

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

This has been a year like no other. Like all organisations we have been greatly affected by lockdown – unable to meet, unable to fundraise. This meeting is taking place by zoom. Change is being forced upon us – historic times!

Peter Hurlow-Jones



First, it is with sadness that we heard of the passing of Peter Hurlow-Jones. Peter's contribution to the work of the Society has been invaluable – his family history of the Stephens' and Jones' is of great importance to story of

Pembroke. He inspired me to start researching the history of Pembroke and has been a great supporter of our work: giving so much information, written and oral, and donating many photographs and artefacts, which are held for posterity in the museum. He is sadly missed.

Programme of Events

Following our previous AGM on 21st February 2020, we were able to hold one event prior to the first lockdown on 23rd March.



President Frank Harries with Lynne Houston

On Saturday 7th March, we held a coffee morning and talk in Monkton Church Hall. Lynne Houston of Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks gave a presentation of her DVD entitled '1939 – Reflections from Castlemartin'. The event was well attended: the requisition of the farms for the tank range was a traumatic period in our local history and is still remembered.

The History Society has collected much information and made 2 digital stories– part of our collection in our community history 'Through My Eyes'. Lynne presented us with a copy of her DVD and this will form an important addition to our archive.

After this, all events were necessarily cancelled and, at the time of writing, we are unable to predict when we will next be able to hold a public event. However, our work has continued in other areas.

Statue Trail

An aspiration to develop an arts/statue trail began a few years ago with the campaign for a Henry VII statue. A regeneration project of Pembroke Town Council, it was led by Linda Asman, Rose Blackburn and Pauline Waters and the History Society carried out a successful fundraising campaign with great community support.

It is also gratifying to see that Pembrokeshire County Council has now commenced work on the Henry Tudor Centre, a project that I along with Rose and Pauline had long campaigned for. Rose and I are members of the newly formed Henry Tudor Trust, which will be developing the exhibition for the Centre.

PCC is developing the Centre into a community hub to include TIC, Library, café and community rooms – a really exciting prospect for Pembroke.



William Marshal Statue

An unexpected outcome of the Henry VII statue campaign was the award of £30,000 from Wales Community CIC to continue with another statue. After Henry Tudor, the next great figure in our history to honour with a statue had to be William Marshal, who was not only Earl of Pembroke but Regent of England and hero of Magna Carta.



At our last AGM I was pleased to report that the additional funding for the William Marshal statue had been raised thanks largely to PCC's Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant. As with the Henry VII statue, we are working closely with Pembroke

Town Council, which has adopted the project and holds all monies in a Town Heritage Fund. A special thanks to our Town Clerk, Suzie Thomas, for her invaluable help and support. Although Covid-19 has slowed everything down, our talented sculptor Harriet Addyman, is making wonderful progress and the statue of William Marshal astride his warhorse is promising to be spectacular. We are hoping that the project will be completed by late summer/September by which time we hope the worst of the pandemic will be over to enable us to have an unveiling celebration.

Inspirational Dragons Project

Again, this is a Town Council/History Society project. The aim is to build a fountain in Pembroke Millpond in the form of a dragon, inspired by Llandrindod Wells 'Fabulous Water Beast'. Having obtained £13,587.00 from LEADER (which is administered by Planed), Joanna Burton and Paris Rouse took the project into the junior schools, Golden Grove and Monkton Priory Community School, to involve children in the design and technology involved. Unfortunately, lockdown meant that we were unable to complete the project with Ysgol Harri Tudur Henry Tudor School. The project was to have formed part of coursework for GCSE, but closure of the schools put this on hold, although the school offered the work to pupils on its online portal during lock down.

However, I am pleased to report that the maquette has been constructed. It needed to be constructed in stainless steel and it is fortunate



that we have a fine local sculptor in Gideon Petersen (above) who works in this medium. Gideon was responsible for the acclaimed statue of Welsh resistance hero Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in Llandovery and the popular Bertie the Sea Bass created for the 'Turn the Tide on Plastic' project led by Amroth and Saundersfoot community councils.

The intended public consultation and exhibition in Pembroke Town Hall has had to be put on hold until restrictions on public gatherings allow. However, the project received prominent reporting in the local press and the maquette was put on public view in the shop window next to Brown's Café, accompanied by a small display.

History Projects

It is an important function of a history society that we carry out research and record memories, to preserve aspects of our local history that would otherwise be lost.

i) National Service

National service is a period in our history, which has tended to get overlooked: we have nothing in the way of a local archive. Although this project has had to be put on hold, shortly before lockdown we engaged the services of community filmmaker Sharron Harris to film interviews with veterans. She was able to carry out one filming session with Frank Harris, who saw active service in Malaya.



Sharron Harries filming Frank Harries

Hopefully, later this year when restrictions are eased, we will continue this work.

ii) World War 2 Fallen

It was our intention, following our WW1 project completed in November 2019, that we continue the work of identifying and telling the stories of the WW2 Fallen on the Cenotaph. These would be added to the WW1 Fallen already researched and printed in a Book of Remembrance to be placed in our churches. At the moment, the WW1 Book of Remembrance can be accessed on our website.

Some preliminary work has been done but again, this is work that we will hope to complete this year.

iii) Monkton History

It has long been the intention to produce a history of Monkton and I am hoping that this will be progressed this year. Keith Johnson and myself are leading the project and we will be asking for contributions from Society members and the Monkton community.

Pembroke Museum

Supported by Pembroke Town Council, the Museum has continued to go from strength to strength thanks to a dedicated band of volunteers. The Museum has its own Committee headed by Chairman, Jill Ensom; Vice Chair, Ron Rees; Treasurer, Marcia Whitehead; Secretary, Mary Floyd and Hon. Curator, Linda Asman.

Throughout the year, the Museum has been closed. It was not possible to admit visitors, as there was not enough space to socially distance. This was a shame as new exhibits had been prepared for the new season.



The 19th Century Cottage

A big thank you to Ron Rees, Roy Smith and George Palmer who have made such a great job

of the 19th Century Cottage exhibit. This features a Welsh down hearth fireplace, to display artefacts donated by StJohn and Judy Stimson.

Rose Blackburn has made a great contribution to the museum with her miniatures and we now have on display her Georgian House furnished according to the period. In addition, she has loaned her Fabergé eggs collection, as an Easter Eggshibition – but Covid-19 intervened and we were unable to open for Easter. Possibly 2022?



Rose Blackburn's Georgian House

I, with help from Rita Hyam and Mary Floyd, have been ensuring that all artefacts have been listed and photographed – we have been sorting out some really amazing collections including Victorian/Edwardian underwear and a valuable collection of 18th and 19th Century prints!

There remains much to be done and I do hope that we can continue our work when restrictions allow.

To conclude, Pembroke and Monkton Local History Society continues in its work with a great group of volunteers and strong community support. What we do, we cannot do alone so a big thank you to all our supporters and the organisations with which we network.

Linda Asman,
Chairman, February 19th 2021

Trustees

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Treasurer & IT Support: Stuart Asman:
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