

# *Y Llychau*

**A NEWSLETTER FOR TALLEY & THE SURROUNDING AREA**

**[www.talley.org.uk/y-llychau](http://www.talley.org.uk/y-llychau)**

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## **TALLEY'S LOWER LAKE**

These Newsletters hope to provide information about the Talley and Cwmdru area and to report on recent happenings. They also aim to provide articles of general interest as well as historical items relevant to our community.

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***Y Llychau* is produced on behalf of St Michael & All Angels, Talley,  
for distribution locally.**

## THE FRONT PAGE

The front page photograph this time is of the Lower of Talley's two lakes. It was taken from Pencarreg, and clearly shows the circle of encroaching trees around the edge of the lake.

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## THE EDITOR WRITES

Welcome to issue 59 of the Talley Newsletter. In each issue I try to include a mixture of articles describing recent local happenings and others of a more general or historical nature. This edition is no exception, so I hope you will find something within its pages that will be of interest to you.

As regular readers will be well aware, I make frequent appeals from articles to include in the Newsletter and for suggestions as to how it could be improved. Generally these pleas fall on deaf ears – hence why they have to be made so often – but on this occasion, I am pleased to say, the response has been a little different.

Not only did I receive more contributions than could be included in one edition of *Y Llychau*, I was also offered a few suggestions as to the possible content of future editions. I would like to thank all of you who responded, especially those of you who wrote articles for inclusion in this or future issues.

I have decided to adopt at least two of the proposals concerning the Newsletter's contents. There will be a short series of articles on Welsh Castles later this year and starting with this issue a list of "Contents" will be included on page 3. If, after a few editions, the list proves popular it will become a regular feature; if not it will be discontinued.

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**WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE**

| <b>Title</b>                           | <b>Author</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| Annual Newsletter Party                | Someone there  | 26          |
| Back in Talley                         | Jan MacAulay   | 35          |
| Bright Yellow Helicopter in our Valley | Wyn Edwards    | 24          |
| Christian Aid Service                  | Roger Pike     | 4           |
| Did You Know?                          | -----          | 29          |
| Easy Fundraising                       | Roger Pike     | 19          |
| Famous People from Wales (part 2)      | Roger Pike     | 8           |
| Hymns                                  | Hywel Jones    | 12          |
| Information on the Ages for Marriage   | Sharon Meek    | 27          |
| Message from Ebenezer Apostolic Church | Andie Davies   | 22          |
| Moles                                  | Hywel Jones    | 5           |
| Mountains of Wales                     | Roger Pike     | 14          |
| My Family and Other Creatures          | S Shawe        | 28          |
| On the Lighter Side                    | -----          | 20          |
| Readers! Can you Help?                 | Pat Edwards    | 17          |
| Road Tax                               | Roger Pike     | 36          |
| Summer Fayre (notice)                  | -----          | 20          |
| Talley School                          | -----          | 30          |
| Talley's Got Talent                    | Angie Hastilow | 23          |
| View from the Cab – episode 2          | Mynydd Du      | 32          |

**THANK YOU**

Clem & Bethan Mitchell (Cwmcochied) would like to thank all the people of Talley & Cwmdy who helped with their wedding by lending equipment, helping with parking (John the cones) or simply put up with the noise & traffic. They had a lovely day. Diolch yn fawr iawn!

## **CHRISTIAN AID SERVICE**

Christian Aid Week 2016 was 15-22 May and, as usual, was celebrated locally with a joint Act of Worship – this year in Providence Chapel in Cwmdru on Thursday 19th May. In early April, representatives from Providence Chapel, Esgairnant Chapel, Ebenezer Apostolic Church and St Michael's church met to discuss the Order of Service and how each church would contribute to it.

Every year a theme is chosen by Christian Aid and this year the aim was to support the women of Bangladesh who live on the river's edge and whose homes are under constant threat of flooding. With this in mind, the Order of Service was based on guidelines issued by Christian Aid and included a video describing the hardship of one young woman and her family.

Morsheda is a young mother living in a river-side shack with her four children. Her husband has left. She has no land, no assets, no savings and the only work she can get is backbreaking manual labour for as little as 74p a day, barely enough to provide food for her children for just one meal each day. Her home has been flooded several times. She desperately needs help. A Home Safety Package from Christian Aid could raise Morsheda's home on an earth plinth, safe from the flood plain, and give her resources to invest in things like farm animals, seeds and a composting kit – giving her the tools she needs to build a better future. A new chance at life for Morsheda would cost as little as £250.

Over 40 adults and 10 children attended the bi-lingual service in Providence. They heard prayers (in both English and Welsh) read by members of the participating churches and chapels as well as children from Talley school. In addition to watching the video, they listened to Bible readings and sang hymns. Pastor Eric Horley from Ebenezer Church gave an inspiring sermon and if the enthusiasm of the hymn singing is anything to go by, all those present appeared to enjoy the experience. During the service a collection was taken to support the work of Christian Aid and thanks to the generosity of those attending over £300 was raised for this very worthwhile cause.

On behalf of the organising sub-committee, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the evening and to everyone who attended the service. Particular thanks must go to the members of Providence for allowing us to use their chapel, to the preacher, Mr Horley, to all those who participated in the service itself, to the children and staff of Talley School and to the ladies who provided the welcome refreshments afterwards.

Roger Pike

## MOLES

This winter was extremely mild and wet, therefore it is possible that you have been bothered by moles and know how difficult it is to get rid of them. They can appear suddenly, leaving mole hills in the garden and an occasional withered plant. A garden or lawn can be transformed into a battlefield within days. If you lived in Ireland you will not have a problem as there aren't any moles there at all.

Earthworms attract moles and as they are near the surface the lawn is an ideal location with its network of roots to assist them to tunnel through them. They can establish a location, tunnel out of it and after completing a network they can relax and wait. As their sense of smell and hearing is acute they can sense an earthworm about five metres away. As the earthworms make their way through the soil they fall into the mole tunnels providing a tasty meal for the moles.

The traditional way of controlling moles is to remove the shadows or signs they leave. However, moles can be advantageous as they improve drainage, break down organic matter and support the topsoil. By controlling earthworms you can control moles but you pay a price for this as you damage the soil. The best way is to use traps but you can injure the moles if you use the scissors trap. By laying the trap in the

## GWADDOD

Mae gaeaf eleni wedi bod yn ti hwnt o fwyn a gwlyb, felly mae'n lled debyg eich bod wedi cael eich poeni gan waddod, felly fe wyddoch pa mor anodd yw i gael gwared ohonynt. Gallant ddisgyn yn sydyn ac fe welwch bridd y wadd yn yr ardd ac ar yr un pryd ambell blanhigyn gwywedig. Gall gardd neu lawnt gael eu troi yn faes y gad ymhen dyddiau. Os ydych yn byw yn yr Iwerddon ni chewch drafferth gan nad oes gwaddod yn y wlad o gwbl.

Mae pryf genwair yn denu gwaddod a chan eu bod yn agos i wyneb y pridd mae'r lawnt yn le delfrydol gyda'r rhwydwaith o wreiddiau yn gymorth i dwnelu drwodd. Gallant sefydlu canolfan, twnelu tuag allan ohono, ac wedi sefydlu rhwydwaith gallant ymlacio ac aros. Gan fod ganddynt allu i aroglu a chlywed gallant ganfod mwydyn tua phum metr oddiwrthynt. Fel mae'r mwydod yn gweithio'u ffordd drwy'r pridd maent yn cwmpo i fewn i dwnelu'r gwaddod ac felly, yn bryd bach blasus iddynt. Atebion traddodiadol i reoli mwydod oedd yr angen difa'r cysgodion a adawant. Er hynny mae'r mwydod yn gallu bod o fudd drwy wella draeniad, a thorri i lawr fater organig a helpu i gefnogi'r pridd uchaf. Wrth reoli'r mwydod gallwch reoli'r gwaddod, ond fe fydd pris uchel i'w dalu sef niweidio'r pridd. Trapio yw'r ateb gorau ond gellir

main artery (or path) the mole is trapped and is caught instantly. The secret of trapping is to avoid unusual smells like petrol or diesel and use old traps. If you use new traps they should be buried in the soil for a few days in farmyard manure and then you should dip your hands in soil, keeping your own aroma away from the trap. Place it a little higher than the mole path and, to ensure that no light enters, place soil or a clod of earth around the top of the trap. This sounds easy but unless you are careful in your preparation your efforts will be in vain. It is amazing how a trap can be disturbed and thrown out of the soil; once the mole sees the trap and disturbs it he will not forget it.

It is possible to smoke the mole's path successfully by using a particular type of smoke but it is important to control the amount of smoke as the mole can find its way out of trouble. The smoke contains sulphur and it must be used in warm weather as the smoke cannot enter the paths or trails in cold and wet weather.

Another way of getting rid of moles is by moving them into a nearby field. To do this you can use a chemical which was used by gardeners fifty years ago.

You find the mole paths or trails and pour a mixture of Jeyes Fluid and water in a 1:20 ratio down. As the

achosi dolur barbaraidd gyda'r trap siswrn. Wrth osod trap yn y prif lwybr mae'r wadd yn baglu a'i ddal yn union. Yr allwedd i drapio yw peidio a defnyddio aroglau estronol fel tanwydd petrol/diesel, gan ddefnyddio hen drapiau. Os defnyddiwyd rai newydd dylid eu claddu yn y pridd am ychydig ddyddiau mewn tail fferm gan guddio'ch dwylo mewn pridd er mwyn cadwch arogl oddiwrth y trap ac yna ei osod ychydig yn uwch na'r llwybr a gofalu nad oes golau yn dod i fewn drwy ychwanegu pridd neu dywarchen oddeutu pen y trap. Mae hyn yn swnio'n hawdd ond os na fyddwch yn ofalus wrth osod trapiau ni fydd eich gwaith yn llwyddo. Mae'n syndod fel gall trap wedi eu ei ansefydlu, ei daflu allan o'r pridd ac unwaith y bydd y wadd wedi gweld y trap a'i oresgyn fe ddeil i gofio amdano.

Mae'n bosibl hefyd i fygdarthu llwybr y wadd gyda mwg arbennig a hynny'n llwyddiannus er bod hi'n bwysig am ba hyd y dylid ledu'r mwg gan fod y wadd yn gallu tynnu ei ffordd allan o drwbl. Mae'r mwg yn cynnwys sylffwr a rhaid ei ddefnyddio mewn tywydd cynnes oherwydd ni all y mwg dreiddio i'r llwybrau mewn tywydd oer gwlyb.

Un ffordd arall i'w gwaredu yw eu symud i gae neu waun agored. I wneud hyn gellir defnyddio hen

## Y Llychau

moles have a keen sense of smell, the smell of this mix will deter them. To ensure that they escape in the right direction, pour a less potent mixture of 1:40 ratio and use it to water your neighbour's lawn or garden. Do this for ten days until the moles have moved or at least have settled in a place which can now withstand the destruction.

gemegin a ddefnyddiwyd gan arddwyr dros hanner canrif yn ol.

Rhaid dod o hyd i lwybrau'r gwadd ac arllwys cymysgedd o Jeyes Fluid a dwr 1:20 i lawr. Gan fod y gwaddod yn aroglu'n hawdd mae arogl hwn yn dueddol i'w troi ymaith. Er mwyn gwneud yn siwr eu bod yn dianc i'r cyfeiriad iawn, arllwyswch gymysgwch llai o gryfder megis 1:40 a'i ddefnyddio i ddyfrhau ar draws lawnt neu ardd cymydog. Daliwch ati am ddeng niwrnod hyd nes y bydd y gwaddod wedi symud neu o leia i fewn i le a fedr wrthsefyll y difrod.



Hywel Jones  
(Kindly translated by Janet James)

Hywel Jones

## FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM WALES (part 2)

### TOM JONES

Thomas John Woodward was born on 7 June, 1940, in Pontypridd and from an early age he sang in the school choir. He enjoyed listening to music on the radio, especially Rhythm & Blues and Rock 'n' Roll, and these later influenced his own musical style. As a teenager he was more interested in drink and girls than his education, so he left school at age 16 to work as a builder's labourer and a door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman.



He married Linda Trenchard in 1957 at age 17 and together they had a son, Mark, born the same year. In 1963 he formed the band *Tommy Scott and the Senators*, but its appeal was limited due to its non-urban location. This changed the following year, when Gordon Mills discovered him, took him to London and became his manager. With a new solo career, the artist changed his name to Tom Jones and Decca Records signed him. His first single didn't catch on, but his second, *It's Not Unusual*, rose to No. 1 in the UK charts in 1965. During the next three years Tom Jones toured the USA and the UK and released several popular songs, including *What's New Pussycat?*, *The Green*, *Green Grass of Home* and *Delilah*.

In 1974 Jones moved his family to the United States because of his resentment of Britain's high taxes. He bought Dean Martin's house in California's posh Bel-Air area. In 1986, Mills passed away, and Jones' son, Mark, replaced him as the singer's manager. The next year, Jones released the song *A Boy From Nowhere*, which put him back in the British charts. This was followed by several albums and appearances on TV and in films. Success continued through the 2000s, during which time he won many accolades, including the Brit Award for Best Male Artist. He also performed for US President Bill Clinton at the White House Millennium Celebration and in the Queen's Golden Jubilee concert.

For his musical accomplishments, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1995 and knighted in 2005 as part of the Queen's New Year's Honours.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SHIRLEY BASSEY

Shirley Veronica Bassey was born in the Tiger Bay district of Cardiff on 8 January 1937. She was the youngest of seven children. When Bassey was a baby, her father was sent to prison for the repeated sexual abuse of a child. This prompted her mother to relocate her family to Splott, a working-class area of the city. Bassey's mixed-race heritage (her mother was English and her father Nigerian) made her stand out there. However, the family's poverty was an ever bigger problem.



In 1952, Bassey left school to work in a factory. She also sang in pubs and at age 16 was cast in a musical revue. The following year she got pregnant, but after giving birth and leaving her daughter Sharon in the care of one of her sisters, Bassey started to perform again. It was when Mike Sullivan became her agent that Bassey started to adopt the cleavage-baring tops and gowns that would become her signature look.

Bassey released her first single, *Burn My Candle*, when she was 19 years old. In 1957, she had her first hit with *Banana Boat Song*. Her worldwide popularity took off when she sang *Goldfinger* for the 1964 James Bond movie. (She later sang the theme songs for 2 other Bond films, *Diamonds Are Forever* and *Moonraker*). These Bond songs, along with her interpretations of numbers like *Big Spender* and *I Am What I Am*, made Bassey's career an unmitigated success.

Unfortunately, Bassey's family life wasn't as successful as her career. In 1963, Bassey gave birth to another daughter, Samantha. Just as with her first child, she wouldn't name Samantha's father. Bassey married twice, but both marriages ended in divorce. The most difficult time for her was the death of her daughter, Samantha, in 1985. Although considered an accidental drowning at the time, because of Samantha's association with a convicted killer doubts were raised.

Shirley Bassey was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2000. It was another mark of distinction in a career that has seen her sell over 135 million records – a long way from her humble Tiger Bay beginnings.

\* \* \* \* \*

## IOAN GRUFFUDD

Ioan Gruffudd (pronounced yo-IN griffith) was born on 6 October, 1973, in Cardiff, the eldest of three children. His parents had changed the family surname from the English Griffiths to the Welsh Gruffudd.

In 1986, the 13-year-old Gruffudd landed a permanent role on the Welsh BBC prime-time soap opera *Pobol y Cwm* (People of the Valley). He left the series after a six-year run and moved to London, where he attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. A string of television roles followed, including the BBC drama *A Relative Stranger* (1995) and the ITV series *Poldark* (1996).

Eventually, Gruffudd was offered roles (although some were only small) in larger productions. In the 1997 film *Titanic*, he played Fifth Officer Harold Lowe; in 1998 he played the lover of Oscar Wilde in the biopic *Wilde*; in 1999, he headlined the Welsh film *Solomon a Gaenor*, which told the story of star-crossed lovers. Later that same year, the film received an Academy Award Nomination as Best Foreign Language Film.



Also in 1999, Gruffudd appeared as the orphaned Pip in the BBC production of *Great Expectations*. However, it was when he starred as the sword-wielding hero in four *Horatio Hornblower* television features that he was brought to the attention of millions of viewers. Based on the epic novels by C.S. Forester, the films traced the career of a young English sailor during the Napoleonic wars.

More recently, Gruffudd adopted a lighter tone with his role in *102 Dalmatians* (2000) and in the spring of 2001, he repeated his most famous role in two more long-awaited instalments in the *Horatio Hornblower* series. He also starred in *Fantastic Four* in 2006.

\* \* \* \* \*

## CATHERINE ZETA-JONES

Catherine Zeta-Jones was born in Swansea on 25 September, 1969. She began dancing when she was 4 years old and at 15 she left school to join a tour of *The Pajama Game*. Two years later she moved on to London's West End, where she appeared in a production of *42nd Street*. Aged 24, she started her television career and found fame in the series *The Darling Buds of May*, which lasted from 1991 to 1993. After that Zeta-Jones landed some high-profile TV movie roles, including the title character in the 1996 historical biopic *Catherine the Great*.



More Hollywood films soon followed, including the critically acclaimed *Traffic*, where she starred with Michael Douglas.

She later won an Academy Award for her performance in *Chicago* (2002). In 2010, she received a Tony Award for her Broadway debut in *A Little Night Music*.

Off-screen, Zeta-Jones's personal life was thriving. After she met the legendary actor Michael Douglas, the pair soon became a couple, despite a 25-year age difference. Their first child, son Dylan, was born in 2000 and later that year, they married at New York's posh Plaza Hotel. Zeta-Jones returned to her musical theatre roots and over the next few years, following the birth of daughter Carys, became more selective about her film work, preferring to spend time with her family in Bermuda – far away from the Hollywood spotlight.

Zeta-Jones was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2010 Birthday Honours and that same year she put work aside to support her husband through a difficult time: he successfully battled throat cancer, but the family crisis put a strain on them all. In 2011, she sought treatment for Biopolar II, a type of manic depression, and publicly acknowledged that she had been diagnosed with the mental health disorder. In August 2013 it was revealed that she and her husband were going through another difficult time. The pair decided to take "some time apart to evaluate and work on their marriage."

\*\*\*\*\*

(to be continued)

Researched by Roger Pike

## HYMNS

The hymn 'don Ebenezer' or 'Wave the Bottle' was composed by Thomas John Williams in 1896.

Thomas John Williams was born in Ynysymudw, Swansea Valley, in 1869. He was organist and choir master in various Baptist chapels in Llanelli; Capel Seion from 1903 until 1913 and Capel Calfaria from 1913 until his death in 1944.

Thomas John Williams found his inspiration to compose this hymn when he found a bottle washed up on the Loughor river in Llandeilo Talybont or Small Llandeilo, near the M4 today. Suddenly, the words for this hymn came from the work of Dafydd William, again of Llandeilo Talybont.

Yn y dyfroedd mawr a'r tonnau  
Nid oes neb a deil fy mhen  
Ond fy annwyl Briod Iesu  
Yr hwn fi farw ar y pren:  
Cyfaill yw mewn afon angau  
Ddeil fy mhen I uwch y don  
Golwg arno wna I'm ganu  
Yn yr afon ddofn hon .

Also, at the same time, he remembered the words of a hymn by Gwilym Hiraethog:

Dyma gariad fel y moroedd  
Tosturiaethau fel y lli.

Notice the emphasis within the two hymns on valleys, rivers, seas and

## EMYNAU

Cyfansoddwyd yr emyn don Ebenezer neu Ton y Botel gan Thomas John Williams yn 1896.

Cafodd Thomas John Williams ei eni yn Ynysymudw Cwm Tawe yn y flwyddyn 1869. Yr oedd Thomas John Williams yn organydd a chor feistr yn yr eglwysi Bedyddwyr canlynol yn tref Llanelli, sef Capel Seion o 1903 hyd 1913, capel Calfaria 1913 hyd ei farwolaeth yn 1944.

Cafodd Thomas John Williams yr ysprydoliaith o cyfansoddi yr emyn don pan ddarganfi botel yn cael I olchi I'r lan gan lanw uchel yr afon Lluchwr yn Llandeilo Talybont neu Llandeilo Fach ger yr M4 heddiw. Yn sydyn daeth geiriau yr emyn o waith Dafydd William eto o Llandeilo Talybont I'w gof.

Yn y dyfroedd mawr a'r tonnau  
Nid oes neb a deil fy mhen  
Ond fy annwyl Briod Iesu  
Yr hwn fi farw ar y pren:  
Cyfaill yw mewn afon angau  
Ddeil fy mhen I uwch y don  
Golwg arno wna I'm ganu  
Yn yr afon ddofn hon .

Hefyd daeth eto I'w gof y geiriau or emyn yr un mesur gan Gwilym Hiraethog:

Dyma gariad fel y moroedd  
Tosturiaethau fel y lli.

waves, which are linked all the time, filling up the bay.

I like this tone and the hymn very much, because it was sung in a singing service in Bethel Chapel in Gaiman, when I was out there in 2004. This service was different to our services in Wales. There were 8 leaders taking turns leading 16 hymns that were in the programme, in Welsh first and then in Spanish. The tones were led by an American Reed Organ which was sent out as a present to the chapel by a family from Llanuwchllyn in 1904.

'Ebenezer' was the last hymn, sung under the leadership of Elinor Bennet. The hymn was sung over and over until the audience had left, in both Welsh and Spanish.

Gras a chariad megis dilyw  
Yn ymdywallt yma 'nghyd,  
A chyfiawnder pur a heddwch  
Yn cusanu euog fyd.

Gracia amor tal como induacion  
En vierta aqui juntos,  
Y puro la justicia y la paz  
En beso veraz mundos

Hywel Jones  
(kindly translated by Nick Gale)

Sylwch ar y bwyslais sydd yn y ddwy emyn yma ar ddyfroedd, afon, mor a thonnau sydd yn cysylltiedig bob amser a llanw uchel mewn aber.

Rwy'f yn hoff o'r don a'r emyn yn fawr iawn, oherydd canwyd hon mewn Cymanfa Ganu yn Capel Bethel y Gaiman yn y Wladfa, pan oeddwn I allan yn 2004. Yr oedd y Cymanfa hon yn wahanol I'n Cymanfaoedd ni yng Nghymru. Yr oedd 8 o arweinyddion yn cymryd eu tro I arwain y 16 o emynau oedd ar y rhaglen, yn yr iaith Cymraeg yn cyntaf ac yn dilyn yn yr iaith Sbaeneg. Y tonau yn cael eu canu I gyfeiliant American Reed Organ a gafodd ddanfôn allan yn anrheg I'r capel gan deulu o Llanuwchllyn yn 1904.

Ebenezer neu Ton y botel yr oedd yr emyn ddiwethaf a ganwyd o dan arwainiaith Elinor Bennet. Canwyd yr emyn throsodd a throsodd nes fod y cynulleidfa I gyd allan o'r capel yn yr iaith Cymraeg a'r iaith Sbaeneg.

Gras a chariad megis dilyw  
Yn ymdywallt yma 'nghyd,  
A chyfiawnder pur a heddwch  
Yn cusanu euog fyd.

Gracia amor tal como induacion  
En vierta aqui juntos,  
Y puro la justicia y la paz  
En beso veraz mundos

Hywel Jones

## THE MOUNTAINS OF WALES

A Mountain in Wales is defined as being any high point over 2000 ft above mean sea-level with at least 100 ft of ‘prominence’ or ‘ascent’ on all sides. There are 138 such mountains in Wales. They can best be divided into three ranges – Snowdonia, the Cambrian Mountains and the Black Mountain Range, (which includes the Black Mountains, Fforest Fawr and the Brecon Beacons).

**Snowdonia** is named after Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales at 3,560 ft. The name in Welsh is *Eryri*, derived from the Latin *oriri*, meaning highlands or risings. In the Middle Ages, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd used the titles ‘Prince of Wales’ and ‘Lord of Snowdonia’, showing the importance of this part of north Wales. Before the boundaries of the national park were designated, “Snowdonia” was generally used to refer to a smaller area, namely the upland region of northern Gwynedd centred on Mount Snowdon, whereas the National Park covers an area more than twice that size extending far to the south into Meirionnydd. The Snowdonia National Park was established in 1951 as the third National Park in Britain, following the Peak District and the Lake District. It covers 827 square miles, has 37 miles of coastline and is home to more than 26,000 people (about 62% of whom can speak Welsh). Unlike national parks in other countries, Snowdonia is made up of both public and private lands. Ownership of the area is made up as follows: 70% is privately owned, 16% belongs to the Forestry Commission (now part of Natural Resources Wales), 9% comes under the National Trust, the Countryside Council of Wales has 2%, local Water Companies 1% and the rest is owned by the National Park Authority, the governing body. Unusually, the Snowdonia National Park has a “hole” in the middle, around the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, a slate quarrying centre. This was deliberately excluded from the park when it was set up to allow the development of new light industry to replace the decimated slate business.

Snowdonia itself may be divided into four areas:

- The northernmost area (the most popular with tourists) includes Moel Hebog (2569 ft), Mynydd Mawr (2290 ft), the Nantlle Ridge (7 peaks from 2005 ft to 2408 ft), the Snowdon Massif, the Glyderau (3283 ft) and the Carneddau (3005 ft). These last three groups are the highest mountains in Wales, and include all of Wales’ 3000-foot mountains.
- The second area includes the peaks of Moel Siabod (2861 ft), Cnicht (2260 ft), the Moelwynion group (highest peak is 2861 ft) and the mountains around Blaenau Ffestiniog.
- The third area (the most remote) includes the Rhinogydd group (highest peak is 2480 ft), the Arenig Fawr (2802 ft), Rhobell Fawr (2408 ft) and the boggy moreland of the Migneint, the largest blanket-bog in Wales.

- The southernmost area includes Cadair Idris (2930 ft), the Tarren range, the Dyfi hills (highest is 2218 ft), and the Aran group, which includes Aran Fawddwy (2969 ft), the highest mountain in the UK south of Snowdon.

The **Cambrian Mountains** (*Mynyddoedd Cambria* in Welsh) is a name that's sometimes used to mean the rocky spine that reaches all the way from the craggy heights of Snowdonia to the softer peaks of the Brecon Beacons, but it is also used more specifically to describe the Mid Wales uplands – the sparsely populated landscape from Plynlimon (2467 ft) near Machynlleth to Mallaen (1516 ft) near Llandovery. The Cambrian Mountains are separated from Snowdonia and the Black Mountain Range by the Dovey and Tywi valleys. They include the sources of the Wye and the Severn, the peaceful Elan Valley reservoirs and miles of wild scenery; the home of owls and other birds of prey.

Originally the term “Cambrian Mountains” was applied in a general sense to most of upland Wales, but since the 1950s its application has become increasingly localised to the geographically homogeneous Mid Wales uplands, known in Welsh as the *Elenydd*. This barren and sparsely populated ‘wilderness’ is often referred to as the ‘Desert of Wales’. It was unsuccessfully proposed as a National Park in the 1960s and again in the 1970s.

While Snowdonia contains a mix of volcanic rocks and sedimentary rocks of Cambrian and Ordovician age, the mountains of South Wales are mainly Devonian age Old Red Sandstone, Carboniferous Limestone and various sandstones. The ranges of mid-Wales on the other hand are predominantly formed from Ordovician and Silurian sandstones and mudstones. In many areas these outcrop only infrequently, thus resulting in rounded grassy hills. The Cambrian Mountains (in the modern sense of the term) are generally less popular with hillwalkers than the ranges to their north and south. Since all of Wales’ ranges face the predominant westerly air stream coming in from the Atlantic Ocean, they enjoy (if that’s the right word) high levels of rainfall and are the source of numerous rivers. There are 15 main summits, ranging in height from 1909 ft (Siambwr Trawsfynydd) to 2467 ft (Plynlimon), although only 11 of them are defined as being a mountain.

The **Black Mountain Range** (Welsh: *Y Mynydd Du*) is the farthest south of the three Welsh ranges. The Black Mountain Range, sometimes just called Black Mountain (singular), is to the west, north of Swansea, straddling the county boundary between Carmarthenshire and Powys. It is one of Wales’ most wild and remote places with impressive, glacier-carved escarpments and isolated lakes, often several miles from the nearest road. Its highest peak is Fan Brycheiniog (2631 ft).

The Black Mountains (plural) are to the east, on the border with England. Abergavenny, Hay-on-Wye, Llangorse and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal stand at their feet and their highest point is the Waun Fach plateau (2661 ft). Confusingly enough, this range is also home to a peak called Black Mountain (2306 ft). Other significant summits of the range include Hay Bluff (2,221 ft), Rhos Dirion (2,339 ft) and Lord Hereford's Knob (2,264 ft). Towards the south of the range are the independent summits of Pen Allt-mawr (2,359 ft) and Pen Cerrig-calch (2300 ft), which rises prominently above the Usk Valley.

To the south-west is Fforest Fawr (Great Forest), an upland area of remarkable limestone cliffs and caves. It is the only Geopark in Wales – but what is a Geopark? Many of Earth's most spectacular and interesting landscapes contain small, remote communities who often have a very special connection with the land. For those who live in such areas, jobs, housing and services are hard to come by and so it can be difficult for families to put down roots. In 1998 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) launched an initiative which recognised these challenges but also the very great potential the communities had to take pride in and promote their landscapes for tourism. They called this initiative 'Geoparks'. Geoparks are set up and managed by the local community. Each one is different, but they all share a common aim which is to tell the story of their landscape and make it accessible to visitors from primary school children to research scientists and beyond.

Both the Black Mountain Range and the Black Mountains lie within the grassy expanses of the Brecon Beacons National Park. There are only three National Parks in Wales – Snowdonia (established in 1951), Pembrokeshire Coast (1952) and Brecon Beacons (1957). The Brecon Beacons are said to be named after the ancient practice of lighting signal fires (beacons) on mountains to warn of attacks by invaders, although today beacons are usually only used to commemorate public and national events, such as coronations or to mark the turn of the millennium.

The Brecon Beacons, particularly around Pen y Fan (2907ft), are a popular training area for members of the UK armed forces. The Army's Infantry Battle School is located at Brecon, for example, and the Special Air Service (SAS) use the area to test the fitness of applicants. The Beacons can experience extremes of temperature. In July 2013 three soldiers died from heatstroke on an SAS selection exercise and an army captain was found frozen to death on Corn Du (2864 ft) earlier in the same year after training in freezing weather.

Researched by Roger Pike

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## READERS! CAN YOU HELP?

In issue 57 of *Y Llychau*, I wrote about the Women's Institute in Talley and requested information or photographs about this organization. Recently I was given a large package of photographs and memorabilia of Pretoria House by Anne, niece of the recently deceased Rowena Jones.



Amazingly, one of those photographs, shown here, was identified by Gilda Roberts, Ffald Y Bugail, and Mrs. Jones, Brynteg, as a W. I. Dramatic Production. They were able to identify some of the people in the photographs as left to right, Back Row – Mrs. Jones, Brynteg, and Mrs. Lewis, Langwm, Middle Row – Rowena Jones, Pretoria House, an unknown lady, and Mrs. Davies, Halfway. The lady at the front, Gilda thought, might be Linos. Neither Gilda nor Mrs. Jones knew when or where the photograph was taken, though they told me that the Dramas were also performed at other local W.I.s like Llansawel. Perhaps one of the readers of *Y Llychau* could assist in further identification of this photograph and any other information about Talley Women's Institute.

The St David's Day photograph on the front cover of Issue 57 of *Y Llychau* prompted me to include this additional photograph from the Pretoria House Collection. It shows fourteen Welsh ladies dressed in traditional Welsh Costumes. Again, there was no indication of date, place or identities of the ladies in the photograph. I am ever hopeful that sharp eyed readers of *Y Llychau* may be able to help.

## Y Llychau



Devonald's father, shown as Sydney Gordon Jones on his Birth Certificate has also been referred to in other documents as John Anthony, his father's name. This could have been just an error or maybe Sydney preferred to be known by his father's name. Can anyone confirm the name by which he was generally known?

Also included in the package was this aerial photograph showing Pretoria House, Cross Inn Cottage, Abbey View and The Edwinsford Arms in 1962. A few changes have been made since then!!



If you can help with any information or photographs, please contact either the Editor of *Y Llychau* or Pat Edwards on 01558 685779.

## EASY FUNDRAISING

A couple of years ago I requested readers to consider the use of two specific websites – one for searching the web and the other for when they make purchases on the internet. I would like to thank those who are using one or both of these sites and invite others to do the same.

Simply by using EasySearch (<http://talleychurch.easysearch.org.uk>) as your internet search engine you can raise funds for Talley Church with every search that you do, at no cost to yourself. For each completed search, 0.5p is credited to the church account and periodically sent to the church treasurer. If you set EasySearch as your homepage, every time you use your computer you will be reminded of this. By using EasySearch instead of Google or any other search engine, you can make a real difference: EasySearch is completely FREE and by making just 10 searches a day, you could raise around £20 a year for our cause.

As well as raising funds, EasySearch also gives you the best search results available on the web. Today, the internet is so big that different search engines will often deliver different results for the same search. So, by combining the strengths of several search engines together – Yahoo!, Bing, MIVA, Ask and many more – you get the very best results in terms of accuracy and relevance, which means you'll find what you're looking for quickly and easily every time – all in one 'easy' search!

The EasySearch homepage also has a link to the EasyFundraising website. If you use this site to make your internet purchases, a percentage of the amount you spend is donated to Talley Church as well (assuming that the first time you use it you select it). You still shop directly with each retailer as you would normally, but simply by using the links from the EasyFundraising site first, each purchase you make will generate a donation at no extra cost to your purchase. Simply select the retailer you wish to purchase from, using the search box at the top of the EasyFundraising screen and click on the link to enter their site.

You can shop with over 2000 Brand Name retailers and to raise funds you just use the links from the EasyFundraising site first – it's that simple! If you ALREADY shop online, why not help us at no extra cost for purchases you would make anyway. Thanks to those who support us in this way, Talley Church has already received over £125. Think how much more we could get if just a few more of you were to use EasySearch and EasyFundraising.

Roger Pike

## **SUMMER FAYRE**

The Cwmdu and Talley Summer Fair will take place this year on

**Saturday 9th July**

**from 1pm till late**

It will be held at Cwmdu.

The community has been busy planning a packed event for visitors from all over the area including evening entertainment, an auction, raffle, games, races and a host of stalls.

Food will be available all day and during the evening.

**Entry is £5.00 per adult,      £2.50 for 11-17 year olds,  
under 11s free.**

For further Details, please contact Tanya on  
**[talleyschoolpta@gmail.com](mailto:talleyschoolpta@gmail.com)**

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## **ON THE LIGHTER SIDE**

### **A day at the Fair**

Every year, Fred and Ethel would spend a day at the local Fair. Every year, Fred would say, "Ethel, I'd like to ride in that hot air balloon." And every year, Ethel would reply, "I know, Fred, but that hot air balloon ride costs ten pounds, and ten pounds is ten pounds."

One year, while they were at the fair, Fred said, "Ethel, I'm 74 years old. If I don't have a ride in that hot air balloon this year, I may never get another chance." As usual Ethel replied, "I know, Fred, but that hot air balloon ride costs ten pounds, and ten pounds is ten pounds."

The pilot happened to overhear them and said, "Listen folks, I'll make you a deal.

I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say a word, I won't charge you anything. But, if you say a single word, then you'll have to pay the ten pounds."

Fred and Ethel agreed, so up they went. The pilot did all kinds of rolls and dives, twists and turns, but not a word was heard. He did all his fancy manoeuvres again, but still not a word.

When they finally landed, the pilot turned to Fred and said, "Gosh, I did everything I could think of to get you to yell out, and yet you never said a word."

"Well," Fred replied, "I was going to say something when Ethel fell out, but ten pounds is ten pounds."

ooOOoo

### **The flock of Sheep**

A blonde was really tired of being made fun of, so she decided to dye her hair so she would look like a brunette. When she had brown hair, she decided to take a drive in the country.

After she had been driving for a while, she saw a farmer and a flock of sheep and thought, "Oh! Those sheep are so adorable, I'd really like to have one".

She got out and walked over to the farmer and said, "If I can guess how many sheep you have, can I take one home?"

The farmer, being a bit of a gambler himself, said she could have a try.

The blonde looked at the flock and guessed, "157."

The farmer was amazed – she was right! So the blonde, (who looked like a brunette), picked one out and got back into her car with it.

However, before she drove off, the farmer walked up to her and said

"If I can guess the real colour of your hair, can I have my dog back?"

## **A MESSAGE FROM EBENEZER APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

We all need the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you are as intrigued as I am about the jewels within the pages of the Bible, I would like to welcome you to one of our services at Ebenezer. Each Sunday we have Morning Praise at 10.30 a.m. and a Gospel Service at 5.00 p.m. Find us at Halfway on the Talley Road between Llandeilo and Talley. Post code – SA19 7YA.

Angie Davies

### **“Ebenezer Evergreen Club”**



Are you feeling lonely and in need of companionship?  
Would you like to feel refreshed and uplifted?

Come along to our fortnightly coffee morning  
(10.30 am to 12 noon), held in the hall of Ebenezer Church,  
Halfway, (near Talley) SA9 7YH.

We have quizzes and sometimes a song, or two,  
and we also discuss interesting topics.

There are no charges and refreshments will be provided.  
A warm welcome awaits you.

Coffee mornings will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 26<sup>th</sup> July  
9<sup>th</sup> August, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 6<sup>th</sup> September  
and fortnightly after that.

**Further information from Eric and Diana on 01269 593214**

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## **TALLEY'S GOT TALENT      14th May 2016**

WHAT A NIGHT! A great audience, wonderful weather, great acts, a keg of Jacobi beer, Raspberry Cocktails and a fantastic BBQ with Talley sausages – what more could you ask for on a Saturday evening?

Saturday night started with a lovely evening outside in the sunshine with waitress bar service, face painting and a barbecue serving sausages from 3 miles away.

Ian took to the stage at 7pm as our MC with a musical talent, he played a few tunes on his guitar and then welcomed the other acts to the stage. As the evening went on many people performed including Ruby and Clare on their clarinets, Huw playing the guitar, Tom and Bryn with their wonderful magic tricks, Seren and Ella singing a song by Lukas Graham, Kieran playing the piano, Tristan and Caitlyn singing, a short play by the Teatime Thespians and Richard and Rowan's sketch about the teachers.



Clara had taught the school children (and some of the parents) three songs which included Dumela, Diggedy Dog and Never Doubt, which was sung in rounds; all of these went down really well. The evening finished with a special performance from the 'Nice Girls' singing (well, not really singing) Wannabe by the Spice Girls, they had all the moves!!

All proceeds of the evening went to Talley School PTA, to pay for school trips and extra equipment to help the children in their lessons. After ticket sales, bar and BBQ takings and very generous donation over £600 profit was made. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening such a success – Dani, Clare, Lola, Sam, Ian, Tanya, Laura, Angie and everyone else who helped in any way.

Thank you all who came and supported the school and getting thinking what you could do next year!

Angie Hastilow

## THE BRIGHT YELLOW HELICOPTER FLYING IN OUR VALLEY



On Tuesday 3 May a bright yellow helicopter with “ELECTRICITY” in large letters on the side flew low through the village, looking and sounding very dramatic as it traced the power lines which criss-cross our valley. As we watched it work I mused on how long helicopters have been used for this work and what I found may surprise villagers.

Helicopters have been used in the UK on electricity power lines since 1963, over 50 years ago, when Western Power Distribution (WPD) undertook its maiden line patrol for the Port of Bristol Authority. But it was a severe winter in 1965 which saw the helicopter’s use in emergencies come to the fore. Conditions were so poor that linesmen and staff were flown into otherwise inaccessible areas where lines had been brought down.

A report published afterwards recognised that the helicopter had many benefits and advantages to offer. Possibly the most valuable of these was the spotting of potential defects, which would not otherwise be seen from a ground level

inspection. The reputation of the helicopter unit spread quickly through the industry and by 1970 the company was working with Midlands Electricity Board and South Wales Electricity Board, and the consortium was then joined by Seeboard with Southern joining in 1988. WPD now owns and operates a fleet of five helicopters from its Helicopter Unit headquarters at Bristol Airport carrying out a range of tasks.

Line Patrolling makes up 70% of their work. As we saw, the helicopter flies just above and to one side of the line. Alongside the pilot, trained observers, using OS maps with overlays showing power lines and installations, report on 40 kinds of faults – ranging from deterioration to damage caused by storms, vandals and woodpeckers.

If the condition is urgent, details are immediately sent to the electricity network control centre. All routine work is plotted onto report maps or stored in a computer system. About 80 to 100 miles of line can be surveyed in a normal five-hour flying day split into two sorties. Two men and a Land Rover would take 10 days to do the same thing.

Although the helicopter we saw did not have one, they can be fitted with a forward looking infra-red electronic camera which is used to detect hot spot faults. This technique can also show heat coming from buildings to measure how energy efficient they are. The camera system also gives advance warning of potential faults, helping to improve fault records, and ensures that WPD preventative maintenance is effective.

It is in emergencies that helicopters can be used most effectively. The Unit has a great deal of experience in adapting to all kinds of emergency conditions. Some of the many tasks undertaken include detailed inspection, transporting work teams and equipment to difficult sites, lifting and construction. Their contribution has often been a major factor in restoring electricity supplies as quickly as possible. And here is a scary thought, in the USA helicopters will “dangle” a technician, in a special “Faraday” suit, to work on power lines while they are live! WPD tell us they do not do this, which must be a relief to all involved!

My thanks to Western Power Distribution Helicopter Unit for their help in preparing this article.

Wyn Edwards

## THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER PARTY

Each year the Editor of *Y Llychau* sends out invitations to all those people who had contributed an article for the newsletter or had supported it in some other way. This year the Party (described by the editor as “Cheese, Wine & Nibbles”) was on Saturday 21st May.

Despite the damp weather over two dozen people travelled to St Michael’s Church Hall in Talley to see what the editor had provided for us this year. As usual we were not disappointed. There was a wonderful spread of warm and cold snacks for us to enjoy as we supped our glasses of wine (or soft drink for those who had to drive home afterwards).

During the afternoon we had the opportunity to chat to old friends and to meet new people. Although some had only come from Talley and Cwmdru other party goers had travelled from elsewhere in Carmarthenshire, Cumbria and Surrey to be there. Unfortunately, some of those who regularly attend these functions were not able to be with us on this occasion. The most noticeable absentee was Mr John Walford, who is recovering at home from a heart attack. He was sadly missed and all of those present wish him a speedy recovery. We hope to see him with us at next year’s function.

As the party progressed, our host continued to pass from table to table with plates of nibbles that he insisted we had to finish before he would allow us to leave. Just when we thought we had emptied all the plates, he uncovered a further supply of goodies – Jaffa cakes, chocolate clusters, biscuits and mini Swiss rolls – which he insisted we should all try.

The afternoon drew to a close as we drank cups of tea and coffee, while the mountain of plates and dishes were being washed. In all it was a very enjoyable event. Mair Molteno thanked Roger for organising the party and expressed the gratitude of everyone present for the hard work he does as editor of the newsletter. She encouraged those present to help him out by writing more articles for him to publish.

With our tummies replete and our thirst assuaged, we departed, leaving our editor to finish the washing up and clear away the tables and chairs.

Someone who was there

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## INFORMATION ON THE AGES FOR MARRIAGE



For all those who are researching their family trees, the following might be of interest.

- From 29 September 1653, the legal age for marriage was fixed at 16 for a man and 14 for a woman.
- The law was changed in 1660 and the ages of marriage reverted to 14 for the groom and 12 for the bride.
- The Marriage Act of 1753, made it illegal for those in England under the age of 21 to get married without the consent of their parents or guardians.
- However, the consent requirement was repealed and replaced in July 1822, therefore, from 1823 the age at which a couple could undergo a valid marriage, without parental consent, reverted to 14 for boys and 12 for girls.
- When the 1929 Age of Marriage Act was passed, all marriages were made void from 10 May 1929, if either partner was under the age of 16.
- Currently in the UK the minimum age at which a couple can marry is 16, but permission from the parents or guardians is required if they are under the age of 18.

Sharon Meek

## MY FAMILY AND OTHER CREATURES

I do not care for dogs. If it were not that I have no wish to offend my readers I should be tempted to couch that statement in stronger terms. Many moons ago when I was quite small, my father, acting out a childhood fantasy, acquired a young Alsatian he was pleased to call Caesar. True to the impulse that had occasioned this wanton act, he then abandoned the unfortunate animal to the care of my reluctant, harassed and newly pregnant mother.

In due course Caesar, unlamented, save perhaps by my father, was passed along to a land-owning family of our distant acquaintance where I am certain he was much happier and we, by what manner I have no notion, took possession of a demented black Labrador who came complete with the name Sally. Perhaps the name put my father off, for he had even less truck with this animal and my mother, now saddled with a new baby and a grandmother ostensibly on hand to 'help', was once again faced with re-homing the creature.

I don't recall Sally's fate but, sadly the grandmother remained. Given the choice, I should have preferred to keep the dog. If Sally was generally deemed demented, then my grandmother was definitely certifiable and in time was also re-homed. It is an oft quoted truism in our house that my mother's family, though nominally sane, rarely made it through life with a single working organ to their name, whereas my father's family were indestructible but quite frankly bonkers. Come world's end there will be will be cockroaches and Shawes vying for supremacy – and my money's on the latter.

Although we avoided live-in dogs thereafter, we were exposed to a whole raft of relatives and friends who indulged in canine ownership, from dotty aunts with malodorous lap-dogs burdened with cringe-making monikers like Tiggy and Sugar to my best friend's horrendous hounds whose howling and moaning could be heard in the school-yard several streets away.

Despite his dog fantasy, my youthful father had a much loved moggy known as Bidy whom he always claimed was a particularly skilled and malevolent familiar so he raised no objections when, during our sojourn in Egypt, we collected an army of feral pussies in the vicinity of our suburban villa much to the alarm and annoyance of our neighbours. There was also George.

George was as feral as any of the cats, given that he was a dog of sorts. He appeared one day on the path leading to our villa, menacing all comers, Egyptians and Europeans alike, and hurling himself at any naked calves that came his way. Heloise, our feral matriarch, was as down on dogs as George was

on humans and used to lie in wait when the herders drove their goats along the swathe of greenery between the streets of Heliopolis to launch herself like a small, ratty ground-to-air missile at any mangy herder dog in reach, landing four-square with extended claws on their unsuspecting backs.

My home in Wales is *full* of suspect livestock. There are wood mice in the walls, bats in the roof, various obnoxious crawling things to be found in every aperture, birds hurling themselves at the window-glass and a garden full of verminous squirrels, slithery grass-snakes, frogs snails, slugs and enough sundry ingredients to keep Macbeth's three witches fully stocked for a lifetime.

We even have a ghost which lurks in a dim corner of the hallway and creeps up on my sister during early evening cooking sessions. I wouldn't think anything of this phenomenon, seeing it never bothers me, but for the fact that it does live directly beneath the porch room where the midnight bells persistently ring out to mark Catholic feast days. Also, although I am known to take after my paternal relatives, my sister most assuredly does not.

S Shawe

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## **DID YOU KNOW?**

A feral cat is a cat that has been born in the wild or has not had human interaction for a significant period of time and is, therefore, self-sufficient.

There is some disagreement over exactly what classifies a cat as feral, but veterinary surgeons tend to use factors such as the cat's levels of socialisation and comfort with humans, and whether it is owned, kept confined or dependent on humans for survival to determine whether a cat is feral or not.

Feral cats are usually considered to be distinct from stray cats, which are domesticated animals that no longer live in people's homes, but could potentially be reintroduced successfully.

Other terms used to describe a feral cat are free-roaming, street or community cat. In some parts of America, feral cats are referred to as alley cats.

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# Talley School

## Playground Garden Project



Ysgol Gynradd Talylychau are looking for donations of

- Pots & Planters
- Paints
- Seeds, Seedlings and plants

We are starting an after school gardening club for the children (along with parents) to get involved in a spot of gardening and help transform our playground.

## ROCKET SCIENCE

## GWYDDONIAETH ROCED



Talley CP School have been very busy planting rocket seeds that have spent a period in space. The KS2 children will be measuring the growth of the space seeds against rocket seeds that have remained on Earth. This experiment, lasting 6 weeks, is being undertaken throughout schools in Britain.

Mae Ysgol Talylychau wedi bod yn brysur iawn yn plannu hadau roced sydd wedi treilio cyfnod yn y gofod. Bydd plant CA2 yn mesur tyfiant yr hadau yn erbyn hadau sydd heb fod i'r gofod. Mae hyn yn arbrawf, sy'n para 6 wythnos, ar draws ysgolion Prydain.



## SPORTS KIT

## CIT CHWARAEON



Talley School show of their brand new sports kit. Many thanks to Toppers Wales for their kind donation.

Mae Ysgol Talylychau wedi bod yn digon ffodus i gael cit chwaraeon newydd. Hoffwyd diolch i Toppers Wales am ei rhodd caredig.

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## A VIEW FROM THE CAB:

### Episode Two: The Mysterious Orient.

I described in the previous episode how a desire to see more of Britain led to an HGV Licence. So, "Have Licence – Will Travel!" was my motto and when a friend who was studying at The University of East Anglia wrote to say that there were regular adverts for lorry drivers in the local papers, I pointed my Morris van in the direction of the Far East. The first hundred miles of travel through the rolling pastures of the midlands was unremarkable but as the landscape became flatter I became increasingly uneasy. I might have been on the Serengeti of Africa, so alien was this moonscape of ploughed land, devoid of any fencing, stretching away into the far distance. Huge flocks of exotic birds, which I later learnt were Lapwings, wheeled screeching above the furrows and I realised with a shock of misgiving that I hadn't seen a cow for 50 miles!

Arrival in the capital of Norfolk, which I soon learnt to call “Nawch”, did nothing to dispel the sense of foreignness. The inhabitants – having apparently elected to dispense with the use of consonants – were pretty much unintelligible and always seemed to answer a simple question with another one. In response to a request for directions they would say “Do ya wan terr righ, a terr leff, donch ya?”

Nevertheless they were a friendly bunch and I soon found myself driving a tipper around Norfolk carrying anything that came out of a hole in the ground and anything that would go in one. Thus it was that one day, loaded with building

rubble, I was directed to reverse across a field to the edge of an old quarry which the farmer was back filling. I was still some distance from the edge of the pit when I suddenly found myself staring straight up at the sky. Climbing out of the now vertical vehicle, I clambered to the surface by climbing a vast Elm which had been bulldozed over the edge of the quarry and covered with a thin layer of soil. It took nearly a week for a combination of earth movers to haul my poor wagon out.



Although enjoying the easy life of a tipper driver, I wanted to see more of the country, so I took a job driving an artic for a local businessman, Jack Shewring, who had diversified from pig farming into the fabrication of agricultural buildings. Much of my time was spent trying to satisfy the voracious appetites of his large herd of pigs. If lucky, then there would be a bulk load of corn augured straight off the farm into my tipping trailer. Mostly, however, the feed was collected bagged and the bags varied from back-breaking 12 stone (75kg) hessian sacks to heart-breaking half-hundredweight (25kg) paper bags. In either case the sacks came down a chute onto a loading bay and then the driver was required to walk the length of the trailer to stack it. The 12 stone bags were hard but at least the job was over fairly quickly. In loading 12 tonne of the half-hundredweight sacks one walked the equivalent of nearly four miles, picking up and dropping a sack every 15 yards.

Another of Jack’s sidelines was the importation of Dania Combines through Felixstowe Docks. When the boat docked I would run down to collect the combines by driving them off a ramp onto the trailer. This was a fairly scary activity as the outside of the drive wheels were wider than the bed of the trailer

so extreme accuracy was called for especially as the weight hit the trailer and it suddenly dipped a foot. I had great fun, though, taking them round the agricultural shows – the Royal English at Stoneleigh, the Bath & West or The East of England

– but I got into trouble one day with a routine delivery to Ivybridge in Devon. I had instructions to take a D101 to the dealer there and, happy to be going on a long trip, I popped it on and set off. All was well until, having unloaded the machine at Ivybridge the manager, looking up from signing the delivery note, frowned and said “that’s a D100 – not a 101.” In vain I tried to persuade



him to paint out the offending ‘0’ and substitute it with a nice new ‘1’. There was nothing for it but to throw the log book out of the window and hightail it back the 350 miles to Norwich, swop the machines over, nod apologetically to Jack who was stamping and cursing above the roar of the engines and head back to Devon.

Surprisingly, Jack had cooled down by the time I arrived back at the yard and sent me off for a nice relaxing load of apples for Covent Garden. This was always a very interesting trip because the fruit market, which was designed for horse and cart traffic was tucked at the back of the Opera House right in the centre of London and delivering late at night it was necessary to inch the lorry past rows of limousines collecting people in evening dress. The market had its own policemen, dressed in a strange Victorian uniform – all brass buttons and braid, who were called beadles.

One night, when I had taken a girlfriend down to see the sights and we were waiting to unload in the press and throng of the market, a beadle swiftly opened the passenger door and slid a tray of peaches – which were then quite a delicacy – into the footwell. I assumed that this was a gesture of admiration for my friend’s beauty but as we drove out of the market our beadle held up an imperious hand, opened the passenger door and, in one smooth movement slid the box of peaches into his sentry box. He winked, “Ta Love” – and slammed the door shut. That’s Cockneys for you!

Well, I enjoyed working for Jack but Englishmen can suffer from hiraeth too so, after a couple of years, I headed back to the West Country where a drop of scrumpy and a lungfull of the sweet odour of cowdung awaited....

Mynydd Du

## **BACK IN TALLEY**

As many of you may have noticed, the extensive works to Alma have eventually been completed. We are so pleased to have kept the house and now be able to stay there again.

My parents, Jack and Marion Morgan, moved into Alma in 1978 when they retired from teaching in Birmingham. They had always intended to come back to Wales and although they were born in Merthyr Tydfil and Dowlais respectively, both sets of ancestors came originally from nearby in Carmarthenshire.

They adored Talley and were made to feel so welcome. They soon became involved in numerous activities in the village where they formed strong and enduring friendships.

Following my mother's death, after 17 very happy years in Talley, my father continued to live here for another 18 years until his death in 2013. We would like to thank all those people in the village who helped make their retirement and latter years here so enjoyable.

Of course, Talley has changed in some ways since my parents first arrived. Mrs Jones still ran her post office and general shop and there was a thriving pub, where my father and husband spent numerous convivial evenings.

They are no longer open, but thankfully our neighbours, Alan and Margo Bailey, still take orders over the phone to deliver groceries and meat from their family shops in Llangadog to homes in Talley – which is a wonderful service and without which my father would not have been able to continue to live independently until he passed away at the age of 93.

During the last 35 years my husband and I and our three sons have spent so many happy times here in Talley. We are so pleased to be able to continue our association with this lovely village.

Jan MacAulay

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## ROAD TAX

I recently received a reminder to renew the vehicle tax on my car. This got me to thinking about the history of this tax. It is often assumed today that 'road tax' pays for the maintenance of Britain's road system. It does not. In fact, it is general and local taxation that pays for our roads. Proceeds from today's Vehicle Excise Duty – a tax on vehicles, not a payment for the use of roads – goes into the 'Consolidated Fund', the general coffers of the Treasury.

In late medieval times, tolls or turnpikes were created for the use of a specific length of road or bridge. Anyone using them had to pay and the money was allegedly used for the upkeep of the road – the first 'road tax'. Vehicular taxation was not introduced in Great Britain until 1637, when Hackney cabs were licenced. Nearly a century later, in 1747, all horse-drawn carriages that used two or more horses attracted a similar annual tax or licence. The first tax on mechanically-propelled vehicles followed in 1770. However, these machines were steam-powered and were never used in vast numbers, largely due to their inefficiency and the rough nature of the roads at that time.

By 1861, the Locomotive Acts controlled the taxation of vehicles on British roads. At this stage, the administration was via the local county offices, a system that was to remain right up until 1974. The second Locomotive Act (in 1865) created the infamous 4 mph speed limit and the requirement that a man walked in front with a red flag! It was around this time that the term 'keeper' came into use, rather than 'owner', a term still in use today. Owners of a steam vehicle or a coach and four needed to purchase an annual licence at a cost of two guineas for each vehicle, but it was only valid in the county where it was issued. A separate licence was required for each county in which the vehicle was to be used. However, the system was difficult to enforce – number plates did not exist and there was no law mandating evidence of payment to be displayed.

Following the introduction of the moto car, the 1896 Locomotive and Highways Act was generally more friendly to the driver, enabling more popular light motor vehicles to be used – vehicles under 3 tons were exempted from the legislation requiring the man with the red flag and the speed limit was raised to 14 mph, although this was later reduced to 12 mph. However, other regulations followed, such as passing on-coming traffic on the left and keeping to the right when overtaking. In addition, the driver was required to stop at the instruction of a police officer or any person 'in charge of a restive horse'.

Although an increasing number of motor and steam-powered road vehicles began to use our roads, the first legislation to refer to motor cars by name was

the Motor Car Act of 1903. It introduced number plates to identify individual cars on the road and made County Councils and County Borough Councils the Registration and Licencing Authorities. The 1903 Act also set the annual registration fee at £1 for a car and 5/- for a motorcycle and imposed a 20 mph speed limit. The Act also introduced fines for driving unlicensed vehicles, speeding and reckless driving.

In 1909, Lloyd George's famous 'People's Budget' introduced a 'Road Tax' to be paid by motorists and to be spent on roads. The money raised went into a 'Road Fund', which was administered by a 'Road Board'. Lloyd George introduced a graduated tax on cars, based on their horsepower, together with a tax on imported oil and a duty of 3d per gallon on petrol. The Royal Automobile Club (RAC) had been founded in 1897 and it was asked to produce a formula for calculating the horsepower (HP) of cars for use by the Act. The RAC formula they provided was  $HP = (D^2 \times n)/2.5$  where D = the diameter of the pistons and n = the number of cylinders.

The 'People's Budget' meant that motorists had to pay an annual amount into the new Road Fund, but Lloyd George gave a pledge to motorists: the Road Fund money would be ring-fenced, to be spent only on road maintenance projects. This ring-fencing was deeply opposed by the Treasury and by Customs & Excise officials.

The Road Board, created by the Development and Road Improvements Bill 1909, gave grants from the fund to local authorities to repair roads damaged by motorists. Even in the early days of motoring, the **provision** of roads was mostly paid for by general and local taxation but their **repair** was considered the responsibility of the motorist. Paying Road Fund dues was never a fee for using a road, it was money to be paid out to local authorities to mend the damage done to roads by motorists – "power to build new roads" was only a secondary consideration. No new roads were ever built by the Board and it sponsored few major improvements; much the largest part of its grants (over 90%) went towards small scale improvements to road surfaces.

During the Great War, motor vehicle use continued to expand. This had an increasing adverse effect on the condition of Britain's roads, which led, in 1919, to a Royal Commission being set up to review the situation and make appropriate recommendations. This Commission was the parent of the Road Traffic Acts of 1919 and 1920.

In 1919 the Ministry of Transport was created with a Roads Department. The Road Board thus became superfluous and was disbanded. However, the Road

Fund continued to exist, but not for much longer. The Treasury had never been happy with the ring-fenced Road Fund and constantly plotted against it. In 1921 a Treasury memo stated “The Chancellor will probably not wish to raise this controversy at the present moment, but at the same time he may think it well to give no further encouragement to the theory that motor taxes must be spent only on roads.” The Ministry of Transport was opposed to going back on Lloyd George’s 1909 pledge to motorists but the Chancellor saw the need for the pledge to be superseded at some point.

By 1925, the Treasury was preparing the way for scrapping ring-fencing. In 1927, the Treasury noted that the main supporters of the Road Fund were private motoring organisations who wanted road improvements not for the good of the country but for motorists to drive faster: “it is clearly absurd that the State should be asked to provide large and ever-increasing sums for what are virtually pleasure racing tracks.” That same year the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, removed the ring-fence and increased the car tax from the flat rate of £1 to £1 per horsepower, so that larger vehicles paid more than smaller ones. (This remained unchanged until 1948). Churchill and his Treasury mandarins also felt they were entitled to take £7m from the Road Fund because the Treasury had given the Fund a grant of £8.25m when it was first set up. The budget of that year authorised the first of Churchill’s two ‘raids’ on the Road Fund. It was the beginning of the end for the Fund. The whole of the Road Fund’s £12m was gradually absorbed into national coffers (it took until 1937 for the Road Fund to be emptied; but it limped on, in name only, until the 1950s).

The UK’s road building programme between the two World Wars was not paid for by motorists alone. In 1929 the Government authorised a £28m programme for an extension of the trunk roads programme and a further £27.5m on a five-year programme for classified roads. Newly built roads were paid for by general taxation, not from ‘road tax’.

Today, we have Graduated Vehicle Excise Duty, a tax on motorised emissions of carbon dioxide. In fact, this is similar to when the tax was introduced in 1921 when cars with greater horsepower paid more. Then as now, roads are expensive to build and maintain: motorists have never paid the full costs of the tarmac they drive on and have always been subsidised to drive. Even in 1907, two years before the creation of the Road Fund, motorists had forgotten about the debt they owed to prehistoric track builders, such as the Romans, the Turnpike Trusts and even bicyclists (the Cyclists’ Touring Club and National Cyclists’ Union had created the ‘Roads Improvement Association’ in 1886). Before even one road had been built with motorcars in mind, car drivers assumed the mantle of overlords of the road.

In 1921 the tax disc was introduced. This circular piece of paper had to be displayed on the front windscreen of cars to show that the appropriate tax had been paid. From 1923 until 1938 these road tax discs had security background text which read ROAD FUND LICENCE. In 1939 the tiny text was replaced by MECHANICALLY PROPELLED VEHICLE LICENCE. The requirement to display a tax disc was removed in October 2014, when a new electronic system was introduced.

The earliest tax discs came on white paper (1921 – 1922), but it wasn't long before it was realised that the constabulary needed an easier way to spot untaxed vehicles from a distance. So, in 1923 a vertical green stripe was added. The tax discs' colour band (vertical, horizontal, diagonal or cross) changed annually, but the discs always expired in December. Needless to say this caused a flood of work in Post Offices across the country in January each year when most people visited them to renew.

Another change to the tax disc came in 1938 when perforations were introduced to make it easier to detach for display. However, there were no perforations between 1942 and 1952 as a result of war damage to the machinery that made the discs. In 1957 the disc was completely redesigned. The coloured disc was given a wide white band running across it broken up with details about the HP/engine capacity, the unladen weight and the tax cost. The final disc design was introduced in 1961. Only the vehicle's registration number, classification and make were shown along with the number of months the disc was valid for and its cost. This disc was now fully coloured with various faded sections and the expiry month and year shown very prominently. Every four years, when the brown discs came round, there were stories of Guinness bottle labels being used in place of them.

Even though the Road Fund had ceased by 1937, motor vehicle log-books continued to use the term. The RF60 (RF for Road Fund) log-books were issued by local authorities; although some changed the designation to VE60 (for Vehicle Excise) others did not. RF60 and VE60 log-books were finally phased out in 1977 when the newly-created Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) took over the registration of vehicles.

Nowadays, the correct name for the amount payable to tax a car is Vehicle Excise Duty. However, people commonly still think of it as 'car tax' because 'road tax' carries with it the whiff of 'road ownership' and has caused unnecessary conflict in the past between road users, all of whom have equal rights to use our roads.

Roger Pike

## THE NEWSLETTER

*Y Llychau* is published on behalf of the congregation of St Michael & All Angels, Talley, for the benefit of all local residents. Although sponsored by the church, the newsletter is intended to address the needs of the whole community and not just those of the church congregation.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain sufficient articles to include in the Newsletter. However, perhaps as a result of my persistent badgering, on this occasion I am pleased to report that not only did I receive enough contributions to fill this issue, but there were two others which I have had to hold over until the next issue. A heartfelt "Thank You" to all those who sent me an article.

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## THE NEXT ISSUE

Intended Publication Date – **Thursday 1st September 2016**

Copy Dates – Please submit all items for inclusion in the next issue  
**as soon as possible & BEFORE the dates below**

For contributions written in English or Welsh that require translating  
**Friday 22nd July 2016** (to allow time for translation)

For contributions written in either language (English **and/or** Welsh) that  
do not need to be translated  
**Friday 29th July 2016**