



Membership Renewal

Membership was due for renewal in July and there may be some who intended to renew but have not yet done so. If that's you please complete the renewal form you were sent recently and send it to the membership secretary (Louise). For those who do not renew thank you for your support in the past - this will be your last Friends News.

Volunteering is Fun & Rewarding

by Friends of Llancaiach Fawr Vice Chair Wendy Davies



At Llancaiach Fawr, Volunteers are Very Important:

Some have been involved with *Ground Work's Healthy Villages Team*; pictured are Sam Baker, project officer Keith Fairhall, and assistant Leighton Page, project officer Helen Ball is not in the photo.

The photograph shows a representation of a 16th Century Stone Masons' Lodge, using larch wood from Caerphilly Community Wood Yard salvaged from landfill.

Diane Walker designed the replica lodge using a 16th century Belgian wood masons' lodge design. It is 5m square, by 3½m high at the apex and open sided.

Together with the Healthy Villages Team the volunteers have been stripping bark, and whittling away with a wood chisel making wooden pegs and joints. Once the wood on the roof has settled, any gaps from shrinkage will be filled in with clay and string; this is called "corking".

'The Lodge' will be used to demonstrate traditional building techniques such as arch construction, wattle and daub (pictured), roof construction, dry stone walling and a small forge.

Our volunteers learnt these simple crafts to demonstrate to visitors and school children. Some of the children believed they had to collect cow poo from nearby fields in order to "have a go" at 'wattle and daubing'. In the 16th Century they did use a mix of cow poo, clay and horse hair but we used a mix of clay and straw.

Volunteers who helped on this special project are Keith Badman, Ken Reynolds, Josh Reynolds, Matt Hutcherson, Mave Heath, Anji Doyle, Julie Smith, Ieuan Crump, Dai Jones, Martin Kelly, Liam Churcher, Indi Jagedisson, supported by Friends Vice Chair Wendy Davies (pictured); via step-by-step visitor talks and volunteer aided demonstrations; explaining the daily *Lodge* usage.



All volunteers are welcome. If you don't fancy rural crafts, volunteers are always welcome to join the sewing ladies, who meet once a week, making and mending servants' clothes. Or you can try your hand at gardening, events stewarding, helping at the children's activity days or you can introduce your own individual skills.

Contact our volunteer co-ordinator Jan Fitzgerald for more information at the Manor House 01443 412248.

Join our team of volunteers, and meet new Friends.

News from the Manor

by Diane Walker (General Manager)

The conservation work on the Manor is moving forward at a tremendous pace. The historical interpreters now do a nice line in complaining how noisy the journeymen builders are that the Colonel has got in to improve his house! After years of having to ignore the 'elephants in the room' that are the modern lights and radiators, it is a small price to pay for achieving an interior which matches the quality of our live interpretation.

The top floor is out of bounds due to roof works and the major refit of mechanical and electrical installations that need to cross the width of the building at attic level to minimise visible services elsewhere in the manor. All pipes and cables have been removed from the roof trusses and now run around the edges of the attics so they will be hidden by oak partitions that will create the bat refuges and hide the steelwork from the 1980's repairs.

A lot of the early work won't be readily visible, but it is important it is done properly, with great attention to detail. Unless you have the eyesight of an eagle, you won't see the oak repairs to rafter ends at the eaves, nor the stonework between them to give bat access but keep jackdaws out. I have to confess that standing on the top of the scaffolding looking at the southern face of the roof is a thing of beauty! The chimneys have been re-pointed, the lightning conductors replaced and we are just waiting for ridge tiles to be fitted. Then the scaffolding can start to come down. *(Diane wrote this a month ago and as you can see the roof is finished and much of the scaffolding is now gone).*

Underneath the slate are hand riven oak laths that have been lime plastered to finish off the ceilings and make the attics look habitable as servants' quarters. Animal hair is being mixed with the plaster so it binds between the laths and it will be lime washed when it dries out. Oak floorboards will be laid soon, at which point it will look like someone could have lived there. And an owl box has been installed in the hope that tawny owls will return to nest in the future.

At the back of the Manor the staircase tower is now at full height and the roof has been cut into where it connects to the north attic. The brickwork of the outer skin has been gently battered to match the profile of the stone walls of the Manor. This now has its first coat of lime render. It will be finished with a rough cast render (a small area of the original is hidden within the 17th century extension on the north west corner - small stones are thrown at the surface when still wet to produce a robust protective coat - hence 'rough cast'). The original 16th century render is, however, a pale pink colour so there is a lot of gentle teasing between the contractors, architects and me regarding the final limewash colour for the staircase extension because I'm not keen on pink and would rather match the creamy ochre colour on the west gable. Watch this space to see who wins the argument! The platform lift has been ordered and the staircase will be built from Welsh oak - at the moment it looks as though the lift will be fitted in late August so it won't be until the new stairs are in and the old fire escape is out that we can open up the top floor again, as we need an emergency exit in operation.

The new chimney stack above the Great Hall fireplace is coming along nicely. We have re-used stone from the wall behind the manor and other reclaimed stone to make sure it looks weathered and doesn't stick out like a sore thumb! The other chimneys we want to use with open fires are being parged (a method of rendering the inside surface). Some of this work will have to happen whilst we are open to the public but the contractors are game enough to wear costume to try and blend in with the staff. It'll be interesting to see what the Colonel has to say about that!

The new boiler and radiators are in (except the one for the colonel's chamber which will be fitted to the floor once the spiral stairs are removed) and the furniture to encase the radiators is being made. Nic Rhode, the craftsman who is making them is doing a wonderful job. Ken Reynolds has adapted the horn lanterns to allow electrical cable to be discreetly fitted so they can function as emergency lights as well. The wall lights are on their way from America as I write and will also be adapted. Different styles will be put into the high status areas and the servants' working and living areas to reflect the differences in their conditions.

Beds for the attics are being made by Rhys Harris. Some of the timber for the oak beds for the senior servants is being recycled from the old oak tables we had, which I stowed away after we could no longer use them in the conservatory as I thought 'they may come in handy later!' The Sewing Ladies will start making sheets, mattress covers and pillow cases for the servants' beds shortly. The linen has been ordered and we have been fortunate to have had some plain Welsh wool blankets donated. If anyone has any spare traditional cream wool blankets or plain grey ones (old army blankets are ideal) that they could donate to the project, please get in touch and then we can be ready to furnish the attics ready.

The next 'Behind The Scenes' tour of the building works with the MD of Taliesin Conservation Ltd will be on Saturday 2nd August at 10am. If you want to come along you will need to pre-book by ringing reception as places are limited. It costs £3 per person towards the friends fundraising for the attics.

I look forward to sharing progress on site with you over the summer.



17th Century Lives

by Meirwen Jones

Obadiah Smallpiece



The comedic element at Llancaiach Fawr is supplied by the larger than life character of Obadiah Smallpiece.

Having had a successful career as a barrister, Obadiah is now in his twilight years and has a reputation for being somewhat of an eccentric. When the Clerk of the Court is unavailable for The Sessions, Obadiah travels up from Cardiff on his donkey to assist Colonel Prichard.

Unfortunately he has been known to arrive several hours late as he has fallen asleep on his donkey and wandered off course – notably travelling via Abergavenny!

There have been occasions when he has even decided to start his lunch of cheese and port during The Sessions, much to the annoyance of the Colonel.

Obadiah comes from a long line of Clerks and as a result his career was always mapped out. He began his education in Brecon before going on to spend five years at university.

A likeable old soul, his presence at the Manor will always raise a smile.

Snowhill Manor Trip

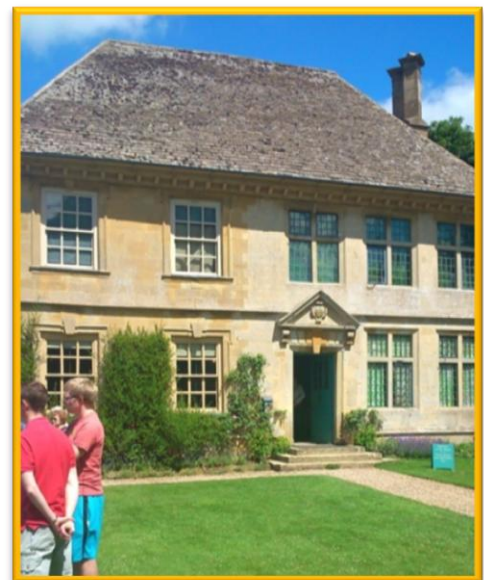
by Jan Fitzgerald

On a beautiful sunny Midsummer day we set off for Snowhill Manor.

Set in the middle of the Cotswolds, Snowhill looks like a traditional Cotswold manor house. But there was nothing ordinary about what we what found inside. Charles Wade, the last owner of Snowhill, had a passion for collecting. From the age of seven he collected and restored beautiful and interesting objects.

Mr Wade bought the Manor, which partly dates back to the middle ages, just after the First World War. After several years restoring it, he started filling it with the amazing objects he'd already collected, and continued collecting. And despite there being objects from all over the world they were all collected in this country (even the samurai warrior armour!).

The gardens too were lovely, set out in a series of 'rooms'. An extra treat was the demonstration on the lawn of Japanese martial arts, to the accompaniment of Japanese drums. An exciting sound!!



We ended our day with a visit to the lovely village of Broadway before wending our merry way home. Everyone agreed that it had been a most enjoyable and interesting day.

Clarks Village Trip - 22nd November

Our next trip will be on Saturday 22nd November and we will be visiting the famous Clarks Village shopping outlet just a mile from Glastonbury. Clarks Village is no ordinary designer shopping outlet, you'll find traditional paved walkways, beautiful landscaped gardens, a stylish restaurant terrace with indoor and outdoor dining, a choice of coffee shops and, of course, an unrivalled selection of discount designer and high street stores offering up to 60% off.

If anyone is interested in this trip please contact Jan on 01443 815469 or complete the attached booking form.

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



Forthcoming Friends Events

Wed 8 Oct – 7:00pm for cawl – 7:30pm AGM	Annual General Meeting – followed by – a behind the scenes tour conducted by Diane <i>Please contact our secretary Lynne (07745333123 or blynnelock@aol.com) if you are able to attend the meeting as we have to advise chef so he can prepare the Cawl and also confirm if you are interested in going on the "Behind the Scenes Tour"</i> <i>The roles which need to be filled this year are Vice Chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Social Secretary and Newsletter Editor</i>
Sat 22 Nov	Clarks Village Christmas Shopping Trip – see above for details - booking form attached




Manor House Events

Mon 25 Aug	Barking Mad Dog Show – Adults £1, Concessions 50p
Sun 24 Aug – Sat 6 Sep	Art Exhibition – Bargued and District Art Society – free entry
Sun 21 Sep	Traditional Trades and Creative Crafts – age old skills on display in and around the manor
Tue 28 – Fri 31 Oct	Halloween Activities
Sat 8 & Sun 9 Nov	Antiques Fair
Sat 15 Nov	Craft Day – Christmas crafts for grown ups – cake toppers class - £20 per person – quilting for Christmas class - £20 per person – Christmas wreathmaking class - £5 per person
Tue 18 Nov	Toy and Train Fair
Sat 29 Nov	Menter Iaith Christmas Fair
Tue 9 Dec	Carol Concert
Sat 14 & Sat 21 Dec	Tudor Treats – join the servants of the Manor preparing for Christmas as they make candles, soap balls and pomanders

GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk

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

-  **Wed 24 Sep 7:00 pm** – Oliver Blackmore – *The Antiquarian excavations at Caerwent 1899 – 1913*
-  **Wed 29 Oct 7:00 pm** – Alan Thorne - *German U Boats off the UK coast during WW1*
-  **Wed 26 Nov 7:00 pm** – Greg Buick – *The Prichard Family and the Llancaiach Estate*

A Great Way to Help our Fund Raising Efforts

As you are all aware we are busy trying to raise funds (£9,785 in fact) to furnish the Attic in the Manor House.

We would like to advise you of an online shopping scheme we have recently registered with – it's called easyfundraising.org.uk. There are no catches and it's completely free to use.

It's really simple – just shop online via www.easyfundraising.org.uk with over 2,700 well known retailers like Amazon, Argos, M&S, John Lewis, eBay (and many more!) and whenever you buy something online, the retailer makes a donation to our project.

It doesn't cost you a single penny extra.

So please help us by getting shopping online now!!

[Click here: Raise More Money for Causes & Charities | easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)