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Copïau ychwanegol ar gael oddi wrth Siop y Gât, Mynachlog Nedd a Siop Rhydhir neu'r Golygydd, Cyng. Margaret Smith
Tel: 01639 681112 E-mail: ymlaen@ntlworld.com

To include local interest items please contact the Editor or your local Councillor.
Er mwyn cynnwys eitemau o ddiddordeb lleol cysylltwch â'r Golygydd neu'ch Cyngorwr lleol.

Message from the Chairman of the Community Council

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I serve this community for the third time as Chairperson.

We who reside in the Dyffryn Clydach area are fortunate, in that we live in the countryside, but we still have easy access to the towns in our area.

All those who have served this community as Councillors have had one aim and that is to try and improve the way in which the Council can serve everyone, without exception. For the sixteen years that I have served as a Councillor in Dyffryn Clydach, I have been fortunate to have had a good working relationship with the many colleagues that I have been associated with.

By being positive, I believe that communities have an opportunity to shape and improve their local environment. I would urge you therefore to respond to the invitation from *Groundwork* that appears in this edition of *Ymlaen* and to share your views on how we

can further improve Dyffryn Clydach with your local Councillors.

I was saddened recently by the resignation through ill health of Councillor David Thomas and would like to thank him personally for his contribution to the well-being of our Community and wish him and Joan all the very best for the future.

My thanks go to the many volunteers who work hard to keep the various activities flourishing at the Memorial Hall: Mother Craft, Helping Hands, Over 50s, Indoor Bowls Club, Discos, and Friday Night Bingos among them.

And finally, may I take this opportunity to say a heartfelt, "Thank You" to Mr. Randall Shopland, Clerk to Dyffryn Clydach Community Council, for the help and advice he has given me throughout my time as a Councillor.

Gwyn Edwards



Neges gan Gadeirydd y Cyngor Cymuned

Mae yn bleser mawr i mi gael gwasanaethu'r gymuned hon am y trydydd tro fel Cadeirydd.

'Rydym ni sydd yn byw yn Dyffryn Clydach yn ffodus ein bod yn byw yng ngefn gwlad ond eto o fewn cyrraedd i'r trefi.

Mae pawb sydd wedi gwasanaethu'r gymuned hon fel Cyngorwyr ond ag un nod, sef i geisio gwella'r ffordd mae'r Cyngor yn gwasanaethu pawb, heb eithriad. Dros yr un mlynedd ar bymtheg 'rwyf wedi gwasanaethu fel Cyngorwr yn Dyffryn Clydach, 'rydw i wedi bod yn ffodus i gael perthynas gweithiol da gyda'r nifer o gydweithwyr yr wyf wedi bod yn gysylltiedig â nhw.

Trwy fod yn gadarnhaol, 'rwy'n credu bod gan gymunedau cyfle i lunio a gwella'u hamgylchedd lleol. 'Rwy'n eich hannog felly i ymateb i'r gwahoddiad gan *Groundwork* sydd i'w weld yn y cyhoeddiad hwn o *Ymlaen* ac i rannu eich syniadau

gyda'ch cyngorwyr lleol ar sut y gallwn wella Dyffryn Clydach ymhellach.

'Roedd ymddiswyddiad y Cyngorwr David Thomas yn ddiweddar o achos tostrwydd wedi peritwch i mi a hoffwn ddiolch yn bersonol iddo am ei gyfraniad at ffyniant ein Cymuned ac i ddymuno iddo ac i Joan pob dymuniad da at y dyfodol.

Fy niolch hefyd i'r nifer o wirfoddolwyr sydd yn gweithio'n galed i gadw'r gwahanol gweithgareddau yn y Neuadd Goffa: Crefft y Mamau, Dwylo Cynorthwyol, Dros 50au, Bowliau Dan Dô, Disco a Bingo nos Wener yn eu plith.

Ac i orffen, hoffwn gymryd y cyfle i ddweud, "Diolch o Galon" i Mr. Randall Shopland, Clerc Cyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach, am y cymorth a'r cyngor mae e' wedi rhoi i mi drwy gydol fy nghyfnod fel Cyngorwr.

Gwyn Edwards

Community Art Plans to put Dyffryn Clydach on the Map

Dyffryn Clydach Community Council is delighted to announce that on securing over £2,000 funding from the Cronfa Wledig Rural Identity Scheme and contributing almost £1,000 themselves, work has started on the project with a well attended community meeting. A textile art map will be created and hung at the Memorial Hall which will record the social history as well as the geography and history of the area.

Cllr Mrs Alyson Thomas explained the general plan and listened to everyone's ideas and memories to start the project rolling. "Dyffryn Clydach has a great tradition of strong community groups and we want to record all that are in living memory," she said. Groups of participants worked together to discuss sites of significance, important events, native wildlife, as well as colour schemes and the techniques which will be used.

No formal skills are needed to take part. There will be workshops for those who want to work on the map and these will run for a year until the map is complete. "We are relying solely on the talent of local people to design and produce the work", enthused Cllr Mrs Thomas. "There are opportunities too for people to get involved and to record the information and progress as it develops."

The finished map will be displayed within the hall and a grand community celebration day is planned to share it with everyone. We would truly welcome everyone's input throughout the project.

Cynlluniau Celf Cymunedol i ddodi Dyffryn Clydach ar y map

Mae Cyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach yn falch o gyhoeddi, ei bod wedi sicrhau dros £2000 o nawdd gan Gynllun Adnabod y Gronfa Wledig a thrwy gyfrannu bron i £1000 eu hunain, bod y gwaith wedi dechrau ar y brosiect gyda chyfarfod â chynulleidfarniferus. Bwriedir creu map tecstil a fydd yn cael ei osod yn y Neuadd Goffa bydd yn cronicle hanes cymdeithasol ynghyd â daearyddiaeth a hanes yr ardal.

Esboniwyd y cynllun gan Cyng. Alyson Thomas a gwrandawodd ar syniadau ac atgofion pawb i gychwyn y cywaith. "Mae gan Ddyffryn Clydach draddodiad gwych o grwpiau cymunedol cryf ac 'rydym am gofnodi y cwbl sydd o fewn cof', meddai. Fe weithiodd grwpiau gyda'u gilydd i drafod safleoedd o bwysigrwydd, digwyddiadau pwysig, a bywyd gwyllt brodorol yn ogystal â chynlluniau lliw a'r dulliau bydd yn cael eu defnyddio.

Does dim eisiau sgiliau arbennig arnoch i gymryd rhan. Fe fydd yna weithdai i'r rhai fydd am weithio ar y map ac yn parhau am flwyddyn nes i'r map gael ei orffen. "'Rydym yn dibynnu yn gyfangwbl ar dalentau pobl lleol i gynllunio a chyflawni'r gwaith", meddai'r Cyng. Thomas yn frwdfrydig. "Mae yna gyfleoedd hefyd i rai gysylltu eu hunain drwy gofnodi'r gwybodaeth a'r gwaith wrth iddo ddatblygu.

Bydd y map gorffenedig yn cael ei arddangos yn y Neuadd ar adeg dathliad cymunedol er mwyn rhannu campwaith gyda phawb.

Gwerthfawrogi'r mewnbwn i'r prosiect.

ARWEL MORGAN

Just 19 years old, Arwel Morgan has been playing bowls for only three years. He is already vice captain of Tonmawr Short Mat Bowls and has Welsh honours at both under 18 and under 21 levels. "It is fairly new in Wales to have youth sides," said Arwel. "This is a strong area for bowling, and several members of the Wales team come from Neath and Swansea." In December he will be travelling to Armagh to represent Glamorgan in the Inter County British Championships, then there will be the annual competition playing England. Well done, Arwel, we look forward to hearing of your further success.

Arwel regularly bowls with players ranging in age from 11 to 95 years. He says that clubs are always looking for new members. If you are interested, why not go along to the Memorial Hall on Monday mornings? Longford Short Mat Bowls Club meets there at 10.00am and would welcome anyone interested in "having a go"!

Arwel Morgan proudly displays the medal he won representing Wales, after only one year in the sport!



Arwel Morgan yn dangos balchder y fedal enillodd tra'n cynrychioli Cymru, a hyn ond ar ôl blwyddyn yn unig o chwarae!

Ond yn 19 mlwydd oed, mae Arwel Morgan wedi bod yn chwarae bowls ers tair mlynedd bellach. Mae'n isgaptan ar dîm Mat Bowllo Agos Tonmawr yn barod ac mae ganddo anrhyddedau Cymreig ar lefelau o dan 18 ac o dan 21. "Mae'n gymharol newydd yng Nghymru i gael tîmau ieuenctid," medd Arwel. "Mae hon yn ardal gref am fowlio, ac mae nifer o aelodau o dîm Cymru yn dod o Gastell-nedd ac Abertawe." Ym mis Rhagfyr fe fydd yn teithio i Armagh i gynrychioli Morgannwg ym Mhencampwriaethau Rhyng-sirol Prydain, yna fe fydd yna'r gystadleuaeth flynyddol yn erbyn Lloegr. Da iawn, Arwel, edrychwn ymlaen i glywed am ragor o lwyddiant gennyt.

Mae Arwel yn chwarae'n gyson â chwareuwyr sy'n gwahaniaethu mewn oed rhwng 11 a 95. Mae e'n dweud chwilio, byth a beunydd, am aelodau newydd. Os oes gennych ddi-ddordeb, pam na ewch i'r Neuadd Goffa ar foreuon Llun? Mae Clwb Mat Bowllo Agos Rhydhir yn cwrdd yno am 10 a byddant yn croesawu unrhyw un sydd yn barod i "roi tro arni"!

DYFFRYN CLYDACH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH Winter Newsletter

Crime Prevention

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention initiatives ever. Behind it lies a simple idea and a central value shared by millions of people around the country:

**Getting together with your neighbours to
take action can cut local crime**

Everyone knows that the police are there to fight crime, but they need your help to do an effective job. Neighbourhood Watch is all about an active partnership with the police. Neighbourhood Watch schemes can:

- Cut crime and opportunities for crime
- Help and reassure those who live in the area
- Encourage neighbourliness and closer communities

Our area is controlled from:

PONTARDAWE POLICE STATION – 01792 562775

Our nearest police station is:

SKEWEN POLICE STATION – 01792 450644

Our local PCSO for Dyffryn Clydach is:

CHERI DAVIES - 07805 301569

The **EMERGENCY** number remains **"999"** but this is now for "life and death" only. Please use **"101"** to report incidents to the police.

Dyffryn Clydach Neighbourhood Watch continues to meet regularly on the second Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays) in Longford Memorial Hall. Meetings start at 7.00pm and usually take up 45 minutes on average.

HELPING HANDS KNITTERS

Helping Hands Knitters organised a fundraising Chinese Auction recently for Tŷ Hafan. This was very well supported by the community who enjoyed the lovely range of crafted items on sale as well as the banter of the auction. Rob Taylor of Tŷ Hafan came along to support it and to receive a cheque for the sum of £400 raised on the day. As he explained, the children's hospice costs £5m annually to run. With no state funding, donations are its lifeblood, and at any time in Wales there are 300 families experiencing the pain and challenge of nurturing a child with a life threatening illness or who will not survive childhood.

The knitters meet every Thursday afternoon at the hall between 12 and 3pm and are constantly welcoming new members. No skills are needed as everything can be taught. The group also has a large network of knitters all over South Wales supporting them. This year they have helped Feed the Children, Relief for Romania, Romania 1 Aid, Falconers Orphanage, ZAMBIA, and Help for Heroes.

For further information ring Alyson on 01792 528754 or Val on 01792423359

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Helping Hands Knitters had a great day out in Cardiff recently thanks to a grant from the National Lottery. They visited the Creative Stitch and Hobby Craft Exhibition in the CIA where they delivered a huge parcel of knitted and crocheted sea creatures which will form part of the RNLI fundraising Exhibit~Above and Below the Waves. Everyone was amazed at the ingenuity and imagination of the knitters and the items were a real talking point. The group has now been challenged to produce a section of a shipwreck or a giant octopus for the exhibition. The day was great, with ideas and technique workshops and lots to try and buy.

The Neath Abbey and District Older People's Forum...

has been set up under the guidance of the Speaking up for Age Programme (Help the Aged in Wales/Age Concern Cymru).

The Forum's main focus has been to raise awareness of the need for people to share the problems of growing older and to speak in one voice to improve local services, especially transport and health services. The forum can provide impartial information and advice on statutory benefits and issues affecting older people.

Open meetings recently held in the Memorial Hall have been well attended. The issues of most concern are - Continuing Care in the Community and Transport. Details on future events will be advertised locally.

Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness Club

Classes in Dyffryn Clydach Memorial Hall are fun and friendly. They are held on Tuesdays from 9.30 to 10.45am. All ages and all fitness abilities are most welcome.

Classes include a private weigh-in, motivational chat and a 45 minute exercise session taught by a professionally qualified diet & fitness instructor.

For further details telephone Emma Shepherd on 01792 815100.

Extra copies of *Ymlaen* will be available in Abbeygate Stores and Longford Stores. Thank you to Jagtar and Jan for helping with this. Remember to support your local shops.

Bydd copi'au ychwanegol Ymlaen ar gael mewn Siop y Gât a Siop Rhydhir. Diolch i Jagtar a Jan am helpu gyda hwn. Cofiwch cefnogi eich siopau lleol.

PANDEMONIUM AT COUNCIL MEETING

By Robert King

On 14th May, 1949 a fire destroyed three houses in Cilffriw making thirteen people homeless. Such an event at any time, one would think, would bring communities together to help in any way and soften the trauma of those involved.

At that time Neath Rural District Council, like every local authority in the country was embarking on a massive programme of building council houses. In Longford it was in 1951 that the majority of houses were ready to accommodate tenants. Tregelles Road was occupied by prefabricated buildings but the other streets' houses were bricks and mortar, built to the highest standards.

The letting of these houses was governed by a rudimentary points system but the 'local member' held huge influence on who could come into the area and who could not.

You would think that a fire that destroyed three houses would have concentrated the mind insomuch as the mindset would be 'let's get these people re-housed...' but the members of Dyffryn Clydach Parish Council had other ideas. With them it appears, reading the Neath Guardian front page report for Friday 3rd June 1949, insular considerations ruled.

On 30th May that year the Dyffryn Clydach Parish Council met at Neath Abbey Infants' School to discuss the question of providing three houses for the thirteen people who had been made homeless by the fire in Cilfrew.

There were heated exchanges which led to the chairman of Neath Rural District Council, Cllr John James (who represented Creunant) storming out of the meeting. The report doesn't explain why Cllr James chaired the meeting. Nevertheless the meeting continued after he had left with W.J. Griffiths, a former chairman of the parish council, taking the chair.

Before walking out of the meeting Cllr James had informed the members that the families from the three houses destroyed by fire were now at Lletty Nedd, living in a communal manner and he called upon Cllr Alun Thomas, the member from Neath Abbey, to 'loan' three houses from Longford. Cllr Thomas had argued that he didn't feel he could agree to this request without seeking the views of the people of Dyffryn Clydach. The extraordinary meeting of the parish council had been called without his knowledge.

Cllr Thomas reasoned that there were properties in the Blaenhonddan area that could be used to re-house the stricken families. He mentioned Cadoxton Lodge, which was empty and could be requisitioned. He continued the argument that his responsibility was to the people of his parish, and there were families living in squalid conditions, living in houses that had been condemned fifteen years before.

Clearly Cllr Alun Thomas was bitterly upset at what he saw as 'his area' being used to the detriment of residents, who had been on the council housing waiting list because they lived in substandard accommodation. "In Cllr James' parish

(Creunant) there were two local authority houses currently vacant; there were six houses in Glynneath; and four in Resolfen. Some of the men from the burned out houses worked in the valley and it would be more convenient if they were re-housed there."

Cllr James said that Cllr Alun Thomas had not touched the question at all regarding people living in sub-standard housing. "We," he added, "could all make a survey of our areas and come up with such facts."

It seems that it was at this point in the meeting that Cllr James lost control of the meeting. There was general outburst at his reasoning about surveys of poor housing and someone shouted from the audience: "He had given you the worst cases."

The chairman: "I am trying to rule this meeting and I hope to rule it properly."

A voice shouted: "He [Cllr Alun Thomas] has touched the cases all the way through."

The chairman said "It appears to me that there is only one side being heard and there is no point in continuing the discussion."

A voice shouted: "It's all your fault...."

The chairman continued: "I am surprised that Cllr [Alun] Thomas has made a statement here tonight while in the Council Chamber...."

The chairman clearly wasn't allowed to complete his sentence because a voice shouted: "We have full confidence in Cllr Thomas."

"As far as I am concerned you can all please yourselves," said the chairman, "You were told that I have two houses and if I was as fortunate as Cllr Thomas I would give you the two houses tonight."

Again the voice is reported: "You are appealing to people who are living in worse conditions than those people in Lletty Nedd."

There were further interjections and Cllr James said: "It is all very well to appeal to passion. If you do not want to respond to this appeal, say so, and we will go."

Cllr J.T. Evans (Bryncoch) who had appealed to the parish council previously said: "I have asked for it and I have got it. It is a tricky business and we are trying to do the best we can do. If the meeting is hostile to my point of view then I blame myself. All right, I have got to take it on the chin, but one argument I must answer. Putting those people into Cadoxton Lodge would be like putting them from the frying pan into the fire. You have to put the house in to a decent condition for them to live. I appeal to your sense of fair play. If you are not prepared to do it then say so. Cllr Alun Thomas refers to other parishes and I said I did not want to particularise. I appealed to any parish that had houses available to loan me three until housing in my own ward was ready. But these houses will not be ready for some time that is the answer to Cllr Alun Thomas."

Again voices from the audience: 'We are in

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Cllr Gwyn Edwards Hoisting the Owain Glyndŵr Standard

There was cause for celebration in September when the Council was able to fly a flag for the first time from the newly erected flagpole outside the Memorial Hall. The sun shone brightly and there was enough breeze to see the flag flying.

Guests at the event included Bethan Jenkins AM, local children from Dŵr y Felin Comprehensive School Lower, Sybil Davies with members of the Owain Glyndŵr Society and members of the local community.

Adding to the atmosphere of the occasion were two longbow archers dressed in period costume and everyone enjoyed listening to the harpist Novella Roberts Lewis and then Sally Roberts Jones who gave a brief introduction into the life of Owain Glyndŵr.

A fascinating insight into the mystery surrounding Owain's final disappearance was given by author Alex Gibbon who has researched his life. Was there a connection with the legendary character Jack o' Kent in the Welsh borders?



Owain Glyndŵr is a national hero who in the early fifteenth century succeeded in uniting and leading the Welsh against English rule.

He was brave and merciless in battle and had grand ideas for plans in Wales – universities in North and South Wales, a Welsh Parliament and an independent church.

Although never betrayed or captured, he was unable to maintain the long-running revolt against the English before he mysteriously vanished some time after 1413.

Y Cyng Gwyn Edwards yn codi baner Owain Glyndŵr

'Roedd yno le i ddathlu ym mis Medi pan galluogwyd y Cyngor i hedfan baner am y tro cyntaf o'r polyn sydd newydd ei godi y tu allan i'r Neuadd Gymuned. Bu'r haul yn tywynnu'n ddisglair ac 'roedd yno ddigon o awel i ddangos y faner yn chwifio.

Ymhlith y gwesteion a fu'n bresennol yn yr achlysur oedd Bethan Jenkins AC, plant lleol o adran iau Ysgol Gyfun Dŵr-y-Felin, Sybil Davies a'i chyfeillion o Gymdeithas Owain Glyndŵr ac aelodau o'r gymuned leol.

Yn ychwanegu at awyrgylch yr achlysur 'roedd yno ddau ŵr bwa hir wedi eu gwisgo mewn dillad o'r cyfnod ac 'roedd pawb wedi mwynhau gwrandio ar y delynores Novella Roberts Lewis ac yna Sally Roberts Jones a roddodd cyflwyniad byr i fywyd Owain Glyndŵr.

Cafwyd mewnwelediad diddorol iawn i'r dirgelwch ynglyn â'i ddifflaniad terfynol gan yr awdur Alex Gibbon sydd wedi gwneud ymchwilar ei fywyd. Tybed a oedd yno cysylltiad â'r cymeriad chwedlonol Jack o' Kent o ororau Cymru?

Mae Owain Glyndŵr yn arwr genedlaethol a lwyddodd i uno ac arwain y Cymru yn erbyn Rheolaeth Lloegr yn gynnar yn y bymthegfed ganrif.

'Roedd yn ddewr ac yn ddirigareded ar faes y gad ac 'roedd ganddo syniadau uchel a chynlluniau ar gyfer Cymru – prifysgolion yng Ngogledd a De Cymru, senedd i Gymru ac eglwys anibynnol.

Er na chafodd ei fradychu na'i ddal, ni lwyddodd i gynnal y gwrthryfel hiroedlog yn erbyn y Saeson cyn iddo ddiflannu yn anesboniadwy ryw bryd wedi 1413.

Pandemonium at Council meeting – continued

sympathy with these people from Cilffriw, but we have cause of dire need here. My wife and family live in Penyard and I am in lodgings. Is that the way to bring up a family? The people from Cilffriw are living together at the moment so why not move them into condemned property in Neath Abbey when the occupants are moved to new houses?"

Clearly Cllr James was being shouted down and, his arguments rejected. He made reference to prefabricated housing in almost every parish in the Rural District area being occupied immediately they were being constructed. He said that they were all occupied thus the need to 'loan' three houses from Neath Abbey.

Cllr James concluded by saying the matter would be referred to the District Council. "I did have respect for Cllr Thomas but you can have him. I have finished," and with that he walked out of the meeting.

He was followed by Cllr J.T. Evans and two other Bryncoch councillors, Dan Jones and Bert John. Cllr

Evans turned on Cllr Alun Thomas saying that he had displayed a degree of hostility towards the homeless families.

The newspaper's report doesn't tell us the outcome of the story. But the meeting did have a collection to raise money to help the plight of those families who had suffered. The sum of 5 guineas was raised.

A short time afterwards the committee of the Dyffryn Clydach District fund held a concert in Ebenezer Chapel, Neath Abbey with proceeds being directed towards the fire victims. A total of £43 was realised.

As we have seen in more recent times parish pump politics can be anything but boring.

Check out our website
www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/DyffrynClydach
Gwylwch ein gwefan

We all had balaclavas...

Seventy years ago, the 3rd of September was a fine, sunny day. I had not long had my fifth birthday and my parents had taken my sister and myself on an outing to Limeslade Bay at the Mumbles. My father went up to a green painted building where a can of boiling water to make tea could be obtained for a few pence. He returned to say that he had heard that Britain was at war with Germany. The full implications of this were not felt immediately, life went on as normal. The shops were still lit in the winter of 1939 and there was no immediate sense of what was to come. Events such as Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain meant little to children living in our part of Wales, but there was a strong expectation that Britain would be invaded by Germany. The blackout was introduced and road blocks began to appear. There were to be no more visits to the seaside because potential invasion beaches were mined and fenced off with barbed wire. We were all issued with gas masks which we were expected to carry to school. Brown, sticky tape was applied to the school windows to reduce the effect of glass splinters. There were no air raid shelters where we lived at that time. One of my earliest recollections of the air raids was sitting on the floor in the playground with the rest of the school-children, our backs against a high stone wall, watching a daylight air raid on Llandarcy Oil Refinery. Later we would be divided up into two's and three's and sent to neighbouring houses when the sirens sounded.



Many of the large, detached houses in the area were taken over by the military. There was also a large army camp situated on Neath Abbey Road, opposite the present-day playing fields of Cwrt Hebert, where many anti-aircraft guns and searchlights were sited. We were virtually living in the middle of an army camp, there were soldiers everywhere. A small number of evacuees from the big cities appeared in the village. My father had worked in the mines where his lungs had been badly affected by dust. He started work in a munitions factory in Neath in 1937. He had been turned down at his medical for the forces but had joined the ARP organisation before war had been declared. The air raids increased towards the end of 1940 with many raids on Llandarcy oil refinery and the local factories. Swansea suffered badly when it was raided on three consecutive nights. I recall going with my father up the field behind the houses and looking across to Llandarcy which was covered in flames. There was thick, black smoke covering the area. The oil tanks which had been set on fire were allowed to burn out and there were loud explosions day and night, until they collapsed.

Food became scarce and was rationed. Most people began to keep pigs and chickens to supplement the rations which were very small compared with today's choices. As children, we had our chores: looking after the animals, finding bedding for the pigs and cleaning out their sty. We collected potato peelings, acorns and occasionally, accompanied the older children to get "bran" (the leavings after the malting process) from the brewery in Cadoxton. People also grew fruit and vegetables in the long gardens. The schools organised the collection of blackberries and wimberries which were preserved and later used in the school meals. We grew quite attached to the pigs and chickens and we were sad when they were killed to provide food for us. The butcher who came to kill the pig was a colourful local character with even more colourful language. On the appointed day, my sister and I were sent down to our grandmother's house to collect baking tins, with strict instructions from my mother not to hurry back.

The adults never seemed to sleep in those days. If they weren't in work they were out with the air raid wardens or fire watching. Our mothers had none of the labour saving devices which are part and parcel of life today. They spent hours queuing at shops for food, cooking, and washing clothes. Our clothes were made from adult hand-me-downs or what our mothers knitted for us. All the boys had balaclava helmets and the girls had pixie hoods. As the threat



Harry Thomas



of invasion increased, the Local Defence volunteers were formed which later became the Home Guard complete with real army uniforms and rifles. Many of

Continued on next page

us had relatives and neighbours in the Home Guard and as children we took a real interest in their exercises. These usually took the form of the local unit acting as "German parachutists" who would hide up in the fields and woods while Home Guard units from outside the area were supposed to find them. We became quite good at confusing the people from outside while we could always tell the local unit where the opposition were. There were open fields all the way to Neath then and we would spend hours out in the open without coming to any harm.

Our proximity to Llandarcy meant that there were persistent and frequent air raids with bombs being dropped quite close to the houses on occasion. The refinery had been ringed with barrage balloons and a plant had been built in Longford to fill jerry cans with fuel for the military. Glynfelin House was bombed and the Gibbins family had to move in with relatives in Bryncoch. The Germans mistook Glynclydach pond for the one at Llandarcy and dropped a stick of bombs between the pond and the white bridge in Taillwyd. One night I woke up to hear an aircraft flying very low. The anti-aircraft guns at Neath Abbey were firing at a furious rate. There was a strong smell of petrol and suddenly there was whistling sound which rose to a shriek. This was followed by a very loud explosion which shook the houses. We heard that a German plane had been caught in the searchlights and in order to escape, had jettisoned its bombs at the foot of the quarry on Drummau Mountain.

We had to make our own amusements. The

chapels used to organise concerts to raise money for the Forces Comforts Funds. We learned how to recite and to take part in sketches. I used to go fishing from the time I was big enough to hold a fishing rod. As the war went on we were to see soldiers from many nations in and around the area. The Americans arrived in force in 1942 and there were many stationed around Neath. They took part in exercises with the local Home Guard who gave a very good account of themselves. The build-up continued and we got used to seeing American military policemen, huge men wearing white belts and helmets, swinging long wooden clubs, patrolling the streets in Neath. In the weeks before D-Day, the roads were crowded with long convoys of tanks, guns and other military vehicles moving down to the docks. I have always wondered how those young men, smiling and waving from their trucks, made it home. Then suddenly, most of the military were gone. On D-Day the head teacher told us of the invasion and we all said a prayer for those taking part.

Conditions improved at home after D-Day, there was more food and restrictions on street lighting were eased. There were German and Italian POW's working on the farms, most of them were friendly enough and seemed glad to be out of it. When VE Day came in May 1945, the head teacher held a short service and we had a half day off from school. The war continued in the Far East and later in 1945, we heard that the Americans had dropped a bomb which had destroyed a whole Japanese city. VJ Day came in August and the long war was over. Things were quite tough after the war but there was a tremendous feeling of hope that things would get better. We were thankful to have survived and were very fortunate to have loving parents who always did their very best for us. We lived among good people who never gave up and in a country that had stood alone against Hitler. We had been severely battered but we had not been beaten.

Harry Thomas



A SHOPPING TRIP TO BATH...



A shopping trip has been arranged by the Friends of Neath Abbey Infants' School, and there are still some places available. If you are interested in going, please contact the school for further details, telephone 01792 812227.

Nature notes Kay Fern

One of the mysteries of the natural world in recent years is the marked decline in the bee population - both bumble and honey type.

In the U.S.A. a phenomenon known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has seen the honey bee population decline by some 70% causing widespread problems for growers who depend on bees to pollinate their crops - the estimated value of which is in excess of 8 billion dollars. CCD has already reached Europe and many British beekeepers maintain that it has reached these islands too, despite the denials of DEFRA.

What causes CCD is unknown. Beekeepers open a hive to find that almost all the bees have vanished without leaving any clue as to where they have gone. Several possible reasons for this occurrence have been put forward but there is no hard evidence to date. That radiation from mobile phones had affected the bee's navigation system was once thought to be a cause but this theory has now been dismissed. There are, however, three more plausible suggestions as to what causes CCD.

Firstly, pesticides may have an effect. Traces of 170 synthetic chemicals have been found inside hives and although they may not kill bees directly, they could weaken the bees' resistance to disease. Secondly, CCD could be caused by a single-celled fungus named *Nosema apis* that attacks the bees' gut. And



thirdly, many think that a variety of stress-causing agents could be affecting the bees' immune system: the varroa mite that feeds on bees' blood, poor nutrition caused by having a single crop like oilseed rape to feed on for a lengthy period, or a contaminated water supply could be some of the contributory factors.

Whatever the cause, urgent action is required to save bees, for over a third of the world's food supply is dependant upon pollinating insects. Albert Einstein is reputed to have said that "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left." Let's hope for all our sakes that he was wrong!

We could all do our little bit to help these fascinating insects survive. Why not grow rosemary, sage, mint, chives, oregano, marjoram and lavender in a corner of your garden, or in pots on your patio. Not only would you be helping the bees to survive, you would also be furnishing yourself with a collection of fine herbs at the same time.

If you would like to know more about the various bumble bees that can be seen in Dyffryn Clydach, why not join the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust. All new members will receive a welcome pack that includes a large bumble bee identification poster. Or, if you are keen, and have access to a small plot of land, why not try your hand at keeping bees. The Welsh Beekeepers Association run regular programmes of beekeeping classes and has members locally who are always ready to offer valuable advice.

RETIREMENT

Because of ill health, long serving member Cllr David Thomas has recently resigned from Dyffryn Clydach Community Council. Previously holding office of Chairman during 2003/4, he represented the Council on Neath Abbey Board of Governors and was Chairman of the local Police Liaison Committee. He was an active member of the Halls Committee, involved with the planning of community events. The Council would like to thank Mr Thomas for his service to the community and wish both him and Mrs Joan Thomas well for the future.

Filling the vacant seat is Cllr Jonathon Taylor of Maes y Mynydd who is looking forward to his new position representing you in Council matters.

YMDDEOLIAD

Oherwydd salwch, bu raid i aelod o hir-wasanaeth ymddeol o Gyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach yn ddiweddar. Bu'n Gadeirydd ar y Cyngor yn 2003/4, cynrychiolodd y Cyngor ar Fwrdd Llywodraethwyr Ysgol Mynachlog Nedd ac 'roedd yn Gadeirydd ar Bwyllgor Cyswllt yr Heddlu yn lleol. 'Roedd yn aelod weithgar o Bwyllgor y Neuadd Goffa, yn ymwneud â threfnu digwyddiadau i'r gymuned. Hoffai'r Cyngor estyn eu diolch i Mr. Thomas am ei wasanaeth i'r gymuned a dymuno'n dda iddo ef a Joan ei briod i'r dyfodol.

Yn llanw'r sedd gwag mae'r Cynghorydd Jonathon Taylor o Faes y Mynydd sydd yn edrych ymlaen at eich cynrychioli yn ei swydd newydd mewn materion sydd yn berthnasol i'r Cyngor.

DYFFRYN GATEWAY PROJECT

As part of the Community Gateways programme running in the rural wards of Neath Port Talbot, *Groundwork* has been working with the local community to come up with a small environmental gateway project. The triangle of land on Penshannel near the beginning of the Dram Road has been identified for this.

The *Groundwork* team was in the area recently to seek the ideas and opinions of local people to identify what sort of project takes shape on the site.

Gail Devine, Community Gateways Project Officer, welcomes your suggestions and may be contacted on 01656 727800 for further information.

CYNLLUN MYNEDFA DYFFRYN CLYDACH

Fel rhan o raglen Mynedfeydd i'r Gymuned sydd yn cymryd lle yn wardiau gwledig Castell-nedd Port Talbot, mae Groundwork wedi bod yn gweithio gyda'r gymuned leol i ddod o hyd i gynllun bach yn ymwneud â mynedfa amgylcheddol. Penderfynwyd ar y triogl o dir ar Bensianel yn agos at ddechrau'r Dram Road at hyn.

Bu tîm Groundwork yn yr ardal yn ddiweddar i gasglu syniadau a barn pobl lleol er mwyn dod o hyd i'r math o gynllun fyddai'n gweddu i'r safle.

Fe fydd Gail Devine, swyddog prosiect Mynedfeydd i'r Gymuned, yn croesawu eich syniadau ac fe allwch cysylltu â hi ar 01656 727800 am ragor o wybodaeth.

HEOL PENLAN

Mrs Louie Davies of Heol Penlan has given us the names of the original tenants of Heol Penlan. This is from the early 1950's.

Mae Mrs. Louisa Davies, Heol Penlan wedi danfon atom enwau tenantiaid cyntaf Heol Penlan. Mae rhain o 1950au cynnar.

2 Mrs Rees
4 Mrs Hempenstall
6 Mrs Edwards
8 Mrs Jenkins
10 Mrs Mellin

1 Mrs Davies
3 Mrs Davies
5 Mrs Stacey
7 Mrs Cuddy
9 Mrs Thomas

12 Mrs Davies
14 Mrs Watkins
16 Mrs Bowen
18 Mrs Gethin
20 Mrs Megicke
22 Mrs Isaac
24 Mrs Walters
26 Mrs Watkins
28 Mrs Hendy
30 Mrs Lloyd
32 Mrs Gemmel

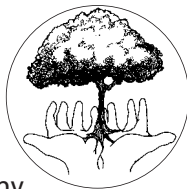
11 Mrs Absalom
13 Mrs Thomas
15 Mrs Lewis
17 Mrs Saint
19 Mrs Bevan
21 Mrs Bendle
23 Mrs Miles

FLATS

Mrs Pritchard
Mrs Hopkins
Mrs Jones
Mrs Wilkins



Dyffryn Clydach Environmental Group



The group, like so many of the local gardeners, found this summer's "rainy season" gave little opportunity to do outside work. However, we did not entirely "rust", as litter picking continued during the breaks in the weather. In Coed Bach the paths and steps were cleared of leaves, the river was checked for invasive species like Himalayan Balsam and fallen wood and other debris was removed from the river bed. The waterfall has been a splendid sight, with the heavy rainfall of the summer months increasing the river flow through the wood. Clearance of sycamore saplings and rhododendron is continuing, this is to open up the woodland to enable oak to re-establish. In the Graig we found that, partly because of the

weather, it was fairly clear of litter. The group works in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy. With additional support from Groundwork bulb planting has been carried out in Cwrt Herbert.

The group welcomes all people to join in our work to conserve the environment and its rich flora and fauna. Please contact the Secretary on 01639 681112.

CALLING ALL TODDLERS

To secure funding and ensure a nursery place at the Early Years Unit of Neath Abbey Infants' School, parents must register their children in advance. For places from September 2010 this has to be done by the end of this year.

Admission forms and further details are available from the school, telephone 01792 812227.

Get Gardening

Margaret Smith

LAWN CARE

Remove fallen leaves from around the garden. You can collect leaves from the lawn using a mower with the blade set high. This way you will mow the grass and shred and collect the leaves at the same time. Try not to go onto the lawn when it is wet (or frosty). Cut the grass as necessary and when mowing see that the blades have been raised so that the grass is not cut too short.

VEGETABLES

Clear the ground of old crops and dig it roughly. At the same time mix in well rotted manure or garden compost. Hardy varieties of peas and broad beans can be sown now, but will need added protection from cloches throughout the winter.

FLOWERS

Clean the beds by removing and composting any dead and rotting material and cutting down perennials. Finish planting out spring flowering bulbs. Tulips can be planted out throughout November and even into December 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 tender plants when it becomes much colder.

HOUSE PLANTS

House plants need less water through the winter months, but will need checking weekly. Flowering plants like cyclamen and azaleas are best kept in a cool room. Never put plants or cut flowers on top of televisions or other electrical items and keep all pot plants away from radiators where they will dry out in the hot air. Although many house plants like light conditions, ensure that they are not trapped on draughty window sills or behind curtains at night.

For gardening supplies and up to 50% reduction on Dobies seed catalogue orders remember to visit Longford Gardening Club.

This is to be found in the garage compound off Heol Penlan and is open on Sundays between 10.00am and 12.30pm. It will be closing for the winter period on Sunday 29th November and reopening on Sunday 7th February. Anyone wishing to purchase items from the Gardening Club during the week or during the winter recess may contact the Secretary, Stephen Absalom, on 01792 813465.

Seed orders should be received before Sunday 29th November.

More members are needed to help run both the gardening club and the shop.

If you are able to help, please contact the Secretary, as above.

RECIPE ♦ RECIPE ♦ RECIPE

Rosemary Conley's Brandy Sauce

Try this low-fat, low-calorie, brandy sauce instead of brandy butter and you will still feel spoiled without having to pile on the pounds.

Serves 8 1 serving 69 kcal/0.1g fat

Ingredients

600ml (1pint) skimmed milk

3 drops almond essence

2 tbsps cornflour

Liquid artificial sweetener

3 tbsps brandy

Method

Heat all but 4 tbsps of milk together with the almond essence until almost boiling. Remove from heat.

Mix the cornflour and remaining cold milk thoroughly and slowly pour into the hot milk, stirring continuously until the mixture begins to thicken. Return to the heat and continue to cook, stirring all the time. If the sauce is too thin, mix some more cornflour with cold milk and add it slowly until you achieve the consistency of custard.

Sweeten to taste. Add the brandy a few drops at a time and stir well. Transfer to a serving jug. Cover and keep warm until ready to serve.



STRUTHERS CHURCH, NEATH

has set up its temporary home in Longford and is enjoying the facilities offered by the Community Council. "We have lovely rooms to use, the crèche is filling up and the children in the Sunday School are currently making a model of the Great Temple of Jerusalem in the other room. It's wonderful! The children enjoy being outside in the playgrounds. You may hear them singing on the swings!" enthused Minister Gareth Watkins.

The Struthers Church family is a warm and welcoming group with people from every age and social group, even different nationalities. The hall is not a proper church, but it certainly becomes one with the presence of God in it every Sunday, and at Saturday evening meetings. The doors are open to everyone.

Gareth Watkins would like to advertise their Christmas Carol Service which will be held on Saturday 19th December. "It's a night filled with neighbours and visitors, with children singing and parents getting tearful, and it's by candlelight, with mince pies piled high to be served at the end. It is a wonderful God-centred start to the festivities, so we really hope you will join us. Watch out for details on posters and come and join us with the Sheep, the Kings and all the little Angels. We're looking forward to it!"

ARCHIVE PHOTO LLUN ARCHIF

The mystery of the archive photo in the Spring edition was, "How did I manage to send the wrong photograph to be printed?" Apologies to readers for the confusion, and thanks to those of you who have contacted us with names of some of the children. To put matters right we are publishing below the school photo with names of children identified.

Argraffwyd llun dirgel anghywir yn rhifyn y Gwanwyn. Ymddiheuriadau am hyn a diolch i bawb a gysylltodd a mi gydag enwau'r plant. Dyma'r llun unwaith eto gyda'r enwau a ddaeth i law.



Mynachlog Nedd Junior School Photo 1962

Back row (Rhes gefn): Stephen Hughes, Terry Davies, Hugh Ballard, Alan Jones, Ralph Reeves, Hugh Saunders, Haydn Parry, John Lloyd

Middle Row (Rhes ganol): Miss Elizabeth ???????? – teacher, Susan Burgess, Gillian Oakley, Susan Roberts, Ann Williams [Doran], Pauline Lloyd, Rosemary Reeves, Julie Elias, Mr. Griffiths - headmaster

Front Row (Rhes flaen): Colin Hopkins, Christopher Britton, David Rawlings, ????????, Philip Richards, Martin King.

For this edition, we are including a photo sent in by Mrs Marion Williams. This is sure to bring back fond memories for many of us. It shows children in Tregelles Road at the Christmas party in 1951.

Dyma lun arall a anfonwyd gan Mrs Marion Williams. Mae'n siwr y daw ag atgofion melys iawn i'r plant a'r rhieni ym mharti Nadolig yn Heol Tregelles yn 1951.



Little Indians

Identified **Little Indians** are / Yr Indiaid bach a adnabyddwyd:

Back row (Rhes gefn): Sarah Williams, Leanne Ross, Sharon Fox, Jamie ?

Front row (Rhes flaen): Amanda Poole, ? ?

Congratulations *Llongyfarchiadau*

Congratulations and Best Wishes go to County Councillor Martyn Peters and his wife Rita who were married in August at Neath Register Office.

The reception was held at the Glyn Clydach Coach House and everybody there had an enjoyable evening. It was a real community event.



Llongyfarchiadau a dymuniadau gorau i'n Cynghorydd Sirol Martyn Peters a'i wraig Rita ar eu priodas ym mis Awst yn Swyddfa Gofrestru Castell-nedd.

Bu'r wledd yng ngwesty'r Coach House Glyn Clydach a chafwyd noson fendigedig gan bawb a oedd yn bresennol. Roedd hi'n achlysur cymunedol yn wir.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council has published its Local Development Plan, LDP. This sets out the Council's plan for land use over the next fifteen years – where to build, what is needed and the open space and countryside that should be protected.

A meeting for local residents was held in the Memorial Hall. Many people expressed concern about the intrusion into the countryside and the problems caused by an increasing volume of traffic.

In Dyffryn Clydach there are eight small candidate sites put forward for consideration. Three sites are in Dyffryn, and the rest are in Drymmau Road, The Highlands, Longford Lane, Old Road and Penshannel.

These are not planning applications, but candidate sites suggested as potential sites for future development.

The Council invites comments or objections before the LDP is finalised.

CYNLLUN DATBLYGU LLEOL

Mae Cyngor Bwrdeistref Lleol Castell-nedd Port Talbot wedi cyhoeddi eu Cynllun Datblygu Lleol, CDLL. Mae hwn yn dangos cynlluniau'r Cyngor ynglŷn â defnyddio'r tir dros dros y pymtheg mlynedd sesaf – ble i adeiladu, beth sydd ei angen a'r tir agored a'r cefn gwlad y dyla'i warchod.

Cynhaliwyd cyfarfod o'r trigolion lleol yn y Neuadd Goffa. Mynegwyd pryder gan sawl person am y tarfu ar gefn gwlad ac am y problemau byddai'n deillio o'r cynnydd ym maint y trafnidiaeth.

Yn Dyffryn Clydach mae yna wyth safle posib bach wedi eu rhoi gerbron i'w hystyried. Mae tri o'r safleoedd yn Dyffryn, a'r gweddill ar Heol Drymmau, Yr Highlands, Lôn Rhyddir, yr Hen Heol a Phenshanel.

Nid yw y rhai'n yn ceisiadau cynllunio, ond yn safleoedd posib sydd wedi eu hawgrymu fel safleoedd y gellid eu datblygu yn y dyfodol.

Mae'r cyngor yn gwahodd sylwadau neu gwrthwynebiadau cyn i'r CDLL ei diweddio.

WHAT'S ON AT CHRISTMAS

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

Christmas Fayre

Friday 27 November, followed by bingo session

Children's Disco

Saturday 5 December, 2.00 – 4.00pm

Community Carol Evening

Wednesday 16 December, 7.00pm

Hall users' and over 50's Tea

Saturday 9 January, 2.00pm



Times for these events can be confirmed with any of your local councillors or by consulting notices in the Memorial Hall or on our website.

DIGWYDDIADAU'R NADOLIG

Mae'r digwyddiadau canlynol yn cymryd lle yn y Neuadd Gymuned dros y Nadolig:

Ffair Nadolig

Gwener 27 Tachwedd, gyda sesiwn bingo i dilyn

Disco i'r Plant

Sadwrn 5 Rhagfyr, 2.00 – 4.00yp

Noson Carolau i'r Gymuned

Mercher 16 Rhagfyr, 7.00yp

Tê i ddefnyddwyr y neuadd

Sadwrn 9 Ionawr, 2.00yp ac i'r rhai dros 50



Cewch ddod o hyd i amseroedd y digwyddiadau hyn drwy holi eich cynghorwyr lleol neu drwy wylïo'r hysbysebion yn y neuadd neu wylïo ein safle ar y wê.