

Cymdeithas Hanesyddol Tyddewi a Phebidiog
St Davids and Dewisland Historical Society

A Pembrokeshire Potpourri – Selection from the Archives

Paul Edey

Potpourri = “an unusual or interesting collection of things” and this is true for the collection of images to be found in the Historical Society images archives rescued from the original Society Computer by Paul Edey, and based on images members may not have seen before.

1882 was a significant year for St Davids as it marked the Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh (Alfred b.1844, 2nd son to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and his wife, the Tsar’s daughter, Princess Marie Alexandrovna). The couple had come to Pembrokeshire to launch HMS Edinburgh, built at Pembroke Dock, on 18th March 1882. A total of nine celebratory ‘triumphal’ arches in total were erected around St Davids ... including Grove, Vicarage, Cross Square, Carpenter’s Arms, Nun St and City Inn. Ladies paraded on the City Cross to mark the occasion and clearly no expense was spared for the popular prince!

Amongst the images stored in the Historical Society archives are many that the passage of time has rendered anonymous. The aim with New Archive aims to provide as much information as possible for the images. Modern research tools make it easier to identify images. The location of a bridge was finally attributed to Castle Pyll, (Black Bridge), Milford ... not an iron-framed construction but **timber!** Built 1858 - demolished 1872 means this image can be dated to the 1860s. From the same collection an image of Millford Haven ... looking towards the slipway, now the Marina. It shows the church stands alone and the ‘new’ houses line the crest of the hill but few other buildings exist, down to the mudflats of the foreshore! Other images included the dedication of St David’s City Hall Foundation Stone (1920) with crowds of school children providing a touch of social history, the Cathedral Choir (c.1900), the Bishops Palace, the Bont, Caerbwdy corn mills, Caerfachel, Dale, and Whitesands ... along with a number of ‘public’ people and ‘private’ family groups ... and a reminder of jalopy-racing (and the psychedelic ‘The Duke of Bedford’) in the 1970s, popular with the local lads (all the jalopies were MOT failures)! Members of the audience could identify with a number of those in some of the image including friends and family! Amongst the images was a gem of an article from “Sunday at Home” - with



reminiscences of of the journey to St Davids and their visit in 1869.

Ending on an enigma - from the 1860s. It had to be Milford Haven but where? The area had changed over the intervening almost 160 years – the site now masked by oil terminals and storage tanks! ‘Clever Technology’ makes it possible to not only locate where the image must have been (but there are also the remains of a jetty behind the oil storage facility)!