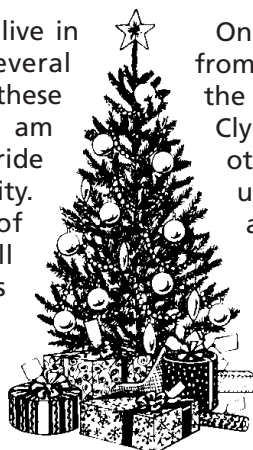


Message from the Chairman of the Community Council

Over the past few years, since coming to live in Dyffryn Clydach, I have witnessed several changes within the community. Many of these changes have been for the good, and I am particularly pleased with the sense of pride that many of you show in our community. This can be seen in the number of organisations that exist in a small community such as ours, and it is heartening to know that demand for the use of the Memorial Hall is greater than can be accommodated at present. Hopefully, the refurbishing exercise that is due to take place shortly will help solve this problem.



On the down side, criminal acts do occur here from time to time but thanks to your vigilance and the good work of Neighbourhood Watch, Dyffryn Clydach fares pretty well when compared with other areas of the county borough. I would urge you to continue being vigilant and report anything suspicious to the police.

As we approach the festive season, I should like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year and extend an invitation to you all to join us in the many activities that will be taking place at the Memorial Hall during the coming weeks.

Gwyn Edwards

ELECTION...ELECTION...ELECTION...ELECTION...

An election has been called in Dyffryn Clydach to fill the vacant seat on the Community Council following the resignation of Mrs Janice Dudley. The Council would like to thank Mrs Dudley for her past input into the work of the Council and to wish her well for the future.

In order to save the local ratepayers a sum well in excess of £3,000, it had been suggested by the ruling Plaid Cymru party that a new Councillor be co-opted. Although winning all thirteen seats with an overwhelming majority at the last election, it was willing to co-opt an opposition party member if it meant that an election could be avoided. However, the local Labour Party has insisted on the election.

The proposed date is for Thursday 24th November. The three usual polling stations will be used at: the Memorial Hall, Traherne Court and The Highlands. They will be open from 8.00am until 9.00pm.

REMEMBER TO USE YOUR VOTE

A limited number of booklets produced for the Queen's Golden Jubilee and given to children in Dyffryn Clydach are available for just £1.

Bilingual, and written for children, they contain interesting local history as well as giving an insight into monastic life.

Additional copies available from Neath Abbey Post Office
or the editor, telephone 01792 427915

COUNCIL TAX PROTESTS

Councillors from Dyffryn Clydach have been in the forefront in efforts to secure a fairer system in paying for local services.

The Council Tax is fundamentally flawed and the recent re-banding exercise, which has since been shelved in England, has only added to the sense of injustice felt by many Council Tax payers. It would be a pity if these protests were to be seen to be connected with party politics. Council Tax demands neither question nor care about the politics of the person to whom the demand is addressed.

The Council Tax is a property based system which is not concerned about ability to pay nor even the demands the taxpayer places on local services. It is based entirely on the fact that the person billed, occupies or owns a property within the area of the local authority. Council Tax, unlike Income Tax, has no ceiling and could be seen as the ultimate stealth tax.

In recent years it has been used to fund shortfalls in grants received from central government. Because of serious flaws in the distribution of these grants, a far heavier burden has been placed on the poorer

local authority areas whose Council Tax payers have seen massive increases in their bills year upon year, far outstripping inflation or their incomes. Areas with a high rate of economic inactivity have been particularly hard hit, and council taxes in Neath Port Talbot are the highest in Wales.

There are means tested relief systems but these are often complicated and do not appeal to people who have always paid their way. These systems are very unfair to people whose incomes are just above benefit thresholds. Younger people struggling to pay a mortgage should not be saddled with massive, arbitrary Council Tax demands on top of everything else. Local services have to be paid for and no-one minds paying their fair share, but the burden is being carried by far too few people at present.

It is hardly an endorsement if a system has to urge people to claim exemptions from it. A society which sends otherwise law abiding pensioners to prison because of the Council Tax is clearly not at ease with itself.

The present system is clearly unsustainable.

Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly



Holly is one of the most important and well known evergreens. It is a native of Britain and very common in Wales where it grows in hedgerows and on the edge of woodland. Its red berries add a splash of colour at Christmastime when the tree is at its most attractive.

Christmas decorations are said to be derived from a custom observed by the Romans of sending boughs and other gifts to their friends during the festival of Saturnalia. This custom was adopted by the early Christians, although they were forbidden to decorate their houses at Christmas with green boughs at the same time as the pagans, with Saturnalia commencing about a week before Christmas. The origin has been traced to the Druids who held the holly in high esteem. They believed the shrub remained green to keep the earth beautiful when the sacred oak and other deciduous trees had lost their leaves. They also believed that it provided shelter from the cold for the tiny fairies that lived in the forests. (In actual fact, animals and insects do shelter in it during the coldest months.) They used its magical powers to drive away demons, decorating their doors and windows with holly in a bid to capture evil spirits and prevent them from entering their homes. As Christianity spread through the Roman Empire, early followers adopted the custom of decorating their homes for the Saturnalia festival in order to avoid persecution, and gradually it became a symbol of Christmas.

According to legend the holly first sprang up

under the footsteps of Christ. Its sharply pointed leaves were said by many to represent the crown of thorns worn by Christ prior to the crucifixion and its berries resemble drops of blood representing Christ's suffering.



In the first century AD the Roman official Pliny wrote about the holly. If it was planted near a house or farm it would repel poison and defend it from lightning and witchcraft. Its flowers would cause water to freeze, and if it was thrown at an animal, even without touching it, the animal would return and lie down by it.

The wood of the holly is used for carving engravers' blocks and, having magical powers over animals, it can be used for horse whips. Cattle enjoy eating it, and it can be used as winter fodder. Farmers are reluctant to cut out a holly tree, and it can often be found standing proud above surrounding hedging.



The RSPB recommend planting holly, as it provides excellent food and shelter for wildlife. Its prickly leaves are a strong deterrent to many creatures that might otherwise steal birds' eggs from nests among the holly.

So, enjoy decorating your home with holly this Christmas, and remember it could very well provide a safe haven for fairies!

EXPLOSION AT No 1 MAIN COLLIERY, BRYNCOCH

On Tuesday, 4th August 1896, at about eleven in the morning the inhabitants of Dyffryn Clydach heard what appeared to be the peal of distant thunder. Yet there was no hint of thunder in the air, for South Wales was enjoying a period of prolonged summer weather that showed no sign of breaking. The Cambrian newspaper had reported that the previous day – Bank Holiday Monday – had been a record day for the Mumbles Railway where upwards of 24,000 people had travelled over the line, and that there had been several other venues and events to which the holidaying workers had thronged to take advantage of the balmy weather. It soon became apparent, therefore, as the news spread quickly from house to house, that what had appeared to have been thunder was, in fact, the rumbling from an explosion deep in the ground beneath them.

The Number One Main, or Bryncoch Pit, was a new pit with sinking commencing in May 1891 reaching the Graigola seam at a depth of 435 yards in January 1893. The Graigola seam, which was some twenty-five yards below the Tir Edmund seam, produced steam coal and had been previously worked at a shallower depth from the Court Herbert Colliery, situated some two miles to the south. Shortly after the sinking of the "Bryncoch", a connection was made between both pits. The new pit had modern buildings and machinery, and the lights used were "locked" safety lamps. Many felt the use of such lamps unnecessary given that neither the Graigola nor the Tir Edmund seams were regarded as "gassy" or "fiery" and had been worked previously with open lights.

That Tuesday, after the morning inspection, 196 of the pit's workforce of 230 descended the pit. The Cambrian reported that:

"One of the workmen who intended presenting himself for work and would have been working in the section where the explosion was most severe, a certain David Jones, had been troubled during the night by a restless baby, and in consequence slept much later than usual, so that he decided not to go to the pit on Tuesday at all."

After descending the pit, the men went about their work as usual. At about 8.30am David Harries and William D. Jones, two repairers working on No.1 North-East Heading heard the roof "working" but were not unduly concerned because the pillar there had been removed and the roof was intended to fall as a result. Harris, after briefly visiting the area to assess the situation, returned to his place of work and when a small fall occurred just after nine o'clock both men continued with their work without bothering to investigate. At about ten o'clock, a much larger fall took place and when Harris was making his way to visit the scene for a second time he met some colliers coming towards him from their workplaces beyond where the fall had occurred. They told Harris that the area was "filling with gas" and that at least one of their lights had been "put out by the gas".

In no time, word of the impending danger had

reached the officials at the pithead, who all (including the under-manager, Mr. William Williams) immediately descended the shaft; it was due to the prompt action of these men in organising an immediate evacuation of the pit, along with the energy of David Evans – the engine driver

operating the winding gear – that between 10.45 and 11.05am, 175 workers had been raised up a pit 435 yards in depth. Only some twenty men and boys remained underground: those still working in the Southeast heading and those who had been engaged in getting the men to the surface.

Following the evacuation of most of the workforce, William Williams and David Harris proceeded to where the fall had taken place but were unable to reach their destination due to the accumulation of gas. In order to prevent the gas seeping back to the pit bottom, they partially opened the door at the junction of No.1 North-East and No.1 North headings. The result of this was to drive the gas towards the South-East district. It was at about

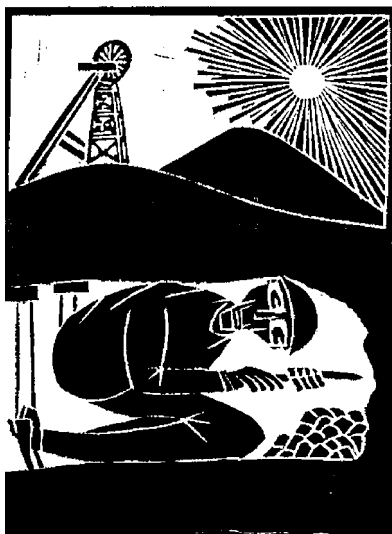
this time that the explosion occurred.

In the South-East district, Lewis Jones Snr. along with his sons Lewis Jones Jnr. and Leyshon Jones had been working at the top of No.2 South-East heading. Their work that morning was to drill a hole for the purpose of shot firing. The task had been completed and the shot fired by fireman James Jones, some three quarters of an hour before the explosion.

Half way along the heading, William Jones, a labourer, had just finished clearing some rubble and was having a rest as he waited for a haulier to arrive to cart it away. Within minutes of his having heard the shot being fired, an excited Lewis Jones Jnr. came hurrying towards him exclaiming, "Let me have light; our lamps have gone out!" Handing him his lamp, William Jones followed him to within 280 yards of where he, his father and brother had been working. At this point, the lamp went out. They called repeatedly to Lewis and Leyshon Jones but received no reply.

Retracing their steps towards the South heading, they came across other workmen who gave them a lamp each and sent one of their number, Evan Jones, to accompany them back to the point where the Jones family had been working. The result was as before: their lamps were extinguished and, despite repeated calling, no reply was heard. The gas was now accumulating rapidly forcing them to retreat down the heading where they met firemen James Jones and David Meyrick and repairer Daniel Jones who, having been informed that men were still working in No. 2 South-East heading, were on their way to get them out. Both parties decided to join forces and proceeded up the heading towards the missing men, with the exception of William Jones who by this time was near exhaustion from his earlier efforts. After warning them to proceed slowly and to carry their lamps low, he made for the pit bottom. As soon as he arrived at the lodge at the pit bottom, an explosion took place.

this article to be continued in the next edition



Paul Peter Piech

OUT AND ABOUT IN DYFFRYN CLYDACH

Without a doubt, Dyffryn Clydach has some of the most stunning countryside to be found anywhere around Neath. We are so fortunate to have such a range of wonderful places to explore, and all within walking distance for everyone.

It is possible to walk for hours over Drymmau Mountain (between Drumau Road and Dyffryn Church) and to enjoy tremendous panoramic views. On a good day you can pick out many Swansea landmarks, as well as the more familiar views over Neath. There are magnificent views over Swansea Bay and in 1995 beacon fires lit to commemorate VE Day could be seen in the Gnoll and as far away as Cefn Bryn, Penmaen.

There are less strenuous walks along the canal, or through the woods - Darren Woods, Coed y Graig or Coed Bach. In Coed Bach there is a really attractive waterfall (just below the roundabout at the top of Longford Road) and a network of paths in the Cwm lead from here down to the old iron works.

Going from the Highlands and Penshannel you can walk along an old tram road which used to take coal from the Main Colliery to Neath Abbey railway sidings and wharves, and to the old Mines Royal Copper Works.

From our homes all these walks can be readily accessed in just minutes and the Community Council is justifiably proud of the condition and maintenance of the footpaths. These are looked after by the Council Groundsman who also checks out associated fences, gates and seating.

On a fine day, why not get outside and enjoy a walk in our fine countryside here?



Council Groundsman, Mr Harry Davies, working on the surface of footpaths in the Cwm

NEWS FROM OUR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

Both the long established Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers and the newer Dyffryn Clydach Environmental Group were shortlisted for Tidy Wales Awards. Their work in cleaning up and improving the environment was recognised in a ceremony organised by Keep Wales Tidy in partnership with Environment Agency Wales and the Wales Tourist Board.

Members of Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers outside their compound in Longford Road



Dyffryn Clydach Environmental Group Members by the waterfall in Coed Bach, Longford

The Eco-Schools Flag flies proudly above Mynachlog Nedd junior School. The flag is intended to help children become more effective citizens by encouraging them to take responsibility for the future of their environment. In order to qualify for the award, pupils had to convince the assessors that they had discussed, and where possible acted to improve matters concerning litter, waste minimisation, energy, water, transport, healthy living, school grounds and global citizenship. Well done, Mynachlog Nedd Junior!



Well, who'd have thought it?

This is an amazing true story recounted by Margaret Bater. While playing golf in a competition in Southerndown, a course where sheep are allowed to graze, she drove off from the first tee, but the ball struck a wandering sheep squarely in the rear. With the ball firmly lodged, the startled sheep ran off before the ball dropped out, giving Margaret at least ten yards advantage. This was not all she gained, though, because her letter about the incident gained her a prize putter. Good one, Margaret!

DYFFRYN CLYDACH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

WINTER 2005 NEWSLETTER

The Dyffryn Clydach Neighbourhood Watch scheme is pleased to be able to circulate future newsletters by means of the "YMLAEN" community magazine, and we thank Dyffryn Clydach Community Council, and the editor, for this facility.

Our local scheme, as a member of the Afan Tawe Nedd Neighbourhood Watch Association, is supporting the national project directed at addressing the problem of DISTRACTION BURGLARIES and DOORSTEP CRIME which, unfortunately, are now occurring regularly in our own locality. We urge everyone to be aware of the possibility of becoming a victim, and we ask that the more vulnerable residents are "looked after". There are many devices now available to help householders in combating the "door-step criminal", and the Neighbourhood Watch street leaders and the Police Community Support Officers are willing and able to help and advise in the matter of door chains, spy holes, security lighting and the like.

The main weapon in the armoury, of course, is AWARENESS. When answering an unexpected caller at the front door, are you sure that the back door is closed? Sadly, modern technology has made the production of very convincing "look alike" personal identification a simple task, and as a result the bona fide public services worker now needs to be "vetted" further. Please consider using the "pass word"

scheme now available from the main service providers. Many doorstep sellers are genuine and just trying to earn an honest living. However, some are not - the principle must be

IF IN DOUBT - KEEP HIM OUT!!

Doorstep Sellers and Bogus Callers are the subjects of an initiative being actioned with the support of the Trading Standards Officers. The local Department is currently housed at the Old Civic Centre in Neath. If you think that you have been the victim of unfair trading, then give them a call on: 01639 686033.

There has been a change in personnel at the Pontardawe Police Station, the Headquarters of the Sector in which our area falls. It is now commanded by Inspector Jason James, with Sgt. Andy Abraham as his deputy. They have introduced themselves to our group, and have informed us of the intention to increase the "community based" element of their man-power, and the direction of Police Community Support Officers to locally identified trouble spots.

A project is to be implemented soon where-by residents can have items of value (up to a maximum of 10) "water marked" - making stolen property a risky business to possess, as it can be easily traced back to its owner. Keep a look out in the local press

Working together to help build a safer community

SMARTWATER

South Wales Police are working in partnership with Smartwater to help make communities feel safer. It is part of a large community initiative to beat the burglars and warn off thieves.

Pontardawe Police Community Action Team have been encouraging members of Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Watch schemes to take advantage of this new initiative designed to beat the burglars.

Each member has been given the opportunity to have up to 10 items per household 'Smartwatered'. A sticker is then displayed in their windows to warn thieves that the property has been security marked.

Smartwater is a revolutionary forensic security system, which is a invisible water based solution and can only be seen under ultra-violet light. It is applied to the nooks and crannies of valuables making them uniquely identifiable and once dry virtually impossible to remove.

It is a powerful theft deterrent because any stolen 'Smartwatered' valuables can be analysed to irrefutably link the thief back to the crime scene via the unique code. Each bottle has a unique code and that code will be linked to a household. Each code will be kept on the Smartwater National Security Database with the occupier's details.



This initiative has proved very successful since starting on October 2005. Many members of these schemes have already been part of this initiative. Mrs Rees from the Dyffryn Clydach area said "I am looking forward to being part of this initiative, it is really good to have the police working closely with the public".

If you are interested in being part of this initiative, please contact your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator Martyn Peters on 01792 813174 or alternatively contact, Kiele Hopkin, Police Community Support Officer at Pontardawe Police Station on 01792 562838 or Chris Thomas Community Safety Officer at Port Talbot Police Station on 01639 889124.

Proclamation Ceremony, National Eisteddfod, Swansea

The Proclamation Ceremony for the National Eisteddfod 2006 was held at Singleton Park, Swansea on 25th June 2005, after a parade through the city by the Gorsedd of Bards, civic representatives and members of various organisations. The colourful costumes of the bards and the various officials and groups taking part in the ceremony brightened a somewhat dark and overcast day.

The Proclamation itself was preceded by the installation of the new Archdruid Selwyn Griffiths (Selwyn Iolen) by the retiring Archdruid Dr Robyn Lewis. The new Archdruid is from Pensisarwaun near Caernarfon and is only the fifth former schoolteacher to hold the position in the last hundred years. He is a respected adjudicator of prose and recitation in minor eisteddfodau and is unlikely to be as political or as controversial as Dr Lewis.

To anyone who has seen these ceremonies on television, the experience was certainly enhanced by being present. One was conscious of being present at an event which stretches back into history. From their position near the central Gorsedd stone, the Trumpeters sounded fanfares to the North, East, South and West in turn. The members of the Gorsedd in their respective green, blue or white robes, signifying their status, took up their positions within the Gorsedd Circle. The Herald summoned the Assembly to attention and the new Archdruid was installed by the outgoing Archdruid. The huge sword carried by Ray Gravell, the former Welsh international rugby player, was held aloft and



partially withdrawn from its scabbard. There was a shout of "A oes heddwch?" (Is there peace?) with an answering shout of "Heddwch" from the assembled throng. This was repeated three times. The new Archdruid took his seat and was offered gifts of fruit and flowers. He was invited to drink from the Corn Hirlas (Horn of Plenty.) Young girls performed a floral dance accompanied by the harpist. After a short address by the new Archdruid, the Proclamation was made inviting Eisteddfodwyr to assemble at Felindre, Swansea in 2006. A poem was recited which paid tribute to the hot, back breaking work in the old style tin works and to their more modern successor Velindre, now demolished.

The Eisteddfod is a uniquely Welsh institution which can be traced back to an event held by Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd in 1176. Its title is thought to date back to a competition held by Gruffydd ap Nicolas in 1451. The

costumes and the rituals owe much to the creative mind of Iolo Morgannwg in the 18th Century. It remains a major cultural event which is well worthy of support.

RECIPE ❖ RECIPE ❖ RECIPE

Never fail fresh Seville Orange Marmalade

The season for fresh Seville oranges is very short and they can be found in the shops for a few weeks from mid January onwards. Their skin is thick and dimpled and their flavour is bitter, but ideal for cooking, and traditionally used in the making of marmalade.

Using a pressure cooker and food processor, this recipe is quick to make, and it has never failed! (The oranges may be bought in season and then frozen. They can even be cooked without thawing, but remember to make allowances for this in the cooking time.)

- 2 lbs Seville oranges
- 2 lemons
- 2 pints water
- 4 lbs sugar

- Reserve the juice of the lemons
- Chunk the oranges and pressure cook them with the lemon skins and water for 25 minutes at 10lbs pressure
- Remove the pips and process the fruit
- Add the lemon juice and sugar and boil for about 30 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking
- Bottle in hot sterilized jars (Makes 7 – 8lbs)

What's on at Christmas

The following events have been booked in the Memorial Hall over the Christmas period:

Christmas Fayre:

Friday 2 December

Community Carol Evening:

Wednesday 7 December

Children's Party:

Saturday 10 December

Over 50's Tea:

Saturday 8 January

Get Gardening

Margaret Smith

This is the time of year for planning ahead for new planting by ordering seeds for next year. Trees, shrubs and hedges are best planted now, giving them plenty of time to get established before the cold winter weather sets in. Trim straggly growth on hedges and prune fruit trees and bushes. Now it is cooler water plants more sparingly, and in the greenhouse make sure there is good circulation around foliage to prevent fungal disease.

Lawn care

Remove fallen leaves from lawns, ponds and beds, taking care not to disturb creatures hibernating under vegetation or in the corner of a shed. Spike lawns and brush grit into the holes to improve drainage.

Vegetables

When it is possible to get onto the garden dig it roughly, turning the soil but not breaking it up finely. The rain will drain freely from roughly dug soil which will not then become compacted and heavy, thereby making lighter work in the spring.

Pot up herbs and bring them in under glass, or on a window sill. A small pot of chives, for example, can provide a useful fresh winter garnish.

Winter Density is a good variety of lettuce which can be sown in succession now for a continuous fresh supply.

Flowers

Finish planting out spring flowering bulbs, or if you have been unable to do this, plant them in large pots. They can always be planted out later.

Divide and cut back herbaceous perennials and apply mulch or use garden fleece to protect tender plants.

Prune roses and tie in shrubs to prevent them from rocking in the wind and weakening their root system.

Longford and District Gardening Society

For gardening supplies and a 50% reduction on orders of seeds from Dobies catalogue visit Longford Gardening Club. This is to be found in the garage compound off Heol Penlan and is open on Sundays between 10.30am and 12.30pm. It will be closed for the winter period from 28th November until 12th February. Orders for seeds and plugs should be in by 27th November. Purchases from the club during the week or during the winter period may be arranged by contacting the Secretary, Mr Stephen Absalom, 101 Longford Road, Neath Abbey, telephone 01792 813465.

A full range of plants, trees and shrubs is available from Bryncoch Nurseries, Primrose Bank (next to Bryncoch Rugby Club.)

Nature notes

One of the great success stories of conservation in the last century is how the Red Kite, or Barcud to give it its Welsh name, was miraculously saved from extinction in the U.K. Once an abundant scavenger in towns and cities during the Middle Ages it was declared to be vermin in the sixteenth century and several laws were passed to bring about its total eradication. As a consequence, the bird's population declined over the centuries to such an extent that by the 1930s only some five pairs remained - all in the remote hills of mid Wales.

From that time on, a concerted effort by conservationists to protect the species saw its numbers increase gradually to reach a total of 69 breeding pairs by 1989. This total was reached despite numerous setbacks caused by illegal shooting, poisoning and nest robbing. By now the Welsh population exceeds 400 breeding pairs. In 1989, too, birds were brought in from Sweden to establish footholds in England and Scotland, and by now their numbers have increased considerably.

Although the future of the Red Kite appears safe in the U.K., the same is not the case in other parts of the European Union. In its German, French, Spanish and Italian strongholds its numbers have declined rapidly due to a variety of reasons which include the use of

"legal" pesticides and rodenticides along with changes in farming methods that have seen grasslands turned into arable land and fields of stubble replaced by winter cereals. Shooting is another cause of its decline.

Wales's largest raptor, with a wingspan of almost two metres, the Red Kite is primarily a scavenger feeding on dead lambs or sheep - although it is unable to do so until the lamb's carcass has been torn open by the stronger beak of a Buzzard

or Raven. It sometimes takes prey in the form of earthworms, small mammals and amphibians, and thanks to the prompt action of Mr. Alun Davies of The Highlands a photographic record of a Red Kite flying in Dyffryn Clydach was obtained last summer. The bird was flying in the wake of Mr. Price's tractor as he cut hay in the field in Longford Farm to the rear of Mr. Davies's property. It descended periodically to pick up some tasty morsel that had been uncovered by the action by the mowing machine.



SWISS GABLES A LISTED BUILDING

Mr and Mrs Watkins of Swiss Gables were surprised to have a visit from people who had been involved with work on the roof of neighbouring St Matthew's Church. Apparently, the interesting design of the house had attracted their attention, and as a result the house has recently been listed by CADW as a Grade II listed building of special architectural or historic interest.

Designed by Henry Ward of Stafford for Howel Gwyn of Dyffryn, the house was built between 1881 and 1884 for the exceptional sum of £7,000, which was more than the church which cost £4,500. It was built for the first vicar, the Rev J L Thomas who moved in in 1884.

With posts of 9inch square timbers, the timber framing is more than decorative. The other timbers, measuring 8x4 inches match the thickness of the yellow brick infill. The framing is said to be all pitch-pine, and the windows of mahogany.

Neath Port Talbot Ramblers

The Neath Port Talbot Ramblers have again enjoyed an excellent summer walks programme which consists of a weekly walk to various locations such as Strumble Head in Pembrokeshire, Talybont on Usk for a short stroll along the canal and the Carmarthen Fans for a more strenuous walk.

The very good weather this summer has seen increased numbers on each walk and has also meant an increase in club membership. In June and July short walks were undertaken with an optional pub meal afterwards. These events proved very popular and will be repeated next year.

Of particular interest to members was an Ogwr Ridgeway walk near Blackmill which took in the windfarm which can be seen from the M4 near Pencoed. After walking through the windfarm most people agreed that the noise from the rotating turbines was unobtrusive and was unlikely to cause too many problems to nearby residents. The visual impact, however, and the output efficiency of these turbines make them a questionable asset.

At the beginning of September twenty group members enjoyed a weekend in Dolgellau. The weather was glorious and two full day walks were undertaken, one of which was to the summit of Cadair Idris, the second highest mountain in Wales. The views towards Snowdon and over Carmarthen Bay were fantastic.

It is hoped that walks around the Dyffryn Woods and Drummau Mountain area will be organised. The winter programme has already started and anyone wishing to take part in the walks or to find more information can find programmes displayed at sports centres and libraries.

Terry Griffiths

The interior has original features, the most attractive of which is a timber fireplace decorated with carved lilies and panelled friezes with inset tiles. These are so delicately designed with a bat and a bird, representing night and day, and with rising and setting suns and waxing and waning moons. There is a white marble frame to the fireplace with patterned tiles in it.

Interesting features within the porch are the painted inscriptions above the doors, meaning peace to those coming in and a blessing to those leaving.

Memorial Hall Renovation Up-date

The Memorial Hall is the focal point of Dyffryn Clydach and is well used by groups from within and outside the community.

The life of the present building is obviously limited and nobody will give an accurate estimate as to how long it will last in its present condition. The previous council started on the work by giving the building a new roof, and ensuring that steel girders rather than the concrete-section walls of the building support the roof.

It is now time to act to ensure that the concrete walls do not deteriorate and allow water to enter the sections and corrode the re-enforcing bars inside them. To this end, our architect has advised that the walls are made waterproof.

In addition to this work, we shall be providing access for wheelchairs to the rear of the building and to the proposed toilet facilities there, as required by the new Disability laws.

The Council also recognises the need for more storage space for regular users of the building such as the Short Mat Bowls club, Mother and Toddler group, and the Karate club. We are hoping to create these extra facilities as well as giving the kitchen a much-needed makeover.

Whilst all this work is in progress – and we anticipate this to be during January, February and March - there will be some disruption for hall users, but your Council will try to keep this to a minimum.

For obvious safety reasons, the under-fives playground to the rear of the hall will be closed for the duration of the work.