

St. Mary's Church Newsletter

Newsletter

Date: 20th. August 2009



August Newsletter

Welcome to the August Newsletter promoting the work being done to save St. Mary's Church in Caerau, Cardiff.

During different times in its history this 12th century church has been closed and left to decay only to be re-opened and restored by those who cared about it.

Back in 1959 Father Victor Jones worked to rebuild and re-open this formerly beautiful church. We are delighted that Father Jones was able to re-visit his old parish on 15th. August 2009.

This was a very emotional trip for Father Jones but he received a warm welcome from his old parishioners and the supporters of the Friends of St. Mary's Group.

Delia Jay introduced Father Jones to the visitors and he spoke of his valiant work re-building the church.



Delia presented Father Jones with a beautifully framed photograph of the church and some extra special bottles of wine.

The story of the work done over the centuries to preserve the church, including Father Jones' wonderful story is told in the book written by Delia Jay and Rosemary Lewis, the Founders of the Friends of St. Mary's Church. All the copies of this book have now been sold but a copy is available at the Ely Library.

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Friends of St. Mary's Church website

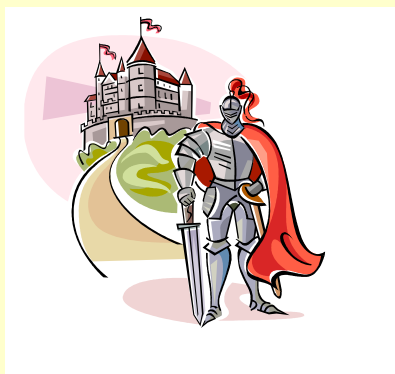
Lot's more information about the history of the site can be found on the Friends of St. Mary's Church website. A full account of Father Jones visit can be found on the site along with a whole gallery of photographs taken on the day.

Checking out the web pages will also keep you up-to-date on activities the Friends are planning or those that have taken place.

<http://www.stmaryscaerau.org/>

There is also a 'facebook' group - Friends of St. Mary's Church - that you could join to keep in touch with what is going on to preserve the site. A link to the facebook group can be found on the Friends of St. Mary's Church website

Protecting the church



Because the history of the site is very important it has been protected by law. The church is **Grade II listed** and the adjoining fields have been made **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**. This means they are protected by CADW. CADW is a service provided by the Welsh Assembly Government who try to protect sites like ours, working with the people who own them to keep them safe for everyone to go on enjoying.

If you visit and find that there has been damage done, either by vandals or even sometimes by the weather, it is important that you tell the Friends of St. Mary's Church website. They will then arrange for professionals to visit and help repair it.

The Friends of St. Mary's Church would like CADW to erect an information board up at the church site. This could give visitors information about the church and the history of the whole Caerau site. Hopefully we will have some news on this for our next newsletter.

Junior Group

The Friends of St. Mary's Group are trying to start a junior group. It is hoped that this could be run from a local school and include children and young people from the local community.

Do you know any young people who may be interested in learning about their local history and helping with this? Please let us know.

“St. Mary's Church is a Grade II Listed Building.”

The churchyard

St. Mary's Church has its own little cemetery or churchyard.

Some of the stones marking the graves are so old that the words have now faded away, but on some stones the names of the people buried here can still be seen.

Because the grave stones are very old and some are big and heavy it's really important to be very careful when walking around the cemetery. Cardiff Council Bereavement Services advises us to try and keep away from the graves, particularly to the right of the church, due to a risk of collapse.



Goodbye and good luck!

We would like to say thank you and goodbye to our local Police Community Support Officer, Nick Williams. Nick is leaving Caerau at the end of August to begin training as a full time police officer.

Nick has attended all the meetings that we've invited him to, listened to our moans, rolled his sleeves up and helped clean up the church and generally been a really good support to our group. And always with a smile!

We all wish him well in his new career.

The Country Code

We have plenty of nice walks in and around the church area, some of which will bring you as far as Dinas Powys. Hopefully we should have some nice weather during the bank holiday at the end of this month. One of our supporters suggested that it may be nice to remind people of the Country Code. Interestingly this was updated in 2004 and the advice is listed below.

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Don't forget, if you are still looking for things to do The National Museum of Wales is open Tuesday to Sunday each week and entry is free.

<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/whatson/>

The Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's is open all week, entry is free but there is a charge for the car park.

<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/stfagans/>

Check out the websites for special events:

The Portable Antiquities Scheme

If you are out and about at the St. Mary's Site it is important to remember that the church is a Grade II Listed Building under the protection of CADW. In addition to this the whole area nearby is protected by law due to it's status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This means it's actually illegal to remove anything from the site or cause damage.

However, sometimes when out walking we pick things up and wonder what they may be. There is now something called The Portable Finds Antiquities Scheme. This scheme is designed for those of us who come across what we think may be historical artefacts, either digging at home in the garden or out walking with the dog.

As part of this scheme a Finds Liaison Officer is available at The National Museum of Wales in Cardiff to help identify artefacts and to record them. This helps give a better idea of the history of specific areas when archaeological evidence is not readily available. For example, we know that very few sites have been excavated in Wales so the recording of even casual finds helps give a much better picture of the history of an area. The details for this scheme can be found at:

<http://www.finds.org.uk/>

Flag Fen Archaeology Park

Those of you who watch Time Team on TV may remember Francis Pryor. Francis is a well published author and famous archaeologist. He is also the Director of the Flag Fen Archaeology Park near Peterborough. This park is home to a unique ancient wooden monument which is lovingly referred to as the 'Stonehenge of the Fens.' A prehistoric wooden causeway dating to around 3500 years ago is perfectly preserved in the wetland. A preservation chamber houses some of these timbers, still where they were found. Within the park there are reconstructions of roundhouses from the bronze and iron ages as well as a museum displaying some of the artefacts found.

This park is a brilliant way to show what was found out on the Fens and is a great example of how such important historical sites can actually be preserved.

There is a really informative website:

<http://www.flagfen.com/>

The important thing is that Dr. Pryor and his Team have worked for many years to protect the site there and never gave up on protecting what they knew to be of hugely important historic value. They are a fine example to us in our attempts to protect our site here in Caerau.

Check it out!

And finally:

Once again our grateful thanks must go to the Caerau Community for their help at Father Jones' visit. This includes church members from St. Timothy's Church and St. David's Church and the children and young people who came along with their families to show their support. Special thanks to our young people, who dressed as 'medieval' ladies and 'fierce' warriors (See below photo taken with Sue Brooke, local group coordinator, far left).



Cardiff Bereavement Services spent time cleaning the site on the day before Father Jones visited. Thank you for that, it is such a lovely thought and very much appreciated.

And of course, thank you to Dave Horton and the brilliant Ely/Caerau Communities First Team who are always involved with us. They came along, offered their support to the event and provided teas, coffees and soft drinks.

If you'd like to know more about anything that appears in this newsletter please feel free to contact Dave Horton, Ely/Caerau Communities First Community Development Officer on the number below who will pass on your enquiries to the Friends of St. Mary's Church Group.

If you have any ideas for future events, memories you would like to include in the next newsletter or would like to become more involved then please let us know. We really would love to hear from you.

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