



# GELLIGAER TIMES

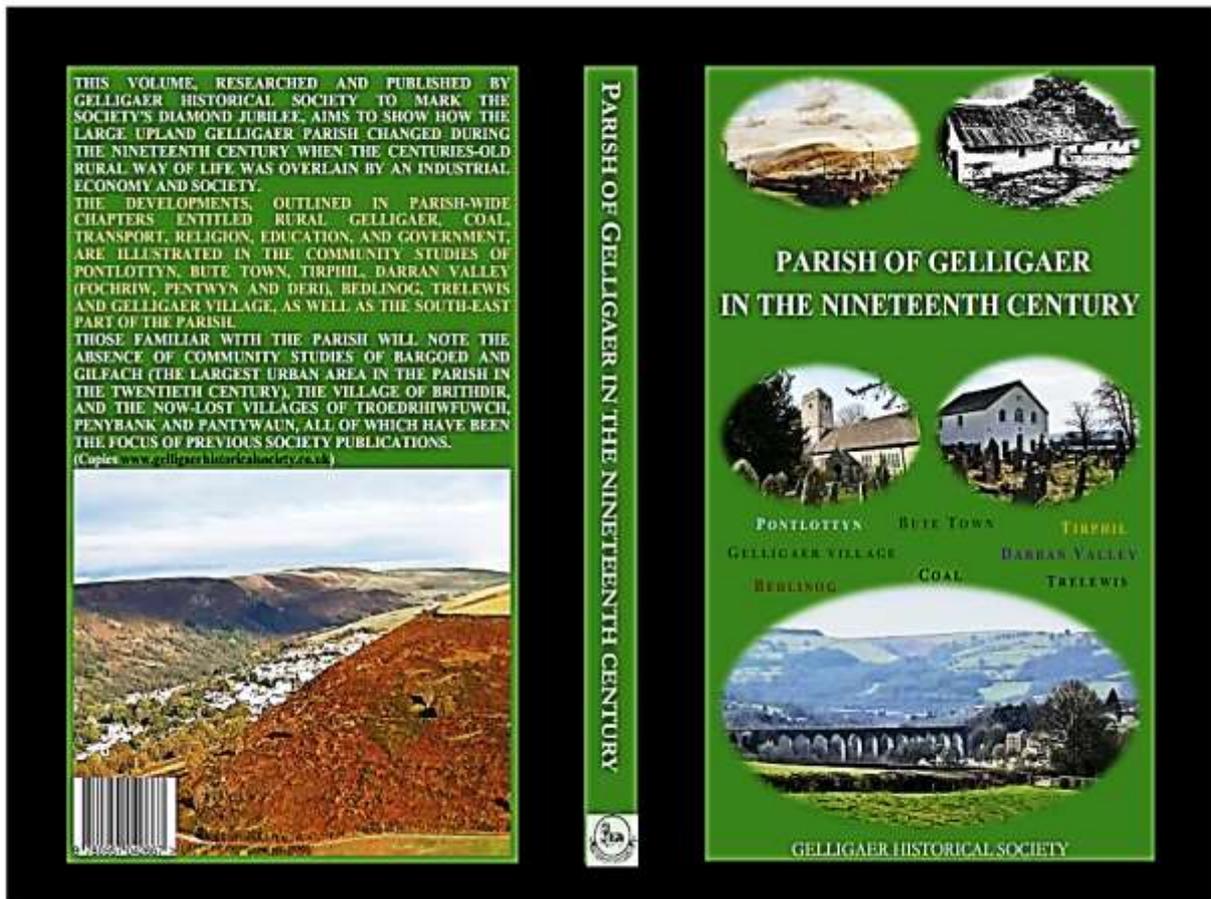


NEWSLETTER OF GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2021 ISSUE NUMBER 59

## BOOK LAUNCH

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 the Society will hold a launch of its much-anticipated publication, which forms part of the celebrations during its **DIAMOND JUBILEE** year. The launch will be conducted via Zoom and commence at 6 p.m. Anyone who wishes to join the event should contact: [sandyhawick@outlook.com](mailto:sandyhawick@outlook.com)



On previous similar occasions the Society has provided celebration cakes. This, of course, will not be possible this time. However, participants may wish to indulge themselves with their own choice of refreshments. Although, because this will be a virtual meeting you may wish to indulge in a zero-calorie virtual cake.

**The book is currently at the printers and should be available by the end of November.**

It is a hardback book of 316 pages (sized 23 by 16 cms – between A5 and A4) including photographs and maps.

**Price £10 plus £3.25 postage/packaging**

[Click here to email us for payment details](#)

**Next Meeting: *Archaeology in the North of Gelligaer Parish***

**When: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November**

**Where: Llancaiach Fawr or by Zoom**

**Time: 7 p.m.**

**To get a Zoom link please email Greg Buick:**

**webmaster@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk**

## **NEWS HEADLINES IN November 1961**

50,000 women in 60 cities participate in the inaugural Women Strike for Peace (WSP) against nuclear proliferation

### **GREAT BRITAIN LIMITS IMMIGRATION FROM COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES**

The ban on the book *Tropic of Cancer* by Henry Miller, previously banned in the UK and USA because of its obscenity, is lifted, and over 1 million copies were sold in that year.

German Democratic Republic closes the border with West Germany and installs barbed wire fences

What should have appeared in the national, and possibly the worldwide press, BUT DID NOT

## ON 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 1961 GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY HELD ITS INAUGURAL MEETING

However, a local matter **did** appear in the national press two weeks later (5<sup>th</sup> December 1961) when *THE TIMES* carried the headline

### Burning Tip making village famous for its smell

The account was about the village of **Bedlinog**. The reporter starting his account *Unfortunately for Bedlinog it is now becoming famous for its smell "Follow your nose and you'll find the place" said a woman pushing a pram.*

### Another sixtieth birthday

In June 1969 the Society was involved in another sixtieth anniversary celebration. The Gelligaer Urban District Council was formed in 1909 and, as part of their celebrations, they financed the publication of *Gelligaer* Volume VI edited by D. Gethin Thomas. In his foreword the late Mr A.T. (Fred) Evans the then M.P. for the Caerphilly Division wrote:

*I am proud of the work the Society has done. The publications of its researches at regular intervals has kept alive the very great public interest which was aroused by the Gelligaer Story. Their use in the schools has been invaluable in providing a meaningful concept of the study of history, enabling a lively interest in the locality to lead into a wider understanding of the forces which made us what we are.*

The editor, D. Gethin Thomas commented that two friends of the Society, *writing in the context of castles, abbeys and fine residences of Glamorgan recently described the Gelligaer part of the county as an "empty quarter" as though it lay in some far away Arabian desert but, despite the absence of magnificent buildings and stately homes, the parish possesses a great historical heritage and it is hoped that the reader will find some pleasure, and the inhabitants much pride, in the story of the inheritance on which the life of the area had been founded.*

He went on to point out that Volume VI was compiled mainly from pages from *The Gelligaer Story* and subsequent lectures and articles published by the Society. One of the chapters headed *The People* contains sub-headings: *Their Names, Their Occupations, Their Poverty, Their Immorality, Their Illiteracy, Their Mortality*. Each one of these sub-headings provides the reader with fascinating and sometimes amusing details. In *Their Names* we discover Edward, son of William Edward recorded by the rector in the burial register of 1725 as *Little Ned*. In 1786 a pauper Elizabeth John was described when she was put to rest as *commonly called Bessi Fawr*. In *Their Immorality* sub-heading are references to children described in the parish registers as either as "supposed, base, bastard, reputed or illegitimate" offspring. It is pointed out that these immoral adventures were indulged in by *all classes to the dismay of the Parson* who was moved to write a separate page of his register about an entry when a leading parishioner of Cascade House, was guilty of such misconduct *Mary the reputed daughter of Mr William Perrott by Mary Edward August 11th 1800 age then one year 10 months*. The dispirited Parson continues *Aetas pareatum perjor avis tulit. Nos nequiores mox daturus. Progenium vitio solem* which translated "means the age of our fathers, worse than our grandfathers still more wicked us to produce an offspring even more wicked than ourselves".

The table of contents shows that the topics covered started with the *Appearance of man* and ended with *Local Government*; with intervening topics such as early Christians, Llewelyn Bren, Tudors, and the parish tithes. It was therefore a swift, but concise tour of the parish from approximately 4,000 years ago until the twentieth century.

Readers are reminded that the Society has a stock of some of the previous issues of *Gelligaer* and other publications. Please visit the Society's web site for details of availability.

### **October meeting at Llanacaich Fawr and by Zoom**

Christopher Jones-Jenkins, someone who has in the past held several positions in the Society, gave an interesting presentation "The Journey to Gelligaer". Perhaps he could have added "with a diversion to Saint Athan" which he introduced towards the end of his talk under a topic he introduced as "rambles". The thrust of his talk was about how he became involved in the Llewellyn Bren project - which eventually led to his designing the information board now situated near the health centre at Gelligaer, looking towards Twyn Y Castell, the home of local princes. Some photos used by Chris appear later in this newsletter. The ones he used to illustrate the climb up the inside of the tower at St Catwg's were "entertaining" and thankfully for most of the audience meant that they will not have to undertake such an adventure.



The illustration board at Gelligaer

## Glyngae Primary School and Roll of Honour by *Royston Smith*



On Thursday 11 November, David Mills and myself represented the Society as guests at Glyn-Gaer Primary School's Remembrance Service. The school, chosen to be the recipient of the WW1 Roll of Honour removed from Gelligaer's Horeb chapel, was hoping to have it installed for their school service but due to COVID restrictions the installation had been delayed, and the plaque, now in storage, will eventually be fitted on an inside wall of the Infants School, which is an appropriate building having been built in 1914 as shown by the photograph, to the left, of the plaque on the outside of the building

However, a paper version of the Roll (photo on the right) was on display in the Primary School as part of their display. A large screen with a video clip frozen in time in the trenches was the backdrop for the school hall decorated for the occasion with its walls embellished with poppies made by the children and a row of trays filled with sand surrounded by glowing tea-lights, centre stage.

At 11'clock a two-minute silence followed by the Last Post, beautifully played by Iestyn on the cornet, was the introduction to the service. The children, one by one, entered the hall carrying a small white cross in hand, saluted whilst calling out the name of a soldier who is named in the Roll of Honour before placing the cross in the tray of sand and then taking their place sitting in a wide circle on the hall floor. Each boy and girl scholar played their individual part to perfection until all the casualties named on the plaque were honoured.





What followed was an enactment of a family at war, with the opening scene of the eldest son, dressed in uniform, informing his parents that he had enlisted. "Oh, we are so proud of you" each parent said as they hugged their brave lad.

The eldest daughter, too young to serve, announced that she had joined the Royal Ordnance Factory, whilst the two youngest family members helped the 'home front' by becoming a nurse and Boy Scout.

Four lads wearing Brodie helmets played a poignant scene of Life in the Trenches with one soldier writing a letter home to Mam & Dad telling them how scared he was, yet, on hearing the cries of a wounded comrade lying on the battlefield, forgot his fears and crawled across open ground to help him back to safety.



The programme ended with the children singing two songs, accompanied by music teacher Bill, on guitar. The first song was *Take me back to dear old Blighty* followed by 'The ones we left behind', written and composed by the children. What was noticeable throughout the whole service, was that every child had learnt the words by heart.

The guests: Councillor Wynn David represented the Gelligaer Community Council (and was previously the Head teacher at Glyn-Gaer Primary), Marian Whiteman, represented the Governing Body, Victoria Bodenham who represented the Local Authority and who is currently leading on Expressive Arts, Sean Molino, an ex-service man who over the weeks had given the children an insight into army life with daily exercise in the schoolyard.

The staff and scholars should be very proud of their performance and GHS are delighted to have the school as associate members.

## **Morgan Jones M.P. Information Board at Bargoed Park**

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Wayne David M.P. for Caerphilly constituency, unveiled an information board near the main gates at Bargoed Park. He had unveiled a similar board at Morgan Jones Parc, Caerphilly - see the report in *Gelligaer Times* August 2021. In his short, but informative, speech he mentioned that the board in Bargoed Park was an appropriate location because Morgan Jones had lived a couple of hundred yards away in Park Crescent, which also served as his constituency office. He reminded those present that Morgan Jones had been imprisoned during WWI because he was a conscientious objector. However, at the outbreak of WWI Morgan had to wrestle with his pacifist beliefs because he realised the horrific threats posed by fascism; ultimately, he took the view that he would support the war.

Wayne David mentioned the presence of GHS members at the unveiling and the Gelligaer link to Morgan Jones, saying that Gelligaer was where Morgan Jones had been born and raised. He went on to mention the efforts by GHS President Elin Jones in successfully campaigning to get the information boards erected; suggesting that she may consider trying to persuade the council to erect an information board in Gelligaer; his comment raising a few smiles from those present.



## **GHS attends the annual Chartist convention at Saint Woolos Cathedral, Newport**

On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2021 the Society had a stall at the above-named event. It was “manned” by Judith Jones and Ian Williams. Throughout the day several people visited the stall and showed an interest in what the Society does. The morning session of the convention was chaired by our President Dr Elin Jones. A comprehensive report on the convention has been drafted by Sue Allen and will appear in the next newsletter.



On the right Ian with GHS member Sue Allen and her husband Roger

After the convention GHS President Dr Elin Jones travelled to The Cwtsh, Arts centre near the Handpost, Stow Hill, Newport where she attended a book signing event for her recent publication *Hanes yn y tyr / History Grounded*. However, to make this event happen Elin enlisted the aid of Judith Jones and during the lunch break at the convention, they hurtled around to obtain a stock of books. Elin wishes to record her grateful thanks to Judith for her assistance. Perhaps in a few weeks' time the speed cameras will reveal some of those hectic journeys. For details of further events at the Cwtsh follow this link [www.cwtsh.org](http://www.cwtsh.org).



Serious business. Here is Elin keeping her eyes on the cash flow at the book signing.

## Views from the Church Tower at Gelligaer

The photos on the left were taken by David Blatchford in the 1950s, on the right are photos by Chris Jones-Jenkins taken in 2019. The Blatchford glass slides were literally rescued from a rubbish skip by former GHS President, the late Islwyn Hughes. Most of the slides were donated to the Winding House Museum and have been scanned into a computer.



From the top of the tower



Is anyone able to identify these three men?



Looking into the body of the church from inside the tower

### **Another Chapel to close**

In previous editions of this newsletter there were photographs and details about the closure of Bryn Seion chapel, Ystrad Mynach. The Society has now heard the news that Ysgwyddgwyn Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Deri is due to close. The last service will be at 2 p.m. on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021. Further information and a brief history about that chapel will appear in the next newsletter

### **A new book**

Richard Suggett, *Painted Temples: Wallpaintings and Rood-screens in Welsh Churches, 1200–1800* (RCAHMW, 2021). xii + 366 pages with 275 illustrations. RRP £29.95.

Foreword by Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr Rowan Williams

To order: <https://rcahmw.gov.uk/painted-temples-wallpaintings-and-rood-screens-in-welsh-churches-1200-1800-by-richard-suggett/>

Or contact Nicola Roberts/Marisa Morgan-Tel. 01970 621248

### **THE 1921 CENSUS**

*FindMyPast* been chosen by The National Archives to make the 1921 Census, a detailed snapshot of 38 million lives, available online from **6 January 2022**. The information in the 1921 census will be very useful especially as that of 1931 was destroyed in a fire, and the 1941 count was cancelled due to the Second World War. Thus, the 1921 Census sets the scene for a key point in history. It was the first census to recognise divorce, and to capture people's employment details, so may reveal some interesting and surprising insights into family secrets

