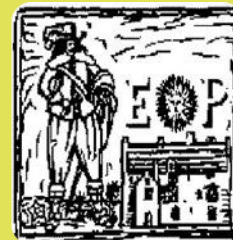


# Friends News

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Winter 2014



## Christmas at The Manor

Christmas with the Prichards would have been an exciting time at the Manor. Christmas Eve saw the preparation of the wreaths with which to decorate the house : the celebrations really starting with the Yule Log being brought into the house. Accompanied by music and mulled wine, it was a time for all the household to come together.



It is hoped that the log will burn for the twelve days of Christmas and bring good luck to the household.

From midnight onwards on Christmas Eve, each household would have taken part in a plygain which was essentially a choir competition. The winners would be the last ones standing – however long it took!

Christmas Day is the one day of the year when the whole household would have sat together and had dinner. The meal would have consisted of a number of different roasted meats, vegetable dishes and quite possibly a pie.

A fruit cake would have been made and within that cake there would have been a bean. Whoever found the bean played the role of the Lord of Misrule – so it could have been anyone! The 'rules' meant that for the rest of the meal there would have been a new Head of the household – even to the extent that they would have swapped places at the table with Colonel Prichard.

The twelve days of Christmas would have been a busy time for the Prichards with family visiting during the festive period. It would have all culminated in a big celebration on twelfth night as the ashes of the Yule log that would have hopefully burned for the whole period would have been buried.

Don't forget that you can join the servants on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December at the Manor as they prepare candles, soaps, balls and pomanders in readiness for Christmas.

## Christmas Shopping in Street

Following on from our sell out Christmas trip to Bath in 2013, this year we headed to Street in Somerset and in particular to the Clarke's Shopping Village.

As you can see, we shopped until we dropped- both committee and friends alike!!

Even though our President Rose Williams didn't win a raffle prize on the bus she said she thoroughly enjoyed her first visit to Street. Well done to the lucky raffle winners: don't eat and drink your prizes all in one go!

So we all came back tired and happy, presents bought for others and treats for ourselves ( well that's my memories anyway ).



Thank you Jan for arranging that the day ran smoothly and to the Friends ( and their friends) for supporting the trip.

Watch out for details of the next trip in June 2015 to Lacock Abbey. If you are interested contact Jan on 01443 815469 to book a place.

Don't forget to tell your friends about visiting the Manor and to consider joining the Friends Association for the bargain price of £7.50 – individual or £6 concession.

**Louise Kenyon Membership Secretary**

## Musings from the Manor

I write this at the end of a day spent with the architect, Cadw inspector, electrical and mechanical consultants, building surveyor and the contractor, working our way through the manor checking where we are at with all the different aspects of the building project.... It's been a long day!

The roof itself is looking good with just a few slates to replace that cracked when they were being nailed on and some of the lead work to finesse at the edges. The new chimney stack above the Great Hall fireplace is looking fantastic and as though it has always been there. The stone mason has carefully matched the way the stone has been laid in the walls of the manor and used stone that has been weathered to make sure it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb.

The inside of all the attics have Welsh oak floorboards laid now and it's just the eaves panelling that needs to be fitted before they start to look like the servants quarters as I envisaged them at the start of the process some 9 years ago now (patience is definitely a virtue). We haven't lime washed the walls as we are keeping them as they were but the ceilings have a fairly white top coat of lime plaster which brightens them up without going over the top and making them look of a higher status than they are.



The staircase tower has been roofed and rendered and it's just the kneeler stones where the walls join the gables that are to go in. The oak window frames are in and some of them have been glazed already. The landings are in place and we are just waiting for the new oak staircase to go in so that the interior can have its final coat of lime render before the lift is installed. The external lime washing will be done just as the scaffold is due to come down as one of the last jobs, so that it doesn't get scuffed.



The new heating is installed and all working and where we have taken the rooms back over on the top floor, those radiators have their new bespoke furniture in place – the most expensive radiator covers in the country... but worth every penny and looking fantastic as the usable chests and coffers add so much to the interpretation of each room.

The lime washing is being done on Mondays- the staircase and Cross Passage are completed and the Great Hall is being lime washed wall by wall so that it is accessible the following day. It is being prepared ready for a wedding in there on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December. The walls are ochre and the fireplace will be a dark reddish colour, picking up the darker colour in the wall hanging and warming the room up nicely. The fireplace is already in use and makes the Great Hall look and feel extremely welcoming at last.

The new doors will be fitted soon and in particular the one between the Cross Passage and Kitchen, along with the shutters on the hatch in the wall, will make the downstairs much warmer during the winter we hope.

The Parlour is back in use after the ceiling was re-plastered and the leaking smoke has been sorted out. When the chimney specialists were plastering (parging) the inside of the flues they found a hole that had been letting smoke into the void between the Parlour floor and Servants Hall ceiling which had blackened the floorboards but the smoke had been contained beneath the floor covering. Panic over!

All the lanterns are now installed whether they are hanging lanterns or wall mounted ones. Ken Reynolds has done a fantastic job of converting the lanterns to be able to take electrical cable as discreetly as possible and the electricians will go round at the very end to make sure that all the cable that is visible is wrapped in wire on the hooks and pinned back as tidily as humanly possible into mortar joints or otherwise camouflaged. The horn is in place and the colour and quality of the light is just so different from the bright white modern light we had before that I don't know how we managed for all those years. The Parlour and Great Hall have a copper chandelier in each of them, which we are keeping for use with candles, but they finish each room off perfectly.



The work on the ramped walkway to the door of the new staircase tower will be the last thing to be done as the scaffolding will need to be out of the way to do it. If we are lucky weather-wise, then we should be finished for Christmas, in time for me to have a break in a darkened room with industrial quantities of sherry and mince pies to celebrate.

Before I slip into that haze may I wish you and yours a peaceful Christmas and I look forward to showing you the finished Manor in the New Year.



**Diane Walker**



### Fund Raising Up Date

The summer is always a busy time of the year as the accounts are prepared for auditing and ultimately presenting at the AGM. Many thanks to Pat and Pauline for their continued support as our auditors.

This summer has been a particularly pleasant one for me as the Treasurer of the Friends. Since our last newsletter we have been very fortunate to have received donations over £300 from Honourary members, Patrons and Friends which will assist us in buying items for the attic.



We have also become the chosen charity for 2014/2015 by the Ystrad Mynach Quilters who have very kindly donated £1200 which they have requested we use to purchase beds. These are being made by a local carpenter, Rhys Harris and we are now the proud owners of 2 beds so just 14 to go!!

Finally, we have also been successful in obtaining a grant from The Ashley Family Foundation, through the Community Foundation In Wales for £2080.

This is brilliant news as this will allow us to purchase the wollen blankets and also the linen which our team of sewing ladies are busy making into sheets, mattress covers, shirts and shifts.

As you can see we are making headway into furnishing the attic space, but this would not have been possible without the financial support of our Friends, The Ystrad Mynach Quilters and The Community Foundation in Wales to which we are very grateful.



We are just under £2000 short of reaching our target of £10,000 which is required to completely furnish the attic so if you feel you would like to make a contribution, please send this for the attention of

**Gareth Jones, Treasurer c/o Llancaiach Fawr Manor** and please indicate in the letter if you are a tax payer and that you are happy for us to claim Gift Aid.

Thanks to everyone for your support and we look forward to seeing you at the "Newly Furnished" attic very soon.

**Gareth Jones Treasurer**

## Volunteers Needed

At Llancaiach Fawr, we have always been extremely lucky to have many volunteers that help in all areas of the site. Quite frankly we couldn't manage without all the additional support that is given freely.

Currently we have volunteer gardeners, people that volunteer in the manor house (and if you are wondering, yes in costume), a fabulous bunch of ladies that make and repair the costumes for the Historical Interpreters and a stout-hearted base of volunteers who brave the large numbers of children that attend our children's activity days throughout the year .

We are constantly looking to boost volunteer numbers and at the moment, I am focusing on costumed interpretation. For those with an interest in history or acting or education, it can be a very rewarding role. I frequently accommodate schoolchildren for work experience on the site and one of the areas they are most apprehensive of is the Manor house itself.

However, I must say after they get over their initial fears, they really enjoy it and it is a joy to watch the personal growth that goes along with the experience. In fact, many of the relief staff started here on work experience, enjoyed it so much that they carried on volunteering and once they had become proficient, were taken on as staff members.

Obviously it takes a while to learn to speak in Old English and indeed to increase knowledge of the period to the required level but everyone works at this at a different pace. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer in the Manor, contact me on **01443 414014** and we will meet for a chat.

**Louise Griffith**

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## Jenkin Jones



Merthyr born Jenkin is the Colonel's chief groom. Himself the son of a groom, he has spent a considerable time at war fighting alongside his father as a mercenary in Europe.

A staunch Baptist, he joined up with the Swedish army to fight against the Catholics in the war in Europe. He spent over 18 years fighting across Europe returning only occasionally to leave money with his wife Verity and their three children.

A good cavalry soldier, Jenkin's original plan is to return home with a stallion and three mares and subsequently breed his own line of horses. However, the outbreak of the Civil War puts a halt to his plans.

He meets Colonel Prichard at a Meeting House and with the Colonel's Baptist sympathies he soon recruits Jenkin to bring his expertise to the Manor.

Jenkin is responsible for supervising the grooms and stable boys as well as ensuring the land animals are well cared for. It is also within his duties to ensure the Colonel's coach is in good working order and that he is available to drive the Colonel when required.

A self- educated man, Jenkin's political and religious views have changed following his experiences overseas.

Not averse to sharing his ideals, he is a man that many have become fearful of.

## AGM Update

The AGM was held in October followed by a very interesting update tour of the Manor. A few new faces have joined the committee with some good old favourites staying on board.

Membership to the Friends has been steady and when our Membership Secretary Louise had a look back over previous years she discovered that Keith Price , Edward and Margaret Evans and Hugh and Jenny Turnbull have been Friends since 1990: Angela and Brian Murrell since 1991 and Ella Shorey since 1992.

Many thanks to you all for your continued commitment.



## Ystrad Mynach Quilters

Established 18 years ago the Quilters meet every Tuesday 1pm -3pm at Siloh Chapel in Ystrad Mynach. During their time they have raised over £15,000 for various local and international charities and this year they have chosen to support the Friends of Llancaiach Fawr.

They had originally hoped to make quilts for the beds in the attic, however following intensive research, it was discovered that the period was too early for quilts. Undeterred, they chose instead to donate monies raised through some of their other projects and enable the construction of the beds to begin.

The Quilters have held exhibitions at Llancaiach of their work in previous years and are presently undertaking patchwork and quilting classes.

The Friends are extremely grateful to the support of the Quilters and in particular Janet, Jenny and Christine and hope that it is a relationship that will go from strength to strength.

**Many thanks ladies.**

## Urdd comes to Llancaiach

One of Europe's largest youth touring festivals will be in Caerphilly between 25-30<sup>th</sup> May 2015, but more specifically at Llancaiach.

To support the event, the Urdd are looking for people to act as stewards, assisting with a number of different activities.

If you feel you would like to be a part of this exciting event please contact the numbers/e-mail below to discuss your availability.

**Stiwardio : 01678 541 012**  
**Ruth@urdd.org**

**Happy Christmas**