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Message from the Chairman of the Community Council

Dear Friends,

Christmas is with us again and the year 2006 is nearly spent. It is a time for families and friends to come together to celebrate the Festive Season. A time to spare a thought for those on their own and for those who for a variety of reasons, cannot be with their families this year. It is also a time to take stock of the year that has passed and to make plans for the coming year.

As a council we have undertaken a number of projects such as the major refurbishment of the Longford Memorial Hall in order to improve the amenities for the residents of Dyffryn Clydach. We hope that those who use the Hall are pleased with the results.

Our community, like a good many others, is not free from problems. But our problems, where they exist, can be solved by having

the will and the effort to do so. I said previously, that I have always thought Dyffryn Clydach to be a pleasant place with friendly people. As I walk about the community and talk to people, I am more convinced of this than ever.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Harry Thomas

Childhood Memories of Life at Longford Farm by Liz Mort (Price)

My parents Walter and Evelyn Price came from Tonna in 1929 and rented Longford Farm from Mr Reynold Thomas of The Graig House. There were five children then, William, Cyril, Winston, Mona and June. Morgan, Richard and Elizabeth were born at Longford. Work was hard in those days, everything being done manually. With the help of horses the work got done, but it took a lot longer than it does with today's modern machinery.

As a child I remember my father collecting prisoners of war from the Army camp on Neath Abbey Road. He paid the War Office for their help and they worked along with my elder brothers on the harvest, making hay and lifting potatoes. My mother cooked a roast dinner every day for the family and the German prisoners. In those days the meat was cooked in the oven at the side of the firegrate and the vegetables were cooked in cast iron saucepans on an open fire.

In the 1940's we had three horse drawn milk floats delivering door to door. The milk was in ten gallon churns and we scooped the milk with pint or half pint measures into milk cans. It was really cold work, especially in the winter because everything was made of metal.

My elder brothers worked on the land. We grew all the basic vegetables, potatoes, carrots, swedes, parsnips, cabbage and peas. They then went out on the veg round.

Along with the prisoners we also had help from the boys from the reformatory school at Hillside. We never had one abscond, they were eager to come and help because they had plenty of fresh air and a good dinner every day. My father paid Glamorgan Farm School for their help.

By the late 1940's my father had purchased a second hand Ford open back van for delivering milk to the

schools. We went to Neath Abbey Infants, Skewen Lower Girls and Boys Schools, Coedffranc and Cadoxton Schools. The third pint glass bottles had a cardboard cap in which you pushed the centre through to put the straw in for drinking. We also supplied half pint bottles which were given morning and afternoon to underprivileged children. Ours was the first farm in Glamorgan to be tuberculin attested in 1931. Milk sold in bottles with the cardboard tops was called commercial milk. That with the foil cap was the tuberculin attested milk.

Come September 1945 I had to start school which I did not like one bit as I was used to my freedom, going different places in the van with my father or going with my sister Mona who could drive then without having to pass a driving test. I remember helping in the dairy. I had to stand on a crate to get the clean bottles out of the water tank. I can remember to this day how many crates of third pint bottles we filled by hand with a jug because there was no machine for that size bottle. Being the youngest of eight children, I might have been more fortunate in having a doll and a pram and a dolls cot which my mother's brother made for me.

I treasure these memories of everything in my young life.



Mr and Mrs Walter Price enjoying a day at the Royal Welsh Show, Cardiff 1949.

The Royal Commission Report of 1842 on the Employment and Condition of Children in Mines and Manufactories

The coming of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries brought about the most rapid and dramatic changes in the living conditions of ordinary people that mankind had ever experienced. Children were particularly affected. There being no schools, except for the rich and privileged, young children for centuries would have worked around the

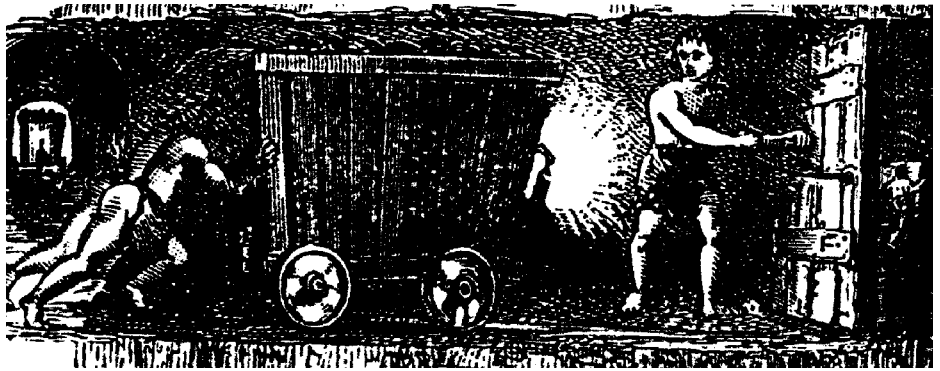
house or helped their parents in their labours as weavers, bakers, farm labourers or woodmen, for example. Parents would have ensured that the work their children undertook would not be onerous, and enough time would be allowed for recreation and sleep.

Work in the new factories, coal mines and metal refineries was very different. Bullying foremen and twelve hour shifts, in dark filthy conditions, with little time for meals and none for recreation, were the order of the day. And, as a result, death and injury among the children employed in such industries became commonplace. Parents, unfortunately, were unable to intervene, as the few pence earned by their children were a crucial addition to the family income.

A large proportion of the population was unaware of the unbearable conditions suffered by those employed in the new industries and it was only after the long and persistent efforts of a few influential people that steps to improve the lot of the working class children began to take effect.

In 1840, Lord Ashley - later to become the Earl of Shaftesbury - persuaded Parliament to set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Children's Employment. The Commission produced two reports: one covered children in mines and the other children in trades and manufactories. In the Appendix of the second report is contained the "Report and Evidence from Sub-Commissioners" where the findings "on the State, Condition and Treatment of such Children and Young Persons" is recorded in some detail. The Sub-Commissioners visited all parts of the British Isles and interviewed a cross section of the population that included children, workmen, employers, clergymen and doctors.

Robert Hugh Franks, the Sub-Commissioner who visited south Wales noted that there were more cases of children being employed in the pits at very early ages than in any other area surveyed. He cites evidence from several witnesses of children as young as three or four being carried underground by their fathers. On visiting Taff Vale colliery he came across "Mary Davies, near seven years old: A very pretty little girl, who was fast asleep under a piece of rock near the air-door below ground. Her lamp had gone out for want of oil: and upon waking her, she said the rats or some one, had run away with her bread and cheese, so she went to sleep." He continues: "The overman who



was with me thought she was not so old, though he felt sure she had been below near eighteen months."

Of his visit to our area, he records the following evidence:

Cadoxton - "Sunday schools of the Established Church, Wesleyans, Calvinistic Methodists, and Independents. Day and evening-schools at the Old Storehouse Pentre Clwydau, Aberdulais, and the Abbey, which are not confined to boys, but where girls, in addition to the usual elements of education, are taught needlework etc. The schools are but indifferently attended by colliers' children".

"Mr. Charles Waring, agent, Neath Abbey Iron Company: 'Unless under particular circumstances, children are never employed at these works under 14 years of age'."

"Mr. William Close, master of Neath Abbey School: 'Children ought to remain school up to 14 years of age'."

"Neath Abbey Iron Company, parish of Cadoxton, County of Glamorgan - Messrs. Foxes, Price & Co., Proprietors. Number of persons employed: -

Adults	175
Under 18 years of age	47
Under 13	11"

Mr. Charles Waring, agent:

The Neath Abbey Iron Company is an engine manufactory, and contains a department for iron shipbuilding, etc. Our works have no special provisions for ventilation, but they are sufficiently airy, and the usual temperature is from 58° to 70°, nor is any great degree of heat required in those processes where children are employed. Indeed, unless under particular circumstances, such is the inability of parents to support their children, through sickness or any other cause, children are never employed at these works under 14 years of age, nor is it indispensable that children should be employed at all.

There are three schools connected with the works: one for infants, one for boys of from 5 to 14 years of age, and one for girls. To these schools each of the workmen contribute 1d. per week, and they generally avail themselves of them by sending those of their children who are not old enough for work.

Of those children who are in our works you will not find more than six who cannot read and write. Indeed in this particular quarter instruction is much more generally diffused, and more interest is taken in the

education of working people and their children, than in many other parts of South Wales where there is a manufacturing population.

Philip Jones, aged 14, fetter-tender: Goes to Sunday-school, but not to day-school; has just left school to come to work; can both read and write. Attends the Welsh Wesleyan Sunday-school. Has neither father nor mother; lives with grandmother. Earns 3s. a week.

William Rees, aged 12, moulder's attendant: Does not go to day-school - has been to day-school; goes to Methodists' Sunday-school; is taught Welsh. Lives with his grandmother; has two sisters younger than himself - one lives with his mother and one with grandmother. Works from six in the morning till six in the evening; earns 3s. 6d. a week. Can spell in Welsh; don't teach the Commandments at Sunday-school until the boys get into the Testament; don't know how many Commandments there are.

John Jenkins, aged 13, general attendant: Left day-school three years ago, and came to work. Can read and write too; knows how many Commandments there are; has been in the Testament at Sunday-school; goes to the Independent Welsh school.

(One of the foremen said that the Independents had a Catechism, and made the children learn it when they could read the Testament, and that their Sunday-school had an average attendance at one Sunday-school of 200 of both sexes, and at another of 150 to 200, including adults as well as children and young persons).

Thomas Morgan, aged 13, attendant on the furnace: Went to day-school three years since; goes to Sunday-school; can read and write. Works 10 and a half hours a day, exclusive of the hour and a half to his meals; earns 3s. a week. Father is a carpenter, and earns 15s. a week, and brother earns 3s. 6d. like himself.

John Howell, aged 15: Attends upon the men in the boiler-making and iron ship-building department; Goes to Sunday-school, left day-school these four years; can read (pretty well). Is paid like the others, 9d. a day,- works 12 hours a day. (Men and boys are all paid by the day in these works). Lives with his mother; mother works on a farm.

Thomas Davies, aged 12, attendant on the furnaces: Goes to Sunday-school; left day-school about a year ago; reads, writes and ciphers; learns the Welsh Bible at the Sunday-school of the Independents; knows there are Ten Commandments.

William Davies, aged 11: (This boy, like the two preceding, was an attendant on the men, but he was so confused that I could make nothing of him)".

The Neath Abbey Coal Company

The Main, Bryncoch and Brynddwey (sic) Collieries, parish of Cadoxton juxta Neath, county of Glamorgan (along the East base of the Drymma Mountains) - Neath Abbey Company, Proprietors.

Number of persons employed:-

Adults	96
Under 18 years of age	27
Under 13 years of age	15

Mr. Charles Waring, agent:

These collieries are all carefully ventilated by

downthrow and upthrow pits and airways, and at the bottom of the upthrow pits fires are always kept. One of the workings is entered by shaft, one by level, and one by shaft and man way -all the coal being brought up by shaft. The height of our mainways is in no part less than four feet six inches; and we are both at 10 fathoms and at 16 fathoms below the surface.

There is carburetted hydrogen in small quantities: but the airing prevents their accumulation, and we have never lost any lives from that cause. We have had one man killed by coal falling on him and crushing him, and one boy killed on the incline; he got on the wrong side to be out of the way of the carriages, and was run over and killed on the spot; he was about 10 years old.

The employment of young persons is driving horses, keeping doors, and sweeping roads.

We have four steam engines, equal to 76 horse power, by which the coal is brought to the surface.

I do not think limitation of the age at which children are employed in our mines desirable, as they have no hard work; but if they have to push carriages, etc., I should fix the limit at 14 years of age.

I examined at the Brynddwey (sic) Colliery the following boys:-

David Davies, aged 9 years, air-door boy: Been down a year and a half; had been to the abbey-school and to Sunday-school; could read a little; earns 6d. a day.

Rees Hughes, aged 14, haulier: Been at work three years; has never been to day-school; can't read; comes from Carmarthenshire; earns 1s. a day.

Lewis Morgan, aged 14, haulier: Belongs to the abbey; can't read.

Edward Davis, aged 14, haulier: Had been to the abbey school occasionally; can't read; left school a year and a half since.

RECIPE ♦ RECIPE ♦ RECIPE

BRANDY BUTTER or RUM BUTTER

Both brandy butter and rum butter are excellent with Christmas pudding or mince pies. Prepared in advance, it should be chilled thoroughly before serving and will keep for up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator. My family prefers rum butter and, because it is so popular, there is not much chance of it lasting for 3 weeks!

4oz or 100g unsalted butter
5oz or 150g sieved icing sugar
2 tbsp spirits

Blend the butter and sugar together and beat to a light consistency.

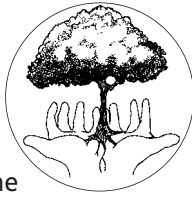
Gradually add the brandy or rum, beating well after each addition.

(If you have been over generous with the spirits and the mixture has curdled, do not worry - just add more sugar and it will become smooth again.)

You can vary the flavour and texture by using a mixture of caster and muscovado sugars, cinnamon or zest of half an orange.

Dyffryn Clydach Environmental Group

secures major funding for Neath Abbey Woodlands



Dyffryn Clydach Environmental Group has been awarded a £50,000 grant from Cydcoed – Woods for All, the Forestry Commission Wales programme which promotes Welsh forestry for community development, to make its local woods more accessible to all. They plan to link the woodlands around Scwd Bach waterfall and the Cwm in Longford, and at Coed y Graig behind Dŵr y Felin Lower School creating the new Neath Abbey Woodland – with more wildlife areas, more waymarked paths and a series of artistic interpretation panels.

“These woodlands have always been used by local people, but mostly as a short cut,” said group secretary Margaret Smith. “Now we plan to create a real little gem of a wood that people will be able to enjoy for all kinds of activities.”

Local schools, community groups and Coed Cymru are already behind the scheme, and the plan is to draw the wider community into helping to turn the site into a wildlife haven – and a real asset to the area. Once the work is completed a whole range of activities – from fungal forays to guided walks, Easter egg hunts to natural history projects – will be organised.

“But before we can do that we need as many people as possible to help the specialists and contractors so that we can build ourselves an exciting new community facility where people can really enjoy being out of doors,” said Mrs Smith. Paths are going to be upgraded, handrails put in and access made better across the whole site. Invasive species – laurel, rhododendron, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed – will be controlled, allowing the natural sessile oak and other native trees to re-establish. Nesting sites will be created, and a wide variety of habitats provided to encourage a greater diversity of wildlife. Picnic tables, seating and information displays are also planned. Drainage work and new fencing will help protect the woodland.

“Creating a piece of the countryside in an area like Neath Abbey is going to bring all kinds of benefits,” said Steve Crosby of Cydcoed, the £16 million Forestry Commission Wales community woodland project funded by the European Union (Objective One) and Welsh Assembly Government. “As well as giving local people an exciting focus for local activities, the project is also bringing everyone together, fostering community spirit, and hopefully inspiring the people of Neath Abbey to do even more for their local environment,” he added.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Dyffryn Clydach Environmental Group constituted in March 2004 with the aim of increasing public involvement in caring for the community and its environment. The Group's objects are “to promote for the benefit of the public and to involve the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment within the electoral ward of Dyffryn.”

Cydcoed – Woods for All – is a £16 million Forestry Commission Wales grant programme working for communities in the Objective One area of Wales.

Cydcoed Phase I was a £4M programme which ran from 2001 to 2004. It has been so successful that in early 2003 a £12M Cydcoed Phase II running until the end of 2008 was launched with funding from the European Union and Welsh Assembly Government. It promotes Welsh forestry for community development with 100% funding and support to help make better use of woods for jobs, economic regeneration, social inclusion, recreation, and conservation.

Forestry Commission Wales is the government department responsible for forestry policy and looks after the 320,000 acres (130,000 ha) of public forests owned by the Welsh Assembly.

Grŵp Amgylcheddol Dyffryn Clydach

Mae Grŵp Amgylcheddol Dyffryn Clydach wedi sicrhau grant o £50 000 i'w prosiect **Coetir Dyffryn Clydach**, gan Cydcoed – prosiect Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru – sef Coetiroedd i Bawb sy'n hybu coedwigaeth yng Nghymru er lles datblygu'r gymuned leol a gwneud coetiroedd lleol yn haws eu cyrraedd i bawb. Maent yn bwriadu uno'r coedlannau o amgylch rhaeadr Sgwd Fach a'r Cwm, a Choed y Graig y tu cefn i Ysgol Dwryfelin Isaf er mwyn creu'r **Coetir Dyffryn Clydach** newydd – gyda mwy o lecynnau i fywyd gwyllt, mwy o lwybrau wedi eu cyfeirbwyntio, a chyfres o baneli artistig disgrifiedig.

“Mae'r coetiroedd yma wedi cael eu defnyddio ers achau gan bobl leol, ond yn bennaf fel llwybr tarw” meddai ysgrifenyddes y Grŵp Margaret Smith. “Nawr rydym yn bwriadu creu em fach o goetir lle y bydd pobl yn gallu mwynhau pob math o weithgaredd ynddi.”

Mae ysgolion a grwpiau lleol yn ogystal â Choed Cymru yn cefnogi'r cynllun, a'r bwriad yw ennyn cefnogaeth o bob cwr o'r gymuned er mwyn helpu troi'r safle'n hafan at fywyd gwyllt – ac yn drysor sylweddol i'r ardal. Ac wedi i'r gwaith gael ei gwblhau trefnir nifer o weithgareddau gan gynnwys helfa wyau Pasg, teithiau tywysedig, chwilio am ffwng yn ogystal â phrosiectau'n ymwneud ag astudiaethau natur.

“Ond cyn y gallwn gyflawni hyn mae arnom eisiau cymaint o bobl ag sy'n bosibl i helpu'r arbenigwyr a'r contractwyr gyda'r gwaith fel y gallwn adeiladu rhywbeth cyffroes newydd lle y gall pobl mwynhau bod allan yn yr awyr agored,” meddai Mrs Smith.

Mae llwybrau yn mynd i gael eu gwella, canllawiau yn mynd i gael eu gosod, a'r holl safle yn mynd i gael ei wneud o fewn cyrraedd pawb. Fe gaiff rhywogaethau fel y llawryfen, rhododendron, Jac y neidiwr a chanclwm Siapan eu cadw dan reolaeth er mwyn sicrhau ailsefydlu'r dderwen digoes a rhywogaethau brodorol eraill.

Bwriedir creu mannau addas i adar gael nythu, a chreu amrywiaeth o gynefinoedd eraill er mwyn denu ystod mwy eang o fywyd gwyllt.

“Mae creu ardal wledig fel hyn mewn ardal fel Mynachlog Nedd yn mynd i sicrhau pob math o fuddiannau,” meddai Steve Crosby o Cydcoed – y prosiect gwerth £16 miliwn gan Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru sy'n cael ei ariannu gan yr Undeb Ewropeaidd (Amcan Un) a'r Cynulliad. “Yn ogystal â rhoi ffocws cyffroes ar ddigwyddiadau lleol, mae'r prosiect yn denu pawb at ei gilydd, yn meithrin ysbryd cymdogol ac, 'rwy'n gobeithio, yn ysbrydoli pobl Dyffryn Clydach i wneud mwy eto dros eu hamgylchedd lleol,” ategodd.

from the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Area Housing Officer

The Authority has recently taken a more proactive approach to ensure that estates are kept clean and tidy and to ensure that tenants are maintaining their tenancies to a satisfactory standard. Housing Officers are working closely with the Neighbourhood Management Team, Environmental Health, Waste Enforcement and other recognised agencies to ensure that tenants are complying with their tenancy agreements. Our aim is to educate people on good practice. However, if tenants do not comply, enforcement action can and will be taken.

Councillor Martyn Peters and I frequently meet to discuss issues on Longford estate and we walk every street periodically. Without a doubt Longford is one of the authority's most attractive estates, which is why the area is considered desirable to live in. Both Councillor Peters and myself have given a lot of time and effort to achieve this and much of the credit must go to the residents themselves. I would appeal to them to continue to take responsibility to ensure we maintain this high standard we have set ourselves.

Have pride in your home and the community in which you live.

Darren Case

GET YOUR KIT OFF!



Local resident Ken Thomas is the area contact for SOS KIT AID, an innovative charity run by the International Rugby Board. Every year ¼ of a million pounds worth of outgrown/surplus kit is thrown away whilst there are thousands of youngsters worldwide wanting to play the game but with no kit. SOS KIT AID has so far supplied 21,000 items to emerging nations such as Poland, Georgia, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

Ken says he has had a great response from many local clubs but is always looking for more kit. He wants items suitable for ages 8 to 18 - shirts, shorts, togs and socks and says football kits are equally welcome. If you are a member of a sports club or school sports team you may want to contact Ken to arrange a collection day. Alternatively, individual items can be taken to him at 15, Graig Parc, Longford. His contact telephone numbers are: 01792 528754 and 07966193170.

For further information visit the charity's website: www.sosirbkitaid.org

In an age when we are encouraged to re-use and recycle as much as possible this is a great initiative so go on – Get your Kit Off!

Fundraiser Benefits Community

Back in the summer, a table top sale was held in Longford Memorial Hall which raised £180.00 for the National Autistic Society, Monastery Road. Many of us know of Longford Court which has existed in the community for many years but recently the National Autistics Society has established itself in the old Hale's buildings in Monastery Road, Neath Abbey.

Councillors Alyson Thomas and Jennifer Davies went down to the centre to present the cheque and the manager of the centre, Mark Stediford, was only too pleased to show the councillors around the facility and explain a little of what is done there. The centre boasts a cafeteria in which some service users cook and provide daily meals which all smelled delicious on the day they visited. In the main building there was also an IT suite and an Arts and Crafts room and administrative offices.

Out in the workshops there was an excellent range of occupations from the production of high quality concrete garden products to cultivation of plants in poly tunnels. The plants are then used in hanging baskets and planters for certain housing associations. The councillors were impressed by a living logo created from various plants which had been displayed at the National Eisteddfod in Swansea this year.

Alyson and Jennifer were also shown an area of the old yard which had been improved with the installation of decking, a summerhouse and colourful planted displays.

Mark stressed the importance of these activities to the service users and his pleasure in knowing that the community supported them. He then showed the councillors where the money raised would be used. A section of the workshops was being partitioned and equipped for woodworking and the money would be put to very good use for the purchase of tools and supplies.

Mr Stediford advised that many of the items produced in the workshops would be on sale at the centre's Christmas Fair, details of which will be in the local press soon.

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 26th November until 11th February.

All orders for seeds and plugs should be in by 26th November and returned to the Secretary, Mr Stephen Absalom, at 101 Longford Road, Neath Abbey, Neath, SA10 7HF.

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

Purchases from the club during the week or during the winter period may be arranged by contacting the Secretary, as above, or by telephoning 01792 813465.

Get Gardening

Margaret Smith

Now is the time for planning ahead for new planting.

When ordering seeds for next year you can halve the cost of the catalogue price by ordering them from Longford and District Gardening Society. Container grown plants can be planted at any time of year, but they can be quite expensive. Bare rooted plants which are available now are much cheaper, but plant them out as soon as you buy them. Another way to save money is to grow shrubs from your own cuttings. Lifting and dividing overgrown clumps of herbaceous perennials such as asters and phlox will not only increase your stock but also improve the plants so that they will have a better shape and more flowers.

Lawn care

Remove fallen leaves. Due to the mild weather the grass has continued to grow and it has been necessary to mow later this year. Ensure that the mower blades have been raised so that there is a deeper cover of grass throughout the winter months.

Nature notes

THE TAWNY OWL (STRIX ALUCO)

The tawny owl is a stoutly built bird, the size of a small crow; it has a streaked chestnut brown plumage and large black eyes. Its breeding grounds are in woodlands, urban gardens and parks close to human habitation. It nests in holes of hollow trees or sometimes on the ground. It is nocturnal, but can be seen flying at dusk. In the daytime it roosts in trees, close to the bark, where its feathering provides excellent camouflage. If the smaller birds discover its roost they will form mobbing parties to disturb and attack it.

The large black eyes are not spherical, but tubular, and are not capable of rotary movement. The owls compensate for their fixed eyes by having flexible necks so that the head can rotate easily through at least 270 degrees to change a viewpoint. To gain all round vision when hunting they bob and sway their heads in order to pinpoint their prey. The bill is curved downwards to give a clear view. They have no ear tufts. The ears are positioned each side of the facial disc, and are nearly the size of one's own. Nocturnal owls are light sensitive, hunting mostly in low light. However, when it is very dark they cannot see and rely on their very acute hearing to locate their prey. To conserve energy they will perch, then when the prey is sighted and marked they will pounce. The loose soft feathers of their plumage allow them to fly silently. The talons are lethal, the outer toe can rotate backwards, enabling the toes to meet and give a better grip. The prey is killed instantly by the hind claw. Their legs



Tawny Owl
Strix Aluco

Vegetables

Clear the ground and dig it roughly, turning any annual weeds so that they are under the surface. To save time and effort, do not break the soil up finely as the winter frosts will do this for you. Roughly dug soil will also drain more freely, meaning that it will be easier to work in the spring.

Plant out garlic cloves and fruit bushes. Prune apple and pear trees and fruit bushes.

Flowers

Clean flower beds by removing and composting annuals and by cutting back and dividing herbaceous perennials.

Finish planting out spring flowering bulbs. For a spring display tulips can be planted out when the ground is cooler.

Roses and shrubs should be pruned now to prevent them rocking in the wind and damaging their root systems.

Apply mulch or use garden fleece to protect more tender plants.

are feathered to reduce the sound of their flight as well as to protect them from the bites of rats and mice. An owl's diet is varied from small birds to frogs, hedgehogs and rodents. They discard and regurgitate their food in loosely textured white pellets from which an analysis of their diet can be made.

Tawny owls pair for life. The breeding year starts in the autumn when they re-establish their territories. It is at this time that the young birds bred earlier in the year become sexually mature and begin to lay claims to their own territory, which is usually within the boundaries of their parents'. If they fail to do this they could die of starvation. Disputes between young birds can be very aggressive and vocal.

Tawny owls are often heard, but rarely seen. It is particularly noisy in the breeding season. The "tu whit" and "tu whoo" is a misleading description of their calls. "Klee VIT" or "klee VICK" is the contact call made by the females, and the males use it too in answer to their mates. The male has the "hoot" which is used in courtship, territorial ownership and when bringing food to the nest. The male also has a more uncommon drawn out bubbling trill. The young owlets in the nest make the hissing sound "she ep." In all, at least fifteen calls have been recorded and noted. The owls will not call in wet or windy weather, in the cold or at the full moon.

Breeding commences in mid March, or earlier if the weather is good. Tawny owls do not build nests, preferring hollows in trees or taking over the stick nests of crows or squirrel dreys. They have now adapted to using nest boxes. They can build up a fat reserve which guarantees their survival during the winter months. Like all birds of prey, they are a protected species. It is unwise to disturb nesting tawny owls as they can be very aggressive during the breeding period.

Neath Abbey Infants' School has a new headmistress.

Mrs Beverley Newman took up her post in September and we welcome her to her position hoping that she has many happy years with the children of Dyffryn Clydach. Mrs Newman is well experienced, having had teaching posts in Bryncoch, Cimla and Skewen. Her last post was as deputy head in Melin Infants' School. Her two children both attend Dwr y Felin Comprehensive. Mrs Newman is extremely pleased to be in Neath Abbey and would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome she has received.

Chairman of the Council, Councillor Harry Thomas, and Councillor Mrs Margaret Smith visited the school recently to present prizes to children from last year's early years unit who had entered the council's art competition. Well done to all the children who entered, some of whom received their prizes in the summer.

It is the first year that the council has run the art and writing competitions and the councillors were bowled over by the standard of the entries. We certainly have some real talent in our community.

Neath Port Talbot Ramblers

The Neath Port Talbot Ramblers have again completed a very successful summer walks programme with increased membership and more walkers attracted out each Sunday. More group members have volunteered to lead walks and the group has ventured further afield this year to places such as Monmouth, Llanthony Abbey and Pembrokeshire.

The evening short walks during the summer were also well attended with good numbers staying for the optional pub meal following the walk.

In September the group travelled to north Devon for a weekend away. The weather was glorious and the two walks along the Exmoor section of the south west coastal path were enjoyed by all.

Turning to a subject much nearer home, as most locals will know there are plans to site a windfarm on Drummau Mountain. This would be a tragedy for such a beautiful area and the ramblers intend to oppose any planning application. They have been heartened by the decision of a Welsh Assembly inspector to reject a similar application for a wind farm at Mynydd y Gwrhyd, above Pontardawe in the Swansea Valley. If that fight can be won, so can ours. The ramblers have therefore decided to ask everyone who is interested to join them for a five mile walk across Mynydd Drummau to see the possible siting of the proposed wind turbines and the impact they may have on our local environment.

For further details contact Terry Griffiths (telephone 01639 637964) and watch the local press for a date for the proposed walk.

DYFFRYN CLYDACH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH Winter Newsletter

Are you being bothered by nuisance phone calls from sales reps or other time wasters?

The problem is caused by your telephone number being stored on a national database; it is, however, a simple process to have your number removed in order to reduce, and in some cases stop, unwanted telephone calls.

If you are a BT customer call 0800 121 80000.

If you are with another provider (eg ntl) contact the Telephone Preference Service 0845 070 0707.

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There is a Freephone number to report defective street lighting.

Telephone 0800 590 025

Give the operator the street name and either the number on the lamp post or the number of the house nearest to it.

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With Christmas fast approaching we must all be aware of the risk of becoming the victim of the opportunist Christmas thief.

Please consider a few tips:

- When going shopping or partying, make sure that your home is secure, make it look occupied by leaving a light on (use a low energy bulb).
- Don't leave presents where they are visible through windows.
- Post-code new presents, and do not flash the boxes on bin days.
- When driving keep car doors locked, and valuables out of sight.
- At night, park in well lit areas with valuables locked away. Check all around before unlocking your car.
- Guard your PIN number, and never let a stranger see you tapping in.
- Do not drink and drive. Take a taxi or get a lift.
- Most importantly – "Have a SAFE and HAPPY Christmas!"

Best wishes from your local Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

PHOTOGRAPH MYSTERY

Another photo mystery:

This was taken on the inauguration of Neath Abbey Friends of Neath Hospital.

Can readers help with a date?

Who was the mayor then and can you identify the ladies?



The photograph mystery in the last edition of Ymlaen roused much interest. It shows the female residents of Graig Parc and Danygraig Road taken outside the old Memorial Hall, year unknown.



These are the names suggested by readers to date:
Front row (from left): May Collins, Mrs Jenkins, ?, Flo Murdoch/Mrs Jones, Mrs Foster's Aunt, ?, Mrs Arosmith, Annie Jane Evans, Gwen Hopwood, Trudy Dare, Dorothy Griffiths

Back row: Mrs Roberts/Sally Davies, Mrs Thomas, Mrs Evans, Beryl Hancock, Rita Thomas, Myra Thomas, Joan Leyshon, Mrs Harris, Glenys Morgan, Emmie Jones, Josie Harry

Congratulations



Well known throughout Neath Abbey, Emrys and Ann Walters recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They are pictured here with Councillor Martyn Peters and Councillor Harry Thomas, Chairman of the Council.

Hallowe'en



The wicked witch is living up to her name as the children have fun apple bobbing.

WHAT'S ON... AT CHRISTMAS

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

Christmas Fayre – Saturday 25 November

**Community Carol Evening –
Wednesday 13 December**

Children's Party – Saturday 2 December

Over 50's Tea – Saturday 6 January