



## GELLIGAER TIMES, NUMBER 71

NEWSLETTER OF THE GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2023

### **Editor's Note**

Following on with my idea that I should explain the meaning or significance of the numbers used to denote these newsletters I turned to the source much loved by some-Wikipedia. It came up with the earth-shattering fact- *71 (seventy-one) is the natural number following 70 and preceding 72, so now we know!* A slightly more interesting link to 71 can be found from events in scripture. Gideon was used by God to overthrow the Midianite domination of the Israelites. After securing victory over his enemies, he settled down to marry many wives and become one of Israel's Judges. He ultimately produced 71 sons, seventy of whom are through wives and one of whom is through his concubine who lived in Shechem (Judges 8:30 - 31). Gideon named son number **71** Abimelech, who would grow up to be a vain and violent individual. His desire to rule over the people led him to have 69 of his 70 brothers murdered in cold blood (Judges 9). His many sins, however, would soon catch up to him. After ruling like a tyrant for three years, he was severely injured when an unknown woman, from the top of a tower, dropped a millstone on his head! He ordered, after the large stone injured his head, that his armour bearer kill him (Judges 9:53 - 54).

### **David Mills**

In this newsletter you will find: -

Message from Judith Jones, Chair of the society

Tribute to the late Brian Davies

Report on October 2023 meeting

Gelligaer District Council's Fire Brigade Banquet 1910

Do you remember this sportsman?

Buses from Deri to Maesycwmmmer

Book reviews and notices

Programme of meetings for 2024

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Once again, we can look back on a successful year for Gelligaer Historical Society and I want to say thank you to all members who have, of course, played the major part in this success.

I also want to give my thanks to all officers and committee members for their support of me and our Society; to all speakers at monthly meetings and to our IT organisers there; to everyone who supported our very successful conference in March; to contributors and all who helped produce *Gelligaer* vol. 29; to our newsletter editor for this, and the other four editions published this year, and to our webmaster for continuing to keep our pages fresh.

And to the future. The monthly meetings have already been organised until June 2024 and to remind you, the remaining ones are listed at the end of this newsletter. Our annual conference has been arranged for Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 and, as last year, we hope to have some walks and visits. David Mills has already offered to give a talk at, and about, Bedwellty Church. We also welcome contributions from all of you for the next journal or the newsletter, or an offer to speak at one of our monthly meetings. Please talk to David or me about any ideas you may have.

Importantly, I ask that we all remember friends of the Society who have passed away during 2023 and again extend our sympathy to those of you who have lost loved ones.

I end by sending you my best wishes for Christmas and also for a healthy and peaceful 2024.

### ***Judith***

#### **Tribute to the late Brian Davies**

At the end of our meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Judith announced the sudden death of Brian Davies which happened at the start of the previous week. Brian, and because of his fame amongst many societies, organisations and individuals throughout south Wales it was not necessary to even use his surname, had been a regular speaker at our monthly meetings for many years. His knowledge on many topics knew no bounds. On one occasion he gave a talk about Castell Morgraig, a ruined castle on the Cefn Onn ridge overlooking Cardiff. This ruin has intrigued and baffled historians for years. However, Brian was able to explain things to the audience by bringing along a scale model of the castle as it would have looked in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. During many of his numerous talks he would illustrate whatever he was speaking about by using 35 mm slides, as far as I know he shunned power-point facilities and took great delight in pointing out to the audience that the “thing” on the table was what is known as a projector. The Society was also fortunate enough to persuade Brian to write two articles:

Evan James, Dr William Price and Iolo Morgannwg's Utopia- *Gelligaer* 17 2009

The Chartists of Llanfabon and Gelligaer- *Gelligaer* 24 2017

When I acted as the speaker organiser for this society and other societies, I knew I could rely on Brian to agree, without any hesitation, to visit. It was then that I found that his knowledge of cafes in the south Wales valleys was immense. He would ask for the venue and time then announce where he would eat.

But he was so much more than an entertaining speaker. He worked for the National Museum at the then Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum in Cardiff Bay, where he helped to

regenerate Big Pit, Blaenafon, into the National Coal Museum, becoming its first curator. Later he moved on to Pontypridd where he again set up the town museum in Tabernacle Chapel adjacent to the Old Bridge and managed it successfully for many years.

On his retirement he purchased and renovated a small steam launch “Wideawake”; it was berthed in Penarth Marina and proved to be one of the main attractions when the marina held open days. Brian was always on hand to explain things, in detail, to anyone who showed an interest in his acquisition. For many years and on a somewhat larger scale with the assistance of a group of friends and volunteers, he set about the rescue of the Great Western Colliery steam winding engine at the Hetty pit, just north of Pontypridd, which had survived demolition as part of the proposed Rhondda Heritage Park, but was subsequently dropped from inclusion in it. Only this year he succeeded in obtaining a sizeable grant to greatly enhance the restoration work that he and his volunteers had been carrying out at the Hetty over the years. Brian was a determined man and relished fighting his corner with the relevant authorities when it came to obtaining a lease and then a restoration grant for the Hetty.



During his retirement he also took to collecting miner’s lamps but in true Brian fashion he was not content on simply collecting them. He researched in considerable depth the well-known lamp manufacturers Thomas and Williams of Aberdare.

I am sure many people will have their own fond stories about him. He will be sorely missed, there will only ever be one Brian.

*David Mills*

### **October 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 meeting**

The Commonplace Book of John Gwin of Llangwm (c1615- c1681) Professor Madeleine Gray

John Gwin lived at Llangwm in Monmouthshire in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Professor Gray portrayed him, with humour, as an insatiably curious man who wrote down all things which interested him - in considerable detail!

A keen gardener he wrote about grafting fruit trees for his orchard; his interest in scientific and medical development led him to record various medicines and cures for all sorts of ailments. One of which- for smallpox both interested and amused her listeners. He wrote about marriage and how to choose the right partner, details which the audience enjoyed. His details of the ownership of church pews and how this often led to disagreements which, as churchwarden, he had to resolve was another point of interest. He described how he had the church wall measured and then listed the families which were responsible for the repair of each section proving his meticulous attention to detail.

As an historical document *The Commonplace Book* offers us an insight into day-to-day Monmouthshire during a period of civil war and religious and political upheaval. Speaking to Professor Gray after her lecture I was surprised to learn that it was only a chance encounter with an archive book trolley by Tony Hopkins which brought attention to this book. He noticed it, realised its potential and so the research began.

After listening to such interesting passages delivered in an entertaining way by Professor Gray I'm sure all present at the lecture would agree that this 'chance encounter' was a lucky one.

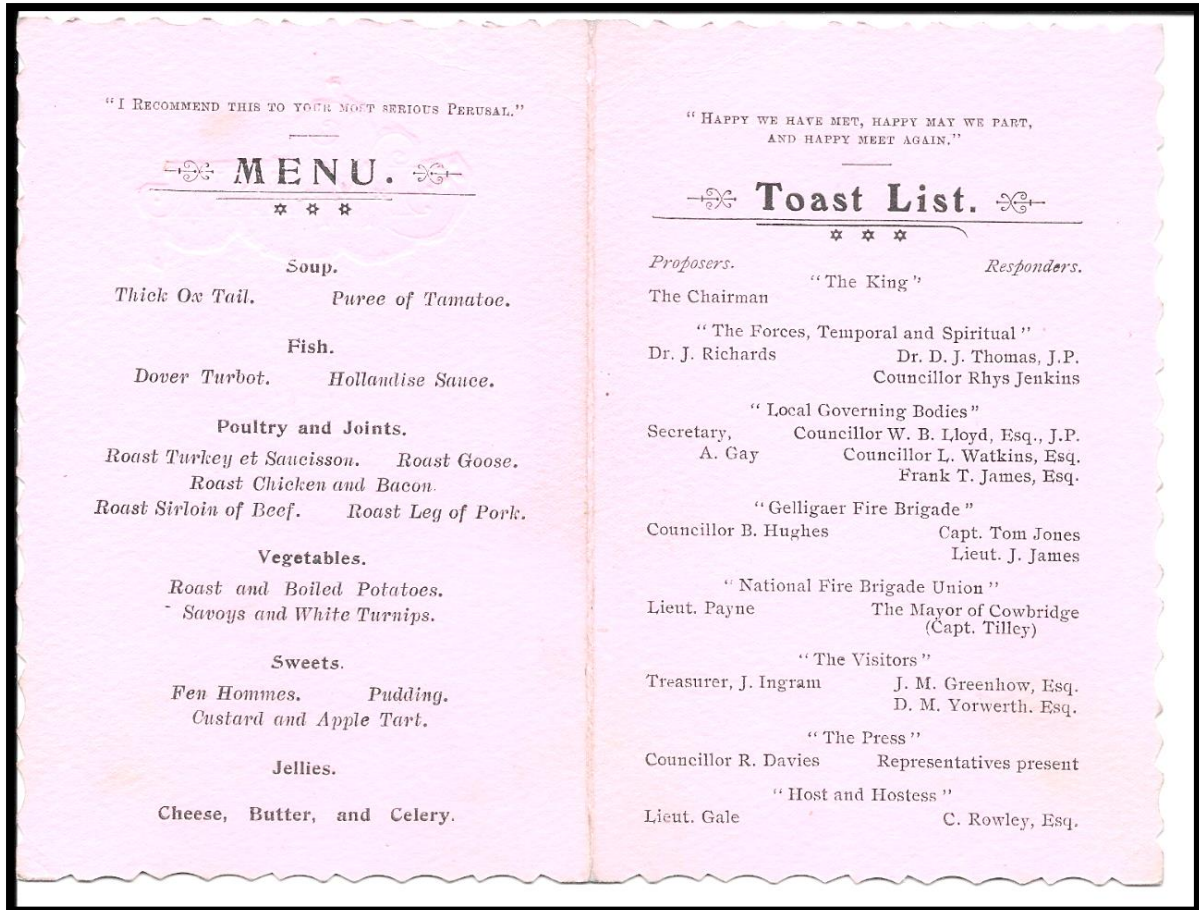
*Ann Pinch*

### GELLIGAER DISTRICT COUNCIL'S FIRE BRIGADE BANQUET 1910

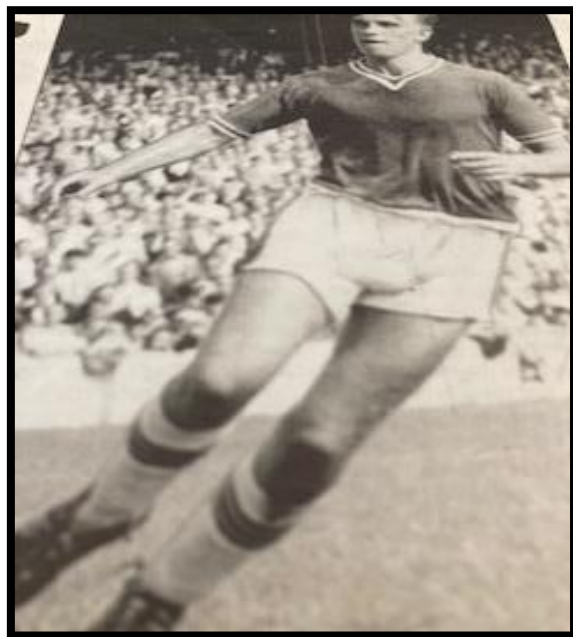
This menu card of Gelligaer District Council's Fire Brigade Banquet held in Junction Hotel, Bargoed on Wednesday 7 December 1910 is reproduced courtesy **Keith Mills**. A long-time researcher into the history of the fire service in Wales, Keith has supported GHS's ongoing research into local history and heritage, contributing *Chief Fire Officer Captain Percy Jack Moody in Gelligaer* volume 24 2017 and by readily supplying details relating to other aspects of the local fire service.

The banquet, preceded by the Brigade's march through Bargoed for review at the recreation ground, was reported in the press, a short report in *Evening Express* 8 December 1910 p. 2 and a far more comprehensive one in *Merthyr Express* 17 December 1910 p. 8, both available on [Welsh Newspapers Online - Home \(library.wales\)](http://Welsh Newspapers Online - Home (library.wales)) [accessed 21 June 2023] *Bargoed and Gilfach a local history* (GHS 2011) pp. 245-6 has further information on the now-demolished Junction Hotel near Bargoed railway station. Some of the people named on the menu card have been mentioned in various GHS publications but there is scope for further research into their life and work in the newly-developing Bargoed and across Gelligaer Urban District before and during the Great War.





Do you remember this sportsman—a footballer described as “the Gareth Bale of his time”?



Graham Moore playing for Cardiff in 1961

Graham Moore was born in Hengoed in 1941. He went to Gilfach Primary School and then on to Bargoed Secondary School. Although his career took him outside Wales, he was always proud to assert that his roots were in the village of Cascade where he lived for 20 years.

His best friend “*Chicken*” (given this nickname because his father always kept chickens) remembers a time when they were very young and being the only two kicking a ball around the field until it was too dark to see the ball; then back to Mrs Moore’s for her ‘special chips from the chip saucepan’. A very active boy his family always knew he’d be a sportsman of some kind-but what kind? At one time it was a long jumper because of the way he would hurdle across the local stream, or perhaps a skier when he skied down the grassy slopes behind his home. But when he started breaking windows with his football, they knew they had a footballer!

On leaving school he began working at Penallta Colliery with his father and brother and while there he could be seen playing football with his friends on Cascade Playing Fields, now known as *The Graham Moore Playing Field* in his memory.

He joined his first football team in 1956- Bargoed Y M C A- and here he was soon spotted by Cardiff City with the promise of a weekly pay of £20! Success followed swiftly, playing for the first team at just 17 and within two years he helped Cardiff win the Welsh Cup scoring 4 goals out of the 16 against Knighton, and also helped the Bluebirds ‘promotion to the First Division.

An international career beckoned and at just 19 in 1959 he was picked to play for Wales against England and managed to score the only Welsh goal and bringing the result to a 1-1 draw. He went on to win a total of 21 caps. A proud moment during this time was when he won “The Welsh Sports Personality of the Year” in 1959.



Leaving Cardiff in 1961 Moore went on to play for Chelsea signing for, in those days, the incredible sum of £35000 (worth many millions in today’s money) and helped them to gain promotion to the First Division. After 2 years and 72 appearances he was sold to Manchester United again for £35000. But injuries hampered his playing career and after just one year and 17 appearances for Manchester United he moved to Northampton Town in 1965, Charlton Athletic in 1967 and later Doncaster Rovers in 1971.

During his career Graham played with, and against, some very famous footballers. – George Best, Bobby Charlton and Dennis Law among others. His sister recalls his friendship with George Best whilst playing with him in the Manchester team and then against him with Moor in his Welsh red shirt and Best in his Irish green shirt; she remembers her disappointment that when Best visited her family home in Cascade she wasn’t there to meet him!

## A VERY PROUD WELSH SPORTSMAN



### GRAHAM MOORE 1941-2015

My thanks and appreciation to the family neighbours and friends of Graham Moore and also my fellow member of Gelligaer Historical Society-Roy Smith.

Photographs from the Rhymney Valley and Merthyr Express

*Ann Pinch*

#### **Buses from Deri to Maesycwmmmer**

In its 23 October 1909 edition, the *Merthyr Express* carried a report which detailed the establishment of a bus route between Deri and Maesycwmmmer. "Recorder" acknowledged a number of contemporary issues, for example, how incomers to the south Wales coalfield area travelled around relatively easily on the network provided by the rail services - although trains were not very frequent! Other public transport was not available because of the lack of good roads, although he accepted that local councils were already planning for the new roads we know today, such as the main route north of Ystrad Mynach; he also urged the improvement of road surfaces. Whilst recognising that local businessmen (particularly in Bargoed) had created this new bus route which would facilitate bringing people and revenue to their town, the reporter accepted that there was opportunity for more employment, and with foresight, extension of the services in other areas, e.g. Gelligaer which was already developing with the opening of Penallta pit.

#### **MOTOR-BUS SERVICE IN RHYMNEY VALLEY [By "Recorder"]**

A welcome and important enterprise was inaugurated in the Rhymney Valley on Monday afternoon when the trial run of the first road motor service was made between Deri, Bargoed, Gilfach, and Pengam to Maesycwmmmer. With the rapid growth of the coal industry in the Rhymney Valley, and the population, many had wondered whether the means of passenger transit from place to place was for ever to remain dependent upon the present railway companies. The absence of a good main road through the valley - say, from Caerphilly to New Tredegar has, doubtless, been the obstacle to anything in the way of a service of motor-buses or trams. That obstacle has not yet been removed. The valley is still without a main road northward of Ystrad Mynach but the now Road Motor Service Company, of Bargoed, have

determined to make the best possible use of such roads as do exist, and so have instituted a service between Deri and Maesycwmmmer. At Pengam this road crosses the Rhymney River, and runs along the Monmouthshire side from Pengam to Maesycwmmmer. It is true this road continues on to Ystrad Mynach, and joins the main road at the corner of Col. Morgan Lindsay's estate, from which point the service could, if necessary, be continued to Llanbradach and Caerphilly; but a road to serve the best interests of the valley - having regard both to population and gradients- should pass through Ystrad Mynach, to the right (northwards) of the Rhymney Railway through the Waun Field at Hengoed, and on to Pengam (still on the Glamorgan side) till it joins the Gilfach road. The making of this piece of road has for some time occupied the attention of the Gellygaer Council, and if landowners in the vicinity are moderate and reasonable in their demands, this road will, no doubt, be realised, and bring about enormous building developments in the vicinity of its route. Such a road would also offer to the present company a grand opportunity for the extension of the motor service from Bargoed to Llanbradach and Caerphilly.

Meanwhile, the service of motor buses which opened on Monday, from Deri to Maesycwmmmer, comes as a welcome boon to the numerous residents between those two places, as well as to the many commercial gentlemen who hitherto have had to hurry their business in order to catch a train at a more or less distant station or wait a long time for the next. Another advantage will be that the motor 'buses will pass through the main business thoroughfare of each of the places, and also the railway stations. Yet another district, between two and three miles from Bargoed, is rapidly becoming ripe for a branch service of the new motor 'buses. Building operations are going on extensively at Gellygaer Village to partly provide for the large numbers who will settle there by reason of their work at the new pits of the Powell Duffryn Company at Penallta, and a motor 'bus to that place would mean increased business for Bargoed.

Having regard to the trading interests of Bargoed, the promoters of this enterprise—who are principally Bargoed gentlemen- have, by means of this service of motors, done much to conserve and increase the popularity of Bargoed as a shopping centre for the valley, and by it, have shown an almost unsuspected keenness of business perception and instinct. This venture should mean a great influx of trade for Bargoed; nor does it mean that other places will suffer in proportion. The success of one place often dims out the sluggishness and apathy of adjacent place. The whirl and hum of business in one place often accelerates its movement throughout the whole vicinity and so one may soon expect to see the sluggishness of the various hamlets of the valley stirred into life and activity by means of this new and easy communication between them and Bargoed. For the delivery of parcels all along the line of the route, this motor service should prove a veritable boon. I have often wondered at the absence of a carrier's cart and that some able man, groaning over the lack of employment, has not seen a possible chance in this direction of serving the community, and earning a decent livelihood for himself. However, no one apparently has seen it. But at last, the Motor 'Bus Company have dreamed of it, and I hope the dream will come true.

There is yet another direction to which I think the new company's service should be extended, viz., Blackwood. Blackwood is a rapidly rising place. It is a difficult place to get at from the Rhymney Valley, but there is a good road between it and Maesycwmmmer, and I am strongly of opinion that if the new company made Blackwood, instead of Maesycwmmmer, their Monmouthshire terminus, and ran their buses to Blackwood via Maesycwmmmer, they would



stand to earn a great deal more, and would thus link up in a convenient way for commercial purposes the Rhymney and Sirhowy Valleys. It will be a pity if they do not.

The trial run of the first motor 'bus took place on Monday afternoon from Bargoed to Deri, and from Deri back to Bargoed via Maesycwmmmer. The car is well upholstered, and constructed to carry nineteen passengers, the top being reserved for luggage. It is a Clarkson steam motor-car and runs smoothly and almost noiselessly. The first difficulty was caused by the state of the road over the Bargoed Railway Bridge, which had had a large quantity of large broken limestone laid on the surface, and which caused considerable damage to the rubber tyres. After this piece had been crossed, the run to Deri, which is an ascent all the way, was along a beautiful road and through some charming mountain scenery. The inhabitants of Deri were taken by surprise by the appearance of the flag-decorated 'bus, which excited much curiosity. Its advent at Deri should certainly prove a welcome one, seeing that, only three trains a day are available from Deri to Bargoed. The trip from Bargoed to Maesycwmmmer was quickly made, but through Fleur-de-lis the road is extremely narrow, and there is another very difficult ascent by the Pengam Post Office. There were also two or three stony places to negotiate in this part of the route, and it is to be hoped that having regard to the great convenience which this service of cars will prove to the public that the various local authorities will do their best to prevent its being impeded through the condition of the roads by taking steps to see that the main thoroughfares are expeditiously rolled when fresh material is put on them. Among the passengers on the trial run were Mr. and Mrs. Davies, of The Emporium, Bargoed; Mr. W. Harris, architect, Bargoed; Mrs. Yorwerth and Mr. J. E. Harry (the secretary of the company).

Further information about roads and the transport system in this area can be found in the chapter on Transport in Gelligaer Historical Society's publication, *Bargoed and Gilfach: a Local History*.

*Judith Jones*

## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

### **MERTHYR HISTORIAN. Volume 33, 2023. i-v and 319 pp. Illustrated. £13**

During the last five decades, Merthyr Tydfil and District Historical Society has produced quality journals and, with its white cover, green lettering, and intriguing front cover photograph, the recently-launched volume 33 lives up to that high standard. On the back cover, between the society's logo at the top and the ISBN details at the bottom, one reads

*Merthyr Historian* volume 33 (2023),  
beginning our next fifty years of publication ...

The contents of volume 33 set the bar high for these future publications.

The title page reveals the link between the cover photograph and Merthyr Tydfil, and that is explored in more detail in an essay about Garthnewydd House. On the reverse of the title-page the list of names of society officers and committee is headed by President, Dr T. F. Holley, who is also a life member of GHS. Then comes a table of contents on pages iii-v. The journal's 319 pages opens with an introduction by editor and one of the two deputy chairs of the society, Professor Emerita Christine Trevett. And that is followed by twenty articles of varying lengths, the work of fourteen different contributors for whom biographies appear on the volume's final four pages plus an insert.

Some of the articles are inspired by an interest in family history.

- Lucy Richardson's well-illustrated history of Garthnewydd House, once home of her great grandfather, local GP Cornelius Biddle, is a chronological narrative from the early nineteenth century to demolition in 1979. Readers of *Gelligaer Times* may be interested to learn that in the 1960s, Deri-born artist John Uzzell Edwards was among the visitors to Garthnewydd House. Garthnewydd House's link with the iconic cover picture, *Cofiwch Dryweryn*, also dates from that decade.
- The three sons of Jack Bailey Jones tell the story of their father's WWII service in the Royal Navy. Their main source, his Certificate of Service, allows them to trace his 55-month naval career through 33 months on two ships and the remaining time at shore bases. The story is illustrated with an extract from the Certificate of Service and some wartime photographs of their father.
- The history of White Horse Inn, Twyn-yr-Odyn, is another family history story as Dr. Richard Clements's ancestors were licensees there in the nineteenth century. Like most other public houses of that time, it was the venue for various meetings, auctions and inquests. It was associated with eisteddfodau and meetings of the Ancient Order of Druids. Readers of *Gelligaer Times* may be interested to know that two of the landlords, Richard Jones and his brother-in-law John Lewis were jointly associated with coal-mining developments in Deri in the 1860s.
- John Fletcher, the sole surviving member of the group involved with the short-lived Merthyr Eisteddfod, contributes an account that is more autobiographical than family history. After explaining how it came about, he describes the bilingual festival in the 1000-seater hall at Hoover factory Pentrebach on a *bright sparkling spring day*, Saturday 12 April 1958. Readers of *Gelligaer Times* may be interested to know that Bargoed-born Alun Hoddinott was a music adjudicator that day, and for more on Alun Hoddinott see *Bargoed and Gilfach a local history* p 268. In spite of the *magnificent success* of that event and the profitable publication it generated, there was a steady decline in interest and, on 16 May 1961, the Eisteddfod committee meeting carried a motion to discontinue the event.

Given the breadth and depth of her research for *DOWLAIS EDUCATIONAL SETTLEMENT and the Quaker John Dennithorne* (reviewed in *Gelligaer Times* 62, April 2022), it is not surprising that Professor Emerita Christine Trevett was able to contribute articles on related topics.

- A lengthy (more than 50 pages) article on Merthyr Tydfil Educational Settlement 1930-49 fulfills a promise made in the 2022 book. It is a story often dominated by tensions between local people who were acutely aware of the contemporary social and economic problems and the more idealistic ambitions of committee members such as sisters Margaret and Gwendoline Davies of Gregynog and Dr Thomas Jones (a native of Rhymney and one-time Lewis school, Pengam pupil). Immaculately footnoted, this article is based on a range of sources including correspondence between the parties concerned. [NB *Gelligaer Times* readers are reminded that GHS member Nesta Williams's *Bargoed Settlement 1933-1998* is available in Caerphilly County Borough Council libraries.]
- A shorter article on Mary Emmeline Horsfall's life and work during the two decades when she made her home in Gwernllwyn House also adds much to an understanding of life in the area in that era of hardship.

Sometimes a short explanation followed by a transcript of the primary source(s) is sufficient to tell a local history story as in the case of the following.

- Fred and John Holley contributed three items in this category.

- i. The first concerns the visit of thirteen Japanese officers to Hill's Plymouth Co's Collieries and is based on a report in *Merthyr Express*. After 250 years in isolation, Japan was *opened up* less than half a century before this visit to Wales and one wonders how much of a cultural shock was there on both sides as the Japanese tried to expand their knowledge of western industry, technology and customs. (*Gelligaer* 29 (2023) carried a related item, based on an article in *Western Mail*, on the Japanese Band in Cardiff in 1902.)
  - ii. Their second contribution is taken from *Merthyr Times* of 1893 and relates to musician John Evans whose bardic name was Eos Myrddin. They outline his career and conclude with a detailed report on a concert in Oddfellows Hall.
  - iii. Finally, their third item comprises eleven items which shed light on Merthyr Vale poet, Rev. Lewis Davies, whose bardic name was Lewys Glyn Cynon, and, by their very diversity, open up so many windows into the history not only of the local area but nationally.
- The late Vida Holley, wife of Fred and, like him, a loyal and long-standing member of both Merthyr and Gelligaer historical societies, did much research on the history of criminal Harry Williams as reported in *Merthyr Express*, and the story has been written up by Barrie Jones. While most of Harry Williams's crimes were in and around Merthyr Tydfil, in 1908 he was found guilty of breaking and entering the Bargoed home of councillor and postmaster Edward Lewis, for which he had eighteen months hard labour.
  - Transcripts from T.E. Clarke's 1848 publication and a report in *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* in September 1847 tell the story of Merthyr people's wonder at the exploits of balloonist Richard Gypson.
  - Transcribed by Stephen Brewer, extracts from *Merthyr Express* in June 1940 tell the story of the arrival of evacuees from Deal and Folkestone. While it would have been a overwhelming experience for the children, hopefully they soon settled in welcoming homes in Troedyrhiw, Abercanaid and Merthyr Vale.
  - Transcripts in a historical journal do not always come from traditional historical sources as illustrated by that on Treharris pit-head baths taken from the medical journal *The Lancet* (August 1908).
  - Two newspaper extracts shed light on life in Trelewis, a community within the parish of Gelligaer and studied by GHS, in the later nineteenth century.

Two of the articles show that the society has embraced modern technology.

- Stephen Brewer's account of the Lavernock tragedy of 1888 stems from a contribution to a blog post [Aberfan's First Tragedy – The Melting Pot \(merthyr-history.com\)](http://merthyr-history.com) which inspired his research into the unfortunate deaths of seven local young men, members of 3<sup>rd</sup> Volunteer Battalion of the Welsh Regiment during their annual summer training camp.
- Similarly, the article on chess in the area first appeared on the internet (the website reference is included beneath the title in volume 33).

Some articles in volume 33 are more about sources than the stories and personalities of local history.

- Huw Williams, one of the society's deputy chairs, contributed an article on a useful publication of 1932, an introductory history of Merthyr County Borough prepared by the local National Union of Teachers. Long out of print, it is not only a valuable source of information but also a reflection of the time it was created.
- Maps are not just for geography: they are valuable sources for local history as shown by Clive Thomas in his meaningful selection of map extracts from Humphrey Lhuyd's sixteenth century map, Yates 1799 Glamorgan map, Plymouth survey of 1766, OS maps of

various scales, 1840 plan of Dowlais Colliery and a c.1927 map of South Wales Coalfield (which includes both Bedlinog and Fochriw within the area of interest to GHS).

Not all the articles in volume 33 fit into categories.

- It is pleasing to read the report by the Society's chairman, Clive Thomas, which shows how the society is investing in the historians of the future by supporting Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative Awards.
- There is an account of Gurnos, Cyfarthfa's model farm, with a section on gamekeepers and poachers.
- Finally, and reflecting a determination to produce further similar publications, is a request for contributions. Two suggestions are floated, namely Merthyr Tydfil Bank 1770-1824, and studies of the careers of some of the many boxers who plied their sport locally and further afield.

I congratulate Merthyr Tydfil and District Historical Society on this publication with its diverse range of interesting and thought-provoking contributions and I commend *Merthyr Historian* volume 33 to readers of *Gelligaer Times*

*Annie Owen*

**MORGANNWG, The journal of Glamorgan history.** Volume LXVII 2023. 202 pp. Distributed to members of Glamorgan History Society, and available for sale (£12.50) via the website [Glamorgan History Society - Cymdeithas Hanes Morgannwg](http://www.glamorganhistorysociety.org.uk).

This volume includes six full-length articles:

- **Gillian Drake**, *Hidden Depths: Merthyr Dyfan's Lost Holy Well*
- **Hilary M. Thomas**, *Sir Robert Thomas (c. 1622-1706), Baronet. The last of the Thomas family of Llanmihangel?*
- **John Morgan-Guy**, *'The Reverence Due to the House of God': The Struggle to Maintain the Fabric and Life of Llandaff Cathedral from 1560 to 1760. Part 2: from Anne to George III*
- **John Francis**, *Counting Coppers: the rise and fall of 'super' policeman Henry Wrenn* (some of his service was in Merthyr Tydfil area)
- **Jean Silvan Evans**, *John Batchelor (1820-1883): the forgotten man behind the familiar statue who helped to shape Cardiff and Wales - and was a disciple of Chartist martyr John Frost*
- **Chris Williams**, *'Lower than Barbarism': J. M. Staniforth of the Western Mail and the Great War at sea*

and Shorter Notes and Queries:

- **Roger L. Brown**, *A forgotten Canon: Charles Perry, Canon of Llandaff Cathedral 1878-88*
  - **Craig Owen Jones**, *Examples of Women's Boxing in Nineteenth-Century Glamorgan*
- as well as the usual features
- Archaeological Notes (which includes Gwernau Hall Barn near Ystrad Mynach)
  - News from the Archives
  - Book Reviews and Notices (which includes a review of John Gwin's work that was subject of Dr. Maddy Gray's talk to GHS in October 2023, but reviews of journals such as *Gelligaer* are held over for a future issue)

**PENERRIG AND ITS PAST FAMILIES** by Penelope Bourdillon, illustrated by Marcia Gibson-Watt, Price £12. The profits from the sales of this book will go to Thomas Jones Pencerrig Trust CIC which aims to restore Pencerrig, home to the eighteenth-century landscape painter Thomas Jones and later of Clara Thomas of Llanbradach (cousin to Mrs. Lindsay of Ystrad Fawr)

**THE HILLFORTS OF IRON AGE WALES** by Toby Driver, Logaston Press 2023. P/b 336pp. Price £20

#### **‘NEGLECTED’ HISTORY OF WALES IN SECOND WORLD WAR PUBLISHED**

Wales’s role in the Second World War, and its effect on the people and landscape of the nation, has been severely neglected. Quentin Deakin, author of *Wales in World War 2* (Y Lolfa). Taking a fresh look at the subject, Dr Deakin argues that neither Welsh or English historians have shown the extent to which Wales was vital to the British war effort.

**Author Quentin Deakin** said: “Previous books have tended to concentrate on south Wales or have rolled together England and Wales into an Anglo-centric national history. As in England, the whole of Wales was caught up in the demands of war in multiple ways. Once you start to look, wherever you live in Wales, an impressive war heritage can be found, leading some archaeologists to conclude that the world wars, occurring in quick succession, made a greater impact on the physical landscape of Wales than any other event of modern times. It’s impact on the people of Wales was equally dramatic.”

*Wales in World War 2* is a comprehensive account which looks at the impact of the conflict from every angle. The author has drawn on local studies, archival resources and oral histories, including fresh interviews with those who were children during the war. Sources from across the country and beyond have been collected and assembled like a jigsaw to demonstrate that far from being peripheral, Wales was central to the war effort in several ways, including hosting secret weapons establishments of global significance.

“The war provided employment for millions of civilians, in war factories, foundries and mines, the civil service, engineering, technical instruction and the creative industries. It will be seen that in some of its weapon’s research, Wales was ahead of the rest of the world. It was also vital to the war economy, had a key role in the training of forces, hosted evacuations of vital importance for the survival of the country. A disproportionately high number of secret military sites were located west of Offa’s Dyke. However, all assumptions that it was a safe haven were proved wrong when it too became a potential target for invasion in 1940. Social changes were also bound up with the war, as the movement of allied armies and evacuees caused the greatest international migration the Principality had ever seen, challenging social and cultural norms and changing the demography of Wales,” said Quentin Deakin.

Chapters cover every region of Wales and every aspect of life, for both military personnel and civilians. As Sian Nicholas, Professor of Modern British History at Aberystwyth University says in her Foreword to the book, this is “...not the generalised wartime ‘Britain’ still typical of so many narratives, but an account focused on the people, the communities and the geography of Wales... Wales is presented here not just as a constituent element of the British

war effort in World War 2, but as a distinct entity for which the war represented unique linguistic, social, political and cultural challenges.

***Wales in World War 2* by Quentin Deakin (£14.99, Y Lolfa) is available now.**

Q U E N T I N   D E A K I N



# WALES IN WORLD WAR 2

*y lolfa*

January 31 2024 <b>11.00 a.m. start</b>	Dr. Edith Evans	<i>Prehistoric Rock Art on our Doorstep</i>
	Lunch can be purchased at Llancaiach Fawr	
	Colin Thomas	<i>Putting Welsh History on Television</i>
February 28	Jeff Childs	<i>The Steel, Sheet and Tinplate Industries of Pontardawe and District</i>
March 23	GHS hopes to hold its annual conference	
March 27	David Mills	<i>When Chartism came to Blackwood and Nelson</i>
April 24	Dr. Stuart Broomfield	<i>The Home Guard during the Second World War</i>
May 29	Lyn Pask	<i>"Steam Pie and a Coke Please" - How four Italian families came from Bardi to Blackwood</i>
June 26	A.G.M. and	
	Roy Smith	<i>The Battle of Jutland "Memorial Park" Bringing History to the Surface</i>
<p><b>MONTHLY MEETINGS:</b>  <b>WHEN?</b> Last Wednesday most months (<b>EXCEPT December [varies] and July and August [no monthly meetings]</b>)  <b>START TIME?</b> 7.00 p.m. (<b>EXCEPT January</b> when it is an 11.00 a.m. start)  <b>WHERE?</b> Llancaiach Fawr (CF46 6ER)  Membership subscription for 2023 - 2024 is £10 (students, £5)  Meetings are open to non-members (£2 contribution to the Society)</p> <p><b>FOR FURTHER DETAILS</b> of GHS events, activities and publications please visit <a href="http://www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk">www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk</a> or follow GHS on Facebook or Twitter</p>		

