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Site Name: **GUILDHALL & MARKETS; CARDIGAN FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.**

PRN: 4996

Site File Ref. No.: CARD/GUIL

Site Type: School; Public Hall & Markets

N. G. Ref.: SN 1777 4615

Period – Post-Medieval; Modern

History:

A petition was completed on January 23rd 1647 from the burgesses of the town, calling for the provision of a free school for Cardigan. It stated that:

“...They pray that a free school may be established in the town of Cardigan annexed to Jesus College, Oxford, and £100 per annum be allowed thereto out of the impropriations, sequestered from delinquents in the county...There is no free school within forty miles, and the inhabitants are so poor that they are not able to have their children educated in any other county. None save the best sort of gentry can read or speak the English tongue, so that preaching does not at all edify them, they being not capable of understanding for want of breeding. In the whole four score parish churches, there are not one dozen ministers who can speak their language...”

In 1650 the Act for the Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel in Wales was passed, encouraging the first State education in Wales. It seems likely that this strengthened the case for the opening of a school in Cardigan. The school was built on a site purchased by the burgesses. When the school was opened in 1653 it was the sixth established Grammar School in Wales. The following record was written on May 9th 1653:

“...Whereas the Honble. Com'tee for the Propagation of the Gospell in Wales have out of their piety and goodness settled a revenue of three score pounds yearly for the mayntayning of a chiefe scholem'r and usher, which is to be got out of the Improprate Tyethes of Llansantffraed. And wee doe p'sent that the Maior for ye tyme beinge and the maior parte of the Cowncell shall have power in proveinge and disproveige, placeinge and displaceinge of their said Chiefe scholem'r or usher, and that such schollers as shall be freely admitted unto the schole must be by the approbation of the said Maior and Cowncell or the maiore parte of them, and that neither of the said scholem'rs shall permitt or suffer their schollers to have any play dayes without a tickett under the Maior's hands, or any two of the Cowncell in his absence, except Thursdayes and Saturdayes in the afternoone...”

On May 20th 1653, the annual sum of £60 from the tithes of Llansantfraed was donated towards the school to cover the wages of the Headmaster and an assistant. The school was founded and administered by the new Cardigan Borough Council in June 1653, to provide for:

“...eight poor Boys taught to read, write and cast accounts, the school built on a spot of ground purchased by the parishioners...

...Record. That in case the parrents of schollers cannot afford for their children's dyett in any inn or ale-house within this Towne, then the Maior and Cowncell, or the major part of them, doe seek a place convenient and the rate.

Record. That such poore schollers out of the Corporation as shall be recommended by the Mair and Councell of the Schoole shall be admitted free, and provision both of apparell and meate shall be made for them out of the Treasury, according to their quality and condition...”

These eight boys were known as the “Foundation Scholars.” In May 1653 Roger Owens or Richard Owens became the first schoolmaster, assisted by an usher named Owen Picton. The former was to receive £40 per annum as a wage and the latter £20 per annum. In the early days school hours are likely to have been 6 a m to 6 pm in summer, 7 a m to 5 p m in winter. Much of the teaching would have been learning by rote, and for the boys to master their Latin, learning Latin texts, mainly on religious subjects. The boys would have sat on long benches or 'forms'. Discipline would have been severe. Most Grammar School boys either left at fifteen years of age and then entered a seven-year apprenticeship at a trade – often that of their fathers. A small number progressed to University. By October 4th 1654 Owen Picton, the usher, had temporary charge of the school and a corresponding increase in salary of £6, implying that R. Owens had already left. The annual sum of £60 paid by the Commissioners for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales ‘...out of pity and goodness...’ since 1653 ceased to be paid from the time of the Restoration in 1660. The expense was then shouldered by the Cardigan Borough Council. About the year 1662 Rev. James Davies came to Cardigan and became the Master, succeeding Rev. Charles Price. Both of these men were Nonconformist preachers. In 1664 Mr. Ryland was the Master. A charge of 2s 6d per day was made to parents who permitted “play days” or unauthorised days of absence from school.

The school may have been extended in 1686 using materials from the Town Walls. On August 6th 1688 Bishop Thomas of St. David's granted a license permitting Rev. David Jenkins, a clerk, of Bridell, to become the Master of the school. Reference was made in 1704 to “...a pair of old walls...” given by John Laugharne of St. Brides and his wife, Anne Laugharne, presumably for extensions to the school. On April 29th 1723 Rev. James Price was appointed to be the Master of the school and remained so until he was replaced on October 5th 1730 by Owen Picton (a descendant of the former usher and master?). In about 1731 Lady Laetitia Cornwallis gave an endowment to the school, which was not received until 1784. It amounted to £717. On October 2nd 1732 Cardigan Borough Council's minute book records:

“...Richard Lee be admitted schoolmaster during his good behaviour and upon complaynt materially against him to be discharged by Council...”

By September 30th 1734 Joshua Evans was the master. The Council minute books record the following item:

“...Ordered that James Lewis of Gelly Dywyll, Esqre. be desired to collect the several sums of money subscribed towards the encouragement of a Master for the Public School within this town of Cardigan, of and from the several and respective persons yt. have subscribed thereto; and that he do pay the same to Mr Joshua Evans, present Master, with our thanks for his past care and service. And further that it is our desire he should continue Master of the said School in expectation of our further friendship and encouragement...”

In 1735 according to the minutes of Cardigan Borough Council:

“...And whereas we had [hoped] that the said Joshua Evans would continue master for some years at the least, and whereas the said Joshua Evans hath notwithstanding such encouragement, contrary to our expectations and without our privity and consent, quitted the said school in a very unhandsome and ungratefull manner...”

On October 1st 1739 Rev. David Jones, the Curate of Cardigan, replaced David Davies as Master. On October 5th 1741 Thomas Lloyd, the Mayor, appointed Richard Watkins as the Master of the school until 1747. On October 5th 1747 Rev. John Davies, the Vicar of Cardigan, was appointed the new Master. On October 22nd 1751 Thomas Watts became the new Schoolmaster and remained so in November 1765, when he was accused of assaulting shoe-maker David Thomas. In 1774 the school was without a master following *“...the resignation of Mr. Meyrick, the late master...”* He may have been Rev. Edward Meyrick, later of Bath and Wells. He was succeeded on October 3rd that year by Rev. Charles Harries. On October 2nd 1786 the Letitia Cornwallis endowment bequest of £717. 10s 6d was granted towards the running of the school and provide an education for six poor boys of the town, to be selected by the Town Council. Lady Letitia Cornwallis' second husband was John Morgan Esq of Cardigan. In 1787 Rev. John Rice was the Master. In 1788 Rev. John Thomas was the Master.

On April 6th 1791 an advertisement was issued seeking contractors for rebuilding the schoolhouse at the same time as the new Cardigan Gaol. Hugh Lloyd was then the Master. In 1796 Rev. Sampson Owen was the Master of the school. On May 7th 1806 Rev. Thomas Morgan wrote to the Cardigan Borough Council to offer his services as Master of the Free Grammar School. A week later the position was advertised, but Rev. Thomas Morgan's application was successful. A piece of land was added to the school that year to serve as a playground. In 1811 the S. P. C. K. praised David Jenkin Morgan, the Singing Master at Cardigan Grammar School, who had taught 34 pupils – more than any other school in the region. On March 28th 1812 the following item appeared in the *'Carmarthen Journal'*:

“...On Monday evening last, the Senior Scholars of the Free School of Cardigan performed, by request, Miss Hannah More's Sacred Drama of Goliath, to a numerous audience. The Rural Dean, of Lower Kemmes, the High Sheriff for the county, and a numerous assemblage of the most respectable ladies and gentlemen, of

the town and neighbourhood, were present, and expressed themselves highly gratified with the performance, which was cheered throughout with reiterated applause. It is but justice to the Senior Scholar, who performed the character of David, to say that he delivered a Prologue and Epilogue, of his own composition, which were greatly admired, and received with marked approbation..."

On July 2nd 1813 Rev. Thomas Morgan, the Master of the school, died aged 34 years. He had also been the Curate of St. Mary's Church and the Rector of Bridell Church. On July 10th 1813 the following report appeared in the 'Cambrian':

"...On Friday, the 2d instant, deservedly lamented, after a short but severe illness, the Rev. Thos. Morgan, aged 34. R. D., Vicar of Eglwswrw, Rector of Bridell, and Master of the Grammar School at Cardigan. He was carried to the grave on Sunday evening by six of his Senior pupils, attended by the Royal Cardigan Clarence Local Militia, amidst the tears of surrounding multitudes; who, by their sorrow, testified the regret they felt at parting with a man rendered deservedly dear to them, by the unwearied discharge of his several duties, the suavity of his manners, and uprightness of his conduct..."

John Jones of St. Dogmaels then briefly had charge of the school. On July 26th 1813 a meeting was held by the Borough Council at the Shire Hall to select a new headmaster. By November 1813 the post had been filled by Rev. George Griffith, the Curate of St. Mary's Church. On April 22nd 1815 the following advertisement appeared in the 'Cambrian':

"...CARDIGAN FREE-SCHOOL.

THIS IS is to give Notice, that a COURT will be held by the MAYOR and COMMON-COUNCIL, of the town of CARDIGAN, in the Town hall, on Monday, the 15th of May, 1815. at twelve o'clock, for the purpose of APPOINTING a MASTER to the FREE-SCHOOL, in the said town; when all Persons wishing to become Candidates for the appointment, are requested to attend with proper testimonials. There is a Salary of £ 10 18s. 6d. to the Master; and further particulars may be known by application to Mr. Lewis Evans, Town Clerk, Cardigan if by letter, post-paid..."

In May 1815 Rev. William Richardson became the Master of the Free School, but resigned after about three months. In August 1815 Rev. Daniel Prytherch Price was the Master. Other sources claim that from this time until January 1817 there was no headmaster at the school. In 1817 Rev. Watkin William Thomas was the Master. In July 1818 John Jones, the Master, died. Rev. W. W. Thomas succeeded him as headmaster. On January 2nd 1819 the following letter appeared in the 'Cambrian':

"...Lampeter, Dec. 2

MR. EDITOR,

Having some business that called me on Wednesday last to Cardigan, which detaining me there that night, I was unexpectedly gratified in the highest degree by a display of juvenile talents in the persons of the Rev. Mr. Thomas's pupils,

*at the breaking up of the school for the Christmas vacation. It appeared, that some intimation had been previously given of the performance; -which brought together most of the town and neighbouring gentry, and such an assemblage of beauty and fashion, I believe, has seldom been seen at Cardigan, except on a ball night. The exhibition consisted of the recitation of speeches, dialogues, and poems in the Greek, Latin, English, and Welsh languages; in which the correctness of the young gentlemen's pronunciation, and their happy conception of the multifarious characters, so as to accompany the recitations with appropriate attitude and action, both charmed and agreeably surprised the audience, and drew upon them reiterated and unbounded applause. I was so much delighted with this unlooked-for entertainment, and thought the performance, in toto, reflected so much credit to both masters and pupils, that I became anxious to take down the names of the young gentlemen, with the part allotted to each, which I beg leave to subjoin, not doubting your readiness to insert the account in our widely circulating Paper. I am your most obedient servant,
CLIO*

*Demosthenes against Philip
Juba and Syphax.
Parting of Hector & Andromache (Greek)
Elegy on Sir Thomas Picton (Welsh)
The Dog and the Fox
Darwin's Eliza
Virgil, 3d Eclogue*

*Wolsey and Cromwell
Rivers and Sir Harry
Lord Byron-on the Death of the Princess
Charlotte
H K. White's Ode to Disappointment
Lord Byron's Farewell
Will Widdle
The Wreck (Welsh)
The Youth and Philosopher
Brutus on the Death of Caesar
The Coachman
Chief Justice and King Henry
Beggar's Petition
T. Quintias; Speech to the Romans
Sir John Melvin and Sterling
Belcour and Stockwell
Englishman and Stanhope.
Guadarama, Lorenzo, and Merchant*

*Toby Tossopot
Helps to Read
Colman's Bolus
Pindar's Razors
Lady Townly and Lady Grace
Vanoc and Valons
Aesop and Beau*

*William Leslie.
Charles Longcroft & John Thomas
David Lloyd.
William Davies.
Richard Mathias.
William Harries.
Thomas Noot, Joseph Hughes, David
Charles*

*Hugh Mathias; James Owen
Thomas Jenkins; Griffith Jenkins.*

*David Lewis
Thomas Lewis.
George Nugent.
James Leslie.
David James.
James Owen; Hugh Mathias
Thomas Williams.
John Davies.
David Lloyd; Thomas Evans
James Owen.
Owen Lloyd.
David Lewis; Thomas Lewis.
George Nugent; William. Harries.
John Howell; James Leslie
William Leslie; Richard Lloyd; Owen
Lloyd.*

*William Davids
John Gerrard
Thomas Noott.
Charles Longcroft
William Lloyd; Hugh Howell.
James Jones; David Charles
Thomas Lewis; David Lewis.*

*Sir Charles and Lady Racket
Prince Henry and Falstaff*

*John Howell; Richard Mathias.
William Lloyd; Richard Lloyd*

CONCLUSION – Music and God Save The King...

On January 9th 1820 the following advertisement was placed in the 'Cambrian':

“...CARDIGAN SCHOOL, CONDUCTED By the Rev. W. W. THOMAS, WILL Re-open, after the Christmas recess, on the 28th of January. Superior accommodations at the Master's house for a limited number of Boarders, at Forty Guineas each per Annum. Drawing, Dancing, and Music Masters attend the School, on moderate terms...”

On April 3rd 1824 the following item appeared in the 'Cambrian':

“...SCHOOLMASTERS. Cardigan Grammar School.

THE Mayor and Common Council of the Borough of CARDIGAN will appoint a MASTER to the said SCHOOL (vacant through the resignation of the Rev. W. W. Thomas), ON THURSDAY, the 15th of APRIL next. Candidates are requested to send in their names, with testimonials of character and qualifications, to Mr. LEWIS EVANS, the Town Clerk, on or before Saturday, the 10th of April. —All letters to be post-paid. There is a permanent salary of £21. 10s. 6d., payable half-yearly, besides the perquisites of the. School. Cardigan, March 20, 1824...”

On September 13th 1824 Rev. David Evans, a graduate of Queen's College, Cambridge, the Curate of Llangoedmor Church, became the Master until 1839. In 1830 Rev. David Evans was the master and there were six supported pupils and twenty paying scholars. In 1834 the school was marked on John Wood's map of Cardigan. In 1835 the school comprised of one room and Rev. David Evans was the Master. On July 12th 1839 the Cardigan Corporation Minute Book noted that Rev. David Evans had resigned as Master. On that date, Daniel Thomas was chosen to succeed him. In August, however, it was announced that John Griffiths of St. David's College, Lampeter, had been appointed to be the new Head Master. Evan Evans, the son of Evan Evans, the Gaoler at Cardigan Gaol, was removed as a pupil – having been subsidised there for more than four years, and John Roberts, son of David Roberts, auctioneer, was admitted. That December, proposals for a new market hall were considered. On August 9th 1843 Cardigan Borough Council referred to Rev. John Griffiths, Master of the school, and requested that he:

“...return immediately to superintend the school himself or to send his resignation in writing to the mayor...”

The position was advertised soon afterwards. In 1843 plans were drawn up for building a new market hall in Cardigan, but were shelved after opposition from Philip John Miles, owner of the Priory estate and Lord of the Manor, resulted in a failed Bill in Parliament. They remained “shelved” until 1850. On July 11th 1844 Rev. Evan Lewis, the Curate of Llangoedmor Church, became the Master of the school,

succeeding Thomas Morgan. On January 17th 1845 the following appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...ENDOWED GRAMMAR SCHOOL, CARDIGAN.

THE REV. EVAN LEWIS, (late Assistant Tutor of St. David's College) begs to acquaint the Public that the above School will be Re-opened on MONDAY, the 20th instant. Mr. L. has a vacancy for two boarders. Cardigan, January 13th, 1845..."

In 1845 John Thomas, the son of the Sexton of Cardigan, reportedly became the new Headmaster (National School?). Rev. Evan Lewis held the position of Master briefly that year between January and July. On November 21st 1845 the following appeared in the 'Pembrokeshire Herald':

"...At a meeting of the mayor and council, the Rev. Mr. Lee, of Lampeter College, was elected to be the master of Lady Cornwallis's grammar school, in this town, subject to him producing his testimonials on the next meeting. We understand the rev. gentleman will readily forward them, being strongly recommended by the Dean of St. David's, the master of his college, and our respected vicar the Rev. Mr. Griffith Thomas..."

In late November 1845 Rev. Richard Lee was appointed to be the Master of the Free Grammar School. On January 30th 1846 the following letter appeared in the 'Pembrokeshire Herald':

*"...TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COMMON COUNCIL OF
CARDIGAN.*

GENTLEMEN,

I find that the grammar-school of this town, after a long vacation of some months, is again re-opened under the mastership of a stranger, and of your choice and appointment. Whether this appointment was judicious, or whether the person selected be competent for the situation is not so much the business, or rather the subject of this address. If he is competent, the greater will be your loss when he leaves; but leave you, most certainly he will, on the very first event he gets another, and a better, fish to fry. Then, if he is not a fit person, the sooner the better he leaves you. But what I would tell you gentlemen, on the present occasion is, that a school sometimes open and sometimes closed, forever changing its masters, like the Cardigan grammar-school of late years, can never flourish - cannot be of much profit, nor prove of any advantage to the town and neighbourhood in which it is established. If you compare the current state of our school to what it was some years ago when the master was permanent amongst us, and not flitting like a bird of passage you will, I know, immediately allow, that what I tell you is correct. Parents will, and indeed you cannot expect them, to put their children in a school conducted under circumstances of such uncertainty, that even you yourselves cannot inform them, although it is open now—how long it will continue to be so.

A burnt child they say, dreads the fire, and I am afraid that the good people of this town and neighbourhood have been so often disappointed with this kind of come-

and-go game, that it will take our school many a long year (under the best of masters) to regain its former celebrity. Then, if a school before it can answer the purposes, for which schools are generally intended, must go on, and continue to go on, in a steady, regular, and uninterrupted course, it devolves on you, into whose hands is committed the care of this once very respectable institution, to put a stop at once and for ever to what I complain of.

There are other abuses connected with the management of this school, which loudly call for, and ought to have, your immediate and best attention but I shall notice only one of them, and that is, the description of boys admitted into it on the foundation, as free scholars. Many boys are thus admitted, whose parents are well able to pay for the education of their children, but by some means, they saddle them on the charity, originally intended for the poorer classes of the place. I have now perhaps said enough for this time, however, if I find that what I have stated is well received, I may again lay some useful particulars before you; but do not think for a moment that I would dictate to you, nor do I address you out of ill-will, all that comes from me emanates from a sincere desire to be of some service to my native town, and to see the old free-school revive and flourish once more.

CIPHER Cardigan, January 28, 1846..."

In February 1846 David Owen Jones, the son of John James Jones, became a pupil of the school. In 1847 the famous report on the State of Education in Wales was published, which contained the following report on Cardigan Grammar School:

"...Grammar School – On December 11 I visited the above school and examined the six boys who were in the school on the foundation; one of the boys was reading Virgil, which he could translate into English, scan &c, in a very creditable manner. They were all rather deficient in the Old Testament history. A prophet foretells future events: did not know any particular events or persons foretold by any of the Prophets. Knew very little of the history of the Israelites, and their journey through the wilderness. Moses led them out of Egypt, and went with them to Canaan. The Ten Commandments were given to Moses in the wilderness: did not know where. They were considerably more ready with their answers to questions given them out of the New Testament:- Christ was born in Bethlehem near Jerusalem, which was in the land of Canaan. Two of the boys were able to answer most of the questions given them concerning Christ's birth, reception, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ wrought many miracles while on the earth, some of which they enumerated. Knew little more of the Apostles than that they were twelve in number; they wrought miracles by the power of God: could not mention any miracles wrought by them. To the following question they could give no answer:- How are sinners saved by Christ's death? (given in several forms). What is meant by atonement, grace, faith? In modern geography they were pretty well versed. They mentioned the four quarters of the globe, some countries in each and some of the largest towns in those countries. Answered correctly as to the number of hours in a day, days in a week, and the number of days, weeks and calendar (but not lunar) months in a year; could not distinguish between a lunar and a calendar month. Some of them were learning their English and some their Latin grammars. They answered correctly the following questions:- How many parts of speech are there? What is a substantive? An adjective? A pronoun? Preposition?

Could not say what a verb or participle were. They were far advanced in arithmetic; they all knew their multiplication and other tables perfectly correctly.

(Signed) D. B. Price, Assistant...

Rev. Evan Lewis was said to be the Master in March 1848. Later in 1848 Rev. Richard Lee Lewis, the Curate of St. Mary's Church, was the Master. Circa 1849 Samuel Lewis wrote the following:

"...The free grammar school was originally founded in 1653, and was at that period endowed, by the Hon. Commissioners for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, with a revenue of £60 per annum, out of the impropriate tithes of Llansantffraid. At the Restoration these reverted to their former owners, the vicars choral in the cathedral church of St. David's; and the school was continued by support from the corporation of Cardigan, until Lady Lætitia Cornwallis, of Abermarlais, in 1731, devised £200, the interest of which was to be paid to the master. Her ladyship's will becoming in 1785 a matter of contention in the court of chancery, an order was then made that £717. 10. 6. Bank three per cents, should be transferred to the mayor and council in respect of the above bequest, and the dividends, amounting to £21. 10. 6., are now paid to the master of the school. The school-house comprises one room, erected some years since by subscription on the property of the corporation. There are six boys on the foundation, who are nominated by the mayor and common council, and are allowed to remain five years, during which time they are taught the Greek and Latin classics, history, and geography, gratuitously, but pay one guinea annually for learning writing and arithmetic: there are about twenty-two other scholars, who pay for their education. Prior to the establishment of St. David's College, Lampeter, young men were ordained from this school. It is said that four scholarships belong to it, but they are not at present available, neither can any particulars of their foundation be ascertained. Attached to the school is a parochial lending-library, founded by Dr. Bray's Associates..."

In August 1849 Rev. D. O. James, the former Tutor to David Griffith Davies of Castle Green, became the new Master. From 1849 until 1852 Rev. David Owen James was the Master. In December 1852 John Davies became the Master until 1862. In May 1853 Headmaster John Davies, M. A., protested to the Town Council:

"...that the number of Free (Foundation) Pupils should be reduced. He stated that it was unreasonable to expect him to educate six boys for £21 a year..."

On April 28th 1854 the following item appeared in the 'Pembrokeshire Herald':

"...NEW MARKET HOUSE.

There appears at last, to be some reasonable ground for supposing that the very desirable object of erecting a market place in Cardigan will be effected. The members of the corporation are in possession of some land in the centre of the town upon which the Grammar School now stands, exactly facing the new street now in course of formation, and it is proposed to remove the Grammar School, and erect a

market and premises in its place. The site is admirably adapted for the purpose, and it is difficult to find a more convenient spot in any other part of the town..."

On May 5th 1854 the following letter appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...GRAMMAR-SCHOOLS IN WALES.

To the Editor of the Welshman.

SIR,

Having observed in your valuable paper last week a statement that the Corporation is possessed of the property on which the Grammar-school stands, I beg to inform you that such is not the case, inasmuch as it was granted as a site for the School about a century ago, and, consequently, is the property of the master for the time being. There are other premises, also, which at one time did belong to the School, but which have now been appropriated elsewhere. On undertaking the mastership, however, I voluntarily signed that I would give it up for the benefit of the town, on being provided with another room and have advocated this, and would still further advocate it to my fellow-townsmen, as the best possible site for the greatly-needed market-place, as it is situated in the very centre of the town.

As my pen is on Schools, I trust that you will allow of a few remarks that occurred to me on reading the excellent speeches delivered at the Yorkshire Welsh Meeting, in which, with a laudable desire for the improvement of their native country, most of the speakers dwelt upon the falling off of schools in Wales, attributable in some instances to the smallness of the endowment, in others to neglect. I may bring Cardigan School (which in former times stood high) as an instance of the former-the endowment is only £20 per annum for the instruction of six boys. The higher classes in Wales fancy that learning is only to be acquired in England, and value the instruction according to the price paid for it, while the other classes are unable or, at any rate, unwilling to pay anything but a nominal sum for the Instruction of their sons. These are some of the causes that have ruined schools in Wales.

It was the design of Bishop Burgess, says one of the speakers above alluded to, that Lampeter should supersede the old Grammar-schools, and another says, the Grammar-schools have been virtually ruined by the erection of St. David's College. Surely this cannot be so. Harrow and Rugby have not been ruined by Oxford and Cambridge. The schools (as their province is) are preparatory instructors to the Colleges, and act as feeders to them. It is true that Lampeter has superseded the old Grammar-schools as a final place of education, and very properly too. The duties of a School and of a College are entirely different, and to combine the two is a perfect anomaly; the one teaches the boy to walk, the other to use his matured strength; the one hews the block of marble from the quarry, and forges it into a shape approximating to the design, the other chisels the distinctive features, and gives it its final polish. In conclusion, it is a marvel with me that in an age when so much is being done for the education of the poor, and money in many instances lavishly expended in building costly schools that nothing whatever is done in this part of Wales for the education of the middle classes, and it would be well if Government would more equally distribute the educational resources of the country Cardigan,

1st May. JOHN

DAVIES...”

On September 10th 1855 the Cardigan Town Council elected to build the new market on the site of the Grammar School. On November 7th 1856 the following item appeared in the 'Welshman':

“...CARDIGAN MARKETS AND IMPROVEMENT.

Powers to Corporation of Borough to establish Markets and Slaughterhouses, to supply Water, to Pave, Light, Water, Cleanse, Regulate, and Improve the Borough, to Purchase Corn and other Market Tolls, and other Purposes.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, That application is intended to be made to Parliament, in the ensuing Session, for leave to bring in a Bill to enable the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Cardigan, in the several counties of Cardigan and Pembroke (hereinafter called the Corporation), to carry into effect and execute all or some of the objects and purposes following, That is to say:

"To Erect and Provide, in and for the said Borough, a Market-place and Market-house and Rooms, to be used or let for the transaction of public and other business in the said Borough, with suitable Buildings, Offices, Sheds, Stalls, Standings, Works and Conveniences connected therewith or attached thereto and to authorize the holding of a Market or Markets in such Market-place and Market-house, on such days and at such times as the Corporation shall from time to time determine, for the sale of butcher's meat, poultry, game, fish, butter, cheese, fruit, vegetables, corn, flour, meal and other provisions, articles, matters, and things, and of all other marketable commodities; and to define the limits of such Markets or Market-place and for preventing, after the establishment or erection of such Markets and Market-place, sales in the public streets and other buildings and places not being private shops, of any provisions, articles, or marketable commodities, for the sale of which such Market or Market-place has been provided and for preventing the use, as a public Market or Markets, of any place or places, or of any buildings within the said Borough not being private shops, and for preventing the hawking of any marketable commodities within the said Borough.

To appropriate one or more Room or Rooms in the Building so to be erected for the use of the Free Grammar School under the control of the Corporation and also the Divinity Library attached thereto, with proper Offices for the use of such School and Library. To appropriate and use a certain Piece of Ground belonging to the Corporation, situate on the west side of High-street, otherwise Pendre, in the Town of Cardigan, called the Free School Bank, and the buildings on or adjoining the same, fronting on the said street and also belonging to the Corporation, for the Site of such Market-place, Market-house, Building, and Conveniences. To Purchase, compulsorily or otherwise, all Interests (if any) in the Lands so to be appropriated for the Site of such Market-place, Market-house, and Buildings, the boundaries of which said Piece of Land and Buildings so to be purchased compulsorily, and the termini of the proposed works thereon, are shown on the plan of such lands, to be deposited as hereinafter mentioned...

...AND NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, That Printed Copies of the said Bill will be deposited, on or before the 31st day of December next, in the Private Bill Office of the House of Commons. Dated this First day of November, 1856. LEWIS EVANS, Town Clerk of Cardigan..."

On November 11th 1856 the Borough Records show the following minute of the Borough Council meeting:

"...It is ordered that Mr. Withers be requested to make out the plans and specifications for a Market House in detail and forwarded to the Town Clerk without delay..."

On May 8th 1857 the plans were approved. Robert Jewell Withers, architect, received an initial payment of £59. 8s. 10d. On July 13th 1857 the "Cardigan Markets and Improvements Act" was approved by Parliament. The new complex was to be built on the site of the Free School, where John Davies was the Master and the Librarian of the Divinity Library. The site also included a forecourt, yard, outbuildings and garden of the school, a garden with house, forecourt and offices tenanted to Abraham Morgan and a coach-house and forecourt tenanted to David Davies of the 'Ship Inn' at No. 1 Pendre. The architect employed for the new Guildhall and Markets complex was R. J. Withers. The revolutionary design was the first municipal building in the British Isles to use the Ruskinian Gothic architectural style. In August 1857 the Borough Council fell out with Mr Withers over his fees and he was dismissed, with a payment of £50. Later that month he was reinstated and instructed to prepare plans. On January 29th 1858 the following advertisement appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...Cardigan Markets and Improvement Act 1857. TO BUILDERS AND OTHERS.

THE Corporation of the Borough of Cardigan hereby give Notice, that they are ready to receive Tenders for the execution of the various works to be performed in the erection of Markets and Public Buildings. Separate Tenders will be received for the proposed Markets, Guildhall, and Grammar School. Plans and Specifications of the same as prepared by the Architect to the Corporation, Mr. R. J. Withers, 6, John-street, Adelphi, London, will be for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office, in Cardigan, and duplicates thereof at the Offices of the Architect from the 10th to the 27th day of FEBRUARY inclusive. Lithographed Copies of the quantities may be obtained on application to the Architect by payment of 10s. 6d. Tenders are to be delivered at the Town Clerk's Office, Cardigan, on or before Saturday, the 27th day of February, in sealed envelopes, addressed "Tender for Markets, &c." The Corporation do not pledge themselves to accept the lowest or any other Tenders. The successful competitor will have to satisfy the Corporation with responsible securities for the proper completion of the works.

EVANS and MORGAN, Town Clerks of the Borough of Cardigan. Town Clerks' Office, Cardigan, 26th January, 1858..."

Demolition of the Grammar School commenced that year. In August 1857 the Cardigan Borough Council fell out with R. J. Withers over his fees, and he was temporarily dismissed, but was reinstated before the end of the month. The new building occupied the site of the Grammar School, Master John Davies; the house of Abraham Morgan and the coach-house of David Davies.

On March 6th 1858 Robert Jewell Withers wrote to the Cardigan Borough Council and referred to their suggestion that the new markets were “...*totally inadequate to the wants of the town...*” He had since provided amended plans and requested further payment. In April 1858 the Borough Council increased the architect's fee by £50 plus 1% for quantities. On May 14th 1858 the following item appeared in the 'Welshman':

“...*CARDIGAN NEW MARKET.*

The plans for the formation of the proposed new market house and buildings have been forwarded to the mayor, R. D. Jenkins Esq., for the approval of the town council. The former plans furnished by Mr. Withers, were considered too elaborate, and required a much larger outlay than was considered expedient, and he was instructed to prepare others less ornamental and expensive, the plans now supplied are considered to be far more suitable, and there is reason to conclude that the works will be shortly commenced...”

In May 1858 the successful tender was that of builders David Jenkins, John Davies and John Thomas, priced at £2, 174. 15s. 0d. for the Market Hall and £1, 880. 5s. 8d. for the Grammar School and Guildhall. The foundation stone was laid by Richard David Jenkins, the Mayor, at 2 p m on July 8th 1858, and the dignitaries of the town all attended. The bells of St. Mary's Church were rung and three rounds were fired from the Corporation cannon at Netpool by Messrs. McDonald and Stephens, two army pensioners. A nine gallon flask of porter was distributed amongst the workmen. The streets of the town were decorated. A procession led from the Shire Hall to the Free School Bank, where the first stone was laid, then to the Slaughter-house site and back to the Shire Hall via St Mary's Lane and St Mary Street. The order of procession was: The Cardiganshire Police Force; Banners and Flags; Brass Band; Town Crier James Sais and Shire Hall Keeper William Finch, both in uniform; The Slaughter House contractors; Market House contractors and Clerk of Works; Stephen Williams, collector; David Roberts – clerk to the Justices; R. J. Withers, architect; Thomas Davies, Bryndu, St. Dogmaels; and Mr. Nicholas, the Borough Treasurer; Thomas Morgan, the Town Clerk; Morgan Rees and Thomas Williams, assessors; J. Clougher and Thomas Griffiths, auditors; David Evans and Lewis Lewis; W. W. Mitchell and William Williams; J. T. Mathias and John Davies; Dr. William L. Noott and William G. George; Thomas Edward, John McCord and J. S. Evans, Councillors; Thomas Davies; David Davies and John James Jones, Aldermen; John Powis and Thomas John, mace-bearers; The Mayor, R. D. Jenkins, in his robes; The Pembrokeshire Police; and the inhabitants of Cardigan and others marching in pairs. The procession was marshalled by Police Sergeant Nicholas Davies. The laying of the stone was the subject of the earliest known local photograph. On May 24th 1859 the Cardigan Borough Council decided to lengthen the Guildhall by 11ft. (from 46.5 feet to 57.5 feet) by building over the market arch, and the floor was strengthened accordingly. On July 12th 1859 it was announced that the market had been completed

and it opened on July 9th 1859. The Market was officially opened at 6 a. m. on July 9th 1859. On July 14th the Council ordered large quantities of calico, which had to be hung from the ceiling of the market to keep the sunlight off the meat. Work was still in progress on the Guildhall. On July 22nd 1859 the following item appeared in the 'Welshman':

“...CARDIGANSHIRE. CARDIGAN'S NEW MARKET.

The new market and slaughter house which were opened to the public on the 9th inst., appear to afford general satisfaction, but the glass roof on the butchers stalls is unfavourable to meat. The building is at Present seen to great disadvantage, masons and other workmen being still employed upon a portion of it...”

On September 16th 1859 an illustration and plan of the building appeared in 'The Building News', together with the following item:

“...PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND MARKETS, CARDIGAN.

The isolated town of Cardigan is so little known that we this week present our readers with a view of the New Town Hall and Markets erecting there, which are fast approaching completion, and when finished will be of great advantage to the town and immediate neighbourhood.

The markets have hitherto been held in the streets, with the exception of meat, which was sold in a small confined space adjoining the old slaughter-house. The prospect of a railway and other completed local improvements, induced the Town Council in 1857 to apply to Parliament for an Act which was then obtained under the title of the “Cardigan Markets and Improvements Act,” for the purpose of building suitable premises for markets and other offices for the use of the inhabitants, on corporation land, and otherwise to pave, light, water and drain the town. Funds were raised by the mortgage of the Borough property, aided by improvement rates, and to R. D. Jenkins, Esq., now and for the last three years Mayor of Cardigan, the chief credit is due for carrying out these works to a successful termination.

The land on which the buildings are erected falls rapidly from east to west; this has enabled the architect to economise space by placing one Market over the other, the upper one entered on a level from the High-street and the lower one from the side road. The public buildings face the High-street, and comprise on the ground level, a Corn Exchange 46 X 24 feet; a Free Grammar School 23 X 17 feet, with Library and Class-room 15 X 15 complete, with urinals, cloak-room, and staircase from side street. A lobby and stone staircase lead to the Town Hall, which is 57 X 24 feet adjoining which are two retiring rooms and waterclosets. A News-room 18 X 17 feet, and Council-room 17 X 14 feet, complete the range of public offices. The lower and upper Markets contain an area of 11, 000 feet, and are appropriated for the disposal of all produce brought into the town for sale. The Slaughter-house is situated on the level of the lower market a short distance northwards, and contains one spacious apartment 70 X 20 feet, fitted with all necessary gear and appurtenances for the slaughtering of animals sold in the markets, added to which there are sheds, yard &c., complete.

The materials used in the erection have been the local blue and brown stones, for all walls whatever, banded with red bricks. The dressings throughout are of Box ground stone, relieved with coloured bricks in arches; the wood is Quebec red pine, and the roofs are covered with Caernarfon slates, to patterns of red and blue; internally, the roofs and floor timbers, as well as all joiners' work, are stained and varnished. The total cost of buildings will be under £5,000.

The Markets and public buildings have been executed by Messrs. Jenkins, Thomas and Davies, Builders of Cilgerran; the Slaughter-house by Messrs. James and Jenkins, Builders of Cardigan; the clerk of works is Mr. C Davies; Mr. R. Jewell Withers, of 51, Doughty-street, London, is the architect to the Corporation, under whose directions and personal superintendence the whole of the works have been carried out..."

On December 16th 1859 the following report appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...CARDIGAN MARKET HOUSE.

On Monday afternoon, an accident of a serious nature occurred to Griffith Davies, a carpenter, employed on the roof of the New Market, and Assembly Rooms. While engaged in fastening a rafter, he lost his balance and fell from a height of about forty feet, and in his descent, struck with great force across one of the beams intended for the flooring of the Assembly Rooms, round which he held, and was fortunately able to retain his hold of the beam, until a ladder was procured, and he was released from his perilous position. The height from which he fell until he struck the beam, was nearly twenty feet, and there is little doubt that he would have sustained fatal injuries, had he fallen upon the large stones lying at the bottom of the building. As soon as possible, Mr. Noot, surgeon, was in attendance, and immediately afterwards, Mr. Mathias surgeon, also arrived, and after a careful examination, it was found that although no bones were broken, serious internal injuries had been received, but he is progressing favourably..."

On February 17th 1860 the following article appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...CARDIGAN NEW MARKET.

As this building approaches completion, its great improvement to the town becomes more strikingly apparent, and strangers visiting the town very generally express their admiration of it. The roof is non-completed, and the contractors are rapidly progressing with the interior. It is intended to organize a Building Society for the formation of a new street of handsome houses, from the market to the church..."

On July 5th 1860 the ladies of Tivyside held a ball here, a few days prior to the official opening. The Guildhall was officially opened the following day. At about this time the Russian Field Gun given to the town in 1857, which had sat unmounted on the quay side, was removed to the Lower Market for safe-keeping. The salary paid to the Grammar School headmaster at about that time was £21 per year, from the Cornwallis endowment. For that sum he was to educate the six free scholars and the remaining pupils, who paid £4 per annum under 14 years of age and £5 per year for the over-14's. He was also responsible for paying the other teaching staff, and

providing for the lighting, heating and cleaning of the school premises. The subjects taught were: Religious Instruction, Greek, Latin, French, Natural Philosophy, Geometry, Algebra, Arithmetic, English Composition, Welsh, History, Geography, Reading and Writing. From 1860 until January 1917 the Literary, Scientific and Mechanics Institute met in rooms here. On March 14th 1862 the following item appeared in the 'Welshman':

“...CARDIGAN.—GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

A special meeting of the members of the Town Council was held at the Council Chamber, on the 10th inst., for the purpose of electing a master for this school, in the place of John Davies, Esq., M.A., resigned, when Mr. Rhys Williams, student of Lampeter College, was elected...”

From 1862 until 1871 Rev. Rees Williams was the Master of the Free Grammar School. On February 19th 1864 the following letter appeared in the 'Welshman':

“...THE TOWN OF CARDIGAN. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "WELSHMAN"

SIR – Lately, while staying in the town of Cardigan, I was not a little surprised to perceive in an out-of-the-way corner in the new market buildings, a cannon, which I afterwards found was presented to the corporation by the government in commemoration of the Crimean war. I hope you will allow me to call the attention of the inhabitants of Cardigan and the neighbourhood to the fact that, in almost every place where such presentment was made by government, the inhabitants went to the expense of mounting the gun on a pedestal, more or less costly, in a public place, in order, I suppose, firstly, to show their gratitude to the government for the gift, and secondly, and chiefly as a tribute of respect to the memory of the noble hearts that ceased to beat on the bloody fields of the Crimea. On inquiring, I found that no less than three officers from the neighbourhood fell in that terrible war, besides many private soldiers, and yet no tribute of respect is paid to them. Is it possible that Cardigan is so void of sympathy? I can hardly believe it. I feel sure that if a subscription were got up the cause would meet with general approbation, and before long the Russian gun would be fixed on a pedestal in some public place in the town, such as before the new market buildings or Finch's-square. It would be an adornment to the town.

I am, Sir, Yours obediently, PEREGRINUS...”

On June 28th 1864 Rev. Rees Williams, Headmaster of Cardigan Grammar School married Elizabeth Rees, the daughter of the late Rev. Thomas Rees, rector of Mwnt and Ferwig. On January 17th 1865 the surveyor reported to Cardigan Borough Council that the walls of the Guildhall were cracking and were on the point of collapse. On March 28th 1865, recognising the serious condition of the buildings, the Council elected to undertake repairs. In 1866 the part of the building used by the Mechanics Institute began to collapse and had to be rebuilt. Decorative iron ties were added and the chimney stack opposite College Row was rebuilt. The architect was Mr. Parker of Thrapston.

In May 1871 the Russian Field Gun was moved from the lower market and placed on the Guildhall steps at the behest of the Mayor, Cllr John James Jones, who had supplied a new base and mounting. Some alterations may have been conducted to the building that year. In 1871 Edward Hughes was the honorary secretary of the Mechanics' Institute and Rev. Rees Williams was the Headmaster of the Grammar School. David Morgan Palmer became the Headmaster of the Cardigan Grammar School in August 1874, having formerly run the "Cardigan Academy" at Quay Street. In December 1874 the Mayor of Cardigan, Levi James, commented on the bulging state of the front of the building. Cllr. William Woodward stated that unless the front of the building was "stayed" to the back, the whole building would collapse. In February 1875 four iron bolts were fixed from east to west in the walls of the Guildhall, with pillars and girders to support the joints and decorative cast iron plates to the tie-rods. The Mechanics' Institute was described as "flourishing" that year. From 1874 until 1887 David M. Palmer was the master of the Free Grammar School.

The butchers paid a fee for their market stalls, and worked a long day here on market days. The meat was brought in by horse and cart, the poorer butchers used donkey carts. Butchers came from Cilgerran, Moylegrove, Eglwysrwr, and Llechryd. The meat was sold comparatively cheaply. Beef, veal, mutton, lamb and pork were sold, as well as sausages, faggots, liver, brawn, tripe and poultry. Some butchers supplied ships in the Port for their stores, and unsold meat was sometimes given freely or at reduced cost to the town's poor. Each Christmas an increased stock of poultry would appear, and a Goose Fair was held. Christmas Eve was particularly busy.

In January 1878 it was proposed to close the Lower Market and to modify the Corn Market to make it useable by the general public as a market. In February 1878 the roofing over of the market courtyard was being considered by the Borough Council. On December 25th 1880 the following report appeared in the '*Cardigan Observer*':

"...CARDIGAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL. DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES.

The annual distribution of prizes took place at the above school, on Thursday last, in the presence of the Mayor (who was chairman), members of the Town Council, and several other gentlemen who feel an interest in the school. The Chairman, after expressing the great pleasure it afforded him to be present, called upon the head master (Mr. D. M. Palmer, B.A.) to read the reports of the examiners. Mr. Palmer then read the following reports: To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Borough of Cardigan. Gentlemen,—I have had the honour of examining the scholars of the Grammar School, Cardigan, in the Greek and Latin languages, in French, and Scripture History, and it affords me very great pleasure to be able to send in the following report The work done by the senior classes in the Aeneid of Virgil, in Cicero's De Senectute, and in Caesar's Gallic Wars, respectively, as well as in the Anabasis of Xenophon, was highly satisfactory. The various extracts from the originals were, as a rule, very faithfully rendered in English, though some excelled the others in the elegance and correctness of their composition. The character of the answers to the grammatical questions given will, I feel confident, bear a favourable comparison with the work done in similar institutions. I was also very much pleased with the accuracy of many of the papers in French Grammar. The

translation of the extracts from Charles XII., was, on the whole, very correctly done. Amongst the juniors there is a greater diversity of excellence. Some have done very great credit to themselves and their master. A few, however, are in a more backward state. But as I presume that most of these are only just commencing the study of the classics, and young withal, no word shall be written to discourage them. Let them persevere, and in time they shall be brought past the wearisome bitterness of their learning.' I may justly congratulate the master on the evident thoroughness and efficiency of the teaching as well as the scholars on the proofs they have given of assiduity and painstaking care. I append the list containing the result of the examination of the members of the several classes, arranged in order of merit. I have the honour to be, yours respectfully, "DAVID ADAMS, RA. Hawen, Dec. 22, 1880.

" To the Trustees of the Cardigan Grammar School. Gentlemen,-At the request of the respected head master, I have had the pleasure of examining your school, in conjunction with T. Harrold Davies, Esq., Jesus College, Oxford, in Arithmetic, Algebra, Euclid, English Language and History, and in Chambers' Introduction to the Study of the Sciences. I am glad to state that the School continues to occupy the high position which it has so deservedly won for so many years, under the watchful and able superintendence of Mr. Palmer. The number of marks in each department was comparatively high. Most of the questions, were clearly and satisfactorily answered, and many of the papers were clean, neat, and well arranged, a very delight to the eye. Some of the papers were very defective in spelling, but this was probably due to a natural failing, and not to any want of care on the part of the teacher or to inattention on the part of the pupil. On the whole, I consider the school to have passed a very creditable examination in the subjects in which I have examined it, and I sincerely trust and believe that it will go on to still higher achievements. "W EDWARDS, B.A. Haverfordwest College, "December 21, 1880."

In addition to these, tabulated lists furnished by the examiners were also read, showing by means of marks the exact position of each scholar in his respective class. The Chairman then proceeded with the distribution of prizes, each prizeman receiving handsomely bound volumes, the works of standard authors." The following is the prize list Caesar Gal. Wars (sen.), Euclid (sen.), and Arithmetic (sen.), Thos, Thomas; Cificrode Senectute, Virgil's Aeneid, and French (sen.), W. J. Williams; Xenophon's Anabasis and Greek Grammar, John Jones; Algebra and Initia Giseca, J. O. Hughes; Arithmetic (sen.), George Thomas; French, James Stephens. 2nd Class.—English Grammar, Arithmetic, Caesar Gal. Wars, Natural Science, E. LI. Thomas; English Grammar, English History, and Natural Science, T. Picton Davies; Euclid, Geography, Griff. L. Griffiths; English History, Johnny Davies. Junior Class—Principia Latina, English History, Geography, French, and Scripture History, J. B. G. Mathias Geography, Introduction to the Sciences, Thomas Evans Mapping and Penmanship, T. N. Thomas; Arithmetic, J. O. Jones Scripture History, Geo. A. Stephens; Regularity and Punctuality of Attendance, LI. C. P. Phillips. The Chairman then warmly congratulated the Head Master and Scholars upon the highly satisfactory reports which the examiner had given of the watchful and efficient manner in which tuition had been afforded by the master, and the more than ordinary proficiency shown by the reports. He encouraged the pupils to persevere in their studies, as, in the present day, the highest possible stations in life are now proved to be attainable by even the most humble, education being the master key to the most lucrative and honourable positions in the land. Alderman Jenkins then urged the

pupils to apply themselves most diligently to their studies, perseverance being a sure road to success; and also cautioned them in their endeavours to attain eminence not to torn to the right or left hand, but to always look forward and upward. He felt a peculiar interest in the school, having been a pupil at the Cardigan Grammar School, where he received his first caning. Short but very appropriate addresses were also given by Councillors Williams, Woodward and Phillips, and by the Rev. Lewis Beynon. A vote of thanks was then unanimously accorded to the Head Master, for his very efficient services in thus enabling his scholars to obtain the marked degree of excellence which they then enjoyed. A vote of thanks was also very cordially accorded the examiners, which the head master undertook to communicate to them. The meeting then terminated, a most enthusiastic cheer having been given the Mayor for his kind presence...”

In 1881 Mrs Picton Evans and a committee of ladies instigated a coffee stall at the meat market on Saturdays and Fair Days. In 1881 the steward of the Tivyside Race Meeting complained that the Guildhall was a disgrace to the town and was not in a fit state to be used as a ballroom. He offered to contribute towards the cost of improvements and, as a result, the council spent £15. 18s. 6d. on redecoration and ornamentation of the rooms concerned. Between 1882 and 1885 D. M. Palmer was the Headmaster of the Cardigan Grammar School and Thomas Thomas was his assistant. In January 1883 it was complained that a new gas lamp with eight burners had been installed in the Reading Room without the permission of the Council. In 1883 some market stall prices included: butter 1/4d to 1/6d a lb; geese 9d to 10d a lb; ducks 2/9d; fowls 1/9d to 2/6d; mutton 10d per lb; beef 9d per lb; pork 8d per lb; veal 8d a lb; potatoes 7lb for 6d. On September 6th 1884 the following item appeared in a report about the Borough Council in the '*Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser*':

“...THE RUSSIAN CANNON.

Mr. William James drew attention to the bad state in which the carriage and wheels of the old Russian cannon in front of the public buildings were, and suggested that they should be put in good order.

Rev. Wm. Jones: Is it right to spend public money to repair the carriage.

Alderman Jenkins: It was obtained as a Crimean trophy. Mr. Jones being a “man of peace”, he is not fond of cannons (laughter).

It was decided to put it in repair as it was town property...”

The old wooden base of the cannon was replaced by the present wheels and mounting for Cllr William James in December 1884. David Jones, a blacksmith employed by William James, Gwalia, conducted the work, with the cart-wheels supplied by Thomas Davies, who had them in the farm yard at Parkypratt. On November 14th 1890 the new Mayor, David Davies, Stanley House, donated an illuminated clock to the town. On November 13th 1891, after his re-election as Mayor, David Davies of Stanley House offered to erect a clock-turret here at his own expense. In June 1892 work began on the new clock turret. On August 31st 1892 the official presentation of the clock and turret by David Davies, Stanley House, took place and the new clock, by Messrs. Smith & Son of the Midland Clock Works,

Derby, was set going. The same firm installed the clock at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Richard Thomas, architect, of Roseleigh, Pendre, Cardigan, designed the clock turret. The builders were J. Richards, carpenter, of St. Dogmaels and John Evans, mason of Church Street, Cardigan. An inscribed Sicilian slab was supplied by Mr Thomas Jenkins, stone-cutter, of Gordon Terrace, North Road. It was a public holiday in the town, and the streets were decorated. On September 3rd 1892 the following report appeared in the '*Cardigan Observer*':

"...A HANDSOME GIFT TO CARDIGAN. INTERESTING PROCEEDINGS.

On Wednesday a magnificent public clock and turret were presented to the town of Cardigan by Mr David Davies, Mayor, when the public acknowledged the handsome gift by presenting him with an illuminated framed address. The town was gaily decorated with flags and bannerettes, the main streets being spanned by streamers of flags from window to window. At 2.30 an open-air meeting was held in front of the public building over which the clock is placed. Ald. Phillips, M. D., presided, and on the raised platform were the Mayor and Mayoress Rev. Henry Stephens and Mrs Stephens; Mrs Phillips (Bank House) the members of the Corporation and Borough magistrates. There was a very large gathering of the public present. The Chairman said the clock had been manufactured by Messrs. Smith and Sons, Derby, and it possessed all the latest improvements. It had four illuminated dials with automatic lighting apparatus. The clock strikes the quarters and hours.

The Mayor then formally presented the clock to the borough. He said it afforded him great pleasure in presenting the public with the clock and turret. The honour they had conferred upon him by electing him to serve the office of Mayor for the second year was a source of great gratification to him. He hoped the clock would help all to be more punctual, and as the movements of the hands were always onward, so he hoped that their mottoes as Cardiganians would also be onwards—progressing in all that was good. (Cheers). The only condition he imposed on the Corporation was that the clock be kept in repair and nightly lit up by them. The Chairman then called on the Mayoress to set the clock going. The Mayoress started the clock by means of a cord, and the clock directly afterwards chimed 2.45. The Chairman then returned thanks on behalf of the public for the munificent gift. He remarked that not many towns could boast of such a liberal Mayor. Mr D. M. Jones (Town Clerk) read the text of the illuminated address, which had the photos of the Mayor and Mayoress at each corner, and a drawing of the clock and turret in the centre, which is as follows:

To David Davies, Esq., Mayor of Cardigan. Dear Mr. Mayor, We, the undersigned, as representing the inhabitants of this ancient borough, hereby desire to express our high appreciation of the manner in which you have hitherto filled the Civic Chair and discharged the duties of Chief Magistrate; and more to offer you our sincere thanks for so generously presenting to your native town the handsome Clock and Turret, which now adorn its Public Building, and which will prove to be a great boon to the public and a lasting monument to your liberality. (We cannot refrain from expressing our pleasure at that success which has enabled you as a fellow- townsman to perform such a gracious and generous act; and we sincerely trust that you and your good wife, the Mayoress, may have a long life of happiness and continued prosperity, and that your children may emulate the good example which you have set them. Signed Aldermen-J. M. Phillips, M.D., J.P., Lewis Evans, J.P., Robert E. Rees,

W. Woodward, J.P. Councillors-O. B. Evans (ex-Mayor), Thomas Griffiths, E. Ceredig Evans, J. C. Roberts, Ivor Evans, Benj. James, Scott F. Kelly, Evan Jenkins, W. J. Williams, Dan Evans, D. Davies D. Morgan Jones, Town Clerk. Justices- Thos. Harris, Levi James, W. Picton Evans, Thos. Edward Davies, W. Davies, MR.C.S., Wm. Lewis; Henry R. Daniel, Justices' clerk. Ministers- Wm. Cynog Davies, B.D., Griffith Davies, T. J. Morris, George Hughes. Cardigan, August 31st. 1892.

Mrs Phillips (Bank House) then made the presentation on behalf of the Committee. The Mayor responding, said he did not know how to thank them sufficiently for the elegant address that had been presented to him and his wife. He should consider it as the greatest treasure he had in Stanley House, his wife and children excepted—(laughter)—as it had been presented to him by the public. The Chairman having unveiled the commemorating marble tablet placed on the turret by the Corporation, the band played- "For he's a jolly good fellow." On the motion of Ald. Evans; seconded by Mr Picton Evans, a hearty Vote of thanks to Aid, Phillips for so ably presiding was passed. At the close of the proceedings Mr Ceredig Evans succeeded in obtaining an excellent negative of the public buildings, clock and turret, and assembly. It is estimated that the turret, clock, etc., will cost the Mayor about £500. At 4 o'clock the Corporation officials and work-men were entertained to a splendid dinner by the Mayor at the Fat Ox Inn.

A COMPLIMENTARY BANQUET TO THE MAYOR.

At 7 o'clock a complimentary banquet was given to the Mayor at the Black Lion Hotel, when over 80 gentlemen were present. The chair was occupied by Aid. Phillips, M.D., J.P, and the vice-chairs by. Col. W. Picton Evans, J.P., and D. G. Davies, J.P. The guest of the evening (Mr Davies, Mayor), on entering the room was received with acclamation, and took his seat on the right of the chairman, who was supported on each side by the members of the Corporation. The Volunteer Brass Band played a selection of music; in front of the hotel during the dinner time. The room was very nicely decorated, and the tables tastily laid out with flowers in pots and otherwise. The banquet proved a perfect success. The following is the FULL MENU :— Soup-Julienne. Fish. Salmon. Turbot Sause Piquante. Lobster sauce. Joints., Fore Quarters of Lamb. Roast Beef. Saddles of Mutton. Boiled Legs of Lamb. Boiled and Roast Chicken. Ham and Tongue. Roast Ducks. Sweets. Cabinet Puddings. Plum and Apple Tarts, Trifles. Cakes And Jellies Desert. Grapes. Pears. Apples. Filberts. Cakes, Biscuits, etc.

Ample justice having been done the good things provided, and the tables cleared the Loyal and Patriotic toasts given from the chair were duly honoured. Mr D. G. Davies, vice-chairman, gave "The Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces," coupled with the names of Mr Buckham and Col. Picton Evans, who responded. Col. Picton Evans in proposing "the health of the Bishop, clergy and ministers," said he was sorry to find that the ministers were absent. They should be with their flocks on such occasions. The Rev. W. Cynog Davies responding for the clergy remarked that he represented the "mother church, and she had been a good mother to them all. Though she was nearly 2,000 years old, yet in her old age she was very vigorous, and her sons and daughters were dutiful and active every- where. He was of opinion that her sons and daughters who were outside her pale were doing all they could for the welfare of the country. (Cheers). The Chairman in proposing "Our Guest," remarked that he had

known Mr Davies since he was a boy in his pinafore. (Laughter). He was a gentleman who was always bent on doing his duty, and that day he had entered the class of one of the most liberal Mayors in the country. The toast was drunk with musical honours, "For he's a jolly good fellow" being sung with heartiness. The Mayor, on rising to respond, was received with acclamation. He said he was greatly obliged to them for the kind manner in which they had received his name. They had, in his opinion, done him too much honour. (Cries of No "). The beautiful address that was presented to him complimented him on the manner he had discharged the duties of his office but he assured them that, were it not for the kind assistance rendered him by his colleagues, he could not have done what he did. There was not a body of men who looked more keenly after the interest of the ratepayers than the Corporation. In the face of all that was said he thought there was a prosperous future before Cardigan they had more visitors among them this summer than ever they had before Gwbert had brought a large number of visitors among them. He could assure them that he much appreciated the honour conferred on him that day. Poetical address to the new clock by Mr John Sharpe, which was dedicated to the Mayor. To the town and trade of Cardigan was proposed by Mr Levi James, and responded to by Mr Lowther, Mr Kelly, Mr O. B. Evans, and Mr J. Daniel. Song by Mr Tom Lewis. Mr Morgan-Richardson, in proposing The health of the Mayor and Corporation," hoped that they would endeavour to improve the town, so as to make it worthy of the magnificent clock which was presented them that day by the Mayor. Gwbert would bring among them a new class of visitors. The Mayor, and Aldermen Lewis Evans and W. Woodward responded, and ably vindicated the body they represented. Song, The County Squire," Mr Jonathan Evans. Mr Ceredig Evans, in felicitous terms, proposed the health of the Borough Magistrates," which was responded to by Mr W. Lewis and Mr T. E. Davies. Song, Death of Nelson," Mr D. Davies. The Mayor gave the "The Chairman, and Mrs Phillips," which was duly musically honoured and acknowledged. Song, Queen of my heart," Mr Ceredig Evans. Mr Henry R. Daniel proposed the health of the vice-chairman, which was responded to by Col. Picton Evans. Col. Picton Evans proposed the health of The Town Clerk," who had rendered material services in carrying out the demonstration. Mr D. Morgan Jones acknowledged the compliment paid him. Aid. Woodward proposed the health of Mr D. G. Davies, one of the vice-chairmen, which was acknowledged. Song. "The Anchor's Weighed," Mr James Evans. Mr D. G. Davies proposed the health of The Ladies," on whose behalf Mr Jonathan Evans and Mr W. J. Williams responded. Col. Picton Evans proposed the health of The Hostess," for whom Mr Conway Jones responded. The Chairman proposed the health of The Press," Mr Davies and Mr Roberts briefly acknowledge the compliment paid the local press. The singing of Hen Wlad fy Nhadau," brought an exceedingly pleasant entertainment which will long be remembered, to a satisfactory close..."

On April 14th 1893 there were proposals for a fire escape at the Guildhall. In January 1895 people attending meetings at the Guildhall, were advised by the local press to wrap themselves in blankets. The hall was so cold that one journalist told the Cardigan Borough Council to consider letting it to a frozen meat company for use as a refrigerator! On July 26th 1895 it was complained that children with catapults had made two holes in the face of the clock. The new Cardigan Intermediate School was temporarily housed in the old Grammar School. The rooms were cleared in readiness on October 11th 1895 and re-opened on November 4th 1895 as "The Intermediate School for Boys", with David M. Palmer as Headmaster, Charles Owen his deputy, and Miss Gladish, B A, mistress. David M. Palmer resigned in December, leaving

Charles Owen, M. A., as the Headmaster. In November 1895 tenders were sought for building a lobby at the Guildhall. In January 1896 Charles Owen officially became the Headmaster of Cardigan Intermediate School and Miss Bessie M. Davies, the Mistress. On May 22nd 1896 the Mayor of Cardigan, Benjamin James, proposed replacing the “...*grand arches our forefathers were so foolish enough to build...*” in the market, with cast iron pillars and the conversion of the market into a meeting hall. On September 14th 1896 Dr. Daniel Rees, M. A. (London), a native of Llandysul, was confirmed as the new Cardigan Intermediate School Headmaster. Charles Owen and Miss Gladish resigned, the former to take up a Headmaster's post at Merthyr Intermediate School and the latter to become Headmistress of the Intermediate School for Girls at Cowbridge. Miss Dora Lewis became the Senior Mistress on the same date. The school moved to the new building in 1897.

On June 22nd 1897 the children of the Borough were entertained to tea in the Corn Market by the Mayor and Mayoress Cllr and Mrs W J Williams, to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, although the Williams' were in London on the day. On July 8th 1898 it was proposed that the chimney of the old Grammar School be rebuilt as it was dangerous. In August 1898 “*Velograph Moving Pictures*” were shown here, depicting the Spanish-American Civil War and the funeral of W. E. Gladstone. On March 24th 1899 the ownership of the Grammar School rooms was disputed, with the managers of Cardigan County Secondary School making an unsuccessful claim to it. Photographs of 1901 show the building lit up for the coronation of Edward VII. Festivities were held at the Guildhall for both the Proclamation and the Coronation. On March 18th 1902 a fire ignited the floor in front of the grate in the Council Chambers and caused damage to both the Council Chamber and the Old Grammar School room beneath. On 21st March 1902 the following item appeared in the ‘*Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser*’:

“...*ANOTHER FIRE AT CARDIGAN.*

NARROW ESCAPE OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Sortly before six o'clock on Tuesday morning, as a young man named Ernest Davies, an apprentice at the Bridgend Foundry, was proceeding to his work, he observed smoke issuing from a window of the Council Chamber. He immediately gave the alarm and the door of the public buildings having been forced open, the Guildhall bell was rung for assistance. Very little notice seems to have been taken of the matter at first, but on entering the Council Chamber it was discovered that the beams of the flooring which run underneath the fireplace had become ignited, and were so far gone as to allow of the fire being dropped into the old grammar school room beneath. The grate in the council chamber was at once pulled out, when a large hole was found burnt through the flooring. A plentiful supply of water from private sources was fortunately procurable before the mains were turned on, and the danger was speedily averted without the assistance of the fire brigade, only two or three of whom put in an appearance. Very little excitement was caused in comparison with the issue at stake, but if not discovered in time the council chamber, reading room, old grammar school, and other portions of the public buildings might have been demolished. The cabinet by the side of the fireplace, containing the Corporation books, &c, was in near propinquity to the scene of the fire, but luckily was not touched. The damage wrought by the fire is estimated at from £50 to £60, and providentially it proved to be no more.

A meeting of the Lawn Tennis Club had been held in the Council Chamber on Monday evening, when a fire was lit, but there can be no doubt the fire had been smouldering for some time, probably from the previous Saturday, when the fire was lit for the meeting of the Cardigan Rural District Council who had to hold the same in the Guildhall owing to the smoke, and the fire was then raked out of the grate...”

On April 18th 1902, in a bid to provide a large meeting hall in the town, the removal of the market pillars and arches was again considered. In July 1902 the Mayor gave a special reception at the Guildhall to welcome home Cardigan Volunteers Corporal John Evans and Private Jenkin Jones from South Africa. On December 9th 1903 a marble Scroll of Honour was unveiled here, in recognition of the Cardigan Volunteers who served in the Boer War, by Mrs. Davies-Evans of Highmead, Llanybydder.

In September 1904 Cllr. John Evans proposed moving the Russian Field Gun to another location and received support from other councillors. The weight of the gun, however, meant that it stayed where it was! On September 11th 1905 the Council Chambers were moved to the former Mechanics' Institute rooms. On January 4th 1907 tenders were sought for renting the Lower Market as a warehouse. On February 5th 1907 the Cardigan Borough Council resolved to use the Lower Market as a store for traps. On August 4th 1908 the Mayor of Cardigan, Cllr. John Evans, proposed removing the stone arches in the upper market once again. On November 19th 1909 the provision of a fire-escape from the Guildhall to the market courtyard, was proposed. On May 9th 1910 there were festivities held here for the Proclamation of King George V. On March 17th 1911 it had been proposed to alter the Upper Market by removing the stone flags and laying timber, removing the arches, installing new windows, and covering over the courtyard. This was approved, but support for the plans rapidly dwindled and nothing came of the scheme.

In March 1912 it was suggested that the Upper Market be altered for use as a public hall. In 1914 Caleb Luke was the inspector and Daniel Owen Thomas was the collector for the markets. Henry David James was the Honorary Secretary of the Mechanics Institute. On August 14th 1914 the building was put at the disposal of the Red Cross. Three days later there was a call for men over 30 to volunteer for the War and to sign up here. In February 1915 the survivors of H M S Majestic were given a Civic Reception at the Guildhall. In June 1916 “Kosovo Day” was celebrated by a tea held in the Market for the local children at the expense of the Mayor, Cllr D T James. In January 1917 the Literary, Scientific and Mechanics Institute, which had been active in Cardigan for seventy years, and had met at the Guildhall since it was built, was wound up. On March 22nd 1918 the library and reading room were taken over for use as the Town Clerk's offices. In July 1919 the Proclamation of Peace was read from the Guildhall steps.

In 1926 D. John Rotie was the hall keeper. In May 1926 it was proposed to close the Corn Market and to remove the stalls there to the Meat Market. From January 11th to March 30th 1927 a soup kitchen was held at the Corn Market. In August 1927 tenders were being sought by the Town Clerk, D Morgan Jones, to paint and redecorate the exterior of the building. On January 22nd 1936 there were festivities here for the Proclamation of King Edward VIII. On February 14th 1936 it was proposed to alter the Guildhall in order to accommodate a new public hall. On

December 4th 1936 there were festivities here for the Proclamation of King George VI. On February 12th 1937 it was proposed to turn part of the Corn Market into a reading room. On March 12th 1937 the Cardigan Borough Council considered selling the public buildings. In April 1937 they decided to scrap a German gun stored in the Lower Market. On May 12th 1937 a carnival and festivities were held in the town, centred on the Guildhall, to celebrate the coronation. On June 18th 1937 it was decided that all the rubbish should be cleared out of the Lower Market as it was “...a breeding place for rats...”

On August 16th 1940 the ironwork of the Borough of Cardigan was being claimed as “salvage”. It was granted that, in view of its’ sterling efforts, the Borough could, for the time being, retain the Russian Field Gun. On January 17th 1941 a scheme was announced to turn the meat market into a social centre for the troops. On August 22nd 1941 Cllr. Jimmy Davies and Cllr. Rosina Davies, No. 38 High Street, proposed that the Russian Field Gun should be scrapped for salvage for the War effort. The proposal to scrap the Russian Field Gun was made again on April 17th 1942. By February 12th 1943 the Cardigan Petty Sessions had been removed to the Priory Street courthouse.

On July 20th 1945 Cardigan Borough Council was facing criticism for refusing to allow a boxing match to be held in the meat market. In September 1945 VJ Day was proclaimed at the Guildhall by the Mayor. On March 8th 1946 the suggested use of part of the Guildhall as a social centre for young people was rejected by Cardigan Borough Council, who were considering the use of the corn market as a reading room. In November 1946 Dan Williams, Y Bwthyn, proposed the demolition of the Guildhall to make way for a new memorial hall. He asked “*Is an 80-year old jerry-built structure in stone with trussed walls worth preserving?*” On February 14th 1947 plans for a County Library here were considered. Calls for a library continued into the summer of 1948, with more formal plans for the corn market to be used as a library on August 13th that year. Cardigan Library opened here on February 5th 1950. On June 30th 1950, former mayor of Cardigan Cllr. Rosina Davies of No. 38 High Street, resigned from Cardigan Borough Council in protest at their decision to allow a boxing match to be held in the market.

On January 11th 1952 Cardigan Chamber of Trade called for the Guildhall market to be replaced by a parking ground. In February 1952 the Proclamation of Queen Elizabeth II was read at the Guildhall. On February 1st 1957 a museum was proposed for the Lower Market. On May 21st 1958 Cardigan’s Mayor, Cllr. Cyril Lloyd, complained bitterly that vandals had painted the cannon red. In 1961 the Guildhall and Markets complex was ‘listed’. On November 23rd 1961 Cllr. R. C. Vernon Smith suggested converting Cardigan Market into a shopping centre. On March 9th 1962 furniture sales here were banned. On April 4th that year, a children’s section opened at the library. On March 8th 1963 Cardigan officials firmly rejected proposals for the demolition of the Guildhall, although conversion into a precinct was considered. On September 13th 1963 the new Guildhall Shopping Arcade proposals were unveiled and supported by the Cardigan Borough Council. By November 15th 1963 Cardigan traders were voicing their protests at the scheme. Plans were still being considered on January 17th 1964, but the plan was dropped on June 12th that year.

On January 14th 1966 it was declared that Cardigan's municipal offices were "...below standard..." and that new offices were needed. On January 21st 1966 gates were proposed for the archway leading to the Upper Market. On April 29th 1966 the Cardigan Borough Council elected to move their offices to the corner of Priory Street and Morgan Street. On January 27th 1967 there were proposals for a new staircase from the Upper to Lower Markets. By March 3rd 1967 the Guildhall was being considered for use as a police station, and, just one week later, demolition was proposed again. On May 24th 1967 Cllr. Ivor John C. Radley of Pendre became the Mayor of Cardigan again, and launched a project to use former offices here as a Centre For the Aged. In March 1968 there was a row over proposals for a door from the 'Ship' inn at No. 1 Pendre, into the courtyard. On May 21st 1968 the Senior Citizen's Centre opened here. On June 28th that year, the Guildhall was said to be running at a loss of £1, 000 per annum.

On January 17th 1969 it was proposed to open up the Lower Market in a £7, 000 scheme. On July 25th 1969 pupils of Cardigan Junior School presented a mural to the new market. Major renovations were conducted to the market at that time, which included a new staircase, new ceilings and asbestos walls. On December 26th 1969 it was proposed to move the library to the former Hope English Congregational Chapel on Pendre, and open up the Market arches. By February 6th 1970 gates had been erected at the market arch. Proposals to open up the arches continued. In March 1972 the Borough Surveyor complained that the recent landscaping of the Market Yard, which had not been completed had been damaged and that vandals had thrown detergent into the new pond. In March 1973 the police were called in to break up a fight at a dance here, after which it was decided that only local groups should be allowed to hold such events here. By May 23rd 1975 the muzzle of the cannon had been sealed. By January 9th 1976, 60 mph gales had damaged the roof.

The building was redecorated in 1985 for the visit to Cardigan of the Princess of Wales. In 1991 alterations were conducted to the steps at the front of the Guildhall and the former Grammar School chimney stack was removed. That autumn there were proposals to remove the cannon at that time and place it behind the market, but opposition halted the plan. In November 1991 the County Council told the Town Council that if the people of Cardigan wished to retain the Guildhall they would have to pay for it themselves, or parts of the building would have to be leased off for commercial use. They claimed that the income from the building was £6000 per annum and that the expenditure was £50, 000 per annum. In March 1992 the County Council complained again that the Guildhall was a significant drain on resources – now claiming a deficit of £24, 000 a year. During the year the 100 year old clock was repaired. In September 1992 the owner of the Ship Inn next door applied for permission to place tables and chairs in the Guildhall courtyard as an extension of the beer garden. By September 10th 1993 plans were afoot to relocate the library, and this was confirmed on March 18th 1994. It had been removed by September 14th 1994. By November 3rd 1994 Hanes Aberteifi claimed that their proposals to turn the former library into a heritage centre were being thwarted by a lack of communications from the Ceredigion District Council.

By March 2nd 1995 work had begun on restoring the Upper Market – removing the asbestos panels and false ceilings and exposing the original structure. The scheme cost the Ceredigion District Council £22, 500 and the work was carried

out by K & M Environmental Services of Milford Haven and Decor 8 Ltd of Cilgerran. Cllr. Derek Gadsby's Mayor-making ceremony was held here on May 9th 1995. Similar ceremonies took place here annually from 1996 until 1999. On November 21st 1996 it was announced that Ceredigion Training would be moving into the former library rooms until the end of the following March. In April 1998 the stalls in the market were being refurbished by the County Council. On October 5th 1998 Cardigan Town Council expressed an interest in taking on the first floor of the Guildhall. Planning permission was granted in January 1999 for the placing of a 'Millennium Countdown Clock' here.

In 2001 there were proposals for the building to be leased to Cardigan Town Council and Menter Aberteifi. In June 2001 Menter Aberteifi prepared a Business Plan for the Guildhall suggesting that they and not the Town Council should take on a long-term lease of the property which would create a revenue stream for them. In December 2001 it was revealed that the County Council was considering converting the Guildhall into offices. Repairs began in April 2003. There were proposals by Menter Aberteifi to replace the Upper Market with the Town Library, to add a tower containing a lift to the NW angle of the Market Hall, to block the existing market arch and open up two of the centre arches from Pendre, and to add an extra storey above the former school rooms to the south.

In January 2004 Cardigan Town Council backed Menter Aberteifi's bid to lease the Guildhall. In May 2004 it was announced that the building was to be leased to Menter Aberteifi. A plaque commemorating the anniversary of the Charge of the Light Brigade was added to the Russian Field Gun and was unveiled on October 25th 2004. In December 2004 a grant of £850, 000 from 'Objective 1' funding was given towards refurbishing the Guildhall. In December 2005 the Cardigan Building Preservation Trust was formed in order to take on the Guildhall refurbishment project.

In January 2006 work began on a £200, 000 refurbishment of the Guildhall, funded by the Townscape Heritage Initiative, which included the strengthening of the floors. By the end of February 2006 the original Grammar School ceiling was exposed by the removal of the low 1960's ceiling. Alterations to the building, including the opening of the arches, were proposed by Menter Aberteifi. In August 2006 the Community Centre re-opened following a re-fit. In September 2006 more development plans for the Guildhall by conservation architects Acanthus Holden were unveiled, including the proposed opening of all of the facade arches. In December 2006 Ceredigion County Council threatened the proposals by announcing their plans to scrap the "peppercorn rent" of the building and to charge £2000 per annum in rent.

In August 2007 work began on a new lift shaft and other alterations by Welsh Heritage Construction of Llanybydder, with a total anticipated cost of £1. 2 million. The 1920's stage in the main hall was removed at that time. That month a 99 year lease of the Guildhall was granted to the Cardigan Building Preservation Trust, who were overseeing the repairs. In July 2008 the rest of the funding required for the restoration was secured, and the 150th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone was celebrated by an exhibition. In late October 2008 work began on re-opening the two centre arches to serve as doors. At that time it was announced that Cardigan Police would open a small office under the Market Arch. The repair work was completed in May 2009. In July 2009 a gallery occupied the former Corn Market, Cardigan Town Council returned to occupy the former Council Chambers for the first

time since the 1960's, and Menter Aberteifi moved into the former caretaker's office. By 2010 the complex was fully operational. In April 2010 it was proposed to re-name the community room at the Guildhall as 'Ystafell Radley'. In May 2010 a scheme to revamp the market courtyard was unveiled. On July 9th the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Guildhall and Markets was marked by a children's tea party and a concert. On July 15th 2010 a new painting by Aneurin and Meirion James was unveiled at the Guildhall.

In August 2010 the go-ahead was given for a refurbishment of the market courtyard. On October 16th 2010 the first wedding ceremony was held at the Guildhall. In May 2011 the courtyard was being refurbished, including the removal of the fishpond. In June 2011 a "time capsule" was deposited under the courtyard. In September 2011 a commemorative painting of the first eisteddfod was donated to the Guildhall by artists Aneurin and Meirion Jones.

In November 2013 new gates were hung at the Market arch, designed by Holden Acanthus of Pembroke, and constructed by Anvil Fabrications of Parc Teifi, Cardigan. At the end of June 2014 market caretaker Ronnie Evans retired after 30 years. In February 2015 a grant of £109, 000 was given to the Guildhall and Markets by the Coastal Community Fund. In January 2017 the market exterior was covered in scaffolding owing to a long-standing problem with the parapet of the north wall of the market hall. In April 2018 it was revealed that the Market Hall was due to receive a £1.7m revamp. On 31st October 2018 plans for the proposed alterations to the Market Hall were unveiled to a generally enthusiastic public.

Description:

The buildings were described by CADW in 1992:

"...1858-60 buildings, originally Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Grammar School, News-room, Corn Store and Markets, by R. J. Withers (1823-94) in Ruskinian Gothic style, the first of their kind in Britain. Coursed blue lias stone with some red brick banding and ashlar dressings, the ashlar since painted white, and banded slate roofs. Gothic of mixed Italian and North European derivation, following Ruskinian precepts in structural colour and the integrity of the wall-face maintained by minimal moulding and window tracery set flush.

Five-bay 2 storey main hall with unmoulded polychrome Gothic arcade below to former Corn Exchange, now library, and tall mullion-and-transom stone windows above with linked pointed hoodmoulds. Coved ashlar eaves cornice with carved bosses and steep hipped roof with ornamental iron cresting. Adjoining to left, recessed entrance with pointed doorway, tall stair-light and top clock turret, lead-clad with pyramidal spire, added 1892 (R Thomas of Cardigan). To left, crossing with single window below and 2 windows above, pointed red brick relieving arches and timber mullion-and-transom windows. Coped gable. Two-bay side elevation to College Lane with stone centre side-wall stack. Rear of Guildhall has ground floor 5-bay arcade and 2 windows above with centre side-wall stack. Behind crossing, lower range, 2-storey to College Lane, one to rear court, slightly projected with roof hipped forward. Rear to court has hipped gable to right of former Corn Store. Early C19 Russian cannon at SE corner of Guildhall.

Markets are designed to a remarkable functional Gothic design, open-well plan with glazed ridge lighting for upper floor. Polychrome external arcading to lower level to College Lane and to rear, where sloping site gives high plinth below arcade. South west angle is chamfered. From courtyard, 2-bay arcade with entry to upper level. Interior has complex stone vaulted lower level, 2-bays deep each side of centre light-well. Painted circular piers with blue lias pointed arches and rubble tunnel vaulting. Light well is arcaded, 3 times 2 bays on 2 levels and upper floor is slate flagged. Timber roof trusses masked by C20 suspended ceiling. C20 stair in light well, original stone stair in south east angle.

Guildhall has stone stairs up under panelled 4-sided roof, small version of 5-bay main hall roof, which has hipped ends and pierced timber panels over wall-plate. Painted stone fireplace with commemorative plaque. Library below has cast-iron columns.

Old photographs show later door inserted into left window of E façade, formerly and latterly window..."

ADDITIONAL (2001) – Old photographs show paired boarded timber doors beneath timber lintels to two middle arches of E façade.

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 IMG_2580 Lower Market stairs (2018) (c) Glen K Johnson
 IMG_5250 Grammar School entrance from College Row (2013) (c) Glen K Johnson