



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2024



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- Local sports during the depression
- A ruling passion ● The whippet and more!

CROESO!

WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN 2024 NEWSLETTER.

This edition includes a long-ago story of the religious revival of 100 years past, a rugby star born in 1908, a local sport played during the hardship days of the general strike and the Depression, and more besides. As usual there is a paragraph about what we have been doing as well as some dates for our next events. *Jean.*



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THE GARW VALLEY HERITAGE SOCIETY

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We are keen to borrow historical material that can be indexed and copied with the consent of the owner, and would be grateful for any photos, family recollections, funny stories, tales of excitement or adventure in the Valley.

Famous people from the Garw:**WILLIAM JOHN “BILLY” MOORE**

Billy Moore was born in his Grandmother's sweetshop at Greenmeadow Terrace, Llangeinor on the 17th February 1908. He resided with his parents there, Bertram and Lily Moore. His Grandmother was Fanny Moore, a Widow. Bertram was a Coal Miner, born in Bettws while Mam Lily was a Housewife. The family had previously lived in nearby Tynyrheol. Billy was a keen sportsman who excelled at both Rugby and Boxing. After leaving Tynyrheol School he worked as a Quarryman. It is said that he trained for Boxing upstairs in a Boxing ring at the Green Meadow public house.

He played for Bridgend RFC and Glamorgan County before gaining his solitary cap as a Lock forward for Wales against Ireland at Ravenhill Park, Belfast on 11th March 1933 in a team that contained some star names in Wilf Wooler, Ronnie Boon, Viv Jenkins, Archie Skym and the legendary Maurice Turnbull. Wales lost the game by 10 points to 5. The International matches against Ireland in the 1930's were notorious for mass punch-ups between the packs. Tough as teak Billy had no fears here as he was an accomplished boxer who the legendary Jack Petersen had failed to stop in a non-title bout at Weston-Super-Mare.

Jack Petersen was British Heavyweight Champion on two separate occasions and had won every one of his first twenty five fights but found Billy Moore a formidable opponent.



Billy signed for Rochdale Hornets Rugby League Club soon after. He also played for the Wales Rugby League side and therefore became a “Duel Code” International.

Oldham signed him from Rochdale Hornets in 1937. His first game for Oldham was against Hull Kingston Rovers on 20th November 1937 playing prop forward in the number 10 shirt. His last game for Oldham was against Salford on the 26th December 1947 again at prop wearing number 10. He played a total of 158 matches scoring 5 tries. He later signed for Oldham RLFC and between 1937-38 and 1947-48 played 158 times for Oldham scoring five tries. He died in Oldham on 31st March 1976.

Billy Moore will feature in our gallery of Famous People from the Garw.

TOP: 1939 Oldham team, Billy is 3rd from the right in back row

RIGHT: A contemporary cartoon of Billy.



POETRY CORNER

For all lovers of greyhounds and whippets:

THE WHIPPET

Janet Sandford Thomas

The whippet is a graceful hound, He's smooth and sleek
As he runs around
Faster and faster off he goes, He never ever seems to slow
And when he does get deadbeat
He loves to lie by your feet.
But if you think he's fast asleep, then watch, because he will creep
Into your bed, beneath the sheets
Dare you try to get him out as you'll end up sleeping
On the couch.



WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

In mid-June we supported the events in Llangeinor Church when they held their 'Open Week' which featured a talk on St Cein, the 6th century saint after whom the village was named.



© Bridgend Valleys Railway Company (Garw Valley Railway)

June 29th was Armed Forces Day in Bridgend, and we joined with the Garw Valley Railway Society on their Open Day held to recognise the service of all the veterans. The GVHS Roll of Honour was on display together with other notes and memorabilia (above), and the day went well with visitors enjoying the railway engines, and the small choir did an excellent programme to entertain.

July saw the Bridgend Heritage Network meet in Nantymoel, at which various Heritage groups from Bridgend, Ogmore, Llynfi, St John's House, and the Garw were able to discuss what they are working on, and what events are taking place in forthcoming months.

Another project recently started is a catalogue of famous Garw people, those who are locally known, and some who have made their mark in the wider world. A few will be displayed in September's 'Open Doors' event (see back page), and we hope to hear of any we may not have known about from our visitors.

We are also working on mounting our better photographs for sale in the future, and meantime if anyone wants a copy of any photograph on our website, please let us know: telephone 01656 856091.

The GVHS' project of mapping all the Garw farms is ongoing with the database being developed and digitising the many maps we now have.



LOCAL SPORT DURING THE DEPRESSION

Taken from Reminiscences Of Life In The Garw Valley.

by Wyn M. Price & Rodney W. Jones.

A very popular street game during the Depression of the 1930's in the Garw was Cattie and Doggie. It was a game that cost next to nothing to play.

The 'doggie' bat was an old piece of wood about 4' long and the 'cattie' was another piece of wood about 9" long which was tapered to a point at both ends. The game's method was very simple: your opponent pitched the 'cattie' towards a 12" diameter circle chalked on the ground. If it landed inside the ring without touching the edges, the 'batsman' was 'out' without a stroke being played.

If however it landed along one edge of the ring the 'batsman' was allowed one stroke at it, but if it landed clear of the ring the 'batsman' had 3 strokes.

The idea of this game was to hit the 'cattie' with the 'dog' on one of its tapered edges so that it flew up into the air. Whilst it was airborne the 'batsman' could give it an almighty swipe propelling it as far as he could.

Upon completing his allocated strokes, the 'batsman' then estimated how many running strides (called 'carms') lay between the circle and the 'cattie', and then the opposing team had to stride the distance in that number or less. If they succeeded the 'batsman's' estimate was added to their own score, but if they failed then the batting team was credited.

Children played this game using old broom handles, while adults, usually in a club or colliery team, preferred to use the more manly, old mandrill shafts, and as the opposing teams were allowed to 'field' as in Cricket, many a brave man came to grief trying to stop a 'cattie' in full flight. Believe it or not there were leagues, championship tables, and all the paraphernalia nowadays associated with today's Football teams, but with the return of the 'prosperity' of full-time employment after WW2, the game sadly died out.

An addendum:

The local paper some years earlier during the general strike had written:

'It is extremely pleasing to note that every possible opportunity is being given to the sporting element, and what with the many matters arranged between the various districts, in "dog and cat" tournaments and other games, the people are in reality kept going. The "catty and dog" match between the Pantygog Mud-slashers and their fair friends was of so interesting a nature that a crowd of upwards of 300 people looked on.

A RULING PASSION

Anonymous, 1926 – GVHS Archives.

The news spread like wildfire along the valley that old Jack Black had ‘had’ the revival spirit. Margedd Evans, over the Post Office counter, said that she for one refused to believe it of the old son of Satan, and that a cell in Swansea gaol still awaited him, if not indeed, the gallows. Who did they think had stunned and all but ‘did’ for Moses Parry, the gamekeeper, in the Bryngarw Woods on Saturday night? “Revival spirit indeed!”

Old Mari Huws said, “Yes, but that was on the Saturday; on the Sunday it was that he caught the revival”.

It appeared that it had all happened at an open-air meeting on Pontycymmer Square. Following the revivalist’s exhortation, and while the crowd sang ‘Aberystwyth’, Jack had burst into tears and publicly declared repentance for his many sins. At any rate that’s how I heard it.

“Going to join the Baptists, he is,” resumed Mari. At this Margedd Evans looked somewhat less incredulous, she herself being a faithful member of the Hen Gorph. “Singing hymns all day he is now and--” Mari was interrupted by the entrance of Ned the postman, who brought the still more thrilling news that Jack was intending to get baptised in the river by a revivalist Minister on the following Sunday morning.

“Unholy blasphemy,” snorted Margedd Evans; “why, all the waters of the rivers in Wales poured out together wouldn’t wash the soul of that wicked old man clean. Indeed, no.”

The whole valley was soon agog with the excitement of the notorious reprobate’s baptism. In the bars of the pubs they were saying that he had sold his old traps, gaffs and nets, the poacher’s tools of his sins as it were, to Sam Lovell, the horse-dealer. What better proof did anyone want of old Jack’s conversion? Aha. Yes! ”But what did the other one want with his old traps and nets?” was asked with lots of nudgings and winkings.

On that Sabbath morning the chapels along the valley and up on the hillside were empty, whilst the banks of the river were lined with spectators. Margedd Evans said she “hated breaking the Sabbath, but surely one could be forgiven on an occasion like this?” Poor Jack, with his jolly weather beaten face like a rising sun above the stark white of his baptismal robe, stood in a strangely submissive attitude by the revivalist’s side, whilst the minister dealt eloquently upon that joy in Heaven over that one sinner that repenteth. The speaker paused to give full effect to his words. Some who were there that day maintain that they noticed the convert’s expression change from beatific smile to a fixed attentiveness.

Be that as it may, it is true to say that after a moment’s impressive silence, the congregation was startled by the sound of a terrific splash caused by Jack’s sudden leap into mid-stream, while he yelled “ Diawl, there’s a Salmon!”



WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE YOUR INTEREST IN THE GARW VALLEY TO ANOTHER LEVEL?

**If the answer is yes, why not come and
help us in the running of the
Garw Valley Heritage Society?**

As some of us are getting older we are always keen to hear from any current and prospective members who may want to help us in maintaining our Society, its public and web presence, and its archive.

There are so many different tasks in the running of this Society. Whether you are interested in meeting people, getting involved in our exhibitions, helping with our ongoing archiving, helping with our IT, or just offering memories, experiences, advice or your time we'd love to hear from you.

We have many exciting upcoming projects planned, so please get in touch and learn and share more about this beautiful valley.

**If you're interested and for further information please see page 2
for a list of the many ways to contact us.**

Thank you!

DATES FOR THE DIARY

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 7th

Gerald will be walking Blaengarw in the footsteps of **Daniel James**, **10am** from the Hut in Parc Calon Lan, and welcomes anyone who wants to join in.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 21st – OPEN DOORS EVENT AND ORGAN RECITAL

10am-4pm at Tabernacle in Pontycymer, Cadw Open Doors event, an annual event: an exhibition of aspects of Garw life over the last 150 years will be featured, and this year we are showing a small collection of notable Garw personalities and biographies. Of special interest that day will be our guest Graham Holcombe, organist and retired canon of Llandaff Cathedral, who came last year to an appreciative audience, and who will play the organ at Tabernacle and also give a talk on the organ itself, which is one of the very few organs of its type that are still in use amongst the working organs that still exist in the South Wales places of worship.



There will also be a sale of Rugby books, many have been donated over the years, and we have several duplicates- all in good condition, for sale at a nominal price.

SEPTEMBER 2024 - OGMORE VALLEY

Throughout September our neighbours in the Ogmore Valley are holding a History Month, where people can enjoy a variety of free history talks, walks and displays across Bridgend County. This has been organised in partnership with the Ogwr Heritage Network and has been funded by the UK government. There are several Open Days in partnership with the Cadw Open Doors festival, and something taking place nearly every day of the month! For more information and enquiries, please email history@awen-wales.com.

OCTOBER 5th - FUN PALACE IN PONTYCYMMER

Keep an eye out for the Fun Palace events being advertised for Saturday October 5th- posters will be appearing throughout the valley.



OPEN DAY

FREE ENTRY

AT THE TABERNACLE CHAPEL

SATURDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2024

10am–4pm Meadow Street, Pontycymer CF32 8HF

Light refreshments • Artefacts • Slide show • Display and Exhibition

MUSIC!

Guest organist GRAHAM HOLCOMBE will be giving a talk and playing between 11.30am and 12.30pm

(This is one of the very few pipe organs remaining in the churches and chapels of South Wales)



A CADW OPEN DOORS PROJECT

Presented by the Tabernacle Chapel and Garw Valley Heritage Society

Unfortunately, due to the age and design of the building, some areas are not wheelchair accessible