A WALK AROUND LLANTWIT MAJOR

compiled by the llantwit major local history society   price 1s

LLANTWIT MAJOR LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

(Formed January 1967)

Patron: Sir Gennydd Traherne, K.G.
President: Rev.J.D.Llewellyn Jones,M.A.,
                  The Vicarage,Cowbridge Road.
Vice Presidents: Professor W.H.Davies, M.J.Dewi Evans,MA
                  Mr.E.A.Lloyd, Mr.L.Taylor, Mr.L.V.Kelly,BA

Chairman: Mr.D.Elwyn Gibbs,BA, 41 Voss Park Drive.
Secretary: Mrs.M.James, Penmaes, Cowbridge Road.
Assistant Secretary: Mrs.J.Pearce, 10 Windmill Close.
Treasurer: Mrs.R.Griffin, The Mount,Windmill Lane.

Meetings are usually held in the
Town Hall at 7.30 pm on the second
Tuesday of each month.

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

1. To foster interest in the history of Llantwit Major and
    its surroundings.

2. To promote research into its history,customs and
    traditions.

3. To recover and preserve documents,prints and photographs of
    the Town.

4. To make and preserve a visual,written and sound record of the
    Town's past.

5. To encourage the preservation of ancient rights,sites,
    buildings and footpaths.

The activities of the Society have centred around a series of
talks and members social evenings during the winter months,visits
to places of local interest during the summer months,and
practical projects throughout the year. For its practical work
the Society has groups dealing with a visual record of the Town
through photographic surveys and coverage of events,sound records
of recollections of inhabitants and personalities,collection of
records,articles,documents and items of historical interest,and
investigations of existing and proposed planning and development
of the Town,with particular reference to the designated
Conservation Area.

Anyone wishing to join the Society is cordially invited to attend the meetings. The Winter session commences on Tuesday the 9th September 1975 at the Town Hall at 7.30 pm.

The Society is proud to have been of assistance over the last five years to the local authorities and to the community at large, and is represented by invitation from the Glamorgan County Council on the Conservation Area Advisory Sub-Committee currently meeting to consider and advise on proposals and definitive work for the Town Conservation Area. Evidence was also given and accepted at the Public Inquiry into the new By-Pass proposals for the Town and other matters brought to the attention of the local authorities which have met with success and thanks.

The Society has been active in promoting interest in the Town. In 1967 and 1971 exhibitions dealing with the history of the area were promoted; in 1969 the society organised the Museum of the Vale at St.Donat's Castle on behalf of Cowbridge R.D.C. as part of the Investiture celebrations.

The Society has prepared and published "Llantwit Major: a history and a guide", which is available in local shops.

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The Heritage Coast.

The History Society is co-operating in one of the three pilot schemes initiated by the Countryside Commission. The Glamorgan Heritage Coast extends one and a half miles inland from Bracksea Point (nr. Aberthaw Power Station) to Newton Point. Its primary purpose will be the preservation and protection of the undeveloped character of this region in the interests of public enjoyment.

The 'Structure Plan'

The Society has also represented local feeling and interests in the blue print being drawn up by the South Glamorgan County Council to shape the future in the interests of livelihood and leisure - to improve the quality of life by the extension of facilities. The programme should be complete in 1977.

A WALK AROUND LLANTWIT MAJOR

Compiled by members of the Llantwit Major Local History Society

The Parish and Manor of Llantwit Major lies on the western fringe of the Vale of Glamorgan, a low plateau of lias limestone ranging from 50 to 200 feet above sea level. There has been continuous settlement in the local area since the Bronze Age, although many of the barrows known locally as 'tumps', which are evidence of that early settlement, have been ploughed out by centuries of intensive farming.

Invaders of a later period preferred to build their camps on sites overlooking the sea - hence the two large Iron Age camps within the Parish, one at Castle Ditches overlooking the mouth of the Colhugh river where the ramparts are clearly visible and the other at the Summer House (Boverton Beach). The Roman choice of site lay to the north of the Town at Caermead, not too far from the old Portway which linked the major Roman forts strung along its length.

The Origin of Llantwit Major.   St Iltud.

At the end of the fourth century the Roman legions withdrew. Authority and protection collapsed. The new natural leaders in Wales were priests of a militant sort who established monasteries in Brittany and around the Irish Sea. One of the earliest in South Wales was Llancarfan and it was from here that Iltud, a Breton by origin, came to plant a new monastic settlement.

The site of the Monastery, or 'llan', was the head of the little gorge where the Ogney Brook suddenly quickens its course. Sheltered from the winds and Irish marauders the monastery flourished and the reputation of Iltud, for his learning, for his teaching of the art of agriculture and for his defiance of local 'kings', has lasted until the present day. The Church today probably stands on the site of the original 'llan' and the circular plan of Churchyard with the Brook diverted around its wertern edge supports the probability. Nothing remains of the original monastery, of course. The native building tradition of wattle and daub was not designed to last.

The CHURCH (8) is our link with the Dark Ages. Inside the western Church there is a fine collection of monuments dating from the eighth century, including the memorial of Hoelt (sub king), to his father Rhys. It would appear that Llantwit became a final resting place - a 'Westminster Abbey', for the petty kings of Glamorgan.

The Norman Conquest of 1090 produced a violent change. The Welsh inhabitants were driven out. They were replaced by English peasants and the Church with its possessions was given to the Benedictine Abbey of Tewkesbury. Parts of the present Church may date from this time, particularly the entrance from the south porch. The ruins at the west end are the Chapel of Our Lady which became a chantry and the Chantry Priest's house also 'ruinated' stands on the south side of the churchyard.

Few parish churches can show such a range of architectural styles spanning the ages. Inside, the restrained dignity of nine centuries of the 'simple life', are revealed at every turn; the medieval effigies, the lozenge decorations, the murals, the font, the armorial bearings on the roof bosses , the beautiful reredos, the Jesse Niche and the elegant restored Rood *

The artist and the naturalist will find much of interest in the neighbourhood of the churchyard. The mellow limestone is softened by the golden lichen, the showy valerian and the ivy-leaved toadflax.   Collar doves keep up a soft cooing which parodies the quiet of this sheltered hollow.

On the west side the path leads over the Ogney Brook to the Barnsway - the entrance to the medieval grange. All that now remains of this impressive farm is the GATEHOUSE (5), a thirteenth century building with external stone stairs. Behind it lie the foundations of the old Granary and the cluster of farm buildings which were excavated in 1937.   South of the Barnsway the footings of the huge ancient Tithe barn can still be seen and beyond them,the medieval DOVE COT (9). Both of the surviving buildings are now scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Strictly speaking,much of the old village as well as the fields to the west, were part of Abbot's Llantwit or West Llantwit which became a separate manor about 1580. PLYMOUTH HOUSE (4) then became the manor house of Edward Stradling, a cousin of the illustrious Sir Edward Stradling of St Donat. .

*   An illustrated Guide is available
     inside the Church

East of the Church the Street runs to the old Michael Cross
now topped by a War Memorial and facing it a line of yeomen's
cottages now the WHITE HART INN (6). The simplicity of the
frontage and the white rendering is a faithful preservation
of a centuries old tradition of domestic buildings. Most of
the cottages near the Cross are shown on the Tithe Map of
1838 and would appear to have undergone repeated renovation
since medieval times. Many were still roofed in thatch at
the beginning of this century.

THE OLD SWAN INN (7) was from the beginning, a more
substantial building with very thick walls (up to 4 feet)
and Tudor doorway. In 1596 it was the home of Hopkin ap Rees,
one of the few Welshmen then in the Parish, and Bayliff to the
Earl of Pembroke, the Lord of the Manor. It was later
occupied by one Edward Maddocks who issued brass trade tokens
during the middle of the seventeenth century and it subsequently
earned the reputation of a Mint.

Opposite the Inn stands the TOWN HALL (2) the subject of
many artistic sketches and engravings. The title,however, is
as recent as the last century and its early history is in
doubt. There are references to   a 'Guildhall' in the time
of Henry VIII. Then,one Tregaron Snell held a shop beneath
it but by the end of the century there is no mention of the
Town Hall in spite of the fact that a detailed account of an
affray which took place outside, is available in the Star
Chamber records which even mention the 'Ocke' (Oak) nearby.
Llantwit tenants too, complain that the farmers of the old
Court House have allowed it to fall into decay. It is likely
that the present building was constructed in the seventeenth
century from the ruins of an older building which had originated
as a barn. Perhaps it did serve at one time as a goal but this
would be before the sixteenth century. It is likely too that
the glove courts which regulated the St Barnabas Fair were held
there,presided over by the Reeve. Further restoration was done
in 1962-3.

Not shown on the map is the old RECTORY, now the Primary
School, which recently celebrated its centenary. This is the
'Capitoli Mansion' or Knolles Place which came into the hands
of the Raglan family about 1400. The Victorian additions on
the South part of the School are easily distinguished from the
medieval rubble building on the north side. The enlarged 19th
century windows disguise the antiquity of the building -
indicated by the massive walls and the three storied porch.

On the other side of the Ogney Brook, over the Swine's
Bridge, stands the WEST HOUSE (1o) home of the Wilkins family
who settled here in the 18th Century. Further to the north
is the ivy covered ruin of LLANTWIT CASTLE (The Old Place)(3)
The date of this building is known precisely -1597 - when John
Stradling remarked that it was much too big for its owner,a
recusant Griffith Williams and his son in law Edmond Avan,
and that it would spew him out. Like most other old houses,
it has its own ghost - The White Lady. The last known
occupant was Dorothy Avan (1670).

The GREAT HOUSE or TY MAWR (1)is a typical Tudor yeoman's
house, probably built by Iltyd Nicholl before moving to
the Ham at the end of the 16th century. The southern wing
(facing the main road) is a rather incongruous addition to
the original building. (7)

Closer to the heart of the Town,the COURT HOUSE (11)
shows essentially Georgian features with its central gable
and circular window.

                    The Manor of Boverton and Llantwit
Vestiges of settlements even older than the Town itself
are still visible within the Manor. The Iron Age fort at
Castle Ditech is the most accessible. Traces of the
defensive earthworks are visible on the eastern slope of
the Valley near the beach but it is only by climbing the
slope and walking through the fort to the well preserved
eastern defences that the scale can be appreciated. A
similar fort is easily accessible at Summer House,south
of Boverton. Within this fort is a summer house built
by Evan Seys (MP for Glamorgan 1659) and immediately
outside, the modern Coastguard Station.

Within a mile of the Town lies the remains of the
Roman Villa of Caer Mead,close by the footpath which runs
west from Morfa Lane. Strange that such a substantial
and sophisticated Roman farm should not be recognised
until 1888. It was built in the second century AD on a
site of 1½ acres - a single storied building around two
courtyards, with barns,workshops,forges,bathrooms and
residential quarters with characteristic tesselated
paving.

At the Norman Conquest BOVERTON became the
administrative centre of the manor. This was the 'Berton'
or home farm with the largest complex of old farm
buildings in the whole of Glamorgan. From the ruins of
these buildings Roger Seys Attorney General built his
Mansion House,BOVERTON PLACE, about 1580.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Population: 8.500. Early Closing: Wednesday
Car Park: Town Hall and rear of Shopping Precinct.

Police: Police Station, Wesley Street.   Tel: 2268
Post Office: Wine Street (closed Saturday afternoon) Tel:2309
Sub Post Office: General Stores Boverton. Tel: 2218
                      (closed Wednesday afternoons)
Registrar: Town Hall (2nd and 4th Thursday of every month)
            Tel: Llantrisant 656
Employment Exchange: Town Hall Car Park. Tel:3451

Public Amenities:-
Library: Recreation Ground, Boverton Road.   Tel: 2700
Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic, Boverton Rd. Tel: 2614
Recreation Field, Boverton Road.
Bowling Green and Tennis Courts, Recreation Ground, Boverton Rd.
Indoor Bowling during winter months.

Places of Worship:-
St. Illtyd's Church (Church in Wales)
Bethel Baptist Chapel, Commercial Street
Ebenezer Congregational Chapel, Colhugh Street
Tabernacle Presbyterian Chapel, Methodist Lane
Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Wesley Street
Jehovah's Witnesses, Town Hall
United Christian Fellowship, Town Hall
Our Lady & St. Illtyd's Roman Catholic, Ham Lane

Banks:-
Barclays, Commercial Street. Tel:3441
Midland, Boverton Road.   Tel: 2384
Lloyds, Boverton Road.   Tel: 2204
National Westminster, Wyndham House, Boverton Road. Tel: 2431

Chemists:-
L.G.Grey & Sons, The Pharmacy, East Street.   Tel: 2267
Donald J.Martin, The Pharmacy, Boverton Road. Tel: 2300

Garages:-
J.T.Elward Ltd., Upper House Garage, Turkey St & High St. Tel: 2412
Williams Garage Ltd., Colhugh Street,   Tel: 3466

Schools:-
Llanilltud Fawr Secondary Modern, Ham Lane. Tel: 3301
Llanilltud Fawr Infants, Ham Lane,   Tel: 2368
Llanilltud Fawr Junior, Wine Street. Tel: 2595
St.Illtyd's C.P.School, Station Road. Tel: 2281
Llantwit Major Youth Wing, Hame Lane. Tel: 2141
Llantwit Major Adult Education Centre.
Eagleswell Road, C.P.School, Eagleswell Road. Tel: 2755

Restaurants and Cafes:-
Quaintways, Colhugh Street. Tel: 2321
West House Hotel,West Street. Tel: 2406
New Cafe, Boverton Road.   Tel: 2377
Fryery Fish Restaurant, Boverton. Tel: 2 61
Old Swan Inn, The Square. Tel: 2230
Boverton Castle, Boverton. Tel: 2428
Cross Keys Hotel, The Strand. Tel: 2494
Tea & Coffee Lounge,Intercraft,Boverton Road.
Tudor Tavern, Kings Head.

Hotels, Guest Houses: -
West House Hotel, West Street. Tel: 2406
Highcroft, Cowbridge Road.

Llantwit Major Town(Community) Council
Council Chamber.Town Hall (Meetings last Tuesday,each month)
Clerk: E.A.Lloyd Esq.,Llys Wen,Beach Road. Tel: 2354
Community Councillors:
  Mayor: Councillor A.C.W.Davies,Eastleigh,Llanmaes Rd.
Dep.Mayor: "   J.David Evans,Godre Coed,   (Tel:2246)
                    Plymouth Street.Tel: 2535
Councillor Mrs Maureen Deere, St. Davids Avenue
  "   Gwyn John, Ashgrove, High Street,
  "   Philip Jones, Tudor House,Llanmaes Rd. Tel:3316
  "   Mrs J.Pearce, 10 Windmill Lane
  "   Marcus Pearce, 10 Windmill Lane
  "   W.Llewelyn Powell,Bowlee,High Meadow. Tel:2934
  "   Charles Thomson,Brook Cottage,College St.Tel:2801
  "   Mrs.Lorna S.Hughes,Dunloe,Llanmaes Road. Tel:2686
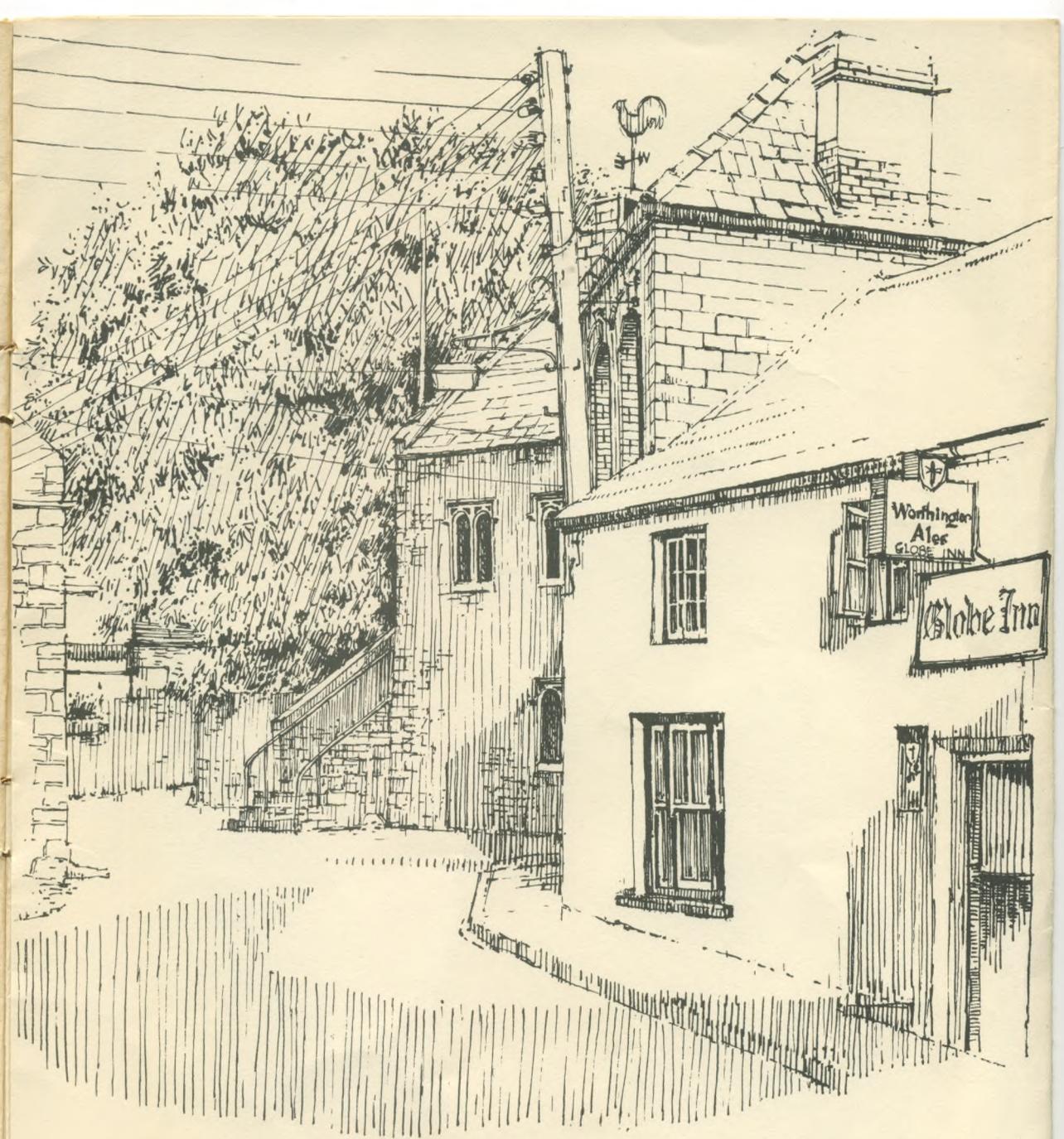 "   Oswald J.Rees,Crossways,West Street (deceased)
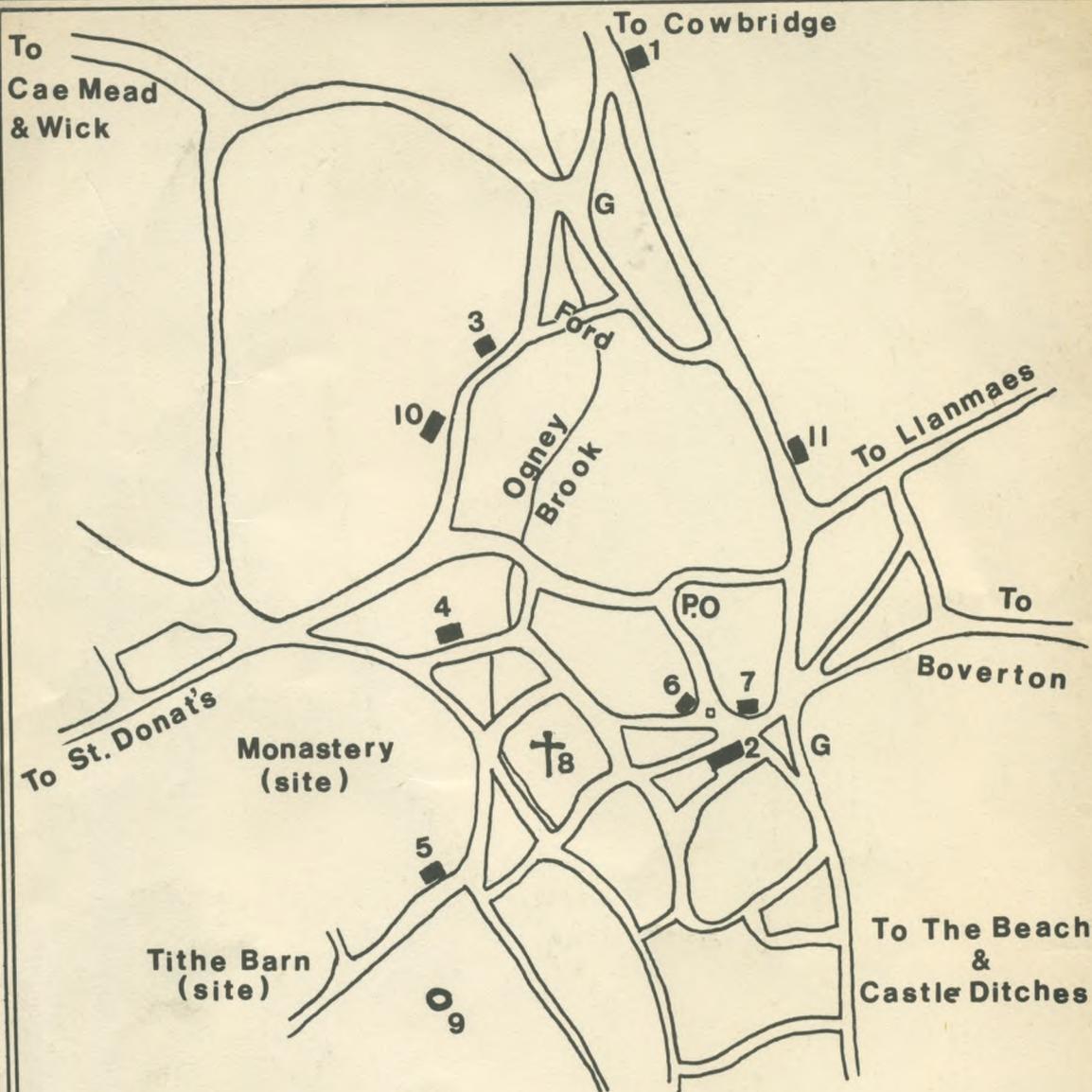District Councillors: Mrs.Lorna S.Hughes,
                      Mr.David C.Thomas,21 Fairfield Rise
                                              (Tel:2652)
District & County: Mr.Jack George,Yr Hafod Colhugh Street,
                                              (Tel:2207)

County Councillor: D.C.Percy,Penderi,Voss Park Drive,
                                              (Tel:2531)

To Cowbridge

To Cae Mead & Wick

G

Ford

3

10

Ogney Brook

11

To Llanmaes

P.O

To St. Donat's

4

Monastery (site)

6   7

8

2   G

To Boverton

5

Tithe Barn (site)

O 9

To The Beach & Castle Ditches

1. Great House
2. Town Hall
3. Castle
4. Plymouth House
5. Gate House
6. The White Hart

7. The Swan Inn
8. St. Illtyd Church
9. Dovecot
10. West House
11. Court House
G = Garage