

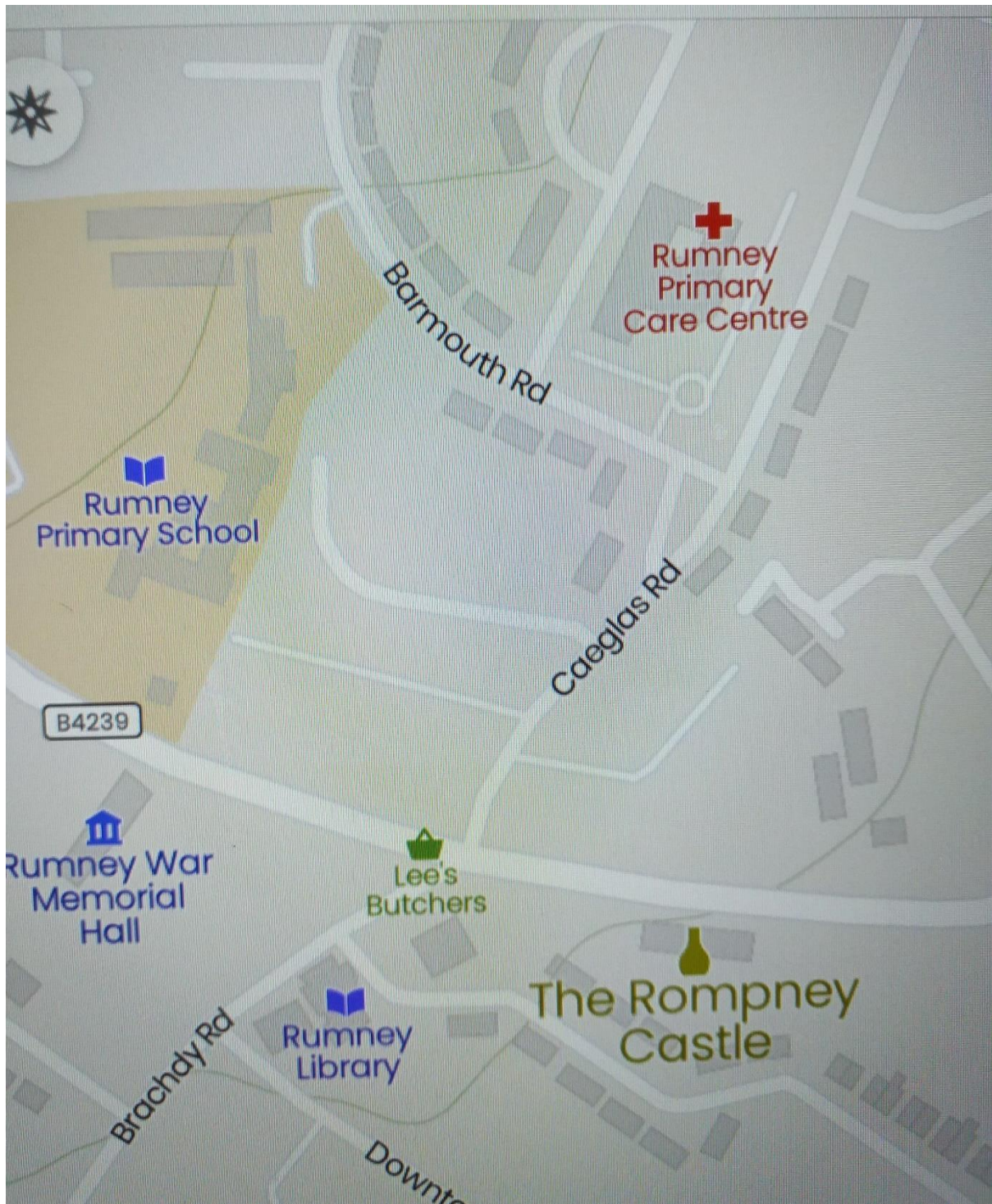
THE ROMPNEY CASTLE
112 WENTLOOG ROAD
RUMNEY
CARDIFF
CF3 3EB



BACKGROUND

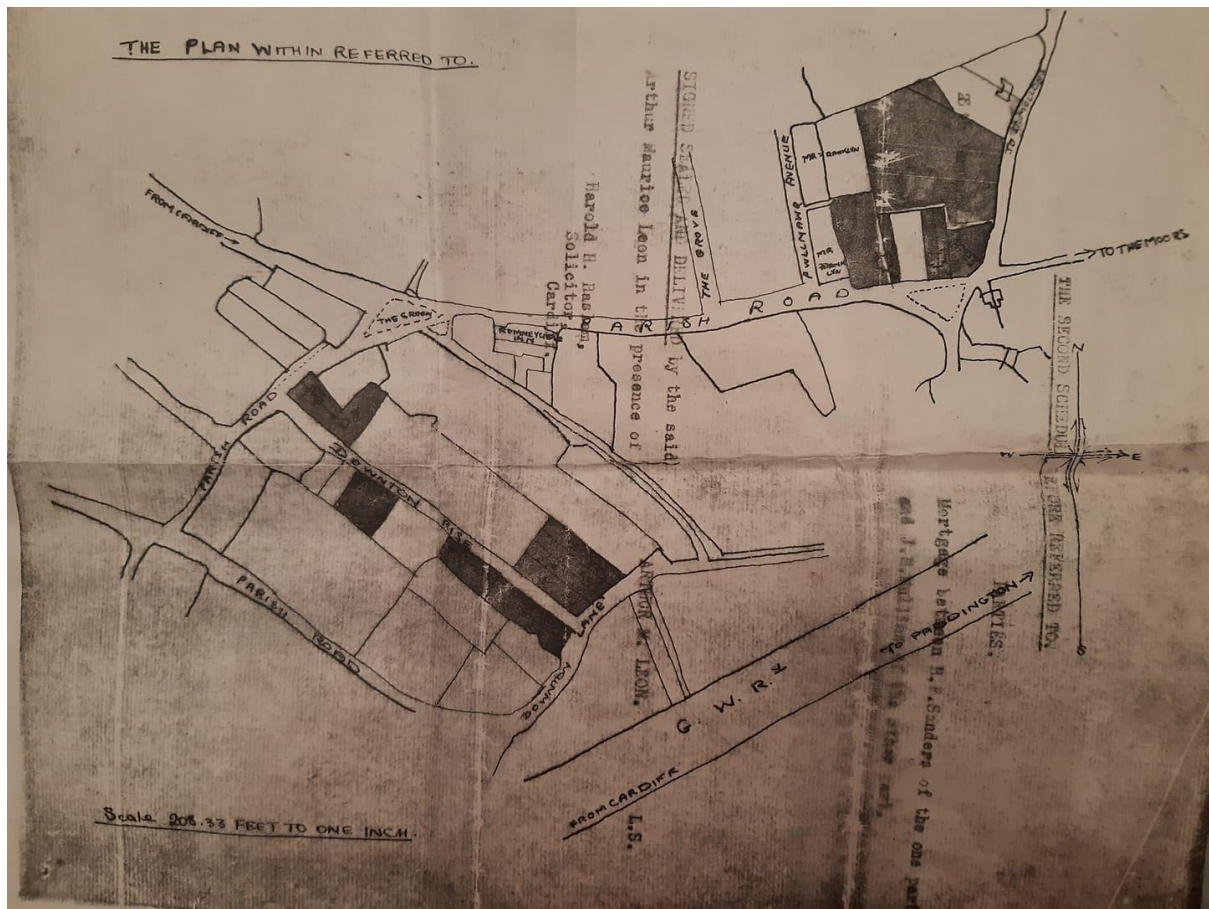
This much-loved pub and unique building in Rumney has been earmarked for demolition by the developer causing much upset and anger from the residents of Rumney and other users of the public house. We understand a planning application for it to be demolished will be submitted shortly. This was a well-used pub prior to the covid outbreak but was then closed and sold on to a developer (Rompney Castle estates). It is situated in the heart of the old Rumney village next to the Gospel Hall and close to the amenities used by residents. It is the only public house in this part of Rumney and as such a big part of the local area. It is one of the oldest buildings left in Rumney and certainly the most distinctive.

SETTING



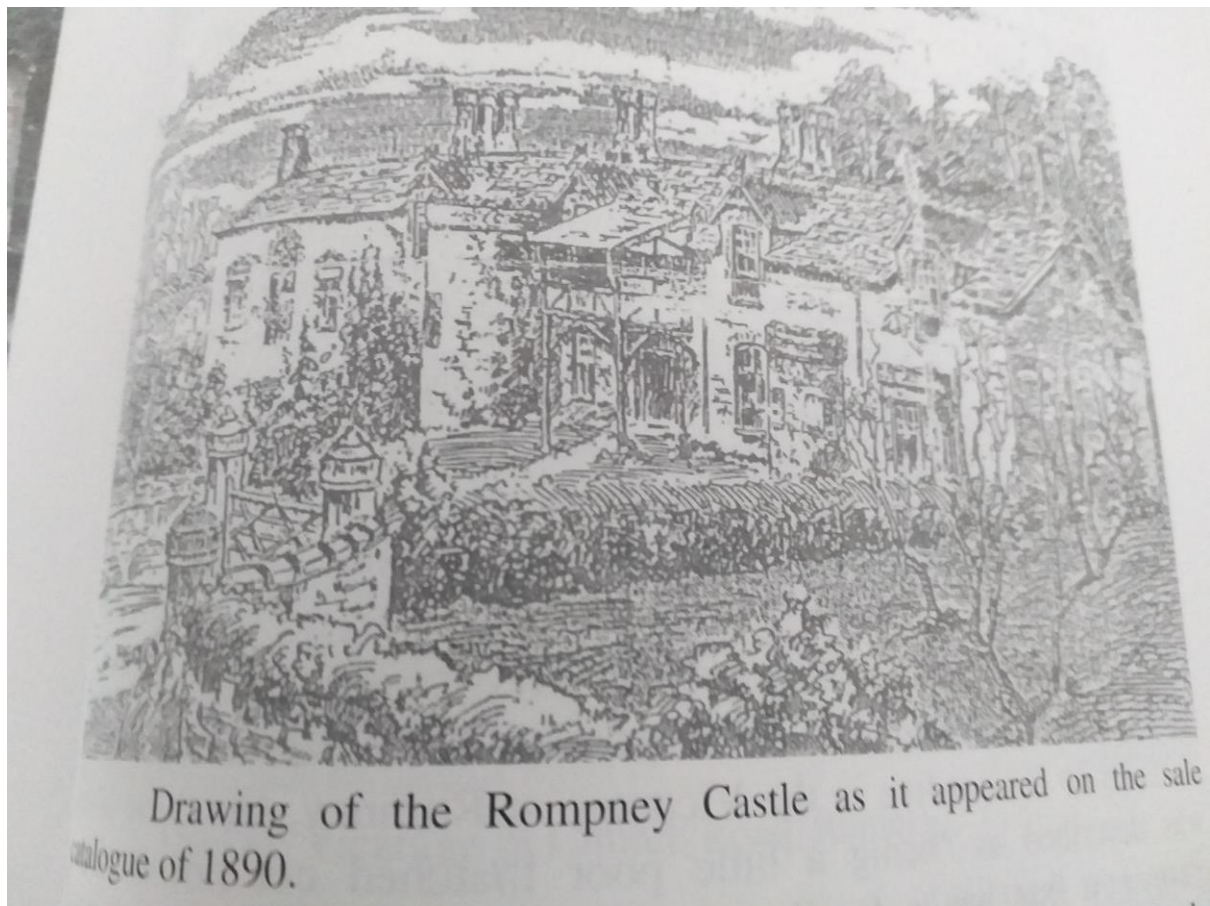
As can be seen from the map the pub is very much part of the area surrounded as it is by dwellings, the old library, memorial hall and the local shopping centre. With the Gospel Hall, Primary School and Methodist church nearby.

HISTORY



The map shows the pub at the top of the page on Parish Road

There is no exact date for the opening of the pub, but The Rompney Castle, in Wentloog Road Rumney, appears on the tythe map of 1846, and was in the 19851 census when it was called the Pear Tree. The inhabitants were described as farmers and victuallers. There is a story that the Pear Tree became the haunt of a gang of smugglers who operated from the River Rhymney, with the wealthy owner of a local manor house as their leader. The landlord of the Pear Tree was said to have been in league with the gang, but they were never caught and there is no written evidence to prove their guilt. On the 1871 Census it is still recorded as the Pear tree and the occupier as a Farmer and Victualler. 1881 There were changes, it was now called the Rompney Castle, it was occupied by Harry Harris Davies – Ex United States Consul and Inn Keeper.



The Ex American Consul in Cardiff Harry Harris Davies bought the property and he made many changes including the building of a mock-baronial hall (now used as the public bar) and is credited with changing the name of the inn to the Rompney Castle. He died in 1886 which may be why the pub was later put up for sale. The obituary read: “ *Weekly Mail 8th May 1886*

DEATH OF COLONEL HARRY DAVIES OF ROMPNEY CASTLE, RUMNEY

We regret to have to announce the death of Colonel Harry H. Davies of Rompney Castle, Rumney, which occurred on Saturday night after a lingering illness, occasioned by the fall of his horse. The deceased was the son of Mr Thomas Davies, Cambrian Inn, Llanfrechva, Caerleon, and received his early education at Llanfrechva National School. He emigrated to America when he was young and settled in Pennsylvania, where he obtained some distinction as an artist, receiving several gold medals for his paintings. When the war broke out between the North and the South the deceased joined the Federal Army under General Thomas and was subsequently promoted to the rank of colonel. He took part in several engagements, for which he received medals. The colonel was appointed by his general to sketch the positions of the enemy before the battles, and he subsequently returned to England with a grand panorama of the American War, making a tour through England and Wales. When the American Consulship became vacant at Cardiff General Grant appointed Colonel Davies to that responsible position, which he filled for some years. Eight years ago he bought the Rompney Castle and the land belonging to it at Rumney, when he re-built the house at considerable expense. The deceased gentleman was guardian for the parish of Rumney, and member of the Rumney School Board. Last year he re-visited the United States for the benefit of his health. Soon after his return to this country his horse fell under him, when he sustained a serious injury, which culminated in his death on Saturday night, as stated above.

On May 6th 1890, the property was put up for auction and was described in the catalogue as having 'extensive views over the Bristol Channel with ample stabling accommodation laid out in attractive grounds.' A map to guide prospective buyers, shows that the Rompney Castle was set in open countryside, with only a few neighbouring farms and private houses.'. As can be seen by the drawing the distinctive chimneys formed an important part of the building.



William Gerrish, the Rumney butcher, is pictured here making a delivery to Mrs Phillips at the Rompney Castle before the Second World War.

When the Welsh Sunday closing act was introduced Rumney was still part of Monmouthshire where public houses remained open on Sundays. Many people walked to Rumney to drink at the pub on a Sunday night, causing many complaints from residents and other Cardiff pub owners. Lloyd George may well have visited the pub in 1895 when he described the area as hell on earth because of the numbers of Welsh people drinking there. William Richards whose family owned the pub for a number of years was a local Councillor and farmer who owned much of the land around the Rompney which it later sold to the Council.



Benjamin Giles and his family, note on the pillars it says Rompney Castle Hotel. In 1901 Census Benjamin Giles was the Inn Keeper he was one of the Giles family from Rumney Pottery.

The beautiful stained-glass windows of the extension alterations to the old Pear Tree Inn.



CENSUS

Wales Census Records

1841 recorded as the Pear Tree - family of John John & family - farmers.

1851 recorded as the Pear Tree - Jenkin John & family - farmer and victualler.

1861 recorded as the Pear Tree - Hannah Edmunds – Farmer and Publican

1871 recorded as the Pear Tree - William Richards & family - farmer and publican.

1881 recorded as the Rompney Castle - Harry Harries Davies & family - ex US consul/ inn keeper.

1891 recorded as the Rompney Castle Hotel - Mary Jones family head - publicans daughter.

1901 recorded as the Rompney Castle Hotel - Benjamin Giles & family - inn keeper.

1911 recorded as the Rompney Castle Hotel - Robert Watkins is the Licensed Victualler

The pub is situated in what was the centre of the old village next to the gospel hall and was at the heart of the village in terms of where people went for a drink after church and for their evening entertainment.



After renovation in 1932.

As can be seen it has changed little over the past 90 years.

CURRENT USE

In recent times the pub has been well used for events and it has one of the few remaining skittle alleys in Cardiff. It is the only public house in this part of Rumney, which currently only has 2 other pubs, both of which are more modern and specialise in serving food. There may be at least part of the original cellars which apparently had a tunnel leading to the river. This may have been one the smugglers used. As we don't have access to the pub, we cannot verify what is or isn't part of the original building. What we can say is that this is a distinctive and unique building in the area and that it has had a major facelift, of a rare Victorian mock Tudor façade, completed nearly 150 years ago and has remained largely unaltered since then. We believe that this adds to the interest of the building. So together with its history and place in the heart of Rumney this is a pub and building well worth preserving and we would ask you to look favourably on the application.

SOURCES/CREDITS

Glamorgan Archives

The Rumney History Society

Book "Rumney and St Melons A History of Two Villages

Local Residents: