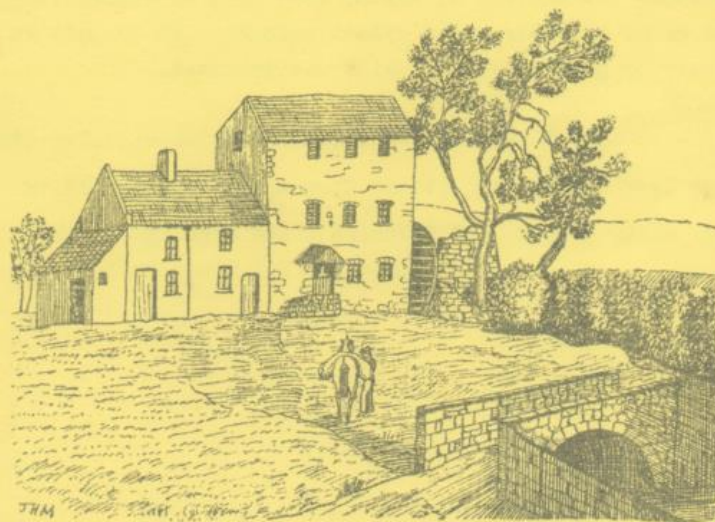


ROATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

VOL. 1, No. 3, DECEMBER 1983

Project Newsletter



ROATH MILL

The ROATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY was formed in November 1978. Its objects include collecting, interpreting and disseminating information about the old ecclesiastical parish of Roath, which covered an area which includes not only the present district of Roath but also Splott, Pengam, Tremorfa, Adamsdown, Pen-y-lan and parts of Cathays and Cyncoed.

Meetings are held every Thursday during school term at 7.15 p.m. at Albany Road Junior School, Albany Road, Cardiff.

The Society works in association with the Extra-mural Department of the University College, Cardiff who organise an annual series of lectures (Fee:£8.50) during the Autumn term at Albany Road School also on Thursday evenings. Students enrolling for the course of ten Extra-mural lectures may join the Society at a reduced fee of £3. for the period 1 January to 30 September 1984.

The ordinary membership subscription for the whole year (1 October to 30 September 1984) is £5.

Members receive free "Project Newsletters" containing results of research as well as snippets of interest to all who wish to find out more about the history of Roath. They have an opportunity to assist in group projects under expert guidance and to join in guided tours to Places of local historic interest.

Chairman: Alec Keir, 6 Melrose Avenue, Pen-y-lan, Cardiff. Tel.482265

Secretary: Jeff Childs, 30 BIRTHDIR Street, Cathays, Cardiff. Tel.40038

Treasurer: Gerry Penfold, 28 Blenheim Close, Highlight Park, Barry, S Glam Tel: (091) 742340

The illustration on front cover is reproduced from a sketch by John Robson Matthews p.105 Vol.111 of Records of the County Borough of Cardiff.

ROATH 150 Years Ago

From: A Topographical Dictionary of Wales. S.Lewis. (London 1833)

ROATH (RHATH), a parish in the hundred of KIBBOR, county of Glamorgan, South Wales, 1½ mile (N.E.by E.) from Cardiff, containing 272 inhabitants.

Rhath, the original name of this place, is a common Welsh designation for ancient earthworks, of which there are several in the immediate vicinity: the late Mr Edward Williams, the Glamorganshire antiquary, supposed this name to be derived from the station Ratostabius, which he places at Cardiff.

The parish is situated on the western bank of the river Romney, over which there is a bridge of one arch, and on the great western road through the county. Its surface, forming an extent of about one thousand five hundred acres, is nearly perfect flat, except that to the north of the village there is a gentle rise. The Romney, which here separates the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth, formerly inundated the moors to a great extent, but an embankment has been constructed within the last few years, which has confined it to its proper channel. The quality of the soil is various, the upper lands towards the north being a red stiff clay, and the flat ground being composed of sandy loam and gravel, which, towards the moors, become covered with tenacious clay, fit for making bricks.

The parish contains several good gentlemen's houses, of which Plas Newydd, in the castellated style, the property of T.M.Richards, Esq., is the principal. It is divided into three lordships, namely, Roath Tewkesbury, Roath Dogfield, Roath Keynsham: the manorial rights of the two former belong to the Marquis of Bute, and those of the latter to Sir C. Morgan, Bart.,

The living is a Vicarage not in charge in the archdeaconry and diocese of Llandaf, endowed with £800 royal bounty, and in the patronage of the Marquis of Bute.

The church, dedicated to St Margaret, is a small neat structure: the chancel was rebuilt by the late Marquis of Bute, who also erected, on the northern side of it, a splendid mausoleum for his family, where he and the late Marchioness and Lord Mountstuart are interred.

Near the centre of the rising ground to the north of the village is a spring of pure water, called Penylan Well, which has been enclosed, and is greatly resorted to by all classes on Easter Monday, when it is supposed that charms are wrought, fortunes foretold, and wishes registered at the mystic stream.

The average annual expenditure for the maintenance of the poor is £233.13.

.....

OVERLEAF (Page 17) IS The FIRST INSTALMENT OF AN "A to Z" GUIDE TO PLACE NAMES IN ROATH.

.....

ABBOTSLAND

A tenement on Roath Moor belonging to Pengam referred to in the Survey of the Manor of Roath Keynsham of the 25th May 1703:

"Item we say and present that there are two other parcels of the Lord's Lands, being likewise part of this Lordship, situate in Roath moore, and now in the tenure of the said Edmond Meredith, as lands belonging to the aforementioned tenement called Pengam, whereof one is called by the name of the Back, al's Abbotsland, containing by estimation 8 acres or thereabouts; and the other is called Pedair erw Twch, containing by estimation four acres or thereabouts." (See also the Backs')

ADAMSCROFT

A plot of 15 acres of land at Adamsdown, mentioned in a Minister's Account of 1492 as having been then lately occupied by the Gatekeeper of Cardiff Castle. In 1542 it was stated to contain eight acres.

ADAMSDOWN

The name given to a messuage and parcel of land straddling the boundary of the old Roath parish and Cardiff, in the south west portion of the parish.

The homestead itself and most of the land was within the ecclesiastical parish of Roath. The earliest map is the Bute Estate plan of 1824 - which shows the Adamsdown estate extending to the Bristol Channel in the south and including a strip of land running parallel with the parish boundary just within the eastern boundary of Cardiff; it also included a parcel of land in Cardiff bordered by the highway on the north and the plot on which the County gaol was built in 1839 - the Spital field.

The first mention of Adamsdown is in an Inquisition of 1440 following the deaths of Isabel le Despenser and her second husband, Richard Beauchamp, who as well as being Lord of Glamorgan was also Earl of Warwick. The name occurs again in a rental survey of 1492 of Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford, a document which provides a clue to the origin of the place name:-

"...8s. of the farm of 14 acres and one rood of land lying at Adamsdowne, lately occupied by the Gatekeeper of the Castle...

3s.8d. of the farm of 2 acres of meadow at Landesmede by Adamsdowne lately occupied by the Gatekeeper of the Castle aforesaid.

And for 13s.4d. of the farm of 15 acres of the said land called Adamscrofte, lately occupied by the aforesaid Gatekeeper...

...nevertheless now the said 3 parcels of land and meadow are demised to William Gough in approvement by the Receiver and Auditor, for that John Pawnton, Gatekeeper of the Castle

aforesaid hath that office with the fees and wages unto the same office due and accustomed..."

Later in the same survey but under the heading 'Farms with issues of the manor', the following entry occurs:-

And for 12d. of one acre and one rood of land at Adamesdowne lately demised unto John Coker, now demised to William Gough this year. And for 12d. of the farm of three roods of land lying in Adamesdowne aforesaid, so demised to the same William Gough this year"

Mention is also made of wagon loads of hay from the meadow there which had all disappeared at the time of the surveyor's visit as the hay had all been consumed by the lord's horses.

It should perhaps be explained that in the above translation of the Latin text, the word 'firma' has been rendered as 'farm'. For all intents and purposes it is roughly equivalent to modern day 'rent'.

From the above quoted documents it would be reasonable to assume that Adamsdown was traditionally a perquisite of the office of Gatekeeper (or Porter) of Cardiff Castle. J.Hobson Matthews surmised that the name originated from a certain Adam Kyngot, evidently the porter of the Castle mentioned in the Cardiff municipal charter of 1331. Whoever Adam was, the second element in the place-name indicates that it was his 'down'.

The occasionally occurring version 'Adamstown' is a mis-spelling.

A survey of 1543 tells us that a certain Dio Roberts was paying 2d. rent for "one acre of meadow between the ditch and Adams Downe on the north side". The same document later on refers to a 'parcel of land called Adams Downe containing 11 acres'.

By the opening of the 17th century William Bawdripp of Splott acquired the house and lands of Richard Ivy, viz. 50 acres of meadow and 30 acres of pasture at Adamsdown and numerous other closes in the vicinity claiming that Ivy had held them by lease from him.

In 1795 Henry Hollier moved from his residence at Cathays House to Adamsdown House. Hollier was chief agent of the first Marquess of Bute and John Davies in "Cardiff and the Marquesses of Bute" says "He had a lamentable record as estate agent. There is at least a suggestion that he swindled his employer. "He had been Town Clerk from 29 September 1786 to 5 March 1789. He was Clerk of the Peace for the County of Glamorgan, Collector of H.M. Customs and Receiver General of Taxes.

His public career ended in ignominy when having defrauded the Treasury his landed estate was forfeit to the Crown and sold. He was removed from office of Alderman of Cardiff in 1818 for "bad government".

His residence was acquired by the first Marquess of Bute in 1811 although both Hollier and his son Henry Hollier (junior) appear to have continued in residence there for some years after that.

By 1841 Adamsdown House and Adamsdown Farm were separate tenancies. The house and its grounds, comprising 4½ acres was then occupied by Whitlock Nichol Esq. He had been a widower for 20 years and lived in the house with his two sons and his elder brother, Edward. The Nichols were one of the illustrious families of Glamorgan. Whitlock died in 1855 (his wife had died in 1855)

but his son Frederick Vincent continued to live at Adamsdown until his death in 1855. The house later became a ladies' boarding school run by Miss Martha Vaughan, who had previously had a school at 49 Crockherbtown, Cardiff. The building is described by J.Hobson Matthews as a slated house with yard and extensive barns and outbuildings at the west end of the railway line near the wooden bridge where now is Adamsdown Square. It was demolished c.1875.

Meanwhile the adjoining Adamsdown Farm comprising a homestead, paddock and land of 270½ acres (including 21 acres on Splott Moors) had been leased from Bute in 1841 by William and William Alexander Bradley of the well known Cardiff family. At the time of the census in that year it was occupied by the farm steward, James Gabb and his family and an eighty year old labourer, Edward Williams. Soon afterwards George Roberts came into occupation of the farm. In 1851 he was farming 220 acres of upland and 46 of moor. The census return shows that he was born at the village of Corwen, Montgomeryshire but that his son Edward was born c.1829 at Llandyssul in Cardiganshire. That George Roberts was a man of some social status in Roath is evidenced by the fact that he qualified for enfranchisement by virtue of his occupation of the lands at Adamsdown from 1845 until his death on the 5th April 1868 at the age of 76. A directory of 1855 shows him to be churchwarden jointly with Charles Croft Williams of Roath Court. The same directory also refers to William Williams as farming at Adamsdown.

The South Wales Railway (later the Great Western Railway) sliced through the Adamsdown estate so that the only access to the lands from the farmhouse was by way of a footbridge over the railway line. The railway had been completed by 1850 but 19 years later Waring's map shows no street development south of the railway other than a small rectangle of dwellings adjacent to the railway line described as "Adamsdown Cottages", while immediately south of this site is a rectangle captioned "intended new streets". In fact no new streets were ever built on the site, the Bute agents evidently considering it more remunerative to lease the land for the use of saw mills and timber yards, which exist there to this day (1983) on the south side of Sanquahar Street. When the old Adamsdown Farm was demolished to make room for street development, a new farmstead was built to the east of the timber yards, its exact location being given by J.Hobson Matthews as 48 Sanquahar Street, East Moors.

Rather confusingly, this site is shown on the 1878/9 O.S.6" Survey as Adamsdown House". By that date the new Adamsdown Farm was becoming a farm-house without a farm because of the industrialisation of Adamsdown land on the East Moors. A directory of 1895 tells us that Edward Roberts was still there and his occupation is given as a farmer.

The East Moors is not today regarded as being part of Adamsdown, but historically, it was part of the vast Adamsdown estate of the Butes.

The Bute East Dock had been completed in 1859 and the land lying to the east and south-east of the dock was ideally suited for industrial development. The full story of the rise and fall of the greatest industrial estate in Cardiff must be told elsewhere. It must suffice here to mention the earliest undertaking, the Tharsis Sulphur and Copper Company which was formed in 1866, the proliferation of wagon works and the most momentous event of all- the arrival of the Dowlais Iron Co which started operating there in 1891.

Five years later steel production commenced and in 1901 the company was taken over by Guest Keen and Co. which amalgamated the following year to form Guest Keen & Nettlefolds Ltd. Recessions, changes in demand, new processes and inadequate dock facilities all contributed to take their toll. Steel making came to a halt in 1934 and a completely new plant was commissioned in 1936.

Then followed nationalisation in 1951, de-nationalisation in 1954 and re-nationalisation in 1967. Despite the £9 million capital expansion project completed by 1964, production finally ceased on 28 April 1978.

Today, clearance of the site has been completed and a modern type industrial estate is taking shape. Gone forever is the old familiar skyline of chimneys, cranes, gasometers and sheds.

As for housing development, the Bute Estate laid out a grid of short streets of small terraced houses in the 1880's and 1890's on the north side of Sanquahar Street on the site of the old Adamsdown Cottages between the timber yards and the railway line with street names culled from the almost interminable string of titles of the Marquess of Bute, his family and his Scottish estates. The houses were owned by the Cardiff Cottage Company which had been formed in 1869 and operated by borrowing money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners at 4% p.a. to finance the purchase of the houses which were then rented out for weekly amounts within the means of the artisan class community.

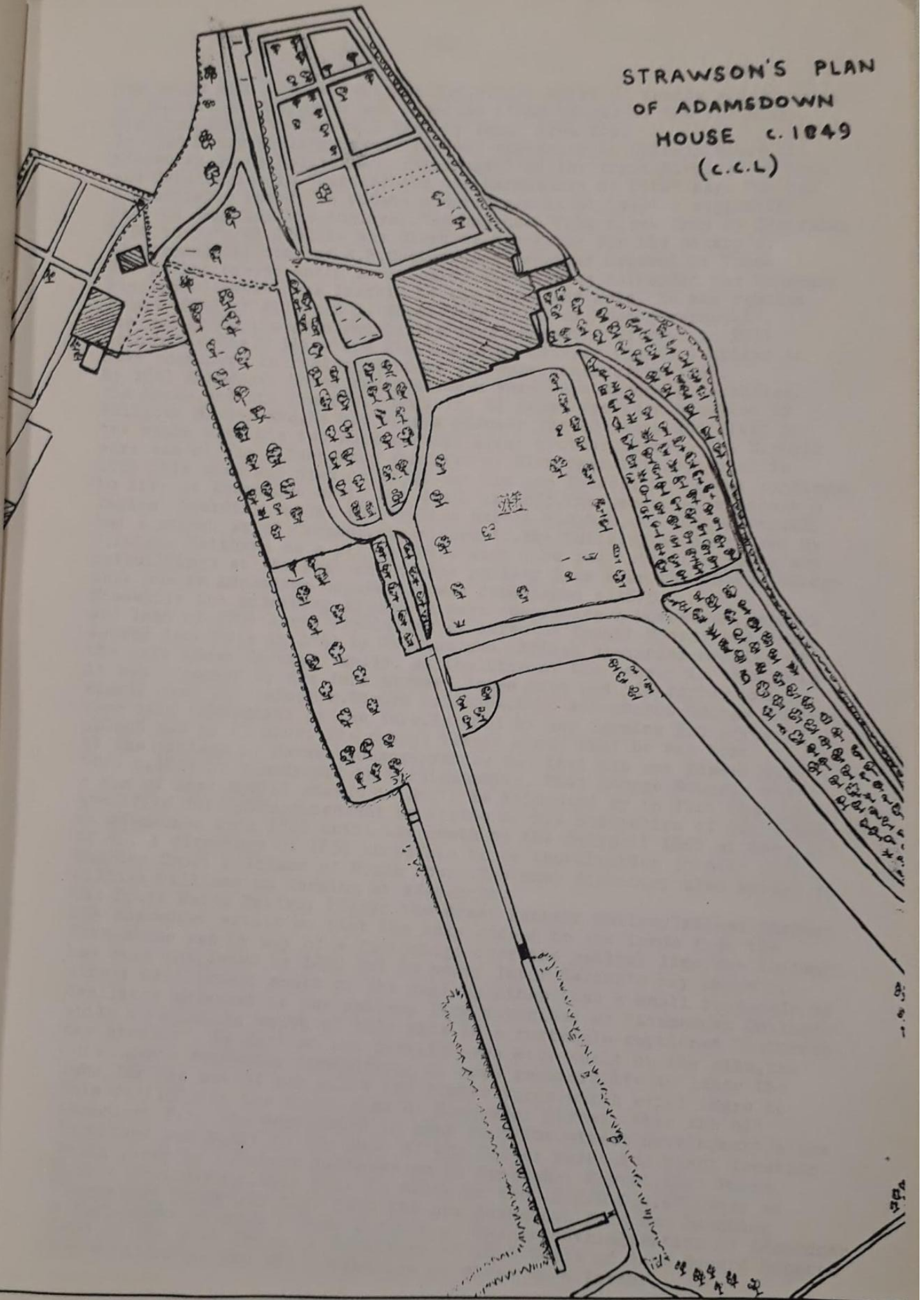
The most extensive housing project however was that of the Dowlais Iron Co. which on the spare land leased from the Bute estate adjoining the iron works built cottages for their workmen. Along this narrow strip of about ten acres stretching towards the foreshore the area which came to be known as Lower Splott sprang up in the late 1880's and early 1890's. Here were Elaine St, Cornelia St, Enid St, Layard St, Swansea St, Menelaus St and Portmanmoor Road. A new iron church dedicated to St. Francis was opened in the district on December 10th 1889.

The whole area was demolished by the Cardiff City Council, over a period in the mid-1960's. The portion of Adamsdown on the north side of the railway line was urbanised in the 1870's, beginning with the building of a Board School in Adamsdown Square in 1875. House plans were being submitted in October 1876 for Galston Street and West Luton Place. A small grid of streets arose between the railway line and Constellation Street - Garesfield St. Galston St, Galston Place, Prince Leopold St and Kames St. The first house plans for Adamsdown Square were approved in January 1877. This area was populated mostly by manual wage earners employed on the railways or docks. Adamsdown Square was one of many gardens and squares in Cardiff handed over in 1888 to the Cardiff Corporation and was in keeping with Bute policy to enhance the ground-rent value of the surrounding leasehold properties.

Today, Adamsdown is in a state of decline. It's church, All Saints, in Adamsdown Square is used as a warehouse. The old Adamsdown cemetery, once the churchyard of St. Mary's, Cardiff has been desecrated. A strong working class community spirit still persists and finds expression through the local Community Trust, while a local housing association has made brave efforts to renovate some of the houses.

In the words of a publication by the Adamsdown Community Trust "Adam's down but not out".

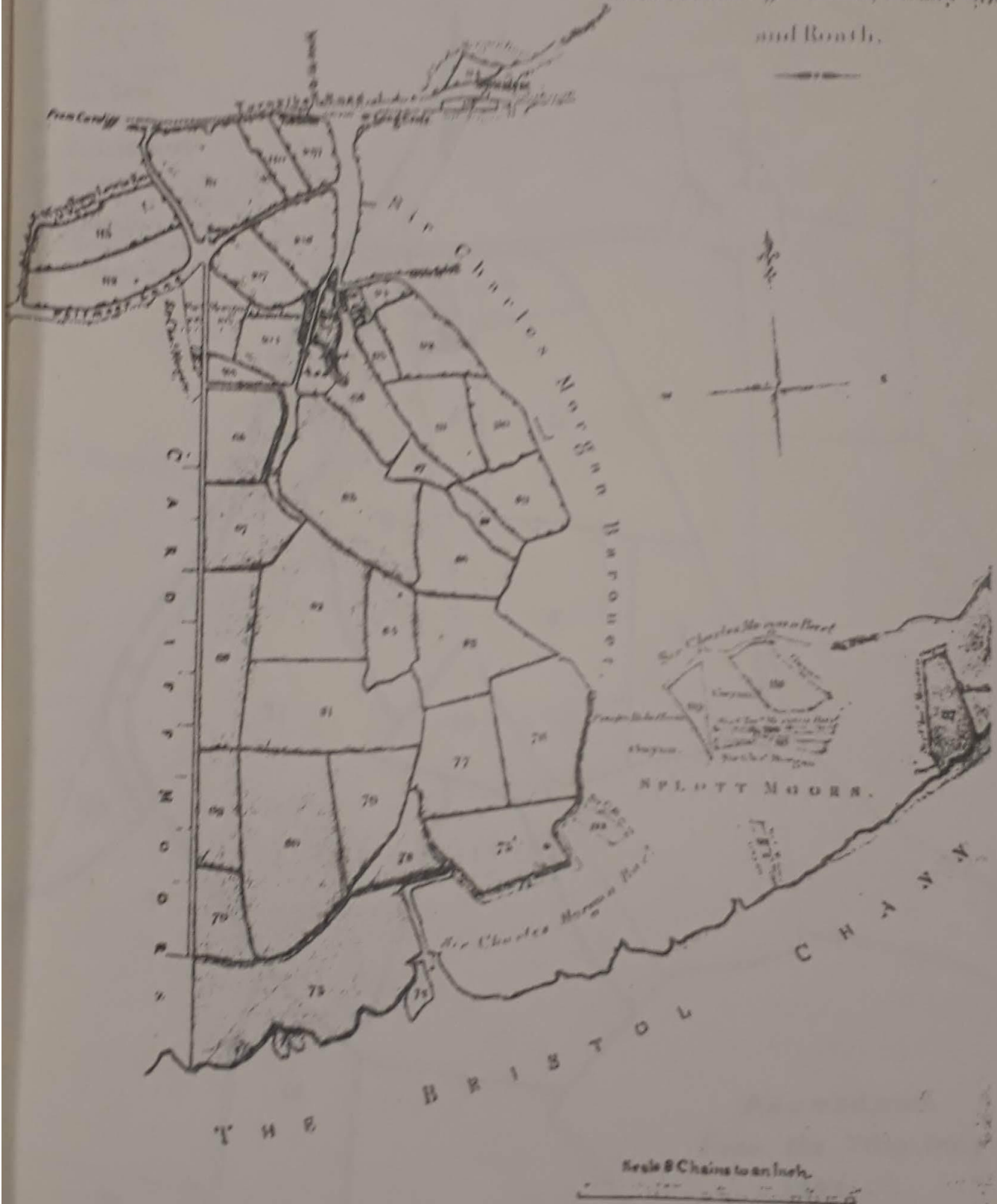
STRAWSON'S PLAN
OF ADAMS DOWN
HOUSE C. 1849
(C.C.L.)



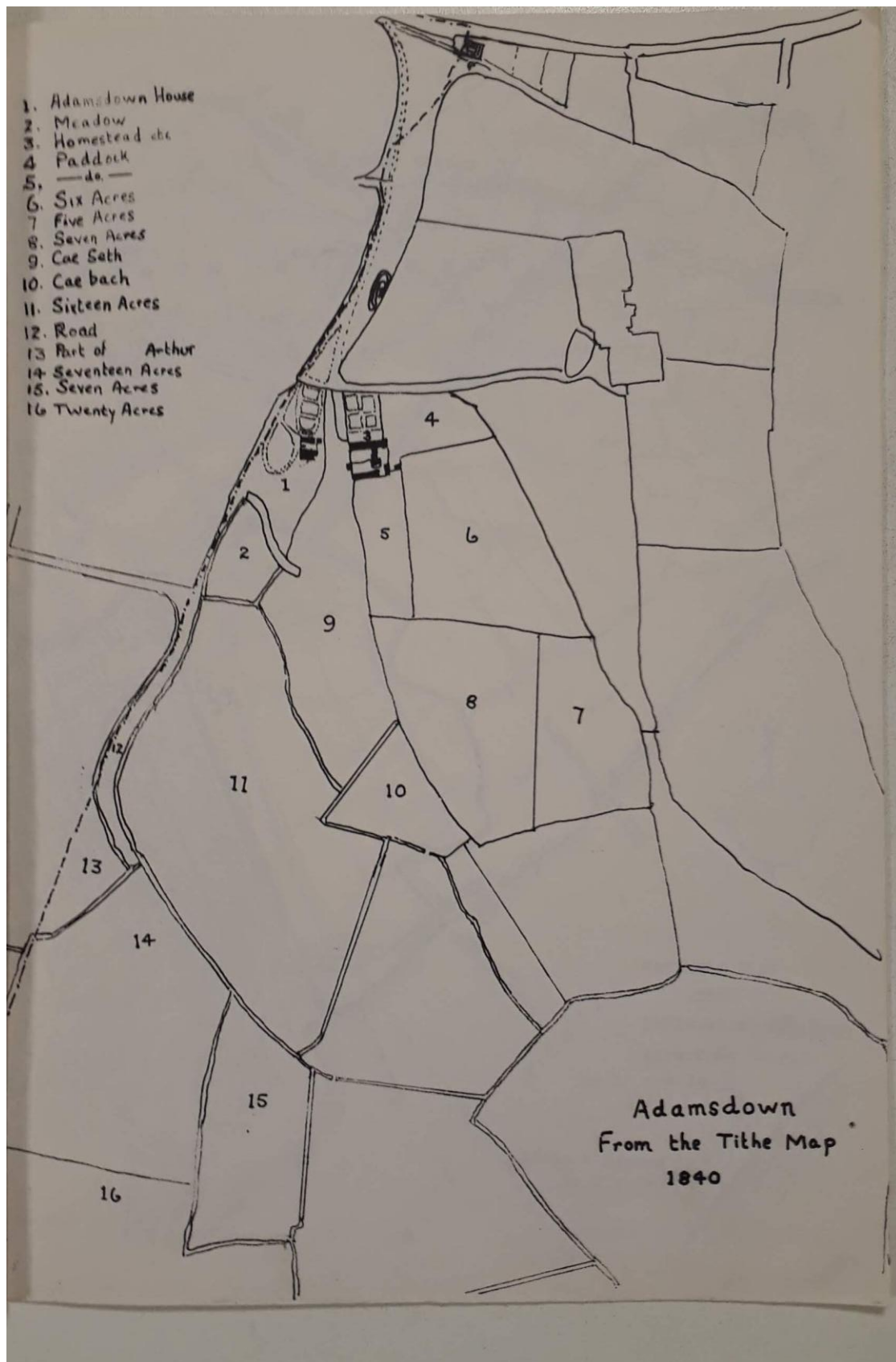
Nº.5.

ADAMSDOWN.

*in the Parishes of St. John & St. Mary Church
and Routh.*



1. Adamsdown House
2. Meadow
3. Homestead etc
4. Paddock
5. —do.—
6. Six Acres
7. Five Acres
8. Seven Acres
9. Cae Sath
10. Cae bach
11. Sixteen Acres
12. Road
13. Part of Arthur
14. Seventeen Acres
15. Seven Acres
16. Twenty Acres





CORRESPONDENCE

The Reverend John R Guy, archivist to the Marsh-Jackson Postgraduate Medical Centre at Yeovil has written in connection with the reference on page 2 of the October Newsletter to Roman pottery in the disused quarry near the former Edward Nicholl Home. He has kindly drawn our attention to an account in the South Wales Echo of 24 September 1963. He writes:

One of the members of the Barry group of archaeologists who found the pottery there was myself, and I recall a fairly large quantity of coarse grey shards being unearthed close to the surface on the quarry face. Because of the site, the thinking in 1963 was that it had once been a signalling station, overlooking as it did the coast road and sea shore.

Although archaeology is strictly not within our terms of reference, the evidence of Roman occupation within the old parish of Roath has evoked considerable interest among our members. We have taken the liberty of reproducing the above quoted article.

SOUTH WALES ECHO 24 September 1963 page 2.

MINISTRY ACTS OVER CARDIFF LAND

ROMAN VILLA MAY BE BURIED ON SITE OF QUARRY

A 1700 year old Roman villa may be buried on a quarry site at Penylan Hill, Cardiff. For years the quarry has been a source of attention to children and anglers - but an eyesore to local residents.

Since 1958 archaeologists have been digging up Romano-British pottery remains, but until recently nothing substantial has been found.

Now a group of amateur archaeologists from Barry claim they have discovered wall foundations beneath the turf on the lip of the quarry.

And the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works have scheduled the site as an ancient monument so that no development can take place before proper excavations are made there.

The site is in line with the proposed Eastern Avenue orbital road," said Ministry officials today.

"There are signs of walls beneath the turf and by scheduling the site as an ancient monument we are making sure that the remains are not destroyed before proper investigation is carried out

SIMILAR FINDS

The Ministry will require three months notice before any development takes place."

Members of the Barry and Vale Archaeological Society first drew the Ministry's attention to the Roman walls. But members of the University College, Cardiff archaeology department have been interested in the site since 1958.

Dr Michael Jarrett, lecturer in archaeology at the University said:

The site may prove very interesting if more work is done there. Pottery has been found three to four feet below the surface and this included pieces of poor quality which could have been thrown away from a pottery kiln.

But if a full-scale villa is found there it would tie in nicely with similar discoveries at Ely, Cardiff, and the area inland from Barry.

HE'S DELIGHTED

The geography of the site is not good for a Roman building of real importance, but, of course it might have been quite different in Roman times. The pottery found so far dates back to the second or third centuries and I would not be really surprised if a villa was discovered. If there is anything to be found it will require large scale digging operations and I am delighted to hear that the Ministry intends to protect the site.

S.W.E. 24.9.1963.

Notes on Adamsdown Maps

Unless otherwise indicated in this series of Newsletters, the 1840 Tithe Map tracings are reproduced 1:1 from the copy supplied by the N.L.W. on which the scale is approximately 6½" to the mile (or, more precisely 1" to 268.4 yards)

This line represents 80 chains or ONE MILE on the Roath Tithe Map

Only the northern portion of the Adamsdown Estate can be accommodated at this scale on A4 size paper. The names of the parcels of land have been taken from the Apportionment Schedule. The entry against Plot No.13 is difficult to decipher on the photocopy supplied by the N.L.W. but looks like "Part of Bue Arthur".

The A4 reproduction of David Stewart's Atlas of 1824 of the Bute Estate does not of course do justice to the superb quality and craftsmanship of the original in the G.R.O. drawn to a scale of 10" to the mile (i.e. 8 chains (one tenth of a mile) to One Inch. The reprographic reduction changes the scale to 5 and one third inches to the mile or 15 chains to 1".

Strawson's large scale plan (of which only a section has been reproduced) held in the C.C.L. is unfortunately undated. I have provisionally placed it as c.1849 as the South Wales Railway (1850) is not shown. The scale and orientation are also absent.

Reminiscences of old Roath Inhabitants.

On 17 October 1896, J.Hobson Matthews indulged in what we would now call "Oral History" when he interviewed some elderly parishioners living at Tai Cochion (The Red Houses). By way of providing some light Christmas reading, it was decided to insert in this number some photo- copied extracts from the Cardiff Records (Vo15. p.324 and pp.328/9) Mention is made of several personal and place names which we have come across in our researches and these will be the subject of notes appearing in future Newsletters.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A GOOD NEW YEAR

TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND READERS

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE SOCIETY WILL BE THURSDAY

12 JANUARY 7.15pm ALBANY ROAD SCHOOL

WILLIAM MORGAN HIER EVANS,¹ Esq, M.B. whose maternal grandfather, Mr. Morgan, occupied Ty Gwyn (otherwise Pen-y-lan farm), the barn of which now forms the convent chapel, said that the well in the present grounds of Well-Field was formerly on the lands of Ty Gwyn. He could not remember that it bore any distinctive name. He wrote: "My mother tells me that the well at Penylan was a bowl with a lip that was supposed to be an impression of Jesus Christ's knee. The water emerged from the rock and was walled over. On Easter Monday a large number of people wended their way thither to drop bent pins into the well, but my mother does not remember that any curative value was attached to the well. My father put a stop to the annual pilgrimage when he became tenant of Ty Gwyn Farm.

"There was a spring² situate in Albany Road, opposite the end of Claude Road, which had the reputation of curing all kinds of eye disease."

The abovenamed Mrs. Evans used to relate a legend to the effect that a lady was compelled to ride on horseback naked around Waun Treoda, as far as Waun Ddyfal, where both horse and rider were weary. In folk-etymology Waun Treoda means "the horse trots "; Waun Ddyfal, " the horse is weary."³

About the year 1860, Dr. Evans often visited the house called Castle Field, near Llystalybont. In the field adjoining the house, after the plough had been through the soil, he and others occasionally found fragments of red (apparently Roman) pottery. and coins which he distinctly remembered were Roman. His uncle long preserved some of these coins.

1. Since deceased, cousin to Mr. J. H. Westyr-Evans, Solicitor.

2. "Yr hen Ffynon Bren " (old Bren Well.) (Close by the well was an old thatched cottage, and a few elms which were still standing in 1896. The cottage was demolished about 1890). Compare the Cornish place-name and surname Branwell.

3 A curious local example of the Godiva legend. The horse figures largely in Welsh folk-lore, especially in connection with prehistoric stone monuments.

4 *Vide ante* Vol. III, p579.

Notes of Information orally given to the Archivist by Mrs MARY HARRIS and Mr JOB RICHARDS, both of Tai Cochion, Roath, 17 October 1896.

I found Mrs. Harris a hale and intelligent woman, aged 81 years. She was born at Rummey, but had lived at Roath nearly all her life. She spoke Welsh much more readily than English, having known no English till she was a full-grown woman. Her daughter, aged about fifty, also spoke Welsh, but less fluently than English. Mr. Richards was then a hearty, clear-headed man of about 70 years. He was born in the parish, at Ffynon Bren Cottage. He spoke Welsh and English with equal fluency.

Ty Cochion³ was so called from the red pantiles with which it was formerly roofed. It was originally the parish poorhouse (H)⁴

The long double cottage in Roath Court field, on the Albany Road, near Claude Hotel, has no distinctive name. It and the other two houses are called "Mr Williams' old houses. The long cottage used to have a thatched roof. (Ty to gwellt oedd o'r blaen.) The Roath village school was the smallest and easternmost of this group of houses, the one where the big ash tree is ("lle mae'r onen fawr)

1. "The red dragon will give a start"
2. "Wales was and Wales will be"
3. *Vide* schedule of Place-names, *sub nomine*.
4. My informant in each case is indicated by the initial letter of his or her surname.

It was kept by a Miss Lewis. The very old thatched cottage in the field opposite the Claude is called Ty'n-y-coly¹(H)

The following were the bridges in the immediate neighbourhood:

Pont y Tredelerch, or Rumney Bridge.

Pont y Rhath, or Roath Bridge, on the Newport Road, across the Nant Mawr by Pengam Lane.

Pont Lleici² carrying the Cefn Coed Lane across the Nant Mawr, at the foot Pen-y-lan.

"The middle bridge" (y bont genol), across the mill-stream by the Roath mill.

"The bridge by the church " (pont gerllaw'r eglwys) across the Nant Mawr (close to Roath Church).

The last two mentioned bridges each consisted of one very large flat stone, so strong that carts could go over it - ("carag fawr iawn dros yr afon") H.R.

Pedair Erw Twc was the name of an old thatched house and land on the west side of Nant Mawr, south of Cyndda Bach. It would be just where the railings of the recreation ground now are, a little further north than the newest of the houses. (H.R.)

Goose Lear of "Gwsler" is the common between Roath Mill and the Deri Farm, where the large droves of geese used to feed (H.R.)

Just south-east of where is now the Claude Hotel was formerly two nameless thatched cottages (H.R.)

Llwyn Celyn was an old thatched house, pulled down years ago. It stood on the west side of Nant Mawr, now the lake. There were several old thatched cottages, on both sides of the Nant, which have been demolished. (R.)

There were a couple of old thatched houses at the back of "Ty hen Ifans y Rhath"³ (the house of old Evans of Roath), by Roath church. The smaller of these was called "the old Clerk's house" and the clerk lived there (H.R.)

Penylan Well was never spoken of otherwise than "hen Ffynon Pen-y-lan"⁴ It was a spring rising from a small bason scooped out of a large stone.

1. Ty'n-y-cwm or Ty-y-cwm. See Schedule of Place names

2. "Pont Licky" (H) "Pont Leeky" (R)

3. Ty Mawr, alias Llys Du

4. Old Pen-y-lan Well

After the Easter Monday fare there, the hollow would be choke-full of bent pins. The fair was called "Ffair Pen-y-lan" and was frequented by crowds of people from the country round (H.R.)

Ffynon Bren was a well situate in the garden of a thatched cottage, by the side of Albany Road, opposite the end of Claude Road. In this house Job Richards was born, and it belonged to his father¹. Job often cleaned out the well himself. There was no masonry around it, but a hedge surrounded it, and approach to the well was over a stile. People came to the well from far and near, with bottles and tins, to carry home the water. They took it, both externally and internally, as a cure for bad eyes. They did not drop pins into the well. His father did all he could to prevent people from going to the well, as they fouled it. It was the finest water he ever knew. You might stir up the mud as much as you liked, but in half an hour the well would be as clear as crystal. It never dried up and never froze. Job has known people come there with pots and pans for water, when they couldn't get it anywhere else. The water of "yr hen Ffynon Bren" was like ice in the summer, and like milk in the winter. "You could drink so much as you'd like at it" (R)

The thatched cottage on Albany Road, among the trees, near the well, was called "Lleison's House" after the man who lived there (H.R.)

Job Richards has heard his father tell how, when he later was a boy, he used to perambulate the bounds of Roath Parish, with other boys. This was locally termed "Walking the feethe". To impress the bounds on their memory, the boys were sometimes pushed into the streams. A boy was once pushed into the Rhymney river; he stuck in the mud, and was rescued with difficulty. Job's father was pushed into the Long Dyke, near the house of that name which stood about where the Splot schools now are. The boys' attention would be called to something, and then someone would push them into the water. When the bounds had been "beaten" the boys were invited to assemble in the evening, and were given a supper with presents of money and other gifts. (R)

1. Apparently it was copyhold at a small fine.