of becoming economically unviable; indeed it was costing money to put on. The choices we faced this year were to either scrap it completely (which seemed harsh as it is, after all, our *raison d'être*), to do less and have fewer staff in or lastly take a chance and create a bigger event. We chose the latter.

I must say, it was a nerve-racking decision. What if we spent more money setting it up and still nobody came? Well, any doubts were put on the back burner and bookings were made. The interpretation in the Manor house has always been exceptionally good so that part of the day stayed largely unchanged with a few little tweaks; why fix what isn't broken? We did change our supporting regiment of choice to Gerard's and in addition to the living history camp and displays they set up in the formal gardens, there was a lurcher and falcon display on the meadow along with go-karts, children's fairground and pony rides and stalls on the court yard and in the education block.



The King himself arrived on horseback with his entourage and guard of honour and was led down to the meadow where he inspected the troops accompanied by the Colonel, his wife and their two children.

In the conservatory, visitors could also have a taste of the seventeenth century for themselves as the restaurant was serving, lovage soup, roast gammon and 'the best orange pudding that ever was tasted'. This mirrored part of the King's feast in the manor.

It turned out then that the chance we took worked out for the better, we more than doubled our visitor numbers and hope to do even better next year. The feedback from the public was excellent and all those involved thoroughly enjoyed themselves and are eager to take part again next year.

LONG LIVE THE KING!

The Friends of Llancaiach Shopping List and Catalogue

by Lin Pook

As we hope you are aware Llancaiach was successful in its bid for the Heritage Lottery Fund and work is due to start on replacing the roof, building an access tower for those with mobility issues, opening the attics and improving the lighting and heating in the Manor so that it is in keeping with its 1645 setting. However, generous as the Heritage Lottery Fund have been there is not enough money in the fund to furnish the attics or buy the furniture which will hide the radiators. This is where the Friends come in.

This Summer the Friends have set up a stall at every major Llancaiach event to raise money for these extra items. We have sold raffle tickets and received donations to support this project.

On view have been examples of the things we want to buy as well as our Shopping List and our 'Llancaiach Wish List Catalogue'. Supporters have been able to see either pictures or actual items that we wish to purchase and then donate sums to buy specific items. These generous people will have their names and donations recorded in a handmade leather bound book which will be on show in the Colonel's study once the renovations have been completed.



No donation is too small – if it cannot buy a specific item it will go towards the larger purchases needed. Wooden beds and handmade chests are expensive items that no single donation will cover – unless you have a rich relative of course!!

Whether you donate money or gifts for the raffles it will all be gratefully received and used effectively.

Please see the Llancaiach Wish List Catalogue which I've sent with this newsletter as an email attachment for members who receive Friends News by email. For those of you who receive Friends News by post you will soon be able to access the catalogue on the website www.afolf.co.uk or by contacting Diane at the manor who will send you a copy in the post.

At the Open Day in September we made £88 on the raffle and Lin Pook and Gareth Jones managed to sell 10 candlesticks, 1 sewing kit, 2 boys shirts, 1 purse and 1 gaming set from the "Wish List Catalogue" worth £100.

Pictures of The Quiz Earlier this Year







Dates for your Diary

For details of Llancaiach Fawr events for 2014, call the manor on 01443 412248, or go to www.llancaiachfawr.co.uk

GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk

A warm welcome is extended to Friends of Llancaiach Fawr and anyone else who wishes to come along to the monthly meetings held at Llancaiach Fawr (usually in The Barn) unless stated otherwise.

-  Wednesday 29 Jan 11:00 am – Rosemarie Williams – *Life on the Llancaiach Fawr farm*
 -  Wednesday 26 Feb 7:00 pm – Tony Jukes – *Rhymney Tramroad North to South*
 -  Wednesday 26 Mar 7:00 pm – Robin Williams – *Pontypool Japanware*
 -  Wednesday 30 Apr 7:00 pm – Willie Cross – *Tredeggar Women A Beautiful Nuisance*
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Not Your Usual Wednesday – “The Sewing Ladies”

With the school term starting and the end of the Childrens’ Activity Days, we sewing ladies expected the first “proper” Wednesday back after the summer to be a return to our usual quiet day. We couldn’t have been more wrong as we had a flurry of visitors.

First to greet us was Sam, just checking to see that we didn’t need anything, which is foolish because, poor soul, we ALWAYS seem to have some lifting or shifting for him. We were then joined by Gareth the Treasurer and 2 other “Friends” who needed somewhere to carry out the annual audit and while they were buried in the account books yet another “Friend” – Jean – turned up with a donation of a box of old lace for us. And all this before lunch-time, very exciting.

Meanwhile, we were busy repairing costumes and one of the covers from the restaurant’s heated trolleys and, more importantly, taking a scissors for the first time to the beautiful new bolt of linen kindly donated recently by The Friends of Llancaiach. We were so pleased to have it as it is really nice quality and will be lovely to work with when making the shirts, shifts, coifs and aprons for Colonel Prichard’s servants. Gaynor spent the morning cutting a shift for “Ann Gibbard” the undercook and I managed to get a photograph of her busily placing the pattern pieces with our equally busy “auditors” engrossed behind.



News from the AGM

The proposed increase in subscriptions was carried unanimously and the constitution has been amended to read “The membership rates will shadow the actual entry rates to the Manor House, and will continue to increase annually accordingly”. Which means the membership rates have increased to - Individuals £7.50, Concessions £6.00 and Families £22.00.

The committee membership is now:

Rosemarie Williams – *President*

Angela Murrell – *Chair*

Wendy Davies – *Vice Chair*

Lynne Lock – *Secretary*

Gareth Jones – *Treasurer*

Louise Kenyon – *Membership Secretary*

Jan Fitzgerald – *Volunteer Co-ordinator*

Tim Ellwood – *Newsletter and Website*

The *Social Secretary* role is currently vacant