

# Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society

## Newsletter

Autumn 2020



Dear Members,

We hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well.

As we know, all Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society activities have ceased temporarily. Following our well-attended Day School in February and our joint meeting with the Laugharne History Society in March, no talks or field visits have been held.

In order to provide as full a service as possible to our Members during lockdown, Volume 56 of *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary* will appear before the end of this calendar year and we thank all contributors and Editor Heather James for another journal of absorbing items relating to Carmarthenshire's history, archaeology and folklore. *Antiquary* 56 will feature tributes to our past President, the late Reverend J. Towyn Jones, and it is good to know that preparation of *Antiquary* 57 for publication in 2021 is under way.

It is with pride that we announce that our new President is Thomas Lloyd, OBE, DL, FSA, Wales Herald Extraordinary. Tom has been a valued member of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarians for many years and his work with historic buildings and wider heritage issues is well-known. Author of *The Lost Houses of Wales*, he also researched and co-authored both south west Wales volumes of the Pevsner series. Tom has been Chair of the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, the Buildings at Risk Trust and The Cathedrals and Churches Commission, and a Director of the Wales Tourist Board. In 2011 he was appointed Wales Herald of Arms Extraordinary.

*President Thomas Lloyd being dressed for the State Opening of Parliament.*



The Society's Council has been meeting regularly by Zoom in order to monitor the situation and resume activities whenever it is safe to do so. Many meetings which were due to have been held in 2020 will now form part of our 2021 provision, and a list of intended events can be seen in this *Newsletter*; note that our next AGM is scheduled for April.

Our Finance and Membership Committee is currently refreshing our list of Members' email addresses in order to keep fully in touch regarding forthcoming arrangements and events. Please see the relevant item in this *Newsletter*, and rest assured that data security is of prime importance to the Society.

*General Sir Thomas Picton - a portrait by Sir Martin Shee, presented to Carmarthenshire by Rev. Edward Picton in honour of his brother.*



In keeping with the Black Lives Matter movement and the debate regarding memorials, our website carries a full appraisal by Dylan Rees of the life and actions of General Sir Thomas Picton and an article on 'The Waterloo Frieze' by Edna Dale-Jones. Also on the website is 'The Airy Tomb', a film produced by the late Richard Dynevor and introduced by Roy Davies in this *Newsletter*. Please see the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society's website ([carmants.org.uk](http://carmants.org.uk)) and our social media accounts for more current information.

Our thanks for your continued support to the Society, and with best wishes,

*Jeremy John (Chair)  
Eurig Davies (Vice Chair)*

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### **Richard Rhys: 'The Airy Tomb'**

The late Richard Rhys, 9<sup>th</sup> Lord Dynevor, was an active member of our Society serving as a Council member and Vice-president. Of even greater significance, however, was his contribution to the cultural life of Wales. In the 1950s he established the Merlin Theatre Group, a repertory company that travelled Wales. It put on plays by Saunders Lewis and Gwyn Thomas as well as giving a young Anthony Hopkins his first theatrical break. In the 1960s, on inheriting the title and estate he sought to turn Newton House into a first class Arts centre at which luminaries such as Sir Geraint Evans, John Ogden and Johnny Dankworth performed while an exhibition of work by Ernest Zobole was displayed in the house.

While this did not achieve the long-term success it deserved and the house and estate were eventually sold, Richard turned his attention to publishing. His Black Raven Press put out such significant works as *The Taliesin Tradition* by Emyr Humphreys, Gwyn Alf Williams' *When was Wales?* and *The Son of Prophecy: Henry Tudor's Road to Bosworth* by Society member and benefactor the late David Rees.

In addition to the above, Richard had a deep interest in cinema which led to his producing a short film directed by his lifelong friend Emyr Humphreys. The subject was the R.S. Thomas poem 'The Airy Tomb' and was shot in the Cambrian mountains and on the Dynevor estate. Filmed in black & white and now nearly 60 years old it is a remarkable work which still remains powerful and moving today. We are grateful to his daughter, the artist Sarah Rhys who drew my attention to the release of the film on the website of the British Film Institute and is available for viewing free. It is a tangible reminder of the life of a man whom the late Welsh historian Dr John Davies described as 'the most interesting of all the Lords Dynevor'.

Web link to the film:

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-the-airy-tomb-1963-online>

*Roy Davies*

## CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

### MEMBERSHIP:

Dear Member,

In order to communicate efficiently and effectively with Members of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, **we ask you please to inform us of your email address.**

In strict compliance with the CAS Data Protection Policy (available on our website [carmants.org.uk](http://carmants.org.uk)) we undertake to use your personal information only to communicate with you on matters relating to the Society: subscriptions, events, meetings, publications and related topics. No personal details will be shared with any third party.

**Please respond by sending us an email on this dedicated email address:** [Carmantiquarians@gmail.com](mailto:Carmantiquarians@gmail.com)

With thanks,

The Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society

## THE PICTON MONUMENT: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In a century of much public expression of British patriotism, Sir Thomas Picton was thought worthy of memorializing in Carmarthen because he was born in West Wales and was considered to have fought with particular bravery for Britain in the final defeat of France at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 in which Sir Thomas was killed.

This battle brought to an end twenty years of war between France and Britain, which in alliance with other major European countries had been fighting France in order to prevent its total domination of Europe under the leadership of Napoleon. The first Carmarthen monument, which was erected in 1825 re-using an earlier design of John Nash, having proved difficult to maintain was replaced by the current obelisk in 1847.

At that time France was still thought to be the greatest potential threat to Britain. Hence the erection of the very costly forts around Milford Haven in the 1850s which were designed to protect the naval dockyard at Pembroke Dock from attack by France.

*Robert Evans*

***Please visit our website ([carmants.co.uk](http://carmants.co.uk)) for full articles on the life of Sir Thomas Picton, 'The Waterloo Frieze' and all other up-to-date information regarding Society activities.***

## Proposed 2021 Programme - Draft

This is an outline, in its early stages of development, of the programme we are planning for next year. It is likely that changes will be made as we explore the feasibility of each and learn of Covid-19 instructions. Events, therefore, may be 'live' or on Zoom. The 'final' programme will be distributed in December with the *Antiquary*.

| <b>Month</b>               | <b>Event</b>                                                                                             | <b>Organiser</b>         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>March 2<br/>7.30 pm</b> | <b>Laugharne History Society<br/>joint meeting:<br/>Heather James -<br/>'Carmarthenshire Shipwrecks'</b> | <b>Peter Stopp</b>       |
| <b>April</b>               | <b>AGM<br/>President Tom Lloyd -</b>                                                                     | <b>Menna Owen-Strong</b> |
| <b>May</b>                 | <b>Llanelli Walk</b>                                                                                     |                          |
| <b>June</b>                | <b>Aberreiddi</b>                                                                                        | <b>Jeremy John</b>       |
| <b>July</b>                | <b>Dynevor Park</b>                                                                                      |                          |
| <b>August</b>              | <b>Garn Goch</b>                                                                                         | <b>Heather James</b>     |
| <b>September</b>           | <b>Visit</b>                                                                                             | <b>Jeremy/Mary</b>       |
| <b>October</b>             | <b>Wyn James -<br/>'Carmarthenshire Hymn-writers'</b>                                                    | <b>Heather James</b>     |
| <b>November</b>            | <b>Day School : Portraits</b><br>(Mary and Menna willing to book venue/take bookings etc.)               | <b>Tom Lloyd</b>         |
| <b>December</b>            | <b>President's Lunch</b>                                                                                 | <b>Tom Lloyd</b>         |