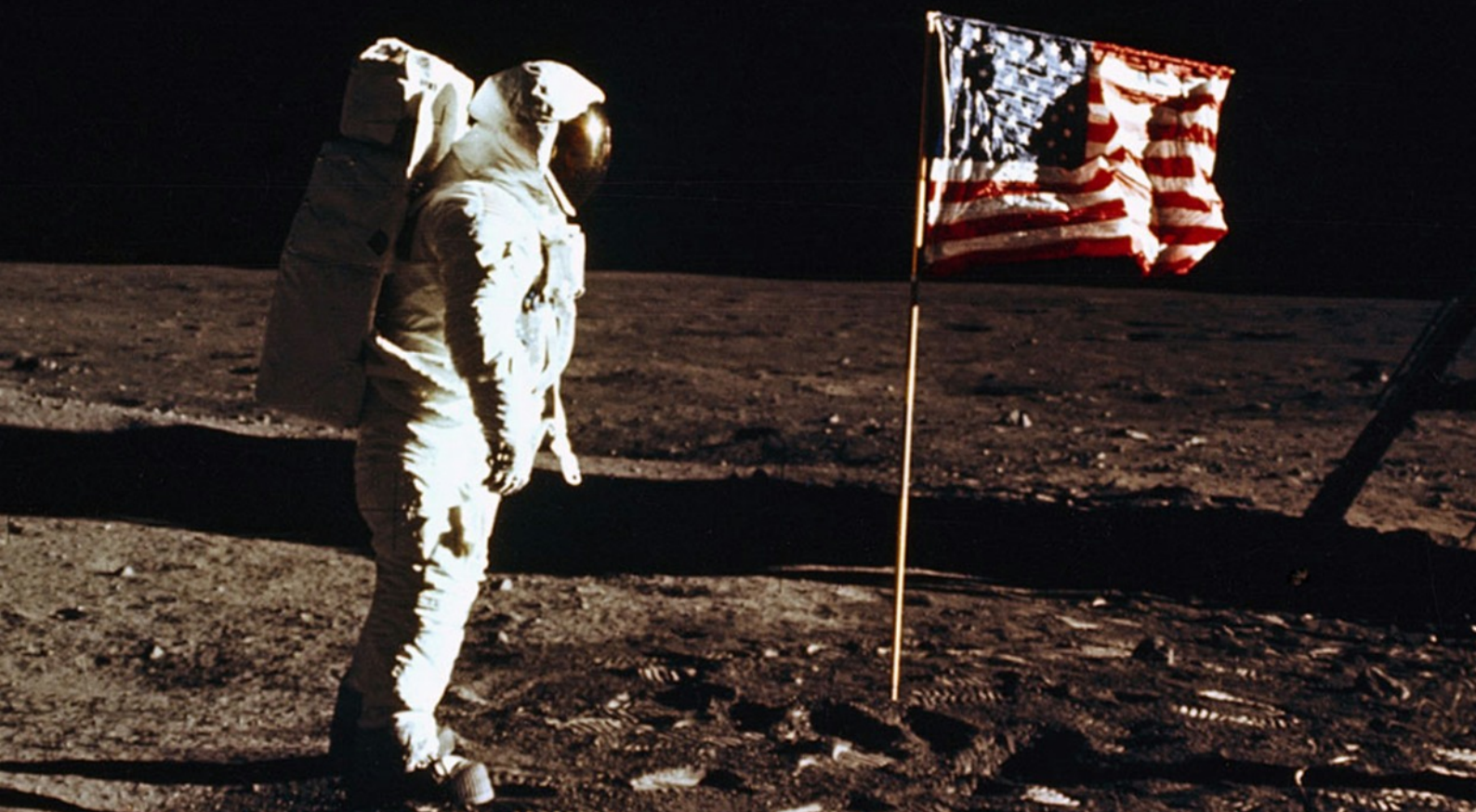


CHRONICLE

Issue 8 Spring 2015



THE SIXTIES

Historical Association, Swansea Branch

Promoting History in South West Wales

If you remember the 60s ...you weren't there

and if you were, it was not all swinging. This copy of *Practical Householder*, published in 1967, used 'gay' in the title, when gay meant carefree and merry. In the 60s though, life was never carefree or gay for homosexuals.

The 1957 Wolfenden Report recommended that adult homosexuality be legalised and condemned the criminalisation of homosexual acts as an impingement of civil liberty.

But it was only in 1967 that the Wolfenden Report became law and homosexuality became legalised. For over four hundred years, since the Buggery Act of 1533, it was made a capital offence in England. In 1828 the law was replaced by the Offences Against the People Act and punishment was the death penalty until 1861. This was not often exacted, sentence would usually be imprisonment for between ten years and life. Oscar Wilde, at the height of his fame, whilst his play *The Importance of being Earnest* was

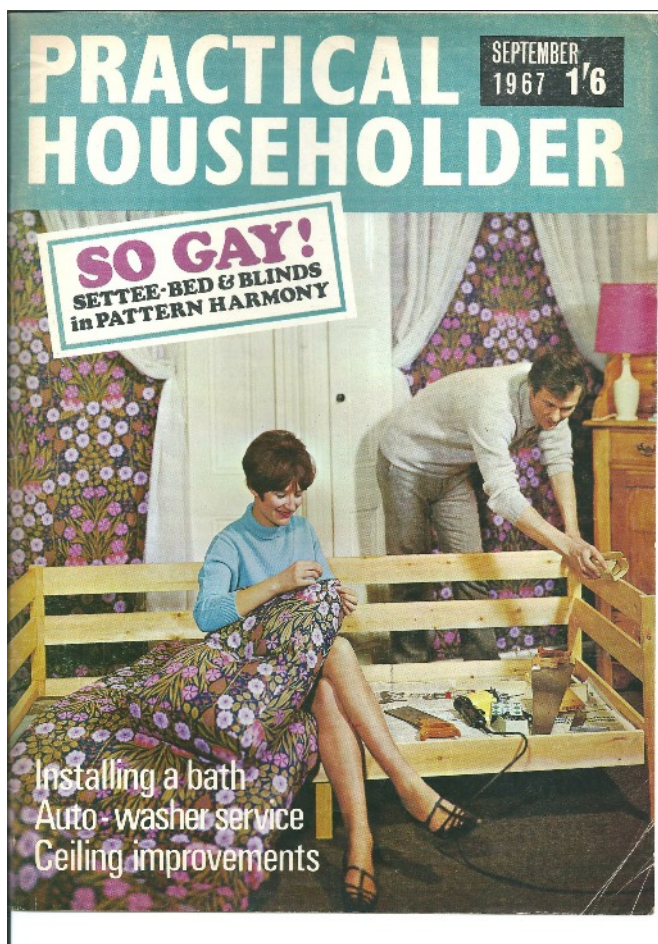
a big hit on the stage in London, he was sentenced in 1895 to hard labour in Reading Gaol, for two years. He became prisoner C.3.3. A government study in 1954 showed that in England and Wales 1069 men were in jail for homosexual acts.

Wolfenden who led the committee was vice-chancellor of Reading University.

When the Wolfenden Committee met back in the mid fifties, the name of the biscuit firm, Huntley and Palmers, was used at committee meetings, so as not to embarrass ladies who might be present: Huntley for homosexuals and Palmers for prostitutes. Lesbians were never prosecuted or even mentioned. It was suggested that by criminalising lesbianism, 'it would alert innocent women to the fact that the possibility existed'. Possibly only a myth, but it is suggested that Queen Victoria tried to alter the bill that parliament tried to introduce in the 19th C, to ban all kinds of homosexuality. The Queen wouldn't believe that women did such things, as a result the bill had to be altered so that it applied only to men.

A change in law came too late for Alan Turing, the cryptographer, and pioneering computer

scientist who was charged with 'gross indecency'. He committed suicide in June 1954. Eventually, in the late 1960s, homosexual men had the chance to become more carefree and gay. In most cases 'the love that dare not speak its name' could be mentioned freely.



From the Editor

Margaret McCloy



1967

If things go wrong while your husband is out at work...

that was the headline for an article I wrote for *Homemaker* magazine in the 1960s. Those were the days when women were expected to be at home in their aprons, not only that, they were presumed to be incapable of coping with a gas leak ('don't look for it with a lighted candle') or unblocking a sink. At the same time, they were expected to be able to do dressmaking.



Fitting a sleeve into a dress is considerably harder than putting a few screws into the wall to hold up a shelf. Another article I wrote for *Homemaker* was headlined, '*Super Settee that even a woman can make.*' At the same time, the USSR launched a 26 year old woman into space. I do hope that Valentina Tereshkova knew how to mend a fuse if one blew.

When the magazine wanted photos of hands holding tools showing the construction of another piece of

furniture, that I had made '*we can't possibly show a woman's hand making this*', I had to persuade the young man at the greengrocers to model for the photographs. He didn't know how to hold an electric drill but, he did have muscles and big hairy hands.

So much changed for women in this decade, abortion was legalised, the birth control pill was made available to all, and thanks to women factory workers in Dagenham, they began to get equal pay with men.

Probably one of the most exceptional happenings in the 60s was the landing of Neil Armstrong on the moon. The USA managed to do this in 1969.

Or did they? President Kennedy did not live to see this great achievement for he was assassinated in 1963. That same year Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights leader, made his great speech 'I have a Dream'. He was assassinated in 1968. Nelson Mandela was given life imprisonment.

One of the decade's most tragic events was the catastrophic disaster that happened here in Wales in 1966. At Aberfan, a colliery spoil tip collapsed and wiped out a generation of young children.

Events in the 60's weren't all swinging or disastrous, there were some good initiatives; the first heart transplant operation was performed, the microwave oven became available and TV banned cigarette advertisements. The Magic Roundabout appeared on our screens, the Rolling Stones group was formed, The Beatles were rejected by Decca records in 1962 but did manage to sell some records with another company. England's football team won the World Cup in 1966 and Wales beat England in the Five nations to win the Triple Crown in 1969.

Issue 8 Spring 2015

The 1960s



I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character

Martin Luther King

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Education is the most

Powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Nelson Mandela



An (ex) Chairman Reflects

Dr John Law

There were various reasons for reviving the Swansea branch of the Historical Association. Members of the Branch had had a distinguished role in the National Association in the past. Swansea University has a large and active History Department. Additionally the 'appetite' for History in the area was self-evident from the work of the local archive services, the large number of very active local history societies, and the annual book fair organised by the Royal Institution of South Wales and held in the City Museum. Of course, there was also the general, and growing interest in all periods - including Archaeology and Art History - as demonstrated by television and radio programmes.

However, there was a question: did people want the Swansea Branch of the Historical Association to be revived? A number of open meetings were held to gauge views, all which were positive. What was also in favour of the re-launch of the Branch was the encouragement and hospitality offered by the National Waterfront Museum, an on-going asset of great value. Previously used as a base, Swansea University had become too expensive and rather inhospitable. Also a few people - who should have known and shown better - regarded the Association as something of a joke. However, the attitude of the Waterfront Museum was entirely positive and welcoming from the outset, and the opportunity to use such an accessible, supportive and interesting venue has been a major key in the success of the Branch in terms of events and membership numbers.

The Museum's help is one of the things I look back on with great pleasure. I think it has also been useful to collaborate with other like-minded institutions, for example the Neath Antiquarian Society, the Friends of the Glynn Vivian and of the Swansea Festival and the Carmarthen Museum. The readiness of the Branch to 'promote' History in South West Wales has also been very important, and an ongoing 'outreach' programme to schools and other communities, and the launching of an essay prize aimed at A-level students are taking these initiatives forward.

The Branch has also supported other projects which has led to funding for the study of the White Rock complex, Swansea Castle - greatly enhancing the understanding of the monument, and the First World War. Other projects in the pipeline include: the Franklins' 'Bluestocking correspondence'; the Heart of Wales Line: the Italian communities in South Wales and the history of Sketty Hall. On this note, Sketty Hall has proved to be another effective venue for successful H.A. social events, and our thanks must go to the staff there who are always very helpful and accommodating.

There are many reasons to be feel pleased with the way things are going. The national Association thinks highly of the Branch and since the re-launch the Association's presidents have been frequent visitors - if at the time of writing 'H.Q' seems more anxious to get its hands on our Branch's well-earned and managed funds than to locate its

AGM in Swansea! At lectures, numbers never drop below thirty and have often exceeded a hundred. Local memberships runs at about one hundred. An on-going, regular, popular programme of lectures and other events is in place and constantly being worked on. The *Chronicle*, our H.A. local journal is, thanks to its editor, a great success in flagging the Branch's wide interests and its valuable contacts beyond the Swansea area. We have appointed two well deserving honorary fellows, both of whom have made a distinct and valuable contribution to local and wider history, F.C. Cowley and John Alban. We also have what may be unique to Swansea, a 'citizen historian' in Sid Kidwell, named as such by Anne Curry the President of the national H.A when she came to give a talk shortly after our re-launch. We also have two important publications, *Travels in the Valleys* by Robert McCloy (2012) and *The White Rock Ferry*, by Tudor and Janet Price (2013).

However, laurels should never be rested on. It is important to engage the membership and get new blood and different views on the committee. Collaborations should be encouraged with other like-minded societies/institutions. Though some people's blood pressure can appear to soar at the mention of 'students', the growing student community should be encouraged to get involved; after all the revival of the Branch owed a great deal to past students at Swansea University. Perhaps the Certificate in Local History, worked on so hard by some members of the Branch, should now be offered to the University of Wales, Trinity St David if Swansea University continues to persist in turning it down for no perceptible academic reason. It would also be timely to engage with the 'immigrant' communities in Swansea and South West Wales, historically a cosmopolitan society that has benefited greatly from cultural diversity. Our interesting and informative web page will soon hopefully include an interactive notice board so members can comment and contribute to the site. In collaborations with the Neath Antiquarians, perhaps we could persuade Cadw make good its identification of Neath Abbey as a 'priority site'?

Finally, if Wales cannot attract the attention of the head office as a serious venue for their annual conference we should perhaps consider a regional conference to cover Wales and the West. The success of the Branch has been a collaborative effort. I do not want to end with a long, deserving, list of names, but I would like to thank those who helped get the Branch off the ground, but have stood down for various personal or health reasons: Dave Stokes, David Richards, Richard Bodenham, Rosemary Crahart, David Coley, Robert McCloy and Ralph Griffiths. If I have omitted anyone from this list, please forgive this accidental omission - the result of a bad memory. I would like to thank all my colleagues on the committee for their help and support when I was in office, while wishing the new team and the membership well.

‘O Canada’ / ‘La Marseillaise’, 1967

Expo 67, the International and Universal Exposition, was held at Montreal in the summer of 1967 to coincide with Canada’s centennial celebrations. It was the most successful of the World’s Fairs held during the twentieth century and a significant moment in the history of cooperation between the English- and French- speaking peoples that make up the Canadian Federation

It was originally planned that Moscow should host the Exposition to mark the 50th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, but at a late stage the Soviets withdrew the invitation. Montreal, whose French-Canadian mayor took up the baton, was not only Canada’s second city (after Toronto) but also the largest city in the mainly French-speaking province of Quebec and therefore highly appropriate as a place to celebrate the centennial of a bilingual country. Quebec had been one of the original provinces of the Canadian Federation in 1867. The former French province of New France had been acquired by Great Britain after the famous victory (1759) of General James Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec City during the Seven Years’ War (1756-63). In the mid-twentieth century the development of the province (with the exception of Montreal) seemed to lag behind that of parts of English-speaking Canada, particularly neighbouring Ontario. As a result, it had a vigorous separatist movement that favoured Quebecan sovereignty and independence. The Front de Libération du Québec – with its slogan ‘Vive le Québec Libre’ – spawned a terrorist campaign in the 1960s, including several bombings, which threatened to disrupt Expo 67. In the event, nothing untoward happened, but the campaign was an unpredictable backdrop to an extraordinary event during Expo 67 which had important consequences.

The world’s heads of state and leaders were invited to the celebrations and indeed came in large numbers. The French President, Charles de Gaulle, hero of the Free French during World War II, decided to combine attendance at Expo 67 with an official visit to Canada. It became clear that he has his own purposes in mind – and indeed the Canadian Federal Government was uneasy. In mid-July he embarked on the French warship *Colbert* and sailed

up the St Lawrence Seaway as far as Quebec City, passing beneath the towering Heights of Abraham. On 24 July he gave a celebrated speech – famous to some, infamous to others – on the balcony of Montreal City Hall, where he addressed tens of thousands, mainly from Quebec province. Speaking slowly and enunciating his words in that inimitable style that made him comprehensible even to those who knew next to no French, and with much embracing of outstretched arms, he concluded with his customary triumphalism that always had political undertones: ‘Vive Montréal! Vive le Québec! Vive le Canada Français! even Vive la France! He could not bring himself to declaim Vive le Canada.! After a pregnant pause, he added with heavy emphasis ‘Vive le Québec LIBRE’



The last phrase was greeted with a roar of approval, but many in Canada and in France were shocked and thoroughly disapproved of both the diplomatic insult to the Canadian Government and what appeared to be an overt intervention in a delicate situation in an allied country. It made matters worse that the speech was carried live on radio and television both nationally and internationally. The content of the short speech was undoubtedly deliberate. On more than one occasion before 1967 de Gaulle had snubbed Canada, an important member of the British Commonwealth, and on Canadian soil he was pleased with himself. He remarked in his speech that the reception he had been given along the St Lawrence River reminded him of his triumphant return to Paris after its liberation from Nazi Germany in 1944. It was an example of diplomacy of vanity rooted in the General’s conception of his role during the Second World War.

The Liberal Prime Minister of Canada, the scholar-statesman Lester Pearson, who had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1957 for his role in resolving the Suez Canal crisis, condemned the speech and publicly rebuked the French President. He told de Gaulle (and by implication the French Government) that ‘Canadians do not need to be liberated’, and he reminded him that Canadian lives – English as well as French – had been lost in two World Wars during the liberation of France and other European countries. Pearson requested that de Gaulle leave Canada forthwith: he left a day later on a French military jet, leaving the *Colbert* to find its own way home.

This event was a seminal moment in the history of relations between English and French in Canada and in the history of diplomatic relations between France and Canada. Since 1970 the Parti Québécois has fought its politics peacefully, and indeed has sometimes formed the provincial government of Quebec.

At the same time, the proposition that Quebec should seek independent sovereignty has been voted down in two referenda, in 1980 and 1995. Quebec remains part of Canada. Indeed, as recently as 2006, Quebec was recognised as a separate nation within a united Canada. Historians are alert to the ironies of history, politicians less so.

The year after Expo 67, students and workers in Paris led the uprising which led to the downfall of President de Gaulle. At the height of the rising, he fled secretly to consult with the army before returning and submitting his regime to a referendum which he lost; in 1969 he finally withdrew from politics.



Not unconnected was de Gaulle’s veto of Great Britain’s application to join the European Economic Community in 1963 and 1967; after his downfall, a third application in 1970-1 was successful. It is an irony too that ‘O Canada’ had its origins in a Québécois song which had been adopted in both French and English as the national anthem of Canada as early as 1939.

Professor Ralph Griffiths

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Did the Swinging 60s reach Wales?

‘The swinging sixties never arrived in Llanelli’ a mature student once regretfully commented to me. Could she have been right? Was this historical milestone of an era just a metropolitan experience? Did it travel or was it confined to a ‘Swinging London’? The cultural historian Dominic Sandbrook writes of the period that ‘almost all accounts concentrate overwhelmingly on the activities of a relatively small well educated minority’, he goes on, ‘for millions of other people, the reality of daily life was rather different’ (Sandbrook 2006 pp.xv11). So why does the *idea* of the Sixties as a period which changed lives and the national culture have such resonance still?

In a sense, the ‘Sixties’ in film, music, literature, politics and youth cultures began in the late 1950s. Often depicted by historians such as David Kynaston as predominantly an era of conformity and austerity, by the late 1950s cracks were appearing. The Suez crisis of 1956 was evidence of a rising political rejection of Britain as an imperial power. This rejection was vividly articulated by John Osborne’s anti- hero Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* which opened at the Royal Court in the same year. Dubbed the ‘angry young man’ genre, it opened the door to a new theatre of social realism and radicalism and brought working-class actors and dramatists to public notice. Centred on the Theatre Workshop in the ‘other Stratford’ in East London, Joan Littlewood’s productions created stars such as Barbara Windsor and Lionel Bart. This was reflected in 1950s literature by the great success of new writers such as Kingsley Amis and John Braine. Amis’ Swansea novels of *Lucky Jim* (1954) and *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955) were a satirical look at prevailing social conventions. John Braine’s *Room at the Top* (1957) in its depiction of a ruthlessly ambitious amoral young working class man was a searing observation of the new phenomenon of the discontented and upwardly mobile working class. In many ways these books paved the way for the cinematic New Wave which was to sweep Europe.



Saturday Night and Sunday Morning

The ‘discovery’ of the working class in the theatre and contemporary literature was mirrored by British cinema during the first half of the decade. The stiff upper lip officer class of Jack Hawkins and the ‘typical’ British copper of Dixon gave way to a new anti-hero, the stropy working class of Arthur Seaton in Alan Sillitoe’s novel *Saturday Night Sunday Morning* (1958). Also in 1956, a group of aspiring young directors formed themselves into the Free Cinema movement. Specialising in documentaries of the changing way of life taking place in Britain, the group led by Lindsay Anderson, included Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson, and were to be the spearhead of the British New Wave of the Sixties. Reisz’s film of *Saturday Night Sunday Morning* (1960), Anderson’s *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962), Richardson’s *Taste of Honey* (1961) from Shelagh Delaney’s sensational stage play in Stratford, were among the early milestones. Based firmly in the gritty working class communities of the North of England (not in Wales or the South), these films brought a new reality to British cinema and made stars of Albert Finney, Tom Courtenay, and the Welsh actress Rachel Roberts. The social realism of the so-called ‘kitchen sink’ films certainly did not depict a wild hedonistic life but reflected a great societal upheaval and discontent. Television, the relatively new medium of the late 1950s, was also engaged in presenting ground-breaking new drama. ITV’s Play for Today series and BBC’s Wednesday Play continued to depict controversial social issues like homelessness and abortion reform such as Ken Loach’s *Cathy Come Home* (1966) and *Up the Junction* (1968).

Then came the advent of 'Mod' cinema and its creation of 'Swinging London' in the latter half of the decade. The famous cover of Time magazine in 1966 entered the national consciousness. The focus moved from the social realism of working class life to the hedonistic fashions and music centred on London and, to a lesser extent, Liverpool. It was this image of a new social reality, of a carefree, relatively wealthy, young, classless mobile population enjoying full employment and engaged in frantic consumerism. The world of *Alfie* (1966) and Mary Quant, Twiggy and Biba. It was very exciting but had its truly radical edge disappeared? Were the later 'Sixties' only made possible by the revolutionary 'Fifties'? Was it then that the true social revolution began?

The late 1950s saw an explosion of resistance and innovation, it was the time of rock 'n roll, of youth cultures, Elvis Presley, the angry young men, the impact politically of the new generation of scholarship boys (and girls), CND, it set the stage for the following decade. The first half of the 60s saw the focus on

working class life and its discontents. It was the latter half of the 60s which now seem to be the focus of cultural attention.

Was the student right when she bemoaned the absence of the Swinging Sixties in Wales? Yes, probably, for as Time magazine noted; 'every decade has its city.....Today it is London'.(1966).

Anthea Symonds

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Times are bad, children no longer obey their parents and everyone is

writing a book

Cicero circa 43 BC

The editor doesn't want everyone to write a book, but, she would like articles sent to her to publish in Chronicle. 300-800 words or more.

Email to margaret.mccloy@sky.com

James Bone commented,

'He's a fastidious journalist, he once telephoned a semi-colon from Moscow'.

You don't have to worry about your punctuation, just write and tell us your story or

send us a book to review. **Next issue features, the 18th century Georgians.**

The Historical Association, Swansea Branch would like to thank David and Margaret Walker for another splendid gift of books.

All donations of books welcomed for our book stall as are prizes for the raffle. Last year the raffle, ably run by Robert Leonard, raised over £500 towards our funds.

Don't forget if you haven't renewed your membership,

there is a form to fill in on the back cover.

Matters on the move in the 1960s

Dr Robert McCloy

There is currently much talk about the establishment of 'City Regions'. For some it is a knee jerk reaction to events in Scotland: a realization that as greater devolution occurs outside England, some such similar change must occur in other regions, some with considerably larger populations. However, its genesis is surely to be found elsewhere. Resisting the temptation to forage in the undergrowth of ancient Greece or even further down in time, the focus of this piece is relatively more recent: to the late 1960s. It was a moment when attention was increasingly focusing upon a re-ordering of local government. The spur was population migration and mobility which had outgrown structures long in place.

Urgent transport can't wait for local government reform

In the UK a Labour government was in office with Barbara Castle its feisty transport minister. A Royal Commission had been appointed to recast local government in England and some argued that a reorganization of transport should wait upon the Royal Commission. Not so, contended Barbara Castle: the transport needs and confusion of the conurbations was such that there could be no further delay. In any case, what was now proposed – the establishment of Passenger Transport Authorities [PTAs] in the great centres of population, or city regions- could be adjusted to conform to any new local government structures. **Central to the proposal was the notion that transport was the crucial element in a quest for wider economic well-being which included housing and spatial planning.** Moreover, public road transport was in decline and congestion threatened traffic and economic paralysis.

Better use of the railway in the conurbations was a vital ingredient and there had to be localized governance to effect a rational integration of the modes of public passenger transport. As noted by Barbara Castle in the Second Reading of the legislation:

'...a basic principle of my policy [is] that local people should be responsible for transport policy in their own communities. Any objective person reading these parts of the Bill must be struck by the revolutionary degree of devolution of powers for transport and traffic which they represent...But

integration [of bus and rail services] must go further than that. In my view, there is absolutely no hope of coping with the traffic explosion in our cities unless those who plan them, who build the highways and the housing estates and site the factories and the overspill developments -- and who manage the traffic -- are also responsible for public transport.'



Barbara Castle

The PTA, consisting of councillors from the constituent councils, would be that instrument and would determine overall policy, including fares, services, and subsidy, and be able to precept upon its constituent rating authorities. It would own the municipal transport operations and be able to purchase local commercial operations, and commission rail services from British Railways. Day-to-day business, however, would be the responsibility of professional managers constituting the Passenger Transport Executive. The Secretary of State [for Transport, in England, and for Scotland and Wales] would designate the areas affected after consultation.

Duly, after local negotiation, the Secretary of State for Transport designated PTAs for Merseyside [January 1, 1970], South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire [SELNEC] [November 1, 1969], Tyneside [January 1, 1970], and West Midlands [October 1, 1969], whilst the Secretary of State for Scotland designated one for Greater Glasgow [June 1, 1973]. The Secretary of State for Wales failed to designate any for Wales. As in the case of an earlier initiative embracing the possibility of an area scheme for transport under the Transport Act of 1947, local government in south Wales, a possible area for a passenger transport authority, offered spirited opposition.

On the fall of the Labour government the successor Conservative administration significantly revised the plans, retaining in its Local Government Act 1972 a two tier arrangement for England, largely discounting the fundamental rationale of Redcliffe-Maud with its emphasis upon town and country interdependence, and put in place a pragmatic settlement largely free of any overt new rationale, the subject of much confusion and misunderstanding and of subsequent necessary but dilatory attempts at further reform. Reform in Wales followed a parallel process of discussion, settling initially upon a two-tier system which was then replaced by a unitary system, itself shortly to be re-organised by amalgamation.

The new metropolitan county councils, which the legislation specified for the conurbations, became the passenger transport authorities. However, whilst the new metropolitan counties assumed responsibility for strategic town and country planning, main roads, emergency services, civil protection, and waste disposal, they were not responsible for housing, a critical justification for the PTAs in the first place. Nor indeed were they responsible for education and social services, major consumers of transport, and local planning. These latter major and strategic functions remained with the second tier of local government, the likes of the cities of Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield. The metropolitan counties were thus seriously compromised from their very beginning. The broader vision – that transport was the means by which a wider purpose of social well-being was to be accomplished – was surely lost.

The main focus was the operation of buses inherited from the constituent lower tier municipalities, related infrastructure, and the promotion of a new generation of trams. In the case of the West Midlands, a major preoccupation was the purchase of ‘Midland Red’s’ bus operation within the metropolitan county.

In retrospect, this was surely a major distraction leading to the eventual dismemberment of a significant commercial enterprise which had provided a comprehensive public service and had successfully pioneered the design and production of bespoke vehicles of advanced design. The combining of municipal fleets and the absorption of commercial operations had little beneficial effect upon the wider community. Services continued to decline

In contemplating the current emergence of city regions it must surely be appropriate to reflect upon the PTAs and PTEs, yet with us but transfigured, and the rise and fall of the metropolitan counties. Matters are proceeding with pace with broad agreement

reached concerning a Greater Manchester with an elected mayor and extensive devolved powers much going beyond Barbara Castle’s blueprint. The successful development of Metrolink [the tram system] and its beneficial impact upon the region and the fact that the ten local authorities have sunk their differences and collaborated in this venture, has been a vital spur.

In retrospect, the separation of vehicle ownership and their immediate operation from the task of identifying public transport needs and commissioning services would seem to have been largely beneficial. As in the cases of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933 and the PTAs in 1968, where this divide did not exist, the preoccupations of the engineer may often have displaced the passenger/ customer from their preeminence. Once the division had been made, in London and the PTAs, the temptation was possibly removed and the focus upon the strategic priority was more easily fulfilled. The significant splitting of functions was, however, part of a programme designed to curb cost and make the market more competitive. The model chosen was essentially that found in the United States. An alternative, the German *Verkehrsverbund*, might have had greater utility where the fundamental starting point was that in a given area the passenger would be given an integrated offer with one ticket for all modes involving a multiplicity of operators.



Victoria Station 1961

Another factor had also been vectored into the 1968 exercise: overall management was increasingly no longer the preserve of either engineers or transport managers. Whilst this may well be the source of regret and even anger on the part of enthusiasts and the displaced – and, in no way, disparages the achievements of these professionals operating in an earlier world – the wider task, the development of prosperous communities- needs the harnessing of Olympian skills and vision. Needless to say, it is not to be presumed that these are necessarily to be found in the ranks of accountants, or even elected mayors....

18th century letter writers your help needed

The Welsh writer Hester Thrale, later Piozzi (1741- 1821) and Shakespearean critic Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800) were friends and fellow intellectuals interested in theatre, the arts and architecture, travelling and literature. They were indefatigable letter-writers and held rival London salons where witty conversationalists gathered. In 2011 we had two HA lectures on Bluestockings by Les Turnbull and Mike Franklin when we heard how both were also pioneer businesswomen, Hester running Thrale's brewery after his death, with the help of Dr Johnson, and Elizabeth managing an important Newcastle colliery.

A team led by Caroline Franklin at Swansea University is editing the correspondence of Elizabeth Montagu and we need help in transcribing some of these fascinating letters which are fairly short – about 3-4 pages. No previous experience is necessary and you don't need a computer. Get in touch and we will send you a copy of a letter and full instructions on how to do the transcription. You can give Caroline your transcription at an HA meeting, or send it to her by email attachment or letter, and she will check it. When the edition of Montagu's correspondence is published, the transcriber's initials will be given. It would be wonderful if the Swansea branch could transcribe all 35 of the letters from Elizabeth to Hester

so that we could acknowledge the branch in our introduction. If you would like to transcribe a letter, please email c.franklin@swansea.ac.uk or telephone her at university on 01792 604304, or write to her c/o Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts and Humanities, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP.



Thank you

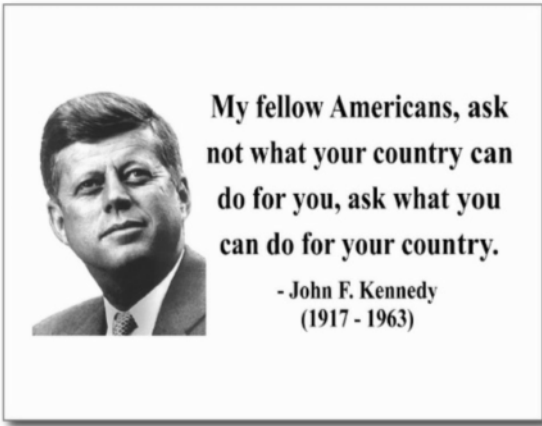
Caroline Franklin.

Kingsley Amis - blue plaque honour

Swansea Council unveiled a blue plaque for Sir Kingsley Amis in the Uplands on Wednesday April 15. Author of Lucky Jim, Amis was a lecturer in English at Swansea University from 1949 to 1961. His blue plaque will be located outside no. 24 The Grove, Uplands the house where he first lived in Swansea. Following the tradition of other writers including Dylan Thomas and Vernon Watkins, Kingsley Amis used Swansea as an inspiration to publish work that still remains popular today. He will be the ninth recipient of a blue plaque in two years.

Chiefly known as a comedic novelist his prolific literary work also extended into poetry, essays, criticism, short stories, anthologies and science fiction. A graduate of Oxford University, he was knighted in 1990 aged 68 just five years before he died.

Other recent blue plaque recipients in Swansea have included fuel cell pioneer Sir William Grove, polar explorer Edgar Evans and gothic novelist Ann of Swansea.



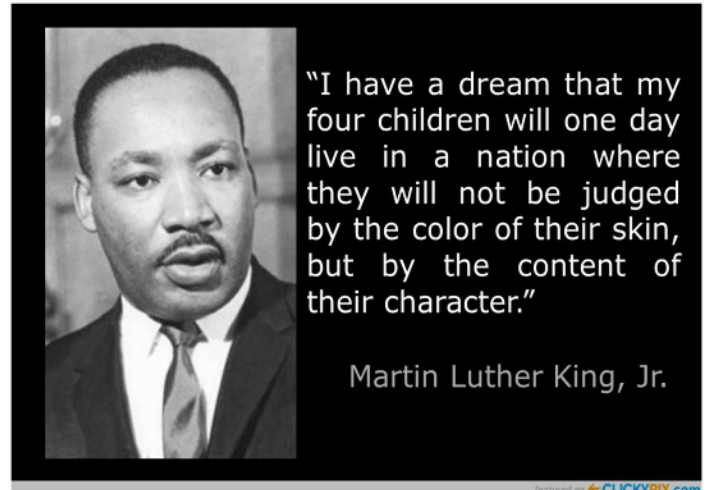
My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

- John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963)

The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity
The Optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.
Winston Churchill died 1965



Aberfan Disaster 1966



"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Martin Luther King, Jr.



'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'
Nelson Mandela



Rosa Parks, Civil Rights heroine

We are all equal here...

but of course some are more equal than others.

The 'swinging sixties' saw huge social changes across the world and in Britain life seemed to be turned upside down and inside out.

Following the deprivations of WW2 and the rebuilding processes of the 1950s, the 1960s were a time of innovation, change and prosperity. The lowest recorded unemployment figures of modern times saw many people with disposable income for the first time in their life. To cash in on this manufacturers increased production of 'must have' goods, especially electrical goods like TVs, radios and of course washing machines and Hoovers for 'the little woman'. Because, don't forget, this was still a time when women were expected to be housewives. To cook and clean and have dinner ready for when the husband, the breadwinner, arrived home from a hard day to be pampered.



The standpoint for women had changed during the war. They had rallied to the call to replace men in factories and on the land and when the men came back, many women were very reluctant to give up this freedom to earn a living and not be dependent on anyone else for support.

Indeed, when you look closely at those times, women who had an apparent equality with men, were in fact second-class citizens. Even as late as 1959 when the Mental Health Act was reformed, a woman who got pregnant out of wedlock could have the new born baby taken off her for adoption and then be incarcerated indefinitely in mental institutions on the grounds that she was 'Morally Deficient'.

Up until 1959!

Even those who were raped could be treated as if they were common prostitutes and locked up for the rest of their lives. Indeed the 1980s and 90s saw many elderly ladies 'released' back into a world that had very little meaning for them. Their lives stolen.

The biggest change to women's lives came with the invention of the birth control pill in the early 1960s. Widely available by 1963 (to married women), women finally had the freedom of choice between a career and home maker. Before then, in many occupations, women were expected to resign upon getting married - in case they got pregnant. There was no maternity leave in those days and employees rights varied from industry to industry.

This is the recollection of Mrs C a Swansea lady recorded in 2010:

Mrs C

1966 and my fourth job – I worked part time in a corner shop in Reginald St. My job was doing the food order for Trinity House light houses and light ships and also to serve in the shop. My wages were the going rate per hour.

My fifth job in 1968 was at the BoB Shop in Port Tennant Rd. There were five girls working there. It was a friendly place to work. I left there in 1974, when I went into hospital and had to take three months off, so the boss replaced me.

The employment safeguards that we take for granted now were unheard of then.

In 1968 a pivotal moment occurred at the Ford car factories, now immortalised in the film 'Made in Dagenham'. Women sewing machinists who made car seats, went on strike when their jobs were re-graded and they were offered a lower grade pay than men doing a similarly skilled job.

Very quickly the supply of car seats ran out and car production ceased. After three weeks the strike ended when an agreement was reached with the women paid more - but still 8% below men doing comparable jobs!

Encouraged by this ,the women at the Hoover factory in Merthyr approached Hoover and asked for parity with their men colleagues.

Hoover responded very well and gave the women what they asked for, but this still caused unrest. The men in the factory were not happy about this and even staged a strike of their own because they felt that the men should earn more than the women. Apparently there was a bad feeling for many years after the dispute ended.



Another feature of this period now frowned on, was the almost national obsession with beauty contests. The thought that women were being seen as objects hardly entered anyone's mind. Born out of seaside competitions since the late 1940s, cash prizes could be won and fame and fortune assured for the winners. Many factories and businesses followed this lead, a thing that v



A Miss Manikin competition for female factory staff was held at the Freeman Cigar Factory in Cardiff in the 1960s.

The battle for equal rights for women, branded as 'the Women's liberation' movement, saw demonstrations and symbolic 'bra burning' very often trivial-

ised by the media who often steered clear of the underlying real issues of 'glass ceilings', lower pay and certain jobs being classed as 'women's work'.



The calls for equality grew stronger as the decade drew to a close, but it was not until 1975 that the Sex Discrimination Act became law. It was an Act of Parliament that protected women (and men) from discrimination on the grounds of gender or marriage. The Act concerned employment, training, education, harassment, the provision of goods and services, and the disposal of premises.



The Gender Recognition Act of 2004 and The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) in 2008, amended parts of this Act to apply to transsexual people. The Act was repealed and replaced in full by the Equality Act 2010. Are we all equal now or do some prejudices still linger? You might recall the case from 2011, when Sky Sports commentators Andy Grey and Richard Keys made fun of assistant referee Sian Massey. Their sexist comments were picked up by the studio microphone and the affair, quite rightly led to their sacking.

In my lifetime, thankfully, we have seen massive strides forward in giving equality to all people no matter what their gender, race, religious beliefs or abilities.

In my lifetime? I was born in 1955, to an unwed woman; adopted to a loving family at three weeks old and never met my birth mother.

Ian Smith

Curator of Modern and Contemporary Industry at the National Waterfront Museum ...

The sixties? Which sixties are you talking about?

The sixties when 10% of the population behaved outrageously, while the rest wondered what the world was coming to, when women stridently professed their equality with men, adopted outlandish garments and wrote books on previously unmentionable subjects. A time when Licence ruled in the name of Liberty, a time when mannerisms replaced manners, when nonentities found fame and fortune, and bawdiness in both senses of the word, was high fashion.

Yes, but do you mean the 1660's or the 1960s?

I mean the Swinging Sixties when it was not posh to be prudent or prudish, when it was social death to wear a coat of last year's cut or last season's hue, and to be described as a trend setter was the ultimate accolade.

No, seriously, we do mean the 1960s and despite the fact that many rulers were behaving like Restoration rakes, there were differences between the two eras.

For starters, in the 1660s women did not burn their bras. In the 17th century King Billy, the dour Dutchman, would eventually put a stop to the fun and fornication, whilst in the 20th century we had the somewhat less successful Mary Whitehouse.

On that subject, the sensation of the sixties was the acquittal of obscenity of a book, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which learned counsel described as 'One would not wish your servant to read' and which a *Country Pursuits* periodical snootily described as containing 'Useful hints on the care of game birds'. Whether or not the double entendre was intentional or not is unknown.

This must have had a beneficial effect on the Arts, since it enabled a home industry to flourish, publishing a literary genre previously only seen via covert importation. Kenneth Tynan's attempt to

liberate the very naughty word f*** from the confines of barrack room and factory floor, was less successful, since it was replaced by a whole lexicon of much naughtier words concerned with nationality and sexual orientation.

In discussing the 1960s we must put away the roseate lenses showing it as a decade when the sun shone every day and a couple of half-crowns and a few florins would buy almost anything. In the absence of a Parliamentary TV coverage, we were happily ignorant of what nincompoops our rulers were and the only Welsh assembly which Cardiff hosted was at the Arms Park.

We also found that a Commercial was no longer a cheerful chap with case of samples and an eye for the ladies, but an annoying interruption to a TV programme.



It was also the decade when thanks to the Cortina and the Mini, that we all got motoring.

It was when we went on 'Packaged holidays in the new BAC 111 jets. When Britain amazed the world with its jumping jets and the French got their culottes in a twist with their supersonic airliner. They then had to go, beret in hand, to the B.A.C. to help them build the Concorde. The Clyde and the Tyne still rang to the riveter's hammer and there were opportunities (only we just called them jobs then) in the great steelworks such as Llanwern. For the first time, men walked on the moon, sending back images of the earth that brought home the realisation that our ecosphere's resources were finite, and bringing the first 'Green shoots' of the Green Movement. Nuclear power promised to supply cheap electricity so it would not be worth metering and computers would run everything as soon as they could be made compact enough to be housed in something smaller than an aircraft hangar.

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and the Mini, that we all got motoring.

It was when we went on 'Packaged holidays in

. "When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'" "

Dr Martin Luther King Jnr.

On the Road Again *



As in other realms of life, motoring in the 1960s influenced and reflected the changing mores of the times to the extent that by the end of the decade, motoring was significantly different from at the start.

The rise of four wheel motoring

By the early 1960s motorways were beginning to spread across Britain, allowing long and fast journeys (with until 1965, no speed limit). Immediate post-war austerity had been replaced, for many, by greater affluence. This was reflected by a new generation of small family cars, effectively ousting motorcycle combinations (with children seated precariously in a side-car), 3-wheeler cars (which could be driven with just a motorcycle licence), kit-cars and 'bubble cars' like the Isetta.

Just as today's Formula 1 cars are the proving grounds for technological developments, safety features developed on the track began to find their way into mass-production models. Radial-play tyres, offering superior grip and handling to traditional cross-plyes; disc brakes, providing greater resistance to 'brake fade'; and front seatbelts, pioneered by Volvo, all became common features or options on new cars. Perversely, given the growth in motorway building, crash barriers on central reservations did not become common-place for another decade.

Motorways apart, much of Britain boasted uncluttered roads, ideal for Sunday afternoon jaunts through the countryside, stopping off perhaps for a picnic on the obligatory tartan rug,

with tea served from Thermos flasks and new-fangled Tupperware containers. Post-Suez, petrol was cheap and plentiful, with UK brand Cleveland Discol even offering a 21st century 5% ethanol mixture.

1960s motoring icons

The British motor industry was at its zenith in the 60s, albeit through amalgamation and 'badge-engineering'. For example, Riley and Wolseley simply served up sportier or more luxurious versions of a basic Austin or Morris. Inevitably, as an enduring icon, the Mini takes centre-stage. Designed by Alec Issigonis of Morris Minor fame, the Mini was launched in August 1959 as both the Morris Mini-Minor and the Austin Seven. Issigonis's front-wheel drive design was revolutionary on several counts – the 'wheel at each corner' maximised interior space, itself enhanced by placing the engine and integral gearbox at right angles to minimise bonnet length; and the rubber suspension created further space and produced deft handling. **Such was the impact of the Mini that virtually all European manufacturers would switch to front-wheel drive, transverse engine layout over the next decade.**

1961 saw the introduction of what was universally considered the breathtakingly beautiful Jaguar E-Type sports car. The sculpted E-Type could reach 150mph and sold at a fraction of the cost of other 'supercars' from manufacturers like Aston Martin, Maserati and Ferrari.

Aiming at a very different market, the Ford Cortina eschewed revolutionary design and was a conventionally-engineered sales 'repmobile' and family car. It nevertheless gave nimble handling, reliability and a level of comfort previously unknown in a family car. Belying its humble engineering, Lotus saw its potential as a sports saloon and the Lotus Cortina gave the sporty Mini Coopers a run for their money in rallies and races alike.

The Rover 2000 instantly overturned Rover's staid, maiden-aunt image. Like today's BMW 3-series, it became the default choice of country solicitors, professionals and junior executives.

Sleek and futuristic, its design masked that its body panels were merely bolted to a conventional chassis.

Elsewhere in the motoring world, development of other icons was underway. Volkswagen was starting to move away from its single offering of Beetle-based models, whilst Citroen pioneered horrendously complex hydraulic braking and steering systems into its shark-like DS19.



The Volkswagen Beetle

The Welsh Dimension

In Wales, motoring was noteworthy for several developments. Only one car was produced entirely in Wales, the Gilbern in Llantwit Fardre. Conceived by local butcher Giles Smith and German-born engineer Bernard Fries (hence *Gil-Bern*), these sports cars attracted a loyal following among connoisseurs. But if Wales produced few complete cars, the components industry in the 1960s was huge – including steel for bodies from BSC Port Talbot and Llanwern; Dunlop Semtex in Brynmawr for rubber components; Pullmaxflex Seating in Ammanford; Lucas Girling Brakes in Cwmbran; Ford's transmission plant in Swansea; and Llanelli Radiators. All made significant engineering contributions to the motor industry and, likewise, afforded high levels of employment.

Yet to say that Wales did not produce complete cars is inaccurate. In the Swansea suburb of Fforestfach was a factory producing a wide range of vehicles exported all over the world. Corgi Toys made highly-detailed, die-cast model cars, arguably of higher authenticity and precision than its rival Dinky Toys. Throughout the 1960s Wales made a significant contribution to existing and future motorists alike.

Rod Ashley

A keen motorist, he is chair of the Swansea Bay Group of Advanced Motorists and a frequent contributor to motoring magazines.

Gilbern will have a display at 'Wales on Wheels'

The Waterfront Museum on Saturday May 16th



The Citroen DS19

In the US, Chevrolet flirted with the absurd, large, rear-engined Corvair, leaving Ford to develop the muscle-car Mustang, as featured in 'Bullitt' – for once an American car with decent handling.



The Ford Mustang

'On the Road Again'
Title of 1967 song by Canned Heat.



Barry Lategan, Sitting, 1967

Twiggy and the mini-skirt

1963



Beatles pop Group

Rejected by

Decca Records

1963

Richard Burton
Married Elizabeth
Taylor 1964



Psycho 1960



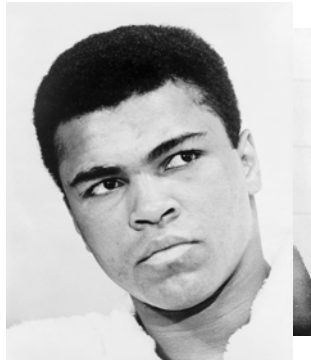
Walt Disney dies 1966

Mary Poppins 1964



World Cup 1966

Cassius Clay



Elvis Presley

Promoted to

Sergeant in

US Army

1960



Marilyn Monroe

dies 1962

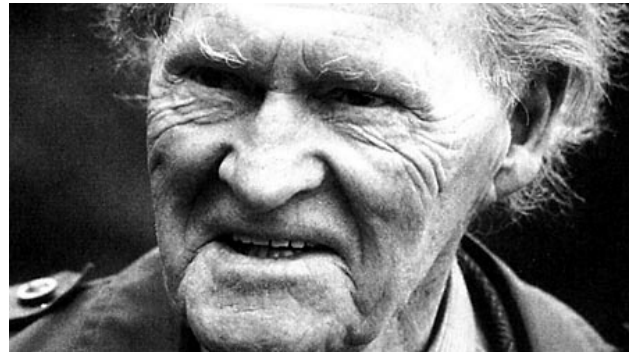
Wales beat England in the 1969 Five Nations and win Triple Crown



Louis Armstrong, What a wonderful world

The Religious Poetry of R.S. Thomas

"Sunlight's a thing that needs a window
Before it enter a dark room.
Windows don't happen."



An insightful and thoughtful lecture was given by Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales, recently at Swansea Museum. Fortuitously given on World Book Day (March 5th) the talk on The Religious Poetry of R. S. Thomas was part of the St David's Day celebrations held annually by the Museum.

Fittingly introduced in both Welsh and English by Andrew Green (former librarian at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth) who mentioned in passing the overshadowing of R. S. Thomas by last years' centenary celebrations of the other famous Welsh poet with the same surname.

R. S. Thomas, the speaker readily admitted, was a difficult poet to read and understand, one who asked rather than answered questions, whose poems were truly representative of his personal anguishes and dilemmas. A constant theme running through his religious verse was the silence of God and the questioning of faith, a fact the speaker conceded was a paradox for a minister who would have been called upon to reassure his congregants on their own dilemmas of faith. The point was made that often it was the act or ritual of prayer, giving rise to a contemplative state that was the source of solace rather than the effectiveness of the prayer itself. Thomas strongly believed that a meditative approach was the best way to be receptive to God, and his apparent absence, that is God's refusal to answers prayers in a practical manner, did not mean he was not present. Faith, Thomas believed should

be difficult; finding God must be challenging to be a truly authentic spiritual experience.

In answer to a question after the talk, the Archbishop gave a brief but detailed biography of Thomas and we learnt that not only was his poetry full of paradoxes his life too was a series of contradictions. An ardent nationalist and supporter of Meibion Glyndwr he didn't quite warm his hands on the flames but neither was he first out with a fire bucket during the fire-bombings of English owned holiday cottages in rural Wales. A strident socialist who sent his only son to a fee-paying boarding school in England. He often relished being awkward - choosing to talk Welsh amongst English speakers wherever and whenever it would cause the most embarrassment. A man who embraced a frugal and austere life as a young minister - once painting his chapel pews black to re-enforce his message of bleak austerity (something that must have tested the faith of his flock considerably), but who, after his second marriage to a wealthy (non Welsh speaking) widow slipped with apparent ease into a rather comfortable retirement of stiff after dinner drinks, cocktail parties and cruises.

This was not an easy talk to take in; in truth many of the points raised were elusive and tricky to grasp, but, as with the poet and the poetry it rewarded greater thought and reflection.

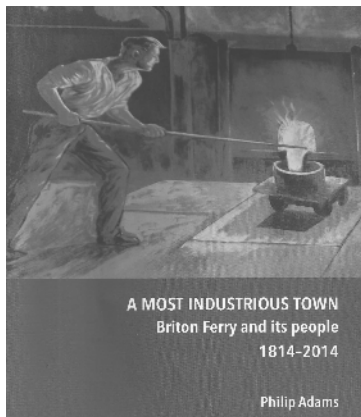
M. B. Stanley

Book Review Robert McCloy

‘I never read a book before I review it; it prejudices a man so’.

Sydney Smith

A Most Industrious Town: Briton ferry and its people 1814-2104 by Philip Adams.



Here is a book inspired by affection which sets the story of a special place in the context of a wider world. It is an engagingly honest piece wherein Philip Adams gently discloses his beliefs and loyalties. The writer's, and his family's, long association with the

town and his career in local industry, and not least, his education in Brynhyfryd School, Neath Grammar School and Swansea University, makes for an unrivalled authoritative account. This reviewer, whose link with Briton Ferry was considerably more tenuous, living there for but two years after World War 2, can but admire the wealth of detail, especially that of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, embracing living and working conditions, the techniques of the many works, the harsh conditions of daily life, the vigorous temperance movement, the abundance of chapels and churches, a wealth of shops

and local schools, the lively docks and railway, the many pubs and clubs, two cinemas, and not least, the town's powerful social cohesion.

Though the narrative makes clear that though living standards have risen and the grim reality of an earlier world has passed away, there has been much loss of a positive character: a sense of local pride [now being splendidly re-asserted], a vibrant community activity in each street, many with its own chapel, a truly local government with its own urban district council, and, not least the Public Hall [at least for this reviewer whose family ran therein a theatre company!]. If space had permitted, he would have enjoyed some reference to the many bus and coach services that served the locality in those relatively car-free post war years: the N and C 'Brown Bombers' in convoy, Red and White, South Wales Transport...ah, but you can't satisfy everyone. This attractively produced book, with many illustrations, will deservedly doubtless please many and disappoint few, not just readers who may have some personal association with the town but those seriously studying local history generally.

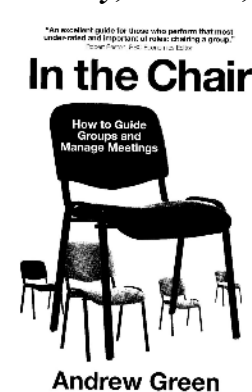
In the Chair by Andrew Green

How apposite, when we have a new Chairman to be reviewing a book about managing meetings.

This splendid book by Andrew Green is a practical, informed and inclusive work on how to be a successful chair. It is full of advice on planning a meeting and how to communicate with the members. It covers both formal and annual meetings and how to meet the group's aims.

Whilst writing this, I found a second hand copy of 'The Chairman's Handbook' by Sir Reginald Palgrave, the 1937 edition. It has its own kind of advice and warnings. 'The election of a chairman may, as is too well known, cause much perplexity, and much to regret'. After giving advice on the chairman maintaining order during a meeting he suggests...

'he may, however, perceive from the



Andrew Green

demeanour of some before him that they are resolved to create rude or even violent interruption, or to incite the meeting to disorder... he may direct the expulsion of a wilful disturber... no unnecessary violence being used'. Although Andrew Green does not have advice on how to dispel rowdy elements at meetings, he does give clear guidance, all through

the book, on how to cope with meetings and how to react to a difficult issue or person, thus maintaining a meeting that is both productive and enjoyable.

Branch News

After 7 years of chairing the branch meetings since its revival, Dr John Law decided to resign his position as Chairman. At the AGM, held at Sketty Hall on 7th March, Emeritus Professor Ralph Griffiths, the branch President, gave a fitting tribute to the fine work that Dr Law has achieved as chairman.

The election of officers took place at the formal part of the AGM, John Ashley was elected the new Chairman. John is a member of the Institute of Welsh Affairs and chairman of the Friends of White Rock. The Vice Chair is Carol David a former member of Swansea University where she was a department administrator.

Ray Savage was re-elected as Hon. Treasurer and Colin James was re-elected as Hon. Executive Secretary. Ten members of the committee were elected, all information to be found on the HA Swansea website.



The meeting concluded with a fine talk by Dr Law on Carpaccio, the Venetian artist who studied under Bellini. About 40 people attended the event at Sketty Hall and enjoyed a splendid buffet lunch. Nine new members joined. The branch is now one of the most successful in Britain with over a hundred members.

Congratulations to Colin James who has been appointed the new chairman of the Branches and Members Committee. He will also sit on both the national Executive Committee and the Council of Trustees of the Historical Association.



John Ashley, the new branch Chairman

Egyptian Experience Day is to be held at Carmarthen Museum, Aberguilli, on **Saturday 18th July** 10.30 – 4.30.

There will be talks, children's activities, food, craft stalls and much more. There will be free transport from Carmarthen to the Museum.

For more information, please contact committee member, Karmen Thomas

At the AGM it was announced that the Fellowship award would be given to Dr John R Alban. He is an Honorary Senior Lecturer in the School of History at the University of East Anglia and was formerly County Archivist of Norfolk. He was previously City Archivist of Swansea and he taught medieval Latin and palaeography in the Universities of Swansea and Cardiff. Information about the award ceremony will be found in the next Chronicle.

Please let the editor know of any events, awards, grants, news or obituaries that we can share in the Branch News. margaret.mccloy@sky.com

HA Swansea Branch Programme 2015

Talks on Saturdays at 11.00, National Waterfront Museum



18th April Professor Daniel Power
**Magna Carta and the Crises of 1214-17:
 Rebellion, Invasion and the Civil War**

16th May Professor Helen J Nicholson
**‘For Empire, Glory and Religion’:
 The Great Siege of Malta, 1565**



20th June Professor Mike Sheenan
**The Forgotten Kennedy: Joe Kennedy
 Jnr and World War Two**

18th July Dr Leighton James
Waterloo and its Representation



15th August Colin Weldon James
Dr Joseph Parry: A Welsh Man of Note

19th September Professor Justin Cham-
 pion
 President of the HA Lecture



Membership Form

Name

Address.....

Phone

Email

Individual membership: £10
 Concessionary membership: £5
 Family (household) membership: £15
 Student (to 30 September 2015): £5
 Cheques to Historical Association, Swansea Branch:
 HA Membership Secretary, 156 Chemical Road, Morriston SA6 6JQ

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