

Y Llychau

A NEWSLETTER FOR TALLEY & THE SURROUNDING AREA

www.talley.org.uk/y-llychau

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THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

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.

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

THE EDITOR WRITES

Welcome to the 61st edition of the Talley newsletter. With this issue we start our eleventh year of publication; an achievement that few thought would happen when the first copy was produced. I have been the “editor” of the Newsletter from the start and I must say that (on the whole) it has been a very enjoyable and satisfying experience. I hope that some of you readers will feel that my efforts have helped produce a worthwhile publication.

I apologise for the fact that this Newsletter contains slightly fewer pages than normal. This is due to the fact that insufficient contributions have been received to fill the usual 40 pages. I have written a few pieces myself to “pad out” this issue, but I feel that future issues would be of more interest to readers if more of them were to compose more articles for me to put in. It is not that difficult to write something, so please give serious consideration to putting pen to paper and giving it a go.

Although editing *Y Llychau* is generally a very pleasant thing to do, there is one task that falls to me that I do not find particularly agreeable. Annually, in the last Newsletter of each year, I have to remind readers of the ever increasing costs associated with producing and distributing *Y Llychau*. Regrettably, that time has come around again.

Those who receive their newsletters through the post have already been asked for a contribution towards the cost of the stamps and envelopes involved. While this financial assistance is very welcome, it does not cover all the expenses involved in producing *Y Llychau*.

I am, therefore, asking those readers in the Talley area who have their copies delivered to their home or who collect them from their church or chapel or from the Post Office in Cwmdy, to consider making a contribution as well. I apologise for having to do this each year, but without doing so it is doubtful that Talley Church finances will be able to support the Newsletter for much longer. I appreciate that not all readers are in a position to make a financial donation so please be assured that *Y Llychau* will continue to be available, whether they contribute or not, for as long as we can afford to produce it. Should you wish to make a donation, please send it to me (contact details are on the back page). Cheques should be made payable to Talley PCC.

Some readers have already made a contribution this year and to those I say a heartfelt “Thank You”.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and hope that some of you will use the holiday period to write an article for the January edition. I look forward to receiving so many contributions than I won't know what to do with them all.

Roger Pike

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UNDER THE COUNTER

News from the Cwmdu Shop and Post Office:

You might know that the Cwmdu shop has a large stock of staple foods at prices which often compare very favourably with local supermarkets but did you know that it supports a number of local artisan producers who offer a mouth-watering array of delicacies?

Sarah's Welsh Cakes & Bara Brith, baked just up the road, are eagerly awaited and snapped up soon after delivery. She's increasing production just to keep up with the demand so I, for one, won't have to rush down when the word gets out that another batch is in.

On Tuesday, Dewi Roberts brings in an array of sausages, burgers, bacon, ham and Scotch Eggs. He also provides us with a supply of fish delivered to order.

The Cwmdu Inn is famous for its award-winning pies, made by Huw Evans. These won the Cwmdu Pie Championship against all comers and are now a permanent offering with your evening pint. Now, by public demand, they are available for purchase in the shop. Eating them at home with a can of lager won't be the real experience but it's the next best thing!

We are very lucky to have milk,

DAN Y COWNTER

Newyddion o Siop a Swyddfa Bost Cwmdu:

'Rwy'n siwr eich bod yn gwybod bod gan siop Cwmdu gyflenwad sylweddol o fwydydd sylfaenol am brisiau sy'n cymharu'n ffafriol iawn gydag archfarchnadoedd ond a oeddech yn gwybod ei bod yn cefnogi nifer fawr o gynhyrchwyr arbennigol sy'n cynnig bwydydd hyfryd a blasus dros ben?

Mae bri mawr ar fara brith a phice ar y maen, sy'n cael eu pobi gan Sarah i fyny'r ffordd, a chant eu prynu yn union ar ôl iddynt gyrraedd y siop. Bydd yn coginio rhagor rhagor o deisennau fel na fydd yn rhaid i mi frysio i'r siop pan ddaw'r cyflenwad nesaf.

Ar ddydd Mawrth, daw Dewi Roberts â digonedd o selsig, byrgyrs, cig moch, ham a 'Scotch Eggs'. Mae hefyd yn cyflenwi pysgod trwy archeb. Mae Cwmdu yn enwog am ei peis buddugol sy'n cael eu coginio gan Hugh Evans. Enillodd rhain bencampwriaeth Cwmdu am y peis gorau yn erbyn nifer o gystadleuwyr ac fe'u cynigir yn gyson gyda'ch peint. Erbyn hyn, gan fod cymaint o alw amdanant, maent ar werth yn y siop. Gallwch eu bwyta gartref gyda lager ac er na fydd hyn yn cynnig gwir brofiad bydd bron â bod cystal!

'Rydym yn ffodus o gael llaeth, hufen a menyn a Abergwenlais, Cil y Cwm.

cream and butter from Abergwenlais, Cil y Cwm. They have a herd of pedigree Jerseys – acknowledged to produce the richest, creamiest milk – from which they make their delicious, golden produce.

When you have bought your fill from the grocery then why not turn to the Post Office counter for a cash withdrawal to replenish your wallet? Or, if you are thinking of heading for the continent before the borders are closed then don't forget that Euros are always available with other currencies the next day.

Free parking, friendly staff, a cup of coffee, a bit of gossip – what more do you want?

Come in and see us soon!

Peter Mitchell

Mae ganddynt fuches pedigri Jersey sy'n rhoi'r llaeth cyfoethocaf llawn hufen a gyda'r llaeth hwn gwnânt eu cynnyrch blasus euraid.

Ar ôl i chwi brynu'n helaeth o'r bwydydd pam na throwch chi at gownter y Swyddfa Bost i dynnu arian i lenwi eich waled? Neu, os ydych yn bwriadu teithio i'r cyfandir cyn bod y ffiniau'n cau, yna peidiwch ag anghofio bod yr Euros ar gael ynghyd ag arian ar gyfer gwledydd eraill y diwrnod nesaf.

Parcio am ddim, staff cyfeillgar, cwpanaid o goffi ac ychydig o storïau – beth arall sydd ei angen arnoch?

Galwch heibio i'n gweld cyn bo hir!

Peter Mitchell

(Kindly translated by Janet James)

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, introduced the custom of decorating a Christmas tree to Britain, although it is also claimed that saint Boniface who lived during the eighth century was responsible. The saint went to Germany to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and as he was walking through the woods on a cold December day he came across

COEDEN NADOLIG

Dyledus ydym i'r Tywysog Albert, priod y Frenhines Victoria am gyflwyno'r arfer o addurno coeden Nadolig i Brydain, er yn wir dywed chwedloniaeth o'r wythfed ganrif mai sant o'r enw Boniface oedd yn gyfrifol. Aeth y sant allan i'r Almaen i ledaenu Efengyl Iesu Grist ac wrth gerdded trwy goedwig yn oerfel mis Rhagfyr daeth ar draws twr o bobl yn

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a group of people standing under an oak tree worshipping and preparing to sacrifice a young boy to their pagan god. Boniface rushed towards them and saved the boy's life. He felled the tree with an axe and immediately noticed a young fir tree growing behind it. The saint told them that the small tree would be a sacred symbol for these reasons.

Firstly, because it was a tree of peace which was used to build their homes; secondly, it was a sign of eternal life as its leaves were evergreen; thirdly, it points towards heaven. With the passage of time, the tree became a symbol of the festival of the birth of Jesus. Evergreen trees as well as mistletoe, holly and ivy were important in pagan festivals as they bore leaves and berries throughout the winter. Christians, therefore, used the trees and gave them a Christian meaning.

In Norway, Sweden and Denmark the holly is used as Christmas decorations in homes, where the tree is considered to be the thorn of Christ commemorating his death, the spines being the crown of thorns and the berries the blood of Christ. The word holly probably stems from this idea and has given us the word 'holly'.

In Wales we can find a tree in the countryside and they are available in various sizes in garden centres. The carpet is covered in spines within a

sefyll o dan dderwen yn addoli ac yn paratoi aberthu bachgen bach i'w duw paganaidd. Rhuthrodd Boniface atynt ac arbedodd fywyd y bachgen. Torrodd y dderwen i lawr gyda bwyell ac yn union sylwodd y bobl ar goeden pinwydden fechan yn tyfu y tu ol iddi. Eglurodd y sant wrthynt mai arwydd sanctaidd iddynt fyddai'r goeden fechan a hynny am dri rheswm:-

Yn gyntaf, gan mai pren heddwch ydoedd yn cael ei defnyddio i adeiladu eu cartrefi. Yn ail, roedd yn arwydd o fywyd tragwyddol gan fod ei dail yn fytholwyrdd. Yn drydydd, mae'n pwyntio tua'r nefoedd. Gyda threigliad amser daeth y goeden yn symbol o wyl geni'r Iesu. Roedd y coed bytholwyrdd, fel uchelwyrdd, celyn a iorwg, yn bwysig yn y gwyliau paganaidd gan fod arnynt ddail ac aeron drwy'r gaeaf. Defnyddiodd y Cristnogion, felly, y coed, wrth chwilio am ystyr Cristnogol iddynt.

Yng ngwledydd Norwy, Sweden a Denmarc defnyddir y gelynnen i addurno tai adeg y Nadolig, gan gysidro'r goeden fel draenen Crist i gofio'i farwolaeth, y dail pigog yw'r goron ddrain a'r aeron coch yw gwaed Crist. Tebyg yw fod y gair 'holly' yn tarddu o'r syniad hwn ac wedi rhoi i ni y gair (sanctaidd)'holly'.

Yng Nghymru gellir mynd allan i'r wlad i chwilio am goeden ac maent i'w cael mewn canolfannau garddio a

few days, resulting in extra cleaning and watering. Consequently, many people buy artificial trees. The trees are grown on land which is watered regularly to ensure that the soil is always moist. There are hundreds of tree growers in Britain, the most popular tree being the Nordic prize but the popularity of the real tree is uncertain. Adverts for Christmas trees will appear along roadsides at the end of November giving details of the various locations for purchasing trees and, without fail, they will be seen on the road from Llandeilo towards Cwmdru and Talley.

With the current emphasis on protecting the environment, it is possible that the authorities will introduce methods of recycling the trees after Christmas, methods such as chipping the trees to provide weed suppressors.

I take this opportunity of wishing a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year to all readers of Y Llychau.

Hywel Jones

(Kindly translated by Janet James)

modd dewis coeden y maint delfrydol i'r cartref. Y drafferth yw bod y goeden, ymhen dyddiau, yn gollwng y pinnau ar lawr ar garpedi. Golyga hyn waith glanhau a dyfrio, a'r canlyniad yw bod mwy a mwy yn prynu coed ffug sy'n ddi-drafferth. Cynnigir coed o bob lliw fel coed opteg ffeibrau. Tyfir coed ar dir sydd yn cael ei ddyfrio'n rheolaidd i wneud yn siwr na fydd y pridd yn sychu. Mae'n debyg fod cannoedd o dyfwyr coed ym Mhrydain a'r fwyaf poblogaidd yw'r goeden pin Nordmann, ond tybed am ba cyhyd y deil y goeden ei thir. Gallwch weld hysbysebion ar ochr y ffyrdd yn niwedd mis Tachwedd yn rhoi manylion y lleoedd ble y gellir prynu coed Nadolig ac heb eithriad ar y ffordd o Llandeilo tuagat Gwmdru a Thalylychau.

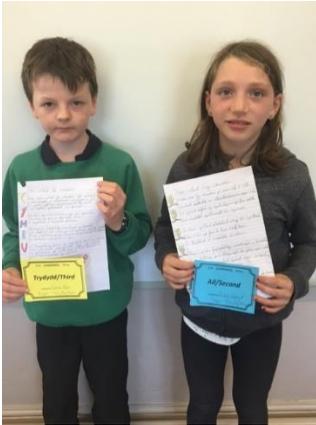
Gyda phwyslais arbennig heddiw ar ddiogelu'r amgylchedd tebyg yw y bydd yr awdurdodau yn canfod modd i'w hail-ddefnyddio i bwrras arall ar ôl Nadolig, fel malurio'r coed Nadolig a'i gosod yn yr ardd i atal chwyn.

Cymeraf y cyfle i ddymuno Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i holl ddarllenwyr Y Llychau.

Hywel Jones

LLANSAWEL SHOW

Pupils of Talley CP School were very busy preparing for Llansawel Show. Isaac Povey won the first prize in creating a birthday card for the Queen, with Ceri Speke in second and Emma Nugent in third. In the writing competition, Ioan Lloyd came second and Ruby Lloyd was third. Also, Frank Speke came third in the art competition, with Annabelle Hill coming second. Congratulations to all the children!



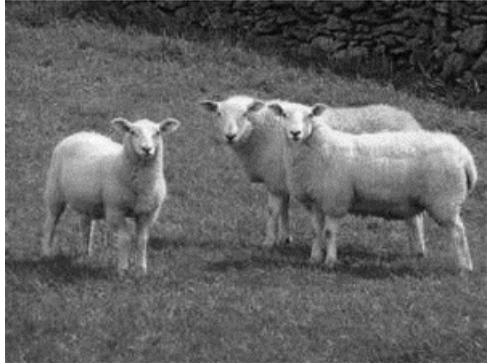
SIOE LLANSAWEL

Buodd disgyblion Ysgol Talylychau yn brysur i baratoi am Sioe Llansawel. Ennillodd Isaac Povey y wobwr gyntaf wrth greu cerdyn i'r Brenhines, gyda Ceri Speke yn ail ac Emma Nugent yn drydydd. Yng nghystadleuaeth ysgrifennu anthem Cymru, daeth Ioan Lloyd yn ail a Ruby Lloyd yn drydydd. Hefyd, daeth Frank Speke yn drydydd yng nghystadleuaeth arlunio, gyda Annabelle Hill yn ail. Llongyfarchiadau i'r plant i gyd!



A MESSAGE FROM EBENEZER APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Ever since I can remember, I have been fascinated by sheep. This could be because I spent my childhood years in Powys where there are a great number of them! I visited the Wonderwool Wales Festival in Builth Wells recently and it is thrilling to think about the journey that wool undertakes from the sheep to the knitted, crocheted or weaved item that we all display in our homes. Pure wool is the world's oldest renewable fibre and is 100% natural.



I hope that you will agree with me when I say that sheep are quiet creatures that graze peacefully in their surroundings, whether it is in a bright green meadow or on the side of a sloping hill. However, like us they can wander away and get lost. It is no wonder then that Jesus liked to look after his sheep and after He had counted his flock, and found that he had one missing, He went to look for the one that was lost.

So it is with us, Jesus does not wish us to be lost anywhere, He wants us to come back to the fold and be with Him. In John 10 Verse 27 Jesus says:- “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” It is never too early to find that pathway that leads to Jesus, the shepherd!

To conclude, we all need the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you are as intrigued as I am about sheep, then I do encourage you to come 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. We have a cup of tea after our evening service and you will be very welcome.

We are based near the villages of Cwmdy and Talley! Post code – SA19 7YA. Further details of our services are available from Pastor Eric Horley on 01269 593214. Please also visit our website <http://www.apostolicchurchcwmdy.co.uk/>

Angie Davies

HENRY SLEPT AT KINGS COURT IN TALLEY ON HIS WAY TO THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

That the future King Henry VII slept at Kings Court has been an oral tradition since Victorian times in Talley. It is backed by the record of a payment of £6 annually from the Royal Exchequer until the disestablishment of the Church in Wales in 1920. The trouble is that there is no definite record that he came. How could it have been true if records show that Henry's army went up the west coast through Cardigan, Llanarth and Aberystwyth? Why would he have come to Talley?



Kings Court

After years of wondering, I think I can now see how and why he may well have come to Talley. It is a tale of two armies trying to communicate, plus Henry's desperate need to gain support, which was not assured in south Wales where Richard III had built strong support.

To use Dylan Thomas, "to begin at the beginning...." Henry landed on 7 August at Mill Bay near Dale, Pembrokeshire with 3000 French troops and some

hundreds of English exiles. He was wary of Richard's army and chose an unconventional route into England via the west coast. Sir Rhys ap Thomas, of Carew Castle, had pledged support to Henry, whilst he was in exile in France. When Henry landed he was still unsure of the support he would gain, especially as Richard had made Rhys Lieutenant in Wales. History is littered with stories of promises which fail to materialise at a crucial time.

On 8 August, Henry's small army left Dale for Haverfordwest and then Cardigan where he arrived on 10 August but there was disappointment that so few came forward to join the army. Meanwhile Rhys ap Thomas rode out from Carmarthen on 7 August with a force of 2000 cavalry, reached Llandovery on 9 August and entered Brecon on 10 August. I understand that the progress of an army and related baggage would have been slow, leaving commanders the opportunity to visit key houses to secure support and more armed men. Unlike today, communications were limited but if you look at a map of Wales you can see that the two armies were closest around 9–10 August. If Henry wanted to know if Rhys's support was real and substantial now was a good time to find out because for the next 5 days big mountain ranges would keep them apart. Talley Abbey would have been no more than 15 miles from the route of Henry's army so would have been a convenient meeting place.

Talley is convenient, but who came? Ignoring the annual payment of £6, there is no record of a meeting. Accounts report that at some point Rhys sent Henry a messenger to ask where he stood if he supported him. Remember that Rhys left Carmarthen on the same day Henry landed. Did Rhys leave, knowing that Henry had left France, but was now unsure of Henry's actual position?

So was the Abbot of Talley an intermediary? Was he able to speak for Rhys and give Henry reassurance that he had the support he wanted? The Abbot is identified as an ardent supporter of Henry's cause and confidential adviser to Rhys, so this could well have been a crucial meeting for Henry. It seems logical but there is no proof. Sadly the more you read of the accounts the more they are confusing. Legend and facts become intertwined. Politics intervenes to alter history. After the Battle of Bosworth, Welsh noble families claimed Henry stayed with them, as a way of positioning themselves in the favour of the new regime.

We do know that Henry and Rhys finally met up at Newtown and the rest, as they say, is history. Henry slept at Kings Court? There are good reasons to think that this may be true but there is still no actual proof.

Wyn Edwards

RECIPE PAGES

FFAGODAU CYMRU

Ffagodau Cymru or Welsh faggots is a traditional dish that is enjoyed throughout Wales but particularly in South and Mid Wales. The meal itself consists of meat off-cuts and offal. The recipe has evolved over time and although it is common for the meat to pork, some Welsh people choose to make faggots using lambs' liver. The traditional way for faggots to be served is with gravy, peas and mashed potatoes but there are numerous modern ways of serving Welsh fagots.

This recipe is reputed to be from the Rhondda.

Ingredients

- 400g (14 oz) pig's liver or minced pork
- 2 large leeks, cleaned and sliced
- 115g (4 oz) fresh breadcrumbs
- fresh sage leaves, finely chopped
- fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper
- 300ml (½ pint) beef stock

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180 C or gas mark 4.
2. Mince the liver and leeks together, preferably in a food processor.
3. Put mixture in a bowl and stir in the breadcrumbs, sage, mint and seasoning to taste.
4. Form the mixture into 12 balls with floured hands and place in a greased, shallow ovenproof dish.
5. Pour the stock into the dish.
6. Cover and bake for about 30 minutes.
7. Uncover and continue cooking for a further 10 minutes or so, to brown the faggots.
8. The remaining gravy may then be thickened.

BANANA LOAF

Mrs Rose Saunders, who was an evacuee in Talley during the war and now lives in London, has sent us the following recipe. She says that it is a good way of using bananas that are a bit over-ripe and that the loaf keeps well. In fact she feels that it is best eaten a few days after it is made with a cup of tea. It tastes particularly good when sliced and spread with a little butter.

Ingredients

- 6 oz (150g) Caster Sugar
- 4 oz (100g) Butter or Margarine
- 8 oz (200g) Self-Raising Flour
- ¼ teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda
- ½ teaspoon Salt
- 2 teaspoons Mixed Spice
- 2 Bananas – peeled and broken into small pieces
- 2 Eggs

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180 C (Gas mark 4)
2. Lightly grease a Loaf Tin
3. Place all ingredients in a bowl and mix until smooth
4. Transfer mixture to the Loaf Tin and smooth the top
5. Bake for about 1½ hours until a skewer pushed into it comes out dry
6. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the Tin
7. Loosen the edges with a knife and invert on to a cooling rack

If you have a favourite recipe that you would like to share with other readers, please sent it to the Editor. (Contact details on the back page).

SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB IN TALLEY MINE 1972-3

When I wrote about Alun Morgan's story (*Y Llychau*, issue 60) of a dog being rescued from the mine I little thought that I would find an account of their time here in 1972-3 but there it was on the website of the South Wales Caving club and it makes for fascinating reading. The "Roger and Elizabeth" whom Alun Morgan remembered in his talk were the Flahertys who lived in Ty Ann Arthur. As members of the South Wales Caving Club, they told the club that they had found an open mine shaft, 150 feet deep and a water filled adit (tunnel) just outside the village. So on August Bank Holiday 1972 the Flahertys, together with Bruce Foster and Peter Francis, set off to explore.

They had discovered the deep water filled adit which ran under the road (which the drawing in my original article does not show), so they decided to lower the water level by digging a trench to let the water out. At the end of a hard day's digging they had created an airspace of just 18 inches, barely enough to give head space to breathe.

The following day they donned wet suits and given buoyancy by the use of car tyre inner tubes they worked their way 470 feet along the tunnel until they found the roof had fallen in. Disheartened they decided to try the mine shaft. They climbed up the mountainside and assembled all of the club's available ladders. They describe securing the ladders at 100 feet, to an old wooden tram (wagon) and exploring one of the levels, which was limited by a rock fall. Bravely they returned to their ladders and descended. They noted that they did not reach the bottom as the shaft contained rubbish and dead sheep.

They went on to Cwmdu to explore some supposed mine workings but found only brambles and boggy ground. Thus their Bank Holiday ended.

In the Spring of 1973 a team returned because a farmer (Aneurin Morgan), who owned land above the mine, had lost his dog down the shaft. Gerry Wolff braved the ladders and found the dog alive at the bottom of the shaft. It was well enough to run away once it was returned to the surface. The team were told they were near a walled-up adit and encouraged to dig it open but they reported that after half a day's work they realised they were looking at a foundation which had support equipment, possibly a crusher.

They returned the next weekend to dig above their previous excavation but despite hard digging found nothing. They concluded that they would not find the adit because the ground was very loose and dangerous to explore without significant shuttering.

All told, a wonderful account of what was probably the last entry to the mine before it was capped.

THE CURIOUS DIP IN THE ROAD

In my original account I described how Sir James Drummond had a trench dug to carry contaminated water from the mine away from the lakes and his fishing. I described how it ran below the lakeside road, below the churchyard and across Plas field before emptying into the Afon Ddu. I checked the available aerial photos to see if anything remained of this in Plas field but found nothing. But then one day I was walking towards the old village and just before the gates to Plas saw the 2 foot wide dip across the road which has dabs of bitumen added to it year on year. I stood and checked. There are no services nearby so what has caused this trench across the road? I think what we have is the point, where Sir James Drummonds mine water was carried under the road. It is likely that the dip we can see is where the pipe has collapsed. I cannot be certain but I cannot think what else might be the cause. Perhaps a reader knows more about this?

Wyn Edwards

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

The Snow Plough

A blonde was driving her car when she became lost in a snowstorm. She didn't panic however, because she remembered what her father had once told her. "If you ever get stuck in a snowstorm, just wait for a snow plough to come along and follow it."

Sure enough, pretty soon a snow plough did come along and she started to follow it. She followed it for about forty-five minutes until finally the driver of the snow plough got out and asked her what she was doing.

She explained that her father had told her if she ever got stuck in a snow storm, to follow a plough. The driver nodded and said, "Well, I've finished clearing Tesco's car park now, do you want to follow me over to Sainsburys?"

Fishing

It was Christmas Eve and an old man was sitting on the pavement outside a pub with a fishing rod dangling into a puddle.

“Poor Old fool,” thought a well-dressed gentleman as he watched the old man for a moment or two. As it was Christmas, he invited the old gent to join him inside the pub for a drink.

As they sipped their whiskeys, the gentleman thought he’d humour the old man and asked, “So how many have you caught today?”

The old man replied, “You’re the eighth.”

POETRY PAGE

One of our readers has sent us this poem by Owen Darnell.

Alzheimer’s Poem

Do not ask me to remember;
Don’t try to make me understand.
Let me rest and know you’re with me,
Kiss my cheek and hold my hand.

I’m confused beyond your concept;
I am sad and sick and lost.
All I know is that I need you
To be with me at all cost.

Do not lose your patience with me.
Do not scold or curse my cry.
I can’t help the way I’m acting,
Can’t be different though I try.

Just remember that I need you;
That the best of me is gone.
Please don’t fail to stand beside me.
Love me ‘til my life is done.

THE CASTLES OF CARMARTHENSHIRE

(part 2)

KIDWELLY CASTLE

In the early 12th century, Roger, bishop of Salisbury and justiciar of England, constructed Kidwelly on a steep ridge overlooking the River Gwendraeth. It was designed by the Normans to secure their new conquest of south Wales. The ridge on the river side meant that the only defence required was a semi-circular bank and ditch on the other side.



The castle fell to the Welsh on a number of occasions in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, including once in 1159 when the Lord Rhys took it and burnt its wooden buildings. He is later rebuilt the castle in 1190, but by 1201 it was back in Norman hands and remained English from then on, despite periodic attacks.

In the mid-13th century the de Chaworth family gained possession and began an extensive rebuilding programme. A new inner ward, set within the outer ward, converted Kidwelly into a strong concentric castle, with two rings of defences. Kidwelly passed by marriage in 1298 to Henry, Earl of Lancaster, who quickly set about upgrading the accommodation to suit his status. The chapel, housed in a projecting tower overlooking the river, was built at this time.

In the early 14th century, the present mighty outer defences were constructed. A stone curtain wall with a wall-walk and series of mural towers was also built. The Great Gatehouse took at least a century to complete and was unfinished at the time of the Welsh siege of 1403 during the Glyndŵr uprising. Despite the fall of the town to the Welsh, the castle remained in the hands of the crown. The 15th-century refurbishment after the damage caused by the siege cost over £500 and it was not until 1422 that the building finally received its lead roof.

The last significant addition to the castle was at the end of the 15th century when a large hall was built on the west of the outer ward with a connecting kitchen within the inner ward. Other buildings were added by Rhys ap Thomas who was

granted the castle by Henry VII. In the early 17th century the judicial court was held in the castle, perhaps in the new hall, but by that time the castle's life as a fortification was over and it played only a minor part in the English Civil War, being so far away from the main action.

LLANSTEFFAN CASTLE

The Norman castle at Llansteffan ("the church of Stephen") originated in the early 12th century. It was built by the Normans on a steep-sided hillock on the site of an earlier Iron Age settlement overlooking the Tywi estuary. The structure was prized not only by the



Normans but also by the rebellious Welsh. In 1146, the princes of Deheubarth captured the castle and held Llansteffan for the next 12 years, when the Normans regained control. In 1189, the Welsh again took the castle, under the direction of the powerful Lord Rhys. Shortly thereafter, it fell into the hands of the crown. Henry II granted the structure to the Norman de Camville family, who refortified the stronghold and maintained control until 1338. During the intervening years, the Welsh targeted Llansteffan, capturing and burning the fortress in 1215 (in a rebellion led by Llywelyn the Great) and again in 1257 (after the English army's devastating defeat at Coed Llathen).

Nevertheless, the de Camvilles kept ownership of the castle despite Welsh attempts to the contrary. Recognising the vulnerability of timber defences, the de Camvilles refortified the castle with stonework in 1192, adding two towers and an outer wall. After the 1215 attack by the Welsh, the Norman overlords added an Inner Gate and a round tower (the keep). After Llywelyn the Last's siege in 1257, the de Camville rebuilding programme incorporated a "castle within a castle", later known as the Upper Ward because it was constructed on a slightly raised platform, accessible only by crossing the more spacious but less congested lower bailey.

In 1338, the last male heir of the de Camville family died and their estates passed,

via the female line, to Robert Penrees. By 1377, the Crown had regained control of Llansteffan Castle, but allowed the Penrees family to continue as custodians. In the early 15th century, the legendary Welsh folk hero, Owain Glyndŵr, threatened English sovereignty and Sir John Penrees was ordered by the king to strengthen the castle. Nevertheless, Glyndŵr's men captured the fortress for a short time, but it was soon back in the hands of the king and in 1495 Jasper Tewdwr received the castle from his nephew.

Llansteffan Castle's most remarkable building is the monumental Great Gatehouse, initiated in the late 13th century. It would have served as an intimidating barrier against siege; a self-sufficient, heavily-defended building which was able to withstand an onslaught of the severest nature. It included two portcullises, heavy double-doors, murder holes, arrow-slits and guardrooms. During the late 15th century, major modifications were made to the Great Gatehouse by Jasper Tewdwr, Henry VII's uncle. The changes were largely decorative and effectively changed the gatehouse from a defensive stronghold to a grand residence, fit for a king. Surprisingly, Jasper allowed the castle to fall into a state of disrepair.

For the next 200 years, Llansteffan Castle continued to be neglected and became a ruin. By the 18th century, the structure had survived as part of a private farm. In the 19th century Llansteffan was revitalised, initially as a spot of historic contemplation for tourists and finally, in the 20th century, as an Ancient Monument in the care of CADW.

CARREG CENNEN CASTLE

Carreg Cennen, located on a private farm a few miles south-east of Llandeilo, is perhaps one of the most spectacularly sited of all Welsh castles. It has a long and eventful history, its ownership having changed hands on numerous occasions.

Although the Lord Rhys, Prince of Deheubarth, may



have built the first castle at Carreg Cennen in the late 12th century, there is evidence that the Romans and prehistoric peoples occupied the craggy hilltop centuries earlier and what remains today dates back to Edward I's period of castle-building in Wales.

One of Lord Rhys' descendants, Rhys Fychan, eventually inherited the castle, but was betrayed by his mother (the Norman Matilda de Braeos) who turned it over to the English. Rhys Fychan regained control of the castle in 1248, but had it taken away from him by his uncle, Maredudd ap Rhys Gryg, and it was then seized in 1277 by Edward I. From that time onwards, the fortress remained in the hands of the English.

The original Welsh stronghold was demolished in the late 13th century and replaced with an impressive stone edifice by John Giffard and his son. Subsequent owners included Hugh le Despenser, John of Gaunt and Henry of Bolingbroke (the future King Henry IV). On Henry's accession, the castle became Crown property. It was besieged during the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr in 1403 when it was considerably damaged.

Despite its ruinous state, the castle was still considered a prize. Later owners included Sir Rhys ap Thomas and the Vaughans from Golden Grove, who left the castle to the Earls of Cawdor in the early 19th century. Although Carreg Cennen was placed under the guardianship of the Office of Works in 1932, the Cawdors continued to own the castle well into the 20th century.

Apparently, in the 1960's Carreg Cennen Castle was acquired by the Morris family of Castell Farm, when Lord Cawdor inadvertently made a mistake in the wording of the deeds and included the castle as part of the farm land that he was selling to them.

Today, the castle is maintained by CADW.

Roger Pike

(To be continued)

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

R	E	L	B	A	T	S	E	R	P
A	A	M	H	T	A	E	R	W	R
T	A	T	B	N	T	A	R	E	E
S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	S
L	A	A	W	E	H	T	R	E	E
L	O	R	A	C	L	S	I	Y	N
C	H	U	R	C	S	U	V	T	T
R	C	U	H	O	L	L	Y	N	S
A	H	M	E	R	R	Y	R	A	S
C	G	N	I	K	C	O	T	S	C

The following words are included above, either forwards, backwards, up, down or diagonally. Can you find them?

CAROL

CHRISTMAS

CHURCH

HOLLY

IVY

LAMB

MERRY

PRESENTS

SANTA

STABLE

STAR

STOCKING

TREE

WREATH

YULE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRITISH MONEY Part 1

Overview

The pound was a unit of account in Anglo-Saxon England, equal to 240 silver pennies and equivalent to one pound weight of silver. It evolved into the modern British currency, the pound sterling. The pound sterling is the world's oldest currency still in use today. Its origins lie in the reign of King Offa of Mercia, (757–796) who introduced the silver penny.

He copied the currency system of Charlemagne's Frankish Empire in which 12 denarius made a solidus, 20 of which made a Libra. In the Mercia system 12 pennies (12d) made up a shilling (1s) and 20 shillings made a pound (1L, which later became £1 using the Latin uppercase L). At this time, the name sterling had yet to be acquired. The penny swiftly spread throughout the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and became the standard coin of what was to become England.

The early pennies were struck from fine silver (as pure as was available). However, in 1158, a new coinage was introduced by Henry II (known as the Tealby penny) which was struck from 92.5% silver. This became the standard until the 20th century and is today known as sterling silver, named after its association with the currency. Sterling silver is harder than the fine silver originally used, so sterling silver coins did not wear down as rapidly.

The English currency was almost exclusively silver until 1344, when the gold noble was introduced into circulation. However, silver remained the legal basis for sterling until 1816. In the reign of Henry IV, the penny was reduced in weight from 21 grains of silver to 15 grains, with a further reduction to 12 grains in 1464.

During the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, the silver coinage was drastically debased. In 1544, silver coinage was issued containing just one third silver and two thirds copper, resulting in coins with a pale copper coloured appearance. Also throughout the Tudor period the size and value of gold coinage fluctuated wildly. In 1663, a new gold coin (the guinea) was introduced. Its value varied considerably until 1717, when it was fixed at 21 shillings.

British merchants sent silver abroad in payments whilst goods for export were paid for with gold. As a consequence, silver flowed out of the country and gold flowed in, leading to a situation where Great Britain was effectively on a gold standard. However, silver was the only commodity accepted by China for exporting goods during this period, so in order to trade with China, Great Britain had to first trade with the other European nations to receive silver, which led to

the East India Company redressing this trade imbalance through the indirect sale of opium to the Chinese.

Silversmiths had always regarded coinage as a source of raw material, already government verified for fineness. As a result, sterling coins were being melted down and fashioned into sterling silverware at an accelerating rate. A 1697 Act of Parliament attempted to stem this tide by raising the minimum acceptable fineness on wrought plate from sterling's 92.5% to a new Britannia silver standard of 95.83%. Product then made solely from melted coins would be found wanting when the silversmith took his wares to the Assay Office, thus discouraging the melting of coins.

The Bank of England was founded in 1694, followed by the Bank of Scotland a year later. Both began to issue paper money. At first the pound Scots had much the same value as the pound sterling, but it suffered far higher devaluation until in the 17th century it was pegged to sterling at a value of 12 pounds Scots = 1 pound sterling.

In 1707, the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland merged to form the Kingdom of Great Britain. In accordance with the Treaty of Union, the currency of Great Britain was sterling, with the pound Scots soon being replaced by sterling at the pegged value.

In 1801, Great Britain and the Kingdom of Ireland were united to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. However, the Irish pound continued to exist and was not replaced by sterling until January 1826. The conversion rate had long been thirteen Irish pounds to twelve pounds sterling.

Until decimalisation, amounts were stated in pounds, shillings, and pence. It was customary to specify some prices (for example professional fees and auction prices for works of art) in guineas although guinea coins were no longer in use.

On 15 February 1971, the UK decimalised its currency, replacing the shilling and penny with a single subdivision. One pound would have 100 new pennies and new coins were introduced, including a new half-penny, although this was soon discontinued. The word "new" was omitted from coins made after 1981 and two years later the paper pound note was replaced with a new pound coin. This circular pound coin will be replaced in 2017 by a 12-sided coin, thought to be more difficult to counterfeit.

In 1998 a new two pound coin was also introduced into circulation and in 2017 the paper £5 notes will be replaced with notes made of plastic.

The Royal Mint

The minting of coins began in Britain around the end of the second century BC. The earliest coins, crude imitations of Continental coins, were cast in moulds, but later coins, also imitations of Continental types, were struck by hand in a manner that remained much the same for the next 1500 years.

After the Roman conquest the crude coinage of Iron Age Britain were replaced by superior Roman coins, the universal currency in the Western Empire. For a time at the end of the third century, Roman coins were actually struck at a mint in London. This London mint set up by the Romans is the earliest recorded mint in the capital, but it functioned for no more than 40 years.

For some 200 years or so after the withdrawal of the Romans no coins appear to have been struck in Britain. Following the consolidation of the English Kingdoms, a London mint was in operation again from about 650. At first its existence was somewhat precarious but from about the time of Alfred the Great (871-899) its history became continuous and increasingly important.

In the 9th century, London was merely one of about thirty mints in England. By the reign of Ethelred II (978-1016) the number had grown to more than 70, mostly in the southern half of the country and there can have been few market towns of any consequence where coins were not struck.

Following the Norman Conquest of 1066 their number declined and from the early part of the 13th century minting was mainly confined to London and Canterbury.

Although the exact location of the Norman mint in London is not known, by about 1279 it had moved to more secure quarters within the Tower of London. There are references to 'the little tower where the treasure of the mint is kept' and to timber bought for 'workshops in the barbican for the needs of the moneyers'. What is not clear is whether the Royal Mint's first quarters in the Tower were in the area which it subsequently occupied between the inner and outer walls.

For the next 500 years the Royal Mint remained in the Tower of London. A plan of 1701 shows the mint buildings forming a narrow horseshoe running round the three sides of the Tower not bounded by the river. These buildings were 'largely of wood; the chief of them were two stories; most were crazy with age, held up by timber shores and pinned together with clamps of iron'. It is surprising that such handsome coins could have emanated from such wretched buildings.

Minting processes were finally mechanised in the 17th century. The installation of mills and presses, while improving the appearance of the coins and making them more difficult to clip (and hence to counterfeit), served also to aggravate the cramped conditions in the Tower. Occasional disputes with the garrison caused further tension, and as the 18th century drew to a close there was talk of moving the Royal Mint elsewhere.

Following the outbreak of war with France, the demands of the garrison, coupled with the difficulty of accommodating new steam-powered machinery, led at last to a decision to move the mint from the Tower. The site chosen for the new Royal Mint was on Little Tower Hill.

Preliminary work began in 1805, the buildings were finished in 1809, new steam-powered machinery was installed in 1810, the transfer from the Tower took place in 1811 and the first coins were struck in the new Royal Mint in 1812.

The new mint, with its ‘stupendous and beautiful machinery’, stood in sharp contrast to the old. The main building was flanked by two gatehouses while behind it, and separated from it by an open quadrangle, were the buildings housing the machinery. There were dwelling houses for officers and staff and the site was surrounded by a boundary wall, along the inside of which ran a narrow alley. Patrolled by soldiers from the Royal Mint’s military guard, this alley became known as the Military Way.

In the 1880s the factory buildings were reconstructed and extended, with new coining presses being installed and melting and rolling capacity increased. Further rebuilding was undertaken at the turn of the century; steam gave way to electricity; dwellings were taken over; and the work of construction and renovation became a continuous process as the Royal Mint endeavoured to cope with an enormous increase in the demand for coin at home and overseas. By the 1960s little of the original mint remained apart from the old machinery building and its gatehouses in the front.

The need to rebuild the Royal Mint had been recognised in the 1950s, but it was the task of striking hundreds of millions of coins in readiness for decimalisation in 1971, while at the same time not neglecting overseas customers, which brought matters to a head. In 1967 it was announced that a new Royal Mint would be built at Llantrisant, some ten miles from Cardiff. (This generated a nickname for the area as “the hole with the mint”). Work began on the Welsh site almost at once and the first phase was opened by the Queen on 17 December 1968.

Once the initial requirement for decimal coins had been satisfied, production was progressively transferred from Tower Hill to Llantrisant. Melting, rolling and blanking facilities were completed and commissioned in 1975 and, with the new mint capable of the full range of minting activity the last coin, a gold sovereign, was struck in London in November of that year. The Tower Hill buildings were finally relinquished in 1980.

The new mint, set in the rolling green Welsh countryside on the edge of the Rhondda Valley, occupies an area of more than 30 acres. Its modern buildings house some of the most advanced coining machinery in the world and it has a larger capacity than any other mint in Western Europe.

Since at least 1282, coins produced by the Royal Mint have been independently checked in a proceeding known as the 'Trial of the Pyx', which takes its name from the pyx or box in which were kept a random sample of coins set aside for testing.

Today the Trial consists of an examination by a jury entirely independent of the Royal Mint to ascertain that the precious metal and cupro-nickel coins made by the Mint are of the proper weight, diameter and composition required by law. The Trial is convened annually and carried out by the Goldsmiths' Company of the City of London, who provide a jury of Freemen of the Company. The jury is sworn in by the Queen's Remembrancer, a senior judge, who presides over the Trial in accordance with directions issued by the Treasury. Officers of the National Weights & Measures Laboratory produce the standard trial plates and the weights against which the sample coins are compared for accuracy.

The jury first check the sample coins to see that the correct number are present, and then weigh the coins in bulk, as well as selected individual specimens, to ascertain that the weight of the coins is within the legal tolerance. Assays are then carried out to test accurately the fineness or composition of the metal by comparison with the standard trial plates and to ensure that it too is within the prescribed tolerance. The diameters of selected coins are also measured to ascertain whether or not they are within the correct tolerances. After an interval of some two or three months the verdict of the jury is delivered to the Queen's Remembrancer in the presence of the Master of the Royal Mint or his deputy. Meticulously kept books chronicle the accuracy of the coins assayed at the Royal Mint and at the public 'Trial of the Pyx'.

Roger Pike

(to be continued)

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

In Britain, thanks have been given for successful harvests since pagan times. An early harvest festival used to be celebrated at the beginning of the harvest season on 1 August and was called Lammas, meaning 'loaf Mass'. Farmers made loaves of bread from the fresh wheat crop. These were given to the local church as the Communion bread during a special service thanking God for the harvest.

By the sixteenth century a number of customs seem to have been firmly established around the gathering of the final harvest. They include the reapers accompanying a fully laden cart; a tradition of shouting "Hooky, hooky"; and one of the reapers dressing extravagantly, acting as 'lord' of the harvest and asking for money from the onlookers. The modern British tradition of holding a Harvest Thanksgiving in churches began in 1843, when the Reverend Robert Hawker invited parishioners to a special thanksgiving service at his church at Morwenstow in Cornwall.



This year in Talley, there were at least three separate events to mark harvest. On Sunday 18th September a special service of thanksgiving was held in St Michael's church. A table of fruit and vegetables was the centre piece of the service conducted by our assistant curate, Rev Delyth Wilson, assisted by her husband Paul, our Lay Reader.

This was followed on Thursday 22nd September by another event in church when the pupils of Talley School brought harvest gifts as part of a moving service in which the children played a major part. After a brief introduction by Rev Delyth Wilson, the children took over and treated the congregation to a service that included songs from the School Choir, music from the Recorder Group and prayers written by the pupils. The service ended with a talk to the children by Delyth before everyone went over to the hall for a harvest tea prepared by members of the church and staff from the school.

The fruit and vegetables from both services were then donated to the Awel Tywi Care Home in Ffairfach, Llandeilo. The gifts were much appreciated by the Home and they expressed their sincere gratitude to everyone concerned.

The final part of our Harvest Thanksgiving celebration was a Harvest Supper held in the church hall on Saturday 24th September. Thirty people, some from the village and others from farther afield, sat down to a two-course meal.

The first course consisted of baked potatoes with a range of fillings, including egg mayonnaise, tuna & sweetcorn, coronation chicken, chilli concarné, savoury mince with tomatoes, baked beans and cheddar cheese. This was followed by a choice of puddings – blackberry & apple crumble, apple pie, rhubarb tart, bread pudding and ice cream. The food was washed down with red or white wine, kindly donated by John Walford and soft drinks (for the children or those who had to drive home) before concluding with cups of tea or coffee.

Although the weather outside was damp and miserable, the atmosphere inside the hall was warm and convivial. Diners had the chance to chat with old friends or meet new ones in a relaxed and informal environment. Talley church hall may not be the most luxurious of locations, but its shortcomings were ignored by all those who attended what was a truly entertaining evening.

I would like to thank all those who helped to make the event such a success. Although intended as more of a social event than a fund-raising activity, the sale of tickets and other donations meant that the supper raised £130 for church funds – after deduction of expenses.

Y Llychau

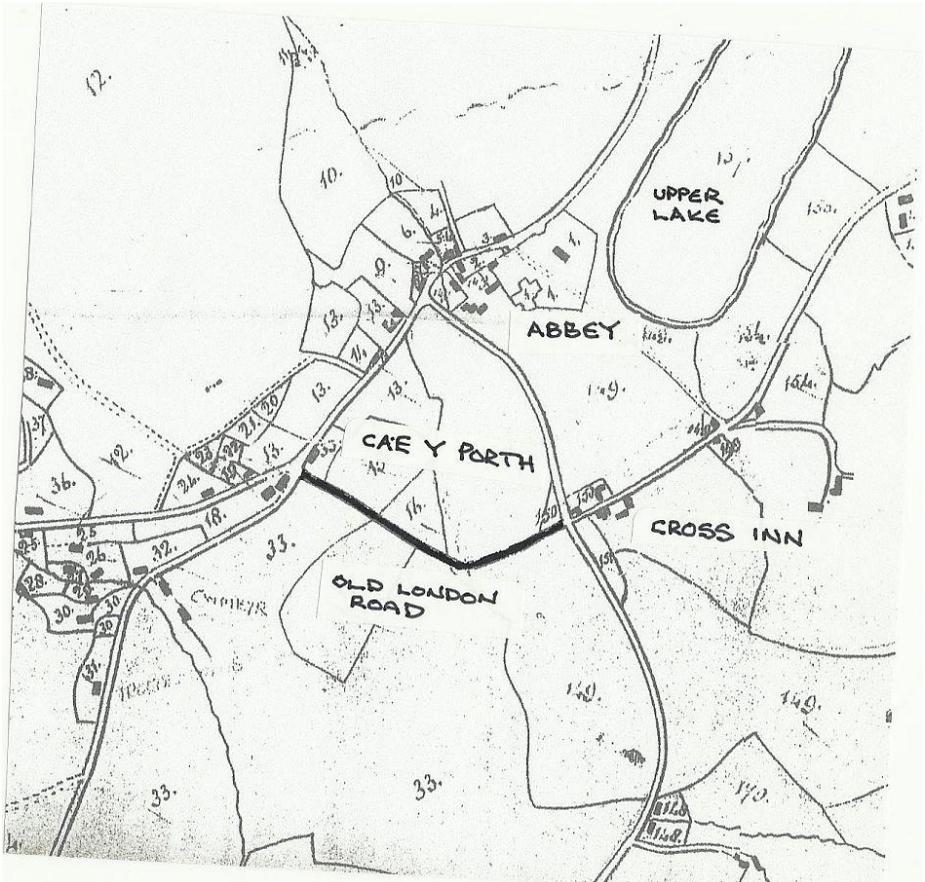


Roger Pike

TALLEY'S LOST ROAD

Sometimes it is strange but a question can be in front of you, begging to be asked, and you cannot see it. So it is with this discovery of Talley's "Old London Road" which came to light as I researched the history of the drovers in Talley.

So what is in front of us all? Well the Edwinsford Arms used to be called The Cross Inn until about 1848. Opposite, where John and Peggy Williams lived, is Cross Inn Cottage. Can you see the question yet? I could not see it until recently, but the question is "What Cross?" because the Edwinsford is on a sharp corner where it is joined by the road from the Abbey.



When David Long–Price wrote his history of Talley Abbey in 1879, he described the limits of the Abbey grounds and identified the south western gate as being in the field known as Cae y Porth. He describes the old high road, the “Old London Road” running round the edge as “now closed”. Searches of the Talley History Group files turned up a small tithe map dated 1839. An extract is shown here and it clearly shows the road as part of the old network which ran through and around the old village.

We can see how the road would have emerged right where the village notice board now stands, tying in with the existence of a mill somewhere along the small stream which emerges at this point.

So it is that Talley had a crossroads. The buildings tried to tell us and now we can say “of course, it’s obvious!”

Wyn Edwards

SUDOKU SOLUTION FROM THE LAST ISSUE

5	2	4	8	9	1	3	7	6
7	1	8	6	3	4	5	2	9
6	3	9	2	5	7	8	4	1
2	9	1	5	8	3	7	6	4
3	8	7	4	6	2	1	9	5
4	6	5	7	1	9	2	8	3
8	5	2	3	4	6	9	1	7
1	4	3	9	7	8	6	5	2
9	7	6	1	2	5	4	3	8

FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM WALES (part 4)

DYLAN THOMAS

Dylan Marlais Thomas was born in Swansea on 27 October 1914. Although a Welshman, he was a poet and writer who wrote exclusively in English. In addition to poetry, he wrote short stories and scripts for film and radio, which he often performed himself. He is perhaps best known for the poem “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” and the play “Under Milk Wood”. He’s also remembered for his heavy drinking, which led to his untimely death.



In 1931 Dylan Thomas left school at the age of 16 to become a reporter and writer. He started as a junior reporter on the *South Wales Daily Post* but after just a year he quit and turned his attention away from journalism towards poetry. At that time he began copying his early poems into what would become known as his ‘notebooks’. Remarkably, about two-thirds of Thomas’s poetic compositions are from his late teens.

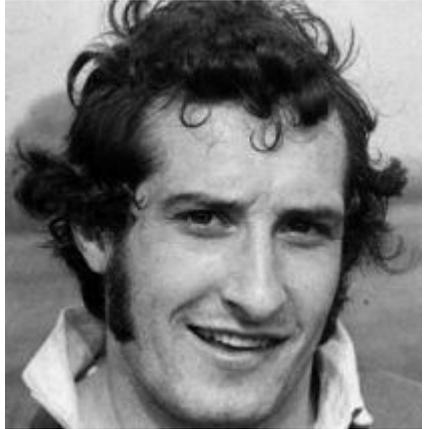
Thomas soon found success. His first poem was published in 1933 and, after moving to London, he had others published at the rate of one or two each year for the next five years. Thomas married Caitlin MacNamara in 1937 and the couple went on to have two sons and a daughter. Although his fame was rising in literary circles, his business sense was lacking, so he and his family lived in relative poverty. To support his family, Thomas worked for the BBC as a film scriptwriter during World War II (he was exempted from fighting due to a lung condition) but he continued to struggle financially – not even being able to pay the taxes that he owed.

Dylan Thomas undertook reading tours to bring in income. His readings were more like flamboyant performances than staid poetic events. He toured the United States four times, with his last appearance taking place in New York in October 1953. A few days later, after a long drinking bout, Thomas collapsed at his hotel. He died in a local New York hospital a week later on 9 November, 1953, at the age of 39. Three causes of death were given during Thomas’s post-mortem examination: pneumonia, swelling of the brain and a fatty liver.

* * * * *

GARETH EDWARDS

Gareth Edwards was born on 12 July, 1947, in Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, the son of a miner. He attended Pontardawe Technical School (now Cwmtawe Community School), where he showed he had a talent for rugby. He won a scholarship to the elite Millfield Public School in Somerset, where, as well as rugby, Edwards showed promise in a wide range of sports, including football, gymnastics and athletics.



Edwards won his first international rugby cap for Wales in 1967 at the age of 19 and by 1978 had played 53 games for Wales, including 13 as captain. He was Wales's youngest ever captain, first taking the captaincy at the age of 20. All his caps were won in succession; he never had a dip in form or an injury that would allow anybody else to take his place. He scored twenty tries in internationals. During his era the Welsh side dominated the Five Nations Championship, winning the title seven times, including three grand slams. In 1969, Edwards was named Player of the Year in Wales. Edwards also played ten times for the British and Irish Lions. In 1974 Edwards was named BBC Wales Sports Personality of the year and followed up this success by receiving an MBE in 1975. Edwards's long successful international career came to an end in 1978, the year in he was named Player of the Year.

After his playing career, he was a team captain on the TV quiz show *A Question of Sport* for four years. In 1997, Edwards was one of the first fifteen former players inducted into the International Rugby Hall of Fame. Later he became a rugby commentator for the BBC and S4C, commentating for the latter in Welsh, his mother tongue. In 1990 he set a British angling record when he landed a pike weighing 45 lb 6oz (20.6 kg) in the Llandegfedd Reservoir near Pontypool.

In the 2007 New Year Honours, Edwards became a CBE and he was knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2015, for services to sport and for charitable services.

* * * * *

ANEURIN BEVAN

Aneurin “Nye” Bevan was born in Tredegar on 15 November 1897. His father was a miner and as a child he experienced the privations of the working classes. He left school at the age of 13 to work in the local colliery, but he soon gained a real interest in politics and was attracted to the philosophy of democratic Socialism which sought to improve the lot of the working class.

During the bitter 1926 General Strike, Bevan emerged as one of the most prominent and passionate leaders of the Welsh mining unions and when the strike ended in defeat for the unions he became determined to achieve political office. In 1928, he won a seat on the local county council and this success led him to stand as the Labour party candidate for Ebbw Vale in the 1929 general election, at which he was elected. He served in the commons for 30 years before his death in 1960. He married fellow Socialist MP Jennie Lee in 1934.



Though a fierce critic of Winston Churchill’s economic policies he was generally supportive of Churchill’s pre-war stance on rearmament and opposed the appeasement policies of Neville Chamberlain. For a brief time he advocated an alliance with other left wing parties, including the Communists; for this he was temporarily thrown out of the Labour party, but was readmitted in 1939. He held a lifetime allegiance to the Labour party feeling that only they had the opportunity to gain power and represent the working man. Yet, despite his loyalty, he was quick to turn on Labour leaders whom he felt had betrayed the Socialist ideal.

Bevan’s proudest achievement was the formation of the National Health Service following the landslide Labour victory of 1945. However, in 1951 he resigned as Minister of Health in protest at Hugh Gaitskell’s decision to introduce prescription charges for the NHS. Although he opposed high expenditure on defence and nuclear power, his speech at the 1957 party conference was very controversial as he ridiculed the idea of nuclear disarmament.

In 1959, Bevan was elected Deputy Leader of the Labour Party. His last speech in the House of Commons that year referred to the difficulties of persuading the electorate to support a policy which would make them less well-off in the short term but more prosperous in the long term. A month later, he went into a hospital to undergo surgery for an ulcer, but malignant stomach cancer was discovered instead. Bevan died the following year at the age of 62 at his home in Buckinghamshire.

* * * * *

RUTH ELLIS

Ruth Neilson was born on 9 October, 1927 in Rhyl, the daughter of a cellist. She was one of five children raised in a strict Catholic home. She left school at age 14 to work as a waitress and three years later she had a brief affair with a married man and gave birth to a son. After the birth she never heard from the father again, so to support the young child on her own, she began modelling and then became a nightclub hostess.



At the age of 23, Ruth married George Johnson Ellis. The troubled marriage ended in separation but it had produced a daughter whom George would not acknowledge. Ruth soon took up with another man, David Blakely, but the turbulent relationship was fraught with jealousy. The situation span out of control and on the evening of Easter Sunday, 1955, Ellis fired five shots at Blakely and killed him while he was leaving a local pub. Ruth Ellis was charged with murder and found guilty on 20 June, 1955. Four weeks later, at the age of 28, Ellis made history by becoming the last woman to hang in England. Her hanging provoked much controversy and in 1965 the death penalty was abolished in Britain.

* * * * *

This is the final part in this short series, but if any reader would like to write a piece about any other people born in Wales, it would be most welcome.

Researched by Roger Pike

THE NEWSLETTER

Y Llychau is produced by St Michael & All Angels, Talley. The Newsletter is intended to be a community publication (not just a church magazine) and as such it needs the support of all members of the local community. An easy way of showing your support is to submit an article for inclusion. The pieces do not have to be literary masterpieces. They can be on any subject that you feel would be of interest to other readers, especially if they relate to Talley or Cwmdru or if they involve local people, past or present.

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THE NEXT ISSUE

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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
Tuesday 22nd November 2016 (to allow time for translation)

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

Tuesday 29th November 2016

**A JOYFUL AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL
NADOLIG LLAWEN A HEDDYCHLON I CHWI I GYD**