

COPPER WORKS

Philippa and Eileen visited the Morfa site to support John Davies of the Swansea Community Boat project over his concern about the planned Morfa Distributor Road for a new housing complex near the River Tawe. He wished to see preserved the old Hafod bridge and the unique industrial wall of the Copper Works. The Planning Department agreed that the preservation of these industrial relics would be honoured.



AGM

We wish to thank all members for their contribution to a very successful AGM held in March. It was agreed that the present Officers continue to serve in their respected positions:

Professor David Herbert - Vice President and Chair of the Committee
Philippa Watkins and Eileen Walton - joint Hon. Secretaries
Tony Lamb - Hon. Treasurer
Audrey Tribe - Membership Secretary
Margaret Lamb - Newsletter Editor
Siân Allen, Sid Kidwell and John Steevens - members of the Executive.

MEETINGS AND WALKABOUT

Monday 24th May 7pm Guildhall - Executive meeting

Saturday 26th June 2pm Walkabout - assemble at the Dylan Thomas Centre. Robin Campbell and Nigel Jenkins will lead us on a tour of the SA1 development. We hope to complete the tour with tea. All Welcome - further information will be available soon.

Monday 15th September 7pm Guildhall - speaker to be confirmed.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome anyone who wishes to join the Civic Society.

The annual subscription is £8 per person or £15 for couples.

The subscriptions contribute to postage, newsletter publication, gifts to speakers and any other administrative costs necessary for the smooth running of the Society.

Mrs Audrey Tribe, membership secretary, will be pleased to accept subscriptions. Cheques made payable to 'Swansea Civic Society' can be handed to her at meetings or sent to her at:

8, Wimmerfield Drive, Killay, Swansea SA2 7BR Tel: 01792 426591

SWANSEA CIVIC SOCIETY

Newsletter Spring 2010



CYMDEITHAS DDINESIG ABERTAWA SWANSEA CIVIC SOCIETY

OUR COMMITMENT

Swansea Civic Society has always been active in the defence and protection of City planning and development of the built environment. The Society is ever watchful for any proposed development which will threaten or undermine Swansea's emergence from a corrosive and poisonous industrial past. Although we often take issue with the City and County of Swansea on various proposals we are also pleased when the Council and Planners take the initiative to enhance and improve the environment.

The improvement of the cycle and pedestrian path along the river front on SA1, the Central Library and the stand they are taking on the proposed Biomass Power Plant on King's Dock is an indication of what may be achieved with commitment and resolve. Nevertheless improvement to the City Centre is a slow progress and the lack of lighting for St. Mary's Church is a disgrace. However, Sid Kidwell, an active member of Swansea Civic Society and Lord Mayor's Warden at St Mary's Church, has taken up this cause.

President

Professor Prys Morgan

Vice President & Chair of the Executive

Professor David Herbert

Hon. Secretaries

Philippa Watkins &
Eileen Walton

Hon. Treasurer

Tony Lamb

Membership Secretary

Audrey Tribe

Newsletter Editor

Margaret Lamb



CORRESPONDENCE

- ♦ to **Roy Thomas**, Swansea businessman, regarding the improvements to **Alexander House**. We asked if he would consider further improvements to the already agreed plans, which a grant from the Welsh Assembly had assisted. We still await a reply.
- ♦ to **Paul Smith, Chief Executive, City & County of Swansea** regarding quality of the copper finish on the new retail block on Princess Way, city lighting and the clearing of bushes on the cycle path in front of the Civic Centre. He agreed to look into these requests.
- ♦ to **CCS Planning Department** regarding the proposed **Urban Village** on High Street which we feel strongly should relate to other possible future developments on the Strand and Parc Tawe and not become a self enclosed development which fails to 'talk' to other buildings. We expressed our support for the work of Coastal Housing who continues to show confidence in our city as one of its most significant investors. We appreciate that the aspirations of the development have had to be reduced due to the recession. It is an important development pivotal for the future development of the High Street area, making an enormous contribution to city centre regeneration due to its position. However, the design of the rear aspect on the Strand elevation seems casual. The Strand is seen as a hostile environment and, as a result, Coastal Housing is shying away from active frontages on this development and the one in the old Castle Cinema. We feel that effectively closing off the back of this development is not solving the design problem, but creating a new one making it less appealing for residents to live above a 'hostile environment'. Because of its position close to the retail centre and Parc Tawe as well as being within close walking distance of the riverside, the Strand has potential to be an interesting, active part of the city centre. This development should improve the environment on the Strand so that it doesn't become a no-go area.
- ♦ to the **Evening Post** on **renewable energy**. The Swansea Civic Society fully supports the Welsh Assembly initiatives on renewable energy. Water, solar, wave and wind power are all options to be explored and potentially exploited. However, we need a clear understanding of the balance sheet of energy production and impacts on the environment. Individual projects and proposals have to be addressed on their merits. Locally, there are two ongoing appeals against energy production projects. The proposal for a biomass wood-burning plant in SA1 would entail a multi-storey construction of significant dimensions. In our view this proposal is not compatible with existing and intended developments at SA1 and should be resisted. Similarly, the proposal for wind turbines at Mynydd y Gair, near the Upper Lliw reservoir, is in an area of open countryside that could be part of a Gower National Park. We are therefore supporting the Gower Society, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) and Save Our Common Mountain Environment (SOCME) who are actively opposing these developments. The thrust towards renewable energy projects needs research to ensure that outcomes are both sustainable and are

in keeping with the environments in which they are placed.

- ♦ to the **Planning Inspectorate Cardiff** regarding the location of the proposed biomass plant. The Council's Landscape and Visual Impact assessment is subject to policies set out in the Unitary Development Plan, EV1, (i) (see for full details <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=25596>):
"New development shall accord with the following objectives of good design: be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density, integrate effectively with adjacent spaces and the public realm to create good quality townscape"
Our point is that the word 'shall' indicates there is no discretion in this matter. Therefore to conclude that on balance the supposed benefits of a local district heating network outweigh other planning considerations is untenable. However, even if this approach were permitted the reality is that the major impact on the visual shape of our city is so enormous as to dwarf any of the supposed benefits.

ADMIRAL LORD NELSON AND SWANSEA

Sid Sidwell, a keen member of the Nelson Society, has always taken a close interest in the heritage of the Admiral. In November 2009 at the Remembrance Parade in Whitehall he noticed that the statue of Nelson was in complete darkness. He wrote to the office of the Lord Mayor of London and instigated steps to illuminate the monument. Nelson had some interesting connections with the City of Swansea. Part of the uniform he wore at the battle of Trafalgar when he was mortally wounded remained in the possession of the family of Lieutenant Lewis Rotely and in 1896 the family donated it to the Royal Hospital Greenwich, now the National Maritime Museum. Lieutenant Rotely, a Royal Marine officer on the Victory, was the son of the landlord of the old Mackworth Arms in Wind Street, Swansea. It is also recorded that Nelson visited Swansea and was pulled up Wind Street in a coach by local sailors. When the coach reached Wind Street, Nelson's former bosun, Tom Cleaves, blew a piercing call on his pipe that Nelson recognised and he greeted him with enthusiasm. Tom was a bell-ringer at St Mary's and a special peal was rung out in Nelson's honour, which he rewarded with two guineas to the bell ringers. When Nelson's party, which included Lady Emma and local industrialist John Morris, retired to the Mackworth Arms, they met the Rotely family including young Lewis. He gave Lewis a letter of introduction to Portsmouth Naval College and this led to his position as a Royal Marine Officer. When Rotely himself was injured at Trafalgar he went below decks and there was given some clothing as a memento of the great man. Rotely wrote a much quoted account of the action at Trafalgar and later became the officer in charge aboard the Victory. He died at Mayhill in 1861 after a second career on the stage and is buried at the north side of the graveyard of St Mary's Church.

