

FRIENDS *news*

www.afolf.co.uk

Spring 2014

News from the Manor

by Diane Walker (General Manager)



We have Heritage Lottery Funding (£943,200) and Cadw funding (£30,000) to help us carry out building works which will make the manor even more atmospheric and fascinating, as well as accessible to more people. The work is being carefully phased to allow the Manor to stay open throughout. We wanted to make sure that our visitors had the opportunity to understand:

what we are doing - new roof and reconstructed servants quarters, new and hidden heating and lighting, a new staircase tower at the rear of the building instead of the modern fire escape, opening up more fireplaces.

why we are doing it - for improved interpretation with more authentic interiors, reduced maintenance costs and lower fuel bills to make us more sustainable in the future and to attract more visitors to share this gem of a gentry house.

how we are doing it - by showing the crafts and trade skills being used by the builders, letting visitors have a go and providing informal talks to explain the processes.

We want visitors to have a glimpse into the work that goes into making sure that houses like this are able to remain open to the public. We want visitors to leave knowing more about everyday life in a gentry household in the mid 17th century and with a greater understanding of how houses were built and the skills and materials that were used. We also want visitors to understand the importance of keeping those traditional skills alive today to protect our historic buildings and allow people to continue to enjoy them for generations to come.... so the house will be a little noisier than usual as Colonel Prichard has got the journeymen builders in to improve his Manor House!

The complete scaffold is now up and at present the concrete roof tiles are being stripped and the old electrical and mechanical installations for the lighting and heaters have been taken out. The cellar has been cleared ready for the new boiler, sinks and work area as well as a new toilet to be fitted. From a study of the roof timber and changes in the building construction, seen most easily with the roof clear, we think that there may need to be a reassessment of the phases of the building of the house. The main east-west roof was certainly built at different times. Interesting and puzzling times are ahead as we try and work out the order in which the building was constructed and extended and hopefully we may be able to finally start to date the earliest phase more accurately.



Monthly 'Behind the Scenes' tours will be run on the first Saturday of the month by the contractors to take people into areas that are normally out of bounds due to safety concerns whilst they are working. Places need to be booked early as they are limited and the £3 fee per person goes to the Friends of Llancaiach Fawr Manor fundraising appeal for furniture and objects for the servants attics - flat shoes and a head for heights are likely to be needed! See the website for details each month. Public tours are at 10am and 11am (ish... as there may be lots of questions for the builders and they might over run a bit!)

17th Century Lives

by Meirwen Jones

Anne Gibbard

This talented Under Cook is twelve months into her two year indenture with the Prichard household. Originally from Abergavenny, Anne has spent the last fifteen years helping her father raise his young family following the death of her mother. At this time of uncertainty with the war, the Manor offers her safety but she is looking to save some money towards a possible marriage and the prospect of running her own home again.



A diligent young woman, Anne rises around 3am three times a week to prepare the ovens for a day's bread baking. When Colonel Prichard and his family are in residence, Anne's days are especially long with the preparation of meals alongside the Head Cook for the entire household. With meal times reflecting a buffet style approach, Anne is often required to cook several different dishes.

Unusually, Anne has been taught to read by her father but this has meant that she can follow recipes and ultimately give her role further value. She has become a seasoned expert on sweetmeats and makes a fine pie. Her speciality is a Steak Pie with a French Pudding; minced mutton, breadcrumbs, cream, dried fruit then layered with steak seasoned with nutmeg.

Like the other servants, Anne has only a small number of possessions. However, with her father being a carpenter she is fortunate enough to have a beautiful handmade travelling chest which stays with her in the attic room that she shares with seven other female servants.

Anne has aspirations to move on and to further this aim she is currently being taught to write. Anne has realised the advantages of this skill and has enlisted the talents of the Scrivener Bryn Llewelyn to teach her. She will be a great loss to the Manor household, let's hope the war doesn't get in the way of her plans.



Bryn Llewelyn

Who is this mysterious character Bryn Llewelyn? Arriving at the Manor only a couple of months ago he has assumed the role of Houseman and Scrivener for the Prichard household. His intention is to stay only until he receives his father's compensation from the parish following the flooding disaster that struck his family mill recently. His father and second wife were killed in the flood and his three children are now being cared for by his mother in Newport. He has made arrangements for his eldest son Matthew to receive an education so that in time they will be able to return to the mill. Unfortunately, due to the war, it looks like Bryn's plans will be on hold for a number of years.

Bryn's father Owain had the foresight to educate his eldest son and as a result Bryn attended the Free School (only in name!) where he studied Latin and English and became proficient in common, legal and secretary script. These talents have enabled him to boost his annual earnings by doing additional 'freelance' scribing within the community.

Bryn's day is long, typical of servant life at the time, beginning at 5am with a two hour meeting with the Steward. Discussions would revolve around land agreements, tenancy arrangements and the preparation of legal documents. The rest of the day could easily be spent writing up the outcomes of those discussions. With a fine goose quill, Bryn takes pride in his scrivener duties.

Partial to a bit of rabbit hunting, Bryn is able to indulge his hobby on the Colonel's land provided a contribution comes the Colonel's way!

Bryn's arrival at the Manor has prompted speculation as to his past. Wearing the tell-tale earring of a traveller he appears to have 'gaps' in his life. Whatever his story, he has already managed to catch the eye of the Under Cook Anne Gibbard. Will we hear the sound of wedding bells? Only time will tell.

The Attics

by Gareth Jones (Friends Treasurer)

Over the last few months you will no doubt have read about the major project which commenced in January, which has partly been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and CADW.

Plans include developing the attics as the servants' quarters, increasing access for visitors with disabilities and creating a more authentic interior for day visitors and school groups to enjoy. The opening up of the attics and creation of the servants' quarters will enable us to tell an integral part of the story of a 17th century household. At present we can only show the living quarters of the gentry owners.

The attics, which were the servants' quarters, have always been out of bounds and unsafe for the public to enter, and having been shown around by Sam, the Outreach and Development Officer, I can understand why!! They will be floored with oak boards and the eaves will be separated by vertical boarding to create bat roosts and to conceal the structural metalwork installed in the 1980s to stabilise the roof structure.

The attics will then need to be furnished with beds, chests and boxes to hold personal items for each of the servants to show a rounded view of their lives and living space. This is where the Friends are required, as we have committed to raise £9,785 to furnish the attics and these costs are separate and not included in the HLF and CADW grants.

The intended contents of the attics are set out in a brochure the Friends have prepared entitled 'Touching the Past' which can be viewed either at the Manor House or on our website www.afolf.co.uk. The items can be purchased, or donations made and as a record your name will be added to our leather ledger to record all money received and items purchased.

While we are applying to various Trusts and Foundations in the hope they will support us, we would also like to invite our members to assist us in raising this money, either by making a donation or by actually purchasing an item.

As the Friends of Llancaich Fawr Manor we intend to continue to support the sharing of this beautiful and fascinating building and its story with the wider community and we hope that you will also be able to assist us.



How you can help with the project

Monetary donations should be sent to Gareth Jones c/o the Manor House

To purchase an item from the brochure contact Diane Walker at the Manor House

If you have any unwanted gifts or other items that could be used as tombola prizes at fundraising events over the summer contact Jan Fitzgerald c/o the Manor House

If you have any unwanted Welsh blankets contact Diane Walker at the Manor House

How you can help the Friends of Llancaich Fawr

The Friends of Llancaich Fawr committee is currently looking for a Social Secretary. If you are interested in joining the committee and carrying out the role, which involves attending committee meetings once a month and organising Friends events throughout the year, please contact the Friends of Llancaich Fawr c/o the Manor House or send an email to the Secretary - Lynne Lock on blynnelock@aol.com.

Dates for your Diary

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



Friends Events

Fri 13 Jun – 7:00pm	Quiz Night – Friends £2.50, Guests £3.00 – quiz starts at 7:30pm
Sat 21 Jun	Coach Trip to Snowhill Manor – Day trip to Snowhill Manor in Gloucestershire – home of Charles Wade’s collections – and Broadway village. Coach £10 for Friends and £12 for Guests. Entrance to House £9.30 (free for National Trust members). Use the booking form to reserve places for yourself and your friends. For more information about the house visit http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/snowhill-manor/ .

Manor House Events


Sun 25 May	Caerphilly Motoring Festival 2014 – more than 250 classic and vintage vehicles - £2 adults, £1 concessions
Wed 28 – Fri 30 May	Peter Pan themed children’s activities – £5 per child (first adult free, additional adults £1)
Sat 14 & Sun 15 Jun	Antiques and Collectables Fair
Sun 15 Jun	Fathers Day ‘Weapons and Warcraft’ – Entry free for Dads
Tue 17 Jun - 6:30–9:00pm	Collectable Toy and Train Fair – entry £1.50
Fri 27 Jun – 7:30pm	Treasure Island – Rain or Shine Theatre Company - £10 adults, £9 concessions, £6 children
Sat 5 Jul	Live Country Music – try out your line dancing skills - £13.50 including food (pre-booked)
Sun 13 Jul	Welsh Model Show ‘A World in Miniature’ - trains, boats, planes, cars and dolls houses - £5 adults, £3.50 concessions, children free with an adult
Wed 23 Jul	Pirates and Princesses – children’s activity day (11am to 4pm) - £5 per child (first adult free, additional adults £1)
Wed 30 Jul	Monsters and Magic – children’s activity day (11am to 4pm) - £5 per child (first adult free, additional adults £1)
Wed 6 Aug	Vampires and Faeries – children’s activity day (11am to 4pm) - £5 per child (first adult free, additional adults £1)
Wed 13 Aug	Superheroes – children’s activity day (11am to 4pm) - £5 per child (first adult free, additional adults £1)
Wed 20 Aug	Pirates and Princesses – children’s activity day (11am to 4pm) - £5 per child (first adult free, additional adults £1)
Sun 24 Aug – 1:00pm – Sat 6 Sep - 5:00pm	Art Exhibition – Bargoed and District Art Society – free entry
Mon 25 Aug	Barking Mad Dog Show with Hope Rescue – £1 Adults, 50p Concessions
Sun 21 Sep	Traditional Skills Day – Civic Trust open day scheme – free entry

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 28 May 7:00 pm – Lyn Pask – Wales’ 9-11 : What happened to the bodies? The Prince of Wales Colliery explosion of September 11, 1878*

 *Wednesday 25 Jun 7:00 pm – Annual General Meeting - followed by a short talk given by Bill Smith on the background to his publication "The History of the Tredegar Mineral Estate"*

 *Wednesday 24 Sep 7:00 pm – Oliver Blackmore – The excavations at Caerwent 1899 – 1913*