

It's now 12.15 and everyone eventually emerges, some reluctantly.

"Well done everyone, please try and keep together" We start walking along the main road heading towards our next destination which is the Usk Rural Museum. "Look out for the shop on the opposite side of the road, it may remind you of a similar shop in Taffs Well. Can anyone remember that shop? Well done Pete, spot on! Yes it's closed now as Arthur died what 20 years ago? I remember him well. When he was driving his foot was either on the brake or the accelerator was on floor. You name it and his shop had it, rumour was that when St Fagans museum was looking for obscure parts for their displays, they went to Arthur's first and usually found it in stock there. "Keep up, you will have time to browse inside later, it's well worth it as the shop stretches back



quite a distance. Will you also keep your eyes open for a business which has an office on this street. I have never been able to spot it; it's a firm that offers of all things burial training". Quick as a flash Rita replies "It must be buried behind one of these street business then"! One or two of you shiver.

Walking, we arrive at the corner, then turn left into New Market Street. "Not far to go now and we are at the museum, please wait outside until all have arrived". Alison is still doing her usual job of ensuring back markers keep up.



Continuing along Market Street we quickly at the museum; the front of belies its sizeable interior. The original Tardis perhaps, after all they are both forms of time machines



"While we are all together, Peter, who has a connection to Usk, is going to mention something of interest which is just a little further along the road. As Peter was a teacher you should have no difficulty in hearing him, and those at the back PLEASE PAY ATTENTION"! I move to the back to ensure that Gwen, Mali, Helen and Linda do so.

"Thanks Mario, exclaims Peter, we will walk on a little down this road and come to two interesting buildings. The first is called The Session House; also called the Courthouse which was built in 1877.

It originally contained two courtrooms but Court Number 1 was gutted by fire in 1944 and was not subsequently re-built. Court Number 2 still survives today with very little alteration. In the courtroom is an impressive judge's chair and the benches which retain their original carved place names for Counsel, Solicitors, Reporters, Jury and others.

I interrupt Peter, "Colin, I believe you have some association with the building and perhaps the prison"?

Heads turn, strange looks appear in some of the eyes, some mouths even form a small 'O' in anticipation perhaps of a bit of gossip.

"Yes, quite correct Mario, replies Colin. It was back in the days when I was a Crown Prosecutor".

Several people seem to move a little way away from Colin whilst also looking a little sheepish.

Margaret takes over where Peter finished. "The Sessions House saw two major nineteenth century trials; those of Margaret Mackworth, 2nd Viscountess Rhondda who was a prominent suffragette.

She had been caught posting a letterbomb in Newport. She was tried by Magistrates in the Courthouse and sentenced to imprisonment in the Prison next door - a passageway under the dock used to link the two buildings. Today the Sessions House is now used as council offices as well as a community resource and is also a very popular wedding venue".

Did I hear something about life sentences still being handed out from somebody in the middle of the group? I look but can't spot the speaker with any certainty. Yet.

I take the opportunity to mention a little something about the museum.

"Housed in an ancient malt barn with adjacent buildings, the Museum has 5000+ exhibits collected by local enthusiasts over the past 50 years. Their aim was to preserve the heritage of the life and work of country people in the Welsh Borders from Victorian times, onwards. The museum houses a unique collection of artefacts from the smallest hand tools and household items through to large agricultural machinery and vintage tractors, some of which I am sure that I have seen recently on French 'B' roads! The museum portrays rural life in Monmouthshire covering a period of approximately 100 years from 1850 – 1950. The collection is housed in a 16th century malt barn with an extensive collection of adjoining buildings.

Specialist collections include a Victorian cottage, forge, carts, a cobbler, cheese making, WWII (including a bomb), a stable, hardware shop and many more. There is a large collection of photographs, books and farm records. Staff have also undertaken an oral history project recording the knowledge and recollections of some of the older residents of Monmouthshire. These memories provide a fascinating insight into rural life and the wartimes activities of the Land Army.

Nobody mentions they have experience of that organisation, I wonder why?

"Now if you look on the back of the map I gave you, there are two YouTube clips that you may

Peter Woodiwiss <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJomQ-Bob3A>

R Morgan – Blacksmith https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH-gr_dvK7Y

want to watch when you get home.

Remember, there is no charge for entry to the museum. There is however a donations box at the far end of the museum and also a cafe if you have yet to have your fill of coffee and cake!

Three sets of eyes light up!

You now have a choice. You can go into the museum straight away or you can walk a little further with me to see the two buildings Peter and Margaret mentioned. Afterwards we will come back and join the rest of you in the museum. There is plenty to see inside the museum, so shall we say that we will meet at the other end of it at 1.25. When we are all together we will walk over to the Three Salmons for lunch. If by any chance some of you finish early, please make your own way over to lunch, but don't get lost, after all you have that map. We are booked in for lunch at 1.45 so there is time for a pre lunch drink if you want one".

A different three sets of eyes light up.

"Right, those that want to look at the House and the prison, come with Peter, Margaret and myself, the rest of you - off you go into the museum and we will all meet up as mentioned at 1.25".

A short walk brings us to the rather impressive looking Sessions House and before going up its drive Peter continues, "The attractive entrance helps to make the Sessions House particularly suitable for wedding photographs, pity Marilyn went into the museum otherwise she could have taken rather a nice photo of us while we are here.

"She rarely takes photos with people in them" mentions Sally, but she might have made an



exception for us today".



We follow Peter in through the doorway, passing through the entrance hall and up the short flight of steps.

"The library houses very impressive collection of almost 3000 volumes of law reports, statutes and commentaries dating from 1698 to 1971. They are available for reading if any of you so feel the need. Alongside of me I notice Colin took a half step forward but was checked by Linda. Beryl however didn't manage to restrain Stan who had a very happy look on his face as he approached the first wall of books, anticipating fingers twitching.



As we move further into the building we arrive at a set of barred doors. This lock-up once housed prisoners awaiting trial, but now it's used, as you can see, for storage but is an important and atmospheric reminder of the original function of the building.

Let's walk on and see the remaining court room. and see its original features and fittings. I bet they could tell a few tales if only they could talk".



"Things have changed a little since I was last here, mentions Colin, but not much. Of course it was rather fuller then.



I used to sit on these benches, but on one side of the large central table. The defence was therefore on one side and the prosecution the other. The door you can see to one side of the main chair was

where the judges and magistrates entered the court.

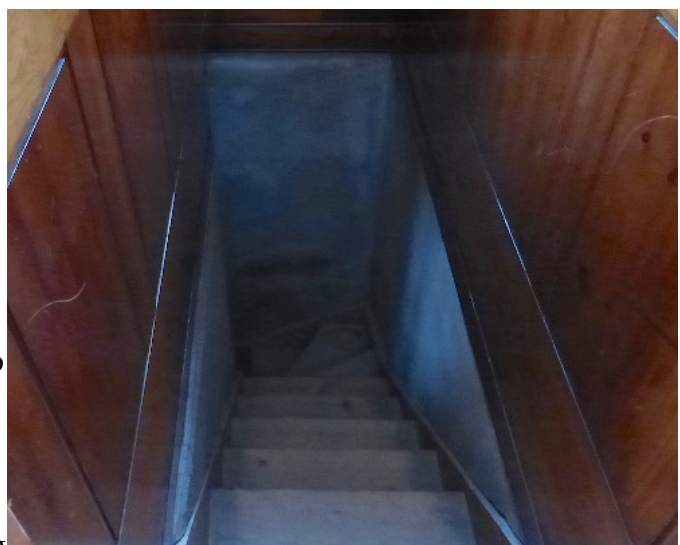


These seats were very hard so one or two with tender bottoms used to bring their own cushions to supplement the ones you see here.



Lets take a closer look at the dock, which, as you know, enclosed the defendant.

Now if you lean over far enough into the dock you can just about see a short flight of steps. These lead from the lock-up and of course also lead back down to the lock-up for those found guilty!



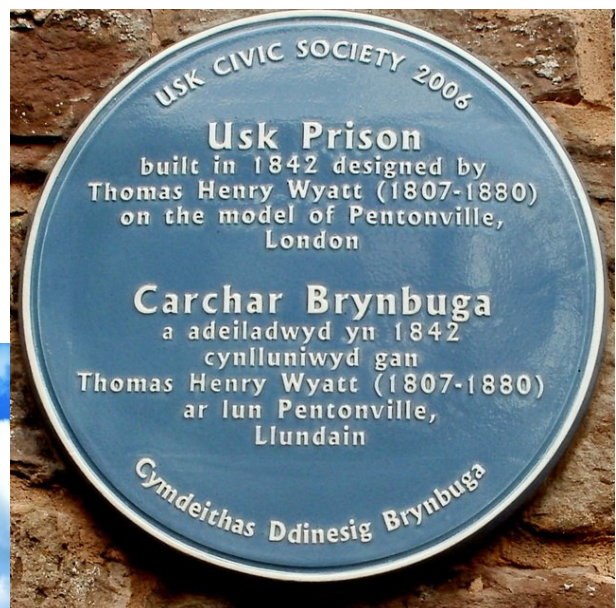
As Peter mentioned, there was a tunnel leading from the cells area to the prison, which was just next door really". Time to leave now, as least we can!

Once outside we can see how close the prison is to the Sessions House. That tunnel would have been quite short. I wonder how many passed through it over the years?



Walking towards the prison we find that there are two entrances

"The first is the newer of the two, and as we get closer to the gate please notice a blue plaque. Hands up those who thought the prison looked surprisingly familiar."



Was it because you stayed there as a guest of HMP service perhaps?"

The original entrance somehow looks a little more intimidating. "Just as a prison should be" I hear someone say, and we think we agree.

Taking our leave of the prison we walk back to the museum. Once there

you make our own way



around, pausing at those exhibits that catch your attention; time soon flies!











Having worked your way to the other end of the museum you come to the tea room. I hope you are



looking at the coffees and not just admiring the cake!



Surprisingly everyone is here, no one seems to taken advantage of a pre dinner drink.. So without further ado we step outside and with a backward glance over one's shoulder at the museum main entrance and delightful cafe, we take our leave.



Walking at a brisk pace, it is after all our pre luncheon exercise, through the main Usk car park.



At the far end we leave the car park and follow the road

and then we will be turning left; remember only traffic has to turn right



along Maryport Road,



past a rather fine house ... note the superior `period` style of Usk lamp post by the way. We are going to walk a little further, through the

bollards, it's one way (but not for us, just cars, so look out) towards our lunch venue.

The Three Salmons which we can just see as the white building at the end of the road. But be please be careful for those who are in rush for their lunch or that drink, we first have to safely cross the main roan through Usk. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!.



Good, everyone is across the main road and no screeching of brakes so all of you have paid attention to my warning.



A welcoming door nicely flanked by a pair of standard bushes, greets us to this 17th Century Coaching Inn.

Just to prove it was a coaching inn please notice across the road



the converted Livery and Bait Stables. Livery, yes. But Bait Stables? Now of course the clue may well be in the name of the Inn. The Usk is famous for its salmon fishing but I didn't know that they kept the bait in stables. On second thoughts, does one 'fly fish' for salmon, so perhaps they used very big flies?



Horseflies maybe?

Through the door we take in the interior surroundings, and for reference note that the Inn seems to have a rather nice garden, perhaps for future use, coffee maybe?

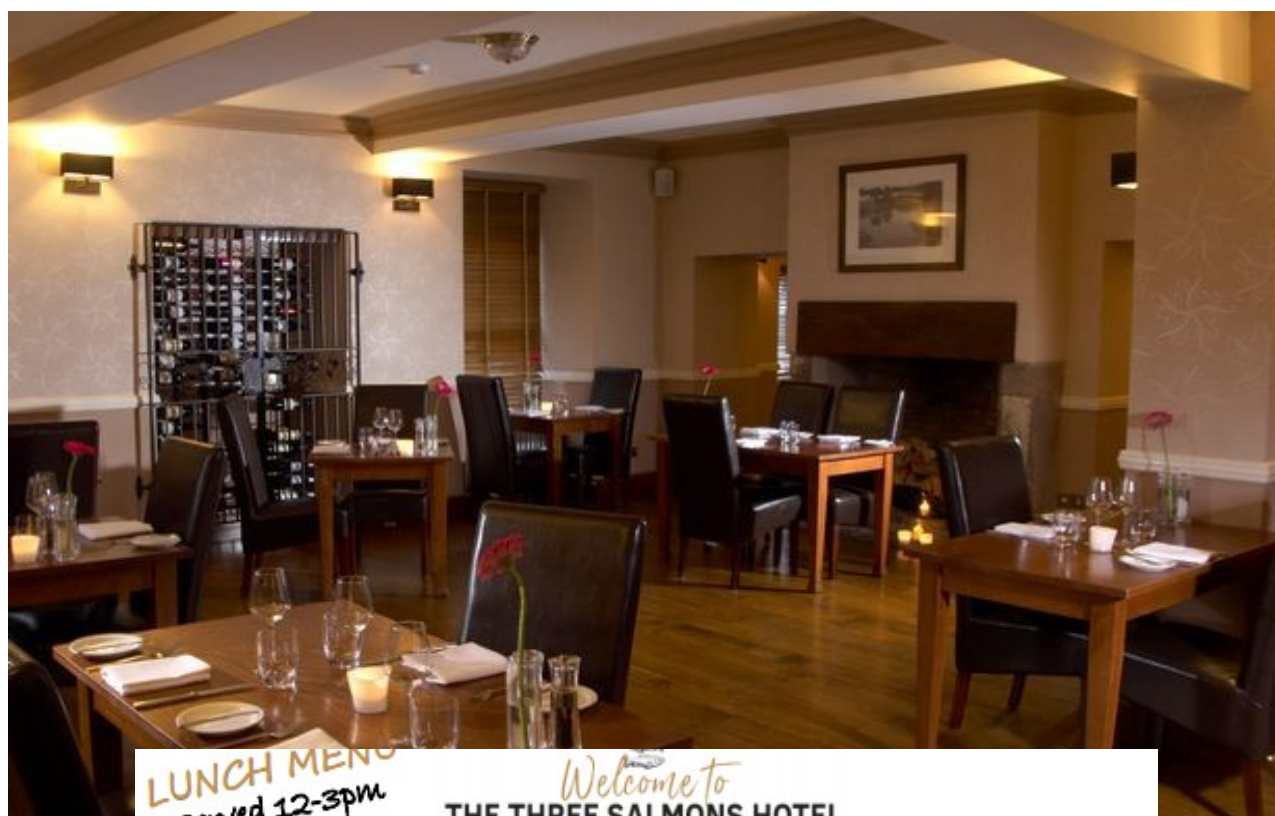


We pass through the bar area on our way to our tables in the restaurant.



"For those of you who have forgotten what they have ordered, there are menus available at the door to the restaurant, and I have a list. Yes Jennifer, I know I always say that because I invariably forget what I have ordered, but I do have certain difficulties you know.

Will you also order and pay for your drinks before you sit down please, it makes things easier when it comes to paying for your lunch". The room has been nicely set up for us, I didn't want two long tables today as it makes it look too formal.



LUNCH MENU
Served 12-3pm

Welcome to
THE THREE SALMONS HOTEL
BRIDGE STREET USK | 01291 672133 | WWW.THREESALMONS.CO.UK

APPETISERS

HOMEMADE BREAD & OLIVES garlic & herb marinade (G,Sd,E,V) **£5.95**

CHEF'S SOUP OF THE DAY fresh bread (V,D) **£5.95**

CLASSIC PRAWN COCKTAIL (Cr,E,D,Mu) **£6.25**

CREAMY GARLIC & BACON MUSHROOMS toasted crouton (D,G,Sd, can be vegetarian) **£6.25**

LIGHT BITES

SMASHED AVOCADO toasted muffins, poached eggs (G,E,D,V) **£7.95** add bacon **£1**

FREE RANGE OMELETTE chips, salad, choice of 3 fillings **£8.95**

Honey baked ham, Welsh cheddar, bacon, cherry tomatoes, confit mushrooms, red onion (additional **£1** each)

FROM THE GRILL

All our burgers are homemade 100% brisket burgers served on brioche bun, lettuce, tomato, gherkin, coleslaw, chunky chips or fries

CLASSIC (D,E,G) **£11.95**

CHEESE Welsh cheddar **£12.99**

BBQ BACON & CHEESE burger wrapped in bacon, smothered in cheese, bacon mayo (D,E,G) **£13.95**

BUTTERMILK CRISPY CHICKEN gem lettuce, tomato, gherkin mayo (D,E,G, can be GF) **£13.95**

BUTTERFLIED CHICKEN gem lettuce, tomato, gherkin mayo (D,E,G, can be GF) **£13.95**

FROM THE SEA

SALMON & PRAWN STIR FRY lightly spiced rice, soy sauce dressing (G,Cr,F,Se,S, can be GF) **£12.95**

WHITEBAIT winter salad, new potatoes, tartare, lemon (G,Mu,D,E) **£9.95**

SMOKED SALMON & PRAWN SALAD Marie rose sauce, winter salad, new potatoes (Cr,E,G,F,Mu) **£11.95**

BEER BATTERED FISH & CHIPS chunky chips, garden peas, tartare sauce, lemon (F,G,D,E, can be GF) **£13.95**

SCAMPI & CHIPS chunky chips, garden peas, tartare, lemon (F,Cr,G,E,D) **£10.95**

FROM THE FIELD

Your choice of potato...Chunky chips, fries, mash or new potatoes

CHICKEN & WAFFLES fried egg, maple gravy (G,D,E,C) **£9.95** add bacon **£1**

THREE SALMONS' PIE seasonal vegetables, red wine gravy, with a choice of potato (G,D,C,Mu,Sd,soy) **£13.95**

PAN FRIED LIVER OR FAGGOTS, MASH & PEAS red wine gravy, with your choice of potato (C,G,D,Sd) **£10.95**

HOMEMADE LASAGNE winter salad with a choice of potatoes (G,D,C) **£11.95**

BRAISED BEEF BOURGUIGNON mustard mash, winter vegetables (gluten free, Sd,C,Mu,D) **£13.95**

THREE SALMONS CURRY naan bread, onion bhaji, mango chutney, rice, chips or 1/2 & 1/2 (G,D) **CHICKEN £13.95** or **SPICED CAULIFLOWER & RED PEPPER** (can be vegan) **£12.95**

SIDES £3.00

SWEET POTATO FRIES

upgrade with your main for £2

CHUNKY CHIPS

ONION RINGS

SEASONAL VEGETABLES

HOUSE SALAD

FRENCH FRIES

COLESLAW

GARLIC BREAD (cheesy £3.50)

POWERED BY PLANTS

VEGAN / VEGETARIAN

MUSHROOM & LEEK PIE seasonal vegetables, with a choice of potatoes (Sd,C) **£13.95**

SPICED CAULIFLOWER & RED PEPPER CURRY rice, chips or 1/2 & 1/2 **£10.95**

VEGAN CHICKEN STIR FRY soy dressing (Soy,Sd,Se,S) **£11.99**

SWEET POTATO, GOATS CHEESE & SPINACH PIE with a choice of potatoes (G,C, M, Soya, not vegan) **£13.95**

All our burgers are 8oz vegan burgers served on a vegan brioche bun, lettuce, tomato, gherkin, red onion coleslaw, fries

CLASSIC (G) **£11.95**

CHEESE BURGER (G) **£12.95**

SUNDAY 22ND MARCH- MOTHERS

DAY LUNCH 3 course £30PP

AFTERNOON TEA WITH THE

EASTER BUNNY - This Good Friday the

Easter Bunny will be making a special appearance here at the Salmons for an egg-cellent afternoon for the whole family to enjoy







Over desserts, Steve who has drawn the short straw, is sitting alongside me. I ask him that burning question. "Steve, do you remember just as we finished passing through Caerleon and were taking the road to Usk"?

"Only vaguely, he replies, did you perhaps think we were going the wrong way"?

"No, I was just wondering if you could shed any light on the name of the road itself, Usk Road. I wonder why it isn't called Caerleon Road, after all it joins Usk to Caerleon. I noticed that when we reached Usk it was still called the Usk Road."

"Amazing, the find of the century" retorts Steve.

I am glad to hear that Steve confirms that it was worth pondering over then.