

GELLIGAER TIMES-NUMBER 70 - THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GELLIGAER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2023



Editor's Note

This is the platinum edition of Gelligaer Times. Platinum is used to describe a 70th wedding anniversary. Being rarer and heavier than gold, platinum has a silver white lustre and is popular in engagement rings. With a melting point of 3215 degrees Fahrenheit, it is extremely **durable** and preferred by jewellers over gold because it is more **malleable**. These characteristics are apt descriptions for a 70-year-old marriage, but whether or not they apply to this newsletter is a moot point.

In this newsletter you will find

Note from our Chair-Judith Jones-with tributes (Welsh and English) by our President Dr Elin Jones

Note by Ann Pinch on Dr Stuart Broomfield's talk (September 2023)

Annual subscriptions

Annual Conference 2024

Photographs from Lynda Main in Australia (Gelligaer Cricket Team)

Photograph from the collection of the late Islwyn Hughes (Gelligaer Rugby Team)

A family photograph from Kath Williams (Rev. R. O. Williams B.A. rector at Gelligaer)

Charitable bequests by Edward Lewis of Gilfach Fargoed Fawr

Events

David Mills

New season and new journal *Judith Jones*

The evening of Wednesday 27th September saw the first of Gelligaer Historical Society's 2023 – 2024 monthly meetings at Llancaiach Fawr. Unfortunately, this also clashed with the threat from Agnes, the first-named storm of the season, and the inclement weather resulted in fewer people attending in person, but numbers increasing via Zoom. The initial business of the meeting was the launch of the Society's latest journal, *Gelligaer* volume 29, by President,

Dr. Elin Jones, who paid tribute to editor and retired chairman, Mrs Annie Owen to whom the journal is dedicated, and to editor and webmaster, Greg Buick as follows:

Dyma rifyn arbennig o'n cylchgrawn, oherwydd mae wedi ei gyflwyno i berson arbennig iawn, sef cyn-Gadeirydd Cymdeithas Hanes Gelligaer, Annie Owen, a ymddeolodd o'r gadair y llynedd. Yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf bu'n arwain y Gymdeithas trwy gyfnod anodd Covid, pan fu'n rhaid i ni addasu at reolau a chyfyngiadau di-rif, gofynion newydd ac annisgwyl a heriau o bob cyfeiriad. Bu'r newidiadau hyn yn ormod i sawl cymdeithas, ond nid i ni, ac mae Annie'n haeddu clod am ein harwain trwy'r stormydd i gyd.

Diolch i'w harweiniad, roedd y Gymdeithas mewn sefyllfa gref cyn Covid, ac mae ei chyflwr llewyrchus heddiw yn tystio i waith caled, cyson a chydwybodol Annie trwy gydol ei chyfnod yn y gadair. Mae safon uchel cyhoeddiadau'r Gymdeithas, a'r parch sydd iddi ymhlith haneswyr amatur

lleol a haneswyr academiaidd a phroffesiynol hefyd yn tystio i safon uchel ysgolheictod Annie. Yr un fu ei gofal dros fanylion cywirdeb ffeithiol ein cyhoeddiadau a manylion trefniadau ein cyfarfodydd a'n cynhadleddau – y manylder mewn manylion sy'n nodweddu hanesydd a threfnydd o'r safon uchaf.

Mae Annie hefyd wedi bod yn hael iawn ei chymwynas a'i chefnogaeth i unigolion a chymdeithasau hanes eraill, ac yn barod bob amser i rannu ei gwybodaeth a'i phrofiad yn y maes.

Bu Cymdeithas Hanes Gelligaer yn ffodus iawn yn ei Chadeirydd, a mawr obeithiwn y bydd hi'n derbyn y gyfrol hon fel teyrnged iddi. Mae'n dod gyda'n dymuniadau gorau am gyfnod newydd hapus yn ei hanes yn y Drenewydd. Rydym yn siwr y bydd yn taflu golau newydd ar hanes yr ardal honno cyn bo hir!

Dr. Elin Jones

This is a special issue of our journal, since it is dedicated to a very special person, the former Chairperson of Gelligaer Historical Society, Annie Owen, who retired from the Chair last year. In recent years she has led the Society through the difficult time of Covid, when we had to adapt to numerous rules and restrictions, new and unexpected requirements and challenges from every direction. These changes proved too much for some societies, but not for us, and Annie deserves praise for leading us through all these storms.

Thanks to her leadership, the Society was in a strong position before Covid, and its present flourishing state testifies to Annie's hard, steady and conscientious work through all her time in the Chair.

The high standard of the Society's publications, and the respect for our work shown by local and amateur historians as well as by academic and professional historians is also evidence of the high standard of Annie's scholarship. She has always taken the same care over the factual accuracy of our publications as over the organisation of our meetings and conferences – that care over details which is typical of the best historians and organisers.

Annie has also been very generous in the help and support she gives individuals and other historical societies, and she is always ready to share her knowledge and her experience in the field.

Gelligaer Historical Society has been very fortunate in its Chair, and we all hope she will accept this volume as a tribute to her. It comes with our best wishes for a new chapter in her history in Newtown.

We are sure that the history of that area will soon benefit from the light that she will throw on it!

Dr. Elin Jones

Yn y rhifyn hwn mae aelodau Cymdeithas Hanes Gelligaer hefyd yn talu teyrnged i Greg Buick, Aelod Anrhydeddus y Gymdeithas, am y gwaith a wnaed ganddo i'r Gymdeithas dros flynyddoedd lawer.

Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn bu'n drysoryd, gwfeistr ers 2009, a golygydd y cylchgrawn. Gall pob un ohonom dystio i waith dyfal Greg dros y Gymdeithas, ei gymwynasgarwch a'i barodrwydd i helpu ac i rannu ei amser a'i arbenigedd.

Greg greodd ein gwefan yn 2008, a fe sydd wedi ei chynnal ers hynny, gan gynnwys yr Adran ar y Rhyfel Fawr - a chyfrannoddi i honno hefyd. Mae wedi ysgrifennu pump cyfrol, sy'n ffynhonnell werthfawr ar gyfer ymchwil i ffermydd a'u teuluoedd ym Mhlwyf Gelligaer.

Ar ben hyn i gyd, ers 2007 bu'n gyfrannwr cyson i'n cylchgrawn Gelligaer.

Mae'n addas iawn i ni nodi cyfraniadau Greg yn y rhifyn hwn, oherwydd bu'n cydweithio'n agos gydag Annie Owen i olygu pob un o gyhoeddiadau'r Gymdeithas, paratoi llyfrau a chylchgronau ar gyfer eu hargraffu a'u cyhoeddi, a'u dosbarthu wedyn hefyd.

Dyma ddeuddegfed cyhoeddiad Greg, a'r olaf ohonynt hefyd, er y bydd yn parhau fel gwfeistr y Gymdeithas.

Dr. Elin Jones

Gelligaer Historical Society members also pay tribute to Honorary Member, Greg Buick, for the work he has done for the Society over many years.

During this time, he has been treasurer, webmaster since 2009, and journal editor. We all appreciate his hard work, his helpfulness, and his generosity with his time and expertise.

Greg created our website in 2008 and has subsequently maintained it, including the Great War section - to which he also contributed. He is the author of five volumes which cover the history of all farms in the hamlets of Gelligaer Parish and which have become a valuable source for research into farms and farming families in the Parish.

It is fitting that we acknowledge Greg's contribution to the Society in this issue, as he has worked with Annie Owen in editing all our publications, also preparing books and journals for printing and publication and distributing them afterwards. In addition to this, since 2007 he has been a regular contributor of articles to our Journal, *Gelligaer*.

This, his twelfth publication will be Greg's last – although he continues to serve as webmaster to the Society.

Dr Elin Jones

The book launch was followed by a very informative – and enjoyable! – talk by Dr. Stuart Broomfield before tea/coffee and the opportunity to purchase the new journal.

Judith Jones

Senghenydd in the Thirteenth Century Dr. Stuart Broomfield

Initially, referring to slides of maps, Dr. Broomfield began by placing the cantref of Senghenydd in its geographical position in Wales, then, more specifically, within Glamorgan which, he said, was effectively the old Kingdom of Morgannwg. He illustrated the three divisions of the Cantref: from the coast to Cefn Onn ridge and Caerphilly Mountain (Cibwr), northward to the Caiach stream (Is Caeach) and finally the area of Uwch Caiach which comprised the mediaeval parishes of Merthyr and Gelligaer.

Dr Broomfield then outlined the administration of the Cantref from its conquest at the end of the eleventh century by the Norman Marcher lord, Robert Fitzhamon, Earl of Gloucester. The de Clare family became lords of Glamorgan in 1215 and by 1267 had succeeded in their aim of bringing the Lordship under their direct rule. Within Senghenydd this was centred on the castle which Fitzhamon had built at Cardiff, but direct rule only covered Cibwr. The northern

part of the Cantref was still under the rule of native princes, although they paid tribute to the de Clares. One of the most well-known of these princes, said Dr. Broomfield, was Ifor Bach - and his descendants. Some the early Welsh leaders of Senghenydd were also given positions of importance in northern Senghenydd by the de Clares. The ultimate ruler of the Lordship, however, was the Norman-English King. Dr. Broomfield further illustrated his talk with photographs of tombs of these various rulers and with photographs of drawings of contemporary events.

He described how the de Clares faced various uprisings from the Welsh princes of Uwch and Is Caiach - and also opposition from princes of Gwynedd, such as Llewelyn the Great and Llewelyn the Last, who were attempting to consolidate their power over the whole of Wales and used this northern section of Senghenydd as a base to attack them. There were several uprisings and repercussions from both sides. By 1262, when Gilbert de Clare 2nd inherited, Llewelyn ap Gruffydd had control of much of North Glamorgan so in 1268, Gilbert began building Caerphilly Castle which became a symbol of Norman power and a centre of conflict. Gilbert de Clare 3rd, "the red", for example, captured Gruffydd ap Rhys (son of Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Ifor Bach), Welsh lord of Senghenydd, imprisoned him at Cardiff Castle, transported him to Kilkenny Castle whence he was never heard of again.

The de Clare dynasty ended in 1314 when Gilbert de Clare 8th Lord of Glamorgan died without issue when fighting for the King at the Battle of Bannockburn. "Keepers" of Glamorgan were appointed by the English crown and Dr. Broomfield ended his account of the rulers of Glamorgan Lordship and Uwch Caiach with the story of Llewelyn Bren who led an unsuccessful revolt against de Clare two years later.

Dr Broomfield concluded his talk by looking at the lives of ordinary people of Senghenydd noting that they always had to be prepared for battle and that the effects of such continuous strife led to land being devastated, cattle being forfeited and homes destroyed. The area was mostly upland with people having various rights from their lord such as the right to enter the forest to gather wood. His final comment and slide was in relation to the platform houses of this era in the northern section of the Cantref.

An interesting, and educating talk about our local area in the thirteenth century, and a valuable addition to Dr. Broomfield's *Gelligaer* journal articles and talks about Mediaeval Senghenydd (see gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk).

Ann Pinch

PLEASE NOTE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE SOCIETY ARE DUE:
ADULTS £10 and STUDENTS £5

Annual Conference-Preliminary Notice

The Society has fixed a date for this event, **SATURDAY 23 March 2024**. Speakers have been booked and they are, but not necessarily in this order:

Rhian Diggins	Glamorgan Blood
Noreen Shopland	Women in the coal industry, both above and below ground
Professor Martin Johnes	Welsh Not
Professor Keir Waddington	Drought in 19 th Century Wales

Further details will be given as soon as they are available

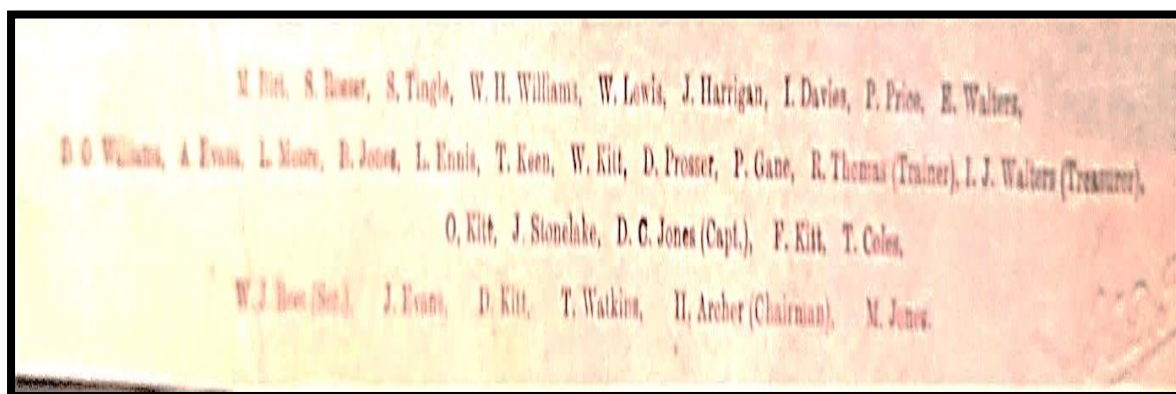
Photographs from Australia sent by LYNDA MAIN (Nee Price)

In a previous newsletter were some photographs that attracted the interest of Lynda Main. Her father Glyn Price, who had been an overman at Penallta Colliery. was also a well-known local sportsman. The Price family have strong links to Gelligaer village and lived in two houses just to the north of the church, one house was Ty Cattwg and the other Ypres, both are extant. Lynda has now kindly sent the following photographs which may bring back memories to some “old Gelligaerians”. The second photograph from Lynda is of a medal awarded to her late father. Presumably RVCL, which is engraved on it, means Rhymney Valley Cricket League.



A photograph from the collection of our late President Islwyn Hughes

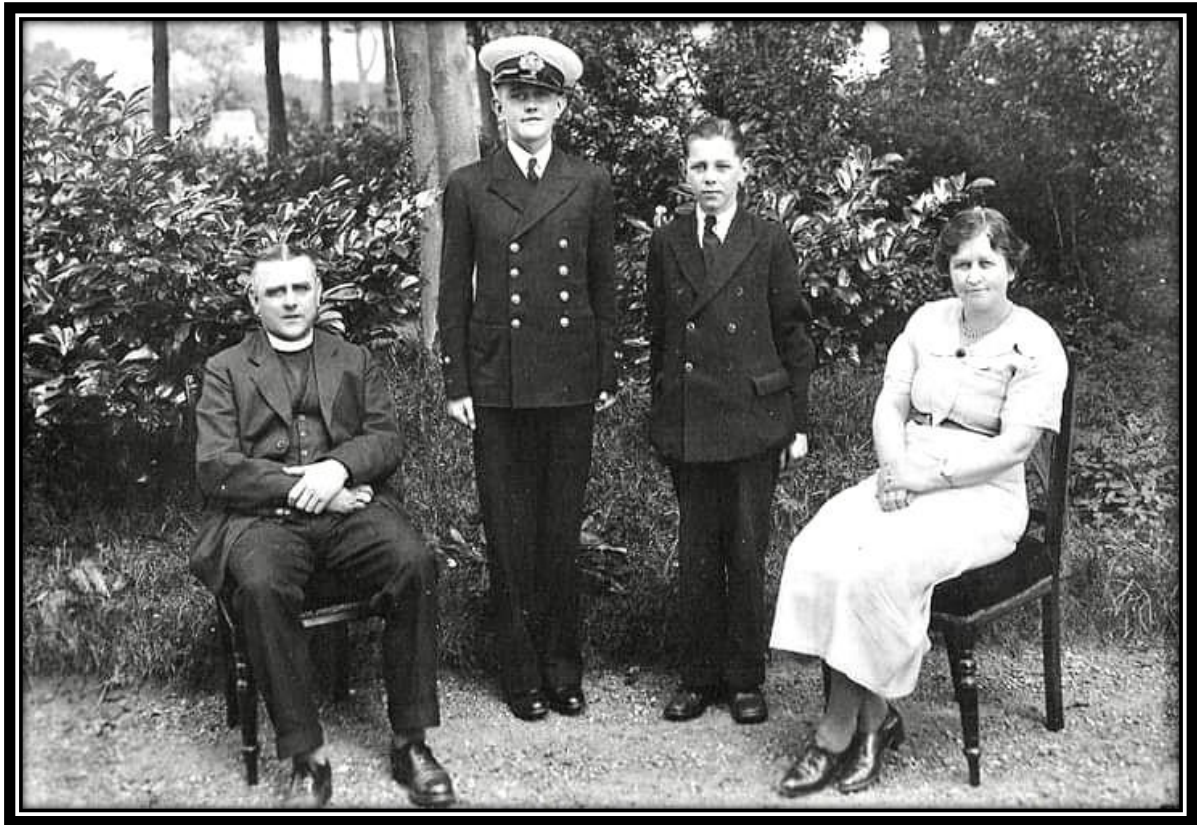
This is a photograph of the Gelligaer rugby team. There are four members of the Kitt family named, some readers may remember F. (Francis) Kitt who kept Cwrt y Betty farm on Hospital Road, Penpedairheol.



Photograph from KATH WILLIAMS

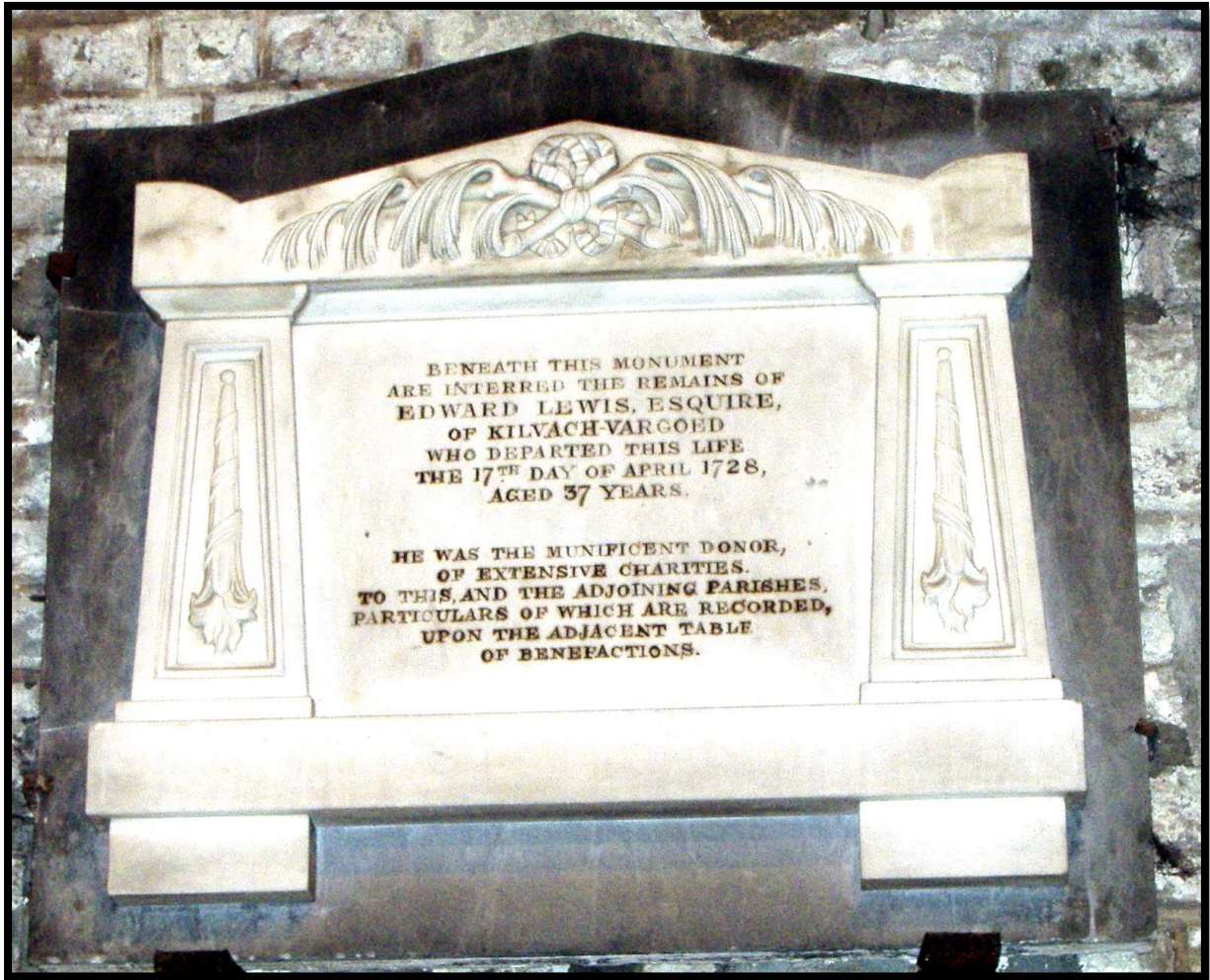
The following photograph was recently posted on the GHS Facebook page by Kath Williams who is the granddaughter of Rev R O Williams B.A., he is on the left in the photograph. Her post coincided with the insertion in this newsletter of a photograph of the Gelligaer Welfare Cricket Club in which Rev. Williams is shown as a vice president. In the photograph below are from left to right:

Rev. J.O.Williams, in uniform his son, Geraint, Kath's father Arthur and her grandmother Bertha. Geraint lost his life in the battle of the Atlantic in 1943, he was age 23. Kath's father became vicar of Llantwit Fardre until the 1990s. The Society is grateful to Kath for posting the photograph on its Facebook page and allowing it to appear in this newsletter.



**THE CHARITABLE BEQUESTS IN THE WILL OF EDWARD LEWIS OF GILFACH
FARGOED FAWR IN THE PARISH OF GELLIGAER**

The photograph below is of a memorial plaque inside St. Cattwg's church Gelligaer. It recites that Edward Lewis was the *munificent donor of extensive chartities*, not just in the parish of Gelligaer, but also to *adjoining parishes*.



The following are extracts from the Will

I give and bequeth the house and land in the possession of William Edmond commonly called CROSSVAIN ISHA and the house and lands late in the possession of Rees William Giles to my said Trustees last mencioned and their heirs forever upon trust that out of the rents and profits they lay out FFIVE POUNDS per annum for BREAD for the poor of the Parish of PEDWELLTEE to be distributed by the Churchwardens of that Parish on Sunday mornings after Divine Service at the Parish Church.

And also that my Trustees lay out and employ the rest of the rents and proffits of ye premises last mencioned for and towards placing out apprentices. So many of the aforesaid FIFTEEN boys as can be conveniently done with the overplus thereof. (This is bequest led to the foundation of Lewis school)

Item. I give and bequeath to my Trustees last mencioned all that house and land in the possession of Thomas William Rees commonly called GOOD THONOR ISHA and all that land called TIER A PONT subject nevertheless to the trust and to the interest and purpose hereinafter mencioned that is to say that they procure and elect one learned and Orthodox Divine of the Church of England to preach two sermons on Sunday at the end of every three weeks the one in the morning at PEDWELLTEE and the other in the afternoon at MONETHUSLIN.

Edward Lewis died in 1728, but his mother had life interest in his estate, hence it was not until her death

in 1739 that the trust could take effect. However, one of his relatives made a claim to the estate. Some of the trustees seemed not to be very interested in putting the terms of the Will into force. However, the other trustees, namely the churchwardens of Bedwellty and Mynyddislwyn and two other trustees made a claim to the Chancery Court. Eventually, in 1749, an agreement was reached between the parties and the terms of the Will were carried out. In 1845 the payments for the sermons, which had become known as the Lectureship Fund, were as follows:

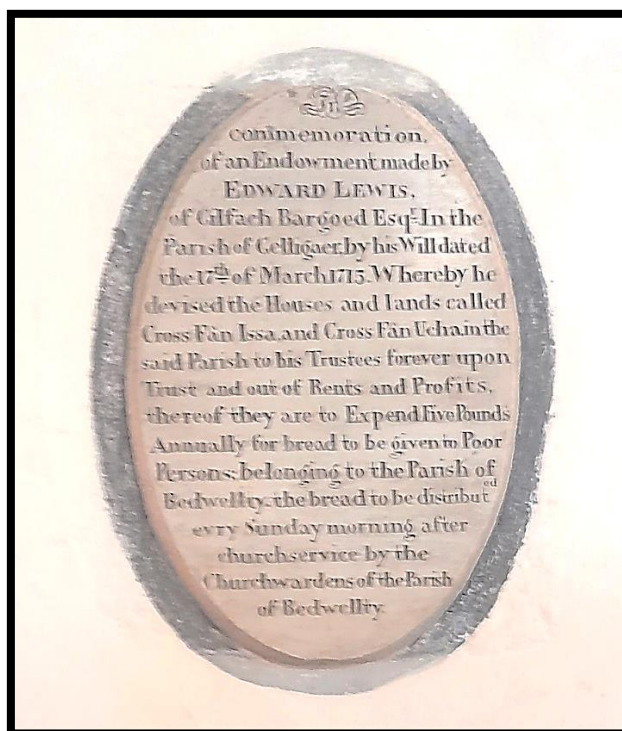
The Rev. Issac Hughes, Mynyddislwyn £8-8-8

The Rev. William Jones, Bedwellty ... £8-8-7.

Why the reverend gentleman at Bedwellty had to suffer the injustice of being paid a penny less than Mynyddislwyn I will never know.

Whilst dealing with the question of sermons it is interesting to note that in 1891 the services at St. Sannan's, Bedwellty each Sunday, were at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.; the afternoon service was in Welsh.

Other than the contents of Edward Lewis's Will what evidence exists today of the charitable donations to those other parishes, namely Bedwellty and Mynyddislwyn. On the north wall of Saint Sannan's, Bedwellty is a plaque (photograph appears below) which mentions the bequest to provide bread for the poor of the parish. In 1715 the sum involved was £5 per annum, with the bread being distributed after every Sunday morning service. There are web sites that can be used to project the worth of a sum of money from a date in the past down to the present day. The site *measuring worth uk* calculates that a commodity valued at £5 in 1715 is now worth £831.70. If any reader wishes to refine this then it is possible to calculate how many loaves of bread can be purchased today for £831.70; answers please to the editor. The provision of bread for the poor seems to have lapsed but a search of the churchwardens' accounts and vestry minutes, which are held at Gwent Archives, Ebbw Vale may well reveal the year it ceased.

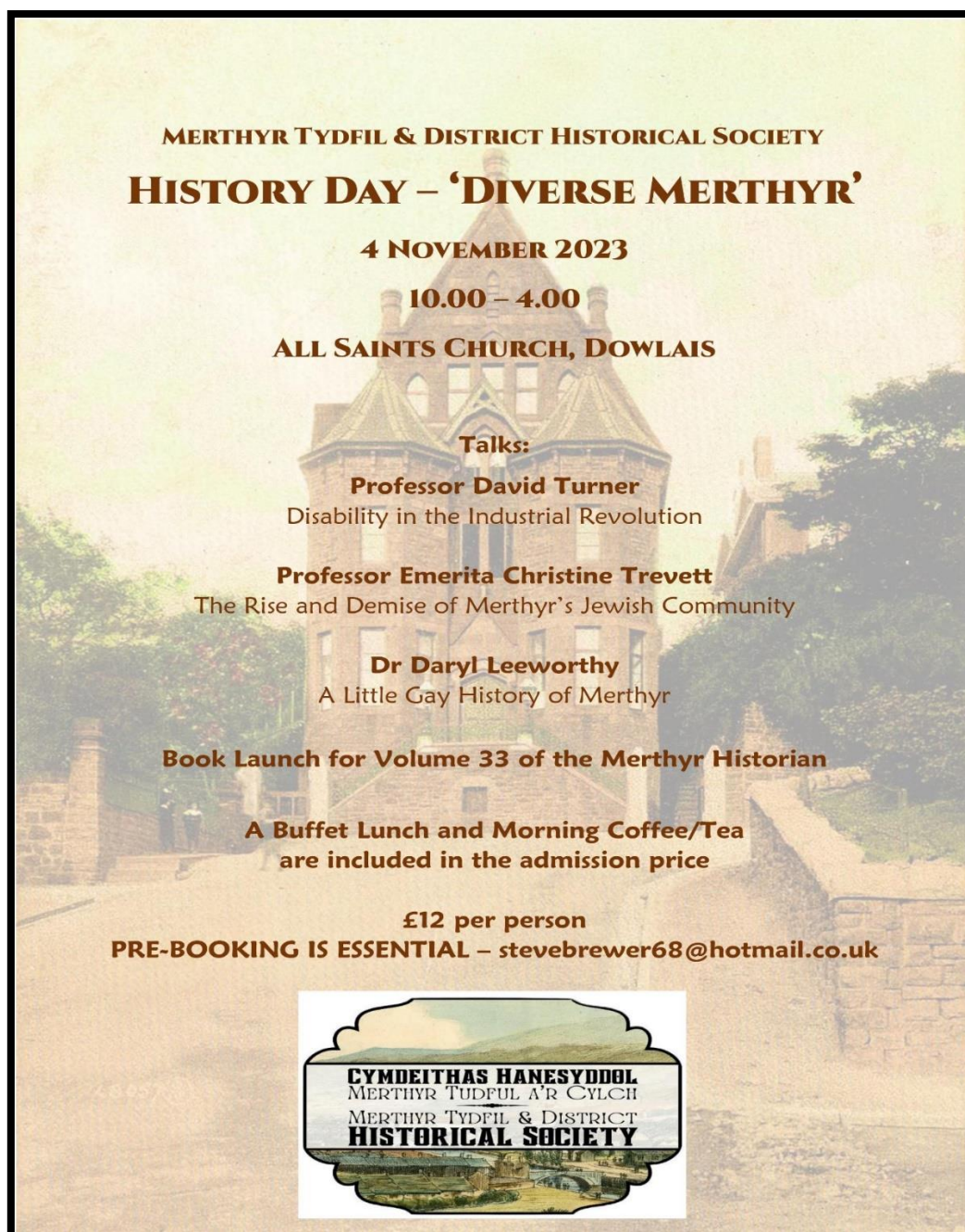


One possibly further link between the Edward Lewis bequests is the arrangement that existed for a number of years which saw a selected number of pupils from outside the parish of Gelligaer being chosen to attend Lewis School, Pengam. This happened during the years of school boys sitting and passing what was known as the 11 plus. However, some boys from outside the parish attended Lewis School prior to that, presumably chosen on merit. Readers are invited to expand on this arrangement by sending their views/knowledge to

GelligaerHS.Photos@gmail.com

David Mills

EVENTS



MERTHYR TYDFIL & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORY DAY – ‘DIVERSE MERTHYR’

4 NOVEMBER 2023

10.00 – 4.00

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, DOWLAIS

Talks:

Professor David Turner
Disability in the Industrial Revolution

Professor Emerita Christine Trevett
The Rise and Demise of Merthyr’s Jewish Community

Dr Daryl Leeworthy
A Little Gay History of Merthyr

Book Launch for Volume 33 of the Merthyr Historian

**A Buffet Lunch and Morning Coffee/Tea
are included in the admission price**

£12 per person

PRE-BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL – stevebrewer68@hotmail.co.uk

**CYMEITHAS HANESYDDOL
MERTHYR TUDFUL A'R CYLCH
MERTHYR TYDFIL & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

THE PEOPLE'S PAPER
THE CHAMPION OF
Political Justice & Universal Right.

No. 01

NEWPORT, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 04, 2023

[PRICE THREEPENCE.

CHARTIST CONVENTION 2023

PROGRAMME

MORNING SESSION

Chaired by Dr Elin Jones

Steve Martin: Poor Negroes and White Slaves: Chartism and Abolition

**Steve Poole & Roger Ball: The Riot 1831 Project:
The Newport Connection.**

Les James: Update on SixPoints publishing project

Discussion Panel

AFTERNOON SESSION

Chaired by Jayne Bryant MS.

**Katrina Navickas: Digital mapping of Chartist Land Plan subscribers
and delegates to the National Conventions'.**

**Ray Stroud/ David Osmond: Representing the Rising:
Art and Chartism in Newport.**

Discussion Panel

Kevin Brennan: A Chartist Musical interlude

POST CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

**Chartist commemoration at the St Woolos Chartist Memorial Stone
The Annual Torchlit march will begin at Belle Vue Park and finish at
Westgate Square.**

04 NOVEMBER 2023 NEWPORT CATHEDRAL

A message from Bargoed Library

Jewish History Association of South Wales

From the 11.11.2023-21.11.2023 we will have an exhibition in Bargoed Library in regards to **“Voices and Images of the south Wales Jewish Community”** The exhibition commences with a talk on 11th November 2023 at 10am.

"JHASW/CHIDC discovers, documents, preserves and shares the cultural heritage of the Jewish communities in south Wales. "This seems pertinent to the history of the valley. We will be inviting schools to visit the exhibition and the talk with the intent on highlighting the Jewish history of our community. We will be taking this as an opportunity to highlight our family and local history resources and our state-of-the-art Digital Fiche Machine.