

DERI



Rhiwbina Civic Society 2023 Programme

17 January: Edging the City – A Journey round the Border of Cardiff - Peter Finch

21 February: The Story of Wales in a Hundred Objects – Andrew Green

21 March: Getting Cardiff Cycling: Pedal Power and Cardiff Cycle City - Paul Streets and Sian Donovan

18 April: Society's Annual Lunch - 12.30 at Caffe Fach. Further information and menu at February and March meetings

16 May: Tales from Wales – Storytelling including Welsh myths and legends – Debra John For further information, please see our website or Facebook page – (All meetings at Canolfan Beulah at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated)



Rhiwbina Library re-opens as Community Wellbeing Hub

Rhiwbina Community Wellbeing Hub will welcome customers back to the former library building on Pen-Y-Dre on Monday, January 16 following the remodelling of the facility to enable the delivery of additional and enhanced services for the community.

With funding from Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund, Integration and Rebalancing Care Fund (IRCF) and MALD (Museums, Archives and Libraries Division), the building has been transformed into a fit-for-purpose community facility that will support the co-location of library services with new advice, health and wellbeing, housing and social care services which will be delivered in the new community rooms, meetings rooms and interview areas.

Visitors to the hub will also benefit from a new computer suite, a bright and inviting children's area, new library shelving and new toilets including an accessible WC with baby changing facilities. Outside, the rear garden area has been landscaped to provide an attractive space with a seating area.

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Cllr Lynda Thorne, said: "A new, fit-for-purpose wellbeing hub is a brilliant way to start 2023 for the community in Rhiwbina. This new facility will bring a host of benefits for people in the local area, providing joined up services that they can access all in one place.

"There'll be a strong focus on health and wellbeing services at the hub as well as the usual library, housing and advice services and more. We're looking forward to welcoming people back to building to see all the improvements.

"Thanks go to the community for their patience while the building was being refurbished - I'm sure everyone will agree, it was worth the wait for this fantastic new wellbeing hub for Rhiwbina."

The wellbeing hub will be open from Monday, January 16, 10am - 7pm, closed on Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9am - 6pm and Saturday 9am - 5.30pm.

Membership Subscriptions for 2023/24

The Society has not raised annual subscriptions for a number of years, and your Executive Committee has been discussing a new approach for next year. The decision we have reached is that we will raise the subscription to £10.00 per person from 1st October 2023. There will no longer be single or family subscriptions, as every member will pay £10.00.

We will be sending out new subscription forms with the April/May *Deri* to everyone, so that you will be able to change Standing Orders in plenty of time before 1st October and for those who would like to pay by Standing Order next year. We urge everyone else to pay by Bank Transfer as we will not be accepting cheques in the future. If you really cannot pay by either of these methods then we will accept cash. We have made this decision because of charges introduced recently by our Bank which have had a substantial impact on the Society's finances.

The other change we will be introducing from October is that Visitors will pay £4.00 at each meeting instead of the £3.00 they pay currently. Members will continue to pay £2.00.

Insulating Old Houses - early experience with external wall insulation by Justin McCarthy



Figure 1. The rear of the house in January 2022
before the window replacement

A recent report from The Resolution Foundation [1] says that "... close to four-in-ten (38 per cent) of UK dwellings were built before 1946 when solid-wall construction and single glazing were the norm, ... there are 9.3 million homes in England with walls classified as having poor or very poor efficiency – 40 per cent of the total housing stock."

Number 36 Beulah Road is an 1893 built semi-detached house, the front part of which is stone built and the rear part is solid brick, externally rendered.

Of the 18 windows and doors all but six were original, wooden, draughty and single glazed, and those six were around 40 years old, so in April of 2022 I had 13 replaced with modern, high performance windows and doors, but in a style very close to the original.

I then turned my attention to the solid brick walls.

The thermal performance of walls and windows is usually expressed as a U-value. This is dependant on the type of material, its thermal conductivity and its thickness. The lower the U-value, the better i.e. the less the heat-energy loss. For older buildings, there is considerable uncertainty regarding exact materials and their thermal properties [2] and the 'standard' values on which regulations are based are being questioned.

Solid 9 inch (230 mm) brick walls are given a standard U-value of around 2.7 W/m²K. Stone walls are given a standard value of 2.0 W/m²K. However, stone walls vary greatly in both the type of stone and type of construction. Two other published research papers [3] and [4], using in-situ measurements on a variety of buildings, indicate that these 'standard' values are over pessimistic, particularly for solid stone walls.

Solid walls can be insulated either internally or externally. Internal insulation can be carried out one room at a time, perhaps as redecoration becomes necessary. It can be quite disruptive especially if there are electrical outlets and fixtures and fittings as in kitchens and bathrooms. Internal insulation also takes space off the size of the rooms. External wall insulation needs to be carried out over a whole section of external wall but is not particularly disruptive.

The research I did led me to conclude that the most effective upgrade I could do at present was to externally insulate the rear, solid brick-built part of the house. I found a company, EWI Pro, that specialise in providing all the materials needed. From the papers I had read I was able to do the calculations (which I am happy to share) and concluded that 100 mm slabs of Rockwool applied externally would result in a U-value of 0.307 W/m²K. My calculations for the existing situation indicated a U-value of 2.1 W/m²K. Part L of the Building Regulations [5] require renovation of 'thermal elements' to achieve 0.30 W/m²K. Given the uncertainties involved, I was happy with 0.307.

EWI Pro have a list of recommended installers and I contacted Robert Szot and had a detailed discussion with him followed by a quote which I accepted. They did a great job.



Figure 2 Scaffolding in place and the paving, windows and doors protected



Figure 3 Insulation slabs being fixed



Figure 4. The finished job

In conclusion, this project has already made a noticeable difference in the warmth of the whole house. I am considering it as an investment of some of my savings. I have looked back at my energy bills and worked out a month by month average gas consumption over five years. I intend to compare future consumption with that, apply current prices and calculate a notional return on this investment. The figures for November and December are very encouraging.

- 1 A. Anis-Alavi, L. Judge, J. Marshall, C. McCurdy and D. Tomlinson (2022), *Hitting a brick wall: How the UK can upgrade its housing stock to reduce energy bills and cut carbon*, The Resolution Foundation, December 2022
- 2 G. N. Francis et al (2015), *Solid-wall U-values: heat flux measurements compared with standard assumptions*, Building Research & Information, 43:2, 238-252, DOI: 10.1080/09613218.2014.967977
- 3 C. Rye (2015), *Are traditional buildings really carbon villains? Why it matters when insulating solid walls*, Journal of Building Survey, Appraisal & Valuation, Volume 4 Number 2, 2015, pp119-126
- 4 C. Rye and C. Scott, (2012), *Research report 1: The U-value report*, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (revised edition 2012).
- 5 The Building Regulations 2010. *Approved Document L Volume 1 – Dwellings, Conservation of fuel and power*. 2022 Edition – For use in Wales

K stands for temperature measured in degrees Kelvin. A temperature difference of one degree Kelvin is the same as one degree Celsius (°C)

Summary of Recent Meetings by Roger Wright

October 2022

A record of about 50 people came to the October meeting when Ritchie Wood gave a presentation with an intriguing title: 'Rhiwbina – an Urban Village or just another City Suburb?' Ritchie's view was definitely an urban village and he showed us why he thought this was the case.

He took us through the variations of the Rhiwbina name, and how the village was based on a small number of farms. He described how the garden village came into existence based on one man's ambitious vision to relocate the poor from inner Cardiff slum areas. We also saw the development of the churches and schools and some of the other local amenities. His talk was accompanied by a large number of interesting illustrations – both old and new.

What makes Rhiwbina a village rather than a suburb? Essentially, it's a place with a range of amenities within easy access for a diverse population; moreover, it's a place where people enjoy living.

Oh, for the return of a post office and a bank?!

November 2022

At our November meeting we held a short AGM when members agreed to change the name of the society from 'Rhiwbina Civic Society' to 'Rhiwbina Society'. Membership fees were also going to be increased with effect from October 2023. The existing committee was re-elected *en bloc* and Anne Jones joined it.

After this, Sarah Boyce gave us a fascinating illustrated talk called 'The Roman Invasion of Wales'. Julius Caesar first invaded Celtic Britain in 55 BC and came back the next year with considerably more reinforcements. The Romans set up two major bases in south east Wales: Caerleon and Caerwent. Their rule lasted for nearly 500 years until AD 410. The remains of these settlements can still be seen today.

What was the Roman legacy? A comprehensive network of roads across the whole of Britain, Christianity, language, a currency, a calendar, mining, various fruit and vegetables and animals.

December 2022

The December meeting was a 'one-off special'. The Society was celebrating 25 years in existence – so, we provided plenty of food and drink to mark the occasion. As a Christmas treat, Lyn Owen devised a quiz on a clever and informative take of 'The 12 days of Christmas'. Lyn used her IT skills to project all the questions and answers onto a screen – together with some music. Well done Lyn – we are already looking forward to next Christmas!

