



GELLIGAER TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Number 65 October 2022

Editor's Note

This edition is number **65**, a number that will probably be significant to most readers, but its significance may well disappear in the future. In fact its significance may well have already disappeared because of a Government decision to alter and delay the retirement age.

In the early 1900s life expectancy in the U.K. was in the region of 42 years, there was no time for a comfortable retirement as the retirement age was 70. Many never managed to live long enough to reach retirement age. In 1925 retirement age became 65, but married couples had to wait until both reached that age before they could draw their pension. In 2007 a significant decision was taken which would allow staged increases in the pension age to rise to 66 between April 2024 and April 2026; followed by an increase to 67 between April 2034 to April 2036. However, as most of us know, in 2020 it was decided that both men and women could retire at age 66. And it is due to rise to 67 in May 2026. Despite these, the debate still continues about a group of women who were disadvantaged by the changes and almost overnight found out that they would have to work until age 66 instead of 60 before they could draw their state pension. The reasons for setting a retirement age, not just in the U.K., are many and varied and possibly I will write more about that topic during my own well earned retirement.

I hope you find something interesting in this newsletter. The Society welcomes contributions for future newsletters; please send them to

www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk or chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk.

David Mills

In this newsletter:

The late Queen Elizabeth II

GHS news

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Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Born 21st April 1926 died 8th September 2022

The late Queen Elizabeth was born in Mayfair, London, the first child of the [Duke and Duchess of York](#) (later [King George VI](#) and [Queen Elizabeth](#)). Elizabeth's only sibling, [Princess Margaret](#), was born in 1930. Her father acceded to the throne in 1936 upon the abdication of his brother, [King Edward VIII](#), making Elizabeth the heir presumptive. Prior to that she had little prospect of becoming Queen.

During her reign the Queen made several notable speeches. However, probably her best known words were made in a speech delivered before she became Queen. On her 21st birthday in 1947 she said

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

She certainly fulfilled her promise.

On the death of her father George VI on 6th February 1952 Elizabeth acceded to the throne, but her coronation did not take place until 2nd June 1953.

During her long reign the late Queen saw many changes in society, not just in the U.K. Some events that she experienced are listed below:

1953-Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay were the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Nikita Krushchev wins a power struggle in Soviet Union after the death of Josef Stalin. Movies in the cinema: From Here to Eternity and Roman Holiday. The U.K. first tested a nuclear war head in Totem 1 which was detonated in South Australia.

1963- U.S.A President Kennedy assassinated. The “Profumo” scandal in the U.K. caused resignations from the cabinet.

1983-Inflation rate was 4.6%. An I.R.A. bomb exploded outside Harrods on 17th December. U.S.A. deployed Cruise missiles at the Greenham Common airbase. Motorola introduced mobile phones to the general public

2013- An amendment to the Queen’s speech expressing regret that it did not contain legislation on Britain’s E.U. membership was defeated (277-131)



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II arrives in Wales by train. On the left at Caernavon in 1968, on the right at Ystrad Mynach in 2014 before she opened a factory on the Penallta Industrial Estate.

Annual Conference

Saturday the 4th March 2023 has been booked with Llancaich Fawr. It is hoped that three speakers who were originally booked for the 2020 conference, which was postponed because of Covid restrictions, will attend; they are: David Maddox, Dr Gethin Mathews and Roger Morgan. The titles of their talks and the costs of admission will be announced as soon as possible.

September Meeting

At the start of the meeting on September 28th 2022 at Llancaiach Fawr, the audience observed a minute's silence in memory of the late Dr. Whitney Jones, a founder and life member of GHS. Attendance was fifty plus four Zoomers, who heard Dic Felstead give a fascinating and very poignant talk *Poets Exploding Like Bombs: Caerphilly in verse and the Spanish Civil War*.

Afterwards our President, Dr Elin Jones, officially launched *Gelligaer 28*, which has been dedicated to the memories of Nesta Jones (1920-2021), GHS President 2015-2021 and a Life Member and Dr Whitney R. D. Jones (1924 – 2022), a founder member and also a GHS Life member. Vol.28 contains sixteen articles, including an article by Dic Felstead which contains the two very evocative poems which he read during his talk.

Thanks to some behind the scenes work in the week prior to the talk, and on the night! by Kathryn Benson Dugdale and her husband James the sound system was the best it has ever been; all of the audience were able to hear the talk. Thanks, are also due to Sandy Halliday who once again carried out the task of ensuring the talk was available on zoom.

A Walk: *Judith Jones*

In early September GHS organised a local walk with Cardiff Archaeological Society. This was led by Dr. Edith Evans of Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust and started at Gelligaer where the group was waved off by GHS vice chair, David Mills.

Between Gelligaer Fort and Carn Y Bugail (the highest point on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common) Edith pointed out evidence of early man in the area, from Bronze Age to Mediaeval: cup-marked stones, Roman practice/marching camps, sections of Roman road, Capel Gwladys, platform houses and several tumuli and carns.

The following photographs appear by courtesy of Sandy Halliday



The first stop to look at the Roman Fort site



Dr Edith Evans pointing out cup marks on a stone on Gelligaer and Merthyr common to the somewhat windswept, but attentive group



Editor's note Is Greg Buick contemplating the possibility of returning the stone to a vertical position?

The following description is from [Coflein](#) "*On Gelligaer Common, about 60m to the north-east of a Roman Road formation, lies a post-Roman or Early Christian inscribed stone. As exposed it leans about 45deg. to the north and measures 2.5m long, its section 0.45m by 0.3m at base. It once bore an inscription near the base of its northern face that read NEFROIHI – “the stone of Nía-Froích”, apparently commemorating an Irish warrior, and dating to the late sixth to early seventh centuries. The stone was first noted by Edward Lhuyd in 1693, but the inscription is no longer visible.*"

If there's enough interest, Clive Andrewartha may do a short walk for members around Gelligaer village – **please** let the Society know if you are interested either via our website email: judithjones15@hotmail.co.uk

On 4th and 18th November Dr. Edith Evans is also leading a (free) two-day course for GHS members and members of Merthyr Tydfil Family History Group on the subject, Graveyard Recording. Edith says,

“The study of graveyards can reveal fascinating information about generations of family history taking place within one local community, be it a village or a small section of a city. The inscriptions on gravestones however, only tell part of the story. The style of memorials and their significance has changed over the centuries, from simple etched slabs to ornate mausoleums; they are social markers that can reflect moods and trends of the era. Through an understanding of the history behind this evolution we can take a closer look at the contents of a graveyard and record some of the more obscure details”.

There are still some places left for the course (either the first or both days) and if you wish to enrol, please email Judith for details, her email address is shown above.

The Nelson Historical Society

Some weeks ago GHS was contacted by Eirwen Mary Hanson who, along with her husband, had organised the running of the Nelson Historical Society. Regrettably, she announced that the Society had not re-started after the Covid lockdown periods and a decision had been made that it should be wound up. GHS were kindly offered the archives that had accumulated over the years, so a visit was made by David Mills to Mary's home. It transpires that the correct title of the Society is Nelson & Llancaich Civic & Historical Society. The documents were contained in several box files so, with the aid of Greg Buick and Roy Smith, they were “weeded” and anything that was thought to be of interest to GHS was retained, the remains were returned to Mary. It is proposed that over a period of time some of the documents, photos etc. will be reproduced in future newsletters.

One box contained a document headed *First coal mine in the U.K. ?*. It contained a quote from the history of Caerphilly Castle written by Rev. E.R. Roberts (Cynlais). The book was said to contain *The first record we have of coal mining in Wales is that of the comptotors or the Minister of State's accounts for the ninth year of the reign of Edward the First namely AD 1283, which reads as follows:*

Manerium de Kaerfilly and 6s 8p from the fishing waters of the Taff during the same period half yearly. From the mill at Llandivedon or llanfalon, nothing because it was destroyed in the war. From the farming of the coal mine, nothing, through lack of workmen on account of the war.

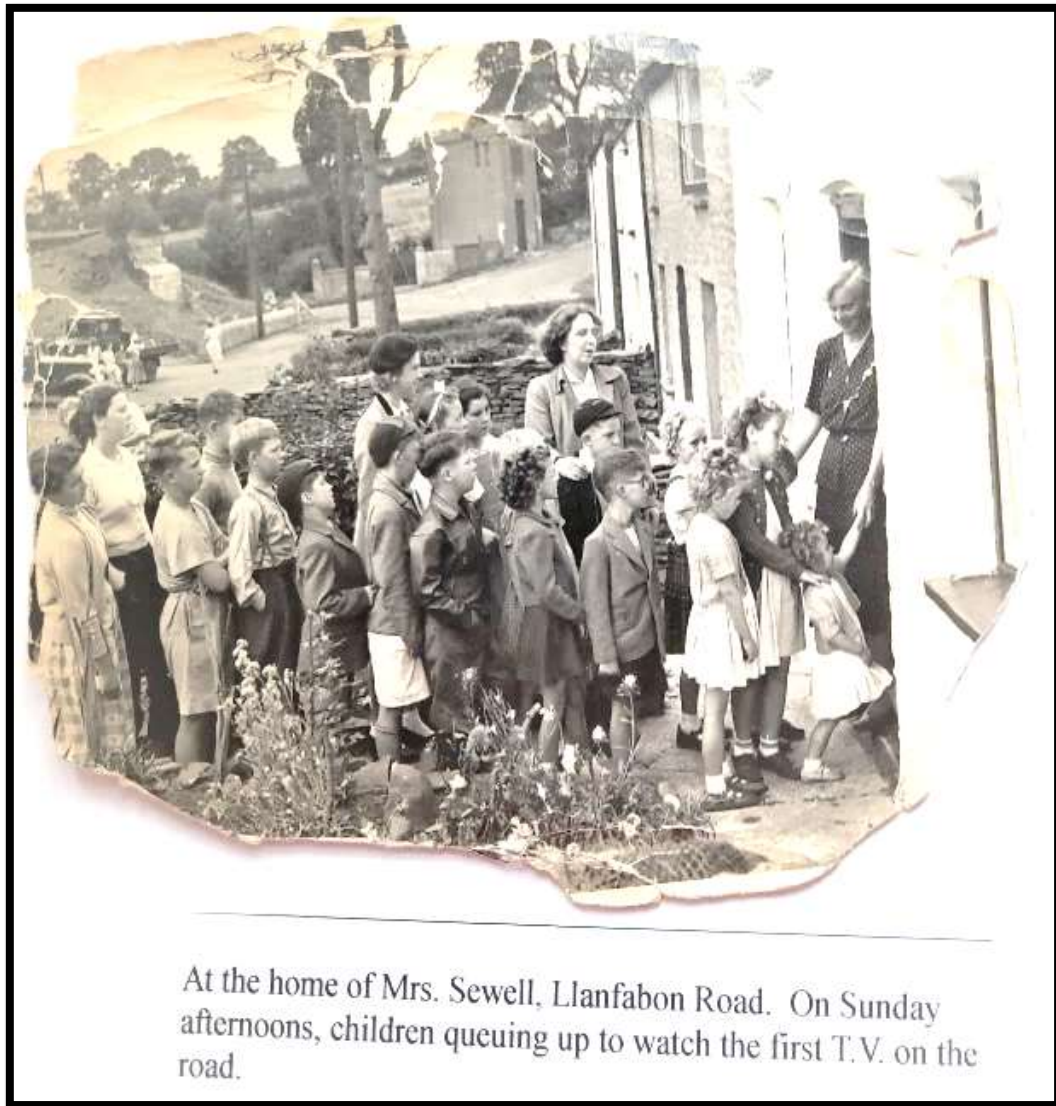
Another box contained a wallet, within which was a coin and a note:



**GEORGE III TWO PENNY PIECE
DATED 1797, FOUND UNDER
THE FLOOR BOARDS IN THE
NELSON INN IN 1919**



Moving to more modern times some readers may well remember the advent of television into our homes as depicted in the photograph below.



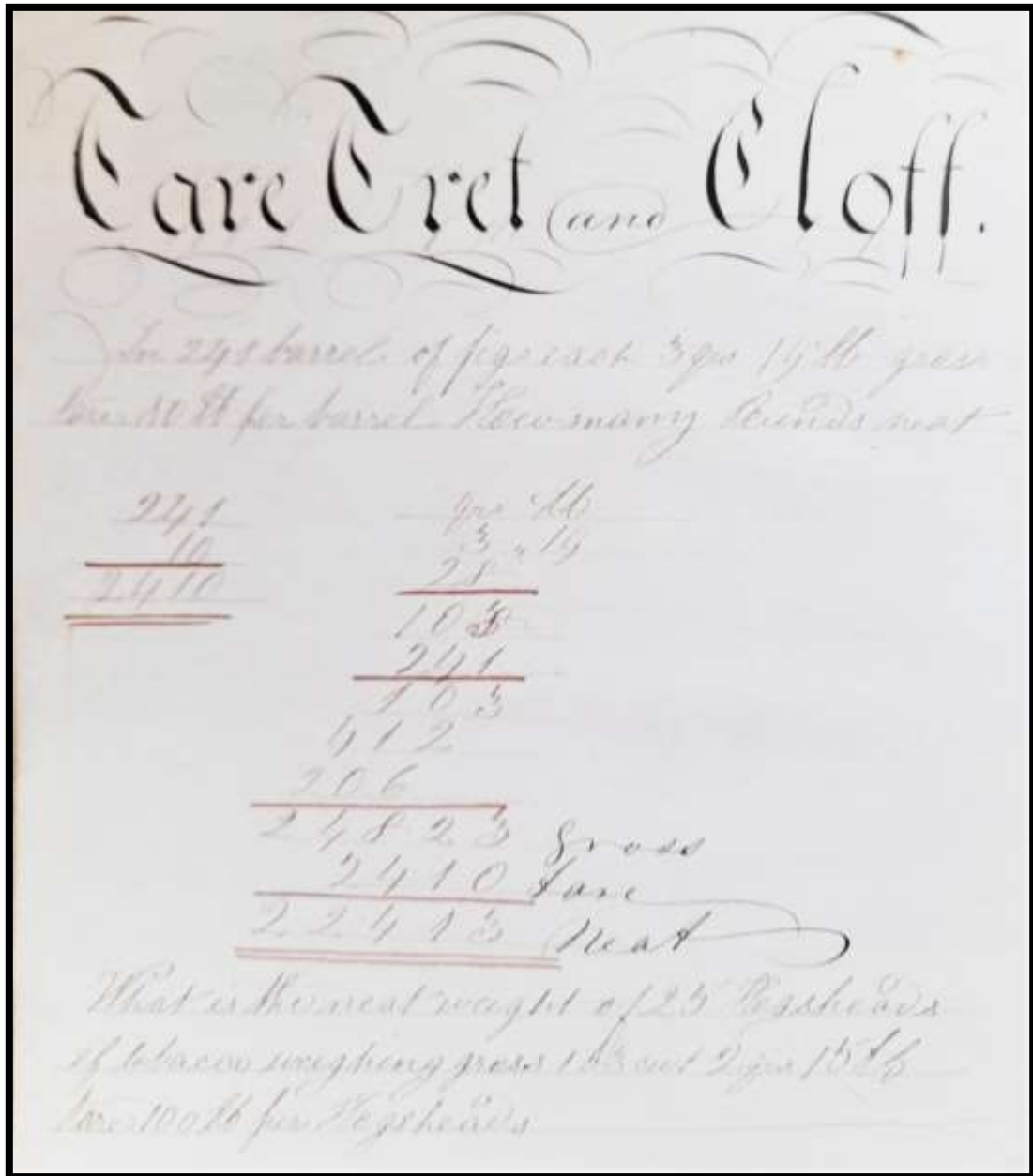
At the home of Mrs. Sewell, Llanfabon Road. On Sunday afternoons, children queuing up to watch the first T.V. on the road.

A Cyphering Book by David Mills

Our new journal *Gelligaer* volume 28 (2022) contains an essay by Annie Owen, *Summerfield Hall School For Girls*. The building (now a private residence) is on a narrow lane that starts opposite the Coal Hole pub, Gellihaf which leads down to the school and then to the road from Maesycwmmmer to Fleur de Lys. I have known of its existence for many years and was always told it was a “Dame School”. Annie’s essay coincided with me being shown a hard covered book in the possession of my aunt. It belonged to Leah Lewis of Twynffald house, Cefn Fforest, near Blackwood in the old parish of Bedwellty. My aunt being of the firm opinion that Leah attended Summerfield Hall School. However, I suspect she may well be wrong. On the first page is written *Leah Lewis Her Cyphering Book, 1860*. Annie’s research suggests that Summerfield Hall, a boarding school, was the only one of its kind in the area and was established in 1879. You will however observe from the examples of some of the pages in Leah’s book, which appear below, that she was well educated. But will I ever discover where she received her education?

Cyphering is a word that is not used much these days; a dictionary definition is: *the act or process of performing mathematical operations to find a value*. The book did not originate in the old parish of Gelligaer, however, Twyn y Ffald house is a short distance from the boundary between the old parishes so I feel the

origin of the book is close enough to be useful to anyone who is interested in the history of education in the area.



The meanings of the arcane words **Tare**, **Trett** and **Cloff** that appear at the top of the page are:

TARE - weight of a cask, package etc which is weighed with the commodity contained therein and an adjustment allowance made for same

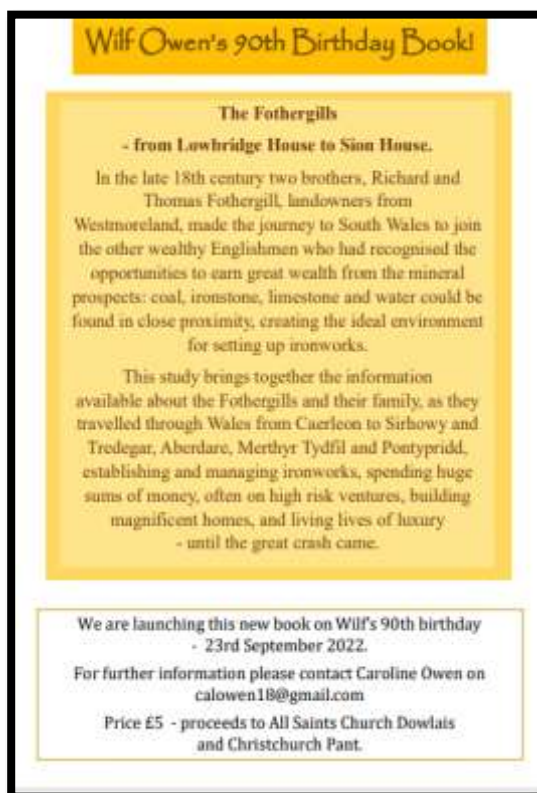
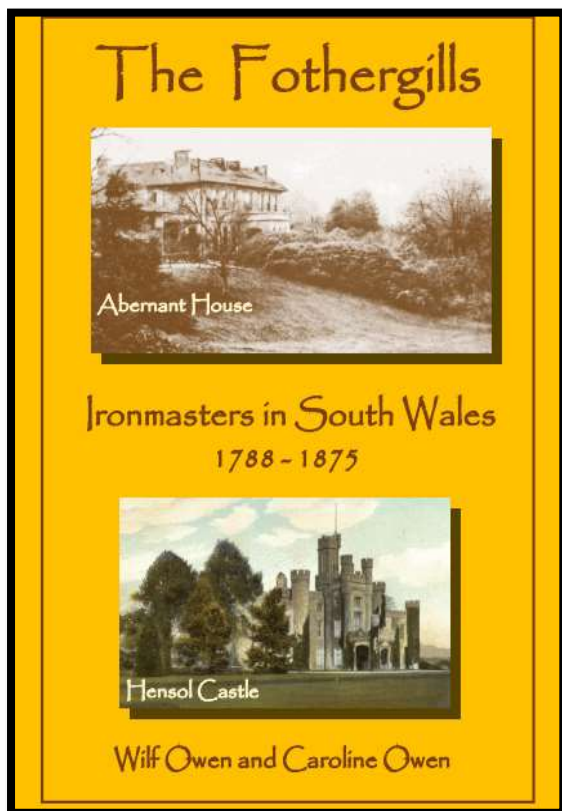
TRETT - an allowance of 4 pounds(weight) on every 104 pounds allowed to purchasers for deterioration of goods in transit

CLOFF - the difference between Tare and CLOFF is an allowance of 2 pounds (weight) in every hundredweight after TARE and TROTT are subtracted.

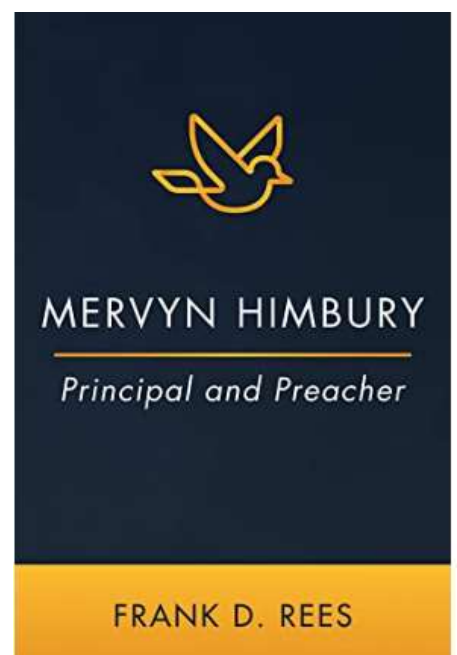
I also have a photocopy of a diary that originated from Twyn y Ffald House. It was started on 13th April 1872 with an entry *Maryanne Williams Forest Married*. Thereafter it continues, with deaths and marriages of local people being the most frequent entries, but every year was an entry *killed the pig*, followed by an account of how much had been spent on fattening it. The final entry, on 26th August 1882, is amusing and reads: - ***Had Leah new set of teeth £12.12.***) The website *measuring worth* calculates that present day equivalent is £1297. Whether or not this is the Leah who produced the cyphering book is not known; there were at least two, possibly three Leah Lewis, who at some time or other lived in Twyn y Ffald House or the adjoining Holly House.

New Publications

1. Readers may be interested in this book written by the well-known Merthyr Historian **Wilf Owen**, in conjunction with his daughter **Caroline**.



2. Some *Gelligaer Times* readers may remember that in 2018 GHS was contacted by Dr. Frank D. Rees, a Baptist pastor and academic theologian in Melbourne Australia. Dr. Rees sought help for his biography of Mervyn Himbury, an eminent Baptist preacher and academic who grew up in Ystrad Mynach and attended Lewis School Pengam. GHS was able to respond positively to Dr. Rees's request as several members of Ystrad Mynach's Facebook community shared photographs while LSP alumni among GHS members found photographs and information as well as useful memories to shed light on life in pre-WW2 LSP. Dr. Rees acknowledged the help and has been in touch again to tell GHS the biography is now available in kindle, hardback and paperback versions via Amazon. It includes a section on Mervyn Himbury's time in LSP as well as some information about his younger brother. For further information and some sample pages from the book, visit [Mervyn Himbury: Principal and Preacher eBook : Rees, Frank D.: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B098383838)



This photograph is of a poster that once hung in Brynseion chapel, Ystrad Mynach. When the chapel closed, GHS were invited to examine the books, photographs etc. and eventually the Society helped with the deposit of some items, including the poster, at the Glamorgan Archives.

TY-CWRDD, HENGOED
EGLWYS Y BEDYDDWYR

CYNHELIR
CYFARFODYDD
HANNER BLYNYDDOL
TR ISLWYS 19000
NOS SADWRN A'R SUL, MEHEFIN 3-4, 1950
DISGWYLIR I BREGETHU Y
PARCH. L. E. VALENTINE, M.A.
PHOS.

Trefn y oedfeun **NOS SADWRN** am 7 o'r gloch ym **MRYN SEION** **PRYNHAWN** SUL am 2.30 o'r gloch ym **MRYN SEION**
BORE SUL am 10.30 ar HENGOED NOS SUL am 9 ar HENGOED

AN ENGLISH SERMON WILL BE DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING
Cesglir Ymhob Oedfa - **Croeso Cynnes I Bawb**

CYFARFODYDD DATHLU
TRI-CHAN MLWYDDIANT YR ACHOS 1650-1950
MEHEFIN 5, 6, 7, 1950

PRYNHAWN LLUN am 2 o'r gloch **CWRDD DATHLU** ar **HENGOED**
Cadeirydd - Mr. T. LONGVILLE BOWEN, Meirther Tydfil (Llywydd Gymanfa Dwyreola Murgawg)
 Rhannau Arweiniol - Parch. J. ANEURIN THOMAS, Pwlltelyn **TE am 4 o'r gloch**
Cymedir rhan yn y Cwrdd hun, gan rhai Llywyddyr, a Gweinidogion.

NOS LUN am 6 o'r gloch **OEDFA BREGETHU** ar **HENGOED**
Cadeirydd - Parch. W. B. THOMAS, Beethilwyd (Cyn-Llywydd Gymanfa Murgawg)
 Rhannau Arweiniol - Parch. R. VAUGHAN JONES, D.A., Abercargoe
 Parch. W. ARTHUR EDWARDS (un o blant yr Eglwys), Caerwac, yn SAESNEG
 Parch. GWILYM MORRIS, Gwail Elfed, yn GYMRAEG

Pregethir gan y

PRYNHAWN, DYDD MARWTH, MEHEFIN 6, am 2 o'r gloch ar **HENGOED**
CWRDD HANESYDDOL
Llywydd - B. PRICE DAVIES, F.R.I.S.A. (un o blant o Eglwys), Bangor
 Rhannau Arweiniol - Parch. D. ISLWYN BEYNON, Rhydymay (Llywydd y Cwrdd Dathlu)
 Annerchir y Cyfarfod gan y Parch. G. R. M. LLOYD, B.A., B.D., B.Litt., Rhydymay ac "CYSYLLIAD HENGOED A ILSTON"
 TE am 4 o'r gloch

NOS FAWRTH, am 6 o'r gloch **OEDFA PREGETHU**, ar **HENGOED**
Llywydd - Parch. ESAIAS HOPKINS, B.A., Llanbradach Rhannau Arweiniol - Parch. D. LLEW. MORGAN, Pwlltelyn
 Brawd D. MERVYN HIMBURY, B.A., B.D. (un o blant yr Eglwys), a Goleg "Regents Park," Gt.-Oxford, (yn SAESNEG) ar Parch. J. M. LEWIS, Treosec (yn GYMRAEG)

NOS FERCHER, am 6 o'r gloch ym **MRYN SEION, Ystrad Mynach, cynhelir**
OEDFA BREGETHU
Llywydd - Parch. J. GOMER JAMES, Talfarnbach Rhannau Arweiniol - Parch. L. E. VALENTINE, Bangor
 Parch. T. HAYDN MORGAN, B.A., R.C.F., Llanwernarth (Cyn-Wilydd yr Eglwys), yn STYNEG, ar
 Parch. Dr. S. W. MUGHES, Northampton (Llywydd Goleg Beddyddwyr Prifysgol Aberystwyth), yn SAESNEG

Pregethir gan y


CESGLIR YMHOB OEDFA TUAG AT Y TREULIAU
ESTYNNIR CROESO CALON I BAWB, I YMUNO A NI YN Y DATHLIAD

The poster advertises a series of services with a number of ministers taking part. It is noticeable that all of them, other than D. Mervyn Himbury, who appears just above the word OEDFA at the bottom of the poster, have the prefix of Parch. (Parchedig), Welsh for Reverend. Mervyn Himbury is described as Brawd (Brother). Possibly this is because he was not ordained as a minister until the summer of 1950. The exact date of his ordination is not known, but it would have been close to the date of these meetings in June 1950.

News from other societies/organisations

This Year's **Chartist Convention** takes place on 5th November 2022. Details can be found in the poster at the end of this newsletter. As in previous years GHS will be in attendance.



NEWPORT CONVENTION SPECIAL. 2022




VOL. 2.—No. 14. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2022 PRICE FOURPENCE HALFPENNY
five shillings per Quarter

A CHARTIST CONVENTION
will be held on **November 5th 2022**
at **Newport Cathedral, Stow Hill**
Between 10 am and 4 o'clock.

The convention extends an invitation to all free thinking people who will enjoy presentations, both verbal and visual, from a celebrated panel of Chartist historians. Keynote Speaker, **Victoria Clarke** will talk about “**The Northern Star**” and **Colin Thomas** will debate “**Putting Welsh History on Television**”. **Sylvia Mason** introduces her book, “**Mary Frost**”. **Fatma Nur Aksoy** will discuss her role in the **Welsh Youth Parliament**. **Guy Hamilton** will report on **James Stephens the Chepstow Chartist**. **Ray Stroud and Olly Blackmore** will update the convention on the **Westgate Hotel bullet holes** and the day will conclude with a short musical performance of “**Treason**”

 <p style="text-align: center;">O'CONNORVILLE <i>The first ESTATE by the</i> CHARTIST CO-OPERATIVE LAND COMPANY HERTFORDSHIRE <i>Thomas Paine</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">St. Woolos + Church +</p> 
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 <p style="text-align: center;">WESTGATE HOTEL NEWPORT MON.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ALL WELCOME TO THIS CELEBRATION OF OUR CHARTIST HERITAGE Tickets £12.00 are available from Events Page www.newportrising.co.uk</p>
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Merthyr Historical Society



Monday 3 October 2022
Merthyr General Hospital
Ann Lewis

Monday 7 November 2022
Women in the Coal Industry
Ceri Thompson

Monday 5 December 2022
*The Depression, Dowlais and its Educational Settlement -
A Pictorial History*
Professor Emerita Christine Trevett

Meetings are held at Canolfan Soar at 2.00pm
Membership - £12 per annum
Non members - £2 per lecture

ALL ARE WELCOME

Charity number 509392 which aims:
*To advance the education of the public by promoting the study of the local history and
architecture of Merthyr Tydfil.*

The Merthyr Historical Society has been supported by Pŷces-y-Fran Intermediate Trust

Lyn Pask -A new talk

Readers may know Lyn who has not only given talks to this Society but several other organisations in the area. He has sent details of his talk based on his research into Italian Cafes in Blackwood, it is entitled *Arrivaderci Bardi-Croeso I Coedduon*. He will deliver the talk at the following venues:

Argoed Community Hall **Wednesday 2nd November 2022** at 10.30 am

St. Augustine's Hall, Pontllanfraith **14th February 2023** at 7.30 pm.

Gwent Archives

Talks from Gwent Archives Autumn-Winter 2022

We are delighted to host the following speakers in the first three talks of our Autumn/Winter series

Wednesday 12th Oct. 2022 12pm – 1pm
The Kru who became Crew - Rebecca Eversley-Dawes
This talk will highlight the extensive work that has been carried out to record the Seamen of the Kru tribe in West Africa who migrated to Wales and our project which aims to preserve the history of Welsh Migration stories from Africa and the Caribbean.

Monday 7th Nov. 2022 10am – 11am
Pack up your records in your old kit bag - Richard Frame
When clearing out attics and old family belongings it's very easy to overlook important historical documents. Richard Frame discusses how personal war time papers from local men, who all served in the 2nd Mons have met with different outcomes. In 2018 he followed in the footsteps of one of these men, who returned safely home, another wasn't so lucky, and he visited his grave whilst the third was wounded and returned home to run a successful Business in Pontypool.

Friday 9th Dec. 2022 2pm – 3pm
The Ghost of Christmas Past: Christmas in Gwent in the 1880s - Peter Strong
Christmas customs and traditions as they were played out in Gwent in the 1880s.

All talks will take place online via Microsoft Teams, and cost £5 per person per talk

 **To book your place please email us at**
enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk 

RUPERRA ZOOM TALKS SERIES FOUR.

A fourth series of Ruperra Zoom talks, which are free, will start on Thursday 13th October and continue every fortnight until December the 8th 2022. These talks are not organised by Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust but by Pat and Chris Jones-Jenkins.

1. Monty Dart “Ruperra in the News.” Articles and photos from newspapers of the day. Thursday October 13th at 7.30pm.
2. Prof Maddy Gray “Who were the Herberts?” Thursday October 27th at 7.30pm.
3. Pat Jones-Jenkins “400 Years Ago - Why Ruperra Castle?” Thursday November 10th at 7.30 pm.
4. Dave Hale “The Language of the Court at Ruperra.” Thursday November 24th at 7.30 pm.
5. Chris Jones “Protected Species at Ruperra.” Thursday December 8th at 7.30 pm.

The link for all their Zoom meetings

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81502728402?pwd=b1VMK081eXNuVGw5RIU5a2JmUWF0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 815 0272 8402

Passcode: 852260

Glamorgan Archives are hosting an event on Thursday 20th October at 2pm, and which may be of interest to readers. Free places can be booked via Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/railway-work-life-death-in-south-wales-beyond-before-1939-tickets-419442803717>

The event will be held online via Microsoft Teams.

Railway Work, Life & Death in South Wales (& beyond) before 1939

Join Dr Mike Esbester from the ‘Railway Work, Life and Death’ project, as he introduces railway staff accidents and the dangers of railway work before the Second World War. He will discuss the ‘Railway Work, Life & Death’ project, which is documenting employee accidents in Britain and Ireland for this period, and the various resources the project offers. He’ll take a South Wales slant on the UK railway industry, putting the area in its wider context and thinking about the social history of railway work. He’ll also think about the ‘Historians Collaborate’ agenda, and how different types of historians can work together better. Dr Mike Esbester is senior lecturer in History at the University of Portsmouth, and one of the co-leads of the ‘Railway Work, Life & Death’ project (www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk).