
CAERWENT HISTORIC TRUST

Special Meeting and Local Update

7.30pm

Tuesday March 16th

We need to deal with outstanding matters from our abbreviated AGM, especially what activities the Trust should pursue in 2010, identification and appointment of a new secretary, and of a new 'walks and talks' coordinator. Following that we'll have a brief report from our local metal detectorists (what's new around the district?) and a review by Mark Lewis of the items now on display in the Westgate Barns (NB it is less than a year since our efforts to get the artefacts from the original cabinet in Caerwent Parish Church returned to the village were successful, and the new Curator of Newport Museum has provided further material).

Bertholey Ridge, daffodils and Kemeys Folly

Sunday 21st March 10.00am

Meet at the Cadw car park Caerwent at 10am or alternatively at the start point MR 386925 at 10.15 sharp. Parking space is very limited here so car sharing is important. Starting above Catsash we shall walk NE on the ancient ridgeway, past pre-Roman earthworks towards the site of Will of Wentwood's house, hoping to find wild Welsh daffodils on the way. To end with we have a kind invitation to look around the grounds of Kemeys Folly (not the interior!) returning soon after 12 noon. ***All welcome!***

Llangeview, Allt-y-Bela and Llangwm

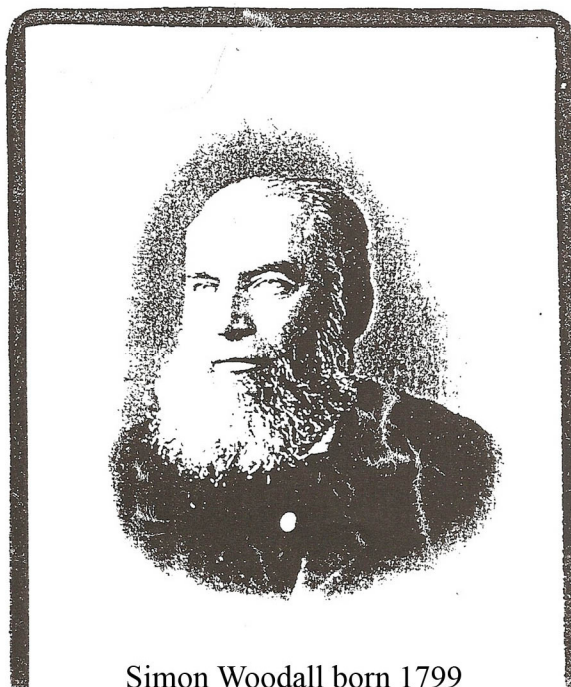
Saturday 27th March 10.00am

There is a possibility of visiting Llangeview Church, Allt-y-Bela and Llangwm Church but places are very limited for this outing. I will explain more at the meeting of 16th March but meanwhile if you are especially interested let me know by phone or e-mail.

The Woodalls of Dinham

The Woodalls, an extended farming and landowning family in the south Herefordshire area bordering Wales, can be traced back to before the Norman Conquest. Simeon Woodall became the tenant of Dinham and moved into the manor house in about 1790. His youngest son Simon was born and died there.

By 1858 the estate was managed by a grandson of Simeon, Thomas, who had recently married Elizabeth Jones, daughter of a Welsh speaking couple from Abergavenny.



Simon Woodall born 1799

Recollections from Thomas' first grandson re the 1890s: Thomas was a tall bearded man. I hardly ever saw him walk anywhere except over his fields with a gun. He drove a waggonette or sometimes a high dogcart very regularly on Sundays to Caerwent where he was churchwarden and also to Chepstow to market and to meetings of the Board of Guardians of which he was chairman for many years. During harvest time all the men on the farm used to have dinner in the big kitchen. Grandfather used to go into the forecourt and blow a kind of conch shell and all the men would come trooping in. A measure of cider daily was part of the men's wages and every morning before they went to the fields or on other work they would parade at the door with their little wooden barrels to draw their allowance. One hardly ever saw strangers at Dinham as there was no road beyond the farmhouse. Occasional small shooting parties of friends arrived such as when James Bevan came and met his future wife for the first time [see wedding report in last September's newspane].

Thomas and Elizabeth were a devout couple and it is hardly surprising that of their eight children two sons were ordained in the Anglican ministry. Their oldest daughter Mary never married but was the great stay of her parents. With the help of an old Irish woman she looked after the poultry and the dairy. She was strict in a Victorian way but kind and good with a heart of gold. Dinham was so far from Caerwent that on Sunday afternoons she would gather all the children from the cottages on the farm and have them for Sunday School in the gunroom where her father's guns were kept in a high rack on the wall and his cartridges in a locked cupboard. Her life was devoted to her parents. She died in 1903 soon after the family had left Dinham, whereupon her role was assumed by a younger unmarried sister.

A portrait of Simeon Woodall 1758 – 1831

To the best of my knowledge this is the earliest picture we have encountered of a resident of Caerwent. It probably represents Simeon around the time he moved here.

(info and pictures copyright David Bevan)



***Another visit to
Dinham
Saturday 17th April 10.00am***

Primarily a car tour with a little walking: this visit is focussed on the old settlements, whose remains become more precarious year on year. The former Factory will be covered to a limited extent, duration 2 hours. Meet at the West Gate, accessed directly from the A48 (between the old and new roads to Llanfair Discoed). If you have any photos or information relevant to the old sites we would be pleased to see it. ***All welcome!***

N.B. we take every care in preparation of visits etc but you take part at your own risk

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