

Freemen of Llantrisant

IN 1346, my friends,
When Edward III, he reigned,
A charter for Llantrisant folk,
Le Dispenser, he proclaimed.
Yes, Hugh, Lord of Glamorgan
Enrolled Freemen for trade:
"You can sell your wares for free," he said,
"From Fanheulog to Brynteg."
Now England was at war with France,
A battle raged at Crecy.
Long bowmen from the town took part,
The result for the French was messy.
And when these veterans returned,
Upon each one bestowed
That Freemanship by way of thanks
For being brave and bold.
And so to 1889,
Llantrisant Trust was founded,
To manage all the Freeman's lands,
The old order had been grounded.
And how that trust has done its work
The Common now is freehold.
It owns Trefyrhyg railway line,
The town hall, Castle Green Ho.
The trustees love their monthly meet,
The Guildhall is the venue
And Howard Thomas as the clerk,
Decides what's on the menu.
The highlight of his tenure came,
This Freeman of Llanharan.
For his Beating of Bounds it seems,
He deserves the title "Baron".
A whole year spent in setting up
Such things as mobile toilets,
And pianos, vicars, marquee tents,
Police, choirs and nice buffets.
The biggest headache was the band;
Without it, clerk in tears.
The Royal Air Force saved the day
With the St Athan Volunteers.
A service at Llantrisant Church,
Procession starts in Swan Street,
Through Bull Ring, High St to Cross Inn,
The bumping stone the young greet.
Brynteg, The Common, Talyfedw Farm,
The business park, Mint Royal,
Fanheulog, then it's back to base
For these Freemen true and loyal.
And Noel Israel noted it:
Traditions well maintained,
Bounds beaten and the bumping stone,
The future now ordained.
When grandsons, sons at 21,
Court Leet honour bestowed,
Remember those far back in time,
Llantrisant men, long bowed.

Mel Thomas
Guest Speaker

GENERAL MEETING 2004

A General Meeting of Freemen of Llantrisant will be held at Llantrisant Guildhall at 7:30pm on Friday 15th October 2004, to discuss and debate the works of the Trust over the past year and to accept suggestions to improve its effectiveness.

A vacancy for a Freeman Trustee has arisen and, consequently, an election must take place. Any Freeman may stand for election, but he will be required to attend personally and be nominated and seconded by Freemen present at the meeting.

LLANTRISANT CASTLE FEASIBILITY STUDY

During the year plenty of debate was held to discuss the future of Llantrisant Castle and whether the 13th century ruin could be developed into a major tourist attraction. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council commissioned Richard Dean of Dean & Cheason Associates to carry out a full feasibility study of the site and offer a number of ideas of how to develop the castle into depending on suitable funding being sought.

A public exhibition was held in the old town and visitors viewed a number of options, including encasing the ruin in a glass tower, complete with elevator shaft to allow visitors the opportunity to enjoy the full 360degree view from the top as the Norman lords would have done. There was also discussion over building an amphitheatre within the castle site. Above all, the Town Forum felt that the most important issue was to ensure the ruin does not fall victim to further deterioration. It was felt that work needed to be undertaken on the castle without delay to strengthen the brickwork. It was also decided that an archaeological dig could unearth interesting artefacts within the site and allow local schoolchildren the opportunity to become involved in educational projects there. The Town Forum will shortly meet to discuss further options. If you have any views on the plans, write to the Chief Executive, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale.

COURT LEET DINNER

LLANTRISANT'S Court Leet Dinner continues to boast some of the country's finest after-dinner speakers. Last year Trustees and Freemen were delighted to welcome British Cinema star Glyn Houston as their speaker. The Tonypanydy-born actor relished the opportunity of coming "home" once more and sharing the many anecdotes of his life on the silver screen.

This year we were all delighted to welcome former headmaster Mel Thomas to the dinner. Those fortunate enough to attend are certain to remember Mel and his wonderful witticisms for years to come. A true professional, the Penclawdd-born raconteur who now resides in Halesowen in the West Midlands related tales of schoolchildren to Welsh rugby internationals. He even came armed with a camel-hair coat and a stereo system playing the Welsh National Anthem for full effect and rugby-stadium atmosphere!

The next dinner will be held on Friday, May 20 2005 and the Trust are delighted to announce! that the speaker will be BBC Radio Wales presenter Roy Noble. For a number of years Roy had hoped to attend the dinner, but work commitments inevitably got in the way. Due to popular demand, Mel Thomas will also attend the dinner as responding speaker. We are confident that both well-known personalities will relish the opportunity of entertaining us in May. Tickets will be available at a cost of £17 from the Clerk to the Town Trust, Howard Thomas in due course.

LLANTRISANT TOWN TRUST

[Registered as a Charity]



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FREEMAN'S NEWSLETTER

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Valedictions

The Trust has learned with deep regret the passing of the under mentioned Freemen :-
Thomas Wyndam DAVIES, Penarth, Roll No. 2185.
Gwyn WESTCOTT, Talbot Green Roll No. 1883
Idris Ockwell HAWKINS, Tonyrefaif, Roll No. 2360.
Edwin John CALE, Talbot Green, Roll No. 1863
Melwyn THOMAS, Llantrisant, Roll No. 2335

Polo Shirts and Sweatshirts

Following various requests to provide garments with the Town Trust coat of arms the Trust is able to offer the following quality garments:-
Sweatshirts, V-neck black in colour to signify the black army, complete with the Town Trust coat-of-arms. Various sizes available cost £20 per garment.
Polo Shirts, green in colour to represent the green of the Common, again with the Town Trust coat-of-arms. Various sizes available, cost £16.50 per garment.
Should you wish to order please make cheques payable to Llantrisant Town Trust and include a fee of £2.50 postage and packing per garment, please ensure you give actual chest size when placing the order.
Please contact the Clerk should you require further information.

Graig Common

The Trustees have been working closely with both the Countryside Council of Wales and the Local Authority Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, to reintroduce limited grazing onto the Graig.

Progress to date, includes the "laying" of the hedgerow alongside the A4119 that had gone completely wild and a wire fence installed. Public rights-of-way access points have either been repaired or replaced.

Future programme of works installation of additional fencing and a cattle grid it is hoped that the works will be completed by early spring.

Freemen Ties

A new stock of freemen's ties has been purchased with the mace inverted to signify the loss of "borough status".

The new ties are of a finer weave resulting in a better quality tie that holds its shape better.

Ties are available from the Clerk at a cost of £10.00p including postage.

The Passing over of a former Clerk to the Trust

Following a long illness I must report the death of Trevor I Rees MBE, K.St.J. although not a Freeman himself he was Clerk for eight years and steered the Trust through its centenary year.