



GELLIGAER TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No. 42

FEBRUARY 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This newsletter is produced by GHS Committee in the absence of a newsletter editor. If anyone would like to volunteer to edit the next issue, please contact GHS website to discuss it.

GHS sends best wishes for a speedy return to good health to David Mills, a longstanding member of GHS who has served the Society in a variety of roles including editing *Gelligaer Times* issues 25-40 and thorough researcher.

RECENT EVENTS

GHS November meeting – GHS member, Carwyn Hughes, gave an interesting presentation entitled *Patagonia, where Welsh meet Spanish, 1865-2019*. His in-depth knowledge of the geography and history of the area coupled with his penetrating conversations with local people during a recent visit to Patagonia, made this a very worthwhile talk.

GHS December meeting – There was a short illustrated talk *Gelligaer's underground Tramways* by Greg Buick and a Christmas quiz devised by GHS vice chair, Judith Jones. The attendance was disappointing but not unexpected in view of the cold weather and members' many other commitments at this time of year.

Thanks to committee members, Ann Pinch and Susan Price, for assisting with serving tea/coffee and mince pies, and to Judith Jones for her efficiency in running both the members-only raffle (won by Sheila Chapman, at whose request it was re-drawn at the January meeting when Nigel Brake was the winner) and the *open* raffle. Thanks to those who donated prizes, as well as everyone else who contributed to a successful evening.

GHS also takes this opportunity to thank Diane Walker and her staff at Llancaiach Fawr, not only for ensuring the refreshments had a distinctly Christmas flavour, but also for their efforts accommodating our needs throughout the year

Friday 24 January – There were two events in Gelligaer.

GHS was well represented in the sizeable crowd that gathered in Gelligaer Square at 11.30 am to hear Dr. Elin Jones outline the life of *Llywelyn Bren, our Forgotten Hero!* before CCBC Mayor, Councillor Julian Simmonds, unveiled the memorial. This photograph shows Dr. Elin Jones and Chris Jones-Jenkins on either side of the memorial. The information board includes Chris Jones-Jenkins's reconstruction



drawing of the area at the time of Llywelyn Bren (the original drawing hangs in the nearby Health Centre) and is mounted on a stand constructed from oak from Llancaiach. Oak from the same source was used for the plaques presented to those



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involved in the project (including Drs. Stuart Broonfield and Elin Jones of GHS). After the unveiling, those attending were invited to Harp Inn to enjoy a warming tasty bowl of cawl following by bara brith and Caerphilly cheese.

At 7 pm, GHS members were among the large congregation in St. Catwg's Church, Gelligaer, for the **Plygain** (traditional Welsh carols) organised by Dr. Elin Jones. A number of groups and individuals took part, singing old Welsh carols unaccompanied in this ancient church. The carol composed by Sir Huw Dafydd, the rector of Gelligaer in the 1520s, was performed in the church for the first time in centuries.

GHS January meeting – Following the practice of recent years, the meeting started at 11am. The meeting opened with a tribute to late Vida Holley, a much-respected long-time member of this Society. Carolyn Jacob, well-known to many for her work in Merthyr Library for many years, gave an interesting talk entitled *An update on the obituaries project (which includes parish of Gelligaer)*. That was followed by lunch and conversation in the café, and, about 1.30 pm, the audience returned to the Barn to listen to Steve Brewer speak on *Lost buildings of Merthyr*. Both talks were very interesting as witnessed by the audience questions and comments.

Thursday 30 January – GHS was represented at CCBC's **commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day** at Penallta House when Holocaust Survivor, Dr Martin Stern, spoke of his personal experience of the Holocaust.

TRIBUTE TO LATE VIDA HOLLEY

Her many friends in the Society were saddened to hear of the passing of Vida Holley in January 2020. A kind and friendly lady, Vida was highly respected within GHS and elsewhere. She worked behind the scenes to support local history researches. Long-standing members of the Society will recall the delicious home-made mince pies she brought to Society December meetings when they were held in Bargoed Library. On behalf of officers, committee and members of GHS, a message of sympathy was sent to her husband Fred and son John, and the Society was represented at the funeral.

The world is a poorer place for her passing.

GHS PROJECTS

GHS WWI project closed in winter 2018-19, but the database of names on local war memorials is still on the Society website and any additional information available can be added.

GHS is very pleased to hear that not only is Mansel Powell currently using the database of names of WWI casualties on **Pontlottyn War Memorial** but will contact the Society with additional information that he uncovered. If this is happening in any other communities, please contact www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk to let us know.

GHS Diamond project will run until the Society celebrates this milestone in 2021-22 season.



Some members and friends are researching aspects of life and work in various parts of the parish during the nineteenth century in preparation for a publication in Diamond Jubilee year. More volunteer researchers will be welcome. Readers with access to the internet may like to look at some of the websites listed below for information about local people and places in the nineteenth century, a century that saw industrialisation and urbanisation roll southwards through the parish. (N.B. if you do not have internet access at home, it is available in your local library.)

USEFUL WEBSITES	
Website link	What to look at
https://newspapers.library.wales/home	Newspapers 1804-1919
https://www.ancestry.com/	Genealogy



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https://places.library.wales/	Parish tithe maps (dated about 1840)
https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/printed-material/thebluebooks/	The Blue Books (education report 1847)
If you find other useful websites, please send link to chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.cco.uk so it can be added to this list in a future newsletter.	

SOURCES

Recently, an Ystrad Mynach resident gifted the following three Gelligaer Urban District Council publications to GHS

1. Abstract of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 1938

Chairman of GUDC – Councillor Richard Williams, J.P., Tirphil

Chairman of GUDC Finance Committee – Councillor W. J. Morgan, Bargoed

GUDC Treasurer C. J. Samuel, who issued this document, subject to audit, in October 1938.

Cyril John Samuel and his wife, Sarah, were listed in The Graig, Hengoed, in the 1939 Register. Born in Pembrokeshire on 1 September 1879, he was one of the sons of Baptist Minister, David Samuel, and his wife Annie (née Lewis). When the 1881 census was taken, he was with his mother and siblings in the household of his maternal grandparents in Rock Villa, Saundersfoot, while his father (Baptist minister at Saundersfoot) was listed as a visitor in a household in Lampeter Velfrey (perhaps he had been taking Sunday services in the chapel there). The birthplaces of his siblings suggest the family lived in the Oystermouth area in the mid 1880s before moving to Llangyfelach where they were at the time of the 1891 and 1901 censuses. In the former, Cyril John Samuel is listed as a scholar while by the time of the latter he was a solicitor's clerk. His whereabouts at the time of the 1911 census are unclear. His marriage to Sarah Jones was registered in Merthyr Tydfil registration district in the June quarter 1912. Research in the local press and/or GUDC records in Glamorgan Archives may shed more light on his service for GUDC. His death was registered in East Glamorgan registration district in March quarter 1960.

2. Treasurer's Accounts 1965-66

Chairman of GUDC – Councillor Douglas Williams, J.P.

Chairman of GUDC Finance Committee – Councillor D. B. Cooke

GUDC Treasurer – Walter Hicks, O.B.E., F.I.M.T.A., F.S.A.A. This, his eighth Abstract of Accounts, was submitted on 6 June 1966. After nearly nine years' service to GUDC, he retired on 31 March 1967.

3. Treasurer's accounts 1966-67

Chairman of GUDC – Councillor Algina Williams, J.P.

Chairman of GUDC Finance Committee – Councillor D. B. Cooke

GUDC Treasurer – H. E. B. Matthews, F.I.M.T.A., who took over as treasurer on 1 April 1967, submitted his first Abstract of Accounts on 8 June 1967.

Each of these booklets offer interesting insights into GUDC's activities at the time.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please see GHS programme 2019-20 at the end of this newsletter and the speakers and talks for the conference SATURDAY 21 MARCH (for which booking is essential – application form on www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk

From time-to-time, GHS is informed of events and activities relating to history and heritage as well as the performing arts. These are frequently announced at GHS monthly meetings but readers who seek up-to-date information and contact details are advised to check the following websites for details:-

- <http://www.merthyr-history.com/> (blog, *The Melting Pot*, about heritage and culture of Merthyr)
- <http://merthyrtydfilheritage.blogspot.com/2013/10/forthcoming-events.html> (calendar of events in Merthyr Tydfil and surrounding area including Rhymney, Merthyr and Cynon Valleys)



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- <http://www.mths.co.uk/?LMCL=uuMTAI> (Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society, scroll down for calendar of forthcoming events)
- <https://vanguardcaerphilly.org/> (Vanguard Centre, Van Road URC, Caerphilly – contact 02920 866578 or Hello@VanguardCaerphilly.co.uk -- lunchtime and evening concerts)
- <https://glamarchives.gov.uk/> (Glamorgan Archives host some interesting talks)
- <http://www.gwentarchives.gov.uk/> -- (Gwent Archives host some interesting talks and short courses).
-

'THE STORY OF BLACKWOOD'
200 YEARS OF HISTORY & PROGRESS
APRIL 4TH 2020
BLACKWOOD MINERS' INSTITUTE

Pontllanfraith & District Local History Society & guest speakers
presents a series of illustrated talks on the auditorium screen.

1. Parishes & manors of Bedwelty & Mynyddiswyn – Monks, musters, mills and the plague.
2. John Hodder Moggridge of Woodfield Park and how he created the village of Blackwood.
3. The Industrial Revolution – how canals, rail roads & coal mines caused the need for a village.
4. Housing – 19th century development of the village and its growth in the 20th century.
5. Social conditions – parish relief, welfare societies, education, religion and crime.
6. Politics – industrial and social unrest, Chartism, and their effect on Blackwood people.
7. Eat, drink and be merry! How the people of Blackwood spent their leisure time.

To accompany the presentations there will be display stands in the bar room from various local organisations: Gwent Archives, Big Pit Mining Museum, the Chartist Society, Gwent Family History Society, Pontllanfraith & District Local History Society, Fleur de Lis History Society. A display of old photographs, maps, posters and booklets, copies of which can be purchased.

Exhibition stands open at 9.00 am. and presentations start at 10.00 am.

Bar open for the purchase of tea, coffee and alcoholic drinks.

Tickets @ £7.50 including lunch available from the Institute.



J.H. Moggridge's Woodfield Park

Researched, drawn and produced by Lyn Paak



Two worker's houses

Printed by Iselyn Heritage Maps, Grove Park, Blackwood, NP22 1DE. © 2019



Glamorgan Family History Society
Family History Fair

At Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre, CF48 1UT

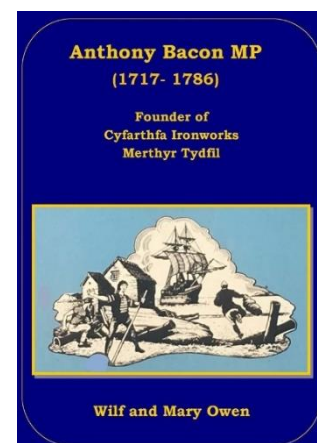
Saturday 26th September 2020

10am – 3pm

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

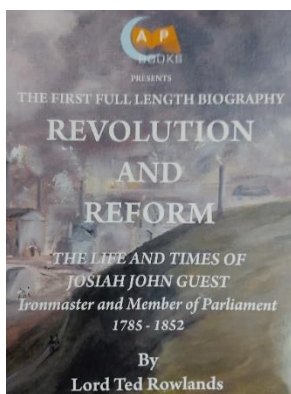
HOW, WHERE AND WHEN TO SEE THE BIRDS OF MALLORCA

A comprehensive guide to 340 species of birds, covering 31 sites across the island, by Neville Davies is in A5 format and can be ordered (cost £12.99 including p+p) by emailing Neville on wildmajorca@gmail.com Neville has given talks to GHS and contributed to some past issues of *Gelligaer Times*



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REVOLUTION AND REFORM: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSIAH JOHN GUEST by Lord Ted Rowlands.

Obtainable (£12.99 + £2.50p&p) from CAP Books, 3 Rectory Close, Dowlais, CF48 3RD

ANTHONY BACON MP (1717-1786) - FOUNDER OF CYFARTHFA IRONWORKS MERTHYR TYDFIL.

Obtainable (£6) from joint authors, Wilf and Mary Owen, marywilf@hotmail.co.uk

MERTHYR HISTORIAN Volume 30 (2019)

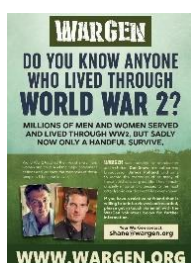
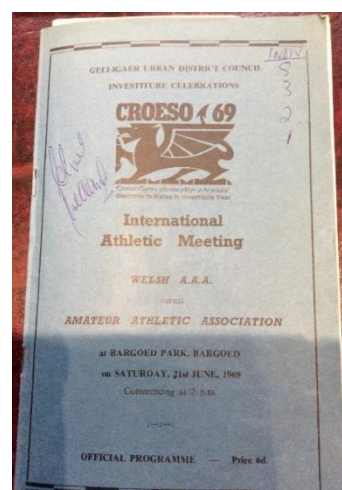
Published by Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society and edited by Christine Trevett and Huw Williams, it features a tribute to Dr. T. Fred Holley at 90 and has a variety of interesting articles

PLACES MAKE HISTORY by Malcolm Llywelyn is a book about Merthyr place-names and a tribute to teacher and artist, Dewi Bowen. Contact lyfraubrynach@btinternet.com

ATHLETICS

GHS member Clive Williams has recently informed GHS that 2019 marks half a century since the first international athletics meeting was held on Bargoed Park (see photograph of front cover of the souvenir programme). Clive, an athlete of note, earned Welsh honours not only on the track but also in the boardroom. Well-known as a writer and broadcaster on athletics, he contributed several articles to *Gelligaer* volume 24 (2017) and is currently working on an article covering all of Wales' athletics matches. Clive concludes his message to GHS with this about the present Bargoed Park and RVAC:

Sadly the track doesn't look good and as such cannot be used for athletics meetings, although Rhymney Valley Athletics Club is very active at the moment operating from Blackwood.



A REMINDER ABOUT DAN SNOW'S WARGEN PROJECT.

If you have any memories of WW2 or you know someone, a family member, a friend or neighbour, please check out the website and consider participating in this project.



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Studying the history and heritage of the area covered by
the former Gelligaer parish and Gelligaer Urban District since 1961
PROGRAMME : 2019-2020

2019	Speaker	Topic
Sept 25	Les James	Zephaniah Williams
	<i>Gelligaer</i> volume 26 will be launched before this meeting (refreshments from 6.15 pm)	
Oct 30	Huw Williams	Merthyr Tydfil and the Heads of the Valleys: 1830s and a Decade of Crisis
Nov 27	Carwyn Hughes	Patagonia, where Welsh meet Spanish, 1865 -2019
Dec 11	A Winter Medley -- Short Portraits of Decembers Past, a quiz and raffle	
	An informal evening with Christmas refreshments	
2020	Speaker	Topic
Jan 29 <u>11.00 a.m. start</u>	Carolyn Jacob and Steve Brewer	A Merthyr Miscellany -- Two talks (one before and one after lunch)
	Lunch can be purchased at Llancaiach Fawr	
Feb 26	Dr. Daryl Leeworthy	The Life and Times of Elaine Morgan
CONFERENCE		
Saturday March 21	<i>The Wars after the War: the long-lasting effects of the Great War upon Wales and the world in the months after the Armistice</i>	Dr. Gethin Matthews Swansea University
	<i>The Llangorse crannog: a unique vision of Wales in the Viking Age</i>	Dr. Alan Lane Cardiff University
	<i>Knights Hospitaller Medical</i>	Roger Morgan
	<i>Workers Hero? William Abraham 'MABON'</i>	David Maddox O.B.E.
	Booking essential -- application form available on www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk	
March 25	Roger Evans	A Victorian Valleys Village School
April 29	Dr. Stuart Broomfield	Pontllytyn and the Irish/Welsh riot of 22 August 1869
May 27	GELLIGAER PARISH LECTURE	
	Judith Jones	140 years of sheep-shearing matches in Gelligaer parish
June 24	A.G.M.	
	Dic Felstead	1913 Pengam Pageant
MONTHLY MEETINGS:		
WHEN? Last Wednesday most months (EXCEPT December [second Wednesday] and July and August [no monthly meeting])		
START TIME 7.00 p.m. (EXCEPT January when it is 11.00 a.m. start)		
WHERE? Llancaiach Fawr [CF46 6ER]		
Membership for 2019-2020 is £10. Meetings are open to non-members (who are invited -to contribute £2)		
FOR FURTHER DETAILS of GHS events, activities and publications visit www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk or follow GHS on Facebook or Twitter		

