

CHRONICLE

A detailed painting of a man in a brown coat and apron drinking from a bottle in a cellar with large wooden barrels. The man is the central figure, shown in profile, drinking from a dark bottle. He wears a brown, textured coat and a light-colored, fringed apron. A red cloth is tucked into his apron. He holds a wicker basket filled with several bottles. The setting is a dimly lit cellar with large wooden barrels. A small candle in a holder is visible on the right. The overall tone is historical and atmospheric.

Issue 16 Summer 2017

DRINK

Historical Association, Swansea Branch

Promoting History in South West Wales

Issue 16 Summer 2017

Drink

Candy is dandy but liquer is quicker Ogden Nash

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Stephen Harrison



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Plunge into the book as one plunges into water, for poverty awaits him who doesn't go there. Ancient Egyptian scribal proverb.

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Pouring out of the Beer

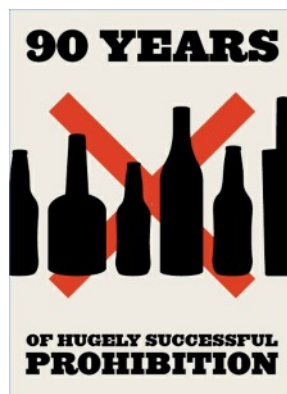
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Prohibition has made nothing but trouble. Al Capone



Cover : painting by Alessandro Sani, Sampling a Good Wine

Lewis & Clark Expedition

From the Editor

margaret.mccloy@sky.com



When coca cola started life as a patent medicine in 1885, it was sold in a soda fountain in America and averaged sales of nine glasses a day. It cost five cents a glass. Amazingly this price remained fixed until 1959. In this issue you will find articles about drink, both soft drinks and the hard stuff that has been imbibed throughout the ages.

You don't have to be a church goer to know that Jesus turned the water into wine, but they didn't have drink driving laws in those days. A least I don't think they did. Now we do and Rod Ashley warns of the perils of drinking and driving. The tale of living in a public house, written by Ian Smith, tells of the lighter side of drinking; if you count the fights at closing time as being on the light side.

Like me, you'll probably be surprised, when you read the article by Richard Hall, at how easy it was to obtain whisky and brandy in America during prohibition. And you didn't have to be a friend of Al Capone either.

The public in the 18th century were exposed to the lewd, boozy world as depicted by Hogarth in his paintings of Gin Lane and Beer Street. Dangerous levels of drink were being consumed. No wonder that by 1830 sobriety was encouraged, pamphlets

were distributed promoting Teetotalism, and abstinence was to be cheered. Kenza Eastwood tells of the beginnings of the different movements involved.

It was only in 1961 that public houses in Wales were able to open once more on a Sunday.

The next issue will feature '*Migration*'. Not just coca cola and birds migrate around the world, but people have migrated for hundreds of years, mainly to find work.

Years ago the Swansea docks were extremely busy, full of large cargo ships. Goods came from as far away as Brazil. Copper came from Cornwall until the mines ran out and later from Chile. Swansea came to be known as Copperopolis and manufactured nearly 70% of the world's copper goods. Swansea had cheap coal, a harbour and easy access to tin mines, it needed men to work in these industries and people migrated here from all over the world. There should be some interesting tales to tell.

If you would like to submit an article on this subject, 200-400 words needed by the end of October, please email me at:
margaret.mccloy@sky.com

“The only way that I could figure they could improve upon Coca-Cola, one of life's most delightful elixirs, which studies prove will heal the sick and occasionally raise the dead, is to put bourbon in it.”

— Lewis Grizzard

Alexander: a Great Drinker

Sometime in 338 or 337 BC, Philip II of Macedon decided to get married. This was not unusual – Philip already had six wives – but there was something different about Cleopatra, his new bride: unlike Philip's other spouses, who hailed from neighbouring countries, she was Macedonian.



This fact caused some consternation when it was raised at

the celebratory banquet. Attalus, the bride's uncle, drunk and proud of his family's new status, stood up and called on the Macedonians present to pray that this new union would produce a 'legitimate heir' to the throne. Asking for a marriage to be blessed with children is hardly surprising, but the phrasing was both pointed and incendiary since Philip already had an heir, Alexander, a young man who had recently proven himself on the battlefield of Chaeronea and would later win fame as the conqueror of Asia. Alexander was furious: 'so you think I'm a bastard, then?' he yelled at Attalus, throwing a cup at his adversary.

Until this point, Philip had been content to lie back and watch the drama, but now he stood up to intervene. He drew his sword, brandishing it in Alexander's direction, took a few staggering steps towards his son and then... fell over, too drunk to walk. Alexander leered down at his father and crowed, 'there is the man about to cross from Europe into Asia, unable to cross from one couch to another'. The next day, Alexander allegedly went into exile and it was several months before the pair were reconciled. This story is found in Plutarch who wrote several hundred years after Alexander's death

so its authenticity is suspect. That said, Alexander's exile is reasonably well attested and, when he came to the throne in 336, one of his first actions was to execute Attalus, so there was obviously tension between the two. Equally, Macedonian symposia were notoriously drunken affairs, so, while the wording of the quip in Plutarch is perhaps a bit too neat to be historical, it is very possible that some sort of argument did take place. For the Greeks, all of this was rather unbecoming. For them, a symposium was supposed to be a rather more sophisticated affair, with poetry and political or philosophical discussion taking centre stage. Of course there was wine and sometimes things might get out of hand and end in disturbances to the peace or minor property damage – boys will be boys after all – but the drunkenness at Macedonian symposia seemed to them to be on a different scale, not least because the Macedonians appeared to drink purely to get drunk.

It was differences like this which saw Greeks such as Demosthenes label Macedonians 'barbarians'. But for the Macedonians, the symposium was a hugely important institution and drunkenness had a point. Macedonian society was hugely competitive with the King consistently having to prove his skills both on the battlefield (Macedonian monarchs routinely led their armies in person and fought in the frontline) and elsewhere. Nevertheless, usurpations and assassinations were commonplace, with only one King dying of natural causes in old age in the seventy years before Alexander came to the throne. Macedonian kings were far from secure, then, and this competitiveness extended to the symposium, where the ability to hold vast quantities of wine was seen as a demonstration of masculinity; no wonder these occasions could descend into the chaos described by Plutarch. Equally, the symposium brought the nobility face-to-face with the King – important matters were discussed, and, in this atmosphere, the King was far from certain to get his own way.

There were several important changes to the Macedonian court during Alexander's reign, but the drinking culture remained

– in a sense, Alexander's campaign was the ultimate Club 18-30 holiday: frequent bouts of violence interspersed with prolonged drinking sessions. Perhaps the most notorious of these took place in Maracanda in modern-day Uzbekistan in 327. Clitus, one of Alexander's leading generals, became increasingly annoyed by what he saw as the unnecessary flattery of Alexander by certain members of the court. These sycophants claimed that Alexander's achievements far-outstripped those of Philip and gave him personal credit for the Macedonian successes. Clitus spoke out at this, emphasising the role played by others - including men who had been purged by Alexander.

The argument became more and more heated until Alexander snapped:

he grabbed a spear from a nearby guard and ran it through Clitus, killing him on the spot. This incident marked a fundamental change in the relationship between Alexander and his Macedonian subjects, with the remaining four years of his life plagued by conspiracies and mutinies.

For the Macedonians then, alcohol played an all-too familiar role – it encouraged socialising, was a release from day-to-day pressures, but could also cause serious problems. Beyond simple relaxation, however, the symposium also played a vital political role in Macedonia. As for Alexander, he died in 323 after a short illness, contracted, where else, but at a symposium.

Stephen Harrison



Alexander the Great
Sculpture by Andrea Verrochio 1436-1488

Remnants of amphoras, early wine bottles, have shown that Mycenaeans traded in wine throughout the ancient world.

The Ancient Greeks drank wines that were sweet, dry or sour. Homer in the *Odyssey* wrote of sweet black wine which would be like our red wine today.

Aristotle in his writings mentioned Limnio, a wine made from black grapes. Wine made from the grape limnio can still be found in the town of Limnos today.

“Age appears best in four things: old wood to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust and old authors to read.”

— Francis Bacon

Beer, Ten Pence a Pint



1959 when I was four we moved into the Dublin Arms, Bridge Street, Hafod, Swansea. My parents, Hubert and Jeanne, grandparents Winnie and Olaf, great Auntie Lalla and 15 year old cousin Peter. It was an old building even then. Built about 1860 it consisted of a bar for the men; a large room where parties could be held, but mostly stood empty, and a snug. The snug was the domain of women. A small room about ten feet square which sat opposite the staff entrance to the bar and women would have to tap on the door to be served. They didn't actually go into the bar.

In fact my mother was the only woman I ever saw in the bar and whilst this was fairly typical, I do know that some pubs did allow women to go in the bar, and even had women's darts teams! Not the 'Dub' though. Men only, it was that sort of area.

Our living quarters consisted of a kitchen and scullery on the ground floor where the bar and snug were. A living room and four bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor and an attic room with a huge arched window that looked towards the docks. As a child I remember vividly the smell of nicotine and stale beer which never dissipated! My father was constantly washing and painting the walls and ceiling in the bar white. This very quickly turned yellow, then brown over the next few weeks, by which point my mother would start nagging him to do it again.

In the early 1960s the pub was a second home to most of the men in the Hafod. They were hard workers employed in copper and steel works or on the docks or in construction. The pub's opening hours were 11.30am until 3.30 pm and then 5.30 until 10.30. There was always a queue of men waiting for the doors to open.

Lunchtime drinkers were frequent. A couple of pints and a pie or pasty and back to work for the afternoon. Then at 5.30 a quick one before tea and after tea five or six more until closing time. This

was the norm for a lot of working men. Of course the beer was not as strong as it is now, mostly 3%.

Beer was about 10 pence a pint for light or dark, mild and bitter was a penny more – old money of course. I remember the uproar when the chancellor added a penny to a pint in one budget, people were almost hysterical.

Then one day in 1966 there was a man fitting some sort of box under the counter. Like all children I loved watching a workman. Lots of pipes and wires were cut and joined, and he made many trips up and down the stairs to the cellar.



Then finally by three o'clock he announced to my waiting mother and grandpa that it was ready.

There were many characters as regulars in the 'Dub'. Dickie was my favourite. He was a rag and bone man who travelled around Swansea on his cart being pulled by a lovely brown and white horse called Queenie. He'd work until about two o'clock every day then after emptying the day's scrap would come to the 'Dub' and tie Queenie up outside near the grass verge. After a few pints he'd climb aboard and head for home sometimes falling asleep on the wagon but it didn't matter as the old horse knew exactly where she was going and would carry him home. One day my grandpa called to come and see what was in the bar and I rushed in to see what was happening. Dickie had a monkey! He's got it from some sailors down the docks. It sat on his shoulder and was wearing a red hat and waistcoat. He was feeding it grapes and we all were entranced to this having never seen a monkey before and close up too.



Then things went downhill fast. Something spooked the monkey and it bit into Dickie's ear! Latched on and wouldn't let go! Dickie was jumping about the bar trying to get the monkey to release him while the rest of us fell about laughing and were no help at all. Eventually the monkey let go and went back to his grape and Dickie went off to the toilets to wash the blood off his neck. Floor show over.

Saturday nights were never dull at the 'Dub'. The bar would be packed and all would be well oiled. Spontaneous singing broke out, not male voice choir stuff though, but old music hall favourites like 'Goodnight Ladies' and 'There's a goldmine in the sky, far away'. I can still remember the words now.

In the summer all the local children would still be playing out at ten o'clock. So we'd gather on the wall opposite the 'Dub' and wait for the fight to start. It was a regular

thing every Saturday. The men had been in the pub since lunchtime, playing cards and darts and betting on horses. Some winners, some losers, the slightest thing could set them off!

Just after ten the singing would stop abruptly and there would be silence for a second or two, then pandemonium would erupt! It soon spilled onto the street like a scene like an old Wild West cowboy film. Everybody throwing punches, ducking and wrestling. Us kids lapped it up. The police would be waiting down on Hafod Bridge in the 'Black Moriah' they didn't want to get involved too quickly. Once it died down a bit the police would come up and throw all and sundry into the van and take them off to the cells overnight.

Sunday morning would see them all best friends again turning up at the 'Dub'. We were 'officially' closed on Sunday so they had to come in through the back door. The bar would be just as busy as Saturday night but everybody sat in silence drinking their pint. If anyone raised his voice all the rest would 'shush!' very loudly to keep any noise down as they didn't want the police to find out about the illegal boozing.

Little did they know that the Sergeant and the Constable would be having a pint in our kitchen with my Grandmother.



The wall opposite the 'Dub' where we waited for the fight to start. I'm at the back on the left.

Ian Smith

Women, drunkenness and ancient Egypt



Egyptian hieroglyphics depict the pouring out of wine

While intoxication by alcohol was not normally approved of, 'holy intoxication' was encouraged, possibly as a link to the world of the gods, an alternative state of being. It is difficult to prove, but one may postulate that such intoxication also included erotic euphoria. The link between drunkenness and erotic euphoria is also apparent in today's western cultures, where it is a cliché that men and women tend to become intimate after heavy drinking. Hathor was not only a goddess of love, but also of drunkenness.

That drunkenness had the possibilities of mystical communion is suggested by the called *The Dispute Between a Man and his Ba*. The nearness and desirability of death is suggested:

'Death is before me today
Like the fragrance of a lotus
Like sitting on the shores of
drunkenness'



Wine was associated with the god Osiris, the god of rebirth. Additionally, wine is associated with the flooding of the Nile (also a symbol of annual rebirth) as the grape harvest and annual flooding combine. Depictions of grapes were commonly painted on tomb walls, particularly in later periods of Egyptian history.

These aspects of alcohol might explain tomb scenes of banquets in which no food is eaten, but at which guests imbibe alcohol. The tomb of Paheri at Elkab has a banqueting scene in which a female cousin of Paheri declares, 'Give me eighteen cups of wine; I want to drink to drunkenness; my throat is as dry as straw'. It is noticeable that while women and drunkenness are particularly disapproved of in the west, there was not this apparent gender-linked disapproval of drunken women in ancient Egypt. There is even one scene from a tomb of a woman vomiting from over indulgence.

Tomb of Djeserkaraseneb:

"Give me eighteen cups of wine, for I want

to drink until drunkenness, my inside is like
straw.

In the last few years, the American Egyptologist, Betsy Bryan, has been excavating at the Temple of the goddess Mut at Karnak (1470 BC). Mut was a goddess closely linked with Hathor. Bryan has discovered a 'Porch of Drunkenness' associated with queen Hatshepsut.

It seems that in the Hall of Drunkenness worshippers got drunk, slept and then were woken by drummers to commune with the goddess, Mut. Some scenes linked drunkenness with 'travelling through the marshes', a possible euphemism for sexual activity.

The festival re-enacted the myth of concerning the aggressive goddess Sekhmet who was sent out to kill humankind by the sun-god Re. Re then changed his mind and Sekhmet had to be dissuaded from her killing spree by the god Thoth. He filled 7000 jars of beer with red ochre. Thinking it was blood, Sekhmet drank it, became drunk, and changed into the peaceful goddess Hathor who was then welcomed back to Egypt. Her return was associated with the annual inundation of the Nile.

Dr Carolyn-Graves Brown



You can see several alcohol related items in the Egypt Centre, including fragments of a wine jar with an inscription showing that it held sweet wine, the year in which the wine was made and even the vineyard in which it was made. The piece is over 3000 years old and comes from the royal site of Amarna.

Carolyn is the Curator of the Egypt Museum

‘Would you like a drink?’

A Round of Drinks



A familiar, even innocuous question. One which seems to anticipate a request for wine or beer or spirits in one form or another. Several years ago, on offering visitors a drink I was slightly taken aback by the enthusiastic reply, ‘Thank you, we’d love a cup of tea.’ Not that I have anything against tea, or those who choose to drink tea - I drink tea myself – but ‘a drink’ appears to have come to be associated with an alcoholic drink. Offers of non-alcoholic drinks tend to be made in a rather different form. As ‘a cup of tea’, ‘a coffee’, ‘some fruit juice’, ‘a glass of water’. Maybe the social occasions on which the various drinks tend to be offered lead us to differentiate between them.

A family tea party would seem a suitable occasion for offers of the ‘cup of tea, glass of squash’ variety, while an annual social event in West Wales indicates the availability of drinks of a rather stronger type. Surrounded by high walls of silver-grey stone in the cloisters of St. David’s Cathedral, with fading rays of sunlight punctuated by bats swooping overhead, the clink of glasses and sound of animated conversation of post-concert receptions make a civilised ending to the evening during the Cathedral Festival of Music. Why, then, standing on short grass at the centre of the cloisters, wine glass in hand, does the occasion feel rather incongruous in that setting?

St. David is known as a vegetarian aesthete who is said to have drunk nothing but water. We can only imagine what he might have said about the wine (or even the fruit juice) available, but we can be certain that the funding of the Festival would suffer if the Saint’s chosen drink was the only refreshment offered. Water is, of course, essential for life but for much of human history water might not have been either readily available or the safest liquid to drink. At a time when a clean source of water was far from certain, it may not have been the wisest choice to follow his example.

While there are many communities which choose to avoid drinking alcohol – Methodists and Baptists come readily to mind in this country – the story of Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana seems to be one of the better-known Gospel stories and many refer to St. Paul’s advice to ‘take a little wine for your stomach’s sake’. It is impossible to say whether the members of David’s religious community followed his abstemious habits with equal enthusiasm but religious orders have, over the years, been connected with the production of alcoholic drinks; Benedictine and Buckfast Wine are well known examples of this trade; and where would many church functions or recitals be without the interval glass of wine?

‘Home brew’, whether referring to beer or wine, has come into and gone out of fashion over the years. Enthusiasts will recommend their efforts as being superior to mass-produced products. While it is possible to achieve excellent results, the end product can be very variable. I recall a gift of home-made blackberry wine which was delicious – tasting of essence of blackberry. I also remember being offered a glass of home-made white wine. Asked if I would like dry or sweet, having tasted the dry version I replied that a sweeter wine might be preferable. At this point the sugar bowl was brought out and sugar stirred into the wine. Neither version was to be recommended. It is to be hoped that, at times when housewives were required to brew small beer for use by the household, the results were less variable.

Gwyneth Anthony

“But indeed I would rather have nothing but tea.”
— Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

Abstinence

Temperance movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries were in the main, groups organized to encourage moderation in the consumption of alcohol - the implied aim being the eventual complete abstinence from all *intoxicating liqueur*. Predominantly the membership consisted of women who (often with their children) had suffered the effects of heavy domestic drinking by their husbands or partners. Often, perhaps unfairly in retrospect, alcohol was blamed for many of society's problems, including - as well as the usual health problems: loss of work, destitution, prostitution, petty crime and the myriad of associated social problems and issues we still see today with addiction to alcohol, drugs and gambling. Dependence on alcohol was viewed not just as a moral issue, as preached from the pulpit, but also a social one that caused serious problems in the home and the workplace

Such movements were not new to the C19. Temperance groups, perhaps unsurprisingly always seemed to follow in the wake of heavy drinking societies and temperance or abstinence movements certainly existed in antiquity. But the idea of linking excess consumption to the ills of society really came into its own in the C19 as a reaction to the widespread availability, popularity and relative cheapness of distilled drinks. Spirits – gin - in particular being blamed rather than beers and ales.

A famous early organisation in Ireland came into being in the 1820s through the fervent enthusiasm of a Belfast professor of theology and Presbyterian Church of Ireland Minister, the Rev. John Edgar. With the flamboyant exuberance of a showman (and plenty of publicity) he poured his stock of whiskey out of his window in 1829 whilst denouncing the evils of spirits. Pursuing this theme he wrote a letter in the *Belfast Telegraph* strongly expressing his views on temperance. He also formed the Ulster Temperance Movement with other Presbyterian clergy urging the signing of

The Pledge – a moral contract between an individual and their belief in the Almighty to aid resistance to temptation.

In the United States, a Pledge of Abstinence had been promoted by various preachers, most notably John Bartholomew Gough, at the beginning of the 1800s. These views spread rapidly and Temperance Associations were established in New York (1808) and Massachusetts (1813). The *American Society for The Promotion of Temperance* was founded in 1826 and, Americans, on the whole being God fearing folk who took their weekly sermons seriously - took the lead from the pulpit and before long some 8,000 local temperance groups in numerous states were up, running and multiplying. Remarkably by the 1830s they had attracted over 1,250,000 members..

Today, however, in our largely secular society, legislation has a far greater influence than the Church and its preachers on our alcohol consumption. Not only is alcohol heavily taxed and so relatively expensive, but there are strictly enforced regulations and laws regarding workplace drinking, the sale of alcohol and drink driving. The ‘industry’ is also becoming more socially responsible issuing guidelines about responsible drinking. Also, strong recommendations concerning general health (especially relating to pregnancy) and alcoholic units consumed are widely advertised and endlessly discussed. Not surprisingly perhaps, according to the latest data from the Office of National Statistics, teetotalism is on the rise, with 21 per cent of Britons claiming not to drink at all, and almost half drinking less than they did previously.

Kenza Eastwood

Lips That

Touch Liquor

Shall Not

Touch Ours

One for the Road ?

A quick overview of drink-driving



Drink-driving may not yet have become *entirely* socially unacceptable but is on the way to attaining this status. Despite its official condemnation, various cultural norms continue to show our widespread tolerance for, and enjoyment of, alcohol. This complicates matters. Whilst we all know the untold damage to lives, bodies, relationships and property caused by excess alcohol, the road to drink-driving's demise has been a long and winding one.

With The 1872 Licensing Act it became an offence in the UK to be drunk whilst in charge of carriages, horses and steam engines. This law was superseded by the 1925 Criminal Justice Act, extending the offence to being found drunk in charge of any mechanically-propelled vehicle on any highway or other public place. It would be nearly a century from the initial legislation before driver alcohol levels could be proven scientifically – with the introduction of the breathalyser in 1967.

During this intervening time, cultural norms also changed. Numerous Hollywood films depicted drink-driving as something commonplace, acceptable and even mildly amusing. The 1959 Hitchcock comedy-thriller *North by Northwest* sees Cary Grant's character being force-fed bourbon and placed behind the wheel of a car which, despite his 'humorous' endeavours to steer straight, is soon involved in a crash. Such attitudes were commonplace in the earlier part of the 20th century with notions of 'one for the road' and 'a little drink won't harm you'

contributing to the acceptance of drinking and driving. The reality painted a different picture.

Today, the blood-alcohol limit in England and Wales is 80 mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, compared with 50mg per 100ml in Scotland and much of mainland Europe. Road safety charity IAM RoadSmart's 2015 report '*Measuring attitudes to driving safety and behaviour*' (the Safety Culture Index) found that over 75% of interviewees supported reducing the 80mg limit to the Scottish / European level. Furthermore, this research gave 95% approval to introducing a law requiring all repeat drink-drive offenders to use a device that prevented their car starting if they had been drinking.

Today there is a strong focus on preventing drivers from using a mobile phone whilst driving – a more widespread problem given the prevalence of phones but with results as catastrophic as drink-driving. Changing driver behaviour takes time, for legislation has to be accompanied by the greater challenge of modifying social attitudes.

Rod Ashley

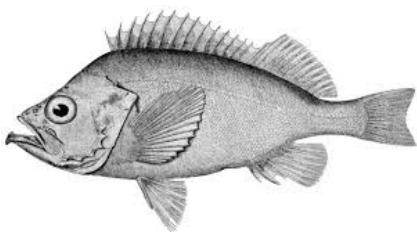


‘Whoever drinks beer is quick to sleep.
Whoever sleeps long does not sin.
Whoever does not sin enters heaven.
Therefore let us drink beer.’
Martin Luther, 1483-1546

“A little learning is a dangerous thing
Drink deep or taste not the Pieran Spring:
there shallow draughts intoxicate the brain”
Alexander Pope
Essay in Criticism 1711



Not wanting to imply that you don't know...but in Greek mythology, the Pieran Spring of Macedonia was sacred to the Muses.



Drink like a fish.

Many fish swim with their mouths open, thus they appear to be continually drinking.

Egyptians at banquets exhibited skeletons to remind guests of the brevity of life.



“In wine, there is truth”

Pliny the Elder, Natural History, 1635

“Beer is made by men, wine by God.”
— Martin Luther

I'll drink to that.

Honorary Branch Fellowship Award 2017



Photograph by David Grindrod.

The award this year was given to Dr David painting who has done so much over the years to promote history in Wales.

He was Law Librarian at Swansea University and was the honorary Librarian of the Royal Institute of South Wales.

The award was presented to him by Dr John Law, president of the HA Swansea Branch, at an informal gathering at Sketty Hall where he was presented with a certificate and a book of photography. The presentation was followed by talks and refreshments.

Swansea City of Culture 2021?

The 2021 bid team, which includes Swansea Council, creative professionals, both Universities, health and business, and arts and cultural leaders, is delighted that the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and their independent assessment panel saw enough merit in its initial bid to take it through to the next stage. **Swansea is on the shortlist of five cities and the final decision will be announced in December 2017.**

Swansea failed last time, in part, because of a lack of community engagement'. The HA Swansea branch has made it known that it wished to get behind this project. Swansea is a city with a richness of culture.

Once you understand and appreciate other people's cultural backgrounds, then you can also connect with them more.

Belle Wei

HA Swansea Branch Open Day

We have planned an open Day on December 16th at the Waterfront Museum to let people see what our branch has to offer and show some of different interests that the branch is involved with. This will follow the branch talk in the Ocean Room. From 2-4 p.m. An invitation will be sent out to some of the many diverse groups that meet in Swansea. We will have tables with displays including, the Outreach programme, White Rock, Chronicle, family history, Sketty Hall and much more.

This Open Day ties in with the December issue of *Chronicle* based on **Migration**. The HA wishes to support this diversity of people and show that Swansea has a good mixed community that exists well together.

Refreshments will be served.

Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common.

Anon.

Open Day December 16th 2017

A Soldier's Tale

Drink features regularly in soldiers' accounts of the Thirty Years War (1618-48). One officer recorded that immediately before attacking at a battle in 1622 'our General Tilly ordered the issue of half a quart of wine to every soldier'.



Johann von Tilly

Another reported that as he prepared for the final assault at the siege of Magdeburg in 1631, 'the general had good Rhenish wine issued to all the soldiers and officers, which gave them great courage.' It was not always so helpful militarily. A diarist noted that guns had to be sent from Freiburg to Breisach without escort 'because most of the cavalymen who had been detailed were full of wine, and none of them could or would ride along'.

Problems ran from the bottom to the top. A private soldier returned from campaign in Italy penniless, having to beg for enough money to buy shoes, 'but first I went into the inn. The wine was so good there that I forgot about the shoes. Bound the old ones up with willow.' Elsewhere a senior officer in the Saxon army commented angrily: 'On the 9th the Lieutenant General swilled himself full of March beer in Templin, and until he had slept it off everything was left in suspense and everyone had to wait for orders.' The example came from even higher: The Elector of Saxony was himself a notorious drinker: 'On the 30th His Highness took his midday meal with the Lieutenant General and got very drunk, as did all the other officers'.

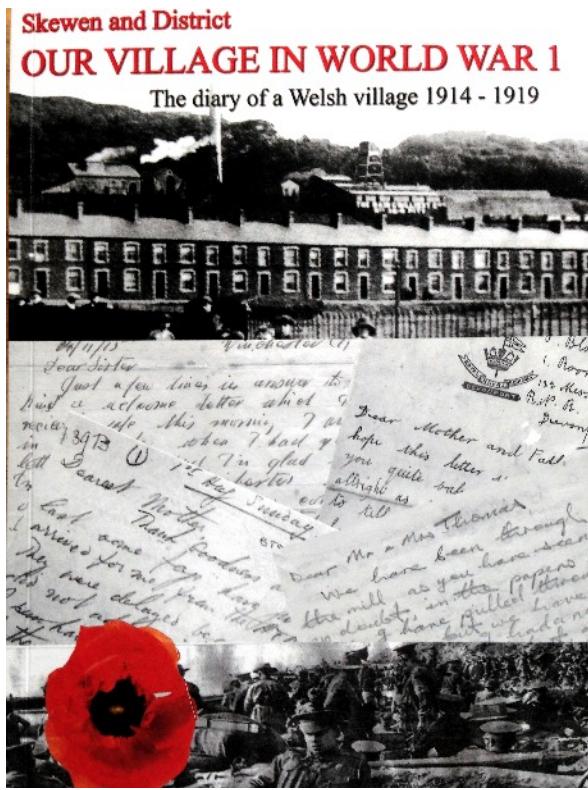
Colonel Robert Monro, later a Parliamentary general, summed up the pleasures and problems of Bacchus for his regiment:

This Regiment in nine yeeres time, under his Majesty of Denmarke, and in Dutch-land [Deutschland], had ever good lucke to get good quarters, where they did get much good wine, and great quantity of good beere, beginning first with Hamburg beere in Holsten, and after that in Denmarke they had plenty of Rustocke beere, and now at Barnoe, and thereafter they tasted the good Calvinists beere at Serbest, and our march continuing out of low Germany, towards the upper Circles of the Empire, as in Franconia, Swabland, Elsas and the Paltz, they were oft merry with the fruits and juice of the best berries that grew in those Circles, for to my knowledge, they never suffered either penury or want, I being the Leader, but oftimes I did complaine and grieve at their plenty, seeing they were better to be commanded, when they dranke water, then when they got too much beere or wine (Mo.II.47).

Geoff Mortimer

Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Isaiah 22.13

Book Review



This wonderfully researched book tells much, more than the story of a Welsh village from 1914-1918. Written in the form of a diary, it tells of monthly events, both national and local during World War 1 and the effect that the war had on the people of Skewen and the surrounding districts.

Sources were gathered from family histories, newspaper reports and various websites.

A remarkable appendix lists 589 service personnel, including 120 fallen, who came from the district. They are hoping to add to this list by readers who might be able to contribute other names. Besides names, listed are the battalions in which they served, their rank, their awards and locations of their graves if they are known.

It tells of the conflicts and the pain suffered and is dedicate to the memory of the people of Skewen & District and to all those who served during WW1. 216 pages of fascinating reading with maps and photographs, including the Skewen Silver band c1910, the Cwrt y Betws Colliery workmen in 1913 and the Skewen Rugby Club 1912. A fascinating book, a pleasure to read.

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Alcohol and Prohibition

The story of alcohol in American History is one that encompasses tales of the heroic, humorous and tragic. From early explorers to Indian traders and diplomats, soldiers and settlers, alcohol has played an omnipresent role in US history (as implied, for better and worse). Take the famous western voyage of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (popularly called the Lewis and Clarke expedition). To keep themselves and their 30 or so companions satiated, Lewis purchased 30 gallons of 'rectified spirits' according to records from 1803. It would seem that alcohol was a prerequisite of this most epic of endeavours.



Alcohol was, and had always been, a key facet of American life—and in areas which might not be considered conventional by today's standards at least. Indeed, for quite some time, it, like tobacco, wasn't always seen as anathema to health, even during the notoriously restrictive Prohibition era. At this time some may perhaps be surprised to learn that physicians could legally prescribe distilled spirits--usually whiskey or brandy--on official government prescription forms.

There was then, a history behind the perceived benefits of alcohol's medicinal values (part of its popularity was undoubtedly its low cost and availability), ones which also, it must be added, stretched back to antiquity and transcended national boundaries. In nineteenth and early twentieth-century America, patients of all ages used alcohol

for medical purposes. Though it is true that the law did regulate how much could be prescribed to each patient--a common adult dose was about one ounce every two-three hours, while child doses ranged from 1/2 to two teaspoons every three hours--adults could legally buy liquor from a pharmacy or physician.

Yet, by the 1920s there existed much scientific literature to suggest that perhaps the faith placed alcohol's medicinal values was in fact *misplaced*. The rise of scientific medicine after 1850 had led to this shift, and by the turn of the twentieth century the therapeutic value of alcohol was widely disputed and even discredited among more advanced practitioners.



Former Police Officers during Prohibition, enjoying a toast in a New York bar

From 1916, *The Pharmacopeia of the United States of America* no longer listed whiskey and brandy as ‘approved medicines’ while a year later the American Medical Association voted, in a somewhat contentious meeting, to effectively throw its weight behind prohibition.

So how do we explain the continued use of prohibition-era ‘alcohol prescriptions’ in view of the debatable scientific and medicinal values of liquor and the fact that, on a wider legal and societal level, alcohol was under siege? Indeed it will no doubt be remembered that the 18th Amendment (1920) prohibited the production, sale, and transport of ‘intoxicating liquors’.

Well, perhaps it could be argued that there were physicians who still clung to the belief that alcohol in its various guises was a cure for a myriad of ailments; especially so since it was only in 1916 that whiskey and brandy were removed from *The Pharmacopeia of the United States of America*. It has also been suggested that American physicians were making a political and professional statement by protesting the encroachment of Congress on their right, as doctors, to treat their patients as they saw fit. In short, they were resisting the

government’s growing jurisdiction over the practice of medicine.

Maybe profiteering played its part too, for the law was open to abuses by physicians and indeed patients. There were, technically, limits on how much liquor could be administered or obtained; ‘no more than a pint of spirituous liquor per person, per 10 days’ officially, and prescriptions could only be used once. Yet the *Prohibition of Intoxicating Beverages, or Volstead Act* (Section 7 especially), provided potential caveats, including: ‘if such examination is found impracticable, then upon the best information obtainable,’ which might have invited unscrupulous (or desperate) individuals to find a less than conscientious physician to provide a much-needed ‘fix’ (individual interpretations of this term, in view of the subject matter, are welcome here) previously this hadn’t exactly been the case) demonstrates through a small prism the manner in which alcohol brought the ingenious (and at times manipulative) out of individuals faced by a law many no doubt felt an arbitrary infringement upon their rights, freedoms and as mentioned above, professional ethics.

Whatever the reality, the era is another of those fascinating periods of American history which would be somewhat difficult for more recent generations to imagine if transposed onto a modern United States or indeed Great Britain. Maybe, however, history does present other precedents from which we may indulge a few whimsical musings.

For instance, when the British government merely raised taxes on cider in the 1760s, it created widespread disorder and rioting in the west-country.

The government even backed down on the issue and sought money elsewhere, including from the American colonies; and we all know how that ended...

Richard Hall



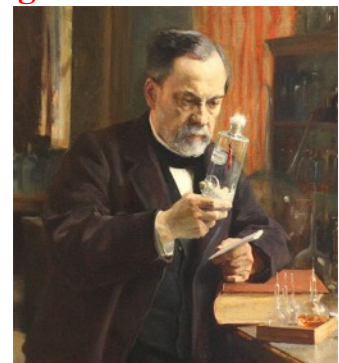
Lewis and Clark's winter camp at Fort Clatsop

**“Wine is the most healthful and most hygienic of beverages.”
— Louis Pasteur**



“T’is the wild wine
that sets the wisest man to sing
at the top of his lungs,
laugh like a fool – it drives the
man to dancing... it even
tempts him to blurt out stories
better never told.”

Homer, *The Odyssey*



**“Wine is constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy.”
Benjamin Franklin**

HA Swansea Branch Programme 2017

Talks on Saturdays at 11.00, National Waterfront Museum, Ocean Room

15th September

HA President's Lecture

Professor Tony Badger

The 2016 Presidential Election and Donald Trump in Historical Perspective



21st October

The Branch Anniversary Lecture

Andrew Varney

Jane Austen: Naval Valour and Family Values



18th November

Dr Mark Lewis

Learning from Sabrina: The Great Severn Flood of 1607

16th December

Dr Martin Johnes

The History of Christmas



Open day December 16th

Individual membership: £10

Concessionary membership: £5

Family (household) membership: £15

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Membership renewable in March 2017

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HA Membership Secretary,

Anne Thomas

48 Brunswick Street

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