



Part of the industrial size channel cut from the river to the Lime Kiln to facilitate coal barges. (Courtesy of Paul and Tessa Settatre)

# Muller's Corner:

MARK Muller goes down the rabbit hole for this week's look at local history...

The property named Cunnigar is on the Fernhill Road, Haverfordwest, being part of the loosely termed Clay Lanes, is one of those fascinating, delightful properties that surround the beautiful, timeless area of ruined Haroldston House, or if we are to call it correctly, Haroldston Hall.

(Haroldston House being the property that serves as the home of my good friend Theo Whalley, as Theo has informed me on countless occasions.)

Cunnigar is the neighbour of Derby Farm, the home (as a youth) of New Zealand explorer, adventurer and entrepreneur William Gilbert Rees, who became godfather to his Bristol-born nephew, to whom he gave his Christian names and who became W G Grace, probably the most famous of cricketers.

These properties - along with Fernhill, Little Milford, and others - became enmeshed in the tortuous legal battle that followed the downfall and death of Sir John Perrot in 1592, eventually coming into the ownership of Hester, the

last of the Perrots by then living in Hereford who married Sir John Packington of Worcester in about 1700.

The name Cunnigar is Flemish and suggests that the property had a specific role to play in the domestic needs of keeping a great house supplied with all of its food requirements and if translated means that rabbit warrens were encouraged on that part of the estate.

All documents earlier than about 1900 refer to it as, 'the Cunnigar' meaning presumably, the Warren.

As with all of the other properties mentioned, Cunnigar land borders the river.

A large seam of limestone existed just below the surface and an enormous quarry was dug out of the surprisingly high cliffs that run along the river, along with a huge lime kiln.

Coal of the highest quality, just yards downstream in Little Milford, provided the fuel for turning the limestone into, primarily lime mortar for building, or after the mid eighteenth century, agricultural fertiliser.

To supply the kiln with coal, an industrial sized channel was dug from the river, allowing barges ac-

cess.

Lime wash was also used as a protective, waterproof coat for high status buildings and we are told in various histories that Haverfordwest Castle, on its completion was 'painted' white, partly for the prestigious image that resulted and partly for its protection.

Between Cunnigar land and the river is a vast salt marsh area which floods on spring tides, commonly used for grazing sheep, but this area turns up much more interesting and intriguing history than its use as a sheep grazing paddock. It became the area used by Pembrokeshire Yeomanry for regular target practice.

The idea of forming the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry was initiated in the London home of Lord Milford in 1794. As a consequence, two companies of fifty each were formed in the beginning; one to be commanded by Lord Milford and one, in the south of the county by Lord Cawdor.

The ongoing French Revolutionary War, which became the Napoleonic Wars, being no doubt the motivation for the formation, which three years later proved fortuitous with the

Yeomanry being used in the defence of Fishguard and the capture of the invading French.

After such a baptism of fire and having proved their worth, just six years later, the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry numbered five hundred.

Regular shooting practice at Cunnigar has left its mark; it is almost impossible to walk across the land without finding musket balls.

The targets used were huge sheets of iron, one of which remains and generally, on hitting one of these, the lead shot flattened. Distinction in target shooting was imperative, if only to produce champions in inter regimental shooting matches that happened in Wales and further afield.

Records suggest that shooting days were enjoyed later in the 19th century with pub landlord J Mathias of the Dragon Hotel in Hill Street commissioned to provide, 'an excellent dinner' for the rank and file whilst the officers retired to The Mariners.

I am indebted to Tessa and Paul Settatre for showing me around their beautiful home and grounds.



The name plate of the property Cunnigar. (Courtesy of Paul and Tessa Settatre)

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