

# Cymdeithas Hanesyddol Tyddewi a Phebidiog St Davids and Dewisland Historical Society

## D453w Yet More Photographic Memories of St Davids

Paul Edey

A positive cornucopia of photographic delights from the archives of St Davids & Dewisland



Historical Society! From very early examples of the photographic record, through a century of 'snap-shots' in time, from the everyday to the extraordinary. Sharing the images was prompted in part by a need to put names or dates to images whilst there were still those around who have a connection to the places and people caught for all time on film. These images are there to be shared with anyone with a particular interest, as the Historical Society have simply been appointed custodian in order to preserve part of the disappearing recent past.

It was common for groups of people to record special events with a photograph so photos included: St Davids Golf Club (early 1940s?); a display of Life Saving Apparatus (1930); Life-Saving Ceremony (1950s?); Remembrance Day Service in Cross Square; a chapel tea party and 'skipping' at Treleddy Fawr (1938); City Hall on Poling Day 1923/24, ladies, gents and boys of the Red Cross (1964 – with the Duchess of Kent inspecting the brigade) and the more everyday image of a group of characters – in their waistcoats and flat caps – clearing rubble from what appears to be Whitesands car-park area (possibly associated with the hydrophone station construction/demolition or clearing up after a major storm ... though the rubble is too angular for beach debris).

Photographs reflect the changing character of the buildings in St Davids with images of the High Street and Nun Street – including the levelling of the Elf Garage ... and the 3 vast fuel storage tanks. Further afield remarkably clear images still exist of Porthgain as a busy working harbour – with ships crammed (and cramped) into the tiny inner harbour, waiting to be loaded from the large hoppers or from the trunks pulled by small steam engines, running on their tracks along the harbour-side. The village of the 1880s was very different from what remains – with the centre occupied by the vast chimneys of the brickworks alongside what remains as 'The Shed' fish bistro. The whole place was a busy, dusty, smoky and noisy industrial landscape both around the harbour and on the valley-side above – with the quarries and stone crushers feeding into the hoppers – with a large workforce (some housed in the cottages in the village).



Another 'disappeared' landscape was represented by images of Treflodan – with a well-house, 3 cottages built around a small farm, a larger farm and a large house all having been removed for the construction of the St Davids wartime airfield. The family of Ann Thomas lived in the large farmhouse until its demolition and the smaller farm was the home of Elaine Price. There are also images of Merryvale (now covered in trees), where the river fed the leat for the Bishop's Mill – now overgrown with vegetation and clogged ... as with the leat for Lower Mill (1915), which diverted water from above the house, directed it over the mill-wheel and then the water re-joined the river just below the mill (and they had the first flushing Ty Bach over the water course!) Alan's family stand proudly in front of the house with Mum just a babe-in-arms.

As well as the 'every-day' and special events photographs include some unique images – such



as the 1<sup>st</sup> ever aircraft in St Davids (in 1933) at Penlan farm! There is also the cast of the 1939 production, in the City Hall, of a show ... thought to be 'Zora' and a more 'intimate' glimpse into the Deanery – a typical Victorian interior complete with chaise longue – in Canon Bevan's time. No photographic record of St Davids would be complete without at least one reference to Dai-the-Mill and in addition to the Mill and the lifeboat is closely associated with the weather readings which he took and recorded daily – now a tradition continued by Malcolm.