



Additional copies available from Neath Abbey Post Office or from the Editor, Cllr Mrs Margaret Smith.

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To include local interest items in future editions, please contact the Editor or your local Councillor

Message from the Chairman of the Community Council

To be elected Chair of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council for the coming year is both a pleasure and a privilege. Especially so, in the place where I was born and brought up. I have lived here for most of my life, in good times and bad, and would not want to live anywhere else.

Dyffryn Clydach is a pleasant place with friendly people. We are fortunate to live within easy reach of many amenities and green, open spaces. It is our intention as a Council to do everything possible



The new Chairman, Cllr Harry Thomas, receives the chain of office from outgoing Chairman, Cllr Gwyn Edwards

to preserve what is good in our community and to improve things where we can. We are currently undertaking a major refurbishment of the Longford Memorial Hall which I am sure will widen the scope of the amenities available to Dyffryn Clydach residents. We are also exploring ways which

will reach more groups within our community.

I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

Harry Thomas

CHANGE AT THE TOP!

Those of you with children will be sad to hear that Mrs Margaret Thomas, the Headteacher of Neath Abbey Infants' School, will be retiring in July.

Mrs Thomas started at the school in January 1968, working as a relief teacher for two terms before being appointed as a permanent teacher by Mrs Mair Williams in September 1968 – the same day that Mrs Williams became Headteacher. In January 1972 she became the school's first Deputy Head.

At that time the school still had outside toilets and a shelter. There were only four classes and Mrs Thomas shared her classroom with the Headteacher and school clerk until an office was erected in the school hall.

The school has expanded greatly over the years to include the Early Years Unit in Rhyd Hir, the office and staff room and most recently the addition of the school field and car park.

Mrs Thomas has certainly seen many changes in her time in Neath Abbey Infants' School and on behalf of everyone in Dyffryn Clydach we send her

many thanks for the contribution she has made to our community in shaping the citizens of the future.

We welcome her successor, Mrs Beverly Newman, current Deputy Head of Melin Infants' School, as the new Headteacher here, who will be taking up the post in September.



Mrs Margaret Thomas and children of Neath Abbey Infants' School

Councillor Mrs Alyson Thomas is pictured here with Councillor Martyn Peters after her successful by-election result was announced. Living in Graig Parc, she may be contacted on 01792 528754.

For local issues contact any Member of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council.

If you are interested to see local democracy in action why not come along to a Council Meeting? These are held in the Longford Memorial Hall on the first Monday of the month, and details are posted in the entrance lobby.



DYFFRYN CLYDACH COMMUNITY AWARD

This year's awards in recognition of service to the community have been awarded to two ladies who have contributed much to society, both here in Dyffryn Clydach and in the community at large.



Mrs Rita Evans of The Highlands received her award at the Christmas Carol Service. She has done much work over a long period of time within the community, particularly in her role with the Salvation Army.



Mrs Val Berni, who lives in Longford Road, has given her time and expertise working to support Longford Court. She has spent endless time and energy for a number of years helping others in the Gateway Club where she has worked tirelessly.

Congratulations, ladies, and "thank you" for your valued contribution to the community.

CWM FELIN (Valley of the Mill)

A land of rugged beauty, Wales,
A land of music, love and dales;
Where hearts of men are filled with song
And the love of God is true and strong.

At the foot of Penlan hill
Lies the valley of the mill,
And of all the places on this earth
I love this valley of my birth.

A winding river through it flows,
Murmuring softly as it goes,
And if we follow it slowly down
We will see the beauty of all around.

It enters our valley o'er man-made falls
Echoing softly its rumbling calls
And meanders serenely through fields of green
Where nature's wild beauty in abundance is seen.

The river now is fast and deep,
And on its bed lie fish asleep;
Whilst overhead the leafy trees
Are sighing gently in the breeze.

It changes now a frothy white
And rushes on with all its might,
And thundering aloud its rumbling calls
It tumbles o'er waterfalls.

And once again all is still,
As it flows on gently past the mill.

This poem was written in the 1940's by the late Roy Hopwood of Longford Road.

DEBATE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY Harry Thomas

Planning permission has been granted for a proposed wind-speed test mast on Drymmau Mountain by a narrow majority. In the meantime, a high test mast has appeared on March Hywel, visible evidence of the forthcoming relentless march of wind turbines on to our skylines. There appears to be a determination to proceed with these regardless of whether the local communities are in favour or not. There can be few, if any,



objections to clean, renewable energy. Unfortunately, that is not what is on offer from the latest rush to cover Welsh hillsides with wind turbines. These are at best, a supplementary means of generating electricity. There is no way that an advanced, energy dependent society such as ours could depend upon these as a main source of energy. The wind may be free and renewable, but it is certainly not dependable. It is unfortunate that the wind turbine lobby has managed to monopolise so much of the debate regarding alternative sources of energy. If the wind turbines' performance was anything like their PR, they would be much more useful.

Yet there is a case for a serious debate. We are told that the world is facing a crisis of global warming from the emission of too much greenhouse gases caused by burning fossil fuels. There is not universal agreement about this because thirty or so years ago scientists were warning that the world was moving into another Ice Age. The British government has set a target for a 20% decrease in CO₂ emissions by 2010. It is admitted that this target will not be met. Britain is responsible for merely 2% of world emissions, meaning 98% is outside British control. Major energy users such as China, India and the USA do not subscribe to the Kyoto protocols. There seems to be a lack of consistency domestically when tax on motor fuel is almost punitive, but

aircraft fuel, a major source of pollution, is lightly taxed in the form of a fuel surcharge.

Wind power is not the only renewable option, can it be desirable in a market economy that one source of energy should be subsidised to the detriment of others? We live on the edge of the Bristol Channel which has the second highest tidal rise and fall in the world. Much of the infrastructure is already in place to exploit this

natural resource, but what is needed is the political will to do this. Wales still has large reserves of coal. Clean burn technology and carbon capture could result in the exploitation of these reserves. The "dash for gas" in the 1980's has left this country vulnerable to the whims of foreign gas producers. Future energy needs will be met by a mixture of generating sources. A critical governmental decision will have to be taken regarding the renewal of the nuclear option which accounts for a massive 25% of British energy needs at present. Alas, all that most of us have to look forward to are ever increasing energy bills, regardless of how this energy is generated.

So do our hillsides have to be blighted in order to satisfy an arbitrary target which will have a negligible effect on global warming? Are the Welsh always destined to sacrifice their scenery to provide energy and power for more fashionable parts of the UK? Do people care about their scenic heritage and the preservation of the remaining places of beauty in this battered Principality of ours? If they don't, it doesn't matter. If they do, they must speak out about it, ask questions. Find out what their elected representatives think and the way they vote, hold them accountable.

The stated aim is to save the planet, but this planet is also our home and the cradle of our quality of life. It would be a pity if much of what makes life

DYFFRYN WOODS

DYFFRYN WOODS lie beneath Drymmau Mountain which can be clearly seen not only from Neath but also from many miles away. From rocky crags the numerous streams run down from springs to the lower flatter area. It is an Ancient Woodland site which was formerly part of the Dyffryn Estate, but was felled and planted with conifers in the 1930's. It was also clearfelled in the 1980's and replanting was mostly larch and conifers. The wood is now largely dominated by dense thickets of birch, willow and other broadleaved trees.

In the early 1990's the Amenity Society decided to help the Woodland Trust to purchase the 290 acre Dyffryn Woods from the Forestry Commission. With the help of local Councils and the generosity of the

people of Neath Abbey and Bryncoch sufficient money was raised to allow the Woodland Trust to achieve its aims.

Since that time the Trust has been busy improving the woods by clearing drains and removing all the old rhododendron bushes to recreate the broadleaf woods. This area is now a tremendous amenity for all of us in the area who love walking and riding.

In recognition of all the hard work done by the late Diane Harry of Dyffryn Clydach in helping the Woodland Trust over this period, it has decided to dedicate a quarter of an acre of the woods in her name. This area lies behind the main entrance to the woods opposite St Matthew's Church Vicarage.

EXPLOSION AT No 1 MAIN COLLIERY, BRYNCOCH

(continued from the last edition)

After a rock fall there was a build up of gas and an explosion as the working party was searching for the missing men ...

Under-manager Williams left the No.1 North-East heading and made for the pit bottom where he re-organised the ventilation arrangements. He then mustered a rescue party and accompanied them into No.2 South-East heading. Twenty-seven yards up the heading they came across the body of William D. Jones:

"His skull was fractured, he was slightly burned, and nearly all his clothes and one boot gone, showing that he had been subjected to a strong blast."

A hundred yards further in they discovered Evan Jones walking towards them, James Jones sitting on the side of the road and David Meyrick lying in the road. All three had severe burns, and all died within the following three weeks. After walking a further 150 yards, the rescue party discovered the badly burned body of Lewis Jones Jnr. The bodies of Lewis Jones Snr. and Leyshon Jones were found some five hundred yards beyond this point; there was no evidence of burning on their bodies.

The inquest into the accident was opened the following day (Wednesday, August 5th, 1896) at the "Hope and Anchor" public house in Neath Abbey. The jury comprised: Messrs. Richard Davies, grocer, Skewen; Reverend George Hague, Baptist minister, Skewen; Thomas Martin, vice-chairman of School Board, Skewen; Benjamin Griffiths, fitter, Skewen; Evan Evans, shopkeeper, Skewen; John John, retired collier, Skewen; Samuel Owen Snr., retired colliery manager, Skewen; David Davies, Terminus Hotel; David Thomas, farmer, Skewen; Samuel Owen Jnr., Skewen; John Thomas, Skewen; John Rees, Neath Abbey; Solomon Owen, Skewen; Thomas Rees, Royal Queen's Inn, Skewen, all former colliers; William Howells, stone cutter, Skewen; Benjamin Noot and William Noot, Mooretown.

At the beginning of proceedings, Mr. Howel Cuthbertson, coroner for Neath district proposed:

"that the jury should drive round the houses where the dead lay, and then reassemble to hear evidence of identification sufficient to enable them to grant certificates of burial."

On returning to the "Hope and Anchor", the coroner took evidence of identification before adjourning proceedings until the following Thursday.

The inquest resumed on Thursday, 13th August, and continued the following day after which it was adjourned in the hope that Evan Jones would recover and be able to give evidence. Unfortunately,

he died some ten days later. The inquest was resumed and concluded on 27th August 1896.

The funeral of Lewis Jones and his two sons, and of William David Jones took place on Saturday, 8th August. The four men were Nonconformists, Lewis Jones and his family being Methodists, and William David Jones, Independent. Short services were held at the homes of the deceased with the Reverends T. Manuel of Mountain Ash and J. Rowlands of Ystalyfera officiating at the home of Lewis Jones Snr. and his son Leyshon; and the Reverends W. Lloyd Jones of Skewen and T. Jones of Aberdare at the house of Lewis Jones Jnr. at Taillwyd, and the Reverend J. Edwards of Neath at the home of William David Jones. Shortly after four o'clock the separate corteges joined on the road leading to St. John's churchyard with the four coffins borne in close succession and followed by weeping relatives. The

Paul Peter Piech

coffins were conveyed into the church and placed in the nave and the west aisle as the organist played the "Dead March from Saul". Following the service, which was conducted in Welsh, the congregation sang "Beth sydd i mi yn y byd" to the tune "Aberystwyth" and the bodies were laid to rest in three adjoining graves: Lewis Jones Snr. and his son Leyshon in one, Lewis Jones Jnr. in another, and William David Jones in the third. When the proceedings had ended the bulk of the congregation headed towards Cadoxton church to attend the funeral of James Jones of Bryncoch, which had been scheduled to take place at five o'clock.

The resumed inquest lasted for three days with fourteen witnesses being called to give evidence. After their deliberations, the jury returned their verdict as follows:

We as a jury, find that Lewis Jones, senior, and Leyshon Jones died through suffocation, but whether before or after the explosion there is no definite evidence, and that the deaths of David Meyrick, James Jones, William Daniel Jones, Lewis Jones, junior, and Evan Jones were caused through injuries received by the explosion which took place on August 4th, 1896, at Bryncoch Pit; that the explosion was caused in the following manner: That a fall took place in the heading, No.1 North-East, which caused an extraordinary accumulation of gas, and that the fireman and others endeavouring to warn the workmen still left in the inner working, accidentally caused the gas to be ignited by going through the workings with a partly protected Davy lamp, and that the jury have heard with satisfaction that the owners have already dispensed with the Davy lamp partly protected; and have adopted a safer lamp for future use, namely, the Cambrian Bonneted Fireman's lamp.

The jury also praised the officials and workmen for their heroic part in the rescue effort, and extended their sympathy to the families of the deceased.

FREecycle

Think Globally – Recycle Locally. If you have internet access check out the Freecycle Network™.

The Freecycle Network is an exciting organisation made up of many individual groups across the globe with over two million members. It is a grassroots and entirely non-profit movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is moderated by a local volunteer and membership is free.

The Freecycle Network was started in May 2003 to promote waste reduction in Tucson's downtown and to help save the desert landscape from being taken over by landfills, but we can equally use this in Wales. The Network provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items. One person's trash can truly be another's treasure.

When you want to find a new home for something - whether it's a chair, a fax machine, piano, or an old door - you simply send an e-mail offering it to members of the local Freecycle group.

Maybe you are looking to acquire something yourself. Simply respond to a member's offer, and you just might get it. After that, it is up to the giver to decide who receives the

gift and to set up a pickup time for passing on the treasure.

The main rule: Everything posted must be free, legal and appropriate for all ages.

Non-profit organisations also benefit from the Freecycle Network. Post the item or items you want to give away and specify that you wish the gift to go to a non-profit cause. It is entirely your choice, a free cycle of giving. To sign up go to www.freecycle.org and find your nearest community by clicking on the UK region on the left. Then click on "Glamorgan". In addition to the Neath Group, other neighbouring groups are active in Swansea and Bridgend. Go directly to your local groups by clicking on "Go To" or you may join immediately by clicking on "Join". An automatic e-mail will be generated which, when sent, will sign you up for the local group and send you a response with instructions on how it works.

One local charitable group in Skewen, "Busy Bees Craft Group", has already received a very large amount of quality wool for its craft projects. Baby equipment and furniture are regularly donated and could be very useful. It is also a great way of de-cluttering your home. So go on - give it a go and have fun!

Fun Day and Summer Fair



Dyffryn Clydach Community Council will be holding its annual Family Fun Day on Saturday July 15th at the Memorial Hall, Longford. Regular visitors to the event will already know what a great day out it is for all the family and this year we hope it will be even better. It will also be an opportunity to see the improvements that have recently been made to the hall.

Along with the usual variety of stalls there will be a barbecue, children's entertainment, demonstrations by crafters and a few surprises too. The 'Annual Welly Wanging Championship' is becoming quite an event with very keen competition to win the coveted 'Golden Welly.'

This year the Council is to run competitions for local children. There will be an art competition in two age groups for children attending infants' schools. Junior school children will be able to take part in a writing competition. Full

details will be made available to both Neath Abbey Infants' School and Mynachlog Nedd Junior School. Local children NOT attending these schools are welcome to enter. Details of the competitions may be seen in the Memorial Hall, Longford. For further information contact Mrs Jennifer Davies on 01792 814472 or your local councillor. The winners will be announced at the Fun Day and prizes and certificates awarded during the afternoon.

After all the fun and games of the afternoon we will round off the day with the ever popular Prize Bingo.



**Make it a date in
your diary July 15th.
See you all there!**

DYFFRYN CLYDACH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH Summer Newsletter

A recent survey indicated that the main items to be addressed when considering being a "Good Neighbour" are summed up as:

Top neighbourly tips

- Ask your neighbour to keep an eye on your home and property if you are going away, and offer to do the same for them.
- Ask your neighbour to clear your post from your letterbox, especially if you have a glass panelled door.
- If your neighbour is a key holder for you, help them by installing power operated blinds or curtains and time switches together with low energy light bulbs. It will help them to give your home the "lived in" look while you are away.
- Use your own security equipment (burglar and car alarms, flood lighting, etc,) responsibly, so you do not disturb your neighbours.
- Be aware of elderly or other vulnerable neighbours especially when it is known that bogus callers or rogue traders are operating in your area. Keep an eye on them and remember that you might want such help one day.
- If you see someone acting suspiciously in your neighbourhood contact the Police and report it to 01792 456999. But remember that the "999" call is EMERGENCY ONLY.
- If you witness a crime or have any information regarding criminal activity that may help the Police (drugs, illegal trading, etc) then call CRIMESTOPPERS on 0800 555111 confidentially.
- Most importantly, get to know your neighbours. Being part of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is a good way to do this.

The Dyffryn Clydach and Brookfield Neighbourhood Watch Group is considering rearranging some of its meetings, and announces that, for a trial period, the monthly meetings in January, April, July and October each year will be held in either the Neath or Port Talbot Civic Offices. This will enable members to participate in the quarterly meetings of the Afan Tawe Nedd Neighbourhood Watch Association.

All these meetings are held on the second Monday of the month commencing at 7pm. The normal meetings in the remaining months, also commencing at 7pm are held in the Committee Room of the Longford Memorial Hall.

Congratulations

Best wishes go to Margaret Bater of The Highlands, Neath Abbey who became the Lady Captain of Pontardawe Golf Club for the second time. Good luck, Margaret, for the forthcoming year!

* * *

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Brenton of Lon Glyfelin. Both in their nineties, they celebrated their birthdays in the same month together. Mr Brenton is originally from the Melin and Mrs Brenton from Cadoxton where they were married 66 years ago. Is this a record?



Yn ôl D. Rhys Phillips, dyma rigwm a oedd yn boblogaidd yn yr ardal hon ers talwm. Rhowch gynnig arni.

Ma' gen i ddwy fuwch lwyd lon radlon
Ma' gennyt titha' ddwy fuwch lwyd lon radlon
Ond ma'm dwy fuwch lwyd lon radlon i
Yn rhadlonach dwy fuwch lwyd lon radlon
Na dy ddwy fuwch lwyd lon radlon di.

RECIPE ♦ RECIPE ♦ RECIPE

JELLY MOUSSE

This is a quick and easy recipe for the children to make

1 packet of jelly
1 small can of evaporated milk

- Dissolve the jelly in boiling water, make up to 1 pint with cold water Allow to cool
- Chill the evaporated milk, whisk until thick
- Whisk in the jelly until thick and almost set
- Pour into a mould or 2 pint dish

There are many variations: strawberry jelly with fresh strawberries makes a delightful summer dessert; orange jelly with a tablespoon of marmalade and decorated with fresh oranges is quite refreshing; lime jelly with a crumbled chocolate flake is different

*Experiment and have fun!
Any decoration as you see fit*

Get Gardening Margaret Smith

After a late start to the Spring weather, hopefully the seedlings are now off to a good start and longer sunnier days will be encouraging healthy new growth.

Here are a few seasonal reminders for May:

Lawn care

Lawns should be mown regularly, and where appropriate trimmed edges will really improve the overall effect. Now is the time to apply summer lawn fertiliser.

Vegetables

Harvest early vegetables and continue to sow and plant out for continuous crops.

To prevent potatoes from turning green and to prevent infection from blight, earth up potatoes by drawing up soil around the plants with a hoe or fork.

Sow runner beans in prepared ground when the soil is warm at the end of May.

Flowers

Remove spring bedding, dead head tulips and

daffodils and allow the foliage to die down, whilst applying a liquid fertiliser to encourage good flowering next year. Remove foliage from spring flowering bulbs once it has died down.

Before planting them outside remember to harden off plants which have been raised in the greenhouse.

Remember to stake border plants which will need support. Do this before the plants are too big, as later staking may damage the growth.

Liquid feed plants in containers and keep hanging baskets, tubs and troughs well watered.

Control weeds by regular hoeing, but be careful not to slice the tops off your prized plants.

Remember to look out for slugs and snails. They really like tender young plants, especially if they have been grown on first in the greenhouse..

For gardening supplies visit Longford Gardening Club. The shop is to be found in the garage compound off Heol Penlan and is open on Sundays between 10.30am and 12.30pm. For supplies at other times ring 01792 814850.

Nature notes

Mid April to mid May sees the return of our summer breeding birds. There are over twenty species of these visitors and not infrequently sightings of rarities take place - birds that have lost their way and travelled way off their normal routes. This year, a Hoopoe, probably destined for southern Spain, was seen at Llangadog in Dyfed. And, nearer home, on April 24, a White Stork was seen perched on a lamp post at Glais.



Osprey

If asked to name some of our summer migrants, most people would have Swallow and Swift near the top of their list, and possibly Osprey, given the television coverage the nesting pair at Porthmadog has received over recent years. Cuckoo, would probably score highly, too. Have you heard the cuckoo in Dyffryn Clydach this year? If you have, please let us know.



Swallows

The numbers of summer visitors vary from year to year. This could be due to a number of factors: such as a poor nesting season the previous year, or even severe drought in sub Sahara Africa where many birds go during our winter months. It has been suggested by some experts that global warming has caused a long-term decline in the numbers of some species because our earlier springs have seen the bulk of their food supply of grubs and caterpillars come and go before the birds arrive on our shores.

In the case of the Cuckoo, a decline in the number of its host species, the Meadow Pipit and Dunnock, is probably the main reason for its disappearance from many areas.

Everything in nature is so delicately balanced that we must all do our bit to minimise interference.

PHOTOGRAPH MYSTERY

Can you identify this photograph? Can you put a date to it? Do you recognise anybody in it? What do you know of the building behind the group?

The community council is keen to keep a record of all things concerning our community for the benefit of future generations. If you have any information that can throw further light on the photograph then please contact the editor or any other community councillor. Details of what we find out will be included in the next edition of Ymlaen.



Your money going up in smoke

During March and April there has been a shocking amount of vandalism in our community. Our recently refurbished children's play area next to Longford Memorial Hall is the main target. Arson attacks by youths have resulted in the climbing frame and roundabout being virtually destroyed. Repairs to equipment and safety matting are expected to cost up to £6,000 and the equipment will be out of use probably until the Autumn. A third arson attack was thankfully foiled by members of our community and the police who attended have issued warnings to certain individuals and ASBO's are being considered.

Someone amongst us knows who the real arsonists are. Arson is a very serious crime and if these youths are not stopped now how long will it be until they start on domestic properties? Justice must be seen to be done. Residents are asked to be vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour, for example: clothing smelling of smoke, purchasing of lighters or lighter fuel, loitering in the park late at night. Parents should also be careful that their children are not dragged into this by peer pressure. Of course this is of no comfort to the young people are now largely deprived of a play area during the coming summer holidays.

Midsummer's walk in Dyffryn Woods

Neath and Port Talbot Ramblers' Association has an interesting summer programme of weekend walks throughout South Wales.

We are fortunate that our own Dyffryn Woods is the venue for a short walk of approximately 3 miles. Walkers will be leaving the Glynclwyd Coach House car park shortly after 6.00pm on Wednesday 21st June. There will be the opportunity for an optional pub meal afterwards.

Make midsummer's day a date for a pleasant walk around the area and get to know our countryside better before returning for a cool drink and something to eat.

We hope to see you there.

For further details please contact Terry Griffiths on 01639 637964. BOX?

Neath Abbey Post Office is on the move!

After eight and a half years running Neath Abbey Post Office, popular Mike Faro is selling up. Local residents, however, are not losing another facility because a new sub post office will be set up just fifty yards down the road in the Abbeygate Minimarket.

It was hoped that the move would have been completed by April, but the complicated legal requirements are very involved. There will be extra facilities involving extensive alterations after which the new post office will be open for longer hours.

We are fortunate that Jagtar Johal and his family are retaining a sub post office in Neath Abbey and we wish them every success with their new venture.

Thank you to Mike Faro and his family for their friendly help and advice while running the post office. Best wishes for your future.