
CAERWENT HISTORIC TRUST

Our AGM was our best attended so far. The No.2 copy of the Caerwent Tithe Map 1841 (recently retrieved from Australia by the Community Council!) was a feature of great interest. Brian Stephens explained his achievements in Metal Detecting and brought many beautiful specimens for us to examine, which made a very enjoyable end to our meeting. We appointed two new Trustees: John Barnard, who is now Custodian of the Westgate Barns site, and Jan Hewlett, who has kindly offered to be our Membership Secretary.

Secret Bunkers of the Resistance Army

Walk: Sunday March 30th 2.30pm

A ramble in the Coed y Caerau area (the western tip of Wentwood) led by Richard Frame and Sallie Mogford. Meet in the car park of the New Inn, Langstone at 2.30pm and drive up to the Bertholey ridge.

The British Resistance Organisation in Gwent (continued) – Jonah Patrol

The patrol was to emerge from the bunker at night, sabotage enemy food and fuel supplies, transport links and aircraft. They were to wreak havoc on the enemy and slow their deadly advance across Wales. Afterwards, they were to return unseen back to the relative safety of the bunker. Their mission was considered to be so dangerous that they were not expected to survive for more than 2 weeks. Their greatest fear was the swift discovery of their bunker by German sniffer dogs. The invaders would have considered them as spies and they would have either been shot on sight or tortured for information. The Germans would have targeted Caerwent had they invaded, for the munitions held at the RNPF cordite factory. The Severn Tunnel would have also been a prime target as it links Wales to England. No doubt the Auxiliary Units would have destroyed the tunnel in an attempt to disrupt enemy advances.

If capture by the enemy was certain, no man from Jonah Patrol could be taken alive. The men had to agree to shoot each other or blow themselves up using their own considerable supply of explosives. The horrific killing of hundreds of men, woman and children at Oradour Sur Glane in Limoges, France, made it all too obvious how the families of resistance units would be punished. After the war, it was generally acknowledged that Jonah Patrol was the most highly trained and deadly of all the Monmouthshire Auxiliary Units.

Members were Alan Hollingdale (Llanwern), Len Escott (Newport), Ray Skinner (Rock and Fountain Inn Penhow), Charles and Les Bulley (Newport/Caerwent), Ralph Jones (Shirenewton), Charles Lawrence (Caerleon). Each member had their own identification marble. When they arrived at the bunker (right) this was rolled down a pipe to alert their comrades inside of their arrival.

Sallie Mogford

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