

February 2013. Chris Oliver - 'Stackpole'

One supposes that most of South Pembrokeshire would be well familiar with Stackpole, seeing it as a gateway to a magnificent strip of coastline leading to Barafundle Bay, and again an alternative walk around the popular Lily Ponds.

As the talk progressed, we were to learn that there is much more to Stackpole than the coastline and beaches.

The church, being the centre point of the village which is not uncommon for that era, dates back to the 12th century, though, has gone through many transitions over the century.

One such phase was documented that in 1851 John Frederick Campbell, 1st Earl of Cawdor, engaged George Gilbert Scott to direct work of restoration costing £1,804, which in the year 2010 would be around £150,000 (its called inflation).

It would be remiss not to mention the village school which was constructed in the 19th century, and the village pub seems was once a post office dating back to the 16th century.

The speaker moved on to a wider aspect of Stackpole which makes fascinating history, being informed that the Lily ponds, which have been a tourist attraction for many years, were excavated in the 18th century, having previously been limestone quarries.

The eight arch stone bridge was constructed during that same period and will continue to be a fascination to tourists for many years to come.

Having covered the outlying features of the village, we were now to learn more about the early years when Stackpole Court was one of the most magnificent mansions, certainly in Pembrokeshire, employing most of Stackpole and many of the villages in the area in a domestic or farming capacity.

We learned of John Campbell who resided at the Court from 1758-1821 and was responsible for much of the early development in that area which gives so much pleasure to the people who visit our county today.

The demolition of Stackpole Court in 1963 was a travesty and generated much criticism at the time. It would not have been allowed to happen today, as people are more appreciative of fine works of early architecture, and the Court was certainly that.

(Doug Harvard)