



E-NEWSLETTER APRIL 2026

ROATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1978 by the late Alec Keir. Our focus is on the ancient parish of Roath - the modern-day suburbs of Adamsdown, Splott, Tremorfa, Pengam, Plasnewydd, Penylan, parts of Cathays and Cyncoed as well as Roath itself.

Our lively and interesting meetings are held at 7.30pm on the second Wednesday of the month from September through to May. See [Programme](#) for details. We meet at [St Edward's church](#), Westville Road, Pen-y-lan, Cardiff CF23 5DE. Annual membership is just £13 ([membership form](#)) and visitors are welcome to attend any meeting, in person or on Zoom for £3.

In May, June and July we undertake a series of trips to places of historic interest in Cardiff and the wider South Wales area.

Our Life President is Jeff Childs and our Life Members, appointed in recognition of the service they have given to the Society, are Dr Diane Brook, Gwyn Smith, Judith Hunt, Peter Gillard, Martin Sheldon and David Parry.

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EDITOR'S WELCOME

We have some excellent articles in this month's edition – many thanks to the contributors.

An idle thought struck me - why are there no statues of Queen Victoria in Cardiff? Of course, we have Queen Street (which is home to the statue of Nye Bevan) and there's also Victoria Park, but the only statue there is of Billy the Seal! I gather that Victoria never visited Cardiff during her long reign (1837-1901). An editorial comment in the Weekly Mail of 11 May 1901 suggests a reason why.



Photo credit: [Ben Salter on Flickr](#)
[Creative commons](#)

Lady Flora Hastings was Victoria's mother's Lady-in-Waiting, who, along with Sir John Conroy, conspired to keep young Victoria away from her Hanoverian uncles. After Victoria ascended the throne, she bore a grudge against Lady Flora, and when the unmarried Flora showed signs of a swelling stomach, Victoria encouraged a rumour that Flora was pregnant by Sir John Conroy. The rumour was false – Lady Flora had advanced liver cancer, and she died shortly afterwards at the age of 33, in 1839, just two years into Victoria's reign. Victoria was said to be haunted by guilty memories of Lady Flora, having nightmares about her for years afterwards. So much for the history lesson.

Of relevance to Cardiff is that Lady Flora Hastings was the sister of Sophia (after whom the eponymous gardens are named), wife of the 2nd Marquess of Bute. The Weekly Mail says that there was a coolness between Bute and the Queen because of the treatment of Lady Flora, and when the Royal Yacht visited Cardiff Bay, the blinds of Cardiff Castle were drawn, indicating that the Marquess was most definitely not at home to visitors.

I don't know if any ill-feeling was felt by the 3rd Marquess, although his conversion to Catholicism is unlikely to have enamoured him to Victoria. However, the 4th Marquess welcomed King Edward VII, Victoria's son, when he and Queen Alexandra visited Cardiff in 1907. The King officially opened the Queen Alexandra Dock and the new City Hall, with the King later dining at Cardiff Castle. Perhaps the Butes' downer on Queen Vic explains why, in contrast to other UK cities, there's so little in Cardiff to commemorate her reign – can anyone better informed than me shed some light on the matter?

I have a personal request – I am researching one of my relatives who was bandmaster with the 2nd South Wales Borderers between 1906 and 1915. Does anyone have a copy of "*A Clash of Cultures - The South Wales Borderers at Tsingtao 1914*" by John Dixon that I might borrow please? Copies of this book seem to be as rare as hens' teeth.

Jon Roberts
Newsletter Editor

Thomas Merton – monk

by Eleanor Williams



Editor's note: Eleanor's article was originally written for another publication to coincide with the beginning of March.

On Saint David's day, we should talk about Thomas Merton. He was a monk in Kentucky. Here's how his biography starts,

"Thomas Merton (1915-1968) is arguably the most influential American Catholic author of the twentieth century. His autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, has sold over one million copies and has been translated into over fifteen languages. He wrote over sixty other books and hundreds of poems and articles on topics ranging from monastic spirituality to civil rights, nonviolence, and the nuclear arms race."

And that might make him sound very single minded and even a bit dryly earnest. Yet this Trappist monk was anything but. He had had a colourful past (his biography says he had, 'a rambunctious youth and adolescence') and interesting people like Joan Baez, the

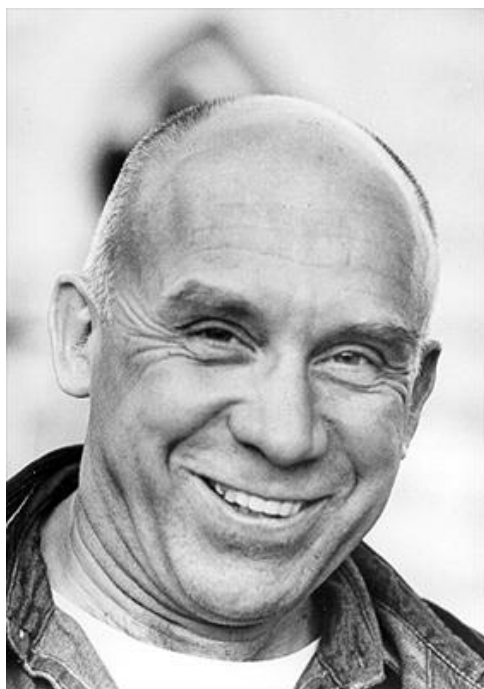
legendary singer-songwriter and sometime girlfriend of Bob Dylan, visited him in the monastery. When he was fifty-one, he went to hospital and had a passionate affair with one of his young nurses. He was tortured by whether he should stop being a monk and marry her. He didn't and died, not long after, when an electric fire fell into his bath near Bangkok exactly twenty-seven years after he had first entered the monastery. Also, after he had met the Dalai Lama who praised him as having a more profound understanding of Buddhism than any other Christian he had known.

But why should we talk about him on St David's Day? Well, it turns out that this boy-and-a-half had Welsh origins. His paternal grandmother was Gertrude Grierson (1855-1956). "She is one of the people of whom I retain the strongest impression of my childhood, she taught me the Lord's prayer." She married Alfred Merton in Christchurch, New Zealand. Gertrude had emigrated, as a child with her parents, from Cardiff in 1864. Gertrude's father was John Grierson and her mother was Elizabeth Bird Grierson.

So far, so straight forward. But at this point, I became lost in a flock of Birds. They were an august Cardiff family, it seems. And I really couldn't unravel the genealogy to work out who was who. With huge thanks to Ted Richards of the Roath Local History Society, it all started to make sense. Elizabeth was the daughter of William Bird, the mayor of Cardiff in 1850, who when not performing civic functions, was a publisher and bookseller in Duke St. opposite the castle.

Thomas Merton's great, great grandfather was, as mayor of Cardiff, a pillar, or perhaps a crenellation, of the Welsh establishment. And although remote in terms of history and geography from each other, they might have been quite similar when it came to what they esteemed. Here's Thomas Merton on the subject of books,

"Books can.....speak to us like God when they bring us light and peace and fill us with silence."



Such twinkling hwyl in his reverential awe – St David would have been proud.

Editor's postscript:

Thomas Merton's autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain* is available to borrow from Cardiff Libraries (I've borrowed it, so you'll have to wait!). There is also an extensive [Wikipedia entry](#) about him.

I shall also write a small piece in next month's newsletter about William Bird and another of his famous descendants.

St Anne's Church & Gill Organs

By Tim Lynes and Nicky Macartney

Introduction

I was an organist at St Anne's church in Snipe Street, Cardiff between 1999 and 2015 when it closed and the building was taken over by Urban Crofters. I was initially one of two organists and got into it by accident when a friend asked if I could play some hymns for a service to help the church out. Playing the organ was quite a challenge, it had a mechanical action which makes it harder to play compared to an electronic keyboard, especially if many stops are pulled out. Although the organ needed tuning and maintenance the sound of the instrument with the acoustics of the church was surprisingly good! Towards the end of my time at St Anne's I used an electronic keyboard and speakers, especially if we used the church hall, as the church was too difficult to heat convincingly in winter.

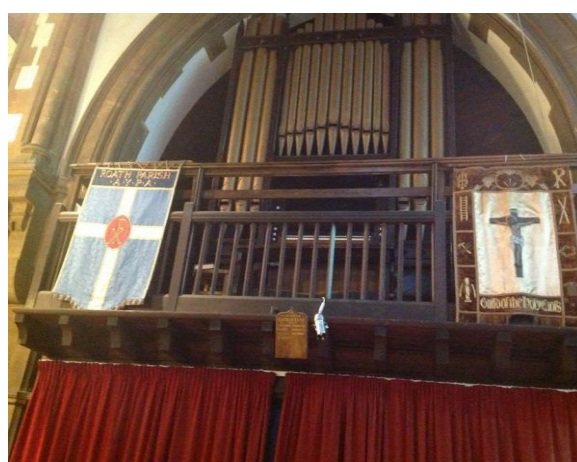
I knew almost nothing about the organ during my time at St Anne's, but later found out it was built by Chas Gill, who was a local organ builder based in Cottrell Road. According to the St Martin in Roath website, the organ had been partly created from pipes from another organ in a Southampton church. The organ was moved from St Martin's in Albany Road to St Anne's around 1905, when St Martin's installed a new organ.

The organ had two manuals (keyboards) and a pedalboard and had a very modest set of stops, including one (Cornopean 8'), which was so out of tune as to be unusable. More information about the organ is available from the National Pipe Organ Register (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/P00470>)

I have fond memories of playing for many services, especially the atmospheric midnight mass when the church would often be packed with slightly worse-for-wear revellers.



View from the organ loft at St Anne's 2015



St Anne's Church Organ Loft

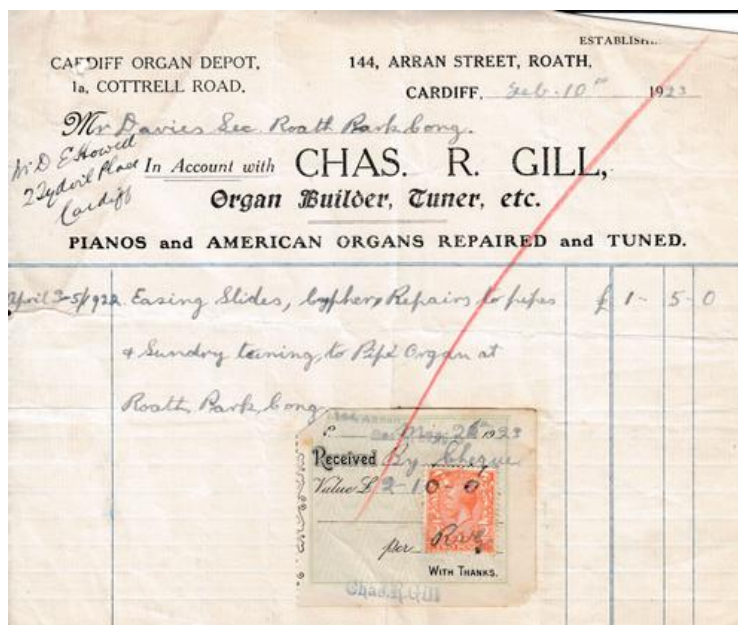
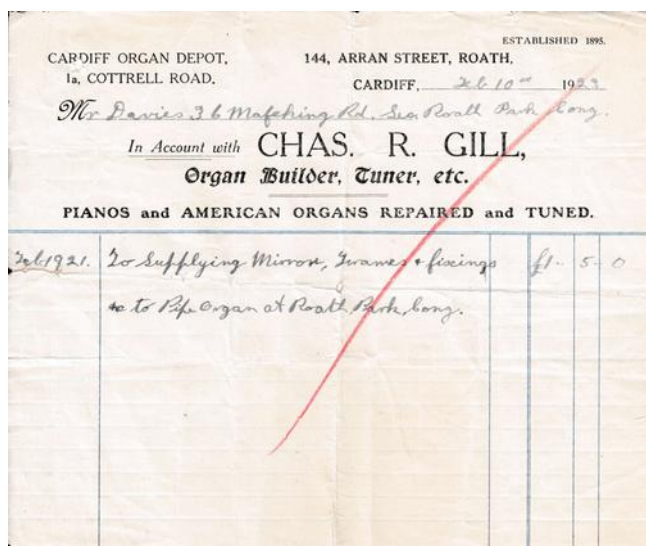
The last event to take place at St Anne's was on Christmas Eve 2015 and the organ was subsequently broken down and its parts were distributed to other venues.



I was lucky enough during my time at St Anne's to play for a funeral service at St Edward's Church in Westville Road, which is also a Gill organ. This was built in 1923 at a cost of £1,130 and is a 3 manual organ, currently (Spring 2026) undergoing refurbishment and is now the largest extant Gill installation. Another significant Gill installation in Roath was the organ in St James' on Newport Road, built in 1925 and rebuilt in 1926 following a fire. St James' church was sold to developers in 2007 and is now apartments.

Gill's Cardiff Organ Depot / Works

Whilst scanning some material for the Roath Local History Society I came across some invoices for maintenance work completed by his company for Roath Park Congregational Church.



The two invoices, dated 10 February 1923, show Chas R. Gill's company was Cardiff Organ Depot, established in 1895, based in Cottrell Road for the main building and construction work and 144 Arran Street was for correspondence. The invoices are for maintenance work on a pipe organ in Roath Park Congregational Church that was carried out by Gill. On

one occasion, in February 1921, the pipe organ required a new mirror, frames and fixings, whilst in April 1922, he needed to fix a pipe 'cipher' ie to unstick an air valve to allow it to close when the note had stopped being pressed. Obviously, some re-tuning was then necessary. Roath Park Congregational Church is now the Tabernacle Church in Pen-y-wain Road and as far as I can tell the organ there was built by Blckett & Howden, of Newcastle, Cardiff & Glasgow (<https://npor.org.uk/survey/P00572>) and not the Gill company.

I was interested to find out more about the Gill organ company. The workshop was based in 1a Cottrell Road which is now occupied by Limegreentangerine, a design company.



1a Cottrell Road

Limegreen Studios

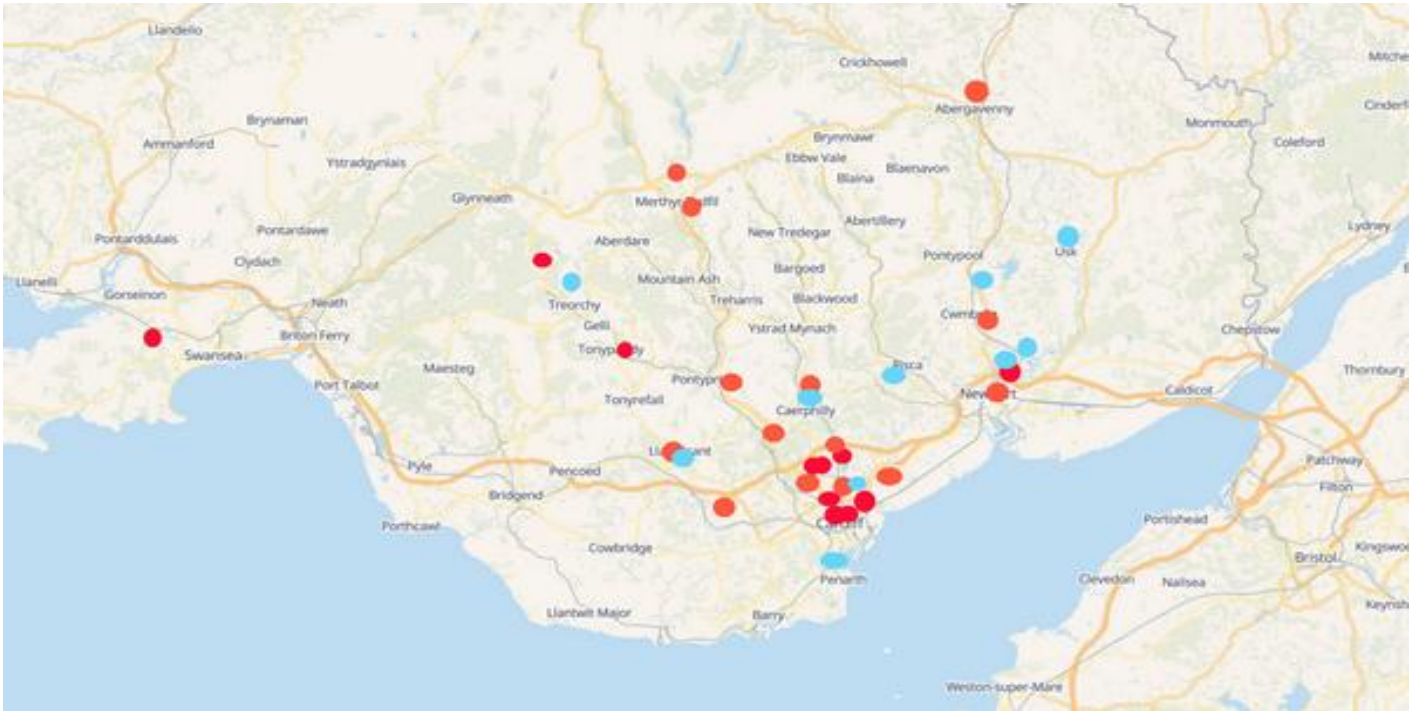
The Gill company was founded by Charles Richard (Chas) in 1895 and taken over by his son, Richard Vernon Gill (Vernon) in 1951 and was active until 1972. Vernon died in 1990 and more information about the Gill family is below.



Scope of the Gill Organ Company

I was interested to find out more about the scope of the Gill company. The National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR.org.uk) contains information about organ builders and I found 43 entries for organs that had been built or installed by the Gill company during its existence. This data may well be incomplete, but it is interesting to see the geographical extent of the company. There would have been hundreds of organ builders during the period of activity of Gill, but the industry has been declining for many years and indeed has an "Endangered" status on it according to the Heritage Crafts organisation (<https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/craft/organ-building/>).

On a recent visit to Nicholson & Co, organ builders based near Malvern in England, they confirmed that there are perhaps as few as 200 to 300 professionals in the UK now, down from a high of around 6000 just after the Second World War.

I have plotted the Gill organs on a map to show the geographical spread of their work.



-  Works by Chas Gill
-  Works by "Gill"
-  Works by RV Gill

You can see that most of the work were concentrated closer to Cardiff where they were based. The key shows the Chas Gill original company work in blue, but unfortunately the NPOR has entries for just "Gill" as builder, so it is not possible to distinguish between the father or son Gill company.

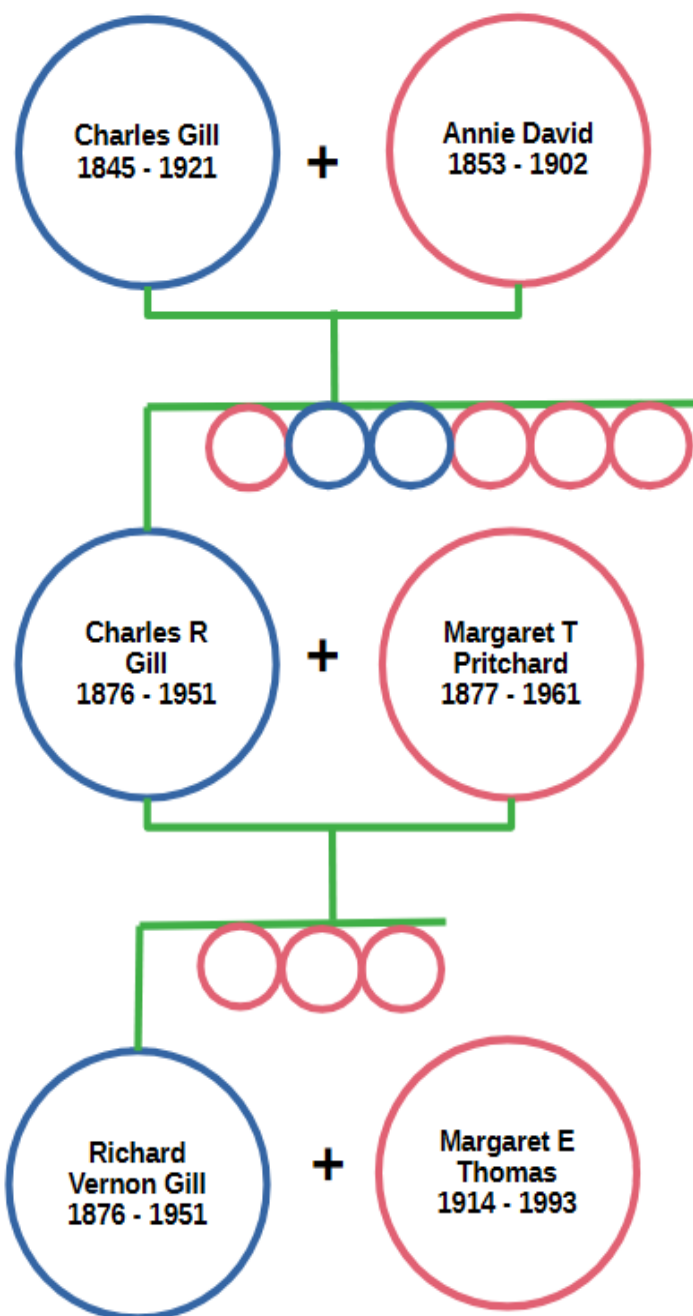
Gill's works also found homes further afield. One example, built in 1899 when Chas Gill was about 22, made its way to the US in 1964 and in 1995 was installed in St Anne's Catholic Church, Ruskin, Florida. Prior to that it belonged to organ enthusiast Joseph Blandon of Texas. Another Gill organ, a 1903 tracker action pipe organ was installed in St Catherine's Anglican Chaplaincy in Stuttgart in 2011, after being dismantled and transported to Germany from where it had been kept in storage (pictured right).



The Gill Family

Three generations of the Gill family were active in the Roath community. Chas Gill was born in Cardiff in 1876 to Charles and Annie and he had 6 siblings. Charles senior was mostly a general labourer, originally from Dundry in Somerset, but also worked as a railway wagon labourer and oil inspector at an Oil Works (location not specified). Annie was born in Llanilid, near Bridgend.

The Gill Family Tree



Chas is described in the 1891 census as an 'organ builder's assistant' at age 14. and 'organ builder' in 1901 aged 24. By 1911, he is working in a former blacksmith's workshop at 1a Cottrell Road, the Cardiff Organ Depot (also known as Cardiff Organ Works), with his 14 year old son, Vernon, who is an apprentice here. They are living at 144 Arran Road, which had previously been his parents' and siblings' family home for a few years. His widowed father had by then moved in with his eldest daughter, Mary Jane, and her family at 570 Cowbridge Road.

In the Western Mail of 30 November 1901, there is an advertisement for the sale of a 2 manual pipe organ, 'splendid tone, modern instrument, practically new, temporarily erected at the Plasnewydd Church (The Gate as it is now)'. Interested parties are urged to contact Charles R Gill at 144 Arran St.

On his death, in 1951, at 68 Connaught Rd, Chas left £2306, 7s, 9d.

Chas' wife was Margaret Thomas Pritchard, from Blaenau-Ffestiniog. They married in 1906. She qualified as a nurse from Chester

General Infirmary in 1901. By 1921, she is back working as a nurse and in the 1939 register, she is described as the proprietress of the Connaught Nursing Home, 68/70 Connaught Road, which was for mothers and babies, which was still active in 1943. Do you know of anyone who was born there? The building is now the Masjid Umar Mosque.



68 Connaught Road as it is today – the Majid Umar Mosque

Vernon is mentioned in the Western Mail of 14th September 1932 as having formally opened the new electrically-blown organ, a gift from the late Mrs Potter Jones, at the Horeb English Baptist Church in Treorchy, by giving an organ recital. One assumes that Mr Gill had some involvement in the building and installation of said organ, but no official mention is made. It does, however, suggest he was suitably proficient at playing the instrument as well as constructing and repairing it.

By 1939, Vernon Gill, Charles' and Margaret's eldest son, was living with his wife, Margaret Eluned at 7 Llandough Street (between Miskin Street and Senghennydd Road) and is described as '*Church organ builder and tuner, chiefly wood, also sheepskin and rubber fabric and some machinery*', and he also volunteered as an ARP warden. By 1949, we know that they were living at 72 Amesbury Road.

When he died in 1990 in Dinas Powys, he left the princely sum of £100,000 and the Cardiff Organ Works was transferred to David Balch. The Cottrell Road works was used as a stage lighting company before becoming a design studio for LimeGreenTangerine in 2006.

The Spy at Number 82

by Jon Lloyd

As the South Wales coalfield boomed a group of German industrialists founded, at 36 Park Place, a UK distributor for H. Flottmann & Co, of Bochrum in the Ruhr region. It was 1907 and the parent company had launched one of the best pneumatic drills available for making blasting holes in the mining industry. Easy to use at only a couple of feet long and capable of 1000 strikes per minute it sold widely, as the Cardiff arm became Flottmann (British) Drill Co. Ltd and moved to Allensbank Works, a compressed air facility built next to the Taff Vale Railway Roath branch where Clodien Avenue meets Allensbank Road.



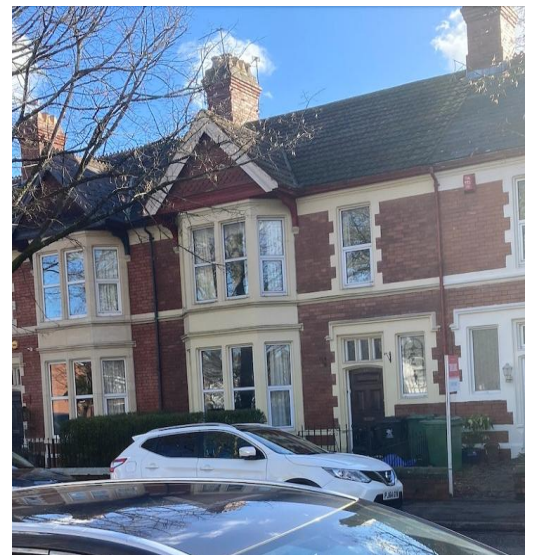
The Flottman pneumatic drill
(Credit europeana.eu C.C. licence)

With developing technology, the company increased its product range and continued to expand, and in autumn 1935 took on a new managing director, Hans Henri Kuhnemann from Koblenz, a former Prussian guards officer. Kuhnemann first lodged at the Park Hotel. In his book on Cardiff's wartime Dennis Morgan recounts how the manager there had to curb Anglo-German nights with their toasts to Hitler and the smashing of glasses in the fireplace etc.

Kuhnemann moved briefly to The Towers on Hollybush Road, adjacent to fellow director Adolf Sgonina, before settling at 82 Marlborough Road. What the firm didn't know was that Kuhnemann had been planted by German intelligence, his role to compile photos and technical information on industrial sites and transport infrastructure such as ports and bridges. These were later proven to have informed German map-making and directly led to specific air raid targeting.

He also led a local Nazi cell with members drawn from Cardiff and Newport though it's not thought that numbers were ever significant.

A contemporary description of Kuhnemann was "all dressed in black, with steel rimmed glasses and a limp." At work he was open on politics, with a swastika and photographs of

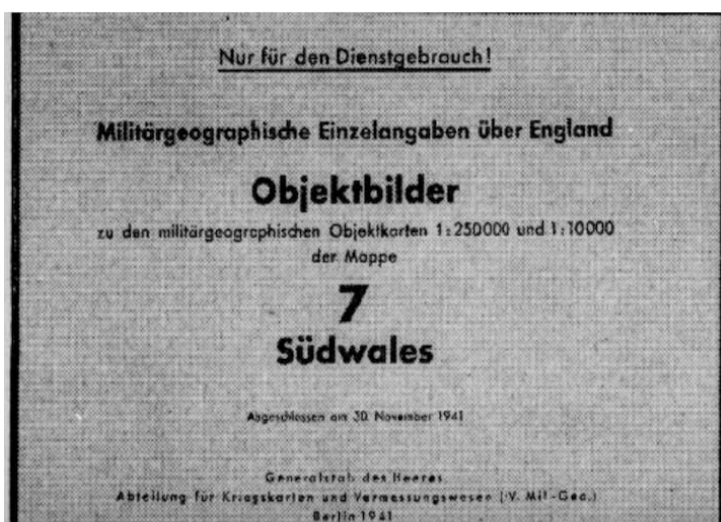


The Marlborough Road home of Hans Henri Kuhnemann

Nazi leaders in his office, and particular pride in the one of himself with Ribbentrop, then Uk ambassador. Not a reluctant party member he had joined enthusiastically on the first day possible, 1st January 1933. In later years a colleague reflected how they thought Kuhnemann didn't seem to know much about mining, however this colleague hadn't made any connection with subversive activity. A well-known figure at the German Embassy, Kuhnemann's letters to Goebbels and Goering had full use of diplomatic bags. He also holidayed with Ribbentrop at Ilfracombe.

Not all colleagues were naive, and Flottmann company secretary Herbert Steer, of Rhydypenau Road, was in fact keeping an eye on Hans for the authorities. Kuhnemann drank heavily and Steer used this to draw out indiscretions. On one occasion when they were in London he found himself introduced to a house meeting of a dozen nazi sympathisers, Kuhnemann boasting of having had an evacuation plane on standby should the Munich agreement have failed.

So what sort of thing did Kuhnemann get up to? Within a year of joining the firm he had arranged a German government invitation to the HM Mines Inspectorate to visit German mines and compare conditions.



Part of the material issued for Luftwaffe targeting during missions over the UK, informed by Kuhnemann's activities.

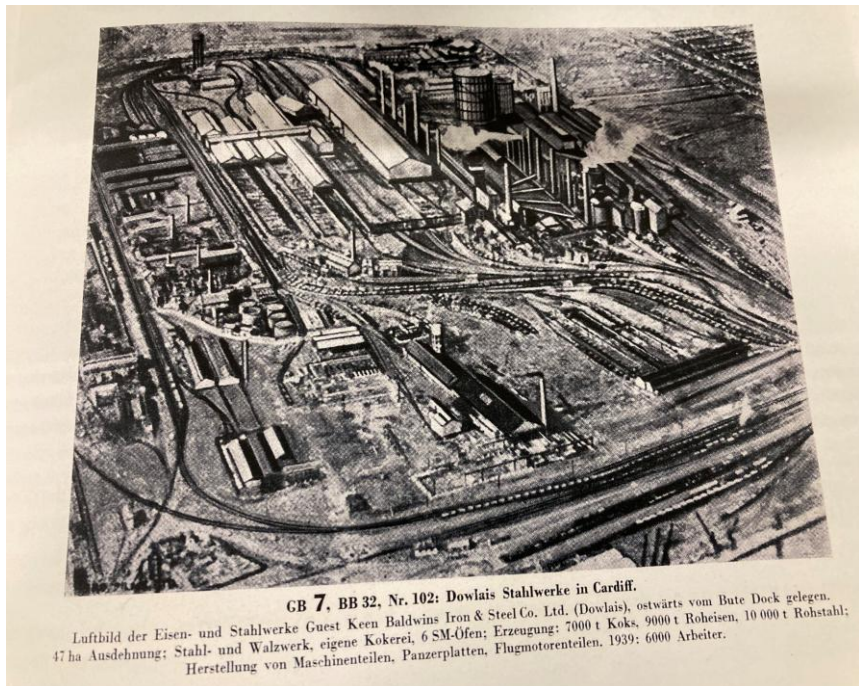
(Courtesy NARA)

possible, military and industrial sites. He toured the Llandarcy oil refinery and Ebbw Vale. A particular practice was to take "pleasure flights" from Pengam airport where his aerial pictures were later especially valuable to the enemy.

Kuhnemann went too, making connections and collecting potentially useful information. As a leading figure in Cardiff's Anglo-German society he was key when, in July 1937, 21 members of the Hitler Youth movement were hosted for the day and they visited Welsh factories. (They were touring the UK from Rydal school in North Wales whose headmaster had invited them).

Kuhnemann also made himself known as a keen amateur photographer. As he travelled South Wales and the Midlands for business, he would note information on, and take photograph of where

Summer 1937 was busy. In July Prof. Jones of the University mining department on Newport Road hosted a party of German mining students, Kuhnemann hosting a lunch at Flottmann. There were further meets at the museum, city hall and castle to which all the leading coal owners were invited (they were sponsoring the exchange). In return the Cardiff students visited Westphalia to see the latest Flottmann equipment in use. A group of six worked as German miners for eight weeks and were paid the equivalent of £12 per month.

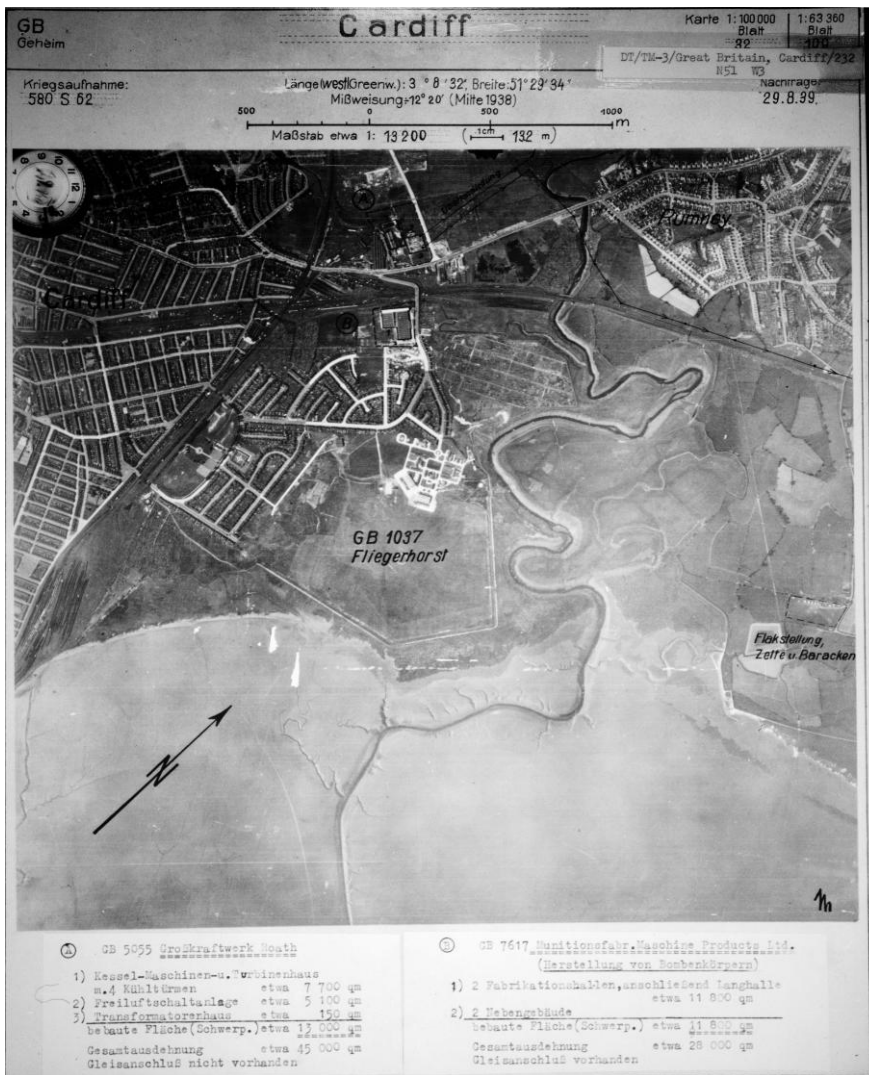


August welcomed another German exchange party, this one led by a Herr Fricke of Berlin. Met by Kuhnemann at the General station their main focus was a visit to GKN and the new rod mill, followed by a City Hall reception. After a Vale tour (Boverton, Talygarn, St Athan) the next day saw a visit down a Welsh colliery using the inevitable Flottmann equipment.

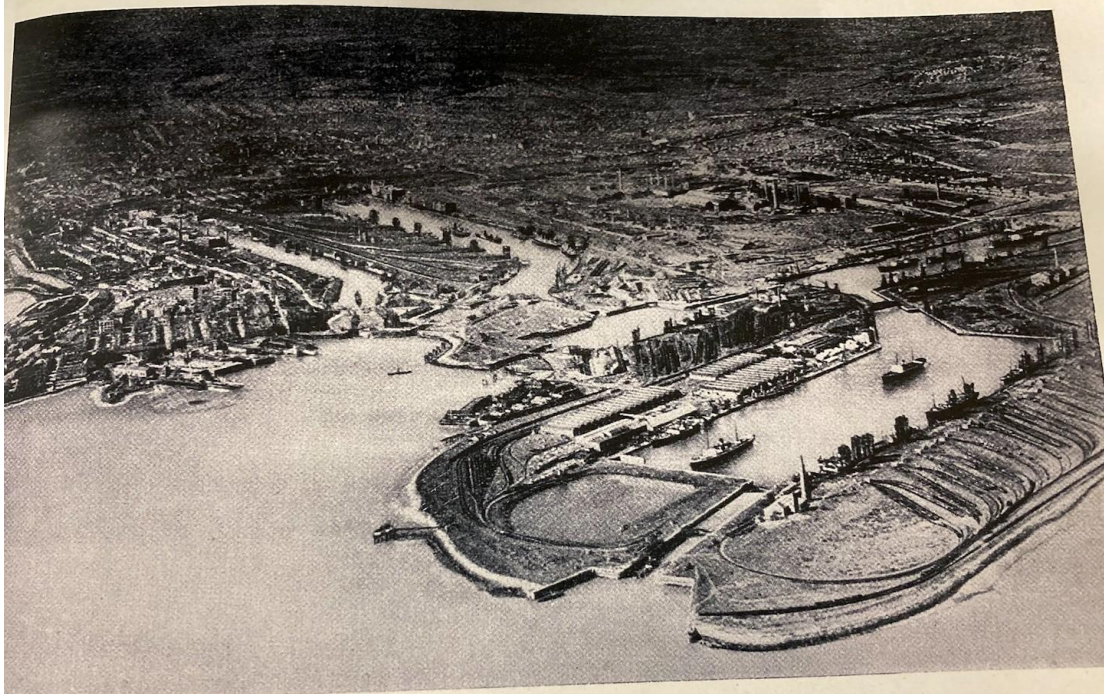
German detailing of the steelworks as supplied by Kuhnemann (Courtesy NARA)

In September the university students had a farewell dinner reflecting on their experience. They were impressed with German productivity and technical advancement. Less so, than perhaps the coal owners, to learn that striking was not only illegal but regarded as treason by German law.

To finish the exchange mining leaders from both countries met at the German embassy prior to a Carlton Club dinner. Messrs Hann (Powell Duffryn), Llewellyn (Amalgamated Anthracite) & Williams (Mon & S Wales Coalowners) were joined by South Wales university staff, all hosted by Chargé d'Affaires Dr Wohrmann. (To Kuhnemann's disappointment Ambassador Ribbentrop had been called to Berlin, but the latter did send a personal note of thanks to Principal Rees for all that the university had done.)



Pengam airport (Fliegerhorst) duly appeared as a target. Note the presence of a Flakstellung - anti-aircraft battery - at the mouth of the River Rhymney, protecting the approach to Cardiff.
(Courtesy Alamy by licence. Further examples from the area are on [alamy.com](http://www.alamy.com))



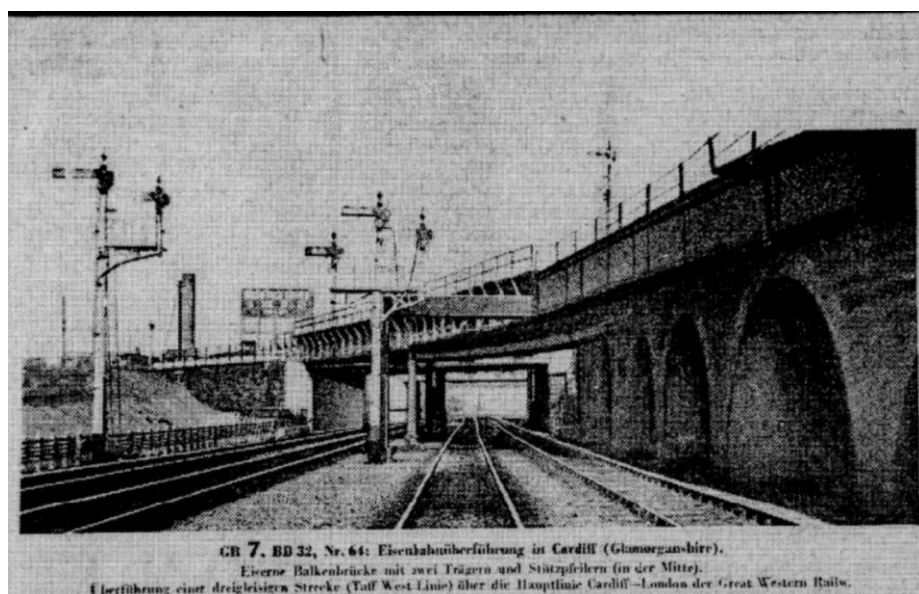
Naturally the docks also came in for particular attention.
(Courtesy NARA)

GB 7, BB 32, Nr. 85: Queen Alexandra Dock im Hafen von Cardiff (Glamorganshire).
Rechts vorn das Queen Alexandra Dock mit Tankanlagen und Pumpwerk (Schornstein, rechts vorn). Rechte Längsseite: Bekohlungsanlagen; linke Längsseite: Kühlhaus und Lagerhäuser. Hintere Querseite: Holzlagerplatz und Brikettfabrik (Schornstein).
Nach hinten rechts: Roath Dock, links davon (Mitte) das kleine Roath Basin mit Durchfahrt nach hinten (Mitte) zum langen Bute East-Dock, daneben links das schmale Bute West-Dock.

During 1938 Kuhnemann got to know Dr Friedrich Schoberth, a fellow German from Nurnberg and lecturer in German and French at the university. Schoberth arrived in the UK in 1928 to teach in Newcastle and after a brief spell in Liverpool reached Cardiff in 1931. In 1933 he enquired with the Home Office Aliens Department about permanent residence but was refused owing to his visa's restrictions. However, on gaining a permanent university post and a visa change, he and wife Klara settled in Tyrwhitt Crescent next to Roath Park Lake, raising a daughter who, sadly, died at four years of age and was buried in Llanishen churchyard.

In December 1937, and with strong academic references, they applied for naturalisation. Nine months later Detective Constable Gwynne Thomas of Cardiff City police issued, through the Chief Constable, a thorough background report to the Home Office. At interview Schoberth told Thomas that he had finished with Germany and had no interest in retaining citizenship there. He also claimed to have no interest in politics. In addition to regular police enquiries Schoberth was also cleared by MI5, without any detail, as having nothing recorded against him. Despite this, and despite interventions by his employers and M.P., the Home Office retained some doubt and naturalisation was refused at the start of November.

Reasons for the authorities' reservations may have been hinted at by a speech Schoberth made at the end of the same month, to the Cardiff University International Relations Club, on Anglo-German relations. Described at the time as provocative, Schoberth sought to justify actions of the Nazi regime as a German attempt to achieve the kind of unity which Britain enjoyed, and that "her treatment of political problems must be different from our own." (Still the students felt the need to publish a clarification that "provocative" meant stimulating rather than anything critical.) And notwithstanding any concern the BBC Welsh service in Park Place were broadcasting as late as May 1939 radio programmes by Dr. Schoberth of German lieder music & culture.



GB 7. BB 32, Nr. 64: Eisenbahnüberführung in Cardiff (Glamorgan-shire).
Eiserne Balkenbrücke mit zwei Trägern und Stützpfählen (in der Mitte).
Überführung einer dreigleisigen Strecke (Taff West Line) über die Hauptlinie Cardiff-London der Great Western Rails.

To maximise the potential for damage to infrastructure, this image pinpointed where the main S Wales railway passed under the "valley lines". (Courtesy NARA)

Since the 1920 Aliens Order Act, foreign residents were subject to a certain amount of control, but Kuhnemann had, by 1939, attracted the surveillance interest of Special Branch who secretly searched his house. At the end of August Mr and Mrs Steer accompanied the Kuhnemanns to London for, they thought, a shopping trip. They never saw the Kuhnemanns again. When, on 3rd September, the day war broke out, Special Branch arrived at Marlborough Road to take Hans into custody, they were too late. Some other Flottman employees were interned but Kuhnemann and his wife had left Cardiff two days earlier for the German Embassy in London, where they helped to destroy incriminating documents, before being spirited home via Holyhead.

Some of the material the spy had obtained was already in Germany for use by the Luftwaffe in air raids. Their aerial maps, for example, include that highly detailed plan of the GKN works, indicating inside knowledge. It's also thought Kuhnemann helped plan the last air raid on Cardiff on 18th May 1943 (said to be in retaliation for the Dambusters raid the day before, its leader having just married a Penarth girl). On that occasion over 40 people lost their lives.



The familiar sight of the Spillers mill shows that food supplies were also targeted. (Courtesy NARA)

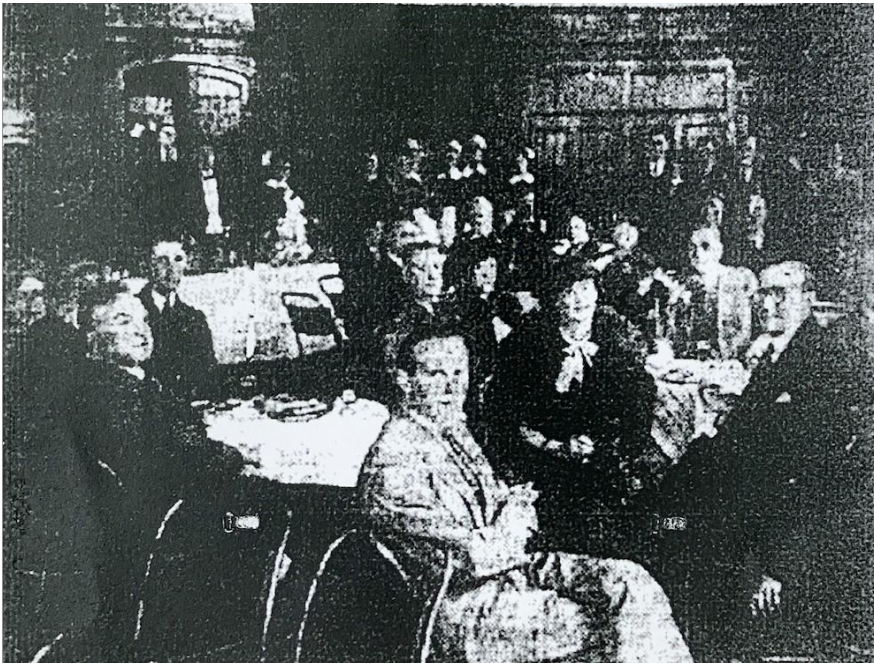
Kuhnemann's friend Schoberth was on holiday in Germany when war was declared and remained there in universities all his life. When interviewed by Echo journalist John O'Sullivan in the 1980's he denied having been a Nazi, until a copy of his 1940 membership was produced, and he admitted to joining as necessary to retain his job. That job was in



German foreign office propaganda, reporting to Rudolf Hess and editing scripts for William Joyce ("Lord Haw-Haw"), (who ironically was said to have once lived in both Colum Road, Cardiff and Barry.) Schoberth also claimed to have never really liked Kuhnemann and that he would never have acted to harm his "beloved Cardiff" However Mr. O'Sullivan believed that Schoberth was earmarked for a political role in Wales had the Allies lost.

German map coding is illustrated - GB 50 signified a British power station, GB 76 British ordnance production. The Colchester Avenue site is outlined, above the Roath branch of the Taff Vale Railway whilst across the main line in Tremorfa the site of the ordnance factory is now a light industrial estate. (Courtesy NARA)

Kuhnemann survived the war to uncertain fate. Amid the post-war confusion he almost certainly changed identity, one Western Mail report claiming he eventually deceived his way into U.S. intelligence before transfer to the British in Koln. He even wrote to Mr & Mrs Steer about revisiting Cardiff, a contact they ignored. The report claims MI5 did catch up with him and after interrogation he was interned. If so that part of the story remains hidden.



This grainy print, courtesy of the Western Mail, is of happier times at the Royal Hotel. Kuhnemann is far right wearing glasses, Schoberth, half turned, at the table on the left.

Sources used:

Western Mail various 1932-38, 25-27/3/57

Wales on Sunday 3/9/89

South Wales Echo 19/5/93

Kellys/W Mail Cardiff directories 1920-37

I Spy Bombers - J Peake 2004

Cardiff a City at War - D Morgan 1989

Nat Archives HO405/47212 Home Office Aliens Personal files.

US National Archives Records Administration -

Defense Intelligence Agency Records Group 373

Univ. S. Wales & Mon. - Cap & Gown 1937-9

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Elizabeth Morgan, RLHS Programme and Events Organiser

ROATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, 8th APRIL, 2026

Gwent Levels: Evolution of a wetland landscape

Chris Harris, Programme Manager for Our Living Levels



Presents

an illustrated talk exploring the last 20,000 years on the **Gwent Levels**, one of the most extraordinary, unique, and threatened landscapes in Wales.



SAINT EDWARD'S MUSIC & ARTS CENTRE

Westville Road, Roath, Cardiff. CF23 5DE.

EVERYBODY WELCOME!

Doors open at **7.00pm** - Meeting starts at **7.30pm**.

For live-stream Zoom Link contact **Jon Roberts** on:

RLHSZoom@gmail.com

GUESTS *in-person, or online* **£3.00**

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP **£13.00**

OTHER LOCAL HISTORY LINKS



Rumney and District Local History Society

Their meetings are held at 7:30pm on the second Thursday of every month (excepting January and August) at Rumney Baptist Church Hall, Tyr-Y-Sarn Road, Rumney, CF3 3BD.

Their next event is on 9 April 2026, when Stella Evans takes a stroll around Newport.

The annual subscription is £20 and visitors can pay £3 per meeting.

Find the Rumney and District Local History Society on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/rumneyhistory>

Grangetown Local History Society



At the time of going to press, no details of their future talks were available, but have a look at their [website](#).

British Association for Local History

The Roath Local History Society is a member of the British Association for Local History. Their website www.balh.org.uk/ offers a varied collection of local history stories, 10-minute videos and loads of helpful ways of researching local history. Some is of general relevance, but there are also pieces on very specialised subjects. Have a look at back issues of *The Local Historian* at <https://www.balh.org.uk/thelocalhistorian>. Members of the BALH are also entitled to a [discount on](#) courses. If you'd like the code to obtain the discount, please email me.



If you wish to be kept up to date on events held by BALH, please subscribe to their mailing list at <https://www.balh.org.uk/#subscribe>

Roath Local History Society on the web

There's also lots of Roath history on the [RLHS website](#), and in the excellent blog posts – do subscribe. There is also the re-energised [Facebook group](#) which has lots of interesting posts and comments. You need merely to answer 2 simple questions to join. And find us at [roath_history](#) on Instagram.

Latest blog stories are:

- [Kenneth More and his Cardiff Roots](#)
- [Margaret Lindsay Williams – Royal Portrait Artist](#)
- [Memories of a Steelworks Electrician](#)
- [Preswylfa School, 82 Pen-y-lan Road](#)

Louvain Rees | [hellohistoria](#)

Louvain Rees's [Hellohistoria](#) blogposts are well worth a follow. She is a BBC Award-winning social historian, specialising in Bridgend and her primary research interests are paupers, poor law, lunacy, and poverty between 1790 and 1921. She confesses to a taste for death and graveyards.

Cardiff Naturalists' Society

Images taken in the early 20th century by Harry Morrey Salmon, Welsh naturalist and "the father of British bird photography", are now available online via the [National Museum's Collections online system](#)

At the time of writing this there are 818 images online of the target 1000, but that is more than enough to enjoy. If you click on an image you will be able to zoom in and also be able to see the negative format for those images that are negatives.



cardiffnats@cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

www.cardiffnaturalists.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CardiffNaturalists>

<http://cardiffnaturalists.blogspot.com/>

GET IN TOUCH

For newsletter feedback and submissions contact:

Jon at RLHSEditor@gmail.com

To request loans from the R.L.H.S. Archive, contact:

Geraint at Denison-Kurg@outlook.com or ☎ (029) 2048 8358.

For membership, contact:

Nicky at RLHSMembershipSec@gmail.com

For events and programming enquiries, contact:

Elizabeth at RoathHistory@gmail.com or ☎ (029) 2048 2658.

For website enquiries, contact:

Ted at RoathHistoryWebsite@gmail.com