

Y Llychau

A NEWSLETTER FOR TALLEY & THE SURROUNDING AREA

www.talley.org.uk/y-llychau

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LLANDOVERY TOWN HALL

These Newsletters hope to provide information about the Talley and Cwmdru area and to report on recent happenings. They also aim to include 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 FRONT PAGE

Llandovery Town Hall stands in the small market place in the centre of the town. There was a courtroom over an open market, in an Italianate style. The building has two storeys with open arcades. At the rear are police cells with iron grilles and entry to the courtroom (now used as a library) was under a clock tower.

THE EDITOR WRITES

Welcome to the July issue of *Y Llychau*. Regrettably, this is a slightly thinner edition than normal because insufficient contributions have been received to enable me to fill the usual 40 pages. Nevertheless, I hope that you will find something in it to interest you.

As a popular past resident of the area used to say “It just happens”, but unfortunately this is not the case with the Newsletter. I can only include those articles that I receive from readers (or those that I have to write myself) and if there are only a few sent to me, the inevitable result is a publication with fewer pages than I would like. I would, therefore, like to repeat the plea I made in the last issue.

While I appreciate the contributions made by some readers, I would dearly like to receive more articles for publication, especially from new contributors. It's not as difficult as you may think to write something, so why not give it a try? You can write about any subject you like, especially if it has a link, however tenuous, to the Talley or Cwmdru area. Even if it doesn't refer to our community, your chosen subject might be of interest to other readers. As I have said many times before, if readers don't write interesting pieces you will have to put up with the boring articles that I write.

Why not take pity on your fellow readers and send me a contribution of your own?

Roger Pike

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A MESSAGE FROM EBENEZER APOSTOLIC CHURCH

As you read this, you may be thinking about your holidays and planning where you are headed. You might even be packing for the journey and it is so important to remember to pack exactly what you need. There is no point in overloading one's case as this could hamper your travel plans.

Jesus told his disciples to "take nothing for the journey except a staff!" Can you imagine taking off on your holiday without any luggage. It would be a disaster. But here Jesus encourages his disciples to travel light and to trust Him for what they needed for their journey. What a lovely thought!

We too can trust Jesus with what we need for our travels, whether it is daily or for the destination that He has in mind for us. We could ask Him to help us as we travel through life and for our daily "bread!"



Ebenezer is situated in the Talley valley and I would like to invite you all to come along to one of our services and listen to Jesus' teachings from the bible. 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 our new Pastor, Ian Hughes, on 01554 751802 or at <http://www.apostolicchurchcwmdy.co.uk>.

Angie Davies

CHASING THE TAIL OF THE SNOW LEOPARD

A CAUTIONARY TALE

This is an account of a journey I made in 1990 following in the footsteps of the author Peter Maitheson, whose book "In the Land of the Snow Leopard" I had previously read. It is an inspiring story of his quest to visit the high Himalaya where it meets the Tibetan Plateau in Western Nepal. In it he describes visiting a monastery of the Bon religion which is a precursor of Buddhism. The area is

extremely remote and can only be reached by weeks of trekking over high mountain passes following trails where no roads exist.

The mountainsides up to 7,000 ft. are terraced and irrigated by snow melt. Rice, millet and potatoes are grown using bullock ploughs and the crops are tended and harvested by hand. The scattered villages are largely self-sufficient, with most of their needs provided from local resources. On the higher slopes are rhododendron forests, which were in full bloom as we made our way towards the far north-west under the shadow of Mount Dhaulagiri (the seventh highest mountain in the world at 26,795 ft. above sea level).

We were travelling with my 4 year old son, who ran along the paths ahead at first but as the days passed he became dispirited by the relentless effort to continue. At a village called Wamitaksar at 7,500 ft. he became ill, but luckily we found a guest house where the lady spoke English and she offered to help us. It was many days walk to the nearest clinic so she asked the local traditional healer to attend to our son. He arrived at our room promptly and had a courteous and kind manner. He was tall and thin and dressed in a long white robe. He proceeded to remove the 'malign spirits' from our son by sucking and blowing them away, then sprinkled wood ash and water as a means of purification. He left, refusing any payment, and afterwards I noticed that he had taken my shoes instead of his own, but he did return mine on his next visit the following day.

We were shown his temple in the centre of the village which was inside a huge hollow tree! On the third day he returned and carried out the same procedures again, taking my shoes instead of his when he left. On the fourth day he returned with my shoes and spoke to our host in the local language and she relayed his concerns to us in English.

His message to me was that we must go back down the mountain and our son would then recover. We took his advice and after a day's descent our son was remarkably better. I became concerned that his taking of my shoes was intentional, as if he walked in my shoes he would understand my motives and my unwise quest to climb the mountain with my child. The converse of this was that I had walked in his shoes and I began to realise that it was me he was healing as much as our son.

Such was the nature of the response to our need in a very different culture.

Peter Gardner

FARMING IN WALES

The history of farming in Wales is long and proud. For the last 4,000 years or so farmers have tilled the soil and herded animals, to provide food and clothing to ward off the worst the Welsh weather can throw at us. Farming has shaped the character of the environment and Welsh farmland has predominantly been carved out of the woods which dominated the landscape after the last Ice Age.

Wildlife has adapted to live in the farmland environment over many centuries. The diversity in habitats created by farming – ploughed fields for crops, grassland and heather moors for sheep grazing and woodlands – led to an abundance of different types of wildlife, both animal and plant. Farmland was generally favourable for wildlife through the Industrial Revolution, the Victorian ‘high farming’ period and up to the middle of the 20th century, but then something dramatic happened – and populations of species associated with farmed land began to decline.

By the 1980s, these declines were deeply concerning and today the future of some of our most characteristic wildlife hangs in the balance. As well as a general reduction in the numbers of different wildlife varieties found, there has been the local and regional extinctions of species, many of which have been lost altogether, such as the annual weed downy hemp nettle which was last seen on a farm near Bangor in 1975. This loss of biodiversity has occurred across a wide range of species – plants, butterflies, bats, birds and mammals.

Given that Welsh wildlife has been largely determined by farming methods, it is not surprising that many studies point to changes in farming practices as a key factor in their decline. After the Second World War, agriculture became increasingly mechanised and industrialised, driven by EU and governmental policies and subsidy systems. While this conjures up images of huge combine harvesters in vast grain fields in some countries, Wales has primarily seen intensification in its grassland management.

Examples of this are draining wet and boggy areas to increase pasture and switching from annual hay making to two or even three silage cuts per year. Conservationists are trying to understand more about the causes of the declines for all the priority species and the picture is far from simple. Other factors are also implicated – loss of habitat from urban development, changes in river management, predation, migration factors and climate change. Many experts believe that action is required in a number of areas, but one thing is very clear. To bring the wildlife back, the farmed landscape must provide the habitat it needs to hide and sleep in and the food sources it needs to survive.

The good news is the Welsh Assembly Government plans to put more resources into wildlife-friendly farming schemes, which have the potential to restore these vital habitat and food resources. It has also made commitments to recovering wildlife in Wales, and it sees wildlife-friendly farming schemes as a vital tool to do this.

Sheep farming is important to the economy of Wales. Much of Wales is rural countryside and sheep are a very common feature in the landscape throughout the country. The woollen industry in Wales used to be a major contributor to the national economy, accounting for two-thirds of the nation's exports in the 17th century. Sheep farms are most often situated in the country's mountains and moorlands, where sheepdogs are employed to round up flocks. Sheep are also reared, however, along the south and west coasts of Wales. In total there are more than ten million sheep in Wales, and in 2011 sheep farming accounted for 80% of Welsh agriculture.

For years, sheep farming has been an ancient husbandry activity in rural parts of Wales where the climate and soil conditions were not suitable for growing crops other than oats. The activity is documented from the mediaeval period, by which time white sheep (probably imported by the Romans) had interbred with native dark-fleeced types to produce varieties of Welsh Mountain sheep. Initially, they were bred for their milk and fleeces, rather than their meat.

By the 13th century, sheep farming in Wales had become a major industry and source of income, largely from wool, much of which was exported. Large flocks of sheep were owned by Cistercian abbeys and monasteries. Although the Welsh woollen industry used to be a major contributor to the national economy, large-scale sheep rearing on the higher moors of the country is only believed to have developed within the last 300 years. Initially, sheep farmers often moved part of their household to live in the hills with the sheep during the summer months; later, their seasonal hillside 'hafods' or dwellings became permanent homes. In the past, grazing rights were determined by local courts.

Historically, Welsh sheep were shorn twice in the year. Besides the regular shearing in May or June, the wool was clipped close about the neck and forequarters at Michaelmas, otherwise all of it would have been lost before the following summer with the animals wandering among the thickets and furze in search of food during winter and spring.

Sheep farming in the mountains of Wales has always been an arduous task, particularly when the traditional techniques of farming were followed. The

activities started with growing grass on the meadows, buying hay from external sources and stacking it. The season began with the birth of the lambs during spring and continued with feeding, caring, shearing and transportation to market centres, maintaining the fencing around the pens and taking care of the deserted young lambs or injured animals. Farms were mostly run by one individual who had to bear most of the responsibilities. The sheep farmers' best support was the sheepdog, used for moving the flocks to better ground or to wintering areas in the valleys.

In recent years, sheep farming has become less profitable to the farmers for many reasons including the falling prices of lamb meat, weather conditions, the loss of more than a million breeding ewes between 2001 and 2009 and global warming. Another disaster struck parts of Wales in March 2013 when the coldest weather experienced for half a century accounted for the death of many ewes and lambs, causing further hardship to sheep farmers.

The threat of the United Kingdom withdrawing from the European Union is also worrying for Welsh sheep farmers. The EU support to the Welsh rural community is reported to be of the order of about half a billion pounds a year. The loss of this income is estimated to put an additional burden of £40 per lamb on the farmer. Government help has been sought by way of subsidies and technical support.

The economic viability of sheep farming in Wales is highly dependent upon the single farm payment given by European taxpayers to people who own land on condition they keep it in "Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition". However, this requires the removal of unwanted vegetation such as wild plants. Many also claim that sheep farming practices and grazing prevent natural trees and shrubs from growing with the subsequent loss of fauna associated with such eco-systems. They say that sheep compact the soil contributing to a cycle of flood and drought, thereby restricting the productivity of more fertile lands downstream.

The National Wool Museum of Wales, located in Dre-fach Felindre near Llandysul in Carmarthenshire, is part of the National Museum Wales. After refurbishing, the museum was reopened in 2004 and now gives the public an opportunity to study all aspects of sheep farming in the Principality.

Roger Pike

A VISIT TO LOURDES



Collecting holy water from the spring at Lourdes.

A few years ago I visited Lourdes during the last week in July to coincide with Welsh National Pilgrimage Week to Lourdes with parishioners from St David's Roman Catholic Church in Llandeilo. About 25,000 pilgrims are present daily in Lourdes during the main pilgrimage season that runs from Easter through to the end of October. The diversity of people was striking: nuns in long habits, elderly couples, young people traveling in groups, elegant Italian women in fur coats and groups of men holding large banners aloft bearing the names of their cities and churches. As the parade of people passed, I was reminded of the characters in *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer's stories about a fourteenth-century pilgrimage to Canterbury, England. He would recognise the air of excitement and anticipation, I thought, though the young people's facial piercings would likely surprise him.

After several more blocks, the commercial district ended and I reached the entrance to the shrine. Just inside St. Joseph's Gate, a large marble statue depicted the Virgin Mary appearing to a man in a hospital bed. A few more steps and a huge basilica came into view, an imposing structure with a gilded crown set atop its lower level. Two ramps extended like arms from each side, ending in a huge square and esplanade capable of holding many thousands of people.

Once I had wandered around to the side of the basilica, I was relieved to see that the heart of the grotto remained essentially the same as it had been all those years before. The large outcropping of stone known as Massabiele was still there and, in the niche where the Lady had appeared to Bernadette, stood a statue of the Virgin Mary, her hands joined in prayer as her eyes gazed heavenward. Below, a long line of people slowly wound its way into the area beneath the stone, where they reverently touched the rock and left photographs, flowers, and other tokens near the spring that had been uncovered by Bernadette. A rack of candles burned brightly in front of the grotto and nearby was a line of spigots where people collected water from the spring.

While the grotto was the heart of the sanctuary, I found the rest of the complex intriguing as well. Several huge churches welcome the hordes of pilgrims that throng here, each with many services throughout the day and evening. My favourite was the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, a Roman-Byzantine structure with exquisite mosaics.

While its physical setting is striking, the shrine's power is also interwoven with the pilgrims who journey here. Scenes from my time there stand out sharp and clear in my memory. I remember a young woman, her face open and vulnerable, kneeling on the cement before the grotto in the falling rain and a friar wearing a brown cape who looked like he had stepped out of a tapestry from the Middle Ages. I recall the Italian woman who noticed me standing near the water fountains and gestured me forward with a broad smile and the words "Bella! Bella!" meaning "Beautiful Beautiful". I remember the many people in wheelchairs, on stretchers and in hospital beds at all the processions and services and the pilgrims who waited patiently to take their turn in the baths near the grotto. I remember the candlelit evening procession very well and the chorus of *Ave Ave Ave Maria* echoed throughout. Being Welsh National Pilgrimage Week, many instances of the blessings in the Welsh language had pride of place, which made me feel very emotionally spirited.

It is not surprising, I think, that so many of the great pilgrimage sites are connected with the Virgin Mary, Fatima in Portugal ,Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City and closer to home Our Lady of the Taper in Cardigan (Mair o Aberteifi). These sites have a special place in the hearts of pilgrims because of the nurturing mother who stands at the centre of them. Like any mother, she beckons her children to come home, an invitation that is answered by millions of people each year.



Statues for sale in Lourdes

As for me, when I recall my trip to Lourdes I remember the grand drama of my experiences there, the processions and masses and the exultant feeling of being surrounded by so many pilgrims. But I recall with special fondness something that may seem small and trivial in comparison – all those shops selling Virgin Mary souvenirs.

While one can complain about the commercialism, I think there's something pleasingly subversive about those endless shelves of knick-knacks. I imagine the places where those trinkets are likely to end up, how they will find their way into nursing homes, hospital rooms and bedside tables, into the pockets of chemotherapy and radiology patients and the hands of soldiers going off to war. Though small and inexpensive, those tokens carry a powerful message: they are a reminder that the broken and wounded will be the first to enter the Kingdom of God, that miracles are possible even when the darkness seems overwhelming, and that the most unlikely among us can receive a life-changing vision of light.

Hywel Jones

SHOPPING IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Almost from prehistoric times, some form of trade took place between people. If a family or group of families could provide everything they needed, well and good, but if they could not, they had to find ways of obtaining their missing requisites from others. Obviously, theft was one way, but that could lead to disastrous consequences for the thief or his family, so a better, safer, more socially acceptable alternative had to be found. Generally, this meant a 'barter system' developed where the required goods were exchanged for other goods or services. After the introduction of money, anything that was required could be exchanged for an agreed sum. This early trade led to the establishment of towns, whose main focus was markets or fairs, at which traders could offer their wares for sale. The medieval housewife would buy much of what she needed at stalls regularly set up and dismantled in the town market place. Gradually these stalls were replaced by permanent shops with living space above or behind.

Shops lined many a medieval market place or high street; some were even built on bridges. Typically a shop would have large, arched, unglazed windows, which could be protected at night by a pair of horizontal shutters. During the day, the upper one could be hooked up to provide shelter, while the lower one folded down to form a counter. Few medieval shops survive, but a 15th-century pair are preserved at the Weald and Downland Living Museum (formerly known as the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum) in Singleton, West Sussex, and the Merchant's House, at 45 Church Street, Tewkesbury is a restored medieval shop and house, also open to the public.

English and Welsh markets were regulated from a relatively early period. The English monarchs awarded a charter to local Lords to create markets and fairs for a particular town or village. This charter would grant the lords the right to charge tolls and also afford some protection from rival markets. For example, once a chartered market was granted for a specific market day, a nearby rival market could not open on the same day. Across the boroughs of Britain, a network of chartered markets sprang up between the 12th and 16th centuries, giving consumers reasonable choice in the markets they preferred to patronise. Today, traders and showmen jealously guard these historic charters.

However, people living in villages, hamlets or other isolated communities without easy access to a market town often had to rely on the services of a peddler. In rural England and Wales, these itinerate traders were known (at various times in history) as a pedlar, a cheapjack (if his wares were considered to be good value for money), a hawker, a chapman (a name still widely used as a surname), a monger, a solicitor (although this now has a different connotation),

a tinker or a canvasser (if he identified a specific need in an area and returned later to supply it). Peddlers filled the gaps in the formal market economy by providing consumers with the convenience of door-to-door service. They operated alongside town markets and fairs where they often purchased surplus stocks which they subsequently resold to consumers. Peddlers were able to distribute goods to the more geographically isolated communities, such as those who lived in mountainous regions of Wales, and consumers who found it difficult to attend town markets. Thus, peddlers played an important role in linking these consumers and regions to wider trade routes. Some peddlers worked as agents or salesmen for larger manufacturers, and so were the precursor to the modern travelling salesman.

Suspensions of dishonesty or petty criminal activity was long associated with peddlers and travellers, so regulations to discourage small-scale retailing by hawkers and peddlers were promulgated by the authorities in the 15th and 16th centuries (and reinforced by the Church). However, these regulations did much to encourage the negative attitudes towards peddlers and, from the 16th century, peddlers were often viewed with distrust. A sixteenth century commentator wrote that *“many pedlars and chapmen, that from fayre to fayre and from markt to markt, carieth away wares in horspakks and fotepakks and basketts for to sell all such trifells on holydays and sondais in chirche porchis and abbeyes dayly.”*

Historically, peddlers travelled on foot, carrying their wares, either by means of a hand-cart or an animal-drawn wagon. Typically, they operated door-to-door, plied the streets or stationed themselves at the fringes of formal trade venues such as open air markets or fairs. As market towns flourished in medieval times, peddlers found a rôle operating on the fringes of the formal economy. They called directly on homes, delivering produce to the door, thereby saving customers time travelling to markets or fairs. However, customers often paid a higher price for this convenience. Some peddlers operated from inns or taverns, where they often acted as an agent rather than a reseller. By the 18th century, some peddlers worked for industrial producers, where they acted as a type of travelling sales representative. In England, these peddlers were known as “Manchester men”. Employed by a factory or entrepreneur, they sold goods from shop to shop rather than door to door and were thus operating as a type of wholesaler. They were the precursors to the modern sales representative.

In Britain today, peddling is still governed by the Pedlars Act of 1871, which requires traders to hold a “pedlar’s certificate”. Application is usually made to the police. In the late 20th century, the use of such certificates became rare as other legislation, such as the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act

of 1982 introduced a Street Trader's licence for England & Wales. Although the Pedlar's Certificates remain legal and in use, several local councils have sought to rid their area of peddlers by way of local bylaws making them apply for a Street Trader's licence.

Meanwhile, town shopkeepers employed other tactics to draw attention to their wares. Many set up stalls just outside their own shop, often under an awning, to put a tempting array of goods under the noses of passers-by. Others erected hanging signs advertising the goods on offer in their shop. These stalls and signs so cluttered street fronts that they were banned in the City of London in 1764: other towns quickly followed suit. Glazed shop windows gradually took over from open ones during the 18th century; small panes of glass were set in a grid of glazing bars and bow windows were popular by the end of the century. Soon, shopkeepers were among the first to take advantage of cheaper sheet glass, after excise duty on glass was abolished in 1845, to create larger windows with the view unbroken by glazing bars.

The narrow town streets, without pavements and crowded with horse-traffic, must have made shopping a hazardous operation, so the Shopping Arcade – a covered pedestrian shopping alley – was introduced to provide comfortable, stylish and safe shopping, away from the dirt and clatter of the street, not to mention the rain. The first arcades of the early 19th century mainly had pitched glass roofs, but these were later replaced by the glass tunnel vault, which still dominates modern arcade design. A second wave of arcade building, from about 1870 to 1910, came with the age of iron. The Victorian imagination ran riot with the possibilities of wrought and cast iron and Cardiff has no less than five arcades from this period. In the 20th century the concept grew into the multi-level shopping centre or mall.

Another remarkable retail development of the Victorian period was the department store. It had its origins in the warehouses and bazaars of the late Georgian and early Victorian period. A bazaar was a huge space surrounded by galleries and lit from above, where space was let out to traders offering a variety of products. The first was the Soho Bazaar, opened in 1816, in London, but by the 1830s several British cities could also boast a bazaar, increasingly making use of cast iron in their construction. The Crystal Palace was described as the greatest bazaar of all. Warehouses and emporia arose from the expansion of specialist shops (such as drapers) into showrooms stocking a wide range of goods. From there it was a short step to the department store in the mid-1870s. Such massive buildings offered scope for grand façades. The humble shop had turned into a retail palace!

Perhaps the biggest change in UK shopping came after the Second World War in the area of grocery shopping, with the advent of the supermarket. In the early days of retailing, all products were fetched by an assistant from shelves behind the merchant's counter while customers waited in front of the counter and indicated the items they wanted. Most foods did not come in individually wrapped consumer-sized packages, so an assistant had to measure out and wrap the precise amount desired by the consumer. This offered opportunities for social interaction; many regarded this style of shopping as "a social occasion" and would often "pause for conversations with the staff or other customers". These practices were by nature very labour-intensive and therefore also quite expensive. The shopping process was slow, as the number of customers who could be attended to at one time was limited by the number of staff employed in the store. Shopping for groceries also often involved trips to multiple specialty shops, such as a greengrocer, butcher, bakery and fishmonger, in addition to a general store, although at the time milk was generally delivered to the home by a milkman.

A supermarket is basically a larger form of the traditional grocery store. It is a self-service shop offering a wide variety of food and household products. The supermarket typically sells meat, fresh produce, dairy products and baked goods, along with shelf space reserved for canned and packaged goods as well as various non-food items such as kitchenware, household cleaners, pharmacy products and pet supplies. Some supermarkets also sell a variety of other household products that are consumed regularly, such as electrical goods and clothes. The traditional supermarket occupies a large amount of floor space, usually on a single level. It is often situated near a residential area in order to be convenient for consumers. The basic appeal is the availability of a broad selection of goods under a single roof, at relatively low prices. Other advantages include ease of parking and, frequently, the convenience of shopping hours that extend into the evening or even for 24 hours a day. In the UK, self-service shopping was slow to establish itself. Even in 1947, there were just ten self-service shops in the whole country. In 1951 the UK's first supermarket, under the Premier Supermarkets brand, opened in Streatham, South London, but by 1960 the sector was dominated by 'the big four': Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrison's.

Even the introduction of large department stores, DIY superstores and food supermarkets is not the end. The internet has opened a whole new concept of "on-line shopping", but that's a different story all together.

Roger Pike

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK SERVICE

It was a full house in Ebenezer in Halfway for the annual Christian Aid Week Service on Thursday 18th May. Representatives from all churches in the Talley Valley were in attendance, including Esgairnant Chapel, Providence Chapel, St Michael's Church and Ebenezer together with pupils, teachers and parents from Talley CP School.

Christian Aid week this year was from 14 – 20 May and was celebrating 60 years of existence. Their aim is the same as it has always been, to help those who need assistance in all parts of the world. This year, one aspect was the support of refugees who have lost their homes and possessions and up and down the country many people were collecting donations for this worthy cause.

Our service consisted of prayers and readings in both Welsh and English by members of each church and chapel represented, as well as some thought-provoking readings from the children of Talley School. The hymn singing was lively and joyous in both languages. There was an inspirational video depicting the story of Theodor Davidovic, a refugee from Serbia, who had been helped by Christian Aid as a young man. This act of kindness has never been forgotten by Theodor and he now goes out collecting himself each Christian Aid Week, as a thank you for the help he received.

An interesting address was given by the Rev Delyth Wilson from the Bro Dyfri Local Ministry Area. Her talk was special and colourful. She urged us to look at what we might pack if we had to leave our homes at a moment's notice, like a refugee. From within her very large rucksack, she pulled out a rock and this, she said, was the most important item – the rock that is Jesus, a help in times of trouble.

A collection was taken to give to the work of Christian Aid. This amounted to just under £220, for which we all give thanks.

Thanks must also be conveyed to Roger Pike for his arrangements for the event and to all those who took part in any way; too many to mention here. It was a joyful and memorable evening and conveyed the Christian message in abundance. We should remember to give, to act and to pray, not just in this special week, but at other times, too.

Angie Davies

THE GREAT ORME COPPER MINES

The Great Orme is one of North Wales' most distinctive landmarks, named after the Viking word 'orme' which means 'worm' or 'sea serpent'. It perfectly describes the headland overlooking Llandudno: a hulking mass of rock encroaching into the lapping Irish Sea.

The existence of mine workings on the Great Orme had been known for many years and it was assumed that it was the industrial Roman society that was responsible for them. It was not until detailed archaeological work began in the 1980s that the truth came to light. An excavation in 1987 uncovered over four miles of tunnels dating back 4000 years – long before the Roman occupation of the area.

It quickly became clear that the Great Orme was in fact the location for massive extraction of valuable copper ore by Bronze Age Britons. The tunnels and caverns discovered as the excavations continued included huge hall-sized spaces as well as tiny passages through which only children would have been able to squeeze. Archaeologists estimate that over 1,800 tons of copper ore was lifted out of the Great Orme by the prehistoric Britons, most likely to be smelted down and alloyed with tin to make bronze, a harder and more practical metal. The tin would probably have come from Cornwall, so there could have been a strong trading culture within Britain at the time.

Other discoveries at the site indicated that volcanic stones from the beach were used as hammers to break the ore initially, then animal bones would have been used for the more detailed work. It is also thought that supply from these mines might well have exceeded demand domestically, and international trade could well have been common.

By the Iron Age, a few hundred years BC, copper ore mining appears to have ceased at the Great Orme. The Romans, too, appear not to have been interested in mining the ore. It was not until 1692 that work in the mines restarted once more. It is considered likely that mining continued until 1848, when trade laws made it uneconomic to mine copper in the UK. By 1881 mining had stopped and the mines fell into disuse and were covered by thousands of tons of waste rubble, only to be rediscovered and reassessed a century later.

Today, the Great Orme is the only Bronze Age copper mine in the world that is open to the public. Despite public access, excavation still continues and more discoveries are being made.

Roger Pike

SECRET GARDEN COMES BACK TO LIFE

In April, St Davids Diocesan Office issued the following press release.



There is a secret lying hidden at the bottom of the Bishop's garden that is about to be revealed.

In its heyday, the Bishop's Palace in Abergwili, near Carmarthen, overlooked what commentators of the time described as "a noble estate" that had been the residence of the Bishops of St Davids since 1536.



But since the 1850s, what has become known as the Bishop's Park has seen fluctuating fortunes. The building is now the county museum and the gardens were left largely to Mother Nature. However, the park's trustees are now embarking on a five-year, multi-million pound project to restore the grounds to their former glory. The centrepiece is a walled garden which Trust volunteers have started to restore with help from initial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and, even at this early stage, the work has uncovered a treasure trove of history going back hundreds of years.

The Bishop's Park restoration is part of a wider Tywi Gateway initiative which aims to open up the entire Tywi Valley for leisure and tourism, including a cycle path all the way to Llandeilo!

In March, the Bishop herself paid a visit to see what exactly was going on at the bottom of her garden and pronounced herself well pleased with what she saw.



The scheme remains subject to further lottery funding but, given a fair wind and the backing it seeks, the Tywi Gateway – and the Bishop's Garden – will be restored in about five years.

CHURCH HIERARCHY

In the last issue of *Y Llychau*, I listed the method of addressing various members of the Anglican clergy. This prompted a question from a reader who wanted to know where the various clergy positions fitted into the hierarchy of the Church in Wales. Here is a simple explanation. It must be remembered that prior to 1920 the Church in Wales was part of the Church of England and, after separation, it retained many of the C-of-E's customs and practices.

Today the Anglican Communion comprises 38 Provincial Churches, of which one is the Church in Wales. There is no Anglican central authority such as a pope. Each Church makes its own decisions in its own way, guided by recommendations from the various bodies within the Communion – the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Each member church of the Anglican Communion is an independent body headed by a Primate. A primate is the most senior bishop of a member church, usually given the title of Archbishop. The Archbishop of Canterbury is Primate of All England, being the senior bishop in the Church of England. For historical reasons, the Church of England and the Church of Ireland (which is headed by the Archbishop of Armagh who is the Primate of All Ireland) also call their second most senior bishops Primates: the Archbishop of York and the Archbishop of Dublin are, respectively, the Primate of England and the Primate of Ireland, without the "All". The Archbishop of Canterbury is the *primus inter pares*, or first among equals, of the Anglican Communion. Although he has no authority outside the Church of England, he hosts and chairs the Lambeth Conference and Anglican Communion Primates' Meeting, and is president of the Anglican Communion Office. In this way, the Archbishop of Canterbury can be seen as the spiritual head of the Anglican Communion, being at the centre of the network of Anglican ministry.

Within the Church in Wales there are three orders of ordained clergy – bishops, priests and deacons. Clergy within these three orders fill the majority of posts within the hierarchy of the church, the lower positions are filled by members of the laity. The most senior position is the Archbishop of Wales. Since devolution in 1920, when the Church in Wales legally separated from the Church of England, the province has been divided into six dioceses. Each diocese is led by a Bishop, who is its spiritual, pastoral and executive head. Diocesan bishops have wide-ranging legal and administrative responsibilities, even though the Church in Wales is not the established church in the country.

The most senior bishop in Wales holds the post of Archbishop of Wales as well as being the Bishop of his (or her) diocese.

The legal act by which a priest becomes a bishop is known as consecration.

In larger or more populous dioceses, diocesan bishops may be assisted by one or more junior bishops. Where the role of an assistant bishop is a legal part of the structure of the diocese, he or she is known as a suffragan bishop and usually has a title named after a place within the diocese. For example, the Bishop of Dorchester and the Bishop of Reading are suffragans to the Bishop of Oxford.

Each diocese has a cathedral that is the mother church and home of the diocesan bishop's cathedra or throne. As cathedrals are sacramental, liturgical and administrative resource centres for their dioceses, their clergy are usually among the most senior in the diocese. Different member churches of the Anglican Communion have different structures of cathedral clergy. The senior priest of a cathedral is called the Dean. The dean is assisted by other senior clergy who are either canons or prebendaries. These have different roles within the cathedral community. For example, a Canon Treasurer is responsible for the fabric and finance of the cathedral, a Canon Precentor is responsible for the worship of the cathedral and a Canon Chancellor is responsible for the archives and libraries of the cathedral. Some non-cathedral clergy are awarded the title of Honorary Canon or Prebendary as a particular distinction. The title of "canon" is a gift of the bishop. For historical reasons, the Dean of St Davids cathedral also undertakes the duties of the Canon Precentor, so, technically, he is the Dean and Precentor of the cathedral.

For administrative reasons, each diocese is divided into areas known as archdeaconries, headed by an Archdeacon. The diocese of St Davids has three Archdeaconries – Carmarthen, Cardigan and St Davids. Most archdeacons oversee an archdeaconry in conjunction with their other parish responsibilities. Since 1840, the position of an archdeacon can only be held by a priest who has been ordained for at least six years.

The legal act by which a priest becomes an archdeacon is called a collation. After bishops and cathedral deans, archdeacons are the most senior clergy in the diocese.

In the Church in Wales, parishes within an archdeaconry are subdivided into areas known as deaneries. The head of a deanery is known as the Area Dean,

to distinguish them from cathedral deans. Area deans are appointed by the bishop from among the parish clergy in the deanery to act as a vehicle of communication between the parishes of the deanery and the archdeacon or bishop, as well as to facilitate cooperation among his or her colleagues through regular meetings (called the clericus or chapter).

Historically, parish clergy have been given the cure of souls and the temporal freehold of the parish and hence are incumbents or parsons. Depending on the tithes they received, they were either rectors (receiving both the greater and lesser tithes), vicars (receiving just the lesser tithes) or perpetual curates (receiving no tithes). In time, the third category was merged in with vicars. Originally, greater tithes were one tenth of the income from hay, corn, farm animals and glebe (land owned by the church). Lesser tithes were one tenth of the income from all other sources. Today, each parish in England and Wales gives its incumbent the title rector or vicar depending on the historical situation with tithes, but, as all clergy in these churches are now paid from central funds, the distinction is meaningless.

In some places in England and Wales, several parishes are linked together to form a team benefice. In them, a team of clergy is licensed to a group of parishes; the senior priest is often known as a team rector and other priests of 'incumbent status' are known as team vicars. A parish priest without secure tenure but holding a bishop's licence is normally termed a 'priest in charge'. However, in the Church in Wales, a team benefice is often called simply a benefice any only has one priest responsible for all the parishes in it.

The legal act by which a person becomes a priest is called ordination.

After ordination most clergy serve as assistants to parish priests before taking up a lead post in a parish of their own. As they share the cure of souls with the parish priest they are often known as Assistant Curates, although in many places they are colloquially known simply as "curates". Their term of appointment as an assistant is known as a curacy.

Since the English Reformation, Deacons have been the lowest order of clergy. Although deacons are members of the clergy (they wear clerical collars), they are not permitted to preside at the Eucharist, bless people or absolve sins. Their responsibilities involve assisting at worship – particularly setting up the altar for the Eucharist and reading the Gospel. They are also accorded responsibility for pastoral care and community outreach.

Licensed Lay Readers are not ordained, but licensed by their bishop. They are not members of the clergy but are authorised to lead worship services, apart from the celebration of the Eucharist. Their responsibilities and privileges can include: conducting Matins, Evensong and Compline; publishing banns of marriage; preaching, teaching and assisting in pastoral care; conducting funerals and distributing (but not celebrating) Holy Communion. This is known as Communion by Extension.

Licensed Lay Administrators are people of good standing in the parish who have been authorised by a bishop to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. Normally the parish priest submits to the bishop a list of names of persons to be so licensed. In some parishes, lay administration is limited to the chalice, but lay administrators may also be permitted to take the consecrated elements from the church to the sick or house-bound to be administered there.

Servers are assistants to the priest during church services. Their liturgical responsibilities include the following: carrying the processional cross in processions to and from the altar, and, in certain cases, at the altar itself; assisting in receiving the offertory gifts of bread, wine, money, etc.; assisting in the preparation of the altar for the Eucharist and in the returning of the chalice and paten to the vestry after the service. Servers traditionally used to assist the celebrant to robe before the service.

Historically, there are two types of churchwarden: the vicar's warden (appointed by the incumbent) and the people's warden (elected annually at the Annual Easter Vestry Meeting). Both churchwardens have a duty to represent the laity and co-operate with the incumbent (or, in cases of vacancy, the bishop). They are expected to lead the parishioners by setting a good example and encouraging unity and peace. They have a particular duty to maintain order and peace in the church and churchyard at all times, especially during services, although this task tends to be devolved to sidesmen, whose main task is to distribute prayer books and hymn books to the congregation.

Roger Pike

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN WALES

Co-operative societies were set up by local people so that they could guarantee receiving good quality products and services at reasonable prices. The movement began in Europe in the 19th century, primarily in Britain and France, although there is evidence that a simple consumer co-operative was running in 1769 in a small cottage in Fenwick, East Ayrshire, when local weavers moved a sack of oatmeal into John Walker's whitewashed front room and began selling the contents at a discount.

By 1830, several hundred co-operatives had been set up and, although initially successful, most had failed by 1840, including one started by Chartists in Pontypridd. It was not until 1844 when the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers established the "Rochdale Principles" on which they ran their own co-operative, that the basis for development and growth of the modern co-operative movement was established. Any profits made were to be shared amongst the members themselves. The societies were to be locally governed and democratically organised with meetings every three months so that officers could reported to members on the way that the society was performing.

Robert Owen (1771–1858) is considered as the father of the co-operative movement. He was a Welshman who made his fortune in the cotton trade. He believed in providing a good living environment for his workers, with access to education for themselves and their children. These ideas were put into effect successfully in the cotton mills of New Lanark, Scotland, where the first co-operative store was opened. Owen had the idea of forming "villages of co-operation" where workers would drag themselves out of poverty by growing their own food, making their own clothes and ultimately becoming self-governing. He tried to form two such villages, one in Scotland and another in Indiana USA, but both communities failed.

In 1859 in Wales a co-operative based on the "Rochdale Principles" and Owen's ideas was set up in Cwmbach. It is seen as the 'beginning' of Co-operation in Wales. Considering the large numbers of societies that failed, particularly between 1860 and 1900, it is surprising that people continued to invest in them, risking their savings, but showing their determination to make co-operation work. In Wales the movement was slow to develop compared with England. In South Wales, co-operatives were established in small valley villages where the coal industry developed. In North Wales, they grew in coal and slate communities, while in mid Wales, they developed in larger towns such as Newtown and Welshpool. The coastal towns of Cardiff and Newport did not

initially develop strong co-operative societies because the dock workers and sea farers had irregular work, which hindered co-operative organisation.

Co-operative societies gave support to their members from the 'cradle to the grave'. They could provide food shopping, hairdressing, car hire, painting and decorating, optician services, a travel agency, insurance and banking as well as funeral services and memorial headstones. But co-operation was about much more than trading; it was a way of life for many and provided extensive social provision and economic activity. In Co-operative Street, Ton Pentre, members lived in 50 houses built by the local Society; in Cymmer there was a co-operative cinema; many Societies set up co-operative halls, ran libraries, organised children's choirs, eisteddfodau, athletics events and education classes.

Co-operation became a central part of the culture of many local Welsh communities, similar to that of the chapel. Local co-operative societies were active participants in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities. In the UK, co-operatives formed the Co-operative Party in the early 20th century to represent members of co-ops in Parliament. The Co-operative Party now has a permanent electoral pact with the Labour Party and some Labour MPs are Co-operative Party members. Co-operative societies were – and still are – part of a world-wide movement seeking to share the benefits of working and trading fairly.

At a time when women were excluded from many areas of Welsh society, the co-operative movement provided an important opportunity for ordinary women to become involved. Their rôle in the household, particularly shopping for family goods, meant they were directly involved in the day-to-day business of their local co-operative societies and they were very important in the societies' education committees. An organisation called the Women's Co-operative Guild was set up in Britain in 1883, and two of the seven women who founded it were from Aberdare. It became an important early radical campaigning organisation for women's rights.

Co-operatives across the world today still have the same ethical values and principles of their founders nearly 200 years ago. The fair trade movement has co-operative producers of coffee, cocoa and other products at its heart. Co-operatives have come a long way since Rochdale and Cwmbach, but they still provide an essential service to their members.

Roger Pike

THIRTY SEVEN YEARS OF HARD WORK AND GREAT ACHIEVEMENT



On Friday 31st March a small ceremony in the vestry at Cwmdru brought an end to the incredible thirty seven years of continuous commitment by Geraint and his small team to the communal pleasures and fundraising success of the Talley Village Dinner. Cheques for £610 were handed over to representatives of the Cardiac Centre at Morryston Hospital, and the Welsh Air Ambulance; yet another significant contribution to the work of organisations giving direct benefit to the local community. In recent times the Air Ambulance has played a key role in assisting the rescue services in dealing with crashes on the Talley Road; and there are those in the community who have much to be thankful for in the work of the Morryston unit.

Geraint seems to have no cumulative record of the sums raised but in current terms we must be talking of somewhere between forty and fifty thousand pounds. Even to the Air Ambulance, currently spending £6½ million each year on its four helicopters and staff, the Talley gift makes a meaningful contribution to this wonderful voluntarily funded organisation.

Over the years (not thirty seven!) I have been persuaded to add to my collection of Talley Dinner walking sticks, buy back my gift to the auction, bid successfully for items which I had not knowingly bid for, managed to leave a friend overbidding my previous bid, or simply succumb to the skills of Geraint the auctioneer. We must be grateful to all who have given items for sale and all those who have bought things or simply made a donation to the good causes of the year.

It is to be hoped that from the ashes will come something new – perhaps something very similar to what has been enjoyed for so many years or perhaps a radically new format for the task of bringing together the Talley community and supporting local causes.

John Rees

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

One day a man went to an auction. While there, he bid for an exotic parrot. He really wanted the bird, so was soon caught up in the bidding. He kept on bidding, but kept getting outbid, so he bid higher and higher and higher. Finally, after he had offered far more than he intended, he secured the bid. The price was high but the fine bird was finally his!

As he was paying for the parrot, he said to the Auctioneer, “I hope this parrot can talk. I would hate to have paid this much for it, only to find out that he can’t say a word!”

“Don’t worry,” said the Auctioneer, “He can talk. Who do you think kept bidding against you?”

FROM PALM SUNDAY TO EASTER DAY

Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter and it is an important one. As well as being the last Sunday in Lent it marks the start of Holy Week. Throughout Lent, the six weeks leading up to Easter, Christians remember the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted. They recall this in different ways; some prefer to refrain from doing something that they enjoy to test their own resolve to overcome the temptation to indulge themselves, while others undertake a course of study to understand better certain aspects of Christianity and to strengthen their own faith.

Holy Week is the time when Christians concern themselves with the last few days of Jesus' life, which he spent in Jerusalem. They recall Maundy Thursday's Last Supper, when Our Lord gave bread and wine to his disciples so that they would have a form of remembrance of him (a practice which believers still do today in Holy Communion), they remember how he was betrayed, leading to his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and they reflect on his trial which culminated in his crucifixion on Good Friday.

According to the gospels, Jesus entered Jerusalem not as a conquering hero but meekly riding on a donkey. Along the road, onlookers cut branches from palm trees and spread them on the ground in front of the donkey. Parishioners of St Michaels Church, Talley, together with friends from Caio, Llansawel and Abergorlech churches, commemorated this Bible account on Palm Sunday by processing to church with a couple of donkeys, kindly supplied by the Lluest Horse & Pony Trust.



As the procession slowly made its way to church along the road through Talley, hymns were sung before the donkeys joined the congregation in church for a service of Holy Communion, led by our Assistant Curate, Rev Delyth Wilson. During the service palm crosses were distributed. The palms symbolised the palm branches of the first Palm Sunday and the cross represented Christ's crucifixion.

Later that week, a celebration of Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday in Talley reminded us of the Last Supper and a service of contemplation on Good Friday in Caio afforded us the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trial and execution. After a quiet day on Holy Saturday, a joyful commemoration of Jesus' resurrection was observed on Easter Day when special services were held in each of our four churches.

The week from Palm Sunday to Easter Day is called Holy for good reason. The events that we recall in that short period really form the basis of Christianity. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem demonstrates the meekness of Our Lord. Jesus' cleansing of the temple by overturning the tables of the money-changers reminds us of the purpose of God's house. The institution of Holy Communion at the Last Supper provides us with a fitting memorial of Christ. Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus shows us the weakness of humanity. The attitude of Pontius Pilate during the trial reminds us that there was no wrong in Jesus and it was just the position of the Jewish authorities that was threatened by his teaching. Jesus' death on the cross shows his willingness to do God's will and his resurrection on the third day proves that God is all powerful.

I recently watched a television programme recalling the last days of Jesus and, while it presented evidence (both archaeological and documental) that these events actually happened, it questioned the timescale. When Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem it must have been at the time of the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah (in the autumn) because that is the only time of the year when palm branches can easily be removed from the trees. The Last Supper, Christ's arrest and trial took place just before the Jews celebrated Passover (in the spring) some six months later. This would give more time for all the reported events to have taken place, rather than in just a single week.

Either way, what we call Holy Week really does provide the basis of our Christian faith.

Roger Pike

PUZZLE PAGE

All words necessary to complete this cross-word are in English.

1		2		3		4		5	6		7
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11								12			
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18		19				20		21			22
23								24			
25					26						

The answer will be in the next issue of the Newsletter.

CLUES

Across

- 1 Take away (8)
- 5 More than chilly (4)
- 8 Umbilicus (5)
- 9 Edge of silhouette (7)
- 11 Apart (7)
- 12 Called (5)
- 13 Mediterranean island (6)
- 15 Narrowly avoided it (6)
- 18 High-spirited escapade (5)
- 20 Astounding (7)
- 23 South American country (7)
- 24 Rogue in a pack of cards (5)
- 25 Extinct bird (4)
- 26 Perfect, without a fault (8)

Down

- 1 Father Christmas (5)
 - 2 Camp out under this (7)
 - 3 Annoyed (5)
 - 4 Groups of singers (6)
 - 6 Revulsion (5)
 - 7 Greatly feared (7)
 - 10 Latin-American dance drink (5)
 - 13 Accomplish a task without failure (7)
 - 14 Tempted or enticed (5)
 - 16 Put a scowl on your face (7)
 - 17 Cask for beer (6)
 - 19 Sixteen ounces (5)
 - 21 Misaligned and awry (5)
 - 22 Assume the answer (5)
-

BANDO

Bando is a team game – related to hockey, hurling and shinty – which was first recorded in Wales in the eighteenth century. The game was played on a large level field between teams of up to thirty players, each of them equipped with a ‘bando bat’, a curve-ended stick resembling that used in field hockey. Although no formal rules are known, the objective of the game was to strike a ball between two marks which served as goals at either end of the pitch.

The Welsh game is believed to have common origins with the Irish game of Shinty. Bando bats were usually made from hard woods (ash and elm were especially popular) while the ball, known as the ‘colby’, was a rough sphere carved from yew, box or crab-apple. The sport was often played between local villages, mainly in west Glamorgan where ash and elm trees were abundant.

Although many pre-industrial games are recorded to be lawless affairs with haphazard rules, the contrary appears true for bando. Once a challenge of a game was made between villages, wagers were normally set which demanded an agreed set of rules, including the number of players (normally between 20 and 30 per side), the size of the playing area and the duration of the game. A typical bando pitch would be 200 yards square, with the goal markers at each end set ten yards apart. Despite a set of rules being agreed for each encounter, the game was still open to violent play with players often using their bando sticks to strike their opponents. Games didn’t appear to involve referees!

One of the more notable teams of the time was the ‘Margam Bando Boys’, a group who played their matches on Aberavon Beach. It is believed that bando was the first mass spectator sport, with one Margam game allegedly attracting over 3,000 spectators. The sport remained popular throughout the century with notable personalities known to play it, including the future UK prime minister, David Lloyd George.

The game continued to be played until the second half of the nineteenth century, but was beginning to be replaced by other sports. The game survived in the Aberavon area until the death of the captain of the Margam Bando Boys in 1876, when many of the team turned their attentions to rugby union. Bando, now a minority sport, survives as an amateur game in parts of Wales and some small-scale attempts have been made to revive the game nationally. Despite having no religious links with Easter, bando became the tradition game to be played on Easter Monday as part of many parish festivals.

Roger Pike

GARDENING IN WALES

While searching the internet for inspiration for something to write to fill these pages, I came across the following article by an American who apparently preferred to remain anonymous. *Ed*

In the 1970s I worked as a gardener in the grounds of a tiny college in Wales. The head gardener, Old George, was a veteran of World War II. He had risen to the rank of private by the end of the conflict. If the army was looking for men to start at the bottom and stay there, then George could fit the bill perfectly. But the military experience was not lost on him. George had gained a sense of time. He insisted his crew of four gardeners showed up for work precisely at 8.00 am, by which time George had the kettle boiling for our first cup of tea of the day. Being late for your tea was a court-martial offence in George's view.

The Welsh climate can be inclement. Rain is always a danger for gardeners. Each day, our first task (after tea) was to assess the weather situation. We would all bend our minds to the problem with alacrity. Tea is perfect for enhancing the brainpower of those, like us, whose job it was to make important decisions. If it were raining, which it often was, we would need to decide what to do next. Another cup of tea at this point is usually the prudent course of action and prudence is a qualification necessary for this technical line of work. Tea enlivens the brain.

The wise decision was to wait in the hut to see if the rain would stop. On these occasions, George would roll an enormous cigarette, the size of a cigar, and attempt to hide in a cloud of blue smoke behind his tabloid newspaper. Occasionally he would grunt or blurt out a muffled sentence. It was at these times that George would demonstrate his skill with the malapropism. He would utter such gems as

“Them volcanoes is always corruptin’.” or

“I wouldn't want to be one of them computers going up to London on the train every day.”

It took me a good while to understand what George was saying. It wasn't just the accent, incomprehensible though that was. When he talked he kept his enormous roll-up in his mouth.

Frank, the longest serving member of our team, was a veteran gardener and a true master of inertia. He spent most of his rainy-day time wistfully staring out of the window. In an energetic mood he'd sip his tea thoughtfully, but when Frank had an excess of energy he would recount, in mind-boggling detail, exactly what he had for his supper the night before. Frank was by then in his sixties and newly married after a life of bachelorhood. He never ceased to be impressed by how well his new wife could serve frozen peas, open cans of vegetables or cook the perfect potato.

Our other teammate was Ben. Ben had recently graduated from the local art school. He didn't want to have to go to Cardiff to take up a full-time textile design job. Ben had a sense of history. He couldn't bear to leave the old-world pubs he loved so much, despite how often he was thrown out of them. Ben was gifted at rolling up his own cigarettes single handed, although they were much smaller than George's. Ben knew his place.

George would eventually calm down from the outrages he read about in the Daily Mirror and come to a leadership decision. The rain was either "set in for the day" or "something of nothing." If George's pronouncement was of the set-in-for-the-day kind, joy would fill our hearts. We would know that life is worth living and has profound meaning. If in a generous mood, George would tell us to "slide off home." George was a true gentleman on these occasions and a credit to working-class solidarity.

When George was in a bad mood, however, it meant toil. We'd have to stay in the shed and clean the gardening tools – or worse yet, if his decision was that the rain was of the something-of-nothing category (drizzle, he called it) it meant he would send our crew into the depths of despair. It meant we had to go outside and work.

In winter, the work was a never-ending task of raking leaves, although there were bonfires which were fun. Standing about poking a bonfire is one of the slow joys of life in the open air. In summer, we mowed grass, clipped hedges, and watered just about anything that was green. I was never sure whether the application form I'd filled in for the job actually said no work between meals, but the drier days were relaxing enough with plenty of time for reading.

When we had to put in a full day's work it went like this.

With military precision, at 8.00 am sharp we would arrive at the hut and have tea. Not fifteen minutes later, we would burst into action by stepping outside.

After some professional conferring as to choice of tools, we would load our three-wheel vehicle (top speed 15 mph) and work continuously for an hour and fifteen minutes. At this critical point, someone was sent back to the hut to put the kettle on.

By 10.00 am we'd all be back in the hut for a quick thirty-minute tea break. After discussing any possible conflicts between our ability to work and the weather, we would again venture forth and continue with our raking or mowing, until noon. We would then disappear for our well-earned lunch break. I lived about a fifteen-minute walk away, so it made sense for me to start timing my lunch hour when I got home (George's idea – he did the same). About an hour-and-a-half later we would return to be refreshed by more tea.

Now this is where we put in some concentrated effort.

We would work, without stop, well, without stopping very much, for an hour and three quarters. Again someone would be sent back to the hut to put the kettle on. This journey could take about four minutes if we were at the far end of the campus and if we rushed – but we gardeners were too wise to rush. It just wasn't the done thing.

By 3.00 pm we would all have a nice sit down and a leisurely cup of tea. If the weather was fine and George had finished his newspaper we would have to "get mobile" again, a term derived from George's military training.

Even on some of the most gruelling of long days we would have packed up by 4.45 pm, knowing that we had done our bit and had to leave at 5.00 pm. This exhausting life is not for everyone, and without sufficient supplies of tea I don't see how this level of output could be achieved.

I soon learnt that in time of war or peace the Welsh have always relied on a nice cup of tea and a sit down to restore their spirits. So make yourself a cup of tea, sit down and do some vacant staring out of the window. It'll make all the difference, you'll see.

On my return to the States, it took some time for me to adapt to drinking coffee again. It doesn't have the same effect as tea and it certainly hasn't got the ability to stir memories of my time across the pond.

I'll have to go back some day.

THE NEWSLETTER

Although sponsored by the Parochial Church Council of St Michael & All Angels, Talley, *Y Llychau* is intended to be of interest to the whole community and not just the church congregation. It is available to any person living in the area who would like a copy.

It is YOUR Newsletter, so please consider writing an article (or better still, a series of articles) to include in it. Without sufficient contributions from readers *Y Llychau* will not have a future. Your article could be on any subject that you think would be of interest to other readers. Pieces relating to Talley or Cwmdu will be particularly welcome.

Roger Pike
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THE NEXT ISSUE

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

For contributions written in English or Welsh that require translating
Saturday 22nd July 2017 (to allow time for translation)

For contributions written in either language (English **and/or** Welsh)
that do not need to be translated
Saturday 29th July 2017