



# Jesus College Old Members' Group

## A Visit to Cowbridge

### 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> June, 2018



Jesus College's links with Wales have, sadly, become less visible since our days in the College. But encouraged by the extremely successful Dr David Lewis event in Abergavenny in 2016, and last year's visit to Caernarfon, we want to keep the Welsh theme going with a visit to the historic Vale of Glamorgan on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. We'll be asking for £85 pp, to include tour guides, individual choices from a set dinner menu, a lunch, a tea and bus transfers between three different locations. We'll base the tour in the old market town of Cowbridge, and members and guests will be expected to finance their own transport to and from there, and make their own accommodation arrangements (see below). We can advise on public transport if necessary and also suggest further places of interest, such as the Welsh folk museum at St Fagan's if people want to stay on locally for a further day.

**Cowbridge Grammar School** was for centuries closely associated with Jesus College. Founded by Sir John Stradling of St Donat's Castle in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century it was re-founded later by our own Sir Leoline Jenkins. The buildings were owned and rebuilt by the College in the Victorian period. The Headmaster was traditionally a Jesus appointee and the school was one of Jesus' main feeder schools in Wales. The school no longer exists – it's now an upmarket apartment



complex so we won't have access to the buildings. But the school's former kitchen garden next door has been transformed into the **Cowbridge Physic Garden**. And the Old Hall which is accessible from the Garden, and which was also used by the school, is now an educational centre.

We've booked a visit to the Garden, with talks by volunteer guides on the botanical and historical aspects of the site. See [www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk/](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk/). We'll meet there at 3.00 pm on Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup>



We'll have dinner\* in the ballroom at the **Bear Hotel** nearby. Clive Jenkins has agreed to provide a brief introduction to the history of Cowbridge beforehand and Dan Clayton-Jones OBE, former Chairman of the National Botanic Garden



of Wales and closely involved in the creation of the Physic Garden will talk after dinner. Apart from playing a major part in the establishment of the gardens, Dan is a former Cowbridge pupil who has helped to promote tourism and heritage causes in Wales for many years, and is a Jesus donor although he didn't go there himself.

Members wishing to stay at the Bear Hotel should make their bookings as soon as possible. Ring them directly on **01446 774814**, mention our function, and you'll get a much cheaper rate than you'll get online. Full details can be seen on [www.townandcountrycollective.co.uk](http://www.townandcountrycollective.co.uk). Their car park is behind the hotel in North Street.

The Bear is part of a chain which includes The West House, an attractive country house hotel in Llantwit Major, but if you wanted to stay there you'd need additional transport to go the dinner in Cowbridge. You could also stay in the Stockwood Mews Apartments and Cottage immediately behind the Bear <http://stockwood-mews-apartments-cottage-cowbridge.hotelmix.co.uk/>. Alternatively, [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) and other sites list accommodation in the area.



On Wednesday July 6<sup>th</sup> we've booked a 29 seater bus to take us from Cowbridge to the Vale coast – first stop **St Donat's Castle**, now the home of Atlantic College, the international sixth form college founded by Kurt Hahn, who also founded Gordonstoun.

The Castle is one of the most spectacular medieval castles in Wales, and not always open to the public. Originally owned by the Stradrings, who played a major part in the Norman occupation of Glamorgan, it was occupied by the family until 1738. It changed hands several times after that before being bought in 1925 by the

American newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, who used it to entertain a string of British and US celebrities until his death in 1951. As well as restoring the building at huge expense he also “plundered” architectural features from a number of other medieval buildings in the UK, prompting George Bernard Shaw to say, following a visit, that "This is what God would have built if he had had the money." At St Donats we will be guided around the castle before enjoying some free time in the grounds, followed by a buffet lunch at the College's Arts Centre.\* The Castle overlooks the Bristol Channel and the Somerset coast, with sweeping terraced gardens leading down to the shore.

From there we'll move on to **St Illtud's Church** in nearby Llantwit Major. Still on the educational theme, the old Celtic monastic site at St Illtud's has been described by some as the first university campus in Britain. It was there that St





Illtud trained hundreds of monks and missionaries in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century to go out and preach the Gospel in Wales, Cornwall, Ireland and Brittany. Those of you who are familiar with Brittany will have heard of St Pol, St Malo and St Samson – all Llantwit Major ‘graduates’, or Llanilltud Fawr to use its Welsh name. The Church – where we’ll once again have the services of a knowledgeable guide – was described by John Wesley in 1777 as the most beautiful and spacious church he had seen in Wales. There is an impressive collection of Celtic stones and medieval effigies in the Galilee Chapel at the west end of the Church, along with wall paintings in other parts of the church which were hidden under whitewash during the various post-reformation purges and only revealed again in the Victorian period.



At the end of the afternoon church volunteers will provide a delicious home-made tea, before our bus takes back to Cowbridge.

The visit to St Illtud's ends the planned itinerary. Members may either make their way home or stay on at the Bear Hotel (or other accommodation). For those looking for other places of interest to visit the **National Museum of Wales** at St Fagans near Cardiff has many historical building of interest in its grounds.

The timetable for the visit to Cowbridge is:-

### **Tuesday 5th June**

3 pm meet at the Physic Gardens, opposite Holy Cross Church, High St, Cowbridge for guided tour of the gardens

6 pm meet in the Ballroom, The Bear, Cowbridge for pre-dinner drinks (pay at the bar)

7 pm dinner in the Ballroom at the Bear\*

### **Wednesday 6th June**

10 am meet at the Bear in Cowbridge to join the bus for visits to St Donat's Church and St Illtud's Church

10.30 am arrive at St Donat's Castle for guided tour

12.30 pm buffet lunch at St Donat's\*

2 pm leave St Donat's Castle

2.30 pm arrive at St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major for guided tour

3.30 pm tea at St Illtud's

4.00 pm bus departs to return to the Bear.

If you would like to join our party for the visit to Cowbridge please complete the attached Booking Form. Either email the form to [events@jomg.org](mailto:events@jomg.org) and pay online (preferable) OR post the form with a cheque. (If you wish to stay at the Bear, early booking is recommended and a better deal can be secured by booking by phone.)

*\*Please advise us of any special dietary requirements.*