

Esgairgeiliog Ceinws

In Pictures And Words, Past And Present



*By
Ray & Julia
Gunn*

Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws

In pictures and words, past and present.

By

Ray & Julia Gunn

An Efel production

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However, we have short listed a few whose contributions extended beyond merely their own immediate family or homes and to whom we owe a special thank you for all their efforts.

Ken Rowlands, for all his stories that raise a chuckle throughout the book. His tireless checking and proof reading of every page as it came off the printer and his inspiration for the idea of the book in its final format.

Blodwen Jones, Ken's sister, for the loan of so many photograph albums, the contents of which crop up so often throughout the book.

Bryn Morgan, who, like Blodwen, came up with an absolute wealth of pictures and also much information about the past in the village and is still coming up with things even now.

Louie and Megan Morris, who, along with Ken and Bryn helped us so much right at the beginning when we really needed it, to get the book started and have kept up their support and encouragement all the way through with their scrap books and albums.

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Thank you all for your continued patience and support over the last five years, without which we doubt if we would have had the fortitude and courage to see it through to the end .

Finally, thank you to David Perrott of Walking Wales magazine who gave his professional encouragement and advice on the editorial and publishing side. It's always comforting to have a friend on the inside when you are trying to learn a profession that was hitherto quite alien to you.

Thank you all and we apologise if we have missed anyone out inadvertently from this long list. Happy reading !

INTRODUCTION

This is not a history book of the sort that we all read at school, full of facts and figures and accurately researched to the last detail.

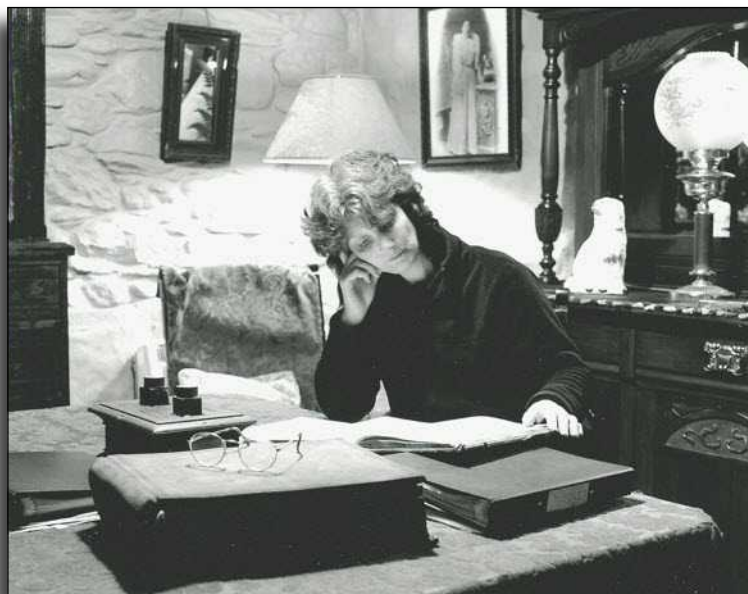
The aim of this book is to record the human side of the village during the twentieth century. It is a collection of pictures, stories and memories set down on paper while they and the people who remember them are still here.

Some of the pictures are notable not just for the people in them but also for some of the scenic details behind the people. For example, the old front porch of Aberglesyrch school, now long gone and all but forgotten. Also, the extra row of bungalows in the Forestry Commission camp, demolished many years ago now.

Likewise, some of the stories and memories may have lost some of their details and pinpoint historical accuracy over the years. However, they are, none the less, still very important for what they tell us about the way life was in the village. This is the essence of what this book is about.

As we move forward into the twenty first century modern technology will soon affect everyone's lives. So much so that we will begin to think that the events of the twentieth century occurred on another world.

Some of the pictures in this book were taken by ourselves. Many, however, are, like the memories etc. only available and shared here due to the generosity and enthusiasm of



Julia studying old ledgers and manuscripts at Yr Efail.

Being complete novices with such contraptions, the almost vertical learning curve from fathoming out how to switch the thing on to publishing a book with almost 180 pages and about 870 photographs more or less simultaneously, certainly warmed the air around our ears for a while !

We hope you enjoy the following pages as much as we enjoyed putting them together. In years to come, future generations may stumble across them and find this glimpse of a past century in their family's history even more fascinating.

Therefore we would like to dedicate this book to our grandchildren.

Ray and Julia Gunn.



Ray in his photographic darkroom at Yr Efail.

all the local people who allowed us to copy and record them. Each picture and story are credited individually with their source.

We would like to express our sincerest thanks to them all for making this book possible.

The idea started in 1998 when Ray appeared on television in the Sunday magazine program called 'Homeland'. He was interviewed about his hobby of creating a photographic archive of the village and it's surrounding area for posterity. He rather rashly mentioned something about putting the pictures together in a book one day. One thing led to another and the idea snowballed and five years on this book is the end result.

Somewhere along the way, we realised we would need a computer to help us compile all the pictures and data.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Esgairgeiliog, Ceinws is a beautiful village situated four miles north of Machynlleth on the old Corris road. It has a population of around 120 people. There were once two chapels and a church here although all three are now closed. The sub post office has also closed but at the time of writing this the village shop and public house, the 'Tafarn Dwynant' are still open for business.

Jumping back a couple of hundred years, to before A.D. 1800, there was very little here that could be identified as a small hamlet even. Just north of the bridge over the river Glesyrch was Esgairgeiliog grist mill and the miller's house, (now Mount Pleasant). A little further up the hill was Esgairgeiliog farm, of which now only the outbuildings remain. South of the bridge, there was only Ceinws farm, Rhiwgreiddyn, Rhiwawel and Yr Efail.

With the arrival of various industries over the succeeding years, the community grew slowly but steadily. An unusual feature however, of all these various new influences was the way the name of the village kept changing. Even the name Esgairgeiliog has had various origins attributed to it. Some say it is a corruption of 'Esgair Cyfeiliog', referring to the ridge above Esgairgeiliog farm, which was reputed to have been the boundary of the ancient kingdom of Cyfeiliog. Such boundaries were apparently marked along ridge tops, (esgair), rather than valley bottoms. Another simpler, more recent explanation was that before the ridge was planted with trees, there was a large patch of bracken on the hillside shaped like a cockerel (ceiliog in Welsh). I'll leave you to decide on that one.

At other times in the nineteenth century, the village has been called 'Pentre Caerbont', when Caerbont was built, 'Pentre Ceinws', 'Pentre Achor' when Achor chapel was built and later, 'Pentre Samaria' when the Methodist chapel was built. These were all popular local names of the time and waxed and waned like such things do. There was one name change, however, that was not popular, did not die out and has been the subject of much debate ever since. When the first sub post office and rural sorting office, (RSO), was due to be opened in the village, there was a problem with what to call it. As there was already another sub office in north Wales called Esgairgeiliog, albeit on Anglesey, it was decided that to avoid confusion with mail sorting, another name would have to be found for the new office. At the time, the proposed new office was to be situated in a property near to Ceinws farm and so the name Ceinws post office and Ceinws RSO was chosen and has been adhered to by the Post Office ever since. So now the village is still called Esgairgeiliog but with a postal address of Ceinws. Although, with RSOs no longer in operation and even the sub post office closed, possibly for good and all mail now sorted by postcode, perhaps we could revert to just the village's proper name.

The name Esgairgeiliog was given a boost in the late nineteenth century when the Corris Railway company used it for their railway station sign in the village.

On the industrial front, the village has had a rich and varied couple of centuries. Prior to 1800 the main industry here was the grist mill, situated where the old Era quarry slate mill now stands. The outlet from the old water wheel is cut into the river bank by the side door of the present building. A few yards further downstream you can still see some of the stonework of the old mill buildings. The millers house is now known as Mount pleasant. Until reinforcing buttresses were applied to it in the 1970's, there was a second arch under Evans bridge for the water leat carrying water to the mill, from the cutting in the rock, still visible just upstream of the bridge.

Soon after 1800 a wool factory was built where the house Minafon now stands, next to the Tafarn Dwynant. By the 1820's, cottages had sprung up close by to house the weavers, carders and other wool workers, Caerbont, Achor cottages, Ty Isaf cottages. Behind the wool factory, there was a place to wash the wool in the river Glesyrch, called a 'pandy'. Henceforth the field has been known as cae pandy.

In 1850, the village was sufficiently well established for a school to be opened in the end house of Achor cottages nearest the bridge, now known as Is-y-Coed.

By the mid 1860's, with the arrival of the railway at Machynlleth, the local woollen trade fell into serious decline. This was due to the now easier importation of cheaper woollen goods mass produced in the big new mills in Lancashire.

However, this decline coincided with the rise in slate quarrying in the area and the weavers and carders in the village were soon replaced by rock drillers and slate splitters. For the next three quarters of a century, the quarries in the area provided the main source of employment.

After the first world war, the slate industry began to grind to a halt. Many of the former slate workers began to find work in the newly formed Forestry Commission. The change from the dusty dirty dangerous conditions underground, to the healthy open air life in the forest must have been a very welcome one for many ex miners. By the time the last quarry in the village closed, in the 1930's, the Forestry Commission had become the new main employer here.

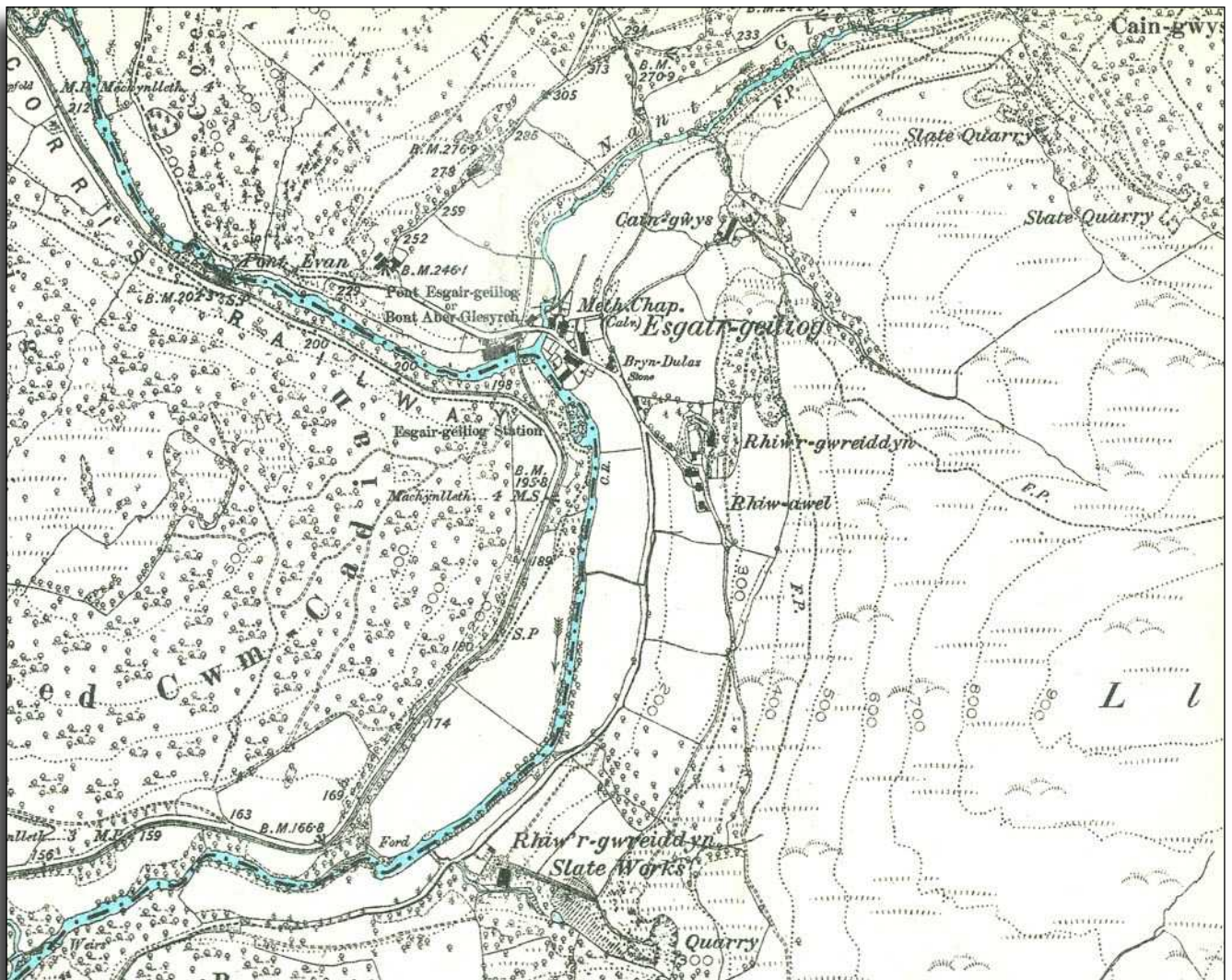
In about 1951, the Forestry Commission took over the complex of timber framed buildings, known locally as the camp and converted them into a model village, providing the Commission with offices, accommodation for their employees and later, a village hall, a snooker room, a church, a sports field and a playground for employees children. It was literally almost a village within the village.

Continuing the boom theme of the post war years, in the late 1940's, the old derelict Era quarry slate mill buildings were converted by an engineering firm into a factory making hospital equipment. Later, after that firm closed, the factory was reopened by another firm, which specialised in refurbishing hospital equipment. That company continued its work there until it too closed in the 1980's. Soon after that, it reopened again, this time occupied by a firm making sofa beds, which, at the time of writing, is still doing so.

By the 1990's, the Forestry Commission had all but petered out as an employer in the village. Their offices there closed, only two of the bungalows were occupied, the village hall and snooker room closed, the church had long since closed and the playing field and playground became overgrown and derelict.

However, a new industry was fast taking over, tourism. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the tourist industry is emerging as a major influence on the earnings and opportunities in the area. This trend of catering for the needs of visitors and tourists as a means of earning a living looks set to continue into the foreseeable future. There are even attempts being made to persuade the Forestry Commission to convert the camp into some kind of visitor centre.

After two centuries of showing its adaptability to change, who knows what the people of this chameleon like village of Esgairgeiliog, Ceinws will have to embrace next.



An Ordnance Survey map of Esgairgeiliog, dated 1891. Reproduced out of scale. From an original map in the authors collection.

The map above is reproduced from an original dating from 1891. Among several points of interest you may notice the absence of the Annibynwyr chapel, Pine View and Aelybryn to name but a few. The road past Rhwgreiddyn quarry follows its original route and Braich Garw cottage is marked beneath the quarry shed, as is the road and ford across the river at that point. Also Era quarry is not shown on this map. See what else you can find different.

ESGAIRGEILIOG, LATE 19 NTH CENTURY.



Esgairgeiliog, about late 1880's.

Picture, M. Coleman's private collection.

Esgairgeiliog, about the late 1880's. Note the Annibynwyr chapel is yet to be built, (in 1895). Also, the old wool factory alongside the Methodist chapel is still there and the roof of Glandwr is lower and faces a different way to today's building. Minafon is yet to be built, on the factory site. To the left of the chapel is the partly built tramway viaduct that was to carry the slate from the Cambria Wynne quarry in front of Dulas cottages. It was left unfinished when slate production was switched to the Era quarry across the valley.



Esgairgeiliog, about 1894.

Picture, the John Thomas collection, courtesy The National Library of Wales.

Esgairgeiliog, about 1894. Some of the trees behind Caerbont in the earlier picture, above, have now gone. The wool factory is still there but the slate waste from the quarry shed has yet to encroach upon the riverbank, below left. The village shop was where the Tafarn Dwynant public bar now stands. Even then, as now, the Aberglesyrch bridge area seemed to be the favourite place for the villagers to meet and put the world to rights.

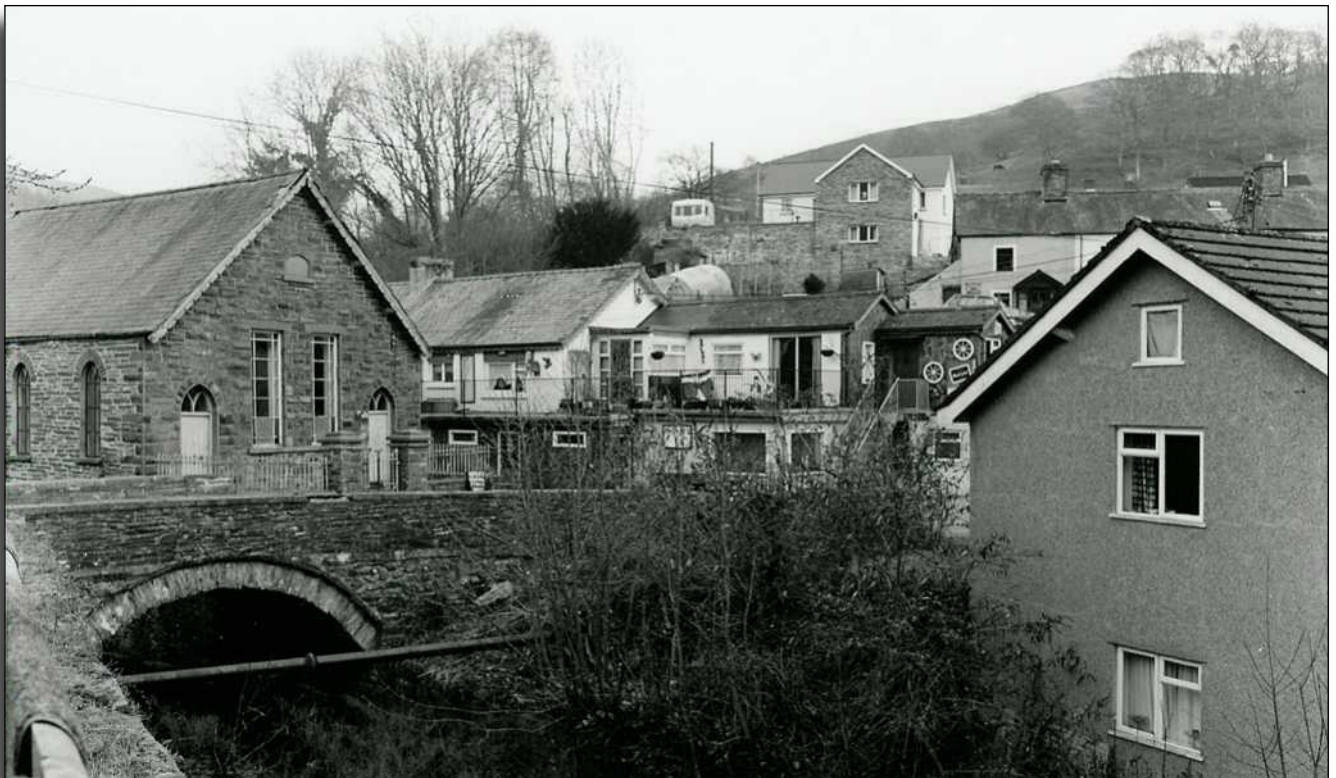
ESGAIRGEILIOG, 1928 & 2003.



Esgairgeiliog, 1928.

Picture by D. S. George. Courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Esgairgeiliog in 1928. The white line down the field in the centre of the picture is the route of a new pipe line carrying water from a reservoir behind Ceinws Bach farm to the public stand taps in the village. One was under Bryndulas, one opposite Achor cottages (Is-y-Coed) and another on the bridge by the Methodist chapel. The Aelybryn council estate has yet to be built (in 1955) but the Annibynwyr chapel is now in place. The slate waste retaining wall behind Dulas cottages is clearly visible.



The bridge, Esgairgeiliog, 2003.

Picture by Ray Gunn

Esgairgeiliog 2003. Two new houses, Aberglesyrch and Penclap and a public house, Tafarn Dwynant, have been built. The pub was built on the foundations of the old cottages and shop mentioned earlier. Also, the front of the Methodist chapel has been altered. In the previous, older pictures, there were three arched windows in the front gable end but now there are just two, with straight lintels across the tops.

PLAS RHIWGREIDDYN.



Plas Rhiwgreiddyn.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

Plas Rhiwgreiddyn, left, was occupied in 1718 by church warden David Evans, his wife Elizabeth and daughter Catherine.

In the 1840's, John and Susanah Peters with their four children, Susanah, Anne, Elizabeth and John. Lived here. David and Elinor Edwards were there with six children, William, Mary, Jane, Elinor, Thomas and Richard in the 1870's. By the 1880's, it was occupied by widow Ann Lewis with her four children James, John, Suzanah and Mary.

Ten years later, Hugh and Jane Jones were living there.



Cptn. David Williams O.B.E.



Mrs Daisy Williams.

Pictures above and right, courtesy Irene Williams.



Tom.



Myfanwy



Octavia .

Captain David Williams and his family moved to Plas Rhiwgreiddyn in January 1931. He had four children, Tom, Myfanwy, Octavia and Irene.

Irene stayed on at the Plas after her parents died, until the end of the century. She now lives with Sali Roberts in a new house built on land that was part of the Rhiwgreiddyn estate, called Patshyn. Sali has lived at the Plas with Irene since 1973 and has taught many people living in Esgairgeiliog who attended Ysgol Bro Dyfi high school in Machynlleth.

Pictured below left are Rosie the dog, Sali and Irene. Pictured right is Patshyn.



Sali Roberts, Irene Williams & Rosie the dog. Picture courtesy Irene Williams.



Patshyn.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

PLAS RHIWGREIDDYN.



Brochure cover by Irene Williams



Irene Williams.



Poppies and foxgloves, by Irene Williams.



Pantperthog and the little train, by Irene Williams.



Old fashioned roses, by Irene Williams.



Following the plough, by Irene Williams.

Below, is an extract from a brochure used by Irene Williams to advertise her work and gallery when she lived at Plas Rhiwgreiddyn :-

**WOODLAND GALLERY
IN THE DULAS VALLEY**

Above the forest village of Ceinws, in the Dulas valley, lies a small attractive art gallery - 'Yr Oriol Fach'. Part of an old country house, it is also the home of Welsh artist, Irene Williams, and where, from May to October, she shows her work.

Irene has painted and exhibited all over Britain and parts of Europe. She particularly likes Switzerland and Bavaria, where she finds the landscape has much in common with her native Wales. Sometimes she paints marine subjects, the small harbours and coves of Anglesey and Cardiganshire., nearer home, Aberdyfi and Borth.

Her work has been seen in many prestigious exhibitions, the National Eisteddfod of Wales, the Laing Exhibition, the Marine Artists, to name but a few. Also, many galleries have shown her paintings, the Commonwealth Institute, the Kaleidoscope and the Mall Galleries in London, Salon D'Artisan, Paris, Sonstraal, Lucerne, Gallery Land, Bavaria and many others. In Wales, the National Library of Wales, Aberyswyth.

When not painting for exhibitions and galleries, she designs greeting cards, prints and works on book illustrations. The cards are sold all over Britain and the prints have been shown at the Frankfurt Book Fair.



Castell-y-Gwynt, Eryri, by Irene Williams.

MEMORIES OF CAPTAIN WILLIAMS. BY KENNETH ROWLANDS.

Near the end of the second world war, when Ken was a young teenager, he ran away to Liverpool to try to join the Merchant Navy. He jumped on a train at Machynlleth and managed to get all the way to Liverpool station without paying his fare or getting caught or turned back. However, almost as soon as he arrived in Lime Street station, he was in the waiting room and suddenly everyone started to dive underneath the tables and counters. Not wishing to draw attention to himself, he did the same, although he was not really sure what was going on. Then, after a short wait, he started to hear the sound of bombs dropping on the city.

The next morning, after surviving the previous night's bombing raid, he walked down to the Merchant Navy recruiting pool



*Kenneth Rowlands.
Picture courtesy Marian Jones.*



*Cptn. David Williams, O.B.E.
Picture courtesy Irene Williams.*

and presented himself to the recruitment officer, a Commander in the Merchant Navy. Ken asked him if he had a vacancy for a cabin boy. The officer asked to see Ken's national insurance card and asked how old he was. 'I'm seventeen,' replied Ken, which he was not. 'Well', said the officer, 'I think you had better go home now, and come back when you are bit older. Then I will be in a position to offer you a job'.

By the time he had walked out of the building, Ken found two policemen waiting for him. They escorted him to the railway station and put him on a train back to Machynlleth. When he arrived at back at Machynlleth, his uncle Evans, from Bryndulas and police Sgt. Davies were waiting for him to take him home.

Later on, Captain Williams, who lived in Plas Rhiwgreiddyn, advised Ken to join the Royal Navy. So Ken wrote off for the necessary papers, passed the entrance exams and was all ready to join. However, his mother refused to sign the consent form. She already had her husband away fighting in the army and did not want to risk losing both him and her only son. By the time Ken was old enough to join up without consent the war was over and his father was home safe.

During Ken's teenage years, he used to look forward to the arrival home on leave of Captain Williams. The Captain had been in the Mer-

chant Navy since he started out on sailing ships. He had taken a shine to Ken and would tell him tales and show him how to perform shipboard tasks. Like how to make a hammock, how to jump into it without falling out the other side and all manner of things to fire a boy's imagination.

The Captain had installed a water powered turbine generator in the river below the Plas, using new D.C. turbines. The remains of the pipe work and the water course to it can still be seen, although the tin shed has now gone. This generator supplied D.C. Electricity to the Plas and to some other houses in the village between the wars. Tom Rowlands, Pictured below, Ken's father, Tom Rowlands blasted the rock in the river bank to make the channel to carry the water to the turbines.

When the Captain was home on leave and Ken saw him going down to the turbine shed to do some maintenance work or clear leaves and rubbish from the intake channel, he would hurry down to 'help' him. This 'help' would invariably include steering the conversation round to the sea, Knowing that once he got the Captain going on that subject the fun would start. Much more fun than a pile of old leaves anyway.

One of Ken's favourite games there was learning how to steer and dock a ship. His job was to man the ships wheel, (in reality, the big wheel that wound the sluice gate up and down at the end of the water intake). The Captain would be on the bridge, (the big tin shed over the turbines). The Captain would shout



Tom Rowlands. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.

PLAS RHIWGREIDDYN.



The Ffrwd. The salmon poachers favourite place. Picture, by Ray Gunn.

orders, like so many degrees to port, or starboard. Ken would respond by spinning the big wheel so many turns left or right. Of course, while they were having great fun, the sluice gate was going up and down like a yo yo. This in turn was causing the turbines to rev up and slow down, along with the voltage going up the line to all the houses connected to it. Some times, when they were performing a particularly tricky manoeuvre, the current would surge so much that light bulbs would start exploding. This was when Mrs Williams up at the Plas would shout ‘that’s it’, and march down to the turbine shed and put the whole crew on a charge, thus ending that days voyage.

During the war, Captain Williams commanded a ship in the north Atlantic, on what were known as the ‘Russian convoys. During this time, he earned an O.B.E. For ‘services in the Atlantic’, and a Brave Conduct Medal for sinking a German U-boat in the same area. Later he fell ill and was taken to a U.S. Military hospital and from there, transported home on the Queen Mary. He died, three years later, in May 1948, the direct result of the war.

In his short retirement, he continued to look after the old turbines. One day, while struggling to clear the intake channel, he slipped and fell in. Luckily, young Ken, as ever, was not far away and managed to pull him out. After the Captain’s death, Edwards Evans of Bryndulas and later, Lewis John Rowlands helped to maintain and keep the turbines going.



The pool above the ffrwd.

Picture, by Ray Gunn.

The pool above the waterfall. The wall on the left is the start of the water course to the old turbine power station, just 50 yards on. It used to supply electricity to the village before the national grid arrived in Esgairgeiliog.

TY GWYN.



Ty Gwyn.

Picture by Julia Gunn..

Ty Gwyn, above, used to be the stables for Plas Rhiwgreiddyn.

It was in this building that Cptn. Williams taught the young Ken Rowlands his hammock drill. He once gave Ken some very heavy binoculars to hold and arranged with Nelson Johnstone's mother that she would hold an envelope up by the gate of Mount Pleasant on the other side of the village, facing the Plas. When Ken looked through the binoculars, he could read the address on the envelope quite clearly. At this time, the empty stables were used for storing logs and had a simple cobbled floor.



Tony & Jenny Clarke, with Samantha & Georgia. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Anthony and Jenny Clarke, left, moved to Ty Gwyn on the 16th Feb 1995. It was here that their two children, Georgia and Samantha were born. To accommodate these new arrivals to the family, they built an extension on to the right hand end of Ty Gwyn.

Jenny is the manageress at the Safeways supermarket at Newtown. Tony works at the Builder Centre at Bow Street, near Aberystwyth.



Anthony & Jenny Clarke on their wedding day. Tony was in the 16/5th Queen's Royal Lancers, as a tank gunner & crewman.

Picture courtesy Anthony Clarke.



Julia Gunn with Eunice and Tony Hicken.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Tony and Eunice Hicken, above, lived at Ty Gwyn from the early 1980's to the mid 1990's. Eunice worked as a receptionist in the Corris doctor's surgery and Tony was an electrician in the area.

RHIWAWEL & CAERBERLLAN.



Rhiwawel, 2002.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Olwen Ifona Jones.
Picture courtesy
Phyllis Jones.



Mr & Mrs Ifor Jones.
Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.

Rhiwawel sits proudly up on the hillside overlooking the village and facing directly up the valley, towards Corris and Cadair Idris. Originally a moderately sized cottage from about the eighteenth century, a substantial extension was added to it in the nineteenth century, built from slate from the local quarry. There were also once further buildings to the right in what is now the garden.

When Julia was a child, in the 1950's and 60's, she remembers Mr & Mrs Ifor Jones living there with their daughter, Olwen Ifona, all pictured above right. It was, at that time, a popular target for local children in the apple scrumping season, as it had an excellent orchard. Mr Jones worked with his brothers in the local coal business at the Felin, Pantperthog.

In the 1980's and 90's it was occupied by Mr & Mrs Tomlinson.



Caerberllan, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn..

Caerberllan, above, is a comfortable four bedroom bungalow, built in the 1970's, on a plot of land that was once a part of the garden of Plas Rhiwgreiddyn.

It was occupied in the 1980's by Eifion and Lynn Jones and their four children.

Throughout most of the 1990's, it was owned by Richard and Audrey Forster, pictured right. Richard, who retired here from Staffordshire, is an ex-policeman and a member of the freemasons lodge at Tywyn, where they now live. While at Caerberllan, he was a familiar figure in the village, often out with their dog, Pero, several times a day and often accompanied by his neighbour, Julia Gunn, with her dog, Ellen. Both he and Audrey were active members of the Corris branch of the Darby and Joan club.



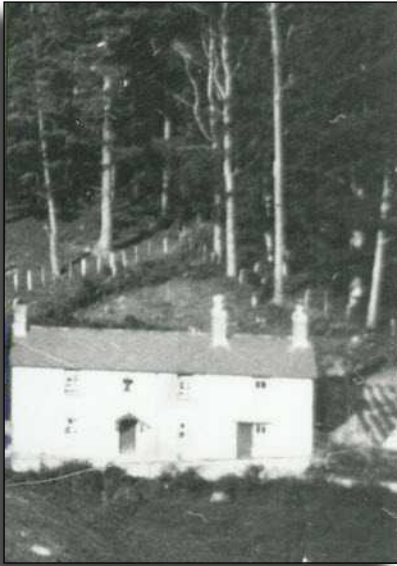
Picture of and courtesy Richard & Audrey Forster.

YR EFAIL.

Yr Efail is one of the oldest houses in Esgairgeiliog, certainly seventeenth century, possibly older. The left hand end was the original, very small cottage. Later, an outbuilding, possibly a cowshed was added and after that, a low, single story blacksmiths forge was tacked on to the end.

At some time, we think in the nineteenth century, the cowshed was converted to human living quarters. The wall between it and the smithy was taken out and rebuilt entirely, with the addition of two chimney flues and fireplaces, one upstairs and one downstairs. After 150 years, that wall is still freestanding with no foundations whatsoever and nothing tying it to it's neighbouring walls, front and back. The smithy, also, has been extended a couple of times, only upwards. The last time, at about the beginning of the twentieth century, was when the whole length of the building was raised to a single roof level, giving eight foot high ceilings throughout the upper floor, a common standard at that time.

In the picture, left, taken about 1928, the smithy chimney is still in evidence and believed to be still in use, although not as a forge. It was



Yr Efail, 1928. Picture by D S George.

taken down when further alterations were made after the second world war. The large potato patch to the right of the house was a common sight in most gardens then, as were the hens in the back garden, (clearer in the original picture). The trees behind the house were cut down in the war and taken to a sawmill in Pennal. The lorry drivers name was Emlyn, Surname not known.

In the 1840's, Evan and Ann Davies lived here with their 5 year old son, Evan. Mr Davies was a blacksmith and he employed 2 apprentices, Evan



Yr Efail, 1990.

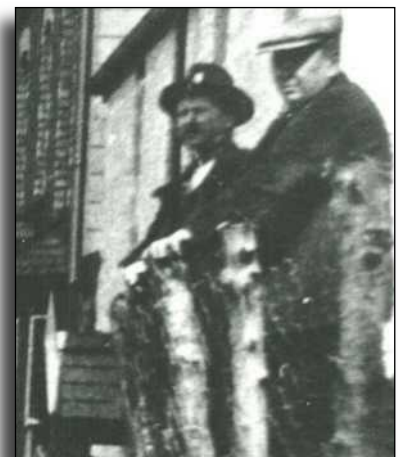
Picture by Ray Gunn.

Jones and Peter Peters. As there were Peters living in Blaenglesyrch at that time, it is quite possible that Peter was from there. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Evan Rowlands was born here. Although Evan died in the early 1990's, his widow, Mion still lives in Corris at the time of writing.



Yr Efail, 1998.

Picture by Ray Gunn..



Picture by D S George.

Between the wars, Mr and Mrs Jarvis and their family came to live in Yr Efail, or Awelon as it was then known. Mr Jarvis traveled to Corris every day where he ran a bakery. He is pictured above, on the left in the front garden with his friend Mr Lloyd, right. In 1940, when the Jarvis's moved to Corris, Joseph Jones and his wife got married and moved into Awelon. Joe, as he was known, worked as a carpenter on the railway and used his skills to good effect, doing a lot of repairs and improvements to the house.

YR EFAIL.

In 1990, Ray and Julia Gunn bought the property, moving from their home in 2 Era Terrace, Esgairgeiliog. They changed the name from Awelon to Yr Efail as a reminder to people of its history. During renovations to the old forge, Ray discovered the foundations and even the ash pit of the forge under the floor, see picture, right. The ashes and cinders of the last fire were still in the ash pit and amongst them were several artifacts that the blacksmith had thrown under the fire in the last days of its use as a forge. They included a horse shoe, a couple of gate latches and some large hand made nails, see picture below. The original floor of the forge had been



Remains of the old forge, Yr Efail, 1990. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Found in the old forge, Yr Efail, 1990. Picture by Ray Gunn.

Ray and Julia undertook all the renovations and building work at Yr Efail entirely by themselves. Because of a serious dry rot problem, this involved digging up all of the floors downstairs and some of the floors upstairs. Stripping all the plaster off the walls and replacing all the old wooden lintels over all the doors and windows with new concrete lintels. When everything remaining had been thoroughly injected and sprayed to the surveyors satisfaction, it was time to start rebuilding again. If the house had been left another year it would have been almost beyond repair. After relaying the floors

of simple bare beaten earth, undulating unevenly where the most wear had occurred. The coal had been stored in the corner to the left of the fire place under the bellows. The pulleys from which the bellows hung are still there today, under the ceiling.

Julia's grandmother, Margaret Rowlands, who lived most of her life in the village from the 1920's to the 1990's, said the forge used to be a meeting place for the men of the village, where they would play cards, discuss the events of the day and even the odd tooth would be pulled out. All by the warmth of the fire.



Inside Yr Efail, 1990.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Traffic passing Yr Efail, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

and the slate slabs, came the plastering, the plumbing, the wiring and some carpentry. Every door frame and door had to be made to measure, because no two openings were the same height or width.

As soon as the inside was habitable, the outside rendering needed stripping off and the walls re pointing and the chimneys repairing. We considered it all well worth while however, as the house has now been saved for a few more generations to enjoy. Once the house was finished we turned our attention to the garden and can now enjoy the fruits of our labours for a few years, hopefully.

YR EFAIL.



Ray Gunn working on Yr Efail 1995.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

Ray Gunn, re pointing the end of the old forge at Yr Efail. The lines of the previous roof levels can be clearly seen, along with the original chimney rising up through the middle.



The inglenook fireplace, Yr Efail 1998.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



The oven and ashpit 1990. Picture by Ray Gunn.

Above left, the inglenook fireplace in Yr Efail. The picture on the right shows the old bread oven and its ash pit underneath, now closed up. When in use, a fire would be lit in the oven. When hot enough, the embers were raked out and thrown into the pit beneath. The food to be cooked was then put in the oven and the door closed, the heat from the bricks would be enough to cook the food. While digging out the old floor, we found several old cooked small bones in the bottom of the ash pit, with a few ashes.

YR EFAIL.



Margaret Rowlands, Pregnant with Kenneth, in 1928, overlooked by Mr Jarvis and Mr Lloyd.

Picture by D S George.

Young Margaret Rowlands was on her way back from taking her husband Tom his lunch at Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, where he worked, when the photographer, Donald George asked her to stop for a minute while he took a photograph. He later gave her a copy, which she kept for nearly seventy years, until she died.



Sharon Jones, pregnant with Cameron Jones.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Exactly seventy years later, Margaret Rowlands' great grand daughter, Sharon Jones, was photographed in the same spot, while pregnant with her son Cameron Jones. Sharon also lives in the village.

YR EFAIL.



Yr Efail, 2002.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

Above, Yr Efail as it looked in 2002. The front porch is, sadly, one of the very few examples left of Joe Jones's craftsmanship in the house. After fifty years, that too is now beginning to deteriorate with the effects of the weather. The ornate fence that ran along the front had to go some years ago, as it was beyond repair.

The authors, pictured right, are very happy now in Esgairgeiliog, where Julia's family have lived since at least the seventeenth century. Ray, pictured below, has been a postman in Machynlleth for nearly twenty years and Julia, below right, has worked at the local Co-Op. For eleven years. Both their children and all their grandchildren also live in the village.



Julia & Ray Gunn, 2000.

Picture, authors collection.



Postman, Ray Gunn, with grandson, Curtis Gunn.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Julia Gunn, right, with Co-Op colleagues, right to left, Dianne Eccles, Gail Galloway and Andrew Wilson..

Picture by Ray Gunn.



A quilt for Sharon.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Julia's first quilt.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Above, the first patchwork quilt made by Julia, was made on her grandmother's old hand sewing machine. Left, a quilt Julia made for her daughter, Sharon. Below are some cushions made as practice pieces.



Dresser made by Ray.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

When Julia's great uncle, Lewis John Rowlands, of Bryndulas, died, he left her a small legacy. Using the money to buy the wood, Ray made her the Welsh dresser pictured above, because she had always wanted one. Another heirloom to pass down through the family.

The china cats were bought for it from Mrs Beaumont, Llwyngwern's shop, 'No 50' at Machynlleth.



Cushions and teddy, by Julia..

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Cushions by Julia.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

PINE VIEW.



Pine View, 1928.

Picture by D S George. Courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Above, Pine View in 1928. The wooden building on the left is the pay office for the Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, also pictured above right, where the quarry workmen would queue up on pay day, before climbing up the steps to receive their pay in the little cubicle in the front doorway. Inside, it is well appointed, with varnished match-board paneling and a parlour type fireplace. At the foot of the steps is a small horse drawn cart making a delivery of some sort. In the back garden can be seen the usual obligatory large vegetable patch.



The old pay office, Pine View, 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Old bill to Pine View, 1940, courtesy S. Dibble. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Elizabeth & Richard Rowlands, 1930's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Kenneth Rowlands, 1940. Picture, courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.

Elizabeth Rowlands kept a shop and post office at Pine View in the 1940's. Sometimes, if she had to go away somewhere, she would leave Richard in charge. However, Richard was not always sure just what she kept there or where. One day, Jimmy Luke, pictured right, a real character in the village, heard that Richard was alone in the shop. He saw Ken Rowlands passing and asked him to run to the shop with an urgent order for six penny worth of sky hooks. Ever one to oblige, Ken did as he was asked. Well, Richard turned the shop upside down looking for these hooks. When Elizabeth came home he was up a step ladder, pulling everything off the top shelves, his white coat filthy and all in disarray. When he told her what he was looking for she went mad. 'There's no such thing, you fool' she screamed. 'Just look at the state of my shop. Wait 'till I get my hands on that Jimmy Luke'. Ken of course, had by this time nipped quickly out the door and scarpered. Something about shooting the messenger !

Richard and Elizabeth Rowlands lived in Pine View between the wars. When Richard was thinking of buying a car, he wanted somewhere safe to keep it. He enlisted the help of Tom Rowlands and John Davis to dig out the bank beside the house and to build a garage. They tipped all the soil they dug out across the road into the corner of the field. When the car arrived, Richard kept it propped up on blocks to stop flats forming on the polished tyres. It only came out once a week to go shopping. Very proud of his car, was Richard.



Jimmy Luke, 1948. Picture courtesy Marion Jones.

PINE VIEW.

Pine View was built at the end of the nineteenth century for a senior official of Rhiwgreiddyn quarry. It is solid and well built with high ceilings and some fine features. By the 1970's though, it had become a little run down and in need of a pick-me-up.

George and Margaret Dibble bought Pine View in about 1980 with some friends. However, the friends soon dropped out and left the Dibbles to enjoy the house alone. Since then, they have been gradually working on it and improving it, as time allowed.



George & Margaret Dibble, in front of Pine View, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



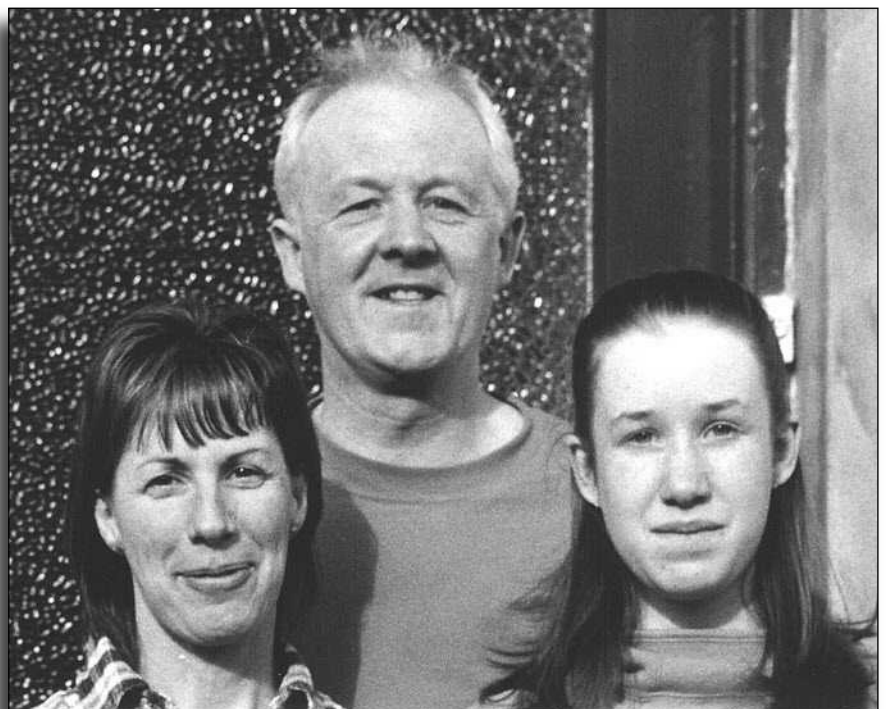
Margaret & George Dibble, outside, with Gordon & Eileen in the middle. 1991. Picture courtesy George Dibble.

In about 1991, the retaining wall next to the garage that Richard Rowlands had built before the war, started to collapse. George and Margaret, along with Margaret's brother-in-law Gordon and his wife, Eileen dismantled it and, re-using the same stone, plus a little more, rebuilt it, during a week's holiday. The trailer, left, was built by Brian Rowlands, the authors brother, who lives in the village.

Sadly, Gordon died about a year after this picture was taken.

By the late 1990's, both George and Margaret were suffering ill health, George especially so and consequently, they now come much less often.

However, George's son Stephen and his wife Jill and daughter Nicola now come regularly and Stephen is also carrying on the renovation work as enthusiastically as his father. Within the next couple of years, hopefully, the house will be finished and fit for several more decades to come.



Jill, Stephen & Nicola Dibble, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Esgairgeiliog, about 1950. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Margaret Rowlands, mid 1950's. Picture, authors collection.

Esgairgeiliog, in about 1950, above and 2000, below. On the left is Margaret Rowlands in the mid 1950's, with, we are told, the first milk bottles to be delivered to the village.

Some minor noticeable differences between these two pictures and the later one below are, the old type phone box, Dulas Cottages have now been raised and altered, the little house on the end of Isycoed, by the footpath has now gone, as has the old bakery at this end of Isycoed. Ty Isaf now has a new roof and the old Era quarry office, later Trefor Jones's shop, on the hill under Mount Pleasant, has long since gone. Just visible, to the right of Margaret's hips, at the bottom of the wall under Bryndulas, is one of the public water taps for the village.



Esgairgeiliog, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

1 BRYNDULAS.



Bryndulas and its gardens, 1928.

Picture by D S George. Courtesy Bryn Morgan.

In the early 1880's, Bryndulas, left, was occupied by David and Elinor Edwards and their four children, William, Jane, Thomas and Richard. He was a joiner and his workshop was the substantial building in the garden to the left and rear of the house. Ten years later, only his widow and daughter Jane were there.

In this later picture, taken in 1928, note the new water pipeline coming down the field and extensive and well tended potato patches. Also the long line of crisp white washing. Must have been a Monday !

Edward Thomas Evans had been a gardener at Pantlludw near Pennal. While working there, he met a maid, Catherine Jane Rowlands. Romance followed and they made plans to marry. Although Edward already owned Achor cottages, (now called Isycoed), he obviously thought Catherine Jane was worth something better, for he bought Bryndulas as their future marital home. They moved into it in the 1920's and lived there until the end of their days. Edward died in 1967 and Catherine died in 1982.

In 1937, when Catherine's father John Rowlands died, her brother, Lewis John Rowlands came to live with them and he also remained there until he died, in 1989.



Bryndulas, late 1950's.

Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

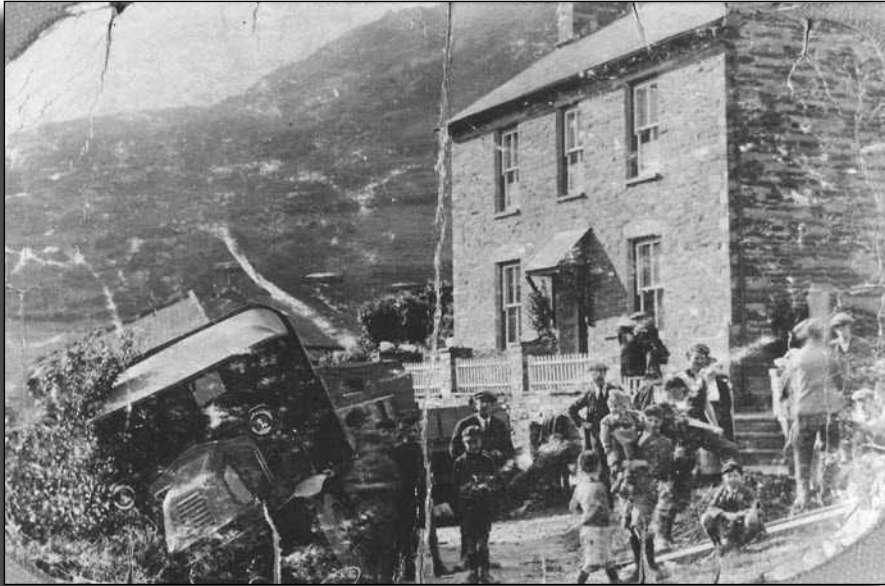


Lewis John Rowlands, 1938 Picture authors collection



Edward & Catherine Jane Evans. 1960's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

1 BRYNDULAS.



In 1936, when the Ministry of Labour were building the training camp by Esgairgeiliog farm, much of the building materials came up from Machynlleth via the old road through the village. One day, one of the lorries ran off the road by Bryndulas, causing a bit of a stir in the community. Well, vehicles were still relatively rare in the village then, never mind heavy lorries. So everybody turned up to see it being pulled back up to the road. The small boy with a cap, next to the lorry is Ken Rowlands.

Accident at Bryndulas, 1936.

Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.

Pictured right, are Kenneth Rowlands and his best friend at the time, Tegwyn Jones, in the early 1940's, by Pine View, with Bryndulas behind them.

Ken thinks they had been playing cowboys and Indians, as he is wearing a holster and, he thinks, a quiver of arrows on his back.

Below, in almost the same spot as the photographer stood to take the picture above, in 1936, but this time, fifty years later, are Kenneth, once more, but now flanked by his two uncles, Richard Jones, left and Lewis John Rowlands, who both lived in the village. These three were a common sight together in the 1980's and were nicknamed 'the last of the summer wine', after the T.V. comedy series about a similar trio in Yorkshire. Lewis John is holding a bundle of sticks in his hands, collected on one of their walks, to light the fire when he goes home. He was always an avid collector of things 'that might be useful one day' and would often enlist the help of the other two to drag them home. He was also a mine of local knowledge about the village and surrounding area. A real character, sadly missed since he died in 1989.



Kenneth Rowlands & Tegwyn Jones. Early 1940's.

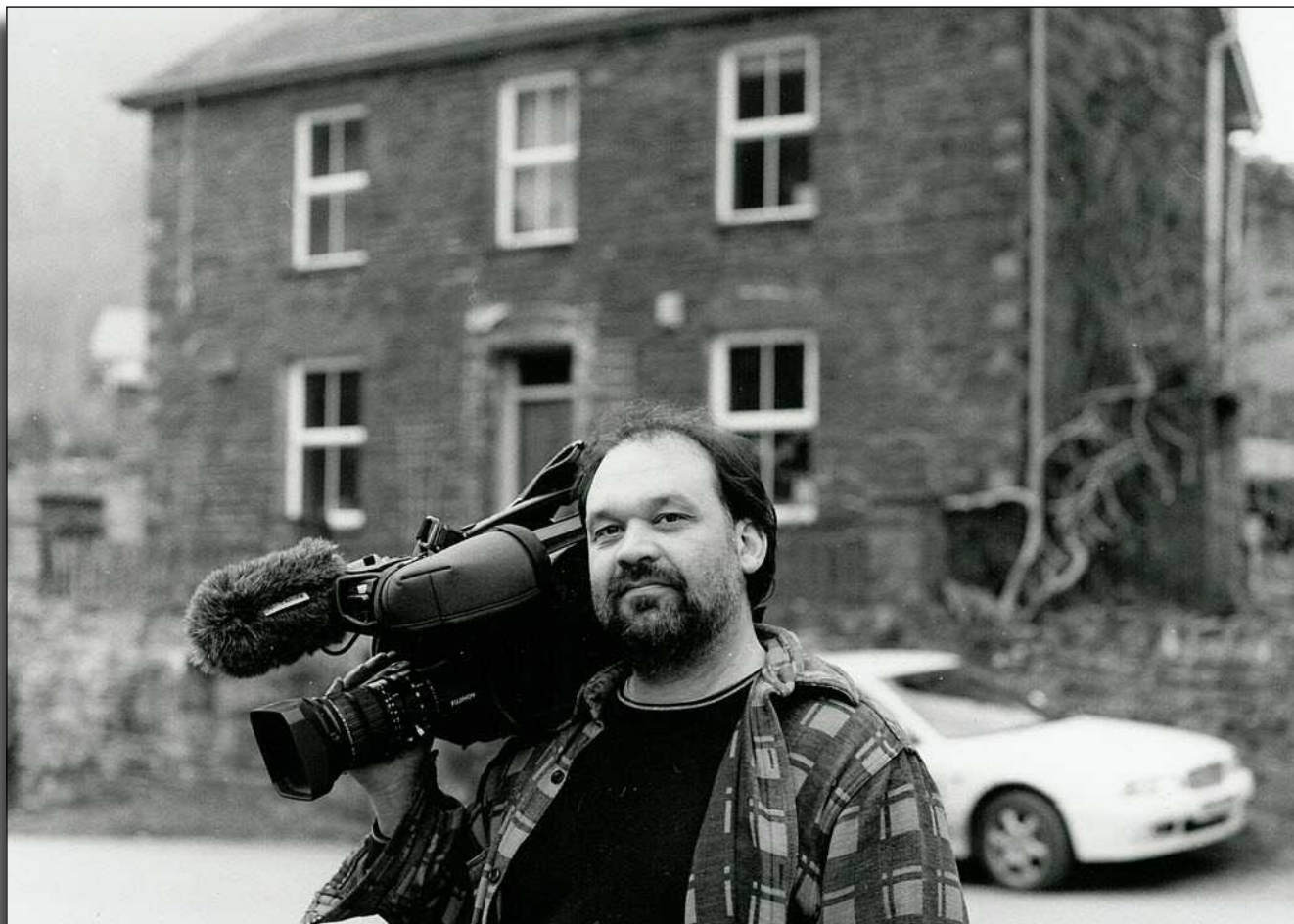
Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Richard Jones, Kenneth Rowlands, Lewis John Rowlands, mid 1980's.

Picture by Blodwen Jones.

1 BRYNDULAS.



Pete Telfer, 2003.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

The current owner of Bryndulas is Pete Telfer, above, who arrived in the late 1990's and looks set to become one of the village's memorable characters. His occupation is also an indicator of the current trend in the area of a drift away from heavy manual trades and occupations as the main source of employment, to jobs more related to tourism, service industries and information technology.

Pete is a television director, producer and cameraman. He has also been a teacher of 'A level' photography and is an accomplished photographer himself, having had literally hundreds of his photographs published in books produced to accompany television series he also happened to direct, produce or film in. Some of his photographs have been bought by the National Library of Wales and by private collectors. He is also a collector of photographs himself and has been asked to lend some of his pictures for various exhibitions.

Born in Bangor, North Wales, Pete was educated in Dyffryn Ardudwy and Harlech and took an Art Foundation course at Bangor College, before studying Fine Art, Painting at Maidstone College of Art.

In 1989 he was a member of the Welsh Snow Sculpture Team, (the first team from Britain), in Finland and remained a member throughout the 1990's, rising to team captain and eventually to team manager.

In his television work, he has been involved in the making of many programmes and series for H.T.V., S.4 C. and BBC Wales. Too many to list them all here but a few you may remember recently were :-

'Homeland', a weekly magazine series, on Sunday mornings, 1998, 1999, (director), for BBC Wales.

'A Welsh Herbal', with Dr David Bellamy, for BBC Wales.

'Mountain', a series of stories about Cadair Idris, (director, camera operator for 3 programmes), for BBC Wales, 2002.

'Sara's Counties of Wales', series presented by Sara Edwards about the 13 old counties of Wales, (director), for BBC Wales, 2003.

Pete, with Richard Gott, of 2 Era Terrace, established 'Pixel Foundry Ltd,' a television production company based in Esgairgeiliog in 2000. So whatever the future holds for the village in this new century, it looks sure to be interesting.



Bryndulas, 2000

Picture by Ray Gunn.

BUSES THROUGH ESGAIRGEILIOG.



Ray Atkins, bus driver, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

The bus service in the Corris valley is one of the best in the whole area. The Machynlleth to Aberllefenni route passes through Esgairgeiliog almost every hour and the Dolgellau to Aberystwyth buses go along the main road almost as often, plus a few to and from Tywyn, via Tallyllyn. The use of the bus stop at the old Esgairgeiliog railway station had to be discontinued a few years ago, due to the danger from ever increasing traffic volumes and speeds on the rather dangerous corner there. This was a shame, as it meant the end of almost 120 years continuous use of the old waiting room by the people of the village. Now, if we want to catch a bus on the main road, it means a walk to Evans bridge. Although, this too has a similarly long history as a pick up point for villagers. Many a summer Sunday School trip has begun its journey with a long wait in the rain at Evans bridge for the charabanc, or, in later years, a warm coach.



Arriva bus service, Esgairgeiliog. 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Ray Gunn in the new bus shelter 2002 Picture by Julia Gunn.

Above, Llinos Jones and Megan Morris board the bus to Machynlleth. Because the service is so good through the village, it is also very well supported by the people in the village. Perhaps not standing room only like it used to be on market days and Saturdays but few buses are completely empty and some are often quite half full.

Pictured left, is Ray Gunn, in the new bus shelter, paid for with money left in a legacy, for the people of the parish, by the late John Beaumont, J.P. of Plas Llwyngwern.

Pictured right, is the first bus service to come through the village in the mid 1990's.

On parade to welcome it were, left to right :- Nan Philips, Dylis Evans, Megan Morris, Alison Morris, Gareth Morris and Judy Nicholls. Louie Morris was also there but behind the camera.

Gareth Morris is Louie and Megan Morris's grandson and was on holiday from Ireland with his Mum and Dad, Alison and Hugh Morris.

Before this day, passengers had to cross over the valley to catch a bus on the main road, so they were very pleased with the new service.



The first bus service through the village. Mid 1990's.

Picture by Louie Morris.

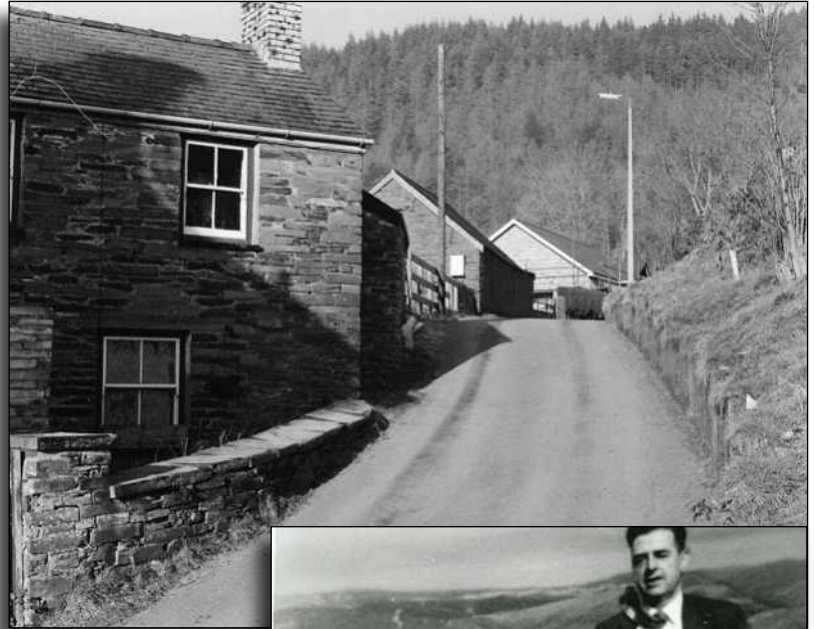
2 BRYNDULAS.



Lena McLennan and her son, Archie.

Lena McLennan, above, and her son Archie, occupied 2 Bryndulas, right, during the 1950's and 60's.

Later on, it was variously occupied by several couples for short periods, including Brian and Heather Rowlands when they first married and also Mark and Sharon Jones in their early married years.



*2 Bryndulas, 2000.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



Lewis John Rowlands. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Behind 2 Bryndulas, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Above, Lewis John Rowlands, with one the Austin mini cars he owned in the early 1960's. Edward Evans, his brother in law can just be seen sitting in the back. Lewis bought another mini after this one, for about £600, new, in the mid 1960's and kept it until his death in 1989, in the garage, below.

The outbuilding on the end of 2 Bryndulas, above, was used at one time to keep a cow, for milk. Now the milk comes in a pickup truck and the building houses a bathroom instead.

Similarly, the old workshop pictured right, was once used by joiner David Edwards in the late nineteenth century, to make, among other things, coffins for the frequent casualties of the harsh industrial climate of the time. Now, in these safer times, coffins are mass produced in factories and it contains only cars. Just two small innocuous looking buildings but what tales they could tell us if they could talk.



The garage, Bryndulas, 2002.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

PENCLAP.



John & Nesta Edwards, 1990's.

Picture courtesy Nesta Edwards.



Ceridwen Jones, with grandchildren, Philip, Yvonne, and Wendy.

Picture courtesy Nesta Edwards.

John and Nesta Edwards, above, used to live in the Forestry Commission Camp, when their children were young. Three of them, Philip, Yvonne and Wendy are pictured above with Nesta's mother, Ceridwen Jones, in their garden, next to the playing field behind the camp. Later on, they moved to live in number 6 Aelybryn, across the village.



View of Esgairgeiliog, May 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Penclap, 2002.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

In the late 1990's, John and Nesta acquired the garden pictured above left, overlooking the village, from Mrs Phena Jones of Gwynfa. Over the next couple of years, they built on it the split-level house pictured above right. Before his retirement, John worked for the Forestry Commission, and for many years Nesta worked at Corris school as a dinner lady.

One of John and Nesta's daughters, Wendy Lynn Edwards, worked at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Aberporth, South Wales, in a Ministry of Defence apprenticeship scheme. In 1985 she met the Princess of Wales, Princess Diana during a Royal visit to the Establishment. Wendy is pictured right, demonstrating one of the exhibits on display for the visit.



Wendy Lynn Edwards with H.R.H. Princess Diana, the Princess of Wales. Picture courtesy Nesta Edwards.

CEINWS BACH.



The oak tree, Aelybryn and the road to Ceinws Bach. Picture by Julia Gunn.

and Talyllyn, Merioneth (Esgairgeiliog side). This meant that neighbouring communities were administered and named separately on each side of the river. Now, of course, both sides are in the same parish and county.

The large oak tree, above, at the bottom of the driveway up to Ceinws Bach has featured in the games and memories of many generations of children growing up in that part of the village.

Ceinws Bach farm, pictured below, is a very old farm, which once also included the tenant small-holding's of Pant Coch (now called Hopley Heights) and Cae-Cwta, (now in ruins).

In the 1780's, it was occupied by Richard and Lydia Edwards and their daughter, Lydia. In the 1840's there were still Edwards's there, now Thomas Edwards and his sons, David, Richard and William. By the 1850's, William was running it with his wife, Ann. Twenty years later, Richard and Eleanor Edwards were in charge.

Many of the houses in the village today, old and new, are built on land that once belonged to Ceinws Bach. So in that respect perhaps, the village name of Ceinws does gain more credibility.

The river Glesyrch below the farm was once the parish boundary between Llanwrin (Ceinws side)



Ceinws Bach, also formerly Ceinws Villa..

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Mary Ann Jones, back and granddaughter Myra, sitting on a pig, Yes, really! Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



John Jones, Ceinws. Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



Alfred,



Richard (Dick),



Stanley.



Maggie Mary,



Gwilym,



Glenys.

Pictures courtesy Blodwen Jones.

In the 1920's, John and Mary Ann Jones, above left, lived at Ceinws Villa, as it was then known. They had six children, Alfred, Richard (Dick), Stanley, Maggie Mary, Gwilym and Glenys. John Jones was a postman in the village and after a nourishing breakfast of OXO would walk up the valley, delivering the mail to all the farms every day. Being on foot meant he did not have to stick to the roads, however, so he made good use of all the network of footpaths crisscrossing the mountainsides. Some were even called postman's paths but all were created to fulfill a legitimate working need. John was also a Deacon in the Annibynwyr chapel in Esgairgeiliog and conducted the singing there.

John's daughter, Maggie Mary, worked in the Eisteddfodd held in Machynlleth in 1937. To save a long walk every day, she cadged a lift with Humphrey Tudor living in Gwynfa, sitting on the handlebars of his bicycle all the way to town.

CEINWS BACH.

In the 1950's and 60's Ceinws Bach was occupied by Miss Breese, pictured right. The author remembers her as a kind and friendly lady and has fond memories of going there as a child to help her to feed the chickens etc.

Huw and Valerie Williams currently farm Ceinws Bach and live there with their three children Hefin, Bethan and Dylan. Hefin now works on the farm with his father. Valerie works in Ysgol Feithrin, Corris. Huw is a councilor on Glantwymyn Community council and is frequently consulted on matters concerning the village. Bethan is a talented young musician and is pictured below, performing in a concert at Corris school in January 2003.

Pictured bottom right, on the hillside above Esgairgeiliog in the late 1970's are Dewi Williams, Huw's father and Huw's Uncle John and brother, Dafydd.



Miss Breese, early 1960's.

Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Bethan Williams, 2003. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Huw & Valerie Williams & children, Dylan, Bethan & Hefin.. 2003. Picture courtesy Valerie Williams.



Huw Williams. 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Left to right :- Dewi Williams, Maescriau, Edward Lloyd, Glandulas Mawr, Huw Williams, Maescriau, Ralph Evans, John Williams, Ty Pella, Dafydd Williams, Maescriau. Late 1970's. Picture courtesy Mrs Elizabeth williams, Maescriau.

AELYBRYN.



Aelybryn, Esgairgeiliog, 1998.

Picture by Ray Gunn..

Aelybryn council estate was built in about 1955 on a field formerly belonging to Ceinws Bach and we are told it cost about £36,000 to build. Glyn Richards, who later married Nora Jones (the shop) was a bricklayer there and two of the labourers were Billy Mitchell and 'Hendry bach'. There are twenty houses, mostly three bedroom, with some two bedroom ones. The majority were bought from the council by sitting tenants in the 1980's and 1990's, with only a few remaining in council ownership by 2003.



Aelybryn, Esgairgeiliog, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Aelybryn, Esgairgeiliog, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Current occupiers of Aelybryn in 2003 :-

- No.1 Donald & Karen Williams Jones.
- No.2 Gwyn Roberts.
- No.3 Martin Blackwell
- No.4 Vivian Williams Jones.
- No.5 Brian & Heather Rowlands.
- No.6 Brian & Jane Vaughan.
- No.7 Mark & Sharon Jones.
- No.8 David & Bethan Jones.
- No.9 Dilwyn Jones.
- No.10 Roger & Elizabeth Sandells.
- No.11 Penelope Andrews.
- No.12 Bryn & Eirwen Morgan.
- No.13 Kenneth & Moira Rowlands.
- No.14 John & Blodwen Jones.
- No.15 Tracy Shortman & Gareth Davies.
- No.16 Patrick & Marie Gunn.
- No.17 Jeremy & Patricia Andrews.
- No.18 Robert John & Phyllis Jones.
- No.19 Llinos Jones.
- No.20 Philip & Valerie Edwards.



Aelybryn, Esgairgeiliog, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

1 AELYBRYN .



Joe Evans, 1960's.



Dorothy Evans, 1960's.



David Evans, 1960's



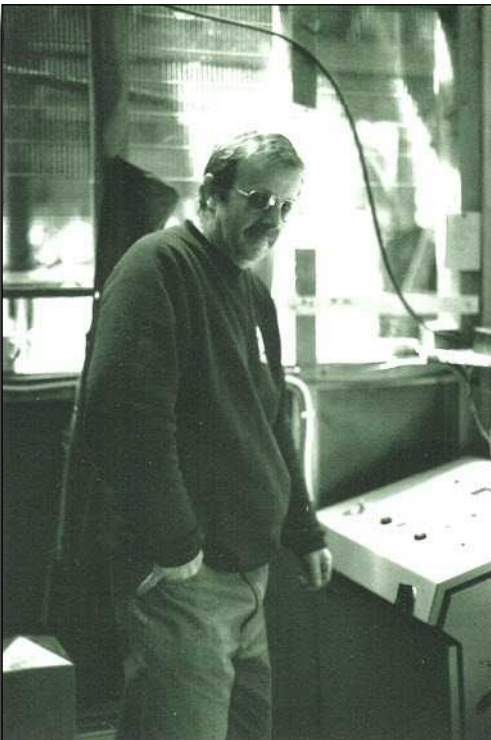
Gerald Groom, 2001.
Picture by Ray Gunn.

Pictured above are Joe and Dorothy Evans who lived in number 1 Aelybryn in the 1960's, with their son David. They also had a lodger, Gerald Groom, who ran a saw-mill in the village. Gerald still lives in the village, at Minafon.

Pictured right are Mr and Mrs William Green who lived there in the 1970's and 1980's.



Mr & Mrs William Green, 1970's, with prize cup for best carrots at Corris Show.
Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.



Donald Williams Jones in the control room of the cliff railway at C.A.T. Pantperthog. 1999.
Picture by Ray Gunn.

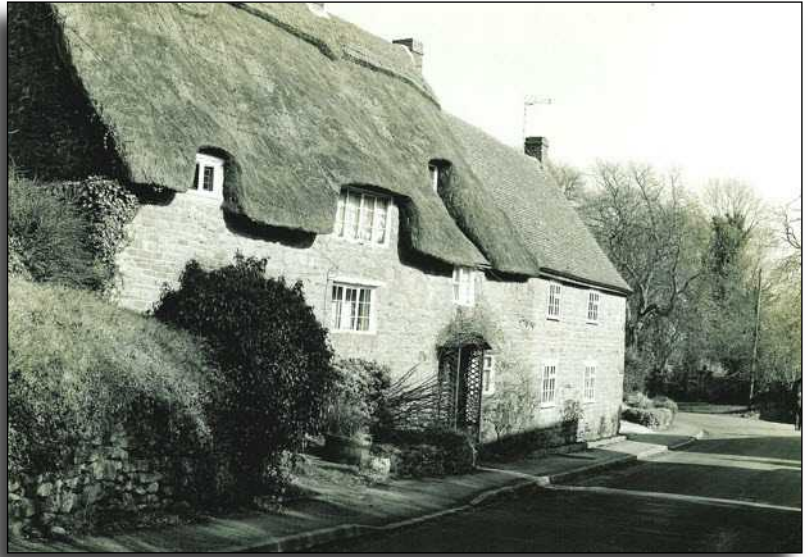


Donald & Karen Williams Jones three children, Emma, 2nd left, Hannah, 2nd from right and John, far right with neighbour Sharon Jones and her two youngest children, Kieran left and Cameron being carried. 2001.
Picture by Ray Gunn.

Pictured above is Donald Williams Jones, working at C.A.T. Pantperthog, in the control room of the cliff railway there in 1999. Before joining C.A.T. Donald was a guard on British Railways, based at Machynlleth. Donald grew up in the village, at 4 Aelybryn. While working on the railway he met Karen when she was working at the station at Shrewsbury. They later married and moved into number 1. Donald and Karen have three children, Emma, Hannah and John, pictured above right with their neighbour, Sharon Jones and two of her three sons, Kieran and Cameron.

2 AELYBRYN.

In 1967 Wallace and Grace Gunn were living with their three teenage sons, Kenneth, Raymond and David in a beautiful stone cottage in a typical farming village in Oxfordshire, on the edge of the Cotswold's. The family had lived in the area for centuries but Wallace and Grace had fallen in love with an area they had been visiting for the previous few years. When Wallace was offered a job at the Manweb electricity power station in Machynlleth they decided to take a chance and moved the whole family to Wales. So on the 2nd September 1967 the Gunns left number 8 Hanwell, pictured far right and headed West into the setting sun and Wales. The picture below was taken on the journey.



6,7 & 8 Hanwell, in Oxfordshire. 2001.

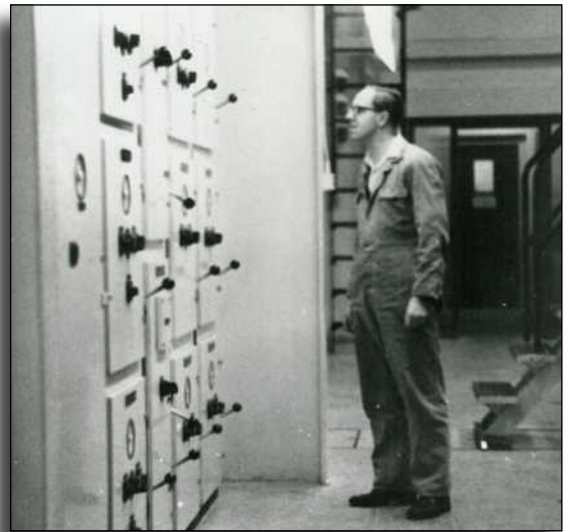
Picture by Ray Gunn.

From left to right they are :-
Wallace, Grace, Kenneth, Raymond and David.



The Gunn family, on route to Wales, 1967.

Picture by Wallace Gunn.



Wallace F. Gunn, 1969. Picture by Wallace Gunn.



Raymond Gunn, 1968.
Picture by Julia Rowlands



Raymond & Julia Gunn, 5-10-68

Wallace enjoyed his work at Manweb as a maintenance electrician and is pictured above right at the C.E.G.B. Dinas power station at Ponterwyd. Their middle son Raymond found work at the engineering firm in the old Era quarry buildings in Esgairgeiliog. Through his job there as a key worker the family were allocated a council house at 2 Aelybryn, Esgairgeiliog, in early 1968, where Ray is pictured, left. Just along the street, at number 13, there lived a family with six children, four of them teenage girls. Of course, the arrival of three new boys of similar age had not gone unnoticed in that house and ways had to be found to arrange an excuse to meet them. The eldest girl Julia was elected to take a Sunday newspaper over on the first weekend as a friendly neighbourly gesture. It worked and to cut a long story short, Raymond Gunn and Julia Rowlands were married later that year on the 5th October 1968.

At about that time Wallace had been transferred to Rheidol power station and the family moved closer to his work. Ironically, 2 Aelybryn was re-allocated to Ellen Jones, Julia's Nain, who moved from Upper Corris to be nearer to her family.



Ellen Jones, 1965. Picture by Julia Gunn.

2 & 3 AELYBRYN .



*Osian & Saffron Roberts, 2002.
Pictures by Julia Gunn.*

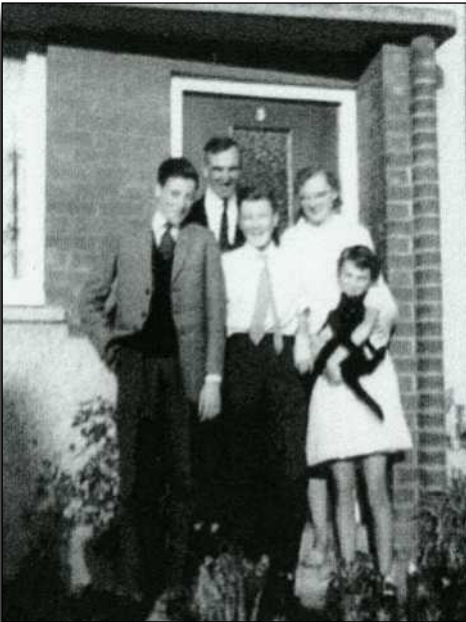
2 Aelybryn is currently occupied by Gwyn Roberts, pictured right with his two children, Osian and Saffron.

Gwyn is an engine driver on the railway at Machynlleth and came to Aelybryn

in the 1990's. He and his children are all keen off road motorcyclists and like to spend their weekends cruising quietly around the woodland roads and mountain tracks in the area, often with Gwyn's friends, Patrick Gunn of 17 Aelybryn and Ralph Beaumont of Plas Llwyngwern. Prior to moving to 2 Aelybryn Gwyn also lived for a while in 2 Bryndulas.



*Gwyn Roberts with his two children, Osian, left & Saffron, right, 2002.
Picture courtesy Gwyn Roberts.*



*Gareth, Ithel, Aled, Megan & Angharad Rowlands, 1962.
Picture courtesy Gareth Rowlands.*

In the early 1960's Ithel and Megan Rowlands lived in 3 Aelybryn with their three children, Gareth, Aled and Angharad. Ithel was a train driver at Machynlleth.

Later on in the 1960's it was occupied by Mr and Mrs Charles Jones and their two daughters, Linda and Rosemary, pictured below. During the time they were remembered at number 3, both Charles and his wife suffered ill health. Charles is pictured below left in the centre of the back row with friends in the village in the early 1970'.

Currently living in number 3 are Martin Blackwell, pictured below right and his son, Michael. Susan, Michael's sister also used to live there but now lives in Aberllefenni.

Martin worked for some years in the factory at Era Works, in the village, making sofa beds. Michael has been working in a boat yard in Borth and also works occasionally with Jeremy Andrews of number 17 Aelybryn on various building jobs locally.



*Susan Field, 1987.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*

Michael Blackwell, 2001. Picture by Julia Gunn.



*Back row, left to right :- Penelope Andrews, Jeremy Andrews, Charles Jones, Mair Cole, Carol Sandells,
Front row :- Elizabeth Cole, Johnny Sandells, Jamie Andrews, David Cole, Cathy Sandells.
Front kneeling, Dilwyn Jones. 1970.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.*



Linda & Rosemary Jones, 1960's. Pictures, authors collection.



*Martin Blackwell, 2002.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

4 & 5 AELYBRYN .



Mabel Williams Jones & Rosie Williams Jones, 1970's. Pictures courtesy Mrs Audrey Beaumont.

Donald Williams Jones, 8 months old. Picture courtesy Karen Williams Jones.



Rosie Williams Jones, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

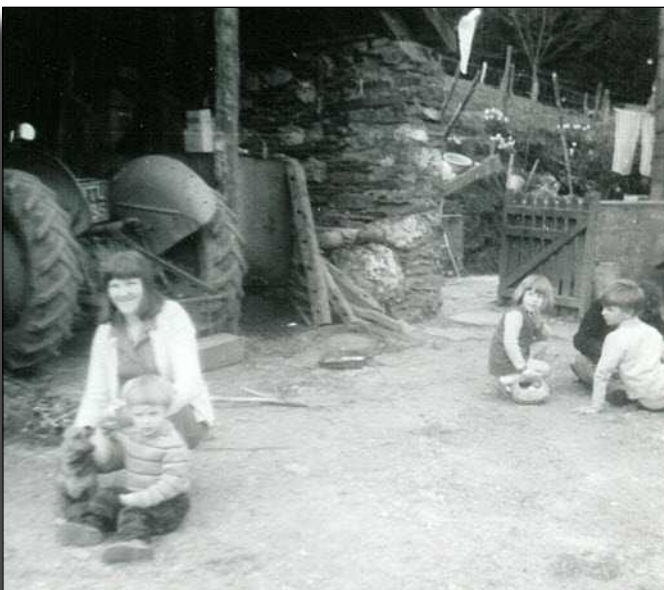


Donald & Vivian Williams Jones, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Pryce and Mabel Williams Jones moved to 4 Aelybryn in the 1950's. They had three children, Vivian, Donald and Rosemary, Known to everyone as Rosie. Pryce was a good violinist and his musical talent seems to have passed down to Donald, as Donald is also a very accomplished organist. Vivian currently works in the bus depot in Machynlleth but is also an experienced heavy goods vehicle driver. He is pictured above left with his brother in Donald's back garden of 1 Aelybryn, where they both enjoy working on their classic cars. In his spare time Vivian is also a keen photographer, with his own darkroom equipment.

Rosie was for many years a popular and familiar figure in the village but recently decided she wanted to experience fresh horizons and is pictured above right on her last day in the village in March 2003.

Cyril and Mair Cole lived in 5 Aelybryn in the 1970's. As a young man Cyril served in the Welsh Guards, where he is pictured below right with a mascot.



Mair Cole, with children, Timothy, left, Elizabeth & David, right, 1970's, at Esgairlwyd, visiting Cyril Cole's family. Picture courtesy William Evans.

Cyril's family were Idwal and Glenys Evans, who farmed at Penlan, Esgairlwyd and Brymair, all farms in the Esgairgeiliog area. Cyril and Mair had three children, Timothy, Elizabeth and David, pictured left. Sadly Cyril and his son David have passed away and Mair, Elizabeth and Timothy have left the village.



Cyril Cole, in the Welsh Guards, Picture courtesy William Evans.

5 AELYBRYN.

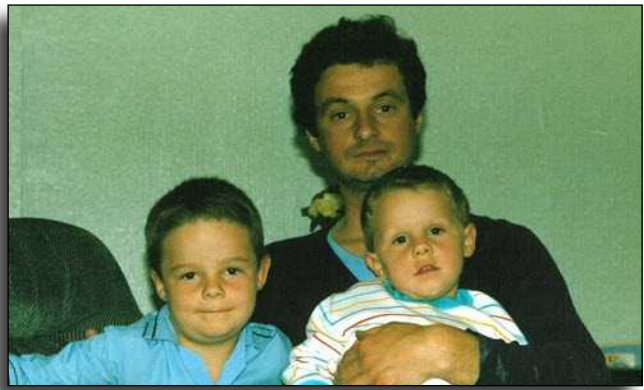


Heather & Brian Rowlands on their wedding day in 1979.
Picture authors collection.

Brian Rowlands grew up in 13 Aelybryn, from the mid 1950's and through the 60's and 70's with his Mum, Dad and five sisters. After marrying Heather Hughes, a local girl from Machynlleth, they lived for a short while in 2 Bryndulas, which belonged then to his great uncle, Lewis John Rowlands of 1 Bryndulas.

Before long however they were allocated the tenancy of 5 Aelybryn, where they have lived ever since.

Brian and Heather have two grown up sons, Adrian and Jonathon living with them at number 5. Adrian is a railway crossing keeper and Jonathon is an



Brian with Adrian & Jonathon. Picture courtesy Brian Rowlands.



Adrian, Jonathon, Brian & Heather Rowlands.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Jonathon Rowlands, Picture courtesy Brian Rowlands.

Brian Rowlands, working
in 2 Era Terrace, 1983.
Picture by Wallace Gunn.



Jonathon & Brian Rowlands, working on Yr Efail, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

apprentice carpenter, like his father. Brian trained as a carpenter when he left school and is a well known and respected craftsman in the area. Jonathon has been a keen footballer since his schooldays and is pictured above left in Holland holding the Severn Valley Fair Play Trophy. Heather works in Dyfi Vision, a T.V. And Hi.Fi. Shop in Machynlleth, run by Dilwyn Jones of number 9 Aelybryn.

6 & 7 AELYBRYN.



Norman Lathem, 1930's.
Picture courtesy Christine Peat.



Glenys Lathem,
Picture courtesy Christine Peat.



Mervyn Jones, 1960's
Picture, authors collection.



Howard Lathem, 1960's.
Picture courtesy Carol Sandells.

Norman and Glenys Lathem lived at number 6 Aelybryn in the 1950's and 60's with their three children, Mervyn, Christine and Howard. Norman had been a postman since the 1930's and is pictured above left delivering mail to the Post Office at Pine View Ceinws in the 1930's. Glenys was also a post woman, taking over the job from Ronwy Pugh of 1 Era Terrace and delivering the mail around the village and surrounding farms. Christine and the author, Julia Gunn (then Rowlands) grew up together as best friends,



Christine Lathem & Julia Rowlands, 1964.
Picture authors collection.

Christine Lathem & Julia Gunn, 1974.
Picture by Ray Gunn.

enjoyed many adventures and whenever Norman took his family for a day out somewhere, Julia would often be invited along too.

One day, the two girls and a few of their friends from the village were playing on the old Rhiwgreiddyn slate tips and decided to play 'house wives'. They strung up a washing line between two trees and hung as many



Christine Peat, 2002.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

of their clothes on it as they could manage without. They then lit a camp fire and pretended to cook a meal and were having a great time, laughing and playing quite innocently. Unknown to them, however, Mrs Pugh fach from 3 Era Terrace had just passed by on her way home from work at Plas Llwyngwern. She saw the smoke rising, caught a glimpse of the washing on the line and heard all the voices and laughing and jumped to the obvious conclusion, there were gypsies on the tips ! She rushed home, telling everyone she met on the way about the arrival of gypsies by the village, causing quite a stir. She and everyone had a good laugh later, though.



John & Myfanwy Lomas 1960's.
Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.



Joyce & Ruth Lomas, mid 1930's.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

John and Myfanwy Lomas lived in retirement at number 7 Aelybryn in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. John had been a head forester in this area for the Forestry Commission. Before the war, John, Myfanwy and their two daughters, Joyce and Ruth lived at Pantperthog Farm and the girls went to Pantperthog school, where they are pictured above right. Later on they moved to Forest Lodge, Pantperthog, before coming to Esgairgeiliog. Myfanwy was one of ten children from Pantperthog Mill and her youngest brother, Bleddyn still lives there at the time of writing, although now in his eighties. She was an active member of the Women's Institute, as were most women of her generation in this area.



Mark & Sharon Jones on their wedding day, 6-6-1987.
Picture courtesy Sharon Jones.


**BRITISH
RED CROSS**

1st AID COMPETITION

Regional Youth

1989

SENIOR INDIVIDUAL WINNER



Sharon Jones's winners plaque, 1989.
Picture courtesy Sharon Jones.



Sharon Jones, authors daughter, 1989 with her plaque.
Picture courtesy Sharon Jones.

Mark and Sharon Jones moved to 7 Aelybryn in the late 1980's from 2 Bryndulas. The previous occupant of number 7 was Mark's great aunt, Myfanwy Lomas, so you could say the tenancy stayed in the family. At that time, Sharon was working at a residential nursing home at Fronfelin Hall, Corris, as a nursing auxiliary. The matron there, Linda Astley was keen to encourage her staff to maintain and improve their nursing skills. Sharon and some of her colleagues joined the Machynlleth branch of the British Red Cross. With Linda's help and training they formed a team and in 1989 the Machynlleth branch represented Powys at the Wales Red Cross First Aid Competition in Swansea. They achieved a double success. Sharon, above right, finished first in the senior individual competition and Sharon together with the rest of the team finished second in the team event. Sharon is still involved with caring for others and now works as a mobile care assistant, providing help for the elderly and disabled in their homes in the community, as pictured below right.

Mark formerly worked in the forestry industry, mostly in harvesting, felling and clearing trees. For several years now, however, he has worked for Royal Mail as a postman in the Machynlleth Delivery Office, a job he thoroughly enjoys. He is pictured below left in his uniform at home in number 7.



Mark & Sharon Jones with their children, Kieran, Cameron & Connor, 2002.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

Mark and Sharon now have three sons, Connor, Kieran and Cameran, pictured above outside Sharon's parent's house, Yr Efail. As a keen fisherman, Mark has already started taking the older ones on fishing expeditions to local rivers and lakes.



Mark Jones, postman, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Sharon Jones, care assistant, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

8 AELYBRYN .



Annie Jones, about 1951.

Picture author's collection.

Richard and Annie Jones were another of the first batch of tenants to move into the new council houses at Aelybryn in 1955/6. They were both local people from the village. Richard, or Dick as he was known to everyone had grown up in Ceinws Bach, or Ceinws Villa as it was then called. He was a very keen gardener and regularly entered his flowers and vegetables in the Corris Show. Dick had worked for the Forestry Commission more or less since leaving the Royal Air Force after the war. He had known Annie since they were teenagers in the 1920's and they



Richard (Dick) & Annie Jones, 1980's.

Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

had a lot of fun together with the other youngsters in the village, often all going for a spin together on the boys motorbikes, what would now be regarded as vintage machines. Annie, however, married Llew Humphreys and had a lovely daughter, Nancy. When, as mentioned later on page 60, Llew and Nancy contracted tuberculosis and died, Annie moved to live with her father Hugh Edwards in 2 Caerbont, looking after him until he died in his eighties in 1950. After this period of bad luck and great sadness, Dick, still in the village, was around to help and support an old friend. Later on when the new houses were built they started a new life together in number 8 as husband and wife. They lived there happily for the remainder of their lives but have now, sadly, both passed away.

The following tale of the carriers cart was told by Annie to her great niece Julia Gunn.

In the early part of this century, during and just after the first world war, personal transport for ordinary people was a simple affair. You walked. Alternatively, if good fortune shone upon you somebody would offer you a lift.

Around this time Annie Edwards as she was then known was a young teenager living with her aunt Margaret and uncle Owen Owen at Hafotty, Pantperthog. This was a small farm about a mile and a half up the valley behind Pantperthog village. She had been sent to town one day to do some shopping. This entailed walking the mile and a half down the track to the main road at Pantperthog and then three miles into town. The main road was then also an un tarred gravel road.

By the time she had arrived in Machynlleth, done the shopping and was ready to start for home again it was late afternoon and she was getting a little tired. You can imagine then, what a joy and relief it was for her as she headed for the Dyfi bridge to be offered a lift to Pantperthog on the passing carrier's cart. Now the carrier's cart was the then equivalent to today's private parcel delivery van. On this day the cart was well laden with goods and parcels and crates of chickens etc for the people and shopkeepers of Corris. The only space left for Annie to sit was on the tailboard at the back.

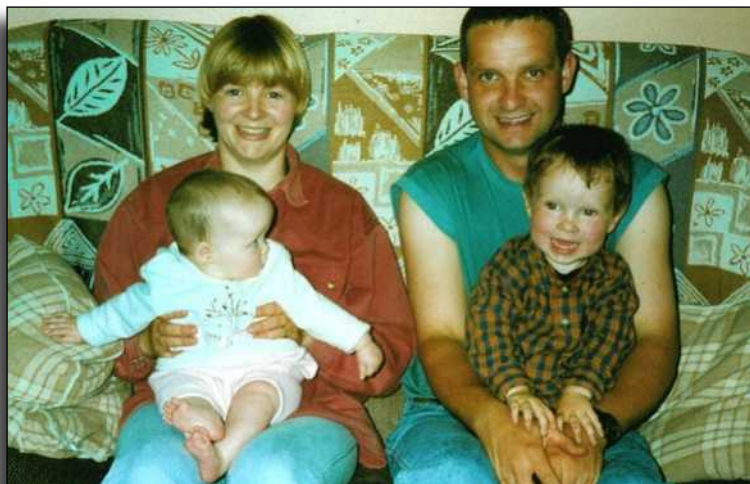
Now the driver of the cart as Annie recalled was a kindly, jovial sort of chap, much given to breaking into song to pass the time as the horse slowly pulled the heavy cart up the valley. He was also much given to sampling the various ales in the many pubs in the town and Annie noted that he seemed to have sampled more than a few that day. However, all went well for a while, until Annie couldn't help noticing that every now and then the driver would suddenly stand up for a while and appear to be staring straight ahead at something in the distance, while still, nonetheless, singing lustily the lines of some hymn or other. Then just as suddenly he would sit down again, only to repeat the strange behaviour again a little while later.

After witnessing this several times, Annie determined to make her way forward over all the crates and boxes in time to enquire what he was doing the next time it happened. Sure enough, just as she was almost to the front of the cart, up he rose and she stretched out her hand, about to tap him on the shoulder.

Seconds later, the horrified young girl was scurrying back towards the tailboard, praying to the Lord that the man had not noticed her behind him. Meanwhile, the driver, quite unaware of this continued to relieve himself over the horse's backside, while feeling that he really ought to have drunk a bit less that day.

Animal rights were not such an issue then !

8 & 9 AELYBRYN .



Bethan & David Jones, with Anna & Ryan, late 1990's.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Bethan Jones with Anna & Ryan, 2001.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

Bethan and David Jones, above, have lived in 8 Aelybryn since the early 1990's, taking it over when David's great aunt and uncle, Annie and Dick Jones died. They have two children, Ryan and Anna, pictured above. David, who grew up in 14 Aelybryn works with his neighbour Roger Sandells, for a civil engineering firm. Prior to that he was a motor mechanic at Station Garage, Machynlleth. Bethan worked with horses when they were first married but now works in Maengwyn Cafe in Machynlleth.



John & Joan Jones on their wedding day,
with Dennis Lake, right
Picture courtesy Carol Sandells.



Carol & Dilwyn, with Joan & baby Kathy.
Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Barry & Carol Sandells, 1990's.
Picture courtesy Carol Sandells.

John and Joan Jones, pictured left, lived at 9 Aelybryn from the 1950's with their two children, Carol and Dilwyn, pictured above centre. Carol married the boy next door, Barry Sandells, pictured above right and now lives in Corris. John was a lorry driver and Joan worked in a clothing factory in Machynlleth with one of her best friends, Moira Rowlands of 13 Aelybryn, (the author's mother). Sadly, John and Joan are no longer with us but Dilwyn still lives in number 9. He runs his own business in Machynlleth, 'Dovey Vision', and is a specialist in the



Dilwyn Jones. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Dilwyn Jones, T.V. repair man. Picture by Julia Gunn.

installation, sale and repair of T.V. Video and satellite equipment. In his spare time he also creates video records of clients weddings etc, including the author's daughter, Sharon Gunn.

10 AELYBRYN .



Phyllis Sandells. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Roger Sandells, 1960's. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Penny Sandells, 1960's. Picture courtesy Carol Sandells

In the 1960's, Phyllis Sandells lived in number 10 Aelybryn with her four children, Barry, Penelope, Roger and Penny.

Phyllis was a very popular and much respected woman on the estate, with her friendly and outgoing nature, always quick to give her help and encouragement to anyone in need in the close village community.

Her eldest son, Barry married Carol Jones, the girl next door, pictured on the previous page and now lives in Corris.

Penelope lives opposite in number 11 (see next page).

Roger, pictured left, took over the house when his mother died and still lives in number 10 with his wife Elizabeth.

Penny lives in Aberystwyth with his wife and family.

Roger and Elizabeth Sandells brought up two children in number 10, Dawn and Mark. Dawn, pictured below, has always been very musical from a very young age and is currently carving out a career as a singer and songwriter, being quite successful so far in America.

Mark, pictured below left, was a keen



Elizabeth & Roger Sandells on their wedding day, 5 March 1977. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.

footballer at school and is shown holding two Glyn Gomer trophies, one for his Machynlleth team and the other for himself as man of the match. Mark is currently serving in the Royal Air Force Police.

Roger works for a civil engineering firm on various contracts around Wales. He is a very keen gardener and frequently wins prizes for his flowers and vegetables at the Corris and District Show.

Elizabeth nurses at the Bro Dyfi Hospital in Machynlleth.



Dawn Sandells, 1980's. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Mark Sandells, 1980's. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Mark Sandells, Royal Air Force Police. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.



Dawn Sandells. Picture courtesy Elizabeth Sandells.

11 AELYBRYN .



Christopher & Penelope Andrews on their wedding day, 18 Sept 1966.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



Phyllis Sandells,
penelope's mother.
Picture courtesy
Penelope Andrews.

Penelope Andrews has lived in Aelybryn since the early 1960's, when she came with her family to number 10.

When she married Christopher Andrews, pictured far left, on 18th September 1966, they were lucky to be offered the tenancy of number 11, opposite Penelope's home, where they have lived ever since.

They had three children, Jamie, Jeremy and Victoria, known to everyone as Vicky, all pictured below left.

Penelope and Chris's house was always known as an open friendly house, where there was always a cup of coffee and a cake for any visitors.

Jeremy grew up to be a painter and decorator and is now also much in demand locally as a builder and lives in 17 Aelybryn.

Vicky joined the army and for six and a half



Jamie & Jeremy Andrews, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



Vicky Andrews, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



Penelope & Christopher Andrews.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



Jamie Andrews, mid 1980's.
Picture courtesy P. Andrews.



Jeremy Andrews, local builder, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Vicky Andrews, W.R.A.C..
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



Christopher Andrews, at work for the water board.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



Penelope Andrews, at work in the Craft Centre, Corris.
Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.

years was a lance corporal physical training instructor, and is pictured above centre.

Penelope works seasonally in the restaurant at the Corris Craft Centre and is pictured there, left.

Christopher spent most of his working life working for the water board and is pictured far left at one of their installations.

Sadly, Christopher and Jamie are no longer with us.

Penelope still keeps very active in her garden and is surrounded by her family, including two grandchildren, Iana and Adam at number 17.

12 AELYBRYN .



Mary Morgan pouring H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh a cup of tea at the C.A.T. 1970's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Bryn Morgan receiving his retirement certificate, 1980's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

nearby Fronfelen Hall, where she is pictured, right, with Bryn and Eirwen, who walked to visit her every day. Also in the picture, second from right, is her older son, Tom on a visit from his home in Australia.

Sadly Mary passed away in the mid 1990's, while at Fronfelen Hall. A real character gone from the village but unforgettable to those who knew her.

Mary Morgan moved up to 12 Aelybryn from the old cottages by the Methodist chapel with the first batch of tenants to be allocated the new houses in 1956. With her went her two younger children, Bryn and Eirwen.

Mary was a very hard working woman. She had various jobs over the years, including driving a school car, taking local children to school from remote areas not served by the main bus service. She worked in the Wynnstay Hotel in Machynlleth for many years. She also rented a field from Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, next to the tips, by the river. Here Mary raised geese and turkeys for sale at Christmas and also kept hens there for eggs to sell around the area. Mary was involved with the Centre for Alternative Technology in Pantperthog and is pictured above left, pouring a cup of tea for H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh when he visited the Centre in the 1970's.

Right up until her eighties, Mary would regularly be seen out gathering firewood from the roadsides and supervising egg and newspaper deliveries in the village with the help of Bryn and Eirwen. Later, however, as her health failed, Mary went to stay in the nursing home at



Mary Morgan, centre, with her three children, Bryn, left, Tom and Eirwen, 1990's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Bryn Morgan, 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn..



The Corris Railway train, 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.

long time member, Bryn was always keen to get stuck in with the often hard physical work of rebuilding the line. Now in his seventies and with failing health, Bryn still attends working weekends and does what he can.

Eirwen too is now suffering ill health and is seldom seen out in the village.

We would like to include a special thank you here to Bryn for all his help and encouragement and making available many scores of photographs for us to choose from.

Bryn Morgan is another child of the village, well known to everyone who has lived in the area for any length of time. Bryn worked for the Forestry Commission for most of his life, retiring from there in the late 1980's. His work there involved repairing and maintaining the many miles of fencing around the Dyfi forest.

Since his retirement, Bryn has kept himself very busy. Although he no longer has the field or the hens etc, he became more involved in his work with the Corris Railway Society. A

13 AELYBRYN .



13 Aelybryn, 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.

When Ken and Moira Rowlands were informed that they were to be allocated one of the new houses being built on the hillside below Ceinws Bach farm in 1955 it caused much excitement in the family. Nowadays, with such universally high standards of living in all levels of housing, both private and public, it is hard to imagine, or remember if you are old enough, how different these houses were to many of the older cottages at that time. Ken and Moira were moving from a cramped two up, two down, cold stone house with outside toilet, outside washing facilities, cold slab floors laid straight on the bare earth, damp patches in the walls and a very limited electrical supply. They were moving into a brand new spacious house with three bedrooms, a toilet upstairs, a bathroom, with not just cold but even hot water all plumbed in. Downstairs there was not just a living room but also a front parlour too, plus a

kitchen with, again, cold and hot water over the stone sink. There was even a separate room in the house to do the washing, although the water had to be carried from the kitchen to this.

In addition, the whole house was bone dry, with proper floors and dry cavity walls. Outside were large gardens plenty of open spaces and even a decent view.

Being among the first batch of tenants they had some limited choice of which house they would prefer to have. Moira had often enjoyed taking her children to pick mushrooms in a particular part of the field the estate was being built in and asked for number 13 because it was on exactly that spot. When she was granted her wish it was the icing on the cake and they just couldn't wait for the day they were handed the keys to move in from Achor cottages.



Ken & Moira Rowlands, 1965.
Picture courtesy Moira Rowlands.



Ken Rowlands, Crosville bus driver, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.

Ken and Moira are still there almost fifty years on. For many of those years Ken worked for the Crosville bus company, first as a conductor and later as a bus driver. The work was hectic in those days. With fewer people owning cars, the buses were often packed, with many people having to stand in the aisles and the luggage racks jammed with shopping bags. Even at night, many people used the buses to go to town and the last bus home was often nearly full, with some people still full of high spirits and some quietly sleeping it off in the corner.

Moira worked for many years in the clothing factory in Machynlleth, when it was called Cardwells and later Walters. In between working there she brought up six children, three of whom, Julia, Jennifer and Alison, later joined her at the sewing factory when they grew up and left school.

Julia married the boy at the end of the street, Raymond Gunn. They had two children, Sharon and Patrick and after traveling around for



Sian, Kenneth, Alison, Julia, Jennifer, Ann, Moira and Brian Rowlands, at Brian's wedding reception, 1979.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Rowlands.

13 AELYBRYN .

fourteen years in the Royal Air Force they came back to settle in the village. Sharon and Patrick are also now married and both live in Aelybryn.



Kenneth Duncan Evans, 1968., Picture, author's collection.

Jennifer married David Evans and they live in Llanfachreth. Jennifer helps run a nursing home in Dolgellau. Her son, Kenneth Duncan was born while she still lived at number 13 and is pictured above left in 1968 and above centre when he later joined the Welsh Guards. She also had three daughters, Sara, Julie and Laura.



Kenneth Duncan Evans, late 1980's. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.

Alison married Emyr Jones from Corris and they lived in Aberllefenni for many years. She has two children, Louise and Ryan and now lives in Machynlleth.

Ann became a policewoman and is pictured above right as a cadet in Colwyn Bay during a visit by H.R.H. Prince Philip in 1971. Ann married a policeman, Barry Whitley and they had two children, Kelly and John and live in Wrexham.



Police cadet Ann Rowlands, lower left, Assistant Chief Constable, upper left, H.R.H Prince Philip upper right, 23 July 1971. N. Wales police H.Q. Colwyn Bay. Picture courtesy N.. Wales Police.

Brian became a carpenter and married Heather Hughes from Machynlleth. They had two children, Adrian and Jonathon, who still live at home with them in 5 Aelybryn.

Sian went to stay with her sister Ann in Llandudno as a teenager in the early 1970's, where she met and married Nigel Williams. They settled in Conwy where they had two children, Vincent and Lana. Sian was for many years a registered child minder working from home.

Ken and Moira are very fortunate to have two of their children, Julia and Brian, four grandchildren, Sharon, Patrick, Adrian and Jonathon and six great grandchildren, Thomas, Louise, Connor, Curtis, Kieran and Cameron all living in the village. All except Julia live in Aelybryn and see each other most days.

Both Ken and Moira retired from work through ill health in the 1980's but although their health is still

deteriorating they remain in good spirits partly due to the sustained support and presence of all their family both in the village and away.

Moira was born in Upper Corris, one of seven children and met Kenneth while at a football match in Machynlleth with her brother Rhufon. A few years ago, she wrote a book about her life, growing up in the 1930's and 1940's which makes fascinating reading, but which is yet to be published. Moira is a real pillar of the family, who could always be relied upon in a crisis.

Ken was born in Esgairgeiliog, in Caerbont and without his extensive memories and knowledge of the village over the last 75 years this book would not have been started.

He is definitely one of what is called locally 'plant-y-pentre' or children of the village and a character too !



Kenneth Rowlands, with his daughter, Julia Gunn, the author and her six grandchildren, Ken's great grandchildren, 2001. Children left to right, Curtis Gunn, Connor Jones, Cameron Jones (on Julia's knee), Thomas Gunn, Louise Gunn, Kieran Jones. All live in Esgairgeiliog. Picture by Sharon Jones.

14 & 15 AELYBRYN .



Mrs Grace Lawrence, 1960's. Mrs Lawrence lived in 14 Aelybryn from 1955 until she passed away in the mid 1970's. A very devout Christian, she led the Sunday school in the church in the forestry camp and at home. There was always a welcome in her home for the children of the village. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



John & Blodwen Jones with grandchildren, Ryan & Anna, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



John Jones delivering coal in Aelybryn, 1990's. Picture courtesy John Jones.



David & Carol Jones, 1990's. Picture authors collection.

John and Blodwen Jones moved from number 19 Aelybryn to Number 14 in the mid 1970's, when the previous occupant, Mrs Grace Lawrence died. John worked with his father in the coal delivery business at the mill in Pantperthog until he retired recently. They have two children Carol and David, Pictured left. Carol is now a teacher in Stafford and is married to Chris Curry. They have one child called Ben. David now lives across the road in number 8 and is married to Bethan and have two children, Ryan and Anna. Blodwen did home hairdressing for many years but is now retired. Her brother Kenneth lives next door in number 13. John's parents used to live next door in 15 Aelybryn .

Robert and Ceridwen Jones moved to 15 Aelybryn in 1956 from Gwynfryn in Pantperthog, when the house was brand new. They had four children, John, Nesta, Phyllis and Delyth. John now lives in number 14, Phyllis lives in number 18 and until recently Nesta lived in number 6, but has now moved round the corner to Penclap. Before retiring, Robin, as he was known, worked in the family coal business with his brothers and son, John. Ceridwen was a very active member of the Women's Institute for many years.

Both Robin and Ceridwen have now passed away but their family maintains a strong presence here, with three of their children, three of their grandchildren and eight of their many great grandchildren still living in Esgairgeiliog.



Robert & Ceridwen Jones 17 Nov 1934. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.



Ceridwen & Robert Jones, 1980's.

Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

15 AELYBRYN .



Ceridwen Jones, centre & two of her daughters, Phyllis & Nesta, 1957. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.



John Gwyndaf Jones & his sister Delyth Jones, with John's Ford car. Picture courtesy Nesta Jones.



Patty Ann & William Evans, left & centre with William's parents, Idwal & Glenys Evans and William & Patty Ann's two children, Peter & Richard. Picture courtesy William Evans.

Above left and right are Ceridwen Jones, sitting, with her daughters Phyllis, left and Nesta, her son John and younger daughter Delyth, right, all of 15 Aelybryn.

After Robin and Ceridwen Jones, the next tenants in 15 Aelybryn were William and Patty Ann Evans, pictured left with their two children, Peter and Richard and William's parents, Idwal and Glenys Evans.

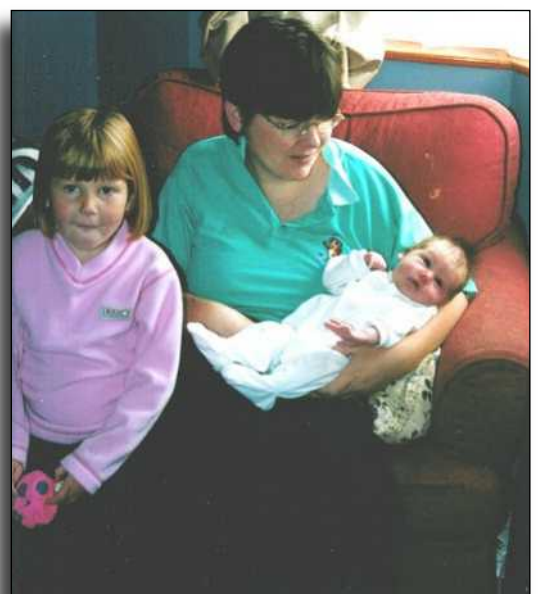
William is a local lad, having grown up in Esgairlwyd and Brynmair, farms in and around Esgairgeiliog. He is still involved in farming, with sheep at Brynmair and other places around the Dulas valley. A skilled bricklayer, William won the silver trowel award at Newtown Technical College during his training in the 1970's. Nowadays he is a lecturer at the same college, passing on the skills he learned there.

The current tenants of number 15 are Gareth Davies and Tracy Shortman, pictured right.

Gareth has been working in the furniture factory in Era Works in the village. He is an avid computer fan and often makes them up from old and new parts for himself and friends. He is also very musical and was recently a member of a local pop music band. Tracy also once worked in the factory in the village, with her late mother, Brenda Shortman, when they lived at Nant-y-Nele in Llanwrin in the mid 1990's. They have two children, Brenda and Joanna.



Gareth Davies, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Tracy Shortman with Tracy & Gareth's two children, Brenda & Joanna. Picture by Julia Gunn.



*Patrick & Marie Gunn on their wedding day, 15-July-1995.
Picture by Ray Gunn..*



*Patrick & Marie Gunn with their three children, Curtis, Louise & Thomas, 2002.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

Patrick and Marie Gunn moved to 16 Aelybryn in 1995. Marie had come to live in the village a year or so before from Birmingham. Patrick is the authors son and has lived in Esgairgeiliog since 1982. They are pictured above left on their wedding day, 15 July 1995. They are both qualified chefs and had their wedding reception at the Pen y Bont hotel, Tallyllyn, where Patrick learned his trade. Above right, they now have three lovely children, Curtis, Louise and Thomas.

Patrick currently works as a chef at the White Lion hotel in Machynlleth and Marie, below right in her uniform, supervises the new fast food outlet in the Spar supermarket in Machynlleth.

Patrick is a competent D.I.Y. Enthusiast. He enjoys wood turning and carving and will tackle moderately difficult electrical and plumbing work. He has also been well known for several years on the local C.B. Radio network. His main hobby though is off road motorcycling, for which he builds his own bikes, often literally from a basket of bits. He likes the challenge of rebuilding and restoring old and classic trail bikes to full working order. On fine weekends, Pat and a small group of like minded local enthusiasts travel to privately owned venues which cater for this enjoyable pastime, riding (not racing) along especially made woodland paths and mountain tracks.

Marie, on the other hand, likes her gardening and trading plants with family and friends in the village and with her Mother, who has a large garden where she lives in Furnace, near Machynlleth. When necessary she is also a dab hand at wallpapering, decorating and sewing.



Patrick Gunn, in his workshop with a king Dick spanner, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



*Marie Gunn in her Spar uniform, 2003.
Picture by Patrick Gunn.*

16 & 17 AELYBRYN.



Len Williams, 1960's.
Picture courtesy Enid Williams.



Enid with Stephen & Nerys. Picture Courtesy Phyllis Jones.



Stephen & daughter Sarah, 1987. Picture courtesy Enid Williams.



Enid & Len Williams with their grandchild.
Picture courtesy Enid Williams.



Mary Evans, Enid's mother. Picture courtesy Enid Williams.

Enid and Len Williams lived in 16 Aelybryn through the 1960's, 70's and into the early 80's. Enid's mother Mary Evans, pictured above right, also lived with them. Len, pictured above left, played football for Machynlleth in the 1960's and worked for the G.P.O. Enid also worked for the G.P.O, as a telephonist. Enid is a local girl, born in Esgair farm. Before moving to Esgairgeiliog they lived in Corris and Aberllefenni. Stephen now works for Cambrian printers in Aberystwyth and Nerys is a nurse. Len has passed away, sadly but Enid now lives in Machynlleth.

Tom and Margaret Rowlands moved up to 17 Aelybryn from Achor Cottages in 1956, with their daughter Blodwen when the houses were first built. It was something of a family move really, as their son Kenneth and his family had been living a couple of doors along from them in Achor Cottages and he too moved with them to number 13, still only a few doors along. Also Margaret's sister, Annie, across the road in Caerbont, moved in across the road to number 8 Aelybryn. So everyone kept their positions but just moved up the hill into more luxurious accommodation.

Tom was working in Braich Goch quarry then, Blodwen was training as a hairdresser in Machynlleth and life was looking quite good.

Into the 1960's though, Tom's health started to suffer from a lifetime of working in the quarries. Margaret took a job in Cardwells fashion clothing factory in Machynlleth, sewing buttons etc by hand. Her daughter-in-law, Moira Rowlands also worked there with her as a quality controller. Tom passed away on 17 May 1966.

When Margaret retired from work she remained very active. Both she and Tom had always been very keen gardeners and now on her own and with more time available she became even more enthusiastic about it. She also loved to walk and was a familiar sight walking to town and back to do her shopping, even into her eighties. She lived long enough to see her first great, great grandson, Kenneth Connor Jones, of 7 Aelybryn born on 13 August 1996 and is pictured with him above right. Sadly though Margaret died on 19 April 1997, aged 89.



Margaret Rowlands with daughter Blodwen & grandson Brian Rowlands. Inset, Tom Rowlands.
Pictures courtesy Blodwen Rowlands.



Margaret Rowlands with her great, great grandson Kenneth Connor Jones, in 1996.
Picture authors collection.



Trish & Jeremy Andrews with Iana & Adam, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

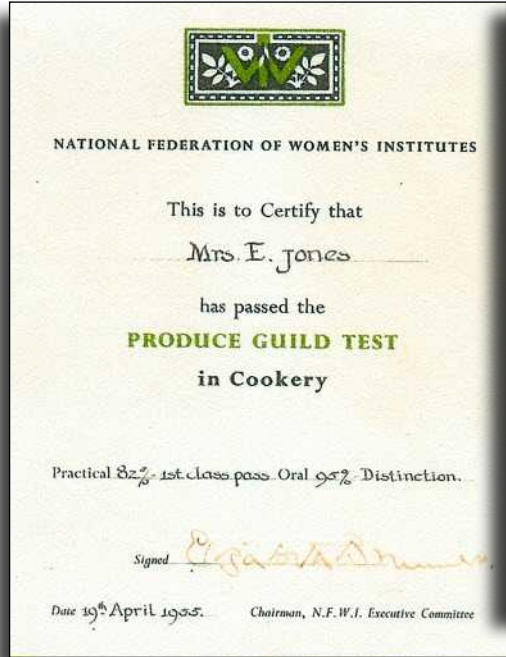
When number 17 became vacant in May 1997, it was reallocated to another local man, Jeremy Andrews, the second son of Christopher and Penelope Andrews of 11 Aelybryn.

Jeremy is pictured left with his wife Trish and their two children Iana and Adam. Jeremy was born and brought up in Esgairgeiliog and is much in demand in the area for his skills as a painter, decorator and builder. He is a familiar sight on a ladder or the roof of various houses in the village.

Trish is from Glasgow and met Jeremy while training in this area as an architect and living in the village at Dulas Cottages. She is now a qualified architect and works full time in the area.



Jane & Ernie Jones, 18 Aelybryn, 1960's.
Picture courtesy Jane Jones.



Jane Jones's Women's Institute cookery certificate
19 April 1955. Picture courtesy Jane Jones.



One of Jane Jones's wedding
cakes, made for Sian & Martin
Hughes in 1986.
Picture courtesy Jane Jones.

Ernie and Jane Jones, pictured above left, moved from Corris to Esgairgeiliog in the 1950's. Ernie was the church warden in the church in the Forestry Commission camp, a satellite of Holy Trinity Church in Corris. Jane was well known for her talent for making beautiful celebration cakes She made and decorated the author's wedding cake in 1968 and decorated the author's daughter's wedding cake in 1987.

Many years ago, when Jane was helping to organise the children's Christmas party in the village hall, she used the bowl pictured right to make the trifle in. A rather unconventional use for a wash bowl but she said it was the only one she could find big enough. The children enjoyed the trifle anyway. Another of her duties was to buy the children's presents to hang on the Christmas tree in the hall. A difficult task, as she was only given £3 to buy them with.

Around that time, community activities in village halls, church halls etc were a popular distraction from the drab, austere post war years, with rationing and

shortages still a part of everyday life. People would often walk miles to take part in a recital or play.

Thus it was one dark freezing winters night. Blodwen Pugh and Jane Jones had been to a drama competition in the Rheboth Hall in Corris. Being late in the evening they had to walk home in the dark along the old road from Corris to Esgairgeiliog. It was an extremely cold bitter night, windy and very dark and their little legs hurried briskly along at great speed. After a while they began to hear a funny tinkling noise that they could not identify but which seemed to be keeping up with them however much they hurried. By the time they arrived at Blodwen's house at 3 Era Terrace they were both getting quite frightened by this strange noise following them. Hearing them coming through the gate, Dafydd Pugh opened the door to greet them but a moment later burst out laughing and told them to look in the hall mirror. Their hair was covered with icicles caused by their hot breath freezing on it as they hurried along and it was these tinkling together that had been making the strange noises they had heard. They laughed many times about that night over the following years.



Jane used this bowl to make trifle
for the village children's xmas party
in 1950's. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Blodwen Pugh & Jane Jones, 1950's.
Picture author's collection.



Jane Jones, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

18 AELYBRYN .



Bob John & Phyllis courting by Rhiwgreiddyn quarry in 1959. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.

Bob John and Phyllis Jones have lived in 18 Aelybryn since 1983. Phyllis grew up in Gwynfryn, Pantperthog and went to school in Pantperthog school, now the village hall there. When she was 18, in the mid 1950's, the council built the twenty houses in Esgairgeiliog called Aelybryn and Phyllis, along with her Mum and Dad and family were among the first tenants to



Bob John & Phyllis Jones's wedding day, 25-Mar-1961. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.

move into what were then some very posh modern houses in the village. They were allocated number 15 and Phyllis lived there until she got married in 1961. She and Bob John settled in Llwynygog, Llwyngwern until 1983 when they moved to 18 Aelybryn, a few doors along from where her parents still lived at number 15.

Phyllis has worked at Plas Llwyngwern for 33 years and is pictured below left with a mangle there that



Phyllis & Bob John Jones, centre, with their sons Mark, Gareth and Peter and his wife June, in 1987. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.

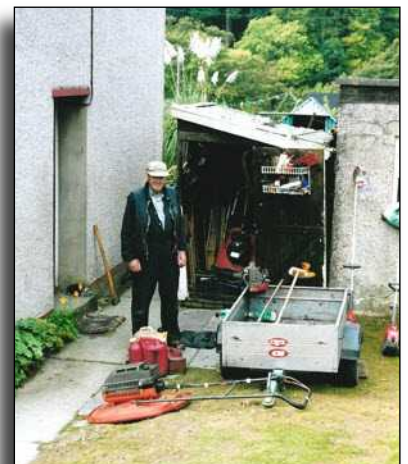


Phyllis Jones & mangle at Plas Llwyngwern. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.

was made in the foundry in Machynlleth.

Bob John worked for many years in the aluminium works in Machynlleth but is now semi retired and fills his time with his grass cutting and gardening contracts, for which he is much in demand. He is pictured right checking his equipment prior to going out on another job.

Above centre, are Phyllis and Bob John with their three sons, Mark, Gareth and Peter with his wife June, on Mark's wedding day.



Bob John Jones & his mowers. Picture by Julia Gunn.

19 AELYBRYN .



*John & Blodwen Jones with children, David & Carol, 1960's.
Picture by John Gwyndaf Jones.*

John Gwyndaf and Blodwen Jones moved into 19 Aelybryn not long after they got married. John grew up in number 15 and is pictured below left delivering coal in Aelybryn with his father Robin Jones.

Blodwen also grew up in Aelybryn, at number 17 with her parents Tom and Margaret Rowlands. When first married she worked as a hairdresser in Machynlleth and after having their two children, Carol and David, pictured left, she continued to cut hair for family and friends in and around the village.

Number 19 being a two bedroom house, they later moved to number 14 in 1976 as the children grew older, where John and Blodwen still live today.



*Robin Jones & his son John delivering coal in Aelybryn, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Delyth Jenkins.*



*The Felin coal lorry in Aelybryn in the 1990's.
Picture by Kenneth Rowlands.*



Llinos Jones, about 1980's. Picture courtesy Llinos Jones.

The current tenant of 19 Aelybryn is Llinos Jones. She came to live there from Commins Coch in 1976.

She is pictured above and right with one of her cats, Amber, who follows her everywhere, including all the way down to the shop and back. More like a dog than a cat. Llinos is always cheerful and a familiar sight in the village and on the bus to and from town.



Llinos Jones with her cat Amber, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Glenys Breese & Robin William Jones.
Picture courtesy Gwynfor Jones.



Gwilym Breese Jones. Picture courtesy Gwynfor Jones.



Mair Wyn & Ann Myfanwy Jones. Picture courtesy Gwynfor Jones.

Robin and Glenys, pictured above were living with their children, Gwynfor, Mair, Myfanwy and Gwilym in number 20 Aelybryn In the 1950's and 60's.

Glenys was one of the daughters of John and Mary Ann Jones, Ceinws Bach and therefore was in good company, with her brothers Dick in number 8 Aelybryn and Gwilym down in Gwynfa, by Caerbont.

The family later moved to the Blaenau Ffestiniog area.

Gwynfor and Myfanwy often visit their Aunt Phena Jones at Gwynfa and are pictured right on such a visit, when they also called on the author with these photographs for inclusion in this book.



J.N.A. 2nd cl. J. Gwynfor Jones, 1963. Picture courtesy Gwynfor Jones.

The current occupants of number 20 Aelybryn are Philip and Valerie Edwards and their three children, Eleri, Ruth and Ian. Philip is a native of the village, having grown up in the Forestry Commission camp and at 6 Aelybryn with his parents, John & Nesta Edwards.



Gwynfor Jones & his sister, Myfanwy, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

CAERBONT.



Caerbont, Esgairgeiliog, about 1894. Picture by John Thomas, courtesy the National Library of Wales.

Caerbont was built in the early 1800's as a row of weavers cottages, around the same time as the wool factory was built just below it. It was a development similar to others cropping up in villages all over the area at that time and signaled the beginning and subsequent growth of Esgairgeiliog as a village community proper, rather than just a collection of scattered farms and cottages.

In 1840 one such weaver, David Roberts was living there with his wife Lowry.

In the early 1850's David Edwards, a carpenter lived there with his wife Elinor and daughter Mary. Could this be the same David and Elinor Edwards who were later living in Bryndulas in the 1880's ? (See page 25)

By the 1870's the woolen industry was in decline, slate mining was taking over in the

village and miner Thomas Morgans was in Caerbont with his wife, Elizabeth. A few years later, slate labourer John Owen moved in with wife Margaret and children, Lewis and Margaret. Interestingly, at the end of the century, another slate labourer, Richard and Anne Edwards and their children Anne, Richard and Elizabeth were living there. Could this Richard be the son of David Edwards, the joiner from Bryndulas and earlier of Caerbont ? Must look further into this one day.



Owen Owen, Hafotty and his wife Margaret and children, Richard and Ann, small boy ? About 1914. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Hugh Edwards, 1950.

Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.

The author, Julia's great grandfather Hugh Edwards, above right, was a farm worker with five daughters just before the first world war. When his wife Alice died in childbirth with their sixth child, a son, Hugh was unable to raise his six small children alone and go out to work. So, as often happened then, the children were split up and taken in by various people in the family. This was better than the only other alternative, the workhouse. Hugh came to live alone in number two Caerbont. Two of Hugh's daughters, Margaret and Annie were taken in by Hugh's sister Margaret and her husband Owen Owen at Hafotty, Pantperthog, pictured above left.

On the corner by the bridge in Pantperthog, before the road was widened and improved, there lay for many years a big round stone. It was said that the only man in the district who could lift that stone was Owen Owen. He was a big very strongly built man. One day, while riding his horse towards Corris, the horse stumbled on the corner by Maespoeth. Owen fell off and was badly injured. He never fully recovered and died not very long afterwards. His wife subsequently moved to three Caerbont, where she lived next door to her brother for the rest of her life.

Like many brothers and sisters, they did not always see eye to eye on everything and when they quarreled they would often not speak to each other for some time. During these silent periods it was noted that if one was on the doorstep and the other came out then the first one would always go back in. As the two front doors were right next to each other, they were humorously likened to one of those little mantelpiece barometers with a man and a woman who moved in or out of a doorway according to the weather. Like 'Sion a Sian' !

CAERBONT.



Caerbont, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn..

Louie T. Morris has lived in Esgairgeiliog for most of the eight decades of his life. For much of that time he has lived with his wife Megan in numbers one and two Caerbont, pictured near left. Pictured right are their two sons Hugh and John in 1959.



Hugh & John Morris in 1959.

Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.

Over the years they have been there Louie has done a great deal of work on his house, converting the two into one, fitting the modern conveniences and in recent years, the new front porch. All, however,

without detracting from the original style and character of the house.

During the second world war Louie served in the army from 1943 to 1946, including time in the far East. He is pictured below left while home on leave in 1945. In the picture below right, with Megan, Louie is



Louie T. Morris, on leave in 1945.

Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.

wearing his medals. They are the Burma Star, the Defence Medal and a loyal service medal. They had just returned from a V.J. Commemoration service at Llanbadarn church in August 2000. This included the laying up of the Standard of the Mid Wales branch of the Burma Star Association, formed to remember veterans like Louie and the men who died fighting to free the world from oppression.



Megan & Louie Morris. Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.

When Louie left school he found work at Llwyngwern farm. While there, in 1937, there was a bad gale and snow storm and it blew down a large tree onto the old road opposite Forest Lodge. The trunk was taken to a sawmill in Machynlleth near the county school and sawn into planks. Louie managed to acquire one of the planks and later used it to make the fine grandmother clock pictured with him right.

After the war Louie returned home and adapted back to a normal working life. For some years he was a driver for the Crosville Bus Co. Many of today's parents and even grandparents can remember him driving them to school. He also worked at Meirion Mill in Dinas Mawddwy and before retiring, at Station Garage in Machynlleth. One thing he is well known for though is beekeeping and Louie's bees have kept the flowers and vegetables pollinated in Esgairgeiliog for many years.

Megan has also led a very busy and active life, especially as a member of the Women's Institute. In nearly all the group photographs we have seen of the W.I. Megan has been in there. She also takes a keen interest in local events and always kept a scrapbook of news cuttings of things happening around the village. Even now Megan is still the local contact for a Welsh newspaper called the 'Blewyn Glas'.



Louie Morris with his grandmother clock.

Picture by Julia Gunn..

CAERBONT.



Caerbont, winter 2001, with snow.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Mrs Jones, 4&5 Caerbont, 1950's
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Gwilym Jones, 5 Caerbont, 1970's
Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



Dick & Marian Jones, 1950's
Picture courtesy Marian Jones



Liz Jones the Post, 1970's
3Caerbont.
Picture authors collection.

Above and below are some of the people who have lived in Caerbont over the years from the 1950's to the present day. Above left is Mrs Jones, who lived with her husband, William in number 4 in the 1950's and used number 5 for storage and to keep bicycles in. Next is her son Gwilym Jones who lived in number 5 in the 1970's & 80's. Gwilym was a plasterer for the builder, John Evans & sons, Cemmaes Road. Dick Jones, Gwilym's brother, grew up in 4 & 5 and was a clerk in Aberllefenni quarry's office in Machynlleth. On the right, Liz Jones the post was married to another brother, Thomas John. She used to work in Pine View when it was a shop and Post Office and later ran the Post Office herself from 3 Caerbont until the 1970's.



Owen Kirkham 5 Caerbont, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Judy & Barry Nichols, with grandson Jake .4 Caerbont.
Picture courtesy Judy Nichols.



Mrs Stone 3 Caerbont, 1989.
Picture courtesy Phena Jones.

Above left is Owen Kirkham, who moved to 5 Caerbont from 2 Bryndulas in the mid 1980's. Owen worked in the forestry industry until retiring and now keeps himself occupied as a handiman in the village for which he is much in demand. Above centre are Judy and Barry Nichols with their grandson, Jake. Barry is retired and Judy works part time. They live in 4 Caerbont. Above right, Mrs Stone lived in 3 Caerbont until moving to Corris in the early 1990's. Mrs Stone's daughter Jackie lives in Nursery Cottage Pantperthog with her husband, Richard (Dick bach).

GWYNFA.



Gwynfa, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Phena & Gwilym Jones, 1980's. Picture courtesy Phena Jones.

In the early twentieth century Gwynfa was a shop and scenes such as that pictured right, with bread deliveries from Mr Lewis's bakery in Machynlleth would have been a regular sight. Note the bare dirt road.

Later on, when Gwynfa returned to a private residence, it was occupied by Gwilym and Phena Jones, pictured above right. Gwilym was one of the sons of John and Mary Ann Jones of Ceinws Bach and worked for the Forestry Commission. He was often to be seen at one time driving the forest District Officer, Mr Butters, between appointments. In his spare time, Gwilym was active in the local community, serving on the parish council and the village hall committee.



A bread delivery to Gwynfa shop, early 20th century. Picture courtesy David Jones, from his book, 'Corris. Through the eye of the camera'. Also courtesy Marian Jones.

Phena was also very actively involved in the village. A keen member of the Women's Institute for many years and still a local reporter for the Welsh newspaper, the 'Blewyn Glas'.

Gwilym and Phena have one son, Gareth, who, like his grandfather John before him also works for Royal Mail. The three generations are pictured below right.



A view of Esgairgeiliog, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Three generations, John Jones, centre, Gwilym Jones, left, Gareth Jones, right. Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.

ACHOR COTTAGES (ISYCOED).



Emma Morgan, on the path 'top y nyrs' Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold..

pictured above left. Emma Morgan is standing with her baby on the path known locally as 'top y nyrs' which led down from the road by 'ty ffwrn' past the back of Ty Isaf to the river. When there was no piped water in the village it was important to have clear access to the river by the shortest route to enable water to be carried home for domestic chores, cleaning, washing etc. The communal bakery and wash house meant important economies could be made in the use of fuel for the oven and the boiler. After the bread was baked, any remaining heat in the oven might be used to cook a piece of meat for someone, or a cake even. Any washing, rinsing etc for which hot water was not essential was often done directly in the river. In such a community neighbourliness was essential rather than optional.

160 years ago in the 1840's, Rowland Jones, a miller, his wife Elizabeth and their eight children, Joseph, Thomas, Rowland, Edward, David, Matilda, Eliabeth and Susan lived in Achor cottages. At the same time, in the same row were Owen and Gaynor Hughes and their five children, Louisa, Margaret, Richard, Catherine and John. Owen and Margaret Pritchard with son Richard. Edward and Mary Edwards with daughter Catherine. Weaver Roderick and Ann Lumley. Hugh and Jane Lumley with children Richard and Mary. David Humphreys with son David, Daughter-in-law Elizabeth and grandson Edward. Thirty three adults and children !



L to R, Catherine Jones, Margaret Morris, Mary Ann Jones (Ceinws), children not known. 1920's. Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



Adults, L to R back, Dolly Thomas, Mary Ann Jones, Ceinws Bach. Front L to R, Catherine Jones, Emma Morgan. Behind Achor cottages. Children not known.. 1930's. Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



Annie Mary Humphreys, later Jones, with daughter Nancy, 1937. Inset, Nancy at about five years old. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.

Pictured above left in the 1920's are Catherine Jones, Ken Rowlands' grandfathers sister, Margaret Morris, Louie Morris Caerbont's mother and Mary Ann Jones, Ceinws Bach, Maggie Mary Arnold's mother. The boy on the right is Stanley Jones, Maggie Mary's brother.

Pictured above right is Annie Mary Humphreys, later Annie Jones of 8 Aelybryn holding her daughter Nancy, on the steps of the house at the back of Achor cottages, where she lived in about 1937. Annie's husband Llew died of tuberculosis, a very common disease before the war. As she nursed him at home Nancy also caught it and died two years after her father, at eleven years old. Mercifully, Annie was spared but was left a widow and childless. Annie later married Richard Jones and moved to Aelybryn in 1955.

ACHOR COTTAGES (ISYCOED).



*John Morris 1950's
Picture courtesy L. T. Morris.*



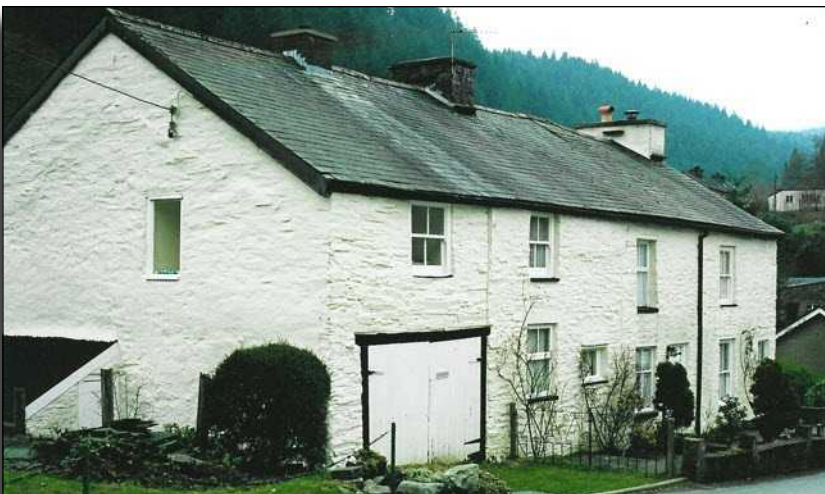
*Mr Lloyd, the postman.. 1928.
Picture by D. S. George.
Author's collection.*



*Aberglesyrch school plaque, 1850.
Picture by Ray Gunn*

In the early to mid twentieth century Mr Lloyd the postman lived in one of the middle houses in Achor cottages. He was well known locally as a bit of a character with a sharp wit and a thorough knowledge of all the local people. He wrote the poem, right, about the village and it's people and at the time it was considered somewhat controversial, especially the full version. Sorry but an English translation would not sound or rhyme the same.

Up to the late 1950's, the terrace looked quite different to it's present day appearance, below. Just visible in the picture above, at the near end is the front of ty-ffwrn, the bake house, which came right out to the road. Just behind little John's head is the front porch of the old Aberglesyrch school, opened in 1850 in the end house of the terrace. The school nameplate is pictured above right which used to hang over the door. Behind the porch is the tiny cottage which was attached to the front corner of the terrace. There was then only a narrow footpath down to Ty Isaf and the river, not a road as now. Also, although not visible, the terrace roof used to be on two levels, being lower over the nearer two. It was raised to a uniform level by Evan Jones, a stonemason from Penrhiw, Forge.



Isycoed, formally Achor cottages. 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn..

Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws.

Ar lan yr afon Ddulas
Y saf y pentre bach
Mae'n bentre go gynhyfrus
Ond yn bentre hynod iach

Mae yma ddau addoldy
A siop yn gwerthu te
A mochyn gan John Panto
A phobeth yn ei le

Mae Mr Lloyd y postman
Yr hwn sydd berson stout
Gwaith hwn y'w planu cabbage
A chodi Brussels sprouts

Mae Mrs Cottrell yma
Yn dwrdio plant y lle
Yn tynu priciau, gwrych y fro
I ferwi ei thecell te

Ac Oswald Edwards hefyd
Yr hwn sydd a'i lais mor ber
E'i draed yn rhodio'r palmant
A'i ben yn rhaith y ser

Mae yma Irish beauty
High hips a gwyneb tlws
Dwy lygad fel dylluan
A'i phwys a'r glic y drws

Mae Isaac Morgan hefyd
Bob dydd ai fysedd cain
Yn methu rhoi ei fotor beic
I fyned yn ei flaen

Mae'r corn yn deffro'r cread
A Mari'n cadw swm
Mae yma le ofnadwy
Cyd-rhwng y corn a'r cwn

Mae Mrs Jones Tai Isaf
Yn ddynes, un o gant
Gwaith hon yw pobi bara
A magu ty o blant

Rhaid peidio anghofio'r pojars
Yn dal wrth olau lloer
A mynd a nhw I Gorris
Am beint o gwrw oer

Pob bendith I'r hen bentref
A phawb oedd yno'n byw
Mae'nt heddiw'n gorffwys'n dawel
Yn dawel gyda Duw.

*Poem written by Mr Lloyd the post.
Given by Gwynfor Jones.
Permission to publish from Gwyn Lloyd,
the poet's grandson.*

ACHOR COTTAGES (ISYCOED).



Tom Rowlands, 1939.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

In the 1920's and 1930's Tom Rowlands worked in Rhiwgreiddyn quarry and the Braichgoch quarry. Margaret, his wife also worked in Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, in the enamelling room, where slate fireplaces, mantle pieces and work tops were enamelled with various marble effect finishes etc. She would frequently come home with bleeding hands from handling the heavy slabs and the effects of the solvents etc used in the enamels.



Kenneth Rowlands, in the South Wales Borderers, left, in 1946 and as a regular in the Welsh Guards, right, in 1949.
Pictures courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Tom Rowlands, 1960's.
Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.



Margaret Rowlands, 1950's.
Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands



Kenneth Rowlands, 1930's.
Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands



Blodwen Rowlands, 1940's.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

Before the Aelybryn council estate was built in 1955, Tom and Margaret Rowlands and their two children, Kenneth and Blodwen had lived in Achor cottages since the late 1920's. Close by next to the Methodist chapel lived Mary Morgan and her three children, Tom, Bryn and Eirwen.

Mary and Maggie decided it would be a good idea to buy a pig and fatten it up with all their combined kitchen waste. Then, when the time came, share the resulting bacon between them. They asked around and eventually received permission to keep it in the woods behind Plas Rhiwgreiddyn. There was a small wooden shed already there which was just big enough for the young pig to squeeze into. So far so good.

They shared the work of looking after the pig like a spoilt pet. Working on the well known fact that the more you fed and pampered them, the faster and bigger they would grow and the tastier the meat would be. Not wanting him to waste too much energy on too much exercise, they encouraged him to stay in the shed while everything a pig might desire was placed under his nose for consumption. The plan worked. The pig grew bigger and bigger and fatter and fatter. He would soon be keeping the two families in bacon butties for a long time to come.

Then, one morning, disaster ! The pig had vanished. Not only that, the shed had vanished too. Well, that's a bit rich they thought. Stealing somebody's pig is bad enough but taking the shed as well, that just about takes the biscuit. Feeling somewhat despondent, not to mention raging mad, they set about combing the area, searching for clues that might lead them to the culprit. What really puzzled them was how somebody could get the pig and the shed through and out of the village without anyone noticing.

Suddenly a shout went up. 'There they are, I see them, up there at the top of the woods'. Everyone turned and peered up through the trees. Yes, there was the shed, moving slowly along the fence as if looking for an opening. They all stared, rubbed their eyes and stared again in disbelief. Then everyone started laughing fit to burst. The shed had short stubby legs, ending in what looked remarkably like pig's trotters. It transpired that the pig had grown so big and fat that eventually it could no longer fit through the doorway of the little shed. So this morning when it awoke and tried to step outside to do what we all do in the morning, it stood up and lifted the shed up off the ground. All it's efforts to shake the offending building off only succeeded in jamming it tighter on to it's back. In the end he simply gave up and wandered off like a giant snail in search of breakfast.



Mary Morgan, Blodwen, Rowlands and Margaret Rowlands, early 1950's.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

ACHOR COTTAGES (ISYCOED).



Kenneth Rowlands. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Moira Rowlands. Picture courtesy Moira Rowlands.



Kenneth Rowlands. Picture by Julia Gunn.

In the early 1950's, Ken and Moira Rowlands lived in 1 Achor cottages, that's the bit where the garage is now in Isycoed, with the first five of their six children. Number six came later, at Aelybryn. Although by this time the roof had been raised and the cottages improved, Ken remembers that when he lived there as a boy, they were quite primitive upstairs. The sloping bedroom ceilings were merely whitewashed sacks hung under the slates to keep some of the draft off as you slept. The only insulation was the feather quilt you shivered under in bed in the winter. Ken and Moira are pictured above as they looked about that time. Ken is wearing his army 'demobbed' suit on the left and on the right he is in his Crosville Bus Company uniform where he worked as a bus driver. He started off cycling to work but later bought a mini petrol motor from Read's garage in Machynlleth to fit onto his bicycle to speed him along. It fitted under the saddle and drove the back wheel by pressing a small pulley against the tyre. A commonly seen and economical gadget in those days. Talking of bikes, a Caradoc Lloyd used to keep a bicycle shop in the house at the back of 4 Achor cottages. Ken only remembers bikes being stored there though.



Julia Rowlands

Another resident in the terrace was George Thomas, who worked at the Braich Goch quarry and drove a steam lorry there. At one time he kept a pet fox in the bakehouse (ty-ffwrn) on the end of the row.

Ken's eldest daughter, Julia, pictured left, remembers as a very small girl there, the regular visits in the summer of 'Johnny onions', selling strings of onions from his bicycle. Also one visit by an Indian in a turban, selling brushes etc, who became very angry when Julia's mother said she did not want anything and he threatened to burn the house down.



Jennifer Rowlands.



Alison Rowlands.



Ann Rowlands.



Brian Rowlands.

All pictures early 1950's, from author's collection.

ACHOR COTTAGES (ISYCORD).



*Mavis Compston, about 1950's.
Picture courtesy Karen Compston.*



One of Mavis Compston's paintings. Picture courtesy Karen Compston.

Mavis Compston, pictured above left, came to Isycoed in 1975, after the death of her husband, Ken Compston, who was the sports editor of the Sunday Times. She had been coming here previously on painting courses by Aubrey Phillips at Abergynolwyn. Mavis had a real flair for art and became quite an accomplished painter. One of her paintings, pictured above right and all her Welsh ones are displayed at Dolffanog Fawr, Talyllyn, where her grandson Alex now lives and runs a bed and breakfast guest house.

Sadly, Mavis died in 1999, and her daughter, Karen now lives in Isycoed with her husband, Dick. Karen has been a lecturer in further education for 25 years and is now working as an education and training consultant. She also enjoys bird watching and embroidery. Dick was a biochemist at Oxford Polytechnic and Oxford Brookes University for 21 years, then an Inspector and reviewer of Quality of Higher and further Education. He is now retired and spends most of his time hill walking, bird watching and fly fishing.

When Dick and Karen came to Isycoed they had a lot of renovation work done to the house by local builder, Jeremy Andrews.



Isycoed, during renovation, June 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.



*Richard (Dick) & Karen Yorke, Isycoed.
Picture courtesy Dick & Karen Yorke.*



Isycoed, during renovation, June 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.

TY ISAF.



Mary Morgan on the footbridge with Bryn, then Tom behind, late 1930's. Ty Isaf on right. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Kathleen in her bathing gear, with Ty Isaf behind. Picture courtesy Kathleen, via Maggie Arnold.



Catherine Jones, Kathleen's mother and Magpie the cat. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

In the late 1930's there were four houses in the terrace of Ty Isaf, down by the footbridge. Later, one of them fell into the river, leaving three. In one of them lived Catherine Jones, pictured above right, who had lived there since at least 1890, with her mother and father, Catherine and Lewis Rowlands. Catherine's daughter, Kathleen is pictured above centre in her bathing gear, having just been for a swim in the river below the houses. At the time of writing Kathleen is now living in Tywyn.

In the picture above left, you can see the front of the terrace as it looked then with four productive front gardens. We think the figures in the doorway of Achor cottage are Annie and Nancy Humphreys. Note the paler section of wall in the top right of Achor cottages, where the roof had recently been raised.



Isycoed, centre and Ty Isaf right, taken from the footbridge. 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

TY ISAF.

In the 1890's Lewis Rowlands lived in number one Ty Isaf with his wife Catherine and eight of their eventual fourteen children, Richard, Catherine, Edward, Lucy, John, Thomas, Mary and Alfred. Lewis and Catherine were the author Julia's great, great grandparents and a copy of their family tree with seven generations who lived in the village is shown on the next page. In number four at the same time there lived another Rowlands, Edward and his wife Elizabeth, with their son John.



*Louie & Margaret Morris with baby Emrys.
Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.*



*Lillian Morris, 1930's.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*



Ty Isaf, 1930's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Lillian Morris, pictured above, centre, remembers, as a child in the 1940's, walking from her home in Ty Isaf to Bomprenfali, now called Nursery Cottage, in Pantperthog to collect milk to bring back and deliver around the village. The milk was carried in a large can with a special one pint measure and contained just the right amount to go around all the customers. Lillian would frequently get herself into trouble by being a little too generous with the measure at some houses, so by the time she got to the last few she would not have enough milk to finish the round. This meant another trip back to Pantperthog to get more milk and rush back to deliver it before dashing off to school. All this at only about twelve years old !

In the late 1930's when Louie Morris senior, (Louie Morris, Caerbont's father) was living in Ty Isaf with his wife Margaret, pictured above left, and their children, one of his youngest sons, Emrys, was Ken Rowland's best mate. One day when Ken went to call for Emrys to come out to play, his friend

was not quite ready, so his Mum told Ken to sit down and wait for him, while she was doing something in the kitchen. Both the front and back doors were open to let the air and light in.

Suddenly, to their amazement, a fox trotted in through the front door and completely ignoring them both, crossed the room, under the table, through the house and out through the back door. He then ran across the garden, through the hedge and off down the riverbank towards the quarry.

Ken and Emrys's mother looked at each other and started to laugh. However, their laughter froze on their lips a few moments later. For in through the door trotted a foxhound, then another and another and another. Instead of all rushing through the house together though, they followed each other in perfect single file, following the fox's route exactly. This continued until eventually the whole pack had filed politely through the house, out through the back door and off down the riverbank.

I suppose they were lucky the hunt followers, some on horseback, did not decide to do the same !



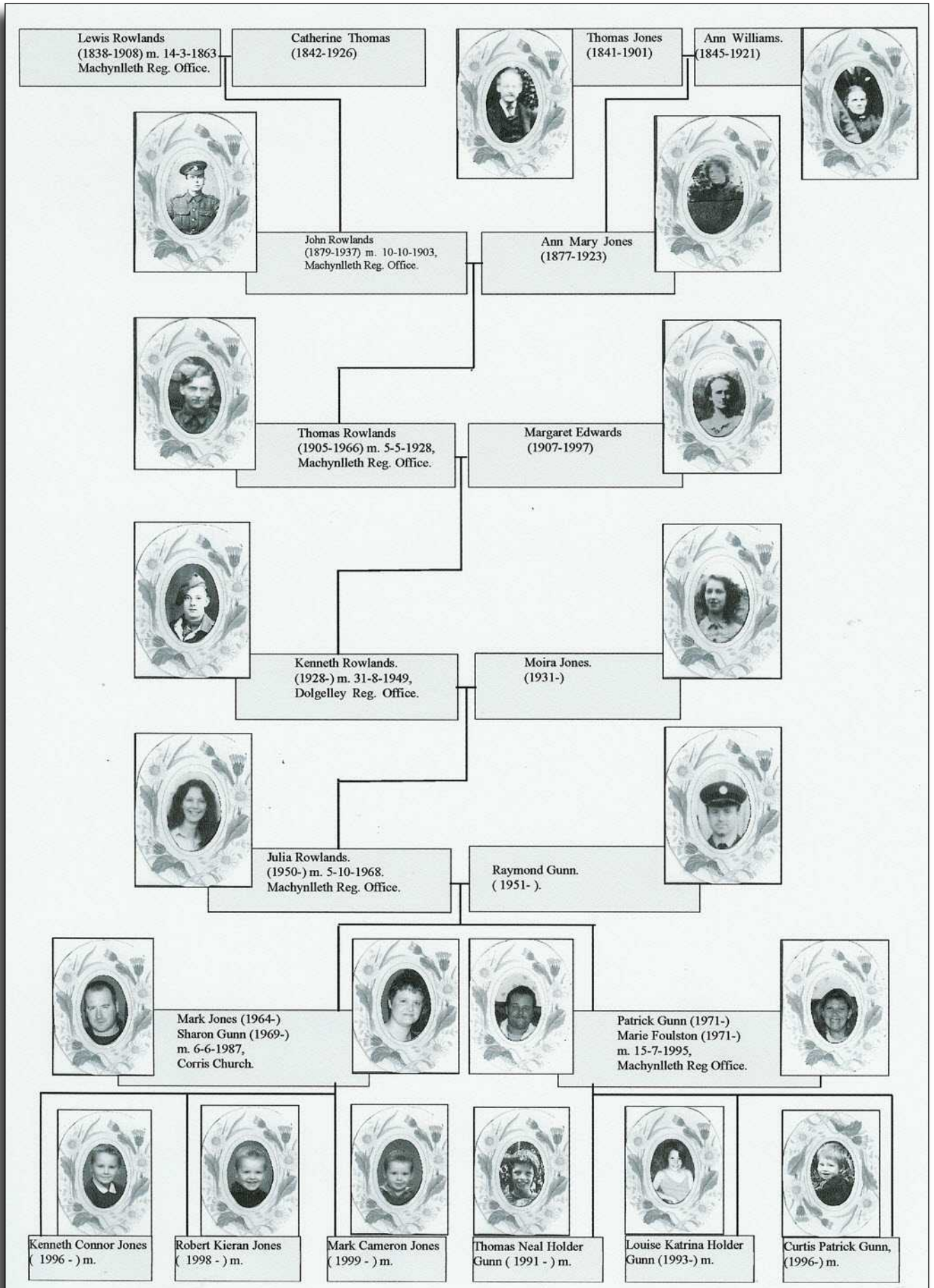
*Emrys Morris, 1930's.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*



*Kenneth Rowlands, 1930's.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*

AUTHOR'S FAMILY TREE.

SEVEN GENERATIONS OF THE AUTHOR JULIA GUNN'S FAMILY WHO HAVE LIVED IN ESGAIRGEILIOG FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS.



TY ISAF.



*A view of Esgairgeiliog, showing Ty Isaf, lower left, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Mrs W. Wallace.*

Dennis and Louise Woodvine came to live in Ty Isaf in the 1970's. The terrace had by this time become somewhat run down, almost derelict and needed a lot of work done to get it up to a habitable standard for the late twentieth century. As number four had fallen into the river many years before, Dennis and Louise converted the remaining three cottages into one large comfortable house, in a style that suited them.

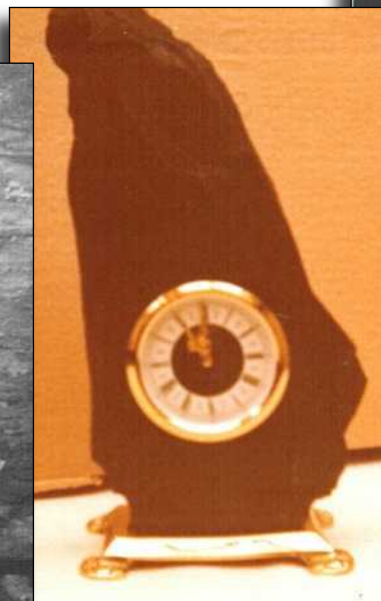
Dennis was an electrician and did some of the maintenance work at Aberllefenni quarry and also general electrical repair jobs in the area. For a while, in the 1960's and 1970's, Dennis and Louise ran a small business making clocks, barometers, plaques etc in slate. Dennis was a good artist and their products sold well. Louise wrote too and had a book published, called 'Forgive Me Hilda' under her pen name of Louise Benson.



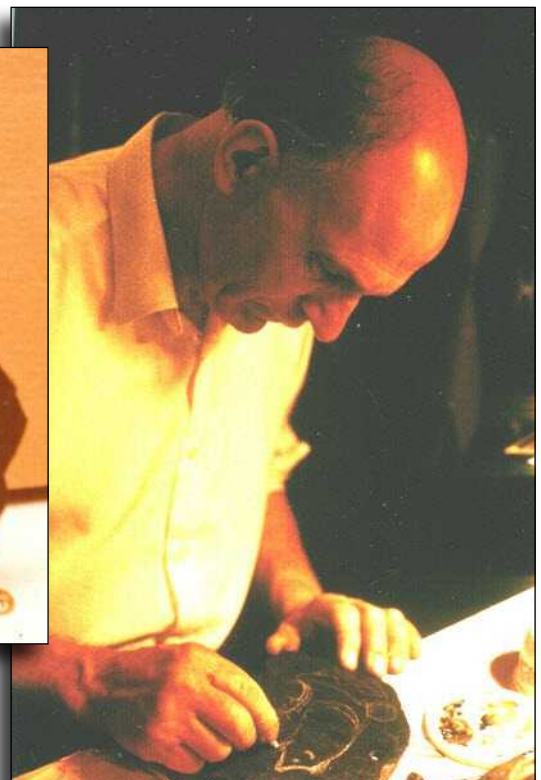
*Dennis & Louise Woodvine, 1990's.
Picture courtesy Mrs W. Wallace.*



Jeremy Andrews with his first fish, caught with Dennis Woodvine. Early 1980's. Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



*A slate clock made by Dennis & Louise Woodvine, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Mrs W. Wallace.*



*Dennis Woodvine drawing on a slate plaque, 1970's.
Picture courtesy Mrs W. Wallace.*

ABERGLASYRCH.



Aberglesyrch cottage, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

Mrs Winifred Wallace came to live in Esgairgeiliog in the 1970's after her husband died. She lived at first with her sister Louise and Dennis Woodvine but moved later to Aberglesyrch when it was built in the late 1970's. Winifred is a keen photographer and was for many years an active member of Ceinws Women's Institute. In the 1970's she also helped Louise and Dennis make their slate clocks and plaques etc.



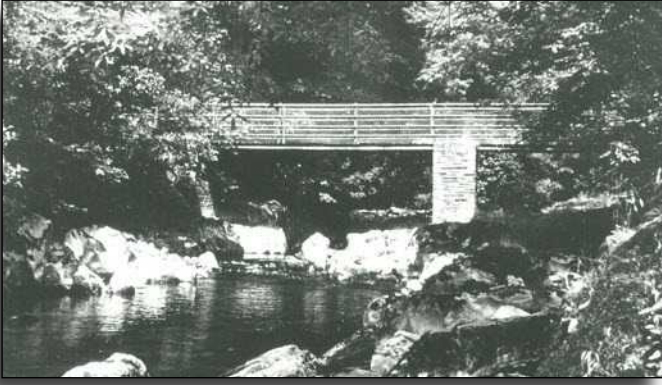
*Mrs Winifred Wallace, 1990's.
Picture courtesy
Audrey Beaumont.*



Aberglesyrch bridge, with Aberglesyrch cottage on the right and the Methodist chapel, centre, 1998.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

THE FOOTBRIDGE.



The footbridge, August 1975. Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.



The footbridge, August 1975. Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.

The first footbridge on the site of the current one in Esgairgeiliog was built when the railway bridge connecting the Era slate mill with the Corris Railway station fell into disrepair in the early part of the twentieth century. As a temporary measure to enable the villagers to reach the station, the Corris Railway manager provided them with some second hand timber to build themselves a wooden footbridge. Although the railway bridge was later repaired, for a few more years at least, the new footbridge proved a popular and much safer means of crossing the river. So popular in fact, that when the wooden bridge eventually needed replacing, a new, much



The old water course opposite the factory, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.

sturdier and more permanent one was built in concrete and stone, which remains in regular use today. As can be seen from the two pictures above, taken in 1975 by Louie Morris and the two below, taken in 2002 by Ray Gunn, the crossing can at times be hampered by inclement weather. Brian Rowlands remembers crossing the bridge on his way to catch the school bus one morning in the early 1960's. As he was crossing he heard a sudden roaring sound from upstream and looking towards the factory he saw a wall of water hurtling round the bend and towards the bridge. Of course he didn't linger but sped over the bridge and up the other side as fast as his little legs would carry him. Looking back from a safer spot he saw cattle and even a caravan being swept up against the bridge and water roaring over the footway. He found out later that there had been a cloudburst in Aberllefenni and the resulting flood had caused much damage all the way down the river.

Pictured above right is a curious feature on the river at this point. Starting just level with the factory building but on the opposite bank, is an old water course. It is cut through the rock very finely and accurately and runs around the corner of the river, under the footbridge and finishes at a point just above the waterfall known as the 'ffrwd', about fifty yards downstream from the footbridge. There is no sign of an old mill or building of any sort at this point. It has been suggested that the old ruined house in the field beyond was connected in some way. Although this may be true, the end of the water course appears to be below the level of the house and there is no sign of a channel to it or of a discharge back to the river. Another suggestion is that it fed water to the area behind the islands next to the 'ffrwd' in times of low water to enable it to be used as a 'Pandy', that is a place where wool was washed prior to processing and spinning etc. Given the proximity to the wool factory just across the river and the fact that the channel must be almost two hundred years old and contemporary with the factory, that suggestion warrants more favour in my view. Must look further into this.



The footbridge, Feb. 2002.

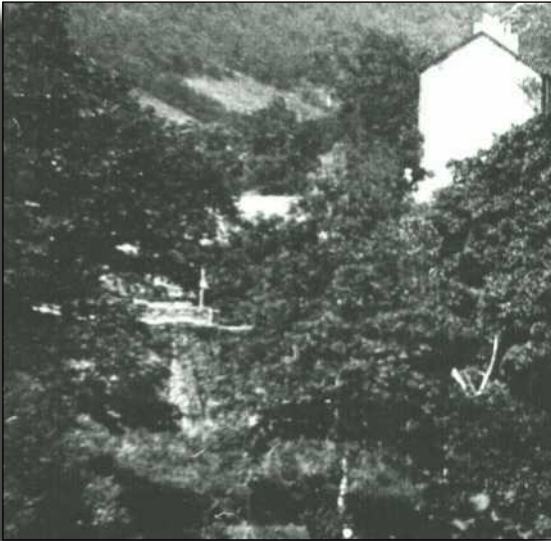
Picture by Ray Gunn.



The footbridge, March 2002.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

BONTDDU RAILWAY BRIDGE .

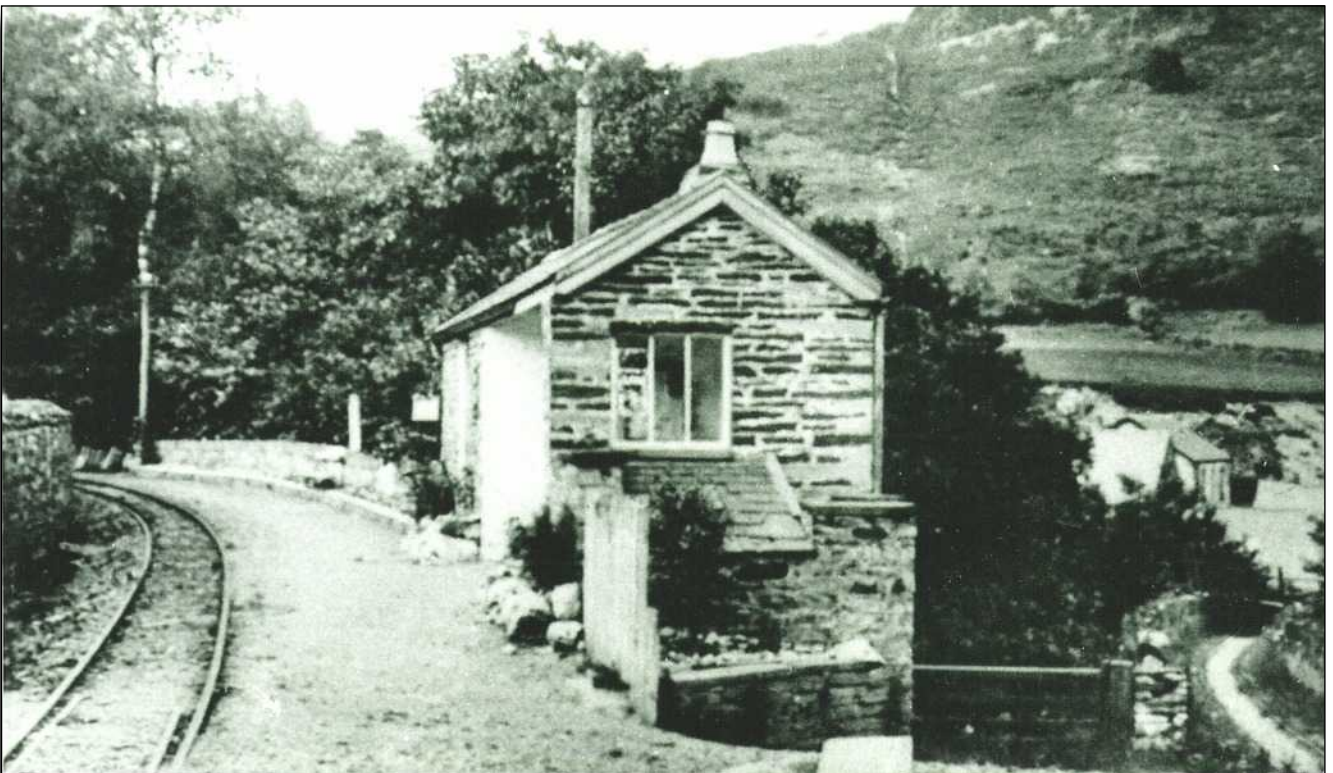


*Bontddu railway bridge, Esgairgeiliog, 1928.
Picture by D.S. George, from authors collection.*

On the left is a picture taken from a small section of an old postcard by Donald George in 1928. Because of the degree of enlargement the detail is not very sharp but you can just make out the railway bridge in the lower left of the picture, with what appears to be a signal over the central pillar. It was built in the 1870's by the Cambria Wynne quarry to connect their mill workshop to the Corris Railway across the river. It was subsequently also used by the villagers as a convenient if sometimes dangerous route across to the station and the main road. When Dick Jones, pictured above right was a youngster, he had been for some milk to Nursery Cottage on



*Dick Jones, Caerbont
1950's
Picture courtesy Marian Jones.*



*Esgairgeiliog station, early 1900's, with the siding down to the bridge on the lower right.
Picture courtesy of the Corris Railway Society.*

his bicycle and on the way back, while crossing over bontddu, he fell off the bridge right down to the river below. Lillian Morris found him on a rock in the river, seriously injured. He survived, however.

Another boy had a narrow escape too, when for a bit of excitement Dolly Thomas's son Jim climbed into a quarry truck up by the station and released the brake. The truck started to roll down the steep gradient of the siding, picking up speed as it hurtled over the bridge and into the yard below, Jim ended up in a heap on the yard just about where the Women's Institute later planted the little cherry tree that is growing there today.

To prevent the bridge becoming a public right of way, there were two small gates on the two ends of the bridge, which were closed once a month and a shilling charged for crossing to keep it legally a private way. When, the bridge started to fall onto disrepair, a new lower and much safer footbridge was built further downstream.



*The central pillar of Bontddu railway bridge,
1998.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*

ESGAIRGEILIOG STATION .



Esgairgeiliog station, early 1890's.

Picture by John Thomas, courtesy The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Esgairgeiliog station was built by the Corris Railway in the mid 1880's for the new passenger service to Machynlleth. Originally, as can clearly be seen in the picture above, the ticket office was built in wood but was later re-built in slate to match the waiting area, as shown in the later picture on the right, taken in 1928.

Looking at the background of the above picture, there is a man standing by the left hand tree. This is about the spot where Pine View will later be built. Yr Efail is shown before its renovation of the early 20th century.

Note the proliferation of advertising signs adorning the station in the early picture, shot in the heyday of rail travel in the Corris valley. Then compare it to the later picture above right in the late 1920's, when the line and the quarries were in mutual decline.

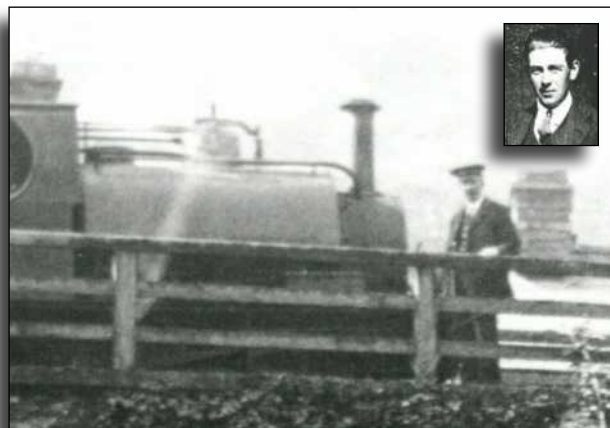


Esgairgeiliog station, 1928. Picture by D. S. George, courtesy Bryn Morgan.

In the 1930's, when Ken Rowlands was a schoolboy he would frequently play truant from Pantperthog school and ride the footplate of the Corris train, helping out with stoking the boiler etc. Whenever the school came into view the driver would shout to Ken to duck down out of sight until they had passed. Much more fun than maths and geography !

The author, Julia Gunn's grandfather, Gomer Jones was a porter on the railway and is pictured left standing by the train on the bridge in Corris. Inset is a clearer picture of him.

Sparks from the chimney and firebox were sometimes responsible for starting small fires by the track side especially in hot dry summer weather, so train crews, official and otherwise, always had to be vigilant and ready to leap into action to prevent the spread of fires into the surrounding forests.



Train on the bridge at Corris early 20th century, with porter Gomer Jones, also inset, the author Julia Gunn's grandfather. Picture courtesy Sara Eade. Inset courtesy Moira Rowlands.

ESGAIRGEILIOG STATION .

To advertise itself to the world in the days when passengers were an important part of its business and the tourist trade in Wales was booming, the Corris Railway commissioned and published numerous postcards for sale to the visitors. Some designs were bought in or just used and adapted by the company. On the right is thought to be one of the latter examples, cheaply printed and sold for a penny or so in local shops.



An early postcard sold by the Corris Railway. Picture courtesy Mary Davies, Dyffryn.

Many others though, especially the series of photographs taken and printed for the company by Donald George of Upper Corris were of exceptionally good quality and are now collected and highly prized by postcard and railway collectors alike.

Below right is the station as it looks today. No trains have run passed it since 1948, when the owners, British Rail, closed the line after a storm damaged the river bank close to the bridge over the river Dyfi. After that however, it did remain in regular use as a shelter for the bus stop on the adjacent main road. Right up to the mid 1970's buses stopping here were frequently full up, with standing room only on market days and Saturdays. Even up to the mid 1990's it was common to see upwards of half a dozen people sheltering in the station waiting for a bus to the market.

However, since the buses started running through the village in the mid 1990's and the station stop was abandoned by the bus company, the little station has become a sad and lonely place.

The future though looks much brighter. The Corris Railway Society is keeping the station repaired and has plans to reinstate the line as far as Tanycoed from Corris as a tourist attraction. This will not only give the Society a boost but will also ensure the future of a much loved



Esgairgeiliog station, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.

feature of the village. It may even revive the fortunes of the local retail outlets in the village.

On the left is the new retaining wall built in 2001 to shore up the A487 trunk road, replacing the old wall built over 150 years ago for horse drawn traffic. Typical of such work carried out in Merioneth, it is of a high standard, using slate stone facings to blend in with adjacent buildings, like the station.

Let us hope then that it won't be too long before the sight and sound of a little steam engine running past Esgairgeiliog station will be a regular and pleasurable experience once again.



Esgairgeiliog station, 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.

ESGAIRGEILIOG MILL .



The river junction in the 1920's, with Lloyd the postman's ducks. Picture courtesy Kathleen via Maggie Arnold.



The river junction, 2002, showing remnants of the old mill.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

The area around the junction of the two rivers, the Dulas and the Glesyrch, has always been the centre of activities in Esgairgeiliog. Even before there was a village proper, Esgairgeiliog mill was grinding oats and corn etc here in the eighteenth century. If you look at the picture above right, the wall under the nearer building by the river is of much earlier stonework than the later quarried slate waste walls around it. This is a part of the old mill buildings and even some of the old window openings are still visible. When the Cambria Wynne quarry started to convert the old mill in the 1870's into a slate mill, they appear to have demolished the water mill itself but used some of the walls of the store sheds, as above. The water for the old mill came from a small dam just above Evans bridge. The dam has now gone completely but the channel carrying water from it is still clearly visible and used to go through a second arch under Evans bridge, now covered up by new buttresses in the 1970's. From there the channel is still visible for a while, following the contours between the river and the old road to the village. The final outlet for the water from the old mill is a wide channel cut in the rock leading down into the river, about level with the office window by the near end of the present main factory building. It is now almost filled with rubble and barely visible but was usable as a path down to the river in the late 1960's.

The present large building is actually a later extension built onto the first slate mill which was where the open concreted yard is now. The first shed fell into disrepair and was derelict by the end of the second world war. The roof was removed by the early 1950's. The extension, being younger and in a better state was kept by the engineering firms which occupied the site from the war up to the late 1980's.

Back to the quarrying days. When the quarry company needed a more powerful water supply than that provided by the original mill leat they created a new, much more elaborate one. It started from the river Dulas close to Fronfelen Hall in Corris and followed the contours all the way down the valley. Passing Evans bridge above the road in wooden troughing, Beyond the bridge it crossed under the road through a pipe and continued past behind the gardens of Era Terrace. By the time it passed immediately behind the terrace it was in wooden troughing high enough to walk under, although it leaked a bit down your neck. At the exact spot where the driveway to Bwthyn Era joins the road, behind Mount Pleasant, the water entered a large iron tank on a tower about ten feet above the ground. From this an iron pipe, about two feet in diameter took the water straight down to the ground and down to the water wheel and later on a turbine in the shed below. This provided enough power to drive all the machinery in the two slate dressing sheds. It may also have fed a turbine in the small shed shown in the picture above left, known locally as 'Ty'r Injan', or engine house. When the water was not required, for maintenance or whatever, a sluice gate was built into the side of the troughing just below where the white bungalow beyond Era Terrace now stands. This was opened to let the water run out and down to the river, creating, over time, a deep crevice in the ground, still shown on maps as a water course.

When Ken Rowlands and his friends were youngsters in the 1930's, the quarry had closed and the water troughing and the storage tank were in disrepair. Sometimes, when the grownups were not looking, they would climb up the wooden steps and down into the two foot iron pipe. Boys were boys then, as now.

ERA WORKS .

To a small boy the stretch of river through the narrow mountain pass from Evans bridge to the ffrwd below the footbridge resembles the Amazon and periodically needs to be re charted and explored.

Swimming in the pool where the two rivers, the Dulas and the Glesyrch meet has always been a good place to acclimatise to the jungle before heading upstream by dugout canoe, (or shrink wrapped packing case, see right). In generations past, diving competitions off Evans bridge were organised to ascertain the depth of the pools there. Not recommended today for health and safety reasons.



Patrick Gunn & Jeremy Andrews exploring the upper reaches of the Dulas, 1985. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Mary & Bryn Morgan in the yard of Era Works, 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



View over Era Works , Christmas day 1995. Picture by Ray Gunn.

much as it had done for the last fifty years. The old office building was demolished long ago.

By the time this picture was taken, the site belonged to Jeremy Thomas, who, along with his wife Michelle was running a factory there making sofabeds. Starting with just the two of them, they gradually built up trade until they employed about ten people and sold a range of sofabeds and other upholstered furniture to the trade all over the United Kingdom and Ireland.

This enabled them to effect a few repairs and improvements to the property, as shown in the picture, right.

Jeremy and Michelle have two children, Jason and Louise, both keen motor cross enthusiasts.

Pictured left are Mary Morgan and her son Bryn in the yard of Era Works in the 1940's, standing by Mary's Austin seven car. The building in the background behind them was originally the office of the Era quarry, with a flight of steps up to it from the yard. Later, after the quarry closed, Trefor Jones opened a shop there, in 1948. Sadly, shortly afterwards his wife Catherine died but Trefor carried on, assisted by his teenage daughter, Nora.

In the opening below the office is an old Commer lorry which the Forestry Commission stored in there in the 1940's.

After the war the mill site was occupied by an engineering firm called Hawkins, which made hospital equipment. Later on another engineering firm moved in, run by Mr Fred Evans from Llanwrin. This firm also had premises elsewhere but used Era Works as it was now known to renovate hospital beds, stripping them, repairing and re spraying them. They also undertook some minor manufacturing work, like making headrests to fit the beds. They employed around three to six people for most of the time they were there.

This firm finally closed in the late 1980's, at which time much of the old post war Hawkins equipment and tooling was still there.

Pictured left is a view over the Era Works site on Christmas day 1995, complete with snow, looking



View over Era Works, May 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn..

WOOL FACTORY & SHOP



The shop by the bridge, about 1894.

Picture by John Thomas, courtesy National Library of Wales.



The old shop, Glandwr & Minafon, 1928.

Picture by D. S. George, courtesy Bryn Morgan.

By the late nineteenth century the wool industry had all but collapsed here with the coming of the railway and with it, cheaper woolen goods from the big Lancashire mills. The factory changed it's use, some say to making brushes, although we are not sure of that, the weavers, carders and spinners were replaced by slate miners, splitters and rock men and eventually the old building fell into disuse.

By the early twentieth century it was pulled down and the two new houses appeared on the site as above. The old cottages on the right survived until the 1950's, when, quite derelict, they too were pulled down.

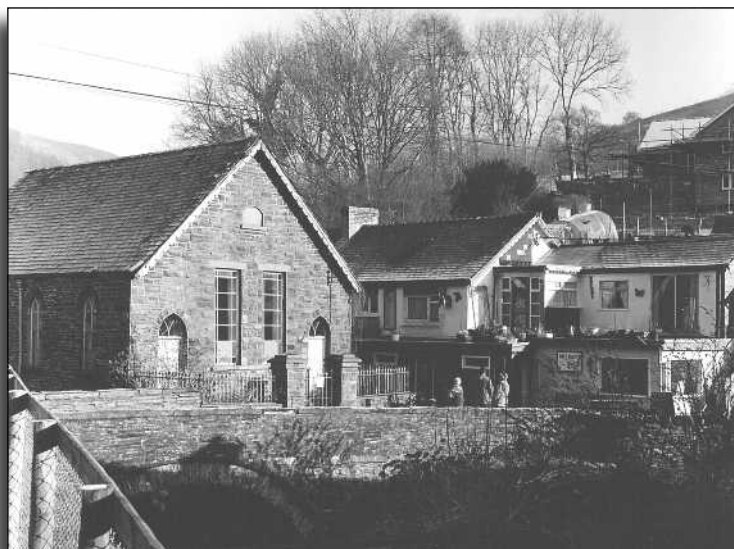
In the latter part of the nineteenth century the village shop and post office were not far from where they were in the late twentieth century. In the picture on the left, both the shop and post office are in the right hand end of the white cottages, which occupied the exact spot where the Tavarn Dwynant public house stands today. The name on the black sign on the wall reads William Jones.

The newer looking house to the left is where Glandwr is now. Despite looking new it was nonetheless rebuilt again by the 1920's, as can be seen in the next picture down. The roof has been turned round and another two houses added next to it.

In the top picture, to the rear left, you can see the old wool factory.

This was built soon after 1800 by Thomas Edwards (Ceinws), to process wool into yarn for the new weavers cottages built around the same time at Caerbont and possibly Achor cottages.

In the 1840's, Abraham and Margaret Edwards lived in the factory house with their children Ann, Sarah and Abraham. Also living there were Thomas William, a mason, his wife Catherine, and his son Edward, also a mason.



The bridge, chapel, Glandwr & Tafarn Dwynant, where the old shop used to be, Jan 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn..



Nora Richards's shop, 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Nora Richards, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

On the left is Nora Richards, who has been serving the needs of the community from her shop in the village for 55 years at the time of writing, since 1948. During this time she lost her mother, then her father, who started the shop and was married and widowed twice but still managed to keep the shop going. However, after all this Nora is now soon to retire.

NORA'S FAMILY .



Trefor Jones, 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan..

Trefor Jones, above and his wife, Catherine, right with baby Nora on her knee. Mary Morgan is in the background.

Trefor and Catherine had seven children, Nora, Iola, Eira, Beryl, Rosina, Morfydd and Clifford. They lived in Glandwr, where Nora still lives at the time of writing.



Era Works yard, 1940's with the old quarry office ,later converted to a shop by Trefor Jones.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Catherine Jones & daughter, Nora, late 1930's. Mary Morgan in background.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Morfydd Jones, Nora's sister. Picture courtesy Nora Richards.



Left back :- Nora,Trevor and Clifford, Catherine and Rosina
Left front :- Beryl, Eira and Iola.



Nora & Beryl Jones, around 1940, on Rhiwgreiddyn quarry tips. Picture courtesy Nora Richards.



Clifford Jones leaving home, early 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Above left, centre and right are Nora's sisters and brother, pictured in the 1940's.

On the right is Nora with her daughter Bethan in the late 1960's, when Nora's shop was in Glandwr and the site of the later pub was still a raised garden on the foundations of the old cottages. In the background are Dulas Cottages before renovation in the 1970's.

Pictured far right are Nora's daughter Bethan and her new husband John Davies on their wedding day. They now live in Llanidloes.



Nora & her daughter Bethan, 1960's. Picture courtesy Nora Richards.



John & Bethan Davies on their wedding day, Picture courtesy Nora Richards.

TAFARN DWYNANT .



*Julia Rowlands, 1965, in front of the site where the Tafarn Dwynant will later be built.
Picture, author's collection.*

together they could run a pub. Nora had the perfect site, where the old cottages had been, see above, and Glyn was a bricklayer and builder by trade and had experience of running a bar. So, to cut a long story short, Glyn built the pub, the 'Tafarn Dwynant', right, in 1977 and together they ran it very successfully for many years.



Tafarn Dwynant, 1990's.

Picture courtesy Winifred Wallace.



Nora Richards, 2003, in the Tafarn Dwynant. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Julia Gunn, 2001, filming in the Tafarn Dwynant.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

In order to make more room for the pub, Glyn also built a new shop for Nora at the bottom of the lane, by the river and an adjoining section to house the sub post office which she also took on.

After nearly thirty years the Tafarn Dwynant is still open and Nora is still running the shop but the sub post office has closed. Glyn too, sadly passed away on 24th May 1990, aged 59.

On the right are the delivery team, Roy Jones and John Evans who help to keep the pub's cellars well stocked.



*The weekly delivery to the Tafarn Dwynant, 2003. Roy Jones & John Evans.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

TAFARN DWYNANT .



Ian Hughes, Mark Jones (captain), Tudor Griffiths, Glyn Richards (landlord), Gwynfor Lewis, David Jones, Owain Jones & Neil Jones. Mid 1980's. Pool champions, Tafarn Dwynant. Picture courtesy Nora Richards.



Peter Jones, Geraint Evans front, Arwel Evans, Roger Jones back, Aled Jones centre, Gareth Jones front, & Mark Jones right. Early 1980's in the Tafarn Dwynant. Picture courtesy Sharon Jones.



Nora Richards & Keith Sheen, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Paul Jones, Nora Richards & Patrick Gunn, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn

MINAFON .



Tom Rowlands with his first wife. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Edward Evans & Llew Jones, Annie Rowland's brother. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

Tom Rowlands, pictured left with his first wife lived in Minafon in the first half of the twentieth century. They had one daughter, Rowenna.

When sadly his first wife later died, Tom remarried. He and his second wife Annie continued to live in Minafon. Tom worked in Braich Goch quarry with his brother John, who was an underground steward there. Tom's sister Mary Jones lived next door in the middle house with her husband Evan.

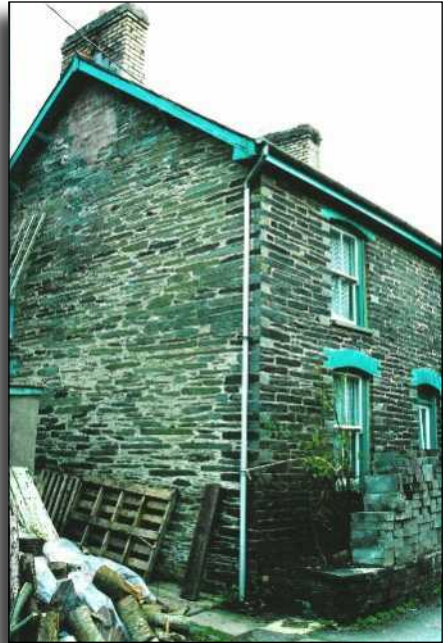
Tom and Annie later took a lodger, Annie's brother Llew Jones, who came there from Tyrpeg on the Aberhosan road. Llew, Pictured below left with Edward Evans from Bryndulas, was a contract farm worker. His specialty was hedge laying and he would travel around from farm to farm cutting and laying or pleaching the hedges. This was a skilled job in the days before tractors and flails and today is coming back into fashion again, although skilled practitioners of the craft are harder to find now.

The current occupier of Minafon is Gerald Groom, Pictured below left. Gerald had formally been living in 1 Aelybryn and was a forestry contractor and has lived in the village since the 1950's. He had his own sawmill in the village, up on the tips of Era quarry, visible in the background of the picture below right of forestry worker Hugh Davies and his children, Julie and Karen.

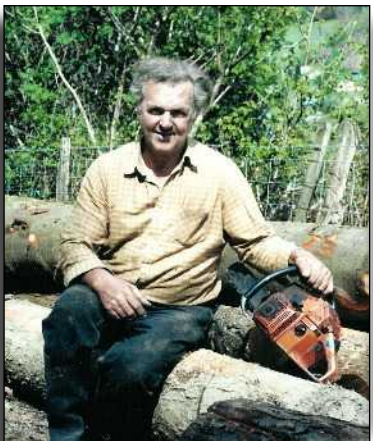
Gerald's sawmill was in a prominent and strategic position above a main entrance to the forest from the village. The Forestry Commission in the mid twentieth century had an extremely strict and forbidding policy regarding the collecting of firewood and even kindling and lighting sticks from the forest.

Even just entering the forest was vigorously discouraged. Therefore, because of his location, Gerald was charged with the job of looking out for trespassers and people collecting kindling. Although reluctant to do it you did'nt argue with the Commission in those days.

So, when young Julia Rowlands and her sisters, all aged between about one and nine decided they wanted a little Christmas tree one December in the 1950's, they had to think of a way to get it past Gerald's sawmill. After spending most of the afternoon sawing through the roots of a little self seeded Douglas fir seedling with sharp stones, they tucked it up warm and snug in the youngest sister's pram with the hood up and rain cover on. As they passed the sawmill giggling and cooeing to the 'baby' in the pram they had a ticking off from Gerald for being there and no, he did'nt want to see the baby, so they politely said goodbye and hurried down the track. They had another telling off at home and never dared to try it again. When told about it recently, almost fifty years on, Gerald was most amused. Although he retired several years ago, he is still asked occasionally to fell a difficult tree, as his skill in placing it safely just where it's wanted is legendary in the area.



Minafon, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Gerald Groom, near Brynllwyd, Corris, 1980's. Picture courtesy Gerald Groom..



Julia, Brian, Ann & Jennifer Rowlands, Early 1960's, Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Hugh Davies & his two daughters, Julie & Karen, in the mid 1970's, with Gerald Groom's sawmill in the background. Picture courtesy Hugh Davies.

FORESTRY HORSES



Joe Evans, & Idris Lewis, 1950's, working for Gerald Groom, pulling out timber. Picture courtesy Gerald Groom.



Gerald Groom, 2003, outside the old smithy, Esgairgeiliog, with two of the last horse shoes from his last horse, Dick, pictured below.



Maggie Rowlands with Gerald's Horse, Dick, 1960's. Dick was the last horse shod in the smithy at Dyfi bridge.

Picture, authors collection.



Maggie Rowlands with another of Gerald's forest Horses, 1960's. Picture, authors collection.



Gerald Groom & one of his horses. Picture courtesy Gerald Goom..

Since the 1960's tractors have done the heavy hauling of timber in the forestry industry, with now even bigger machines based on large track laying diggers adapted to fell, cut up, debark and stack the trees, controlled by one operator in the cab.

Before the mid sixties though, most of the moving and pulling out of the logs was done by horses like the ones shown on this page, which belonged to Gerald Groom.

Dick, pictured above with Maggie Rowlands was a well known and popular horse in the village, mainly because when he was not working he lived in the field opposite the old station bus stop. So when people went to catch a bus, some like Maggie would often take a carrot or two for him to eat. Dick was the last horse to be shod in the old smithy at Dyfi bridge, in 1969. The smithy was demolished in the 1980's, but when working it belonged to Mr Humphreys, a blacksmith who lived in Abernant, Llanwrin and who's brother also owned the smithy in Llanwrin village, now a motor repair garage.

Maggie Rowlands remembered a man called Will working for Gerald, who had at some time injured both his legs and walked with a limp. One day Will was working with a horse which was also a bit lame. He was about to rub some Morris Evans oil (a liniment) on the horses legs to sooth them and Maggie muttered to Gerald, 'why doesn't he rub some on his own legs too'.

THE MORGAN FAMILY , NEW HOUSES .

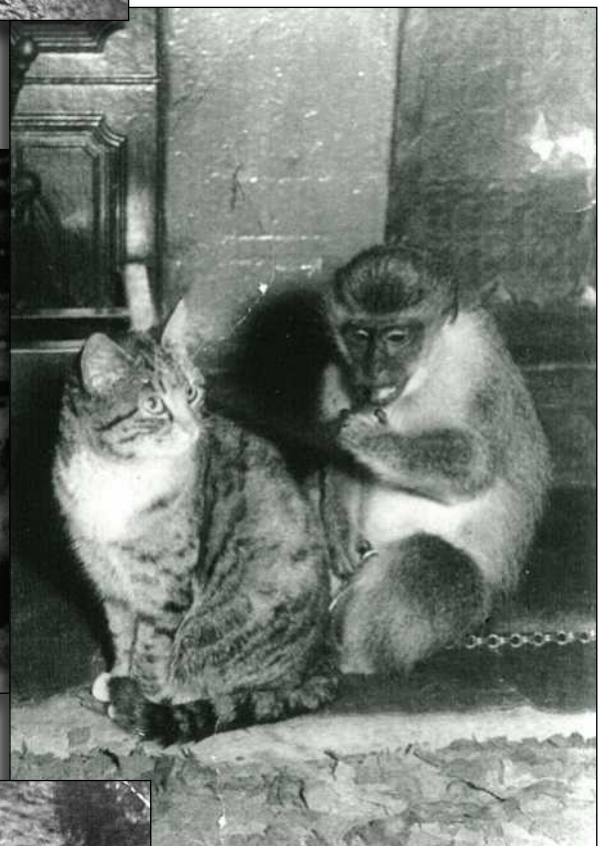


When the old factory by the Methodist chapel was demolished, early in the twentieth century, the new house between it and the old shop was rebuilt with an additional two houses added on the site of the old factory. This made a new terrace of three houses, which for many years were known simply as the 'new houses', Esgairgeiliog. The furthest one was later named Minafon and the middle one became Glandwr. The right hand house, next to the old shop was occupied from the early 1920's until the mid 1950's, when Aelybryn was built, by the Morgan family pictured left, headed by Isaac Morgan.

Isaac Morgan, centre rear, with his daughter Mary, right and three of her four children, Eirwen, Bryn and Tom, about 1939-40. Dafydd John is pictured bottom left of this page. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan..



Bryn Morgan feeding Cheeta the monkey, early 1950's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Cheeta the monkey grooming Ben the cat, 1950's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



David John Morgan, 1940's. The Pioneer Corps. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Mary Morgan with Cheeta the monkey, early 1950's. Above Cheeta, left of Mary's head is the mirror he used to watch out for Mary coming home. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

In the early 1950's the Morgans had a pet monkey called Cheeta. He was a well known character at the time and great friends with their other pet, Ben, the cat, pictured above and would help her nurse and look after her kittens. When he heard Mary approaching in the school car he would become excited and start singing. He would then use a mirror to watch out for her turning into the lane by the house.

THE MORGAN FAMILY , NEW HOUSES .



Mary Morgan, left, Gwyneth Morgan, right, Hannah Morgan, centre and Olga Morgan, right. Small child on left unknown.. Family of Mary's from Tanycoed, late 1930's. Note the Austin 7 car in the background.. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Back, Diana Morgan, left, Jennifer Rowlands, Olga Morgan, Julia Rowlands, front Alison Rowlands, mid 1950's. Diana & Olga Morgan are Gwyneth Morgan's children.

Picture authors collection.



Isaac Morgan with Mary's sons, Bryn & Tom Morgan, late 1930's. Tom was a porter in the Wynnstay hotel, Machynlleth. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

The Morgans were a local family, with further close relatives in Tanycoed. One, Olga Morgan is pictured right in the lane between the chapel and the new houses in the 1940's. On the



Olga Morgan from Tanycoed, 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Gwyneth & Mary Morgan, sitting on Isaac Morgan's car, 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

left is Olga's Mother Gwyneth with Mary Morgan, sitting on Isaac Morgan's car. Note the blackout covers on the head-lamps. The area at the far end of the lane in these two pictures is where Nora Richards has her shop today.

Tom Morgan emigrated to Australia after the war. He returned to visit in recent years but has now sadly passed away.

KEN'S BOYHOOD MEMORIES OF THE VILLAGE .



*Kenneth Rowlands, late 1930's.
Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.*



Isaac Morgan, steam roller driver in South Wales.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

One Saturday morning, Ken Rowlands and his friend Elvet from Maespoeth were roaming the village, looking for something to get up to. Then they saw the steamroller. The driver, who had been doing some work in the village late on Friday night, had left his vehicle by the roadside down by the bridge and gone home to Cwmlinau for the weekend. The boys were unaware that there was still a little bit of fire left in the firebox from the night before and consequently a fair bit of steam pressure still in the boiler. They only wanted to climb up and pretend to drive it.

All was going well and they were having great fun until one of them must have accidentally knocked the wrong lever. For suddenly the big flywheel started to turn. As if that was not bad enough, a few moments later the steamroller started to move forward up the hill towards Mount Pleasant. Being small boys they couldn't see over the top of the boiler and the big flywheel was spinning right by their ears, so they were unable to see which way to steer it. Neither of them had a clue how to stop it either. It was heading straight for the gate and the front of Mount Pleasant house and things were looking pretty grim for the two boys, (and the house).

Luckily, fate had another card up it's sleeve for them. Isaac Morgan, Bryn and Eirwen's grandfather, was home for the weekend from his job in South Wales as a (believe it or not, but it's true) steamroller driver. He and his family lived in one of the houses by the Methodist chapel. Isaac was in the house and heard the distinctive sound of the steamroller starting off. Looking out of the window and taking in the scene in a moment, he ran out, up the hill and managed to stop it reshaping the front path to Mount Pleasant.

Isaac Morgan set a speed and endurance record for steamrollers while working in South Wales,

between the wars, as reported in the Daily Express at the time :-

'Steam Roller Goes 120 Miles In Two Days'

Pembroke Dock, Tuesday :-
A shortage of steamrollers is reported in South Pembrokeshire. All available rollers in the county are working overtime.

A few days ago an urgent call was sent to Newport Mon., 120 miles away, for a roller to be used in connection with a water improvement scheme at Castle Martin.

The roller did the journey in record time, arriving after two days of 'all out' traveling.



Isaac Morgan, with Eirwen & Bryn,

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

KEN'S BOYHOOD MEMORIES OF THE VILLAGE .

One day, in the early part of the second world war, Ken Rowlands, Bryn Morgan and the rest of the gang were kicking around the village looking for something to do. The men were away, the women were working and the boys were bored. Then suddenly an idea! One of them remembered seeing an autocyte in Bryn's mother's outhouse. At that time the autocyte was a fairly recent innovation. Basically a strongly made bicycle with a small engine mounted either behind the seat or forward of the pedals.

The problem now was persuading Bryn to get it out of the shed. He was naturally reluctant to risk a good leathering if something happened to the bike that he couldn't hide. However, after some considerable persuasion he finally agreed and dragged it out of the shed.

After the initial ritual of circling around it, poking it, praising it and working out what everything was for, it was decided that someone should have a go on it. If Bryn was a bit worried before, he was certainly worried now. Especially when everyone agreed that as it was from his house he should be the first one to ride it. Still, ever keen to show willing for a dare and not wishing to admit that he hadn't a clue how the contraption worked, Bryn made ready.

To start the machine, they decided, the petrol was turned on, ignition on, clutch in, then run like hell with it, let go the clutch and jump on. Sounds simple. Everything went fine, until it came to the bit about jumping on. As soon as he let go the clutch, the engine burst into life and the bike lurched forward, pulling Bryn slightly off balance. Off it went, down the road, with Bryn hanging on for dear life, unable to run fast enough to leap over the saddle and not having any idea how to stop it. They hadn't discussed that bit.

Exactly how he did stop it isn't known, as by this time the rest of the gang were running just as fast in the opposite direction. Well ! Bryn's mother wasn't the understanding type and they didn't want to be around when she got hold of Bryn.



Isaac Morgan, 1930's.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

One dark winter's night during the war Ken and his friend, Emrys Morris from Ty Isaf noticed Eirwen Morgan and a land army girl who was lodging with Eirwen's family going for milk. This meant the two girls walking with the milk can all the way to Nursery Cottage, beyond Tanycoed, about half a mile, where they would get the can filled and then walk back again. One of the boys saw the chance for a bit of fun, so after a couple of minutes they set off to follow the girls. When they got to the stretch of main road before Tanycoed where the trees hung out over the road, making it very dark and creepy, they stopped. There they rolled down their socks and rolled up their trousers, showing their white 'long johns' climbed up the bank into the bushes and waited.



Eirwen Morgan, early 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

When the girls, on their return journey, were almost back to where the boys were hiding, they heard a slight rustling and then a thump, thump. Suddenly, in the darkness before them were two pairs of shining white legs. They could see nothing else in the gloom, only these thin white legs dancing about on the road. They were so startled that they ran screaming all the way back to Nursery Cottage and there was not much milk left in the can when they got there.

ANNIBYNWYR TABERNACL CHAPEL .



Dr Allen Nash and Dr Mari Rhydwen visiting from Australia in 2003. Mari is Annie Lizzie Williams's grand daughter. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Tabernacl Adeiladwyd 1895. The title plaque and date the chapel was built Picture by Julia Gunn.



The foundation stone laid by eight year old Annie Lizzie Williams on 29th June 1895.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



The trowel used by Annie Lizzie Williams to lay the foundation stone, pictured right, in 1895. The inscription reads :- 'Presented to Miss A L Williams on her laying of the Foundation Stone of Tabernacl Ceinws Chapel June 29th 1895'.

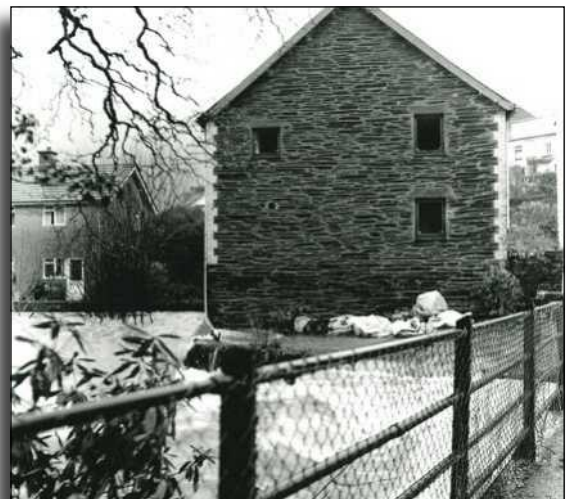
Picture courtesy Dr Mari Rhydwen, Annie Lizzie's grand daughter and Dr Allen Nash. Kindly E mailed from Australia.

According to J. Arthur Williams's book, 'Trem yn Ol', Mrs Hugh Pugh of Plas Rhiwgreiddyn gave land to build a chapel in the village in 1832. It was called 'Achor'. However, we cannot pinpoint exactly where. It might have been in the end of Achor cottages, where the Aberglesyrch school was later opened in 1850, or in the little house that used to be on the end of Achor cottages, where the path goes down to Ty Isaf.

The present chapel was built in 1895 on an empty plot and the foundation stone was laid on the 29th June that year by Annie Lizzie Williams, the eight year old daughter of the Rhiwgreiddyn quarry Manager, Jeremiah Williams and his wife Sophia, who were living in Rhiwawel.

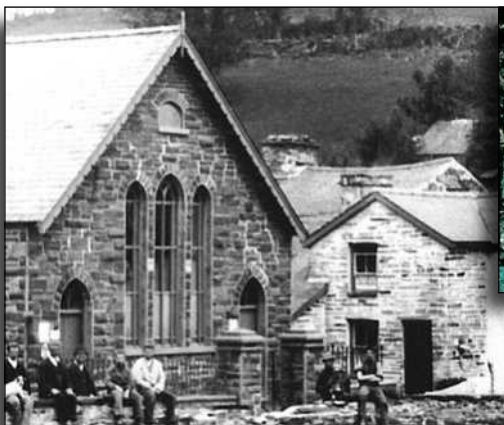
Coincidentally, in May this year, as we were preparing to write about this chapel, the grand daughter of Annie Lizzie Williams, Dr Mari Rhydwen, and her friend, Dr Allen Nash, turned up in the village while on holiday from their home in Australia. They asked around for any information about the chapel and village and Gerald Groom of Minafon kindly sent them up to see us. After a cup of tea and a chinwag they continued on their journey but we have since been in touch by 'e-mail'. Mari, also an author, owns the trowel pictured above and Allen kindly sent us the picture of it. The Rhydwen family bought all of Era Terrace in 1928 when Era Quarry closed and eventually sold the last one, number 2, to us in 1982. It's a small world really isn't it.

Mrs Morris of 1 Caerbont used to teach in the Sunday School at the Annibynwyr chapel and the children of the chapel members were firmly encouraged by their parents to attend. As with most chapels there was a strong social side among the membership, with annual Sunday School trips, parties, choir meetings and competitions with other chapels and choirs etc. Being opposite the Methodist chapel across the road there was often, shall we say, a competitive atmosphere as the respective members arrived for and departed from Sunday services and other functions. They would however get together for large or important social functions. The chapel and indeed the preacher's income was financed by the annual subscriptions and donations of the chapel members. Therefore when attendance and membership began to wane the money dwindled. Eventually, by the 1980's, after 90 years the chapel was forced to close and was later sold. It has now been converted to a house.



A rear view of the Annibynwyr chapel, 2002, with the river Dulas in flood and lapping around the walls of the chapel. Picture by Ray Gunn.

EBENEZER METHODIST CHAPEL .



Ebenezer chapel in the 1890's. (note the old wool factory behind it). Picture by John Thomas, courtesy The National Library of Wales.



Name plaque on Ebenezer chapel, built in 1840, and rebuilt in 1874.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Ebenezer chapel, April 2001, with the new owner, Jeremy Thomas and his son Jason. Note the windows, altered in the early 20th century. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Preacher Mr Davies with Liz Jones the post, after chapel, 1970's.

Picture courtesy Phena Jones.



Inside the closed chapel in 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

In the early 19th century the Methodist congregation in Esgairgeiliog used to meet at Esgairgeiliog farm, then occupied by Edward Edwards. Later, as their numbers and funds grew, Thomas Edwards of Ceinws farm sold them land to build a chapel. It was built in 1840, opened in 1841 and called Ebenezer. It was a small but smart looking chapel, built to a design popular at that time, very similar indeed to the Methodist chapel built in Pantperthog at about the same time. This one though had an additional floor below the main chapel, used as a vestry. At that time there was a flight of steps leading down to the vestry at the front of the chapel.

However, there must have been some problems with the building, as it was rebuilt in 1874 and it is thought that the front steps were also filled in at about this time, with an entrance now at the rear of the building.

Electricity was supplied to the chapel in the 1930's by Captain Williams of Plas Rhiwgreiddyn, when he installed his turbine generators in the river Dulas, (see page 12). The electrician was Iorwerth Lloyd of Brynhyfryd, Corris.

In those days the chapels were the hub of the village, with full congregations on Sundays and various meetings in the vestry on weekday evenings.

An Eisteddfod was held here every other year with the Annibynwyr chapel across the road and it was so packed with people and so enthusiastic was the singing that condensation would be running down the walls.

In the vestry below the chapel, pictured below right, there were children's parties and Sunday schools. In some chapels, adults also attended Sunday schools and some were even presented with medals for so many years unbroken attendance. This was also the room where chapel members attended choir practice. Before the second world war, Mr Lloyd the

postman was the choirmaster. Mr Lloyd was an accomplished pianist but there was no piano or organ in the vestry. Therefore, when he wanted a note to start the choir off on, he would run out of the chapel and up the road to his house in Achor cottages and strike the note on his own piano. Then, singing the note repeatedly he would run back down to the vestry and the choir would start off on the right note.

In later years, Louie Morris's mother, Margaret, used to carry her organ to the vestry for meetings.

Occasionally lay preachers would visit and lead meetings in the vestry and members would donate food for refreshments afterwards. At such times, Mrs Williams of Llwyngwern farm might donate a home grown boiling ham as a fitting treat to impress the visitor.

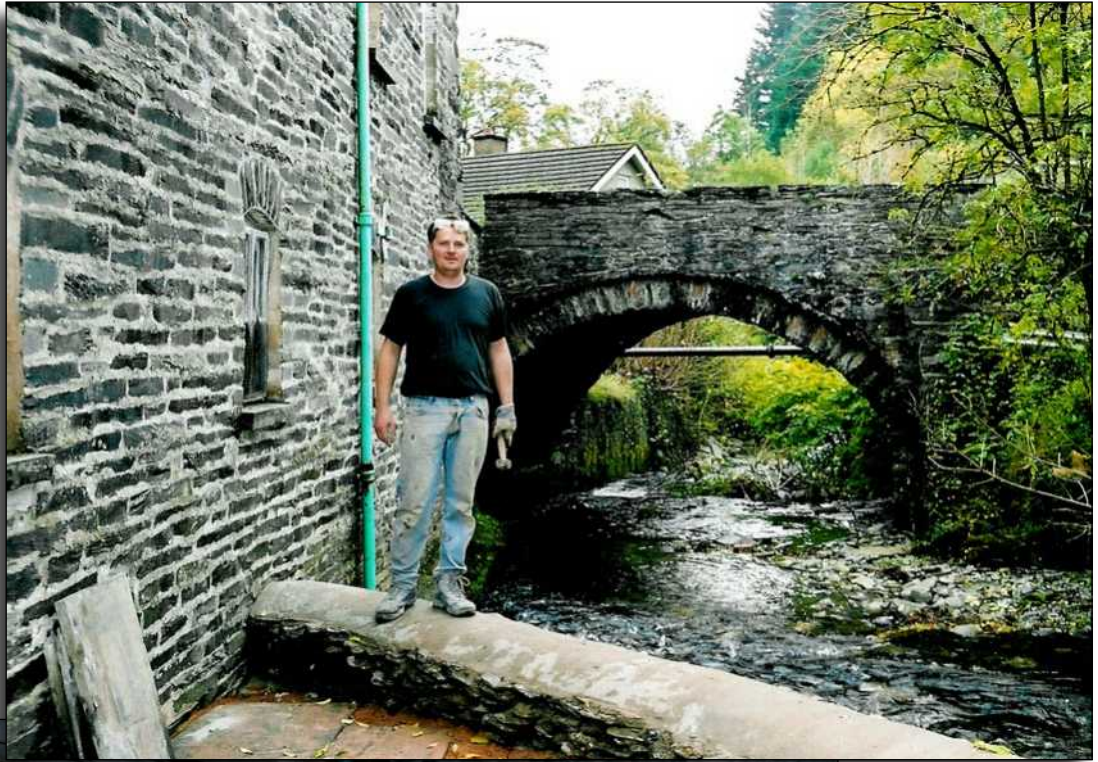
The chapel closed in the 1980's and was sold to somebody in London for a few years. In 2001 It was bought by Jeremy Thomas of Era Works, pictured above right with his son Jason. It's future is uncertain.



The vestry below the chapel in April 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.

EBENEZER METHODIST CHAPEL .

Jeremy Andrews building the new retaining wall and yard between the river Glesyrch and the Methodist chapel, 2001. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Michael Blackwell, left and Jeremy Andrews, right, working on the old vestry under the chapel, with the owner's son Jason Thomas, centre, 2001. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Michael Blackwell working on the chapel, 2001. Picture by Julia Gunn.

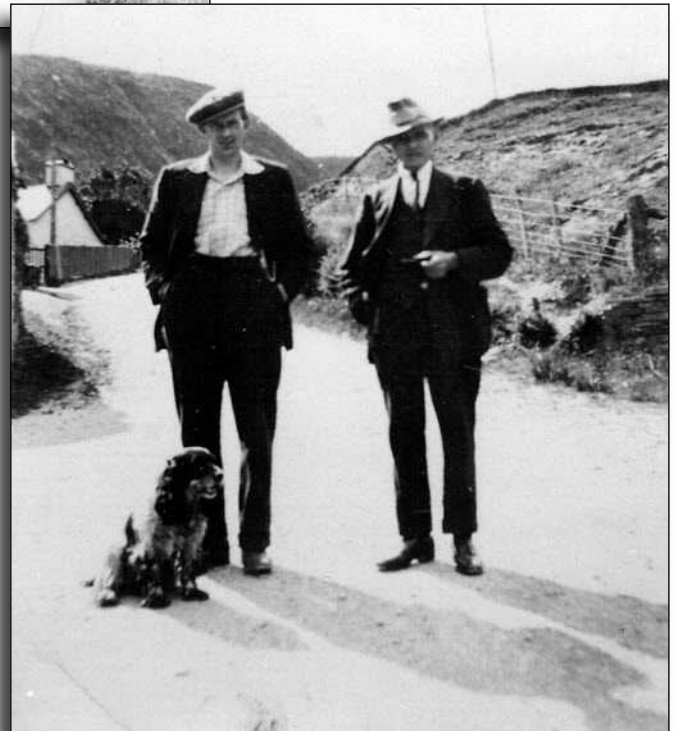


ABERGLESYRCH BRIDGE .



The large apple tree by the bridge, in the garden of Dulas cottages, pictured left, was planted by John Rowlands, pictured below. He planted it soon after his grandson Kenneth Rowlands was born in July 1928 to commemorate his birth. John was living in Dulas cottages at that time. The tree is still thriving today, at 75 years old and still giving a good crop of eating apples every year.

Aberglesyrch bridge, 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.



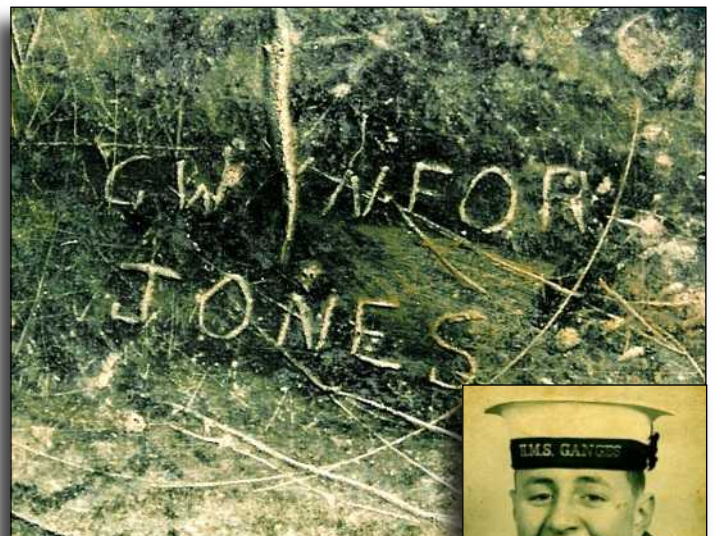
Idwal Jones & John Rowlands by the factory entrance, 1920's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Initials on the bridge. E is for Emrys Morris, above left. KEN is for Kenneth Rowlands, above right, about early 1940's. Picture of initials by Julia Gunn. Boys courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Initials on the bridge. PG 1986, for Patrick Gunn, above. Picture of initials by Julia Gunn, of Patrick by Ray Gunn..



Gwynfor Jones, about early 1960's. Picture of initials by Julia Gunn. Picture right courtesy J.N.A. 2nd cl. J. Gwynfor Jones (1963).

ABERGLESYRCH BRIDGE, 1894 TO 2003 .



Aberglesyrch bridge, showing the shop and Post Office, about 1894. Picture by John Thomas courtesy The National Library of Wales.



Aberglesyrch bridge, meeting place for the village, about 1894.



Picture by John Thomas, courtesy The National Library of Wales.



Aberglesyrch bridge, 2001. Nora Richards, publican, talking to visitors. Still a meeting place for the village. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Gerald Groom, Jeremy & Jason Thomas, 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Rosie Williams Jones, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

ABERGLESYRCH BRIDGE , PEOPLE .



*All along the back :- Richard Jones, left corner, Jack Lloyd, Alfred Jones, Stanley Jones, cap, Era Terr, Ray Arnold, back hatless, Gwylm Jones, big cap, Tecwyn Lloyd, Richard Morgan, cap, Idwal Lloyd, cap, William Green.
Middle row of six :- Tom Rowlands, left, Christmas Jones, Jimmy Luke, cap, Idwal Jones, Dulas cotts, watch chain, Llewelyn Lloyd, Edward Evans, Bryndulas, hiding.
Front row of five :- Stanley Jones, Walter ?, Goedwig, John Jones, Ceinws Bach, hat, Louie Morris, Caerbont, Kenneth Rowlands, Aelybryn, right. Gathering of men on Aberglesyrch bridge in the late 1940's. Picture courtesy Marian Jones.*



View over the bridge about 1940's. Baby believed to be of Morgan family. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Beryl Jones, Nora's sister, 1943. Picture courtesy Louie Morris.



Blodwen Rowlands, Mable Jones, Olga Morgan. Early 1940's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Some of the people who paused to be photographed on Aberglesyrch bridge in the 1940's. Even in the difficult time of the second world war, life at home had to go on and pictures such as the one above right of Beryl Jones were sent to friends and family serving abroad to remind them of home and cheer them up.



*Back row :- Bryn Morgan, Emyr Roberts, Olga Morgan.
Front row :- Briallen Jones, Buddug Jones, Blodwen Rowlands, Clifford Jones, Gareth Jones. Early 1940's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.*

ABERGLESYRCH BRIDGE , PEOPLE .



*Back row of four :- Clifford Jones , Archie McLlellan, Colin Jones, Yr Efail, Eryl Jones.
 Middle row :- Michael Retallick, John Morris, Jennifer Rowlands, cardigan, Angharad Rowlands,(not related), Shirley Morris, back, not known, front, Gwynfor Jones, back, Susan Retallick, front, Aled, Gareth, David Evans, not known, back right hidden.
 Front row :- Bethan Jones, shop, Hugh Morris, Caerbont, Paul Retallick, Alison Rowlands, Aelybryn, Ann Rowlands, Aelybryn, not known, Alec Lake, Eifion Thomas.
 Youths and children of Esgairgeiliog near the bridge in the late 1950's. Picture courtesy Gerald Groom.*



*Iola Jones & Llewelyn Lloyd, 1950's.
 Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*



*Julia Rowlands, aged 15, on the bridge
 1965. Picture authors collection.*



*Raymond Gunn and Julia Rowlands on Aberglesyrch
 bridge, 1968. Picture authors collection.*

Some of the people and children who stopped on the bridge in the 1950's and 1960's, including the authors, above. Today, as the new century begins people still pause as they cross Aberglesyrch bridge, occasionally to have their photograph taken.

DULAS COTTAGES (Y PLWMP).



John Morris, David Jones, Shirley Morris, Eric Jones and Kim the dog,, about mid 1950's. Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.



The village pump, 1999.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

In the early part of the twentieth century Mrs Ellin Morris, (Louie Morris's grandmother) lived in 2 Dulas Cottages, the furthest one from the road. In those days professional photographers would tour an area knocking on doors and offering their services for family portraits etc. After taking the pictures they would return to their studio, perhaps as far away as Aberystwyth or even Liverpool where they would develop and print the results from large glass plate negatives and post the pictures to their customers.

Such was the case one day when a hopeful photographer, Mr Bevan, called on Mrs Morris. Declining the offer of a portrait of herself only, Mrs Morris went on to bemoan the fact that she didn't have a picture of herself with her late husband, William, only single portraits. Spotting a possible opportunity for a sale, Mr Bevan quickly said 'That's no problem, I can copy the two and join them together in the darkroom'. (In those days, with large glass negatives, hand retouching with a pencil and a scraping knife was common place). 'Oh!, alright then', said Mrs Morris but then, after pausing for a moment said 'There is one problem though, the best picture I've got of him is with his hat on. I never liked that hat'. Mr Bevan thought for a moment about all the extra retouching involved but keen for a sale replied 'No problem Mrs Morris, I can remove the hat but there is just one thing I will need to know. When I remove his hat, which side did your husband part his hair'. Mrs Morris gave him a very old fashioned look for a few moments and said, acidly, 'Well, if you can remove his hat you will see for yourself which side he parted his hair, wont you !'

Nowadays, with modern digital cameras and computers the work involved is relatively easier but problem customers are the same today as always.....



Phena Jones, Enid Steiler, ...?..., Lena Mclellan, Jackie Jones, ...?..., Mrs Stone, Blodwen Pugh, Megan Morris and Ceridwen Jones, 1989. Ceinws Women's Institute members planted a cherry tree in the grounds of Era Works, opposite the pump and Dulas Cottages.

Picture courtesy Phena Jones.

DULAS COTTAGES (Y PLWMP).



Dulas Cottages, 1928. Picture by D. S. George, courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Dulas cottages, above, are known locally as 'Y Plwmp' or 'The Pump' because of the village pump adjacent to them. The high retaining wall beyond in the picture was to hold back the slate waste tip accumulated from the cutting shed at Era Works across the road.



'Teulu'r Plwmp', The family, Dulas Cottages, 1901. At back, in doorway, John Idris & Walter. Main row, left to right, Thomas Jones, Richard Jones, Annie Jones, sitting, Thomas Jones, sitting, Richard Albert, boy with armband, Ann Mary Jones, Lucy Ann, little girl, David. In front, Dorothy Jane, little girl standing, baby Martha May.

Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



John Rowlands, about 1914.

Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Ann Mary Jones, 1901, married John Rowlands, left. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Lucy Rowlands, late 1920's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Tom Rowlands, 1940. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

Annie and Thomas Jones, sitting in the centre of the picture above lived in Dulas Cottages at the turn of the 20th century. They were the author Julia Gunn's great, great grandparents. Their daughter Ann Mary, pictured left and also third from right, above, married John Rowlands, pictured far left. He was



Catherine Jane Rowlands, left, Blodwen Rowlands, right, Lewis John Rowlands, sitting, mid 1920's.

Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

one of Lewis Rowlands' children from Ty Isaf. John worked in the Braich Goch quarry, Corris, as an underground steward, a very responsible position commanding much respect from the men at the rock face.

John and Ann brought up five children, Catherine Jane, Thomas, Blodwen, Lewis John and Lucy. Thomas Rowlands, right is the author's grandfather.

DULAS COTTAGES (Y PLWMP).



Blodwen Rowlands outside Dulas Cottages, mid 1930's. Blodwen died in 1935, aged just 27. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



John Rowlands, 1920's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Lewis John Rowlands, 1941. picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

In the late 1920's to early 1930's, Dulas cottages was only two cottages, not three as it is today. In the first, larger one nearer to the road, at that time lived Ken Rowland's grandfather John Rowlands and great aunt Blodwen Rowlands and uncle Lewis John Rowlands. When Ken was born in 1928, his grandfather planted an apple tree in the front garden to mark the event. The tree is still there today and still producing apples.

Even when quite young, Ken was always a very mischievous little boy. I'm sure there must have been times when John Rowlands wished he had buried him under that apple tree. Such as the day he came home from the quarry with his son Lewis John for their dinner. The custom at table then was for the wife, or in this case Blodwen, to carve the meat and put it on the plates on the table. The vegetables and gravy were in separate bowls on the table for everyone to help themselves.

The two men entered the room, looked at the table and grandfather shouted 'where's my meat'. A moment later Lewis John shouted 'where's my meat'. 'It's on the table' came the reply. 'No it's not' shouted grandfather, 'someone's taken it'. 'Someone's taken mine too' said Lewis John. 'I think I know who too' said grandfather. So grandfather bear and



Kenneth Rowlands, about 1934. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Dulas Cottages, (Y Plwmp), 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

uncle bear went off in search of the culprit !

They did not have to look far. Down by the river, under the apple tree sat Ken, his cheeks bulging to bursting point as he struggled to chomp on two platefuls of meat in one go.

PARC DULAS .

Parc Dulas is a small estate of four chalet type houses built in the 1970's and tucked away behind Dulas Cottages, accessed by the old quarry tramway, see picture far right.

This tramway was once a busy route, bringing slate blocks from the Era quarry (also known as Colorado) on the hillside above the village to the cutting shed at Era Works. It is still used as a popular public footpath today. Before we leave this point it is worth noting that there was also another tramway planned and almost completed that would have run along the front of Dulas cottages, over a bridge, along a viaduct into the field beyond and on to the much older Cwm Gloddfa quarry, also known as Cwmodyn and later Cambria Wynne. In the pictures, right, the crumbling remains of the bridge and viaduct built in the 1870's are still there, although part of the wall on the shop side fell into the river only last year. However, before the last link of the tramway was completed, the company opened the Colorado quarry across the valley. Finding that site more viable and promising they eventually abandoned the old quarry, stopped work on the tramway to it and developed instead the new route behind Dulas Cottages to the new quarry. The tramway was horse powered and the stable for the horses, known locally as 'stabal James' is pictured below. It was located almost exactly on the site where 1 Parc Dulas now stands, pictured bottom left.

The estate is now a quiet and peaceful place, with only the slate waste retaining wall along the river bank giving a hint of what this narrow and very level road was once used for.



*View from the entrance to Parc Dulas, 2002.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



*The way to Parc Dulas, 2003.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



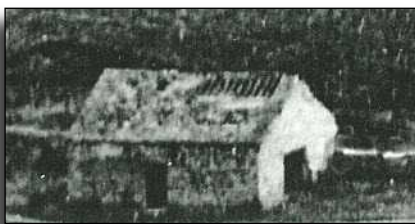
*Below Dulas Cottages, showing the crumbling parallel walls of the old tramway bridge, 2003.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



*Remains of the old tramway bridge, behind the Methodist chapel, 2003.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



Behind the shop, showing the old tram viaduct wall, 2003. Picture by Ray Gunn.



'Stabal James', 1936. Picture authors collection.



1 Parc Dulas, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Parc Dulas, from the Forestry Commission Camp, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

PARC DULAS .



3 & 4 Parc Dulas, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

When the parents of piano teacher Chris Dendy bought 3 Parc Dulas in 1976 they thought they had found their dream home for retirement. Sadly, this was not to be and as his father's health deteriorated it became clear that it would not be practical to live in Ceinws. In 1983 the house was put on the market and Chris returned for 'one last holiday'. He remembers, 'everything conspired to keep me here. The weather was gorgeous, the scenery breathtaking and the people were so friendly but above all, I felt at ease. I returned to London, phoned my parents and offered to buy the place'.

Many happy holidays in Wales followed and as the years went by Chris found it increasingly difficult to return to 'the smoke'. So it was that in 1997 he handed in his notice, - he had been head of music at a large independent school in Surrey, - and embarked on the biggest adventure of his life.

He arrived on a cold wet night in February 1998 and immediately set about creating a music studio. 'There was never a moment's doubt, I knew that I had found my spiritual home'.

The first two years were not easy.

He knew that there were people out there looking for a music teacher but everyone seemed to be waiting for somebody else to try him. He organised concerts, played for choirs and soloists and still only had a handful of pupils. The breakthrough came at the end of 1999 when Ysgol Gynradd Machynlleth asked him to play the piano for their millennium production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream coat. Chris said 'suddenly everyone with a child at that school knew who I was and what I did and the telephone started to ring'.

Today he enjoys a busy schedule, teaching around sixty lessons a week and is much in demand as an accompanist.

He thoroughly enjoys the gentle pace of life here. 'I love it', he says, 'it's wonderful to have the time to concentrate on doing the things I enjoy most. People have been so kind and made me feel very welcome. I hope that as the years go by I can contribute something to the community through my music making and teaching'.

The above text courtesy Chris Dendy.



Christopher Dendy at his piano in 3 Parc Dulas, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn..

‘ THE CAMP HILL ‘



A view over Esgairgeiliog in the late 1950's. No pub, no Penclap. Note the little cottage on the end of Achor cottages.

Picture authors collection.



A similar view taken in 2001. The pub is well established, Penclap is being built but the cottage by Yscoed (Achor) has gone. New units have been built in Era Works yard.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Another view from further back, 1985. The Forestry Commission used to maintain the bank above the verge. Picture by Wallace Gunn.

MOUNT PLEASANT, (FORMALLY ESGAIRGEILIOG MILL HOUSE).



Frank Johnstone senior, Royal Navy, first world war. Picture courtesy Nelson Johnstone.



Frank Johnstone junior, Royal Air Force, 1920's. Picture courtesy Nelson Johnstone.



Mount Pleasant, (formally Esgairgeiliog Mill house), 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Dorothy, Isabella & Nelson Johnstone, about 1930. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

Mount

Pleasant is one of the oldest houses in Esgairgeiliog. It was formally the Miller's house for Esgairgeiliog grist mill. In the 1860's master miller Owen Owens lived there with his daughter Ann, son-in-law John Morris, a mason, daughter Margaret and grand daughter Mary.

By the 1880's, however, the mill had been bought by the Cambria Wynne slate quarry and converted from a corn mill into a slate finishing mill. The house was still called 'Ty'r Felin', or Mill House but was occupied by John Williams, a slate polisher and his wife and four children.

In 1921 Frank Johnstone came to live there. He had once owned an engineering business in Birkenhead and also spent 21 years in the Royal Navy, where he is pictured above left, as an officer. On leaving the navy he and his family planned to emigrate to Canada but were persuaded by a family friend to come to Wales instead. he obtained a job in the quarry and moved to live in Mount Pleasant with his wife Isabella, daughter Dorothy and son Nelson, pictured left. They also had another son, also called Frank, pictured above centre, in the Royal Air Force.

Isabella was not too impressed at first. The house is situated immediately above the cutting and finishing shed and the noises and dust rising from the slate saws and planers were both deafening and choking and she at first thought she had come to hell on earth. In time though, especially when the quarry closed, she came to really love the place.

Not long after the Johnstones moved here the quarry ran into difficulties and closed. Frank went to work for the Braich Goch quarry in Corris, where he stayed until he died in 1929.

Nelson went on to join the Merchant Navy and worked his way up to ship's engineer and first officer rank. He traveled the world many times but amazingly met some of the people from Esgairgeiliog in the furthest of places. Like Tom Morgan, Mary Morgan's son who had emigrated to Australia and met Nelson when his oil ship docked there in 1960, see picture left.



Tom Morgan & Nelson Johnstone, 23-April-1960. Taken in Australia where they met when Nelson's ship called there. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

When Nelson retired from the Merchant Navy he returned to Mount Pleasant, his home since the age of three years. He rekindled his friendships with old pals Lewis John Rowlands, Ken Rowlands and Dennis Lake etc and soon became once again part of the community he grew up in. He is pictured right with Ken and Ken's daughter Julia on one of their frequent walks in the 1990's. Now in his eighties Nelson no longer travels much and is suffering failing health but is still a regular sight in the village.



Julia Gunn, Kenneth Rowlands & Nelson Johnstone, 1994. By Rhiwgreiddyn quarry. Picture by Kelly Whitley.

ERA TERRACE .



Colorado quarry, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Visitors staying at 4 Era Terrace in 1914 for a very important prayer meeting at the chapel. Front row ,visitors names not known. Back row, left, Annie Lizzie, centre, Elizabeth Catherine Breese, right, Edward Breese. Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Ginny & Edward Breese, early 1950's.
Picture courtesy Kenneth Rowlands.



Annie Mary Humphreys,
nee Edwards, 1937.
Picture courtesy Ken
Rowlands.

Era Terrace was built about 1895 to house quarry men and their families working in the Era or Colorado quarry. In order to maximise the advantage to the company, the houses were built slightly taller to enable an extra two large bedrooms to be fitted under the roof, making a total of five bedrooms altogether. No bathrooms of course, or running water, or electricity. The tenants were expected to provide lodgings in these extra rooms for the single men working in the quarry, perhaps as many as three men in each of the large attic rooms.

Also, it was common practice then for married men to come in from out of the area to work in the quarry all week and then travel home at the weekend to their families. They too of course would have to sleep somewhere on week nights. Thus it was not unusual in the heyday of the quarry around the turn of the century for the lady of the house to be cooking every day for as many as eight adults and her own several children.

In the early 1920's, Annie Edwards, just a teenager then, lived for a while at 4 Era Terrace with her aunt and uncle, Ginny and Edward Breese. This was at a time when the Colorado quarry was open and still in use on the mountainside above Era Terrace.

Annie's uncle was working in the quarry and it was the custom at the time for the main meal of the day to be prepared for whatever time the menfolk finished their working shift. When this time was drawing near the women in the terrace would open a window or a door, or send someone outside to listen. The sound they were listening for was footsteps. The roads then were hard gravel and the men wore heavy hobnailed boots. So the crunching tramp of all the men's feet as they made their way down the hill from the quarry could be heard echoing right across the village.

At the sound of this the women knew it was time to start putting the food on the plate and the plate on the table. So that when the menfolk walked through the door their dinner was on the table ready for them.

This may seem a little chauvinistic to today's reader but bear in mind that the working day in the 1920's was long and hard, with little time allowed for tea breaks or mid shift meals. Also they worked a full six day week and religious customs forbade any kind of labour on a Sunday. Therefore if there were any chores or gardening jobs to be done, they often had to be fitted in between after the evening meal and before it got dark, so there was no time to waste.



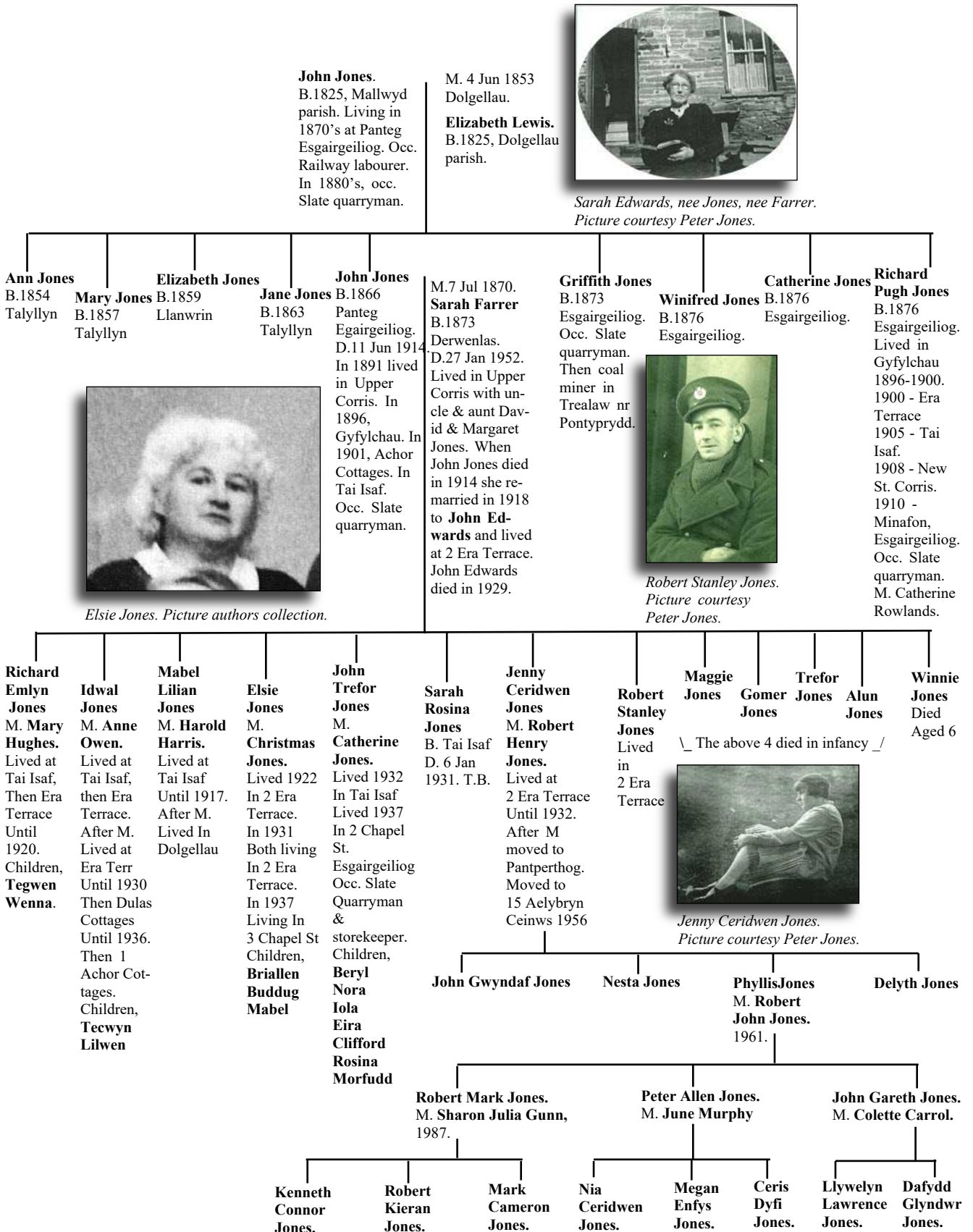
Era Terrace, 1982.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

ERA TERRACE .

Below is the family tree of Sarah Edwards, who lived in 2 Era Terrace from about 1918 until she died in 1952. Born Sarah Farrer in 1873 in Derwenlas, Machynlleth, she married John Jones of Panteg, Esgairgeiliog, himself one of 9 children and bore him 13 children before he died in 1914. Sarah later married John Edwards in 1918 and moved to live in 2 Era Terrace with him and some of her children, maintaining the tenancy there between them for 63 years, until 1982. Many of her children settled in and around the village and 4 of her grandchildren and several of their descendents still live in Esgairgeiliog today.

The tree and information on it is by kind permission of Peter and June Jones.



ERA TERRACE .



Era Terrace, late 1980's.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

In 1982 Raymond Gunn was in the Royal Air Force and stationed at R.A.F. Valley on Anglesey. He and his wife Julia and their two children, Sharon and Patrick had been traveling around with the R.A.F since he joined the service and left Machynlleth in 1970. They had enjoyed many aspects of the service way of life and Ray was half way through his 24 year contract, having already seen service in Denmark, Belize, Northern Ireland and several stations in the United Kingdom.

However, the downside of this was that Sharon and Patrick had also had to change schools several times.



Julia & Ray Gunn, Holyhead, 1982.
Picture by Ray Gunn.



Sharon Gunn, 1986. Picture by Ray Gunn.

When, in 1982 Julia's mother was taken seriously ill and spent several weeks in the chest hospital in Machynlleth, Ray and Julia decided it was time to stop roaming the world and come home to Esgairgeiliog for good.

Continued on page 103.....



Patrick Gunn, chef, 1988. Picture by Ray Gunn.

ERA TERRACE .



The front room of 2 Era Terrace, 1989. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The fireplace in the kitchen of 2 Era Terrace, 1989, with the oven, left, still with its turntables and in good working order.



Picture by Ray Gunn.

.....Continued from page 102....

Just at that time, in September 1982, they were advised that 2 Era Terrace had come up for sale.

It was the last rented house in the Terrace to be sold by the Rhydwen family who had bought the row when the quarry and its properties were broken up and sold off in 1929. The last tenant, Stanley Jones had sadly died recently and his sister Elsie who had lived with him moved to 20 Aelybryn.

By late twentieth century standards the house was in need of bringing a little more up to date. It was almost completely in its original state, with four of the five fireplaces still intact and working. In fact the kitchen range still had its original turntables in the oven, see picture above, and with a little practice Julia found it cooked an egg custard beautifully. There was no water or drainage in the house though and the only toilet was one of the four outside ones still intact on each end of the terrace. Electricity had been installed in the house before the war but only a single lighting circuit with lead cable and none at all on the top floor. This may sound rather primitive for a house in the early 1980's but it was actually still a very common situation in private rented accommodation at that time. With controlled rents still very low, when a tenant moved out it was often more viable to sell the property than to renovate and re-rent.

Anyway, it was just what Ray and Julia were looking for. They sold their Georgian townhouse in Holyhead and moved back home to Esgairgeiliog. Living for a few months at first with Julia's uncle and aunt, Rhufon and May Jones in 7 & 8 Heulfryn in the Forestry Commission camp opposite, they soon brought number 2 up to date, while keeping as many of the original features as possible. Being both keen 'do-it-yourselfers' they did most of the work themselves, while carpenter Brian Rowlands (Julia's brother) and electrician Wallace Gunn (Ray's father) helped out with window repairs and re-wiring.

During this time Ray was commuting from R.A.F Valley and before long they realised that he couldn't continue thus. So sadly he handed in his notice to quit the R.A.F and eventually, in July 1984 he returned home to 'civvy street' for good. At about that time two jobs came up in the Post Office in Machynlleth, so Ray applied for one of them. The Post Office had always previously had a policy of employing ex-servicemen, stemming from the days of national service and the need then to get de-mobbed soldiers back into work. Ray was one of the last ex-servicemen to take advantage of this policy in this area before it was abandoned in the 1980's, due to the lack of demand. He is currently the only ex-serviceman in his local office, a sign of the times, perhaps.

Julia worked for six years in the Dulas Valley Hotel, Corris, as the housekeeper there. For the last eleven years though, she has worked in the local Co-operative supermarket in Machynlleth. When Sharon left school she worked as an auxiliary nurse at Fronfelin Hall nursing home. She now works part time as a carer for the elderly and disabled. Patrick trained as a chef at Penybont Hotel, Talylyn, obtaining his written qualifications at Newtown technical College in 1989.



The front bedroom, 2 Era Terrace, 1989. Picture by Ray Gunn.

ERA TERRACE .



The back of Era Terrace, 1988.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Ray Gunn feeding his hens behind Era Terrace, 1986.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Julia Gunn renovating an old gate behind 2 Era Terrace, 1983.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

When Ray and Julia Gunn bought 2 Era Terrace in 1982 there was no garden to go with it. Of the four original allotment gardens to the north of the terrace by the roadside, three had been sold with the other three houses but the fourth was sold separately as building land and is where the white bungalow, Rostrick Cottage now stands. However, behind the terrace and gardens was a large strip of semi waste land belonging to the factory, Era Works. The owner was approached, an offer was made and eventually a large part of it, a third of an acre, was bought in 1983.

Originally it was bought just as a garden. The brambles and weeds were cleared, a hundred yard access road was dug out (by hand) and Ray even bought some hens and geese, see above picture. After a few years though, they felt it was a bit big for what they wanted of a garden and as they had always wanted a detached house they set about designing one to fit on it.



The gardens behind Era Terrace, 1989. Picture by Ray Gunn..



Along the back of Era Terrace, 1989. Picture by Ray Gunn.

With the help of architect Lionel Curtis they designed their dream cottage, obtained planning permission and hired a local digger driver, Tony Thomas, to level the plot in readiness.

Then disaster struck, in the form of the slump in the housing market in the late eighties. So the project was put on hold. In 1990 however, Yr Efail came on the market across the village. It's condition was very poor but the price was low and it happened to coincide with a good offer for 2 Era Terrace. So, ever up for a challenge, Ray and Julia struck a deal and moved to Yr Efail.

.....Continued on page 105.....

ERA TERRACE .



The quarter acre building plot behind Era Terrace, 1988, before leveling. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Tony Thomas digging out the plot, 1988. Picture by Ray Gunn. Inset of Tony courtesy Tony Thomas.



Ray Gunn working on the plot, 1988. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The building plot after leveling, 1988. Picture by Ray Gunn.

.....Continued from page 104.....

With so much work to do on Yr Efail, the building plot behind Era Terrace began to slip further down the list of priorities. So it was eventually put on the market, where it stayed for a few years, almost forgotten sometimes. Then one evening, in the late 1990's there was a knock on the door and Jeremy Thomas, the owner of Era Works asked Ray and Julia if they would sell him the plot to build a house for him and his family next to his factory. As the planning consent was still in force for their cottage, he bought the land and plans in 1998 and Bwthyn Era was built within the next couple of years and is pictured below.



Bwthyn Era, the cottage designed by Ray & Julia Gunn with architect Lionel Curtis.

Picture, 2001 by Julia Gunn.

ERA TERRACE .



Helen & Richard Gott, with their son Isaac, on their wedding day, 29-Aug-1998. Picture courtesy Helen Gott.

The current occupants of 2 Era Terrace are Richard and Helen Gott and their son Isaac, pictured left and below. When approached with a request for material for inclusion in this book they, like many others in the village, were very enthusiastic, helpful and encouraging. It is a big project for a pair of amateur first time authors like us and they were very helpful in providing us with the following text

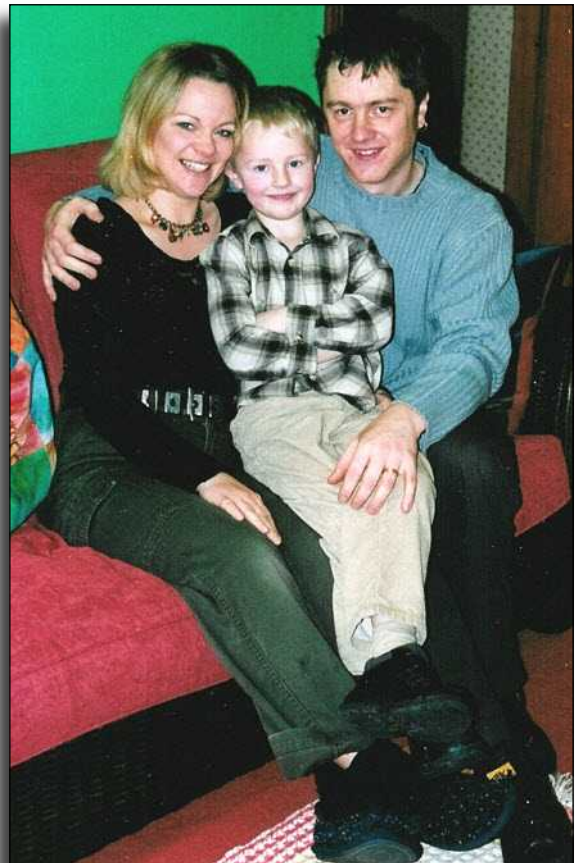
Richard, Helen and Isaac moved to Ceinws on July 7th 1997. Having previously been living in Cardiff.

Richard: I was brought up in Southampton but moved to Bristol in 1988 to study stage management at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. From there, my work moved me to the New Forest, London, Coventry then Cardiff in 1992. The main part of my work has been with touring theatre companies, so I have spent a large part of my working life living out of a suitcase on tour, in hotel rooms, spending too much time away from anywhere I called 'home'.....but loving it really.

Helen: Brought up in Llanfylllyn, Powys and graduated in 1983 with a B.A. Hons in Drama, English and History from Liverpool. After leaving College I received my long awaited Equity card doing puppetry. Much the same as Richard really.....a wonderful existence traveling and working and meeting very interesting folk along the way. I lived in Cardiff and Pontypridd for a fair few years and after meeting Richard I now really enjoy the privilege of living in Mid-Wales again. My career has had to take second place to family commitments although when anything suitable comes along work-wise I always jump at the chance to do what I love the most !

Helen and I met when we were working on a show called 'Stairway to Heaven', which toured round the U.K. We became friends and then had the pleasure of working together again some months later, on a show called 'A Leap in the Dark'!! We discovered we had more than just a friendship (and then discovered that Helen was expecting Isaac) and decided to get a flat together in Cardiff. When we started looking for somewhere to live, we realised that perhaps it would be fairer to Isaac if we moved away from the city We were aware that city kids become streetwise by the age of eight, and sometimes sooner and we felt that Isaac should be given the opportunity to enjoy the magic of childhood, uncomplicated by city life and to grow up at a more 'natural' pace. Isaac is a pupil at Ysgol Glantwymyn.

When looking for a place to settle, Helen and I had the advantage of having been to most towns in Wales, with our work. So, deciding on Machynlleth was fairly easy. 2 Era Terrace was the first house we viewed and we have no regrets. Soon after moving to Ceinws, I met Pete Telfer (1 Bryndulas Ceinws) and we decided to establish our own television production company. Pixel Foundry www.pixelfoundry.co.uk was incorporated in January '01 and at the time of writing (Jan '03) has a one hour documentary in production for S4C about Tad Deiniol (Orthodox Priest in Blaenau Ffestiniog) and is producing a programme about one man's journey to Baghdad to be reunited with family he hasn't seen for 22 years and to break UN sanctions by distributing CD Roms containing up to date medical information. Pixel Foundry has many other productions in the development stage. Our philosophy is to create a sustainable low-impact industry in the Dyfi valley which will provide training opportunities and employment for local people and help increase the local GDP.end..



*Helen & Richard Gott, with Isaac, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

ERA TERRACE .

Since obtaining her Honours Degree in 1983 Helen has become adept at numerous skills, including play writing, the piano, a fine mezzo soprano voice, dancing, horse riding and has earned a living as a puppeteer. It is as an actress though that she has earned the most fame.

Being a fluent Welsh speaker Helen has appeared in many Welsh language television programs. 'Bowen a'i. Bartner', a detective drama series, 'Sioe siarad', an educational drama and numerous appearances in the long running Welsh soap opera 'Pobol y Cwm', all on BBC Wales.

In English she has appeared in BBC Wales programs, 'Nightshift', a police drama, the hospital drama 'Casualty'. For HTV, 'A very small business', a comedy

Her film credits include, 'Lliniau Lliw, A Shadow Falls', a crime drama and recently, 'Happy Now', by Ruby Films, on general release.

These are just a small selection from a long list. Also to her credit are many BBC Radio roles.

Helen's list of theatre credits is even longer, spanning almost twenty years of experience in many and various roles, from high drama to high comedy, from singing to dancing with the Welsh National Opera.

Even now, although concentrating mainly on her family life, Helen still appears occasionally on our small screens, our cinema screens and in theatres around Wales. Lets hope we see a lot more of her for many years to come.



Helen Gwyn, acting. Picture by Brian Tarr, courtesy Helen Gott.



Helen Gwyn, acting. Picture by Brian Tarr, courtesy Helen Gott.

Richard's experience is no less impressive, although somewhat more 'behind the scenes'. ...Sorry....

Since obtaining his diploma in Stage Management in 1990, Richard has worked continuously as 'Stage Manager', 'Company Stage Manager', 'Technical Stage Manager', 'Production / Tour Manager', 'Lighting Designer' and 'Production Manager' for theatres all around England and Wales.

The long list of theatres include the likes of :- The Theatre Royal, Bath, The Salisbury Playhouse, The Forest of Dean Theatre, Gwent Theatre, The Sherman Theatre, The Hijinx Theatre, Theatre Iolo, Arad Goch Theatre, Agor Drysau Theatre, Y Gymraes, Babel Theatre, Bristol Old Vic Youth Theatre, Tamakko-za's tour of Wales, SNAP Theatre Company and Plain Clothes Productions, to name but a few.

Although a highly complex, responsible and sometimes stressful job, Richard thoroughly enjoys the work. Among other things, the work also involves company welfare, budget control, venue liaison, public relations, resources scheduling, lighting design, rigging, board operation, sound recording and editing.

Altogether, Richard and Helen are a very talented and resourceful couple. They are warm and friendly, have made many friends in the area and settled into the community well in the last six years. We hope they and Isaac remain happy in Esgairgeiliog for ever.



Helen Gwyn, acting. Picture by Brian Tarr, courtesy Helen Gott.



Helen Gwyn, acting. Picture by Brian Tarr, courtesy Helen Gott.

ERA TERRACE .

Dafydd Lewis and Blodwen Pugh, pictured right, had lived in 3 Era Terrace since before the second world war. Dafydd was born and brought up in 1 Era Terrace at the turn of the twentieth century so his parents may have been among the first tenants to move into the terrace when it was built in the mid 1890's.

Dafydd worked in the quarries in Esgairgeiliog and before he died in the mid 1980's he was one of the the last people in the village to have worked in Rhiwgreiddyn quarry before it closed in the early 1930's. Like many others in that industry he then moved to the Forestry Commission, where he remained until he retired.

Blodwen came to live in the village when she married Dafydd in the 1930's and soon became very active in the community. She was a keen member of the Women's Institute and sang enthusiastically in local choirs. She was also involved in local amateur dramatics and when the village hall opened in the Forestry camp in 1951 took part in many productions there for the entertainment of local people. Blodwen worked for many years for the Beaumont family at Plas Llwyngwern and also looked after Panteg for Lady White until the late 1980's.

Dafydd and Blodwen had two children, David and Muriel who both later moved to live on the south coast of England. A few years after Dafydd passed away Blodwen went to live with her children, in the early 1990's, where she also passed away a few years later.

The current owner of 3 Era Terrace is Mike Parker, pictured below. The arrival of Mike in the village at the beginning of the twenty first century is indicative of the current changes in employment characteristics in this area in recent years. Whereas in the previous century, people's lives and employment prospects were dominated by the two major heavy industries in the area, first the slate industry, then later on the forestry industry. Newcomers were invariably employed thus, as any alternatives were scarce and often snapped up by local people in the know, before they were advertised even.

Mike, however, brought his work with him. The employment market is now dominated by the effects of tourism, entertainment and the media. Mike's work as a travel writer, magazine columnist, freelance journalist, television presenter, radio commentator, standup comedian and fiction author cover all three of the above areas.

As much of his work involves traveling the length and breadth of Wales, a base in the middle means more nights at home and shorter journeys on the road

Mike is the author of eleven travel books, including all four editions of the 'Rough Guide to Wales', published by Penguin and a best selling guide to Wales. He is currently writing a book called 'Neighbours From Hell', about the history of English attitudes to Wales and the Welsh, to be published by Talybont based Y Lolfa in the autumn 2003.

He writes a column for 'The Big Issue Cymru' and for 'Cambria - the National Magazine of Wales'. He is also a freelance journalist / writer for 'The Guardian', 'The Independent', 'Independent on Sunday', 'The Western Mail', Planet and the 'Welsh Internationalist'. He was winner of the '2001 Attitude Award' for the most original piece of writing in Planet magazine.

As a T.V. Presenter Mike wrote and presented 'The Dragon's Trail' a one off St David's Day special in 2002 for H.T.V. This led to them asking him to write and present a six part series about journeys around the Welsh coast, called 'Coast to Coast' which was screened on Sundays in February and March in 2003. Numerous other TV appearances include 'Heno', 'Wales Today', 'Cwmni Hon', 'Hacio' and 'High Performance'.

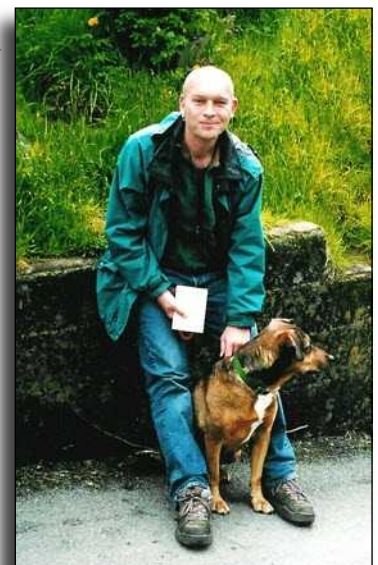
As a radio commentator, Mike has appeared on Radio 1, 3, 4, 5, BBC Radio Wales and Radio Ceredigion and many others.

He has even worked as a comedian and ran a comedy club for two years.

So, an altogether very talented and indeed likeable chap who has already made many friends here and we hope will stay and make Esgairgeiliog his home. Welcome to the village Mike.



Blodwen & Dafydd Lewis Pugh, 1985. Picture courtesy David Pugh.



Mike Parker, author & broadcaster, 2003.

ERA TERRACE .



Elsie Jones, far right, of 2 Era Terr with some of the village children of the 1940's. From left :- Gerald, Nora Jones (shop), Betty Morris, Beryl Jones, Elsie's girls :- Briallen, Buddug, Mabel. Picture courtesy Phena Jones.



Harriet Lloyd, Katie Green, Dafydd Pugh & Ronwy Pugh, brother & sisters all brought up in 1 Era Terrace in the 1920's, with another brother, Hayden & parents Lewis & Mary Pugh. Pictures courtesy Maggie Arnold & Jane Jones.



Mr & Mrs Cooper, owners of 4 Era Terrace from the 19860's to the 1980's. Picture courtesy Avril Shelton.



Mrs Pugh's birthday party in the 1970's. L to R :- Annie Jones, ...n/K..., Enid Steiler, ...n/k..., Winifred Wallace (standing), Elsie Jones, Blodwen Pugh, Mrs Davies (landsend), Phena Jones. Taken behind Era Terrace. Picture courtesy Phena Jones.



Mr & Mrs Cooper's daughter Avril & her husband Vin, the current owners of 4 Era Terrace. Picture courtesy Avril Shelton.

These are some of the people who have occupied Era Terrace over the last eighty odd years. Elsie Jones, pictured above left grew up in 2 Era Terrace and spent most of her life there.



Era Terrace, 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.

The pugh family, above right, occupied 1 & 3 Era Terrace for most of the twentieth century.

Mr & Mrs Cooper owned No.4 from the 1960's until their daughter Avril inherited it in the 1980's and still owns it with her husband Vin.

No.1 is now occupied by bus driver Mick Sawyer and his wife Jane who nurses in the hospital in Machynlleth.



Mick & Jane Sawyer with their grand daughter Casey, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Mick Sawyer, local bus driver, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn

THE CAMP .

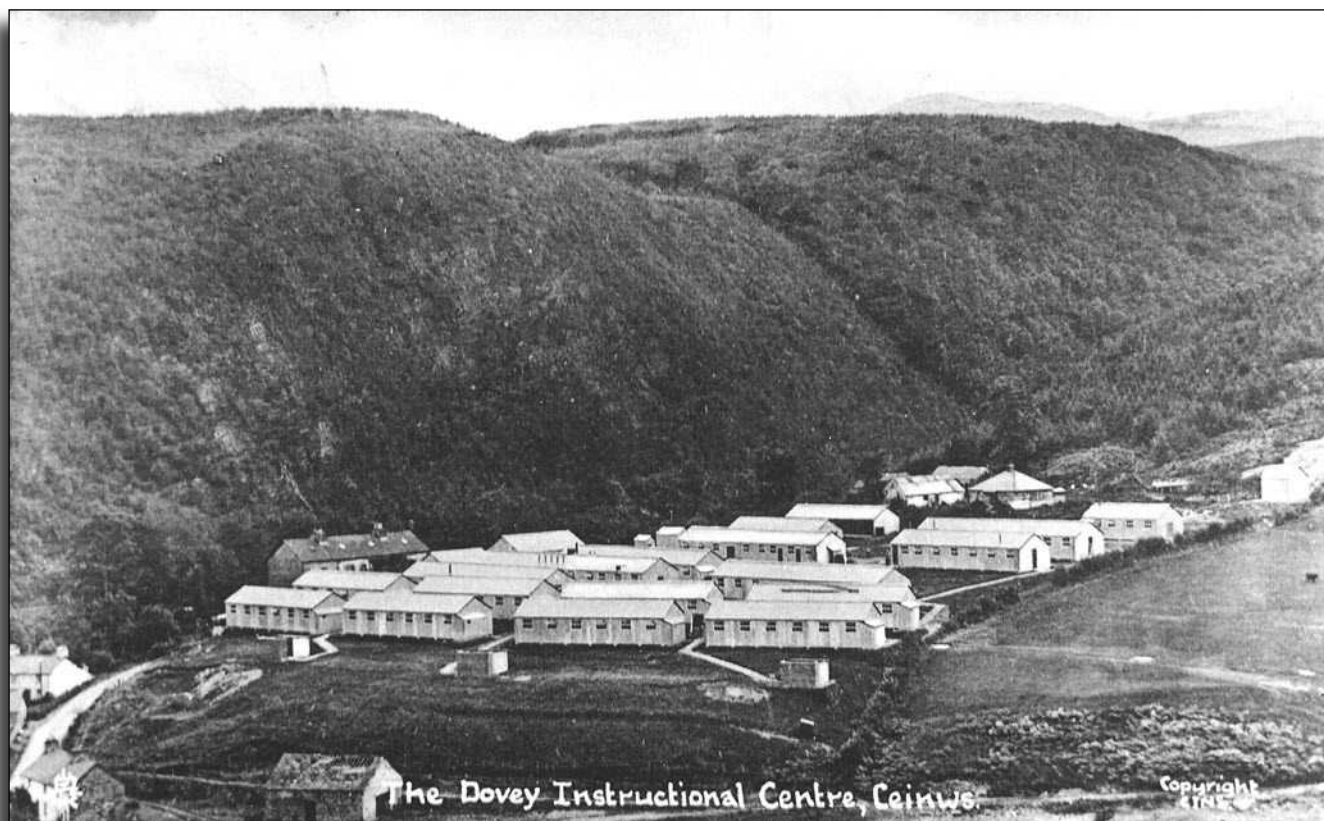


Esgairgeiliog, 1928.

Picture by Donald S. George. Courtesy David Jones.

Pictured above is a view over the village taken by Donald George in 1928. It shows the field, in the foreground, on which, in 1936, the 'Dovey Instructional Centre' was built, see picture below. Note also in the top picture, the absence of the council estate and the white line crossing the field where the estate will later be built. That line was a newly opened trench for the new water pipe to carry water from a spring behind Ceinws Bach down to a series of stand taps in the village. An appreciated luxury of clean drinking water close to the house.

In the lower picture of the newly constructed camp, note the extra row of huts at the front, long gone now, how bare and clear the surrounding land was and 'Stabal James next to Dulas Cottages bottom left.



The Dovey Instructional Centre Ceinws, 1936.

Picture courtesy Gerald Groom.

THE CAMP .



The camp Ceinws, 2002.

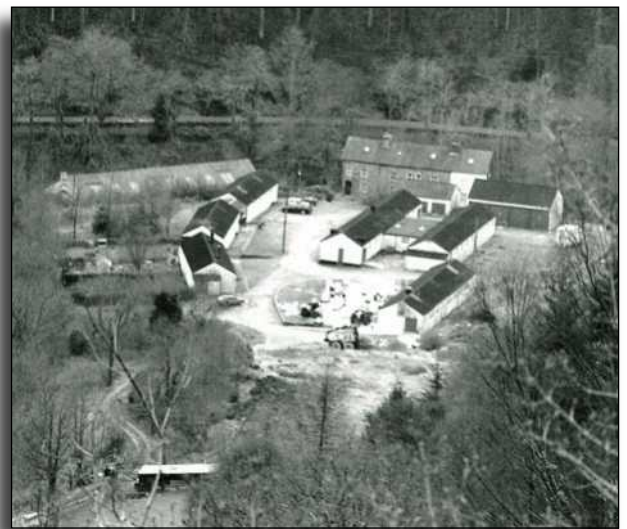
Picture by Ray gunn..

The forestry camp and a stretch of local forestry road were featured in the period television drama 'The Jewel in the Crown', first screened in 1984, starring Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Derrick Branche. The award winning TV adaptation of Paul Scott's 'Raj Quartet' which depicts the lives and loves of people caught in the turbulence of India struggling to break the chain of oppression. It was filmed on location in India, England and Wales and set in the period of 1942- 1947. The Welsh scenes used some of the camp buildings in Ceinws and a scene with Dame Peggy Ashcroft in a Tonga (an Indian vehicle) during a monsoon storm hurtling down a steep forest road. The film is still available at the time of writing from Amazon.com, via the internet.

Below left is a picture of the concrete plaque set in the lawn outside the office in the camp. It reads F C 1954. The lawn is laid out nice and square and level immediately outside the main offices and was ideal for assemblies, parades and presentations. Bearing in mind the previous military experience of most of the Forest Officers and men, it is not surprising to learn that the Commission was run in a rather military way.



The Forestry Commission plaque set in the lawn, dated 1954.



The camp in 1998.

Pictures by Ray Gunn.

THE CAMP .

In 1936, When Ken Rowlands was about eight years old, the collection of corrugated iron buildings now commonly known as ‘the camp’ was being built. He remembers the old lorries, with trailers behind them, loaded with sand, bricks and timber etc, crawling slowly along the old road to the village. Their weight and frequent passing caused much damage to the narrow road and verges. On at least two occasions he remembers them sliding off the road altogether. Once, by the old tramway bridge on Rhiwgreiddyn tips, a lorry coming down the little hill there towards the village slid off the road altogether. The stone retaining wall that was built to repair the road afterwards is still doing sterling service there. The second time was right in front of Bryndulas when a lorry ran off the road and down the bank. Half the village turned out to watch it being recovered, including a photographer, see page 26 for a picture.

Ken recalls that the camp was first built as part of a job creation scheme by the Ministry of Labour (yes, they even had them in those days). When it was finished and in use, he remembers unemployed people would come there from the Birkenhead area for three months at a time and be given work building new roads over the mountains for the Forestry Commission. They were each given a pair of thick corduroy trousers and a pair of stout boots for the work. The building we now think of as the old village hall was then the main cookhouse for the camp. Another building, the same size as the Accommodation huts and located near the far front corner of the site was used as a recreation hut. On a Wednesday night the local village people were allowed to go there to watch the silent films on the small projection screen there. Friday night was boxing night. If anyone fancied their chances, they would put their name down on a list and await their turn, wondering who their opponent would be. Being amateurs, sometimes, in the heat of the moment, some would forget it was only a bit of sport. For instance, one night, Dick Jones, Ceinws Bach and Bert Redford were put in the ring together. At the end of one round, after the bell had sounded, Bert was sitting on his bucket in his corner and Dick was still laying into him.

Incidentally, when the authors were attending the youth club at the camp in the late 1960’s, the boxing equipment was still there for anyone who wanted to settle an argument.



*Richard (Dick) Jones, 1938.
Picture authors collection.*



Some of the ‘trainees’ brought in to work in the new camp in the late 1930’s. No names are known.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



*An old Morris lorry to transport the trainees in the 1930’s. Men, L to R :-
Isaac Morgan, Caradog Lloyd, ...n/k... Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*



The village hall in the camp, 1998 .Picture by Ray Gunn.

THE CAMP .

During the war the camp was used as a borstal school for youths from the midlands. The man in charge was a local character called Jimmy Luke. One day some of the youths attempted a great escape. They tied Jimmy Luke to a chair and ran off. They stole a car belonging to Luther Morgan from Corris but must have abandoned it soon afterwards. By this time troops had been called out from Tonfanau army camp in Towyn to search for them. They were eventually all rounded up on the mountain near Cilgwyn, Llanwrin.

At the end of the war the camp's use changed yet again, to that of a holding camp for German prisoners of war waiting to be repatriated. They were mostly officers of quite senior rank. Most of them were quite friendly and given the chance, would chat freely with the locals. Some had been educated in

England, at Cambridge or Oxford universities, before the war and had spent holidays cycling around this part of Wales, some on tandems.

If they spotted the local youths playing football, some would, if possible, join in, stacking their coats up to make goalposts.

When the officers eventually went home and the camp was once more vacant, which was much longer after the war than most people realise ! It was taken over by the Forestry Commission to provide homes and jobs for our own homecoming soldiers. One row of huts was demolished along the front of the camp facing the village and the Commission set a plaque in the lawn to mark their arrival, see picture on page 111.

Over the coming years the camp was adapted and built up into almost a self contained village. Eventually there was a church, a children's playground with a slide, swings, seesaw and a sports field with football and cricket pitches. The old cookhouse was converted into a proper village hall, with a youth club and a fully equipped snooker and billiards room. The beautiful billiard table was donated from



*Jimmy Luke, 1940's.
Picture courtesy Marion Jones.*

Garthgwynion Hall in Glaspwll, to where we believe it was recently returned. The main hall was equipped for all the usual village functions, like jumble sales, whist drives, Women's Institute meetings, Christmas parties etc. At election times it was used as the local voting office. Anyone old enough to remember the jumble sales and sales of work in the 1950's, 60's and 70's will tell you what exciting, fascinating, and hectic events they were. The whole village and often surrounding villages too would turn up to rummage through all the stalls lining the inside of the hall. The hall would be packed solid with people, some pushing and shoving to get to the bargains first, with so much banter and babbling going on that you could hardly hear yourself think. The children would head straight for the 'lucky dip', a tub filled with sawdust in which were hidden small toys wrapped in fancy paper. Sometimes games and competitions were set up to keep the kids occupied while Mum got on with the serious business of bargain hunting for school clothes, working clothes and maybe even a party dress to keep for Christmas.

There was even a thriving small library in the hall, run as a sub branch of Newtown library, which was popular in the days before television started to arrive in the area. It closed some time around 1967-8.

The Accommodation huts were made into fourteen quite comfortable bungalows for Forestry Commission employees and their families, so between them and the offices and the working activities of the men, the camp was buzzing with life in it's heyday.

Sadly, the Forestry Commission have run down their use of the camp in recent years. The facilities have all closed, even the hall. The accommodation built over sixty five years ago is starting to look neglected, although two bungalows are still occupied. The village is waiting to see what next the site will be used for. The next British Olympic Village, perhaps ?



The stage in the village hall, 2002.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



The dance floor etc in the village hall, 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.

THE CAMP .

When working deep in the forest, high up in the mountains, far from the nearest house or road, it can be difficult to gauge accurately the passage of time. Such a problem faced Ken Rowlands and his workmates, Elfet, Maespoeth, Joe Brynllwyd and a Mr Thomas when they found themselves working halfway up Darren Cadian without a watch between them in the 1950's.

Mr Thomas claimed he could tell the time from the sun, by pushing a stick into the ground and measuring it's shadow. For want of a better idea they agreed to let him be timekeeper for them for the day by his method.

When he said it was ten-o'clock they stopped for morning break. Likewise at lunch time and again for their afternoon break. When he said 'That's it lads, time to go home', they took his word for it and packed up for the day and set off down the mountain for home. Most of them followed a route towards

Corris, behind Brynllwyd Bach but Ken took a more direct route to Esgairgeiliog via Tanycoed. On the way down he met a black labrador, followed soon after by it's master, Mr Ladman, the Forest Area Manager and Mr Frazer, the District Officer. Mr Frazer asked Ken rather abruptly 'Where are you going'. Ken replied 'I'm going home sir'. 'Well', said Mr Frazer, 'You'd better stay home for good then', and walked off with his companion.

Summary dismissal was not

uncommon then and Ken had been home for three days when he saw Mr Frazer by the Methodist chapel taking snuff. Mr Frazer asked Ken why he was home. 'You told me to stay home' he replied. 'Well, you report for work tomorrow morning' he was told, which Ken did and he had his wages at the end of the week.

It transpired that Mr Frazer, Mr Griffiths, another forester and William Bach, the foreman had heard all about the stick sundial in the Braich Goch pub in Corris and had a good laugh about it. When the lads thought it was five-o'clock it was only two-thirty in the afternoon and that's why Ken was fired for going home early.

When they saw him next they asked if he had bought a watch yet. 'Yes' he replied 'I bought one in Machynlleth Fair for five shillings'.



Forest officers & office staff outside the main office in the camp, about 1958. Left to right :- John Jones, Percy Vincent, Elwyn (Sec) Jones, Gomer Richards, Tom Thomas, William Green, Idris Griffiths. Picture courtesy Ian Hughes.



Rhufon Jones enjoying a break, 1980's. Picture courtesy May Jones.



Retirement presentation for Tom Davies, left of centre and Richard (Dick) Jones, right of centre. Little girl is Julie Davies, 1970's. Picture courtesy Hugh Davies.

THE CAMP .



Mark Jones hauling out trees, 1990's. Picture courtesy Mark Jones.



Mark Jones felling trees, 1990's. Picture courtesy Mark Jones.



Henry Holt, Anthony Davies, Alan Thomas, Iorwerth Griffiths & Bryn Morgan. These five workers had a combined total of 148 years service with the Forestry Commission when this picture was taken in the early 1980's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Hugh Davies working for Forest Enterprise, an agency of the Forestry Commission, 1995.

Picture courtesy Hugh Davies.

Nowadays most of the production work and harvesting is done by private contractors, like Mark Jones Pictured at the top of the page in the 1990's.

Some of the more specialist work is still done by Forestry Commission staff, like Hugh Davies, above and Ken Griffiths, right.

Elwyn Davies, Pictured right, still lives in the camp in 13 Heulfryn and is the son of Tom Davies pictured at the bottom of page 114 at his retirement presentation.



Elwyn Davies, Ken Griffiths & Hugh Davies, in the camp 200.3.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

THE CAMP .

Many local families have strong and long standing connections with the Forestry Commission. Some going back almost to when it was first formed in 1918, to replenish the country's depleted woodlands after the first world war. One such family is that of Kelvin Jenkins, the jeweller, who owns and runs a well known jewellery shop in Maengwyn Street in Machynlleth. When asked if he could give us any information about his family connections with Esgairgeiliog, he wrote the following text about two of the three generations of foresters in his family :-

My personal connection with Ceinws falls into two parts. The first was long before I was born and I only know about it from stories told me by my father since I moved back to the area in 1984. The second part consists of my own memories when my Taid and Nain, my father's parents, lived here in the 1950's and 60's. In the 1930's it seems the Forestry Commission decided to build smallholdings where local forestry workers could combine wage-earning timber work with self-sufficient farming. My grandfather Hugh Morgan Jenkins, whose family had been in the area since at least 1880 (as had my grandmother's family, the Roberts of Melinbyrhedin) moved from Cwmffrydlan near Llanwrin into one of these, Panteg, higher up the valley from Ceinws. They kept a cow on a field behind Panteg and my Nain Mary Elen, carried milk daily in backbreaking hand-held cans to sell around the households in Ceinws. She walked all that way with them - of course ! In summer my father Trevor cut hay with the help of an ancient horse borrowed from Tymawr further up the valley. In term time he traveled to school in Machynlleth on the old Corris railway.

Eventually my father left school and joined my Taid to become the third generation of foresters



Panteg, Esgairgeiliog, 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The farm buildings at Panteg, 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.

in my family. But by now there were more opportunities open to a bright and ambitious young man from the area and he went to study forestry at the Commission's school in Parkend in the Forest of Dean, where he met my mother and where I was born in 1942. My mother's family were South Wales stock. Her father, a colliery blacksmith, having moved to work in the tiny Dean coalfield. Along came World War II during which my father served as an RAF flying instructor. My Nain and Taid moved to a different Forestry area near Builth Wells where they lived during my early childhood, even after my father brought his family back to Machynlleth in 1949 to manage the new Dyfi Woodlands forestry co-operative. They must have liked Panteg, because they renamed their new house in Llangammarch in memory of it.

We now come to my own memories. Sometime in the 50's, my Taid was promoted to Forester, a now-discontinued rank in the old Commission hierarchy, and was transferred back to his home area, near his family and took up residence in number 4 Heulfryn. One of the green painted sheet metal buildings of what is still known locally as the camp. Looking at it now in it's sad semi dereliction it is hard to imagine what snug little homes these once were. Although they for the first time gave up their life-long practice of keeping their own pig and curing their own bacon, which even as a long-time vegetarian I remember with affection, they cultivated an immaculate vegetable garden at the back of number 4.

Paradoxically, now that his parents were back on home ground, my father's forestry career took us down to South Wales. Bad move Dad, at least as far as I was concerned ! But for years we still came back to Ceinws for holidays with Nain and Taid. As school led to University for me, my grandparents eventually died and were laid out in the front parlour of 4 Heulfryn as was the custom of the day, before being taken to their last rest in Machynlleth cemetery. After my Nain died, three cousins from Garneddwen, Aberllefenni, lived as housekeepers to my Taid, Megan, Rosina and Gwennan Humphries, daughters of Blodwen Humphries. I remember coming back from Liverpool University to visit and being always met at the door with one of Taid's

rib-crushing hugs. But after he died in 1964 it was the end of my contact with the area, apart from a few nostalgic visits, until I returned in 1984 with my own family - my wife Judy and children Gareth and Gemma - to relocate our jewellery business. I am so glad we did.

Thank you Kelvin.



Kelvin Jenkins, 2003, Picture by Judy Jenkins.



4 Heulfryn, centre right, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.

THE CAMP .

Local Galas, Carnivals and Festivals played an important part in the calendar of events in villages in the mid twentieth century.

Pictured right is Nora Jones (now Richards) as Carnival Queen in Corris in the 1950's. With her are Nesta Jones, left and Mabel Harris, right. Nora now runs the shop and the Dwynant pub in Esgairgeiliog.

Below is Miss Blodwen Rowlands (now Jones) as the first ever Forest Queen in Mid Wales, crowned in the camp in 1954. The following text is drawn from a newspaper clipping at the time. The exact paper and date are unknown :-

CEINWS FOREST QUEEN.

Presiding on Saturday over a ceremony at Ceinws (Esgairgeiliog) Village Hall, in the Dovey Valley, of the crowning of 15-year-old Machynlleth County Schoolgirl Blodwen Rowlands, Achor Cottage, Ceinws, as Forest Queen - first Forest Queen ever elected in the Mid Wales Counties - the Rev. E. M. Evans, Vicar of Corris, spoke of the contribution afforestation was making to the life of the locality.

The Forestry Commission had provided the Village Hall and Community centre in 1951 and were doing everything possible to encourage the community life of the people. It was true to say, he went on, that the neighbourhood was one of the few in North Wales which was not seriously suffering from the modern rural malady of depopulation. Apart from the employment provided in the forests, they had a happy community sharing common interests in the forest village. They were brought together to the community centre and the church, and worked together in the same places every day.

The paths of progress

Queen Blodwen, daughter of Mr and Mrs Tom Rowlands, Ceinws, was crowned by Mrs John Beaumont. 'This is a happy village', Mrs Beaumont said, and added that with community and recreational interests, employment for the people and more houses that were going to be built, the village would expand, but she hoped it would not grow too big, for as a small village it had character and a charm of its own. Queen Blodwen, a regal figure in a full length gown of white satin, also wore a fur collared mantle of dark green, - symbolic of the forests. Corris Silver Band played a march as the queen entered the crowded hall to proceed to the platform, attended by the Misses Janet Williams, Iona Williams, Shirley Morris, Deidre Williams, Anna Williams, Mai Williams, Rhiannon Evans and Dwynwen Jones, with John Morris as crown bearer. The platform had been beautifully decorated with evergreens and flowers of the forest.

Crowning song

After the crowning, a bouquet was handed to Mrs John Beaumont by Julia Rowlands. Queen Blodwen said she was proud to be the first Forest Queen and thanked them for the honour. A crowning song in Welsh and English was sung by Miss Iola Jones, accompanied by Mrs Luther

Morgan and the Corris Band played further selections and 'God Save



Blodwen Rowlands as she appeared in the paper, as Forestry Queen, 1954. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Blodwen Rowlands, 1st Forestry Queen, 1954, with left, Nesta Morris & right Mabel Jones & John Morris. Picture courtesy Louie T. Morris.

The Queen'. Greetings on behalf of the Forestry Commission were expressed by District Forest Officer E.J.Davies.

At the sale of work, the produce stall was in the charge of Mrs E.C.Jones and Mrs Pugh, and various competitions in the charge of Messrs. I.L. Griffiths, E.R. Jones and Bryn Morgan. The ladies of the village and district were largely responsible for the crowning ceremony and general arrangements and the wardrobe mistresses were Mrs Griffiths, Mrs E.G. Jones, Mrs Morris, Mrs Williams and Mrs D.L. Pughe. The proceeds go towards the Village Hall Fund and it is a credit to the district that the hall is not only a community asset but is holding its own financially.



Nesta & Nora Jones & Mabel Harris. Nora Jones of Chapel Street, Esgairgeiliog was crowned Carnival Queen at Corris in the 1950's. Picture courtesy Nora Richards.



Corris Silver Band in the camp in the 1970's. Picture courtesy Mrs Audrey Beaumont.

THE CAMP .



Maggie Arnold competing in the Gala Day at Ceinws, early 1960's, 'looking for summer', with Gwilym Jones, Caerbont.

Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



The camp entrance, 1998.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Carnivals and Galas in the camp were a highlight of many summers in Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws. The following is taken from a newspaper clipping from the early 1960's, kept since then by the author. The exact paper and year is unknown. Coincidentally though, Maggie Arnold found the two pictures, left and above left, taken of her and Megan Morris competing in the same Gala.

GALA DAY AT CEINWS .

A Gala day was held at Ceinws on Saturday and attracted a large attendance. The events were opened by the Rev. D. T. Williams, Llanidloes, who is a native of Ceinws, being the son of Mrs D. Williams and the late Capt. Williams, Plas Rhiwgreiddyn. He was introduced and welcomed by Mr E. R. Morgan. The Rev. Williams, together with Mr Kirkham, Corris were judges of the carnival. The competition in the carnival showed much originality.

Following the carnival there were sports in which the starters were Messrs. Len Williams, R. Jones, G. Jones and E. R. Morgan. Stewards were Messrs. D. Tear, D. L. Pughe, R. H. Jones and others. Refreshments were served at the village hall where a produce and miscellaneous stall was also able to provide an assortment of goods for sale. The stall was in the charge of Mrs Jones, Post Office and Mrs Lomas, who is also secretary of the recreation committee. The tea helpers were Mesdames W. Green, Ifor Jones, D. L. Pughe, D. Tear and Miss A. M. Pugh and others. The gala day was a great success and a useful donation was handed over towards the village hall funds.

Prizewinners were :-

Any Fancy Dress under 7 : Philip Edwards (Billy the Kid) and Howard Latham (Adam) (equal 1st) : 2, Bethan Davies (little old lady). Age 7-12 : 1st, Alec Lake (Red Indian) : 2nd, Susan Retalick (Clown) : 3rd, Glyn Jones (Scarecrow). 12 and over, Mrs D. L. Pugh and Mrs Phena Jones (Comic Couple) (equal) : Mrs Arnold, Machynlleth and Mrs Megan Morris (Looking For Summer). Handsome Pair : Miss Christine Latham and Miss Julia Rowlands. Anything on Wheels : Mrs Len Williams. Race for girls under 5 : 1st, Bethan Davies : 2nd, Mary Thomas. Do. (boys) : Howard Latham. 80 yds, (girls) : 1st, Ann Thomas : 2nd, Dwywnwen Jones. Do. (boys) : 1st, Michael Retalick : 2nd, Glyn Jones. 100 yds (girls) : 1st, Christine Latham : 2nd, Julia Rowlands. Do. (boys) : 1st, Michael Retalick : 2nd, John Morris. Three-legged Race : 1st, Betty Jones and Susan Retalick : 2nd, Mr and Mrs John Edwards. : Thread the Needle : Betty Jones. Egg and Spoon Race : Elinor Davies, R. Jones and Christine Latham.



Megan Morris & Maggie Arnold looking for summer, at the Gala Day at Ceinws, early 1960's. Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



Maggie Arnold as Billy Bunter & Phena Jones from St. Trinians at a Ceinws Carnival, 1960's. Picture courtesy Maggie Arnold.



Colonel the Hon. Ralph Beaumont at a carnival in the camp, 1960's. Picture courtesy Mrs A. Beaumont.

THE CAMP .



The carnivals in the 50's, 60's and 70's were always well supported and enjoyed by the people in the area. These are some pictures of such events, including the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1977.



Pictured right is Colonel the Hon. Ralph Beaumont of Plas Llwyngwern with some St. Trinians old girls, Phyllis Jones, Nesta Edwards, Joan Davies and Blodwen Jones. Pictures courtesy Nesta Edwards.



Another popular eve



nt in the local calendar was the local Eisteddfod. These were very much a Welsh function and as such were reported in the Welsh columns of local publications. The following is an extract from just such a report :-

EISTEDDFOD - Cynhaliwyd eisteddfod yn Neuadd y Pentref nos Fercher, Mawrth 6, pryd y llywyddwyd gan Mr R. M. Jones, Foel Llanwrin, ac arweiniwyd gan Mr T. W. Jones Aberllefenni. Beirniaid : Cerddoriaeth Mr J. A. Williams, Corris; adroddiadau, etc. Parch D. J. Thomas, Machynlleth; gwaith coed, Mr J. Evans, Goedwig; gwaith arlunio. Parch, Ben Williams, Aberllefenni; gwaith gwnio a cookery, Mrs Price Llys Awel Aberllefenni. Cyfelyddes, Mrs Gwyneth Morgan, A. R. C. M., Tanycoed, Ceinws; trysoryddes, Mrs A. M. Jones 2 Caerbont Ceinws; ysgrifennyddes, Mrs E. C. Jones Post Office Ceinws, Rhestr o'r buddugwyr. - Unawd dan 6 oed; 1 Deirdre Williams, 2 Shian Dichie, 6 Olwen Jones; dan 9 oed; 1 Mai Thomas, 2 Mary Jones, Bett Jones; dan 12 oed; 1 Eirian Morgans, 2 Delyth Jones, 3 Diana Morgans; dan 16 oed; 1 Eluned J. Pugh, 2 Eurona Thomas, Deuawddan 16 oed; Jennifer ac Eluned J. Pugh, Corris Uchaf; pianoforte solo, dan 16 oed; Ceris Humphreys Garneddwen; dan 9 oed; Mary Jones Pantperthog Parti deulais, dan 16 oed; Cyd Parti Olga Morgansac Archie Mclellan. Unawd 16-21; Brenda Thomas, Corris Uchaf. Pennillion, dros 16; Mrs Jane Evans, Rhydymain. Deuawd dros 16; Mr a Mrs Gernyw Jones, Corris Uchaf, 2 Brenda ac Eurona Thomas, Corris Uchaf. Her unawd Mr D. P. Owen Corris; pedwarawd; Mr G. H. Owen Corris Uchaf. Adrodd :- Dan 6 oed; Cyd Deirdre Williams ac Iwan Morgans; dan 9 oed; 1 Eurona Pugh, Ffridd Gate, 2 Mary Jones, 3 David Jones; dan 12 oed; 1 Glenda Evans, 2 Iona Thomas, 3 Rosina Jones; dan 16 Olwen Jones, 2 Clifford Jonesa Glyn Hughes. Cydadrodd, dan 16 oed; Parti Iona Thomas; adrodd digri; Mr William Hughes Aberllefenni. Prif adroddiad; Mrs Menna Thomas, Corris; Cyd-adrodd, dros 16; Parti Mrs D. L. Pugh, Ceinws. Amtywiaeth - Arlunio dan 8 oed; Cyd. David Jones, Julia Rowlands, Deirdre Williams; dan 12 oed; Mary Jones, Delyth Jones, Archie Mclellan; dan 16; 2 Colin Jones agored; Mrs Menna Jones, Rhiwawel; brawddeg; Mr E. Tanner; brys neges; Mrs Davies Machynlleth; limerick Mr P. R. Davies, llythyr Cymraeg; Mrs Williams, Llanwrin. Par o socks; 1 Miss M. Lewis, 2 Mrs G. Morgans; jumper; 1 a 3 Miss E. Williams, Dinas Mawddwy, 2 Miss E. Green, Ceinws. Swiss roll; 1 Mrs D. L. Pughe, Ceinws, 2 Mrs Bleddyn Jones, Pantperthog. Welsh cakes, dan 16 oed; 1 Mabel ac Ann Jones, Ceinws, 2 Mary Jarman, Talyllyn.

THE CAMP .

The ladies who made the tea at the opening of the village hall in the camp in 1951. There were 270 guests and the garages opposite the hall were used for the food.

Back row :- Lena McLellan, Betty Morris, Lillian Jones, Briallen Jones, Nesta Edwards, Mrs Griffiths.

Middle row :- n/k....., Elvira, Katy Green, Mary Morgan, Gwyneth Morgan, Blodwen Wood, Lena Wood, Ronwy Pugh.

Front row :- Glenys Jones, Blodwen Pugh, Annie Mary Jones, Phena Jones, Menna Jones,



Womens Institute members in the hall in the camp, about 1950's.

Back row :- Mrs Davies (Lands end), Elsie Jones, Ceridwen Jones, Jane Jones, Myfanwy Lomas, Dorothy Evans, Myra Humphreys.

Middle row :- Dolly Thomas, Daisy Williams, Elizabeth Jones, Megan Morris, Ronwy Pugh.

Front row :- Annie Mary Jones, Blodwen Pugh, Menna Jones, Phena Jones, Magie Mary Arnold.

Womens Institute Members in the hall in the camp in about 1960. Picture courtesy Magie Arnold.

Back row :- Lena McLellan, Elizabeth Jones, Myfanwy Lomas, Mrs Davies (lands end), Mrs Pearson, Glenys Latham, Mabel Williams Jones, Harriet Lloyd, Phena Jones, Myra Humphreys, Megan Morris.

Middle row :- Ronwy Pugh, Isabella Johnstone, n/k....., Dorothy Jones, Mrs Westlake, Katy Green, Blodwen Pugh.

Front row :- Menna Jones, n/k....., Mary Jones.



THE CAMP .



The Womens Institute ladies showing off their craftwork in the village hall in the camp in the 1970's.

L. To R. :- Harriet Lloyd, Menna Jones, Jane Jones, Enid Williams, Lena Mclellan, Katie Green, Blodwen Pugh, Megan Morris, Mrs Davies (landsend), Daisy Williams, Phena Jones, Liz Jones, Myfanwy Lomas, Ceridwen Jones.

Picture courtesy Jane Jones.



Ceridwen Jones, right, with her crochet work, 1970's ? Lady on left not known. Picture courtesy Nesta Edwards.



Ceinws W. I. 'Goose Fair' at Welshpool in 1962. Back row, L to R :- Myfanwy Lomas, Jane Jones, Dolly Thomas, Daisy Williams, Katy Green, Annie Mary Jones, Megan Morris, Maggie Mary Arnold. Front row, L to R :- Liz Jones, Menna Jones, Blodwen Pugh, Phena Jones.

Picture courtesy Jane Jones.

Some of the very talented ladies and children of the village showing off their craftwork learned in the village hall in the 1960's and 70's.



Mrs Elsie Jones proudly showing off her work, 1970's ? Picture courtesy Nesta Edwards.



'Clerk of the Works Evening Class', 1960's. L to R :- Bert Redford, Dafydd Lewis Pugh, John Lomas, Gwilym Jones, children not known, Mrs Megan Morris, Menna Jones, Picture courtesy Jane Jones.

THE CAMP .



Penelope Andrews, back, with middle L to R :- Yvonne Edwards, baby n/k, Jamie Andrews, Jeremy Andrews. Front L to R :- Karen Davies, n/k, Julie Davies, Vicky Andrews. In the camp. Picture courtesy Penelope Andrews.



A children's class on the lawn in the camp, held by a visiting group promoting Child Evangelism, about 1960. L to R :- Brian Rowlands, Sian Rowlands, Stephen Williams, Bethan Jones, Gaynor Davies, Dilwyn Jones (sitting), Howard Latham.. Picture authors collection.

The camp was always a very popular area for the children of the village to play in, with it's flat open spaces and the playground and sports field. A Child Evangelism group used to visit occasionally to preach to the villagers in the camp.

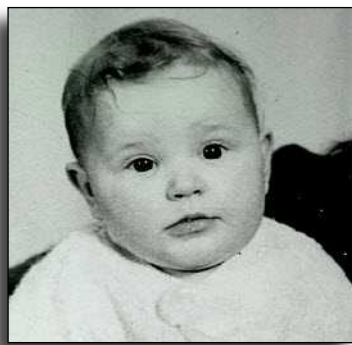
Apart from the hall, though, a major focal point in the camp was the church, pictured below left. It was a satellite of Holy Trinity Church Corris and was consecrated by the Bishop of Bangor. The villagers and local communities rallied round to equip it. The organ came from Maggie Rowlands, the Alter from Tywyn and the Communion set was given by Mr and Mrs John Beaumont of Plas Llwyngwern. The seats came from the former Christ Church, Upper Corris, another zinc satellite of Holy Trinity Corris. Regular services were conducted by the Vicar of Corris, Sunday school was taken by Mrs Grace Lawrence of 14 Aelybryn, assisted in the mid 60's by Julia Rowlands and by Mrs Jane Jones. Cousins Duncan Rowlands and Sharon Gunn were christened there in 1970 in a double ceremony. The church closed in the 1970's and was later used by the Commission for storage.



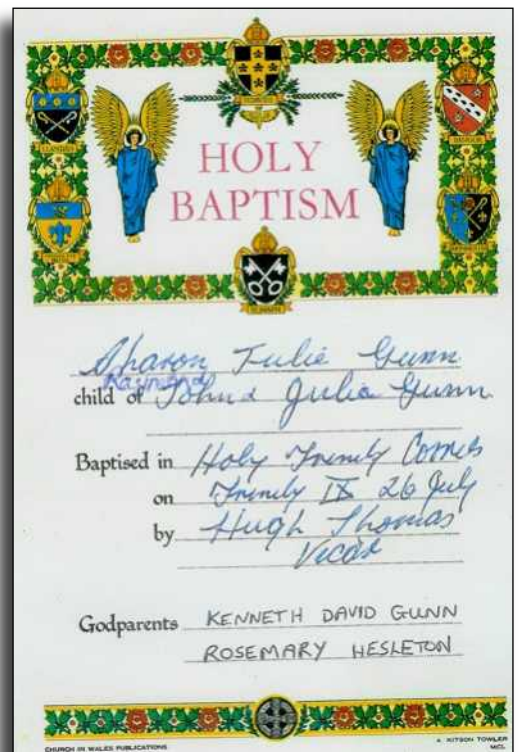
The former church in the camp, a satellite of Holy Trinity Church Corris. Taken 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Kenneth Duncan Rowlands, 1970. Picture by Wallace Gunn.



Sharon Gunn, 1970. Picture by Wallace Gunn.



Sharon Gunn's Baptism Certificate, 1970. Sharon and her cousin Duncan Rowlands were Baptised in the church in the Camp in a double ceremony. Picture courtesy Sharon Jones.

THE CAMP .



Sharon Gunn, 1971, in the playground in the camp sports field. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The derelict playground in 1998, with seesaw & swings. Picture by Ray Gunn.



7 & 8 Heulfryn, the camp, being demolished in Aug. 1986, with Gerald Groom on the tractor. Picture courtesy Hugh Davies.



Gerald Groom helping to demolish 7 & 8 Heulfryn, Rhufon & May Jones's old home, in 1986. Picture courtesy Hugh Davies.



Hugh Davies felling trees in the camp to make way for a storage area in front of 7 & 8 Heulfryn 1983. Picture courtesy Hugh Davies.



The storage area in 1998, right and the wash pan, far left, where 7 & 8 Heulfryn used to be. Picture by Ray Gunn..

Over the years the camp has often been altered and adapted to suit changing needs and circumstances. Once made, the changes are quite often soon forgotten, until old photographs remind us of what it used to look like. The once immaculate lawns and verges, the popular children's playground, even the smart George VI pillar box, removed to Machynlleth in the mid 1990's. 7 & 8 Heulfryn was demolished in 1986 to make space for a new vehicle wash pan.



The George VI pillar box in Maengwyn St Machynlleth that used to be in the camp. Picture by Julia Gunn. 2003



Julia Gunn by the replacement letter box in the camp. 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.

THE CAMP .



Rhufon Jones in the Welsh Guards, late 1940's. Picture authors collection.



May Jones, with two of her great grandchildren, Lily & Sara. 1990's. Picture courtesy May Jones.



Betty Jones, holding Phillip Edwards in the camp, 1960's. Picture courtesy Nesta Edwards.

Rhufon and May Jones lived in 8 Heulfryn from the early 1950's until the mid 1980's when Rhufon retired from the Forestry Commission and they moved to Machynlleth where all their children then lived. They had four children, Betty, Glyn, Olwen and Ifor, who were the author, Julia's cousins. Being a close family, the cousins played a lot together and Rhufon and May were renowned for their hobby of cake making and decorating and the resulting high teas to sample their work are



Glyn Jones, early 1950's. Glyn was born in 8 Heulfryn. Picture courtesy Glyn Jones.

well remembered by all who attended them. Rhufon was also adept at clock repairs and walking stick making and a very keen gardener, with a great show of dahlias every year.

During the long hot summers of the 1950's and early 60's, the Commission would mount regular fire patrols and even built watchtowers to enable the patrols to view large areas of the forest to look for signs of smoke. On some occasions Rhufon would take his entire family and the author's family on such patrols and while he kept an eye open for possible fires the family would enjoy a picnic and pick winberries and blackberries etc. Sadly, Rhufon has passed away but his family still live in Machynlleth.



Olwen Jones, mid 1950's. Picture courtesy Olwen Jones.



Ifor Jones, late 1950's. Picture courtesy Ifor Jones.



Rhufon Jones, with two of his grandchildren, Mark & Andrew, 1980's. Picture courtesy May

THE CAMP .



Dennis Lake, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 1940's.
Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Violet Lake, WRENS, 1946.
Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Violet Lake with her sons, Chris, Alec & Johnny.
Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Land Army girls and some forestry workers by Evans bridge, Esgairgeiliog in 1942. Top row, L to R :- Tom, Maggie Mary Arnold, Ethel Williams, Katy Green, Lil Astley, Thelma, Augusta Jones, Eileen Jones & Bob Williams. Bottom row, L to R :- Dennis Lake, Violet Lake, Mair Davies, Lyn Jones Rosina Owen & Bryn Jones. Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Johnny, Alec & Chris Lake at Corris school, about 1957.
Picture courtesy Chris Lake.

Dennis and Violet Lake have lived in 5 Heulfryn for over fifty years and brought up three sons there, Johnny, Christopher and Alec. Dennis worked for the Forestry Commission until he retired and he and Violet are very keen gardeners. Johnny joined the Navy and His brother Chris joined the Royal Marines as a bandsman and is pictured below right on a march through Deal in Kent. He was also a member of Corris silver band for several years. All three lads now live and work in the area and Dennis and Violet still live in 5 Heulfryn.



Johnny Lake, Royal Navy, mid 1960's, by 5 Heulfryn.
Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Chris Lake, musician, aged 16.
Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Chris Lake, Royal Marines band, 1967 in Deal Kent. Picture courtesy Chris Lake.

THE CAMP .



13 & 14 Heulfryn, 2003. No. 14, right was the home of Gwynfryn & Mair Hughes.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

Gwynfryn Hughes, 1950's.

Picture courtesy Ian Hughes.



Colin Jones, (Yr Efail), Gwynfryn Hughes, Archie McLellan, 1950's.

Picture courtesy Ian Hughes.



Mair Hughes, 1960's ? 14 Heulfryn.

Picture courtesy Ian Hughes.

Gwynfryn and Mair Hughes lived in 14 Heulfryn with their two children, Susan and Ian, pictured below and left for many years. Gwynfryn works for Forest Enterprise but now



Ian & Susan Hughes, 1970's. Picture courtesy Ian Hughes.



Ian Hughes, 1980's.

Picture courtesy Nora Richards.

no longer lives in the camp. When the children had grown up Gwynfryn and Mair moved to Corris. Sadly Mair has passed away but Gwynfryn and Ian still live in Corris. Ian has worked for a civil engineering firm and Susan has moved away from the area.

THE CAMP .



Richard Morgan, (Brynmair) & Tom Davies,
Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.



Tom and Mair Davies's wedding photograph, 1946. Back row, L to R :- Mrs Davies, David Davies, William Davies, Evan Davies, Daniel Davies, Richard Morgan (Brynmair), William Owen. Front row, L to R :- Peg Williams, Mrs B. Bennett, Tom Davies, Mair Davies, Elizabeth Owen, Isaac Jones.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Gaynor Davies & Carol Davies, 1950's.
Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.

Tom and Mair Davies lived in 13

Heulfryn with their three children, Eleanor, Gaynor and Elwyn, having previously lived in Brynmair. Tom had worked for the Forestry Commission until his retirement in the 1970's. Although both Tom and Mair have passed away, their son Elwyn still lives in number 13 and Gaynor also still lives in the area.



Tom Davies, left, Mair Davies, right, with their daughter Gaynor and her daughter Bethan, 1980's. Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.



Gwilym Jones (Gwynfa) & Tom Davies, 13 Heulfryn, 1980's.
Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.



Mair Davies, right, with her daughters Gaynor, centre, Eleanor and Eleanor's son Gareth.
Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.



Elwyn Davies, 13 Heulfryn, 2003, with his works van. Picture by Julia Gunn..

THE CAMP .



*The remains of the infant swings in the playground, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*



The junior (and adult) swings, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



*View from the washpan (formally 8&7 Heulfryn) past 6 down to 1 Heulfryn. 1 to 4 was in recent years the training school for forest skills.
Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.*



*The back of the former cookhouse, then village hall complex in the centre of the camp. On the left is where Forestry official Percy Vincent used to keep and breed his budgerigars. On the right is the corner of the former billiard & snooker room.
Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.*



*A storage building near 13 Heulfryn, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

The pictures on this and the next page show the camp as it looks now, although some were taken in 1998 little has changed since then. While it may not be as spick and span as in days gone by, almost like an army camp in fact, it is now slumbering quietly, awaiting it's fate. Efforts are being made to find a use for the site. Various projects has been suggested, mainly connected with the site's past, including an idea for a permanent museum, exhibition site. The council is reluctant to allow any large scale housing project.



The veiw up from 5 Heulfryn towards Brynmair, (behind the garages). On the right is 13 Heulfryn, still occupied. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The store shed near Brynmair. Picture by Julia Gunn.

THE CAMP .



The view showing 13 Heulfryn, centre, still occupied by Elwyn Davies and a storage building, left, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.



An old store with toilets at the near end for forest workers in the camp, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The main offices in the camp, next to the lawn and the main entrance. 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The M.T. (Motor Transport) and general workshop just inside the camp entrance, with lockup garages beyond. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The end of the office block, left, camp entrance right with M.T. Workshop beyond. Centre is the village hall complex, 2003.



The village hall with the main lawn on the left, with 'no parking' signs, 2003. This picture & picture on left by Julia Gunn.



The entrance to the camp, 2001, showing the M.T. Workshop, left and Era Terrace, right. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The road past the entrance to the camp, 1998, showing the toilet block, left, the offices & the village hall. Picture by Ray Gunn.

BRYNMAIR .



The RAC Rally passing Brynmair, early 1960's.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



The RAC Rally, early 1960's. One of the first Austin minis to take part in the Rally, passing Brynmair. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.

For over 40 years, until the mid 1990's, the Lombard RAC Rally passed through Esgairgeiliog, with a special Stage starting by Brynmair farm buildings and proceeding from there up through the forest.

The old farm buildings around Brynmair used to belong to Esgairgeiliog farm. When the Forestry Commission bought the farm to plant trees on the land before the war, they demolished the house and built their own bungalow next to the outbuildings and called it Brynmair. Thus, the farm house from which the village gets its very name was obliterated completely. The site of the house was about 100 yards further on, below the road where the first forest road junction forks left. All that remains is an old box hedge and some sycamores.

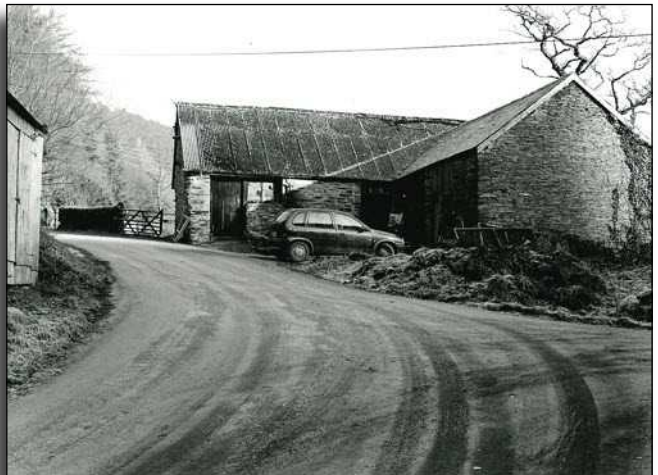
In the 1840's Esgairgeiliog farm was occupied by Edward and Anne Jones and their children, Edward, John, Richard, Elizabeth, Ann, Jane and Mary.



The RAC Rally, early 1960's. The Special Stage started by Brynmair every year for over 40 years until the Rally route was changed in the mid 1990's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



One of the outbuildings of Brynmair, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The approach to Brynmair, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



The chickens & ducks at Brynmair, 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The view from Brynmair over the village 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.

BRYNMAIR .



Brynmair, 2001. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Idwal & Glenys Evans with sons William & Robert. 1960's. Picture courtesy William Evans.



Penlan farm, 1940's-50's. The lady is a friend of the family. Picture courtesy William Evans.

Idwal Evans spent his life farming in the Esgairgeiliog area, at Penlan after the war and moved to Esgairlwyd 47 years ago. He then moved to Brynmair about 1971 and lived and farmed there until he passed away in 2003.

While at Penlan and Esgairlwyd he used a pony to get about on the steep hillsides to tend his sheep. Being a Forestry holding he also kept working horses for pulling out timber in the woods.

Pictured far right are Idwal and his sons William and Robert with the four ewes that won him a prize cup at the 13th Corris & District sheepdog trials in the late 1960's. Idwal came first in all classes for smallholders with his sheep and also in the sheepdog trial with his dog, Queen. He had repeatedly won these competitions for several years.

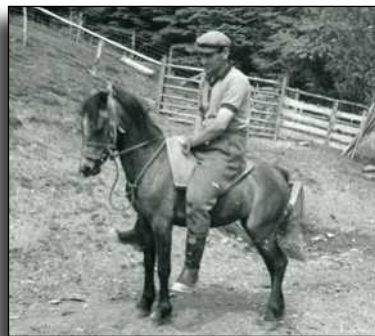
Idwal's son William now farms Brynmair and is pictured below right with one of his sons, Richard. William is also a lecturer at Newtown Technical College, where he himself won the Silver Trowel award while training there as a bricklayer in his youth, in 1976. Pictured left are his Togenburg goats and one of his pure Suffolk lambs. He also keeps other pure breeds of sheep.



Idwal Evans with his dogs, 1970's? Picture courtesy William Evans.



Brothers, Cyril, Robert & William. 1960's. Picture courtesy William Evans.



Idwal Evans on his pony, Champion. Picture courtesy William Evans.



Idwal with William & Robert & their prizewinning sheep ,late 1960's.



A pure Suffolk lamb born on Christmas Day at Brynmair. Picture courtesy Wil Evans.



Togenburg goats at Brynmair. Picture courtesy William Evans.

Idwal's other son, Robert is the estate manager at Esgair farm in Pantperthog, where he lives with his wife, Margaret and children, Robert, Jane, David, Michael and Sarah.

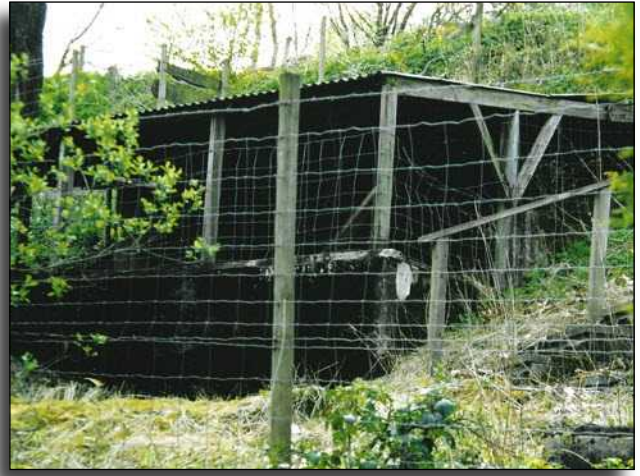


William Evans & his son Richard, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn

CAE PANDY .



The sewage works for the camp, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



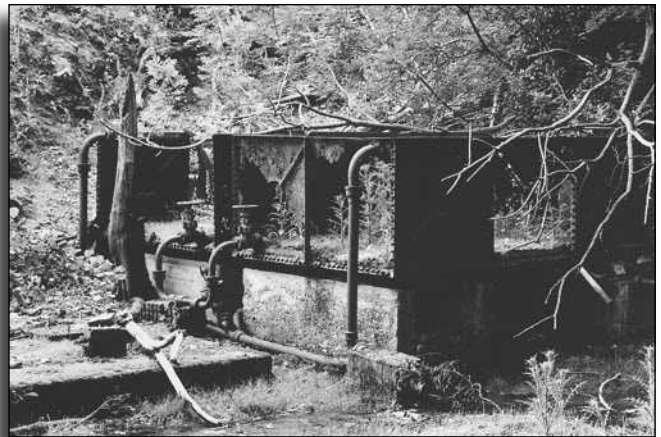
The sewage works for the camp, from the footpath on the old tramway, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The entrance to the old storage tank at the foot of the old quarry incline in Cae Pandy, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The waterfall of surplus water next to the old water tank by the quarry incline, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The old water storage tank by the bottom of the old quarry incline, 1998. Picture by Ray Gunn.

In the field beyond the camp the old incline from Era Quarry descends almost to the river, where it joined the tramway to the village, now a popular footpath. At the base of the incline, tucked away in a narrow cutting is the remains of an old water storage tank, pictured above right, which may have had a use connected with the powering of the incline. Next to it is an attractive waterfall, where the surplus water ran off towards the river.

Right are some more of William Evans's goats from Brynmair.



Some of William Evans's Togenburg goats in the field beyond Cae Pandy, 1998. Picture by Julia Gunn.

CAE CEINWS .



The main sewage plant for the village, in Cae Ceinws, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



L to R :- back row, Alison Rowlands, Ann Rowlands, Dilwyn Jones, Penny Sandells, Brian Rowlands. Front row, :- Howard Latham, Mair Jones, Nerys Williams, Sian Rowlands, Steven Williams, about 1963-4.



Three children in the lane to Ceinws Bach, early 1900's. Named as on back of postcard :- (Maggie Helina) (Katie) & brother Iorwerth Rowlands. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

Some of the children of the village photographed in Cae Ceinws over the years. The children have always enjoyed playing in the field, from football to tag, to sledging in the winter, nature walks and even religious instruction from visiting Evangelists, not to mention attempts at bull fighting, (Kenneth Rowlands). Don't try this today children !



A Child Evangelist meeting in Cae Ceinws, Oct. 1962. L to R :- Evangelist teacher, Ifor Jones, ...n/k., ...n/k., Michael Retalick (white shirt), Meryl Edwards, Susan Retalick, Ann Rowlands (girlfacing away), ...n/k., Dilwyn Jones. Picture courtesy Ifor Jones.



L to R :- Penny Sandells, Mair Jones, Myfanwy Jones, Michael Retalick, Ann Rowlands, Sian Rowlands, Alison Rowlands, Brian Rowlands, Paul Retalick, Donald Williams Jones.

PANTEG & PANTCOCH.



*The footpath to Cambria Wynne quarry & Panteg, 2000.
Picture by Ray Gunn..*



*Thomas & Louise Gunn on the footbridge near the Cambria Wynne quarry, 1998.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



*The old tramway below Ceinws Bach farm to Cambria Wynne quarry, 2000.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



*Panteg farm, 2002.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



Two views of the old Cambria Wynne quarry, 1998.

Pictures by Ray Gunn.

The first Annibynwyr chapel Sunday School was held at the old cottage at Panteg (now demolished) in the 1800's. It then moved up to Ty Mawr and Blaenglesyrch before coming down into the village.

The old road to Cambria Wynne quarry and on to Pantcoch and Cae Cwta is now a popular footpath, as is also the old tramway that runs parallel to it.



*The bridge over the river Glesyrch to Pant Coch, now called Hopley Heights, 1998.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*



*Pant Coch (Hopley Heights), 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

BLAENGLESYRCH & PANT - Y - SAESON .



*The old road to Blaenglesyrch, 2002.
Picture by Julia Gunn.*

Blaenglesyrch was an old farm at the head of the valley, beyond Pantcoch, Ty Mawr and Esgairlwyd. Built up on a steep hillside overlooking the river Glesyrch the buildings were large and well built and it even had it's own waterwheel. The wheel was bought in the mid twentieth century by Hugh Jones, Brynmelin, Llanwrin and the buildings were demolished by the Forestry Commission when they bought the farm to plant trees on the land.

According to the parish records, a Juliana Rowlands lived there in 1680. Related to the author perhaps ? Must dig deeper there. In 1841 it was occupied by Ellis and Elizabeth Roberts. For some time in the nineteenth century the Annibynwyr Chapel Sunday school was held there, when Thomas and Jinni Peters were living there.



*Alfred Rowlands & Edward Jones
(Nancy Lloyd's father).
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.*



*Remains of the barn at Blaenglesyrch farm, 2002.
Picture by Ray Gunn.*

Coming forward to the twentieth century, Nancy Lloyd (of Corris shop) lived there in the early part of the century with her father Edward Jones, pictured above, her mother Lizzie and brother Dafydd. They had moved there from Ty Mawr. Nancy had to walk over the mountain to Aberllefenni school every day. When they later moved to Esgairlwyd she changed to Corris school. Nowadays the Forestry Commission have opened the site for public amenity use and the old road passed the ruin is used as a popular route by off road cyclists and walkers.

Further on, just over the hill from Blaenglesyrch lies Caerfelin, another Forestry Commission smallholding set in the middle of the forest.

Caerfelin is adjacent to the alleged site of an old battlefield in the wars between the Welsh Princes and the English in the late thirteenth century. Authentic information about the site has proved very hard to find. However, we have obtained permission from Mrs Dorothy Pugh to publish some work by the late Dafydd Jones Owen of Y Siop, Llanwrin. It was handwritten in old Welsh and therefore we were very grateful for the assistance of Ms Sali Roberts of Plas Rhiwgreiddyn in the translation to English of some of the more difficult parts. Below is Julia's English version. It is all we have been able to find out so far.

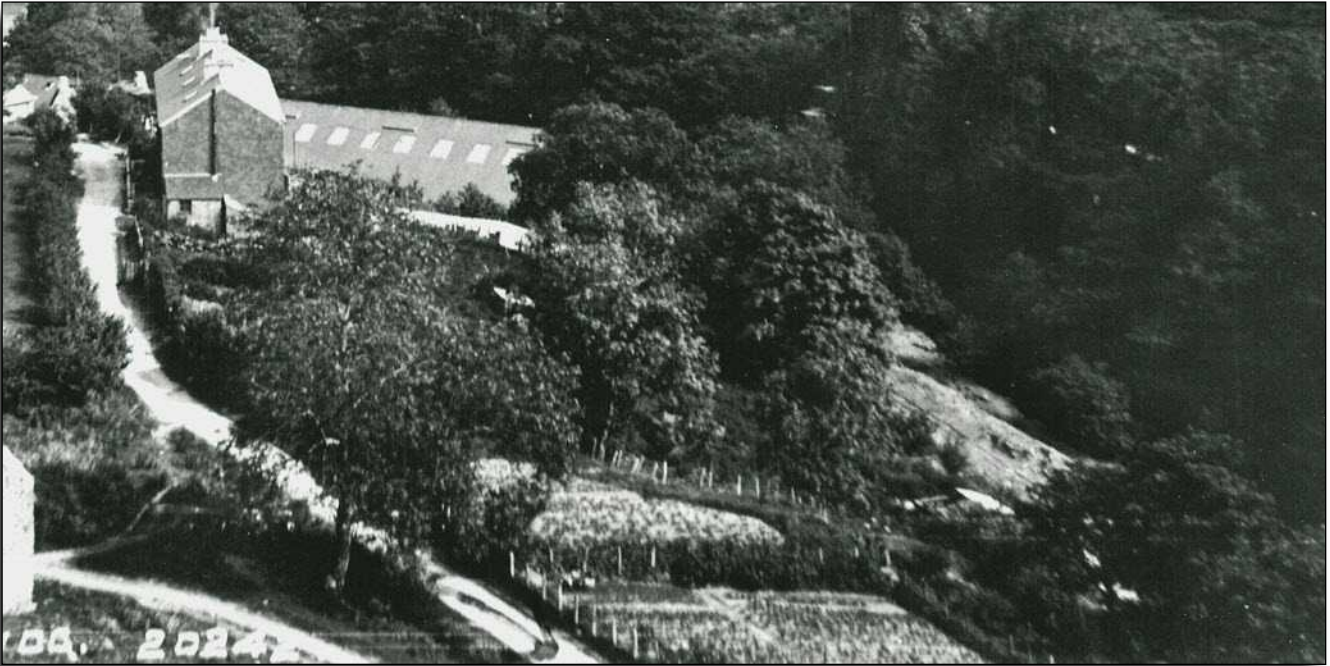
THE LEGEND OF PANT - Y - SAESON .

It has been passed down from one generation to another among the elders of the village that a fierce battle took place around 1282 on the mountain pasture near Caerfelin called 'Pant-y-Saeson. The battle was between the English from Pant-y-Saeson and the Welsh from Gelli Cymru. According to tradition, the leader of the Welsh was Gwaenfab and he was triumphant that day, killing a great number of the English. Their graves are still there today at Pant-y-Beddau.

This stance was planned by Gwaenfab in order to give Llywelyn time to flee to Esgair Llewelyn although he had very few soldiers. Some of them were on the point of giving up when they learnt that Llewelyn had fled and to depress them even further, Gwaenfab was struck by a stray arrow and was killed instantly. His army fled up to Cwm Coed, leaving him on the battlefield. Even though, in the dead of night, they went to look for him, they failed to find his body. The English had not taken his body, nor had they buried it.

In more recent times, in the twentieth century, some men were searching the area for relics, when out of a clear blue sky a severe storm suddenly blew up. It frightened them so much that they fled the site and would not return. It is said that some of the grave sites are marked by low mounds on the hillside. However, the area is now so heavily wooded that it is difficult to locate anything of interest. Perhaps just as well for the peace of the poor souls who have been lying there for the last seven hundred years.

ROSTRICK COTTAGE & SWN-YR-AFON .



A view of the north end of the village, about 1928, showing Era Terrace, Era Works and the two gardens in the foreground are where Rostrick Cottage and Swn-yr-Afon now stand. The tramway over the tips is just visible. Picture by Donald George, courtesy Sara Eade.



Rostrick Cottage, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Swn-yr-Afon, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn..



A rear view of Swn-yr-Afon, 2003, showing some of the landscaping work done by Owen Kirkham for the Dignams.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Hernance & Desmond Dignam, 2003, in the garden of Swn-yr-Afon.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

Just opposite the junction to Brynmair are two relatively new homes. A white bungalow, Rostrick Cottage built in the 1970's for Mrs Robertson and next to it a modern house called Swn-yr-Afon, built a little later, in the early 1980's by her brother and sister in law, Desmond and Hernance Dignam, pictured left. Being keen gardeners at Swn-yr-Afon, particularly Hernance, the two retired teachers began work immediately on taming the wilderness around and below their new home. As much of their very large garden is comprised of either very steep banks or lower down, the former slate tip of the Era Quarry slate mill, help was sought in the form of Owen Kirkham of 5 Caerbont. Over the last twenty years they have transformed the land with a series of terraces, walls and walks, planting flowering and ornamental shrubs. There is still much to do but what has already been done is a credit to their determination and tenacity on very difficult ground indeed. Good luck with the rest of it !

EVANS BRIDGE .



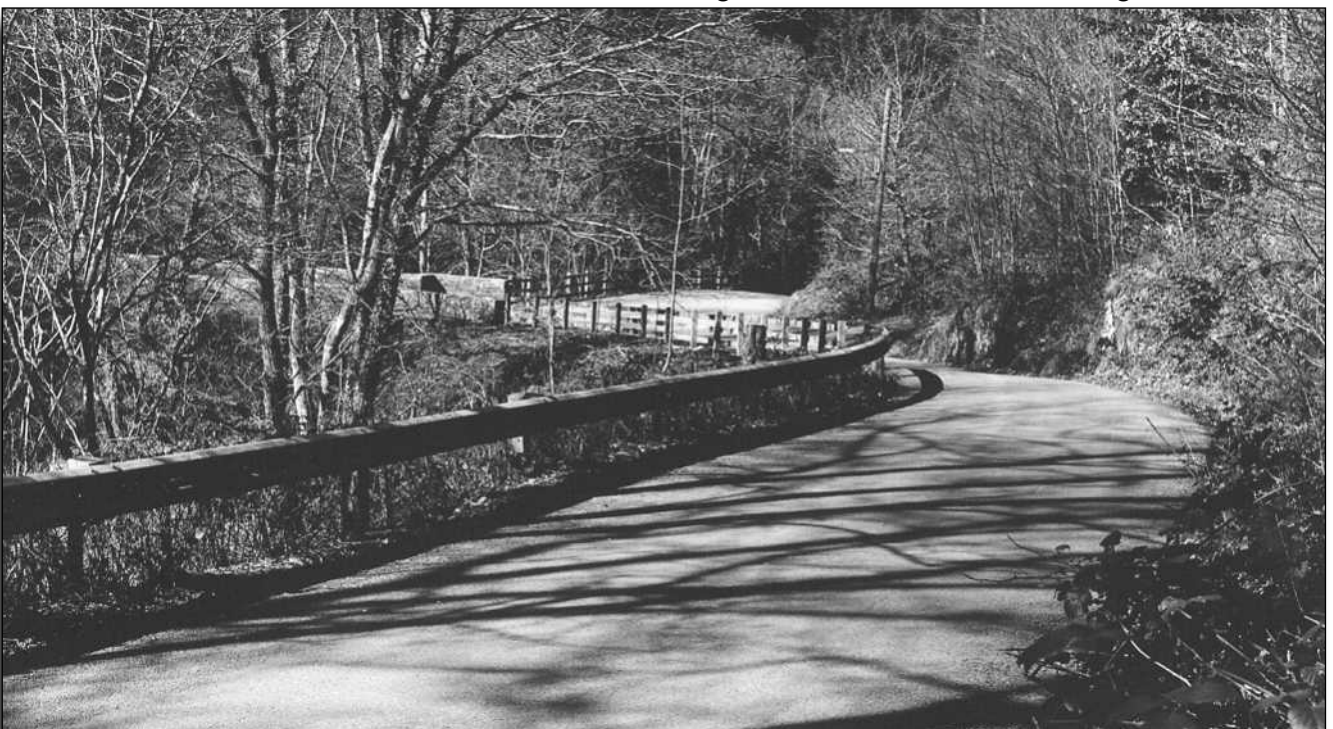
The road from the village to Evans bridge, about 1890's. Picture by Donald George, courtesy David Coleman & Corris Railway Society.



The slide, worn smooth by water from the sluice gate in the old quarry water leat across the road. Shown by Ray Gunn, 2003, Picture by Julia Gunn.

A hundred years ago, when both the Corris Railway and the Era quarry were thriving, the short stretch of road between the village and Evans bridge was every bit as busy as it is today.

In the picture above, the water leat carrying water from the Dulas near Fronfelen Hall to the slate mill in Esgairgeiliog for power can be clearly seen. Just where it passes over the lump of rock on the bend was a sluice gate to let the water out when not needed or for maintenance. When opened the water ran over the road and down to the river. Over the years it wore the rock below the road very smooth, see picture, left and the children of the village would play on it and use it as a slide. Even as recently as the early 1960's, the author and her friends used it in the summer. When Dafydd Lewis Pugh of 3 Era Terrace worked for the quarry as a young man it was one of his tasks to operate the sluice gates along the leat, including one below where Rostrick Cottage is now.



The road to Evans Bridge in 2000. The old water leat is long gone & almost forgotten with little trace left.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

EVANS BRIDGE .



Evans Bridge level crossing, about 1930's ? Corris Railway engine No. 3 (now owned by Talyllyn Railway). The driver was Humphrey Humphreys. Note the crossing keeper's shelter, later used as a bus shelter. Picture courtesy David Coleman & Corris Railway Society.



The Corris Railway train near Maespoeth carrying passengers again in 2002 for the first time since about 1930.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



David Coleman, 2002, chairman of the Corris Railway Society. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The Corris Railway train on Gala Day, June 2003, pulled by Corris engine No.3, now 125 years old. Picture by Ray Gunn.

The picture at the top of the page shows Corris Railway engine number 3 leaving the level crossing at Evans bridge on it's way to Corris, driven by Humphrey Humphreys. Official passenger services ceased about 1930 and freight services in 1948 when the line closed. However, the Corris Railway Society has worked tirelessly for many years to reinstate the line and has now reopened it for passenger services, with an official 'Gala Opening' in June 2003. The original Corris engine No.3 was borrowed from the Talyllyn Railway for the occasion but a new engine is being built for the Society and plans are in hand to extend the line from it's present terminus at Maespoeth on to the picnic site at Tanycoed. When that happens we will once more see steam trains chuffing past Evans bridge and Esgairgeiliog, thanks to David Coleman and his fellow volunteers, including our own Bryn Morgan.

EVANS BRIDGE .



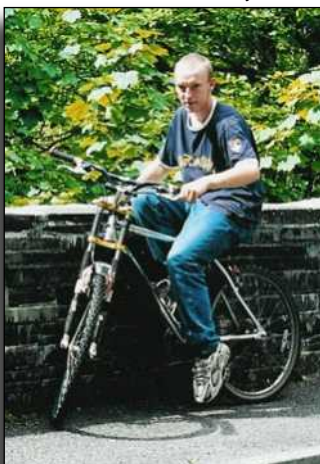
A village outing, a Sunday School trip maybe, about 1933, awaiting transport by Evans bridge. Note the enormous level crossing gate to the left and the railway line crossing the junction. The only people we think we can identify are the lady centre right with a handbag and little girl who could be Blodwen Pugh and her daughter Muriel from 3 Era Terrace. The lady fifth from right with a coat over her arm is Blodwen Rowlands, Dulas Cottages and the shorter lady left of her is ,we think , Annie Mary Humphreys, Achor Cottages, later Jones, of 8 Aelybryn. It is thought that the little boy on the far right at the back above the others could be William Green, late of 1 Aelybryn. Perhaps some of the children in the picture are still alive today, although now in their seventies. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Dennis & Violet Lake on Evans bridge, 1947. Picture courtesy Chris Lake.



Evans bridge, 2000. Although cold and dark in the winter, in summer time this bridge like Aberglesyrch bridge is bright and sunny and a popular place to sit, court or take a picture.



Michael Blackwell on the bridge, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Ray Gunn, taking a break on the bridge and listening to the BBC Light Programme, 1968. Picture by Julia Rowlands.

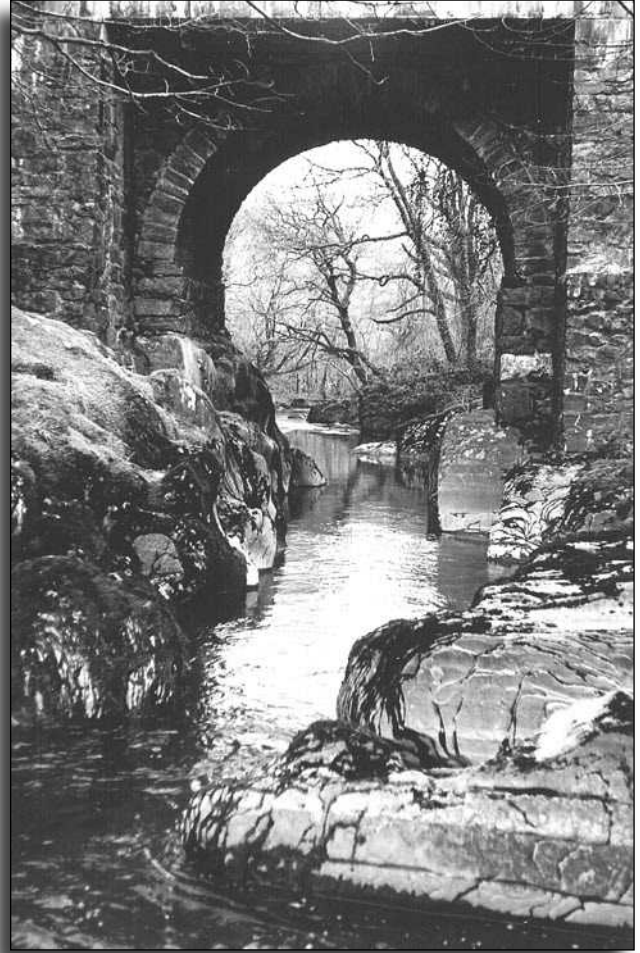


Louise Gunn & her friend and neighbour Iana Andrews from 16 & 17 Aelybryn, out for a walk, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

EVANS BRIDGE .



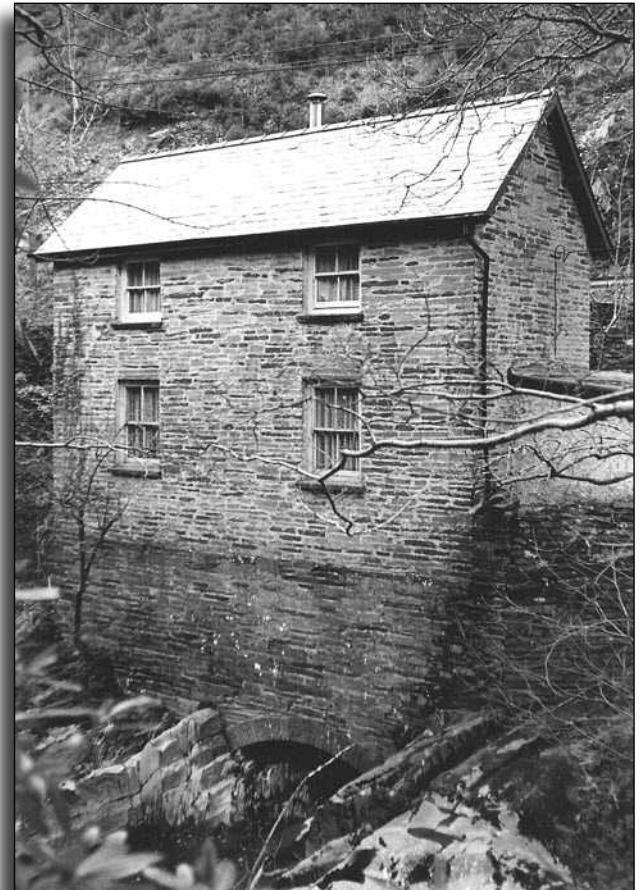
Evans bridge, about 1940's. A Francis Frith postcard, reproduced courtesy The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.



Evans bridge, 1998. Note the widening section built to carry the footpath across the bridge in the 1970's. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Evans bridge from downstream, 2000. There are further buttresses on this side built to strengthen the bridge in the 1970's. Picture by Ray Gunn.

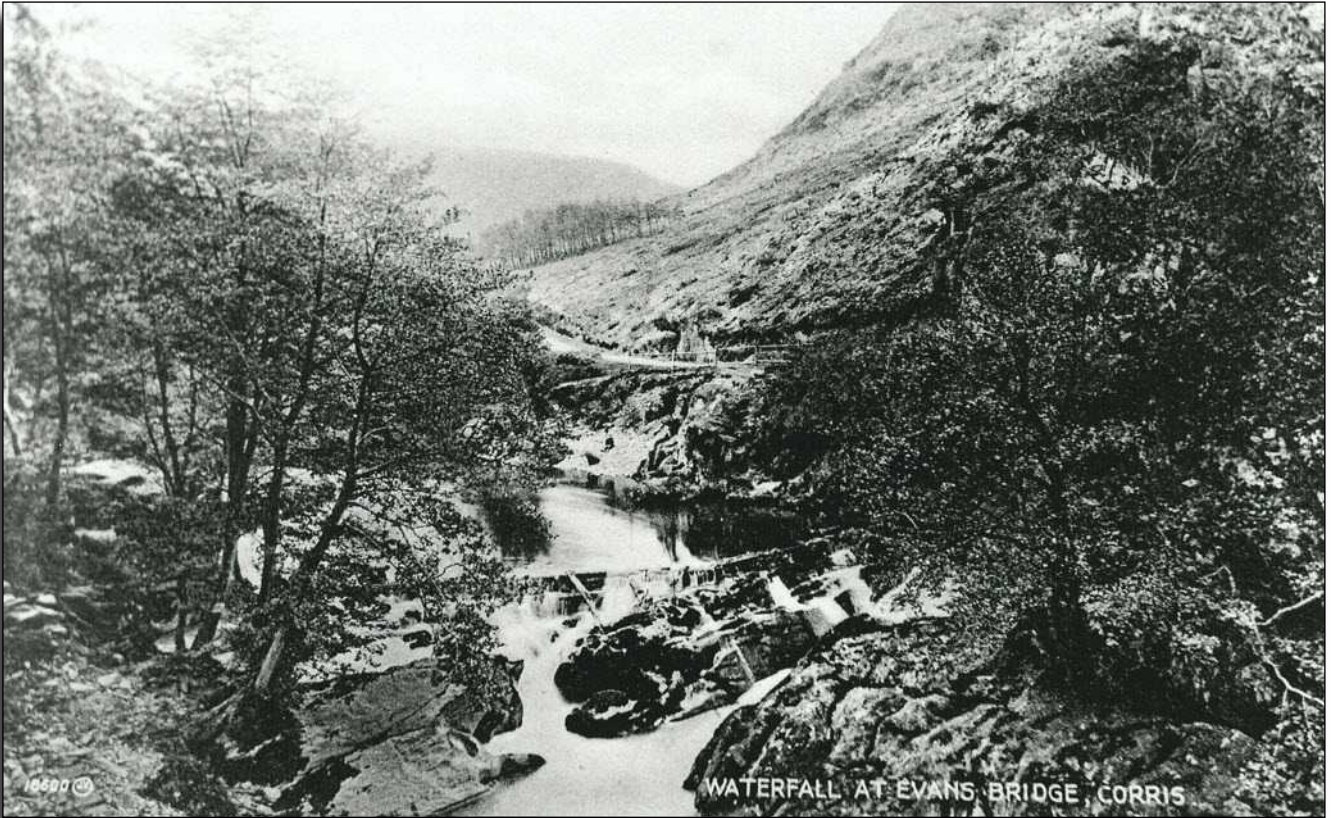


Evans bridge cottage, 1998. Formally the Corris Railway level crossing keeper's cottage. Picture by Ray Gunn.

According to J. Arthur Williams work 'Trem Yn Ol', Evans bridge was built in about 1816 by a Dr D. P. Evans who lived at Fronfelen Hall. Before this there was a wooden bridge over the Dulas, called 'Pompren Ditw'. Apparently many people fell from it and it is believed, after one young woman died after such a fall, Dr Evans decided enough was enough and paid for the present bridge to be built.

The Corris Railway built the house and the first level crossing keeper was Dafydd Griffiths and his family. Their garden was next to where Swn-yr-Afon now stands.

EVANS BRIDGE .



The dam at Evans bridge, about late 1880's .

Valentines postcard, by Donald George. Courtesy Sara Eade.



Ray Gunn at the start of the river channel by the end of the dam, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Before the slate mill was built in Esgairgeiliog in the 1870's, the grist mill it replaced drew its power from a water leat that started its journey a few yards upstream from Evans bridge. The picture above shows the dam constructed to maintain the water level high enough to flow along the channel to the mill. Before Evans bridge was widened and strengthened in the 1970's the channel passed under a small second arch in it and until recently much of its route



The channel cut through the rock between the dam & the bridge, 2003. Picture by Ray Gunn.

could be traced right to the back of the present factory building. After the grist mill's closure the channel would no longer have been needed and indeed, in later pictures taken in the 1890's the dam has vanished completely. However, there are still post holes to be seen cut in the ridge of rock along which it was built and the channel from the dam site to Evans bridge is still there.



The waterfall and dam site in 2000. Picture by Ray Gunn.

The bridge and the view from it were a popular tourist attraction in Victorian and Edwardian times and many postcards were produced of the area, indeed right up to the 1950's. In 2002 the author watched an otter use the water channel to negotiate a route past the waterfall on its way up river. So perhaps it is still in use after all, albeit discreetly.



The river upstream from the bridge, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

EVANS BRIDGE & CORRIS CARAVAN PARK.



Ray Gunn recording some of the initials and dates on the rock by Evans bridge, 2003.



DD JO TOWYN 1857.

On a large smooth slab of rock close to Evans bridge there are carved and scratched the initials and dates of a number of people who paused on their journeys past there. The intriguing thing about them though is that they all seem to date from a period between the late 1820's to the late 1850's. Why none since ? Next time you pass, stop and see how many you can find.



JOHN PARRY.



Ah ! a new one.

CORRIS CARAVAN PARK.



Corris Caravan Park entrance, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



The caravan park in the late 1950's, showing the camp facilities block, right. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



John & Brenda Clark, 2003. Picture by Ray Gunn.

Two couples who are regular weekend visitors to their caravans at Corris Caravan Park are John and Brenda Clark, left, who have been coming here for 15 years and Gordon and Phyllis Timmins, right, who have been coming here now for 6 years. Nice to see you.



Gordon & Phyllis Timmins, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

CORRIS CARAVAN PARK .



*Richurst, Glyn Richard's caravan, 1968.
Picture by Wallace F. Gunn.*



*Ray & Julia Gunn at their wedding
reception in the club, 1968.
Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*



*The authors wedding party in the club, 5 Oct 1968.
L to R :- Kenneth Gunn, Grace & Wallace Gunn, Ray & Julia
Gunn, Moira & Kenneth Rowlands.
Picture authors collection.*



*Blodwen Jones, Nora Richards and Blodwen's mother, Margaret
Rowlands at the authors wedding reception at the club, 5 Oct 1968.
Picture authors collection.*

Although it is called 'Corris Caravan Park', the caravan site near Evans bridge has always been regarded as a part of Esgairgeiliog by the villagers.

When it opened in the 1950's there were only a handful of caravans there in one small field. However, as the 1950's and 60's were the heyday of caravan sites in Wales, it soon grew into a thriving friendly community. Many of the early visitors kept their caravans and later replacements on the site for so many years that they have been passed down through the family to their grand children.

It has not lasted fifty years without it's share of dramas though. Once, during an extremely heavy and prolonged storm, the river started to burst it's banks. One of the caravans sited near the river was washed downstream and came to rest against Evans bridge, blocking the archway. Unable to pass through the bridge the swollen river very quickly backed up and flooded much of the caravan park, until somebody very bravely got a line onto the offending van and it was dragged clear.

On a brighter note, in the '60's and 70's the social needs of the caravaners, and indeed the villagers, who were always welcomed there, were well catered for. Apart from the usual toilets, showers and laundry facilities there was at one time a fish and chip shop there and later on a purpose built large social club and a well stocked shop, run in the beginning by Glyn Richards. Glyn ran the club very successfully before going on to marry shopkeeper Nora and open the Dwynant pub with her in the village.

Such was the club's popularity that it was used as the venue for the authors wedding reception in October 1968. After the reception and party the young and somewhat inebriated couple made their way to their new home,

Glyn Richards's caravan, pictured above left. Unable to find the key, the groom climbed in through the bedroom window and fell onto the bed, which promptly collapsed completely. Somebody had taken all the bolts and screws etc out for a laugh and carefully put it together without them. I wont say what else they did.

Talking of fun in caravans, Ken Rowlands, Hugh Breese Evans from Corris, Nelson Johnstone from Mount Pleasant and an acquaintance called Jock had been enjoying a drink in the Dwynant one morning in the 1970's. Nelson was home on leave from his job as First Engineer on a merchant ship so it was time to celebrate. Anyway, around mid day they were feeling hungry, so after buying a tinned steak and kidney pie and some carrots etc from Nora's shop, they all headed back to their friend's caravan, a bit the worse for drink and starting to feel more hungry by the minute. 'Right, bung the pie in the oven and pass the whisky bottle while we wait' said one. Sounds good, so it was done and they all sat around drinking, swaying and talking, like you do, wondering how long it takes to cook a steak and kidney pie.

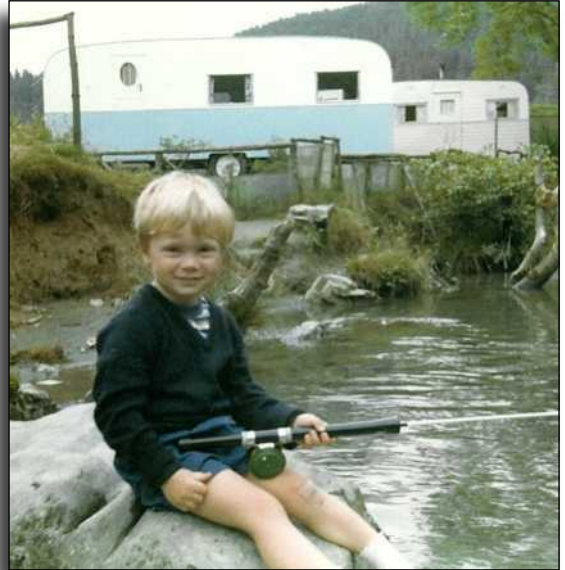
After several minutes they found out, when there was an enormous explosion from the cooker. Completely startled they dived for cover under the furniture. After a long pause, their bums went down and their heads came up and they all looked over to see First Engineer Nelson was still sitting in his chair, splattered with gravy, with a surprised look on his face. 'Whatsh going on in the engine room Ken' he slurred.

The 'engine room' was shattered. Whoever put the pie in it had forgotten to take the lid off the tin first. When it reached boiling point it had exploded, blowing the oven door off and pebble dashing the entire caravan with steak and kidney pie.

CORRIS CARAVAN PARK .



Mike & Monica Clarke's caravan, 1988. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.



Philip Clarke, 1970's. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.



Rachel Clarke & her father, Mike Clarke. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.



Stephen Clarke, 1970's. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.



Monica Clarke & Rajah. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.



Philip Clarke & Timothy, Mrs Christopher's grandson, 1970's. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.

George and Ethel Gledall persuaded Mike and Monica Clarke to try a holiday at Corris caravan park 36 years ago and they liked it so much they have been coming regularly ever since, to their own caravan there. They had three children, Philip, Stephen and Rachel. Sadly, Mike passed away recently but Monica still visits the site, as does Rachel who is now married herself and she and her husband, Charles (Mole) Miller are Godparents to the authors grandson Connor Jones.



Mole & Rachel Miller with their Godson Connor Jones, 1996. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Marnie, George & Ethel Gledall's grand daughter, 1975. Picture courtesy Monica Clarke.

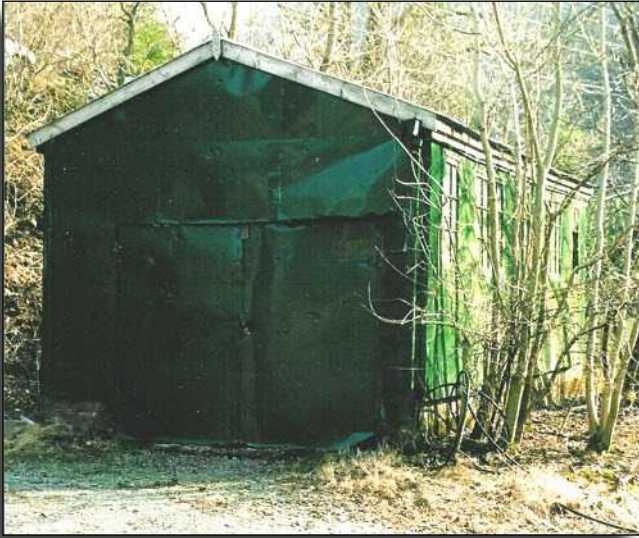
CORRIS CARAVAN PARK .



*The old shop & club, run by Glyn Richards in the 1960's.
Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.*



The club building, where the authors had their wedding reception in 1968 & the children's Playground. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.



The former 1960's fish & chip shop. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.

The old club and shop, pictured above, are now closed and the former chip shop, left, is a store shed. The former site proprietors, Mr Lightfoot in the 1950's and Mr Fleet in the 1960's and 70's are long gone. The current owners though, Mr and Mrs Bull have been working hard for many years now to keep the site up to date with the needs and expectations of the caravanners of the twenty first century, while not forgetting their loyal older tenants who have supported the site for almost fifty years.

The weather still takes it's toll too, as can be seen in the bottom left picture, taken in 2002. A severe storm blew down several trees along the site boundary with one crashing through the roof of this van, only minutes after the occupants had moved from that room to another part of the caravan.

With the cost and hassle of foreign travel it's nice to see traditional holidays sites still thriving.



One of the caravans on the site. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.



A general view of the site. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn..



Damage caused by a storm, Autumn 2002. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The new office building, built in 2002. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.

THE OLD ROAD .



British Telecom erecting poles for the first time on the roadside South of the village, Jan 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



British Telecom connecting the new line to the new poles, 2003, watched by Louise Gunn & Connor, Kieran, & Cameron Jones. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Jimbo from Wyoming, USA, 2003. Picture by Curtis Gunn.



Curtis Gunn, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

The new 'National Cycle Route' section 8 passes through Esgairgeiliog, carrying with it cyclists from all over the World, touring the country. Pictured far left is one, called Jimbo from Wyoming, USA, on-route to Ireland, who stopped and asked the author, Julia to take a picture of him with his camera. As he was asking, Julia's grandson, Curtis Gunn aged six picked up Julia's camera and snapped them both, resulting in the picture shown here. He must have been studying his grandparents activities with a camera more than we thought. Better be careful !



The village sign, by Yr Efail. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The little hill below Yr Efail, with another little message left by a horse in 2003, see story below. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Dafydd Lewis Pugh & Tom Rowlands, in the 1930's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Rowlands.

Whenever I see the 'Please Drive Carefully' sign by Yr Efail I think of a little story about a mishap that occurred nearby over seventy years ago.

Ken Rowlands' father, Tom Rowlands and Dafydd Lewis Pugh worked together in Rhiwgreiddyn quarry in the 1920's and early 30's. The two of them often cycled to work together and one cold frosty winters morning Dafydd was showing off on his shiny new bike and boasting how fast it could go etc. As they reached the little hill by Yr Efail, Dafydd spotted at the bottom of the hill a large pile of horse manure on the road. Seeing his chance for a bit of fun Dafydd said 'Watch me go through this

now Tom bach. I'll scatter that pile of horse manure from here to the quarry. So head down, pedaling furiously and picking up speed down the hill, he soon hit the pile of frozen, brick hard manure.

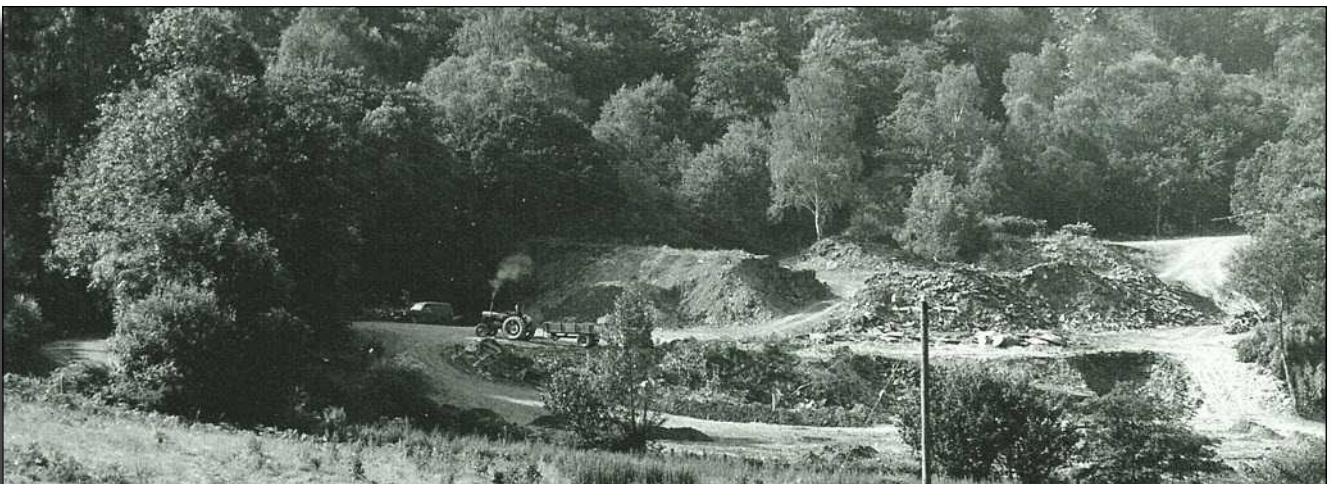
He was off work, in bed for weeks. The bike was never the same again either.

THE OLD ROAD .



Louise Gunn by the field where Mary, Bryn and Eirwen Morgan used to keep their chickens.

Picture, 2003 by Julia Gunn.



The field where Mary Morgan kept her chickens being leveled and reclaimed by Sam Evans in 1997.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

Mary Morgan and her children, Eirwen and Bryn kept chickens, ducks geese and turkeys in a field by Rhiwgreiddyn quarry for as long as most people could remember. However, when Mary passed away in the mid 1990's the field passed back to the landlord, the quarry owner, Sam Evans from Pennal. Sam proceeded to level and reclaim the field to it's present day condition with the help of Gwynfor Jones from Machynlleth. Pictured below centre is the spring by the roadside near the field where villagers used to get their drinking water. Margaret Rowlands still used it as recently as the early 1990's and actually it does taste much better than tap water. Below right are two of the many canoeists who use the Dulas for white water canoeing in winter time.



Mary Morgan feeding her chickens in her field, 1970's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



The spring by the old road where the villagers got their water.

Picture by Julia Gunn.



Canoeists on their way to the Dulas, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

THE OLD ROAD .



A view of the trees by Mary Morgan's field in 1997. The figure is Phyllis Jones on her way home from work. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Phyllis Jones. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

The stretch of old road past Mary Morgans field used to be very picturesque, with the trees either side grown tall and hanging over the road to meet in the middle, forming a tunnel. Phyllis Jones has walked this way for many years, on her way to work at Plas Llwyngwern.

The old bridge, below, used to carry the quarry tramroad over the council road until the road was rerouted up to follow the tramway, to make more room to tip more waste, around the turn of the century.



The old tramway bridge over what used to be the council road to the village before it was moved. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The tunnel under the trees by Mary Morgan's field in 1997, all now cut down to a low hedge.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

QUARRY MEN .

Ken Rowlands's father, Tom Rowlands worked in Rhiwgreiddyn quarry around the late 1920's to the early 1930's.

Tom had an ex police German Shepherd dog called Prince. It was a well trained dog and every day it would bring Tom's lunch box to him wherever he was in the mine. About this time a new manager came to work in the quarry. On one of his first few days there he was making his way along one of the underground levels when in the dim light of his headlamp he saw the large shadowy shape of the dog pass him and then disappear into the gloom.

A couple of minutes later the women working in the enamelling workshop above ground, including Tom's wife Maggie, were alarmed to see the manager rush into the room, obviously very frightened and rather disheveled and babbling something about seeing a wolf underground. When the women managed to calm him down and explain the truth to him, he left the room, looking rather sheepish. Well, it's easy to laugh outside in daylight but deep underground, in pitch darkness save for the flickering light of a candle headlamp and the hollow echoing sound of dripping water all around, reality and common sense can easily give way to instinctive fear and superstition.



The entrance to the lower quarry at Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, 2000. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Tom Rowlands and his German shepherd dog, Prince, outside the entrance to Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, late 1920's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Ken Rowlands, apprentice rockman, 1951. Picture courtesy Phillip Evans.

Tom's son, Ken Rowlands was also a quarryman in his younger days, like his father. He worked in the Braich Goch and Aberllefenni quarries. One day, while working as an apprentice rockman at Aberllefenni, a large rock fell on his right hand and almost severed his fingers right off. They were just hanging on by a little flesh. The local doctor, Dr Crooks, secured his fingers to his

hand temporarily with the aid of an old dried date box, (the ones you eat) and dispatched him off to Aberystwyth hospital.

As luck would have it, (doesn't it always), a heavy rain storm that day had caused the river Dyfi to flood badly, closing Dyfi bridge to traffic. So Ken had to be taken around the ten mile diversion through Llanwrin and Cemmaes Road to Machynlleth and then on towards Aberystwyth. At Derwenlas further delays were caused because the floods had derailed a steam train near the road, which had killed several cows.

The doctors at Aberystwyth wanted to cut ken's fingers off but he refused to let them, as without them it would be very hard to find work and he had a family to feed. When they x rayed his hand they were very puzzled by a dark spot on the film, over his hand. After much discussion and head scratching, they suddenly realised it was a nail from the date box.

Anyway, they managed to successfully sew the fingers back on and Ken still has them all today in full working order fifty years on.

On an equally lighter note, while Ken's wife Moira was waiting in the hospital for news from the surgeon, their infant daughter, Julia, (the author) took her first few steps there, holding onto a wheelchair at first, then letting go.



Tom Rowland's great great grandchildren having a picnic on the tips of Rhiwgreiddyn quarry where he had worked. Back L to R :- Connor Jones, Curtis Gunn, Tom Gunn. Front L to R :- Louise Gunn, Kieran Jones. Picture 2000, by Julia Gunn.

QUARRY MEN .



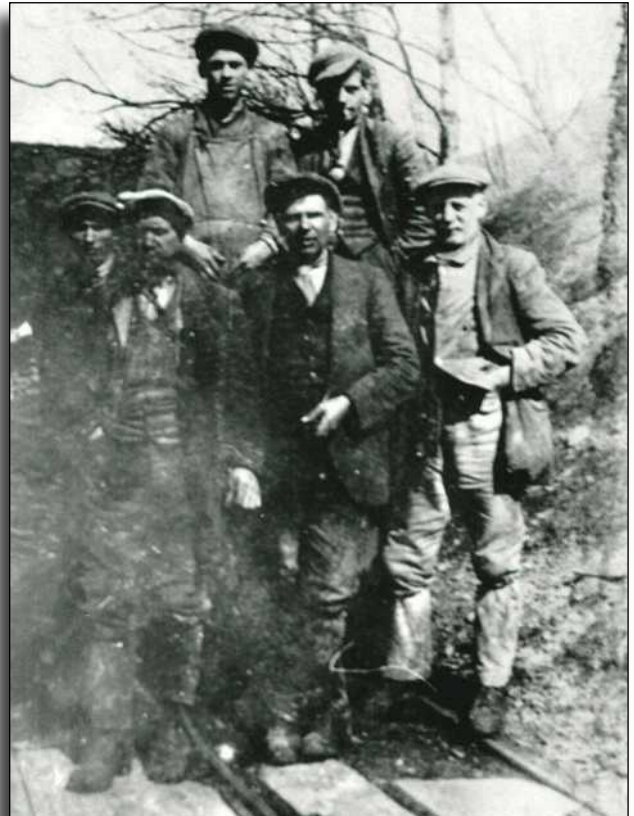
The entrance to Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, 2000. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Thought to be Lhwngwern quarry, 1930's. Back row, L to R :- Tom Rowlands, Minafon, Ceinws, John Davies. Front row L to R :- Alfred Rowlands, Hayden Pugh, Jack Evans, Tom Rowlands, Achor Cottages. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



A water filled shaft in the lower Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, 2000. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Could be Llwngwern quarry, 1930's. Back row L to R :- Hayden Pugh, Tom Rowlands, Achor Cottages. Front row L to R :- George Thomas, John Davies, John Rowlands, ...n/k.... Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



One of the two levels leading into the lower Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, 2000. Picture by Ray Gunn..



Llwngwern quarry, 1930's. L to R :- ...n/k., Dafydd Lewis Pugh, Tom Rowlands, Achor. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



A stone by the back doorway of Rhiwgreiddyn slate mill with initials and dates around 1910 to 1915. Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.

ENAMELLING AT RHIWGREIDDYN .



One of the smaller buildings used at Rhiwgreiddyn quarry for slate finishing and enamelling. Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.



The old company name plate from the early 20th century. Ceinws RSO means Rural Sorting Office. Picture, 2002, by Julia Gunn.



Names and dates written on some of the roof timbers in one of the big sheds in 1914. Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.



An example of the slate finishing work carried out at the quarry. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn



A fireplace in the old office at the quarry. The red slate surround was made and enamelled there. Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.



More names and dates written in 1914. Were they perhaps written before the men departed for the trenches of World War One. If so, how many made it back afterwards? Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.



Margaret Rowlands, in 1928, aged 21. Picture, authors collection.



The furnace door under the enamelling ovens, dated 1884. Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.

In the early part of the 20th century Rhiwgreiddyn quarry buildings were being used for finishing and enamelling slate products. As late as the late 1920's and early 1930's, Margaret Rowlands, pictured above, was employed there in the enamelling process. The fire surrounds, washstand tops etc were given various finishes, such as marble effects and then baked in large ovens, like the one pictured right. The oven doors are solid slate with wrought iron hinges and fittings and the ovens are as big as an average living room.

In one of the big mill sheds there are several names and initials painted on the roof timbers, all dated 1914. Were they perhaps done by young men wanting to leave their mark there before going off to fight in the first world war. If they were, one can't help but wonder how many came back to read them again?

The quarry finally closed for good in the mid 1930's.



Sam Evans, owner of the quarry in 2000, by the solid slate doors of the enamelling ovens. Picture 2000 by Ray Gunn

RHIWGREIDDYN TIPS .



The upper waste tip, mostly from the older upper quarry, in use before the lower opening by the road was made at the end of the 19th century. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.



The beehives, belonging to Louie Morris on top of the upper tip. The bees used to run off the edge of the tip, flap their wings and dive straight for the village like a squadron of fighter bombers, pollinating all the flowers in Yr Efail's garden. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Louie Morris with some of his bees, outside his honey factory behind Caerbont. Since the sale of Rhiwgreiddyn quarry his workers have been moved to a new location. Louie's honey has been popular locally and in Station garage Machynlleth for many years. Picture courtesy Louie Morris.



Julia Gunn filming the old winding house behind the upper tip, Rhiwgreiddyn quarry Picture, 2000, by Ray Gunn.



The old weigh bridge and office building near the upper quarry. The fugitive, Robert Boyton hid around these buildings after shooting police constable Arthur Rowlands in 1961. Picture, 1995, by Ray Gunn.

During August 1961, Robert Boyton, the man who blinded police constable Arthur Rowlands by Dyfi bridge made his camp here in one of the buildings above Rhiwgreiddyn quarry.

He had lived wild in the 1950's and didn't like the Welsh or policemen. He could even eat what meat he caught raw. The authorities said he suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and carried a sawn off shotgun.

P.C. Arthur Rowlands confronted him one night by the cottages at Dyfi bridge. A few words were exchanged and suddenly Boyton drew the shotgun and fired it at P.C. Rowlands at point blank range, blinding him for for life.

Afterwards, while on the run and hiding out at Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, he made at least one foray into the village, when one night he broke quietly in through the back door of 2 Era Terrace. While there he cooked bacon and eggs for himself in the cellar kitchen while the

occupant, Stanley Jones, slept blissfully unaware two floors above. When he had finished he left as quietly as he had arrived.

The villagers were very frightened at the time and would not let their children out to play. He was finally caught in Aberllefenni and eventually imprisoned at Broadmoor hospital, where he later died.

SALE DAY .



On the way to the sale at Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, of Sam Evans's vintage farm machinery. Picture 2000 by Ray Gunn



Phyllis Jones, centre, with her son Peter, his wife June & their children, Nia, Megan & Ceris, at the sale, 6th May 2000. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The auctioneer taking bids from the large crowd with the aid of a microphone and amplifier. Picture 2000 by Ray Gunn



'Old dozers'. Louie Morris taking a nap on one of the several old bulldozers for sale on a very hot day. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.



Some of the equipment and crowds, (over 2000 people) at the quarry on the day of the sale. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.



'What's in there'. Inquisitive visitors peering through knot holes at equipment not included in the sale. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.

On the 6th May 2000, what was reputedly the last major sale of vintage farm and earth moving equipment to be held in this country took place at Rhiwgreiddyn quarry. Over 2000 people turned up on a blazing hot day and cars, vans and lorries filled the field where Mary Morgan's chickens used to be and also overflowed into the field below the quarry, beyond the stream. The equipment was from the huge collection belonging to Mr Sam Evans, of Pennal, an agricultural contractor and the then owner of the quarry. Spread out over the entire lower tip and the mill sheds and yard, the auctioneer took almost a whole day to move through it and complete the sale.



Philip Evans, underground foreman at Aberllefenni quarry, representing Wincilate at the sale. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.



Julia Gunn taking a break by the digger bought by Wincilate for Aberllefenni quarry. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.

LLYN Y MYNYDD .

There were once two small manmade reservoirs above Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, built to provide water and power for the machinery and processes in the quarry and mill sheds. The lower one has been partly empty for years and was recently drained and cleaned up by Sam Evans of Pennal before he sold the property. The second one, further up the little valley behind the quarry is still holding some water and known locally as 'Llyn-y-Mynydd'. It has been popular among the villagers for generations as a place to picnic, swim and learn to swim. Ken Rowlands' uncle, Lewis John Rowlands taught Ken to swim by telling him that there was a half-crown (twelve and a half pence) lying at the bottom if he could find it. In later years Ken and his family would often picnic there on sunny Sunday afternoons.



A small spring, known locally as Ffynnon Oer, on the way to Llyn-y-Mynydd was once used as a treatment for haemorrhoids (piles). Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.

As teenagers, during the war, Ken and Tom Williams from Plas Rhiwgreiddyn, Captain Williams son, used to sail Tom's large model boat there. One day a passing Avro Anson aeroplane circled above them and misjudging the scale of the lake and boat signaled a message about a suspicious boat on a lake at those map co-ordinates. The local home guard from Corris, led by the Rev. Benson Davies were called out to investigate, in case the boat was being used to send signals to the enemy. It's true, honest ! Dad's army would have wiped the floor with Hitler.

On the way up to Llyn-y-Mynydd you pass a small spring, called 'Ffynnon Oer', where the water from it is always pure and very cold. It was once used as a treatment for haemorrhoids (piles). We are not sure if you drank it or sat in it but apparently it was effective and even today it makes a lovely cup of tea.



The upper reservoir built to supply power to Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, called Llyn-y-Mynydd.

Picture 1999, by Ray Gunn.



The lower reservoir that supplied power to the quarry, drained and cleaned out in 1999 by Sam Evans. Picture 2000 by Ray Gunn



The overflow channel of the lower reservoir, neatly constructed in slate. The figure is Julia Gunn. Picture 2000, by Ray Gunn.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE .



The Home Guard company, covering and drawn from men from the Corris valley, outside Tyn-y-Berth school where they would meet for training. Several of the men here were from Esgaigeiliog, for example :- Idwal Lloyd, Gwilym Jones Ceinws Bach, Idwal Jones, Robin Jones, Hayden Pugh Era Terr, George Thomas, Williams Bach and the picture is believed to have been taken about 1944/45.

Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.



Local members of the territorial army on detachment to Portadown Northern Ireland. Back row, L to R :- ...n/k., Evan Siencyn, Tom Rowlands, Achor, Jim Thomas, ? Griffiths, Gomer Rowlands, Mot Bach. Middle row L to R :- Willie Bert Jones, ...n/k., ...n/k., ...n/k., ...n/k., William Edward Roberts, Dafydd Bob, Corris, Jimmy Luke's son ?, Bert Redford. Front row L to R :- Elwyn (Sec) Jones, ...n/k.. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

During the second world war, teenager Ken Rowlands was in the Royal Fusiliers Army Cadet Force. As a keen volunteer, he was used as a messenger by the Home Guard unit, based in Upper Corris and led by the Rev. Benson Davies, pictured above, second row back, centre. This unit covered the Corris valley and drew it's part time volunteer members from all over the valley, including several from Esgaigeiliog. They used the Tyn-y-Berth school in Upper Corris as their base and for drill and other training etc.

One day, during an exercise against the regular army, Ken had a message to deliver from Upper Corris to the Drill Hall in Maengwyn Street Machynlleth. However, on the way to town he was captured by the army near Lliwdy, Pantperthog. They locked him up in a shed with another prisoner, Mr Humphreys, a butcher from Talywern who used to sell his meat in the market hall in Machynlleth. Ken remembers his first camp with the cadets, at Tonfannau, Tywyn, where he and his fellow trainees slept in army tents and were taught to shoot on the rifle range by the sea. He was a good shot and qualified as a marksman. The rifle range is still there today.



Edward Rowlands 1914.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones



Gomer Rowlands 2nd W.War.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Evan Rowlands.
Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.

RHIWGREIDDYN HELIPAD .



The view down onto the lower waste tip of the quarry, showing all the new poles waiting for planting, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The helicopter used to plant the poles in 2002, Cameron Jones, 3, at the controls. Picture by one of the electricity board managers. Reproduced courtesy Sharon Jones.

The slate waste tip below the Rhiwgreiddyn quarry, between the road and the river Dulas contains the waste from the newer part of the quarry that opens next to the road. We believe that there was also another entrance lower down, level with the old council road, which was closed to make more room to tip more waste slate. This tip also contains the sawn ends and offcuts etc from the slate mill and complex of finishing and enamelling buildings etc.

In 2002 Scottish Power began to use the tip to store and prepare new poles ready for transporting to replace old ones on the mountainsides and remote, inaccessible places around this area.

They claim it is quicker, easier and more environmentally friendly to use a helicopter to carry them to their destination and actually plant them in their holes. To do it overland would involve in many cases building new roads over the mountains to get the vehicles up there to do the job.

To watch the helicopter pick up and carry off each pole, returning a few minutes later for another one was a fascinating and novel experience and another example of the many things that have occurred in this village in the last few years that the old quarrymen could never have dreamed would happen.



The helicopter taking off prior to transporting more poles to their new mountain homes, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The helicopter transporting a new pole to it's destination on the mountain near the village, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Curtis Gunn inspecting one of the reels of new power cable stored on the former slate tip, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.

QUARRY HILL .



The author, Ray Gunn talking to his sister in law, Sian Williams on the hill, 2003.

Picture by Julia Gunn.

The short but steep hill below Rhiwgreiddyn slate mill was a deviation made around the turn of the 20th century to reroute the council road up onto the level of the quarry tramroad to allow more room for tipping slate waste from the mill. The old route of the road can still be seen running parallel below the hill and it re-emerged at the other end of the tip through the old tramway bridge.

At the foot of the hill, on the left, just before the stream there used to be a cottage called 'Braich Garw', with a garden and some plum trees. It was once occupied by relatives of Richard Jones, Ceinws Bach, late of 8 Aelybryn. Since the 1930's though, the tip has crept forward slowly and covered it all over,



The old council road, running level below the quarry hill. The road was altered to run up the hill and along the tram road around the turn of the 20th century. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The area by the stream at the bottom of the hill. The cottage, Braich Garw was to the left of the stream, just under the slate tip.

Picture, 2003, by Julia Gunn.



To the right of this stream was a road leading across the Dulas through a ford and up to the main road. This was the route out for the slate from the quarry.

Picture, 2003, by Julia Gunn.



All that remains of the old road leading from across the river up to the main road below Tanycoed. Picture, 2003, by Julia Gunn.

until there

is now no trace of it at all.

Opposite there, where the stream runs down to the river Dulas was a road which ran alongside the stream, down into the river, turned left along the riverbed for about twenty yards then out on the other side and up to join the main road on the corner below Tanycoed, (see picture left). This road was the route once used by the quarry to get their slate products up to the main road. The track up to the road



All that's left of Ty'n Ddol today, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.

and the junction there are all that remain. In the same field but at the other end, near the 'Ffrwd' waterfall are the ruins of another house, known as 'Ty'n Ddol'. Bleddyn Jones, Pantperthog Mill remembers Pughs living there in the early 20th century. J. Arthur Williams wrote in his book 'Trem Yn O'I' in 1961, that his mother was born there and that a Sion and Mari Humphreys lived there in the first half of the 20th century. Only stones there now, and precious few of them after little more than half a century !

PLAS LLWYNGWERN .

No book about Esgairgeiliog would be complete without mention of Plas Llwyngwern and the Beaumont family. Although geographically not actually in the village, it is a close neighbour and the social and political influence of the house and family on the village throughout most of the 20th century was considerable.

Mrs Audrey Beaumont very kindly allowed us free access into her family albums and scrapbooks to compile these pages, for which help we are very grateful. Also the assistance of Mrs Phyllis Jones who tirelessly ferried messages and pictures etc back and forth from the Plas for us.

The Beaumont family are descended from the 5th Marquess of Londonderry and the line came about as follows :-

Mary Cornelia was the only child of Sir John and Lady Harriet Edwards of Greenfields (later Plas), Machynlleth. She married George Henry Vane-Tempest in 1846. He became the 5th Marquess of Londonderry in 1872. Mary Cornelia was the main influence in making Plas Machynlleth (now Celtica) the main seat of the Londonderry family. The large estates at Wynyard Park near Durham and Mount Stewart in Ireland were visited occasionally. Londonderry House was the London home of the family.

Lady Aline was the youngest child of Mary Cornelia and the 5th Marquess. She married Wentworth Blackett Beaumont and they later became Viscount and Viscountess Allendale. When their son, Colonel the Honourable Ralph Beaumont got married, his grandmother, Mary Cornelia gave him Plas Llwyngwern and it's estate as a wedding present. That's how Colonel Beaumont came to live at Plas Llwyngwern.



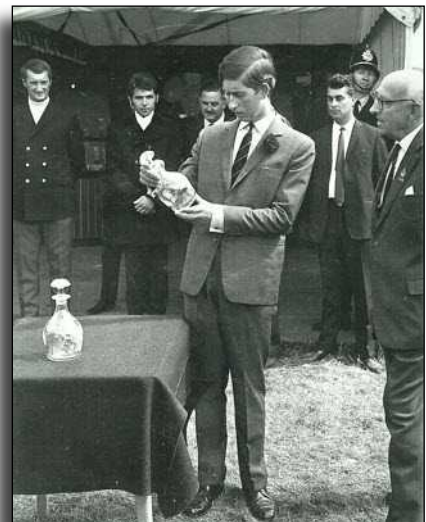
Plas Llwyngwern, 2002.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Three generations of the Beaumont family at Plas Llwyngwern. Colonel the Hon. Ralph Beaumont, centre right, his son John, front right and six grand children, Nigel, Ralph, Louise, Andrew, Hugh & Peter. Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont.

Since Mr and Mrs John Beaumont returned to live at Llwyngwern, the family became an important part of the social life of the villages of Pantperthog and Esgairgeiliog. Many of the village fetes were held in the grounds of the Plas, where the ladies of the Womens Institute made the tea and provided food and entertainments, stalls, etc. Coffee evenings were organised for charities and the gardens opened under the National gardens Scheme. £1200 was raised one year for the NSPCC. In the latter part of the century Colonel Beaumont's son, John returned from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in



Prince Charles visiting a function, accompanied by Colonel the Honourable R.E.B. Beaumont.

Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont.



John Ralph Beaumont, first mayor of Machynlleth after reorganisation in the 1970's, with his wife, Audrey. Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont.

1970 with his family to run the estate. John and his wife Audrey, pictured left, had six children :-
Ralph Wentworth Christopher,
Nigel Canning Vane,
Louise Christine Winsmore,
Andrew John Blackett,
Hugh Edward Stewart,
Peter John Tempest.

The three generations are pictured above left on the stairs in the Plas.



A bust of Mary Cornelia, with two of her great grandsons, Alistair, the 9th Marquess of Londonderry and the late John Beaumont, right, in 1991. Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont and David Wyn Davies, author of Machynlleth Town Trail.

PLAS LLWYNGWERN .

Born in 1927 in London, John Beaumont was raised in Wales. His family had long been in political service, his father serving as M.P. For Central Portsmouth from 1931 to 1945. Six generations of his forebears have sat in the House of Commons since 1795, when the first of his family was returned from the Hexham Division of Northumberland.

John was educated at Eton and Christ's Church, Oxford, where he took an M.A. In Forestry in 1952. During the war he saw four years service with the Royal Signals and the Indian Signal Corps and after demobilization in 1948 served four more years with the Territorial's, Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

In his later years John was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Powys and was the first Mayor of Machynlleth after the political reorganisation of the counties in 1974. He was also appointed a magistrate.

After leaving the army and university he went to live in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1953, farming in the Wedza and Marandellas Districts (now Marondera, Zimbabwe), growing tobacco. During this time he served on and was Chairman of the Sabi Catchment and Wedza I.C.A's (Intensive Conservation Areas) and latterly was Chairman of the Marandellas Group of I.C.A's. He also served as representative of the Wedza Farmers Association on the Rhodesian National Farmers Union National Native Labour Committee. He was a Marandellas Road Councillor and churchwarden of the Parish Church.

Adopted as the candidate for the United Federal Party (opposing Mr Ian Smith) in 1960, John was active in District politics, particularly the Referendum there and after that the Build-A-Nation campaign.



John Beaumont planting the last of the 700 trees to celebrate the 700th year of the Machynlleth Charter. Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont.



Audrey Beaumont showing the art embroidery picture which she completed after just four lessons. Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont.

While living in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Audrey Beaumont developed her considerable talent for craft work. She learned the delicate and highly skilled craft of relief art work in sheet metals like copper, silver and pewter. Some of her work is pictured right and was highly acclaimed, some of it ending up in use and on display in churches around the country.

She also displayed a flair for design and dexterity in embroidery. So much so that she was once interviewed on the subject by a magazine and below is an edited summary of the article :-

The art of hand-embroidery is rare these days but Mrs Beaumont of Marandellas, who has always enjoyed sewing, finds the highly skilled art-embroidery she is learning in Salisbury

an absorbing pastime.

So much so that she makes the journey from her Marandellas farm, 130 miles each way on dirt roads, regularly once a week to Salisbury, where she attends a special school of art-embroidery in Manica road. After four lessons she completed this picture, above left. Her teacher, Mrs Barbara Hedges described it as 'outstanding in colour, design and depth'. When she showed me the intricate stitches used in her picture, she said 'This is my year of freedom, so I want to learn as much about embroidery as I possibly can before schooling starts again'. She saw me looking startled, 'In about a year's time', she explained, 'we shall move to our real home, a tobacco farm at Wedza. Then I shall have to start teaching my three younger children by Correspondence course as they each become old enough'.

She has gone through it all twice before. Now her two elder boys are at school. Like most farmer's wives who live far from schools, she will have to teach each of the younger children until they are old enough for boarding school. 'My five year old will be due for lessons next year', she said, 'and then the other two babies will take their place in the educational queue. But this is my year in between, so I am learning as much about embroidery as I can while I have time'.

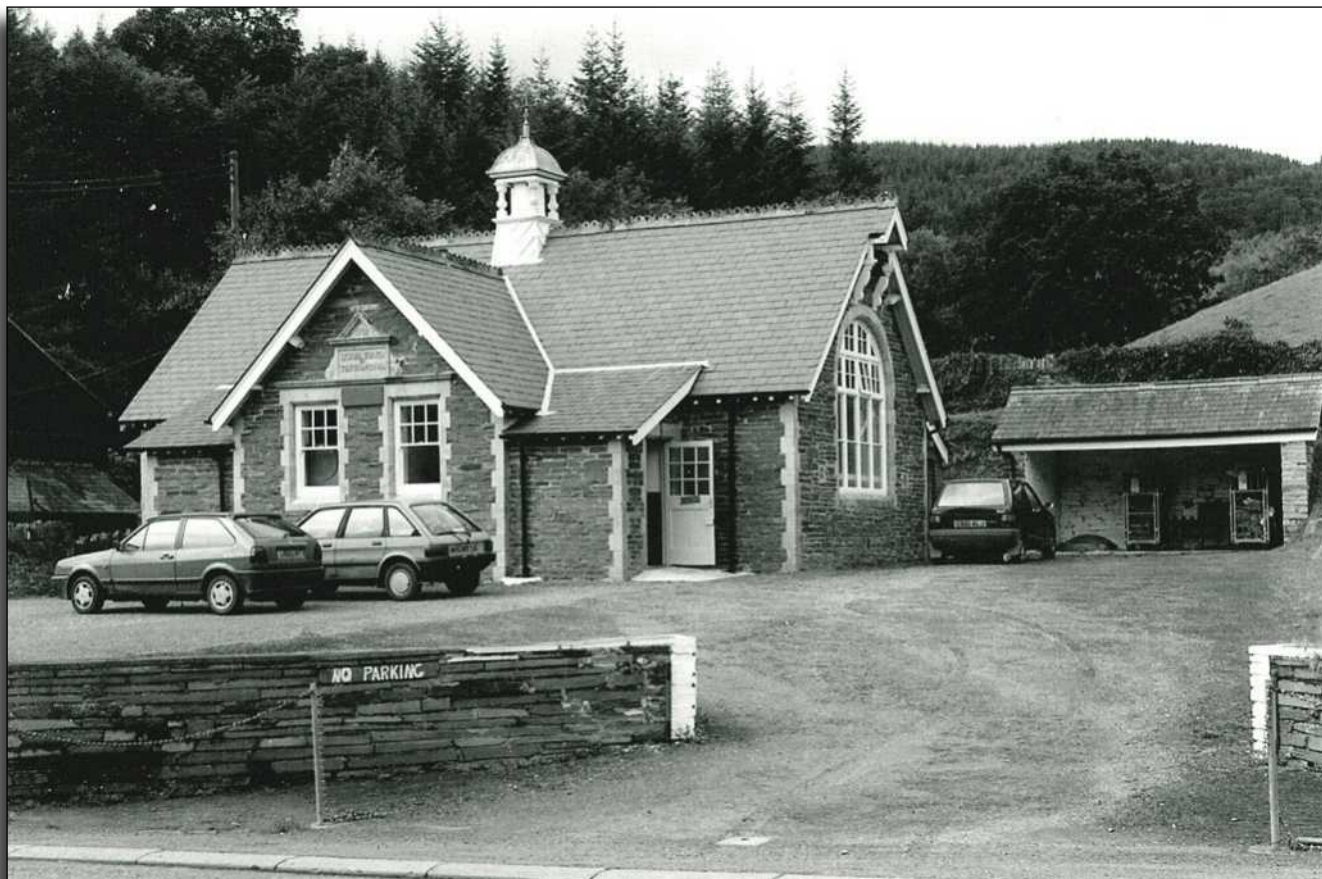
All the above took place in what must seem like another age, in another country. Sadly, John has passed away but their son Ralph lives in Llw yngwern farm with his family.



Some of the copper and pewter work crafted by Audrey Beaumont in Rhodesia. The piece below is enamelled on copper and is four feet high. Her work is displayed in many countries, particularly in churches. Picture courtesy Audrey Beaumont.



PANTPERTHOG SCHOOL .



Pantperthog school, 1999, now Pantperthog village hall, where many Esgairgeiliog children started school.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



Pantperthog schoolchildren, early to mid 1920's. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones. Back row, left to right :- Dick Jones, Ceinws, Owen John, Hafotty, Lewis John Rowlands, Hayden Jones, Ifor Jones Y Felin, Ted Morgan, Gelligen, Reg Pugh. Middle row :- Margaret Awena Rees, Lena Wood, Sally Davis, Blodwen Pugh, Lucy Rowlands, (Plwmp), Maggie Jones, Ceinws, Jim (Dolly Thomas), Miss Thomas, teacher. Front row :- Bob Davis, Abergarfan, Alf Jones, Ceinws, Bleddyn Jones, Y Felin, Richard Price, Hafotty, Owen Henry, Gwynfryn.

PANTPERTHOG SCHOOL .



*Pantperthog schoolchildren, 1932. Names as can be remembered. Back row of five L to R :- Alfred ?, Ifor, Caerbont, Cissy Fearn ?, Rowena Williams ,Miss Thomas, teacher.
 Second row down, L to R :- Meirion ?, Lucy Rowlands ?, Bertie Fearn ?, Lena Wood, Maggie Jones, Ceinws, Sue, (Married Thomas).
 Third row down, L to R :- Ken Rowlands, Achor ?, Elwyn ?, Dick Thomas, Stan Jones, Ceinws Bach, Emrys Morris, Dorothy Swan.
 Front row, L to R :- Glenys Jones, Doldderwen, Lillian Owen, Glenys Jones, Ceinws Bach, Beryl Fearn, Meirwen Jones, Doldderwen, Ceinwen Thomas.
 Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.*



*Pantperthog schoolchildren, about 1936. Back row, L to R :- Mrs Thomas, Head, Dick (Dolly), Tom Morgan, Louie Morris, Meirion (Drainllwydion), Morris (Pen Piner), Stanley or Alfred Jones, Ceinws Bach, Emrys Morris, Miss Burton or Miss Ellis.
 Middle row, L to R :- ..n/k., Lillian Morris, Ceinwen Williams, Glenys Jones, ..n/k., ..n/k.,Eirwen Mogan,Joyce Lomas, Ruth Lomas,....n/k...
 Front row, L to R :- ..n/k., Bryn Morgan, ..n/k., little blond girl, Nora Jones, Ceinws shop, Ken Rowlands, Achor, John Gwyndaf Jones, ..n/k., ..n/k., ..n/k...
 Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.*

PANTPERTHOG SCHOOL .



Pantperthog school, teachers and pupils, around 1950. Back row, L to R :- Teacher Mrs Morris, Glyn Morgan, May Thomas, Myra Jones, Hugh Arnold, Mrs Davies Landsend. Middle row L to R :- Phyllis Jones, Blodwen Rowlands, Noel Williams, Delyth Jones, Beth Williams, Ann Williams, John Henry Jones, Mary Morris, Eluned Morgan. Boy in front, Derfel Davies. Picture courtesy Blodwen Jones.



Pantperthog school Urdd competitors, about 1966ish. Back row of three, L to R :- ...n/k., Steven Williams, ...n/k., Middle row L to R :- Sian Rowlands, ...n/k., Betty Pugh, ...n/k., Llinos Pugh, Ifor Pugh, Bethan Jones, ...n/k., Front row L to R :- ...n/k., Phillip Edwards, Nerys Williams, Tecwyn Pugh, Helen Pugh, ...n/k., Yvonne Edwards, Eirlys Hughes, ...n/k... Picture authors collection.

SCHOOL CHILDREN .



The Rowlands children at Pantperthog school, about 1960. Back row, L to R :- Jennifer, Julia, Alison. Front row :- Ann, Brian. Picture authors collection.



Some of the children of Esgairgeiliog waiting for the bus to go to school in Machynlleth, 2003. Back two, L to R :- Dylan Williams, Louise Gunn. Front row, L to R :- Connor Jones, Kieran Jones, Anna Jones, Brenda Davies, Ryan Jones, Curtis Gunn. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Some of the children from Esgairgeiliog went to CORRIS school. The above picture was taken at Corris old road school about 1925-26. Back row L to R :- Stanley ?, Gwilym Griffith, Dorothy Johnstone, Katie Novello, Gwen Evans, Rosina ?, Olwen Williams, Annie Lizzie Breese, ..n/k...

Second row, L to R :- Miss Lewis, teacher, John Williams, Meiriona, Mair, Lena, (Penlan), Annie Matilda, Jane Mary , Hanna Maglona, Eirlys, Emily Owen, Miss Pugh.

Third row L to R :- Gwendo, Cordelia, ? Davies, Edgar, Gwilym, Myfannwy, H. S. Roberts, schoolmaster, Ben Palings, Sydney Pritchard, Alun Esgairgeiliog, Maggie, Elwyn ?.

Fourth row L to R :- Austin Price, Emyr, Winifred, Glenys, Nancy Pritchard, ..n/k., Enid Gwyngeth, ..n/k., Mererid.

Front row L to R :- Lewis John Rowlands, Gwilym Achor, Davy Braich Goch, Gwyneth Morgan, Wyn bach Maelor, Hugh Penrhos, Richard Edmond, Ritchie Thomas. Picture courtesy Jane Mary Jones, second row down centre.

IN SICKNESS & IN HEALTH .

Doctors play a very important role in any community and Esgairgeiliog is no exception. The village has been very fortunate to have the services of a local cottage hospital in Machynlleth, built between the wars with money raised by local subscription and run by local 'G.P.s'. Even closer to hand, we have enjoyed the convenience for many years of a doctors surgery in Corris.

Starting out in private houses, then in the Church Hall in Corris, it has, for decades now been located in a portacabin in the old Corris Railway station yard.

The author, Julia Gunn, is pictured right in the old District hospital, Machynlleth with our daughter, Sharon, just a day old on 14th Oct 1969.

Doctor Lewis from Aberllefenni was called out in the early hours of that morning to complete the delivery and arrived still in his striped pyjamas under his trousers. As she was born he looked at her and said in Welsh, 'Ah, Rosyn Saron'. So Julia called her Sharon.

The official Corris doctor at that time was Dr. Dobrashion, who lived in Gyfylchau, Esgairgeiliog but on that night he was at the birth of his own daughter in Aberystwyth. He called to see Julia the next day and took the above picture.

Other doctors who cared for the residents of Esgairgeiliog since the war were, Dr Crooks, Dr Pierce, Dr Simhan and Dr Francis.

Our present three wonderful doctors, pictured below, have served the Machynlleth and Corris valley area for about thirty years now and have attended to the ailments and injuries of five generations of Julia's family, from both of Julia's grandmothers, down to Julia's six grandchildren. For a short while they had all five generations on their books at the same time.

Not forgetting of course our wonderful District Nurses, like Mari Jones who recently retired and lives in Corris.

We would like to thank them all for their unflinching loyalty and hard work over all those many years.



Julia Gunn with daughter Sharon, a day old, delivered by Doctor Lewis at the Machynlleth, Corris and District Hospital, Machynlleth on 13 Oct 1969.

Picture authors collection, taken by Dr. Dobrashion.



The new surgery at Corris. This huge 'portable' building recently replaced a smaller one which had reached the end of it's serviceable life.

Picture, 2003, by Julia Gunn.



Dr. Mahendra Upadyy.

Picture by Jill Evans.



Dr. Ruth Hughes and her husband, Dr Thanu Thapa, at Dr. Thapa's recent retirement party.

Picture by Jill Evans.

MOBILE SERVICES .



Reality parcel delivery van, formally White Arrow
Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.



Parceline parcel delivery van. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.



Royal Mail postal delivery van, driven by William (Bill) Owen from Llanwrin. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.



James Williams brewers dray, crewed by Roy Jones and John Evans. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.



The Arriva bus passing through the village, driven by Mr Singh. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.

During the day an amazing variety of vans and vehicles pass through the village, bringing our parcels, our post, our bread, our wine and even our visitors. All are driven by an equally wide variety of cheery drivers, like Mr Owen the post, Mr Singh on the buses, Roy and John on the brewers dray and many more. While most of them are here and gone in only a few minutes, life in the village would not be the same without them.



Bakery delivery van, driven by Sid Thomas, about 1970's. Picture by Ken Rowlands.

MOBILE SERVICES .



The coal lorry, from the Felin, Pantperthog, driven by Gareth Thomas. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.



An earlier coal lorry from the Felin, Pantperthog. Picture 1990's, by Ken Rowlands.



The verge / hedge cutter tidying up the village by Yr Efail. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.



The Powys Council dust cart, crewed by Gwyn Jones and Dennis Evans. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.

More of the services that help to keep the village warm, tidy, sanitary and civilised. The coal delivery firm at the Felin, Pantperthog has kept us warm for many decades. The hedge cutter keeps the verges tidy, the cheerful dustmen take away all our rubbish and what the water board does with all that sewage we really don't want to know. Even major purchases like fitted kitchens can be chosen, delivered and fitted without us ever having to leave our homes. How we take all these things for granted today. See how fortunate we are !



A fitted kitchen from Living Design being delivered and fitted at 7 Aelybryn. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.



Two tankers emptying the sewage tanks in the village. Picture 2003, by Julia Gunn.

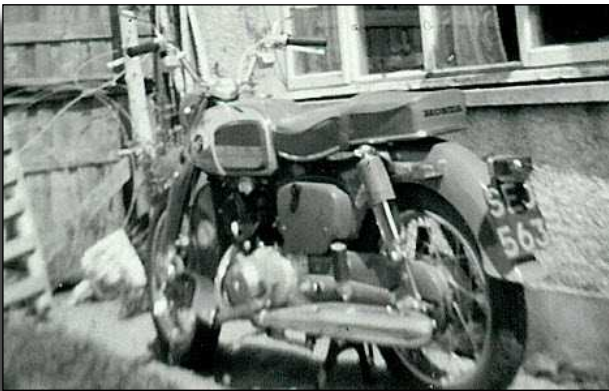
ON TWO WHEELS .



Jack Lloyd, Lliwdy with Clifford Jones (Nora's brother) on the pillion, by Dulas cottages, late 1940's. Picture courtesy Nora Richards.



Ken Rowlands on his Triumph Tiger Cub, early 1960's. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Ken Rowlands' little Honda 125cc, behind 13 Aelybryn, early 1960's. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Ken Rowlands' Ariel Arrow 200cc, behind 13 Aelybryn, early 1960's. Picture by Julia Gunn.



The author, Ray Gunn on the pillion behind his late brother, Kenneth, about to set off from 2 Aelybryn where they lived, on Ken's BSA C11 250cc, in 1968. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Two wheeled transport has always been popular as a relatively cheap means of getting to work and here is a small selection of the many different models of motorcycles that have belonged to people in Esgairgeiliog over the last sixty years or so. Love them or hate them (and we love them), a lot of people have had a lot of fun on them in the village and still do today.



Jeremy Andrews and his Suzuki GSXR 750cc, by his house, 17 Aelybryn, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



A passing group of motorcyclists who stayed for a few days in the Annibynwyr chapel around 2000. Picture by Julia Gunn.

ON TWO WHEELS .



The authors family on both sides have long been used to getting around on two wheels and have owned a large selection of motorcycles over the last few decades. We have included these pictures as one day they will be seen as interesting shots of old and even vintage bikes. Many even now are no longer available in this country.

In the garden below 2 Era Terrace, about 1987. Sharon Gunn on her Suzuki GS125cc, Susan Field on her trail bike, model unknown, Ray Gunn on his Russian Neval 650cc sidecar combination, (with reverse gear, shaft drive and towbar). Picture by Julia Gunn.



The authors Honda XL100cc, guarded by Sheba our black cat, 1984. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Julia ready to take our labrador Sally to the vet in our Jawa 350cc sidecar combination, about 1985. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Patrick Gunn on the author's cousin's Harley Davidson, about 1991. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Patrick Gunn on Dad's Honda C90cc, near Era Terrace, about 1988. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The authors Honda CB250RS, by 2 Era Terrace 1986. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Thomas, Louise & Curtis Gunn on Dad Patrick's Suzuki 400cc four cylinder bike, about 2000. Picture by 'Nain' Julia Gunn.



The authors grandson, Cameron Jones learning to ride his 'Action Man' motorbike in Aelybryn, 2002. Picture by and courtesy Gwyn Roberts.

ON TWO WHEELS .



Patrick Gunn and his Honda TL 185cc. Picture 2002 by Julia Gunn.



A CCM 350cc and Gwyn Roberts by a Suzuki DRZ 400cc. Picture courtesy Gwyn Roberts.



Patrick Gunn's Suzuki TS 185cc. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.



Ralph Beaumont on his CCM 350cc. Picture courtesy Gwyn Roberts.



Patrick Gunn's Suzuki TS 185 with TL tank. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.

Of course, motorcycling is not confined to the roads and a small group of enthusiasts in the village devote much of their spare time to their hobby of trail riding, both locally and in South Wales.

Also, once a year, they use their considerable skills and local knowledge to assist with the marshalling of the annual 'Raw Dyfi Enduro' cycling event which takes place on the roads and forestry tracks of the Dyfi valley. This is a popular event with hundreds of cyclists taking part every year.



Patrick Gunn's Yamaha DT 125R. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.



Ray Gunn with son Patrick and three bikes, a Honda CR 250cc, a Yamaha DT 125R and a Suzuki DRZ 400cc, in the forestry camp in Esgairgeiliog. Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.

ON FOUR WHEELS .



Isaac Morgan, Tanycoed, working as a chauffeur at Fronfelen Hall, Corris, in the 1930's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Isaac Morgan, Chapel Street, Ceinws owned this car, we think it's a Morris, during the war. Note the blackout covers on the headlamps. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Mary Morgan with her Austin Seven in the 1950's. The windscreen sticker advertises the Royal Welsh Show. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Another picture of Mary Morgan and her Austin Seven, in the 1950's. It had a Derbyshire registration, UNUN 6161 and it was the first school car in the village. Mary used it to collect and carry school children in the district to and from school daily for the Education Authority. A job she continued doing for at least thirty years into the 1980's. Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Delyth Jones and a 1958 Ford Prefect. Picture courtesy Phyllis Jones.



Mair Davies with her grand children, Carwyn, Bethan and Eleri Lloyd by the family car, 1980's. Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.



Richard Morgan & Gaynor Davies & an Austin mini, 1960's. Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.

Of course, cars are important too. These are a few that carried people to work, school and to the shops etc over the years of the 20th century.



Tom Davies with his mid 1960's Ford Corsair by Brynmair. Picture courtesy Gaynor Lloyd.

ON FOUR WHEELS .



Monty, Mary Morgan's dog by 12 Aelybryn in the 1970's. Even with the grass verges parking was not such a problem then. Note the Austin 1100 & a Hilman Minx behind it.

Picture courtesy Bryn Morgan.



Ken Rowlands with his Austin 8 or 10, with a split or double window in the back. About late 1950's. Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.



Ken Rowlands' Austin Cambridge in 1967

Picture authors collection.



Ken Rowlands with his Austin Metro in the mid 1980's.

Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.



Brian Rowlands learning to drive in his father Ken's Honda car, 1970's.

Picture by & courtesy Ken Rowlands.



Ken Rowlands and his Rover 216 in the 1990's.

Picture courtesy Ken Rowlands.



Ken Rowlands and his Rover 600, 2002. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Brian Rowlands' Ford Focus, a new style for the 21rst century.

Picture 2003 by Julia Gunn.

ON FOUR WHEELS .



Julia & Ray Gunn with their Datsun Cherry 100A in 1983
Picture by Wallace F Gunn.



Ray & Julia Gunn's Austin Maxi 1750cc in 1984.
Picture by Ray Gunn.



Ray & Julia Gunn's Lada Riva 1300cc in 1988, on the plot where
Bwthyn Era now stands. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Ray Gunn and his Seat Ibiza Friend 1200cc, 2003.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Sharon Gunn in her Renault 5, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Marie Gunn's Vauxhall Astra Royale, 2003. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Finally, a little visitor ! This little car chugged into the village one day in 2003 to pay a
visit to Bryndulas, leaving the following day. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Finally, a few more cars that have graced the roads in the village. Sorry they are mostly the authors family's cars but they are what we happened to have most pictures of, like most families.

The little car on the left just happened to turn up a few days before we were due to write these pages, so a quick snap was taken but we were unable to obtain details of it's make and model etc. Still, it's a good one to end the page with and shows how important and interesting the above pictures will be to our great grandchildren one day. Or give them something to chuckle at anyway.

DRESSING UP .



Halloween, 2002. Kieran, Cameron & Connor Jones.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Halloween, 2002. Thomas & Curtis Gunn.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Halloween, 2002. John Williams Jones, Louise Gunn, Hannah Williams Jones.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Halloween, 2002. Brenda Davies, Ryan Jones, Anna Jones.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



Halloween, 2002. Patrick Gunn.
Picture by Julia Gunn.



The Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws competitors in the 2003 Machynlleth Carnival, who came first in their category as a group. After this picture was taken they all sang 'Happy birthday to you' to Ken Rowlands who was 75 years old on that day, 19th July 2003. The singing was led by Phyllis Jones.

Parents at the back, Left to Right :- Tony Clarke, Trish Andrews, rhinoceros, Sharon Jones, pink pig, grand mother Phyllis Jones.
Children, left to right :- Ryan Jones, gorilla, Cameron Jones, gorilla, Anna Jones tiger, Brenda Davies, Friesian cow, Louise Gunn, butterfly, Georgia Clarke, swan, Kieran Jones, crocodile, Ianna Andrews, Peacock, Connor Jones, bat.
Picture by Julia Gunn.

WINTER WONDERLAND .



Era Terrace, 1984. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The view from Era Terrace across the village, 1984. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The authors dog, Sally, by the camp, 1984. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Looking towards Rhiwgreiddyn from Yr Efail, 2000. Picture by Julia Gunn.



Enjoying the snow by Yr Efail in the new millennium are brothers Connor, Kieran & Cameron Jones & Ianna Andrews, watched by Ruth Edwards & the boys mother, Sharon Jones. Picture 2000, by Julia Gunn.



Looking towards the village & the Darren from Yr Efail, 2000. Picture by Julia Gunn.

Nowadays we don't often see a lot of snow, just rain mostly. So when it does come, the sudden change in appearance and the sound deadening effect of snow give the village a sometimes strange and tranquil atmosphere. Until, that is, the children wake up ! To them it's the most exciting thing they can imagine.

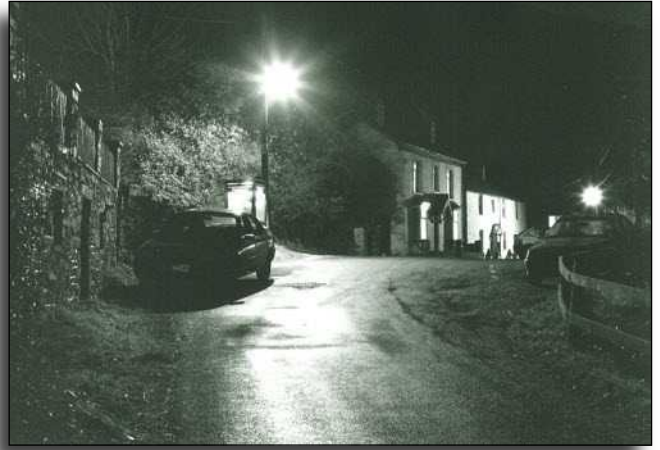


The moon over the Darren, 2000. Picture by Julia Gunn.

AND SO TO BED .



The junction to Aelybryn by Bryndulas. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Pine view & Yr Efail from under Bryndulas. Picture by Ray Gunn.



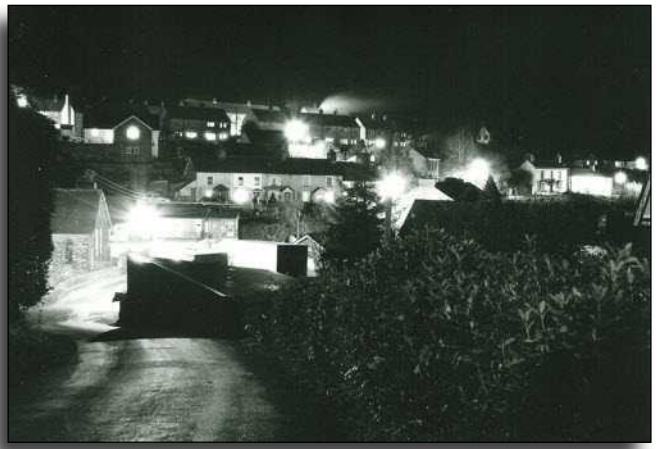
Achor cottages, left & Gwynfa, right. Picture by Ray Gunn.



Dulas cottages, centre & Methodist chapel. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The Dwynant pub, left & Caerbont behind. Achor cottages, right & Pine View & Yr Efail in the distance. Picture by Ray Gunn.



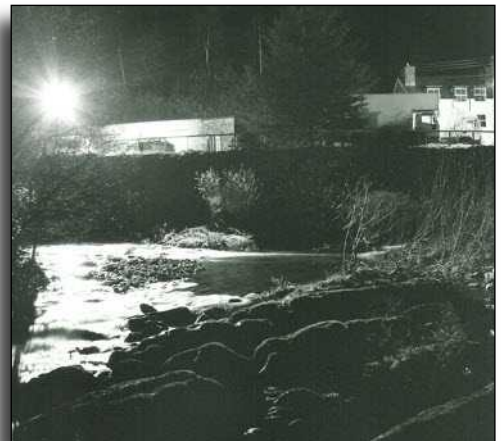
The village from the top of the camp hill. Picture by Ray Gunn.



The back of Achor cottages, centre & Ty Isaf, right, from the footbridge. Picture by Ray Gunn.

The village at night is a picture of bright twinkling lights and dark inky shadows, with widely spaced street lights casting their eerie yellow glow. Imagine it though, without electricity. With just candles and oil lamps and no street lights.

All the pictures on this page were taken by the author in 2002.



The factory, left & Dulas cottages, right, from the footbridge. Picture by Ray Gunn.

SPIRITS OF THE FOREST, GUARDIANS OF THE VILLAGE .



The forestry camp, 5 Heulfryn, centre. Picture 2002 by Ray Gunn.



The forestry camp, 5 heulfryn, centre. Picture 2002 by Ray Gunn.



Pine View, left & Yr Efail, right, 1999.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

In old country folklore much was made of the so called 'spirits of the forest'. Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws is a village in the middle of a forest and if you search for them in daylight you can still find some of the old spirits, frozen as trees and logs by the light of the sun.

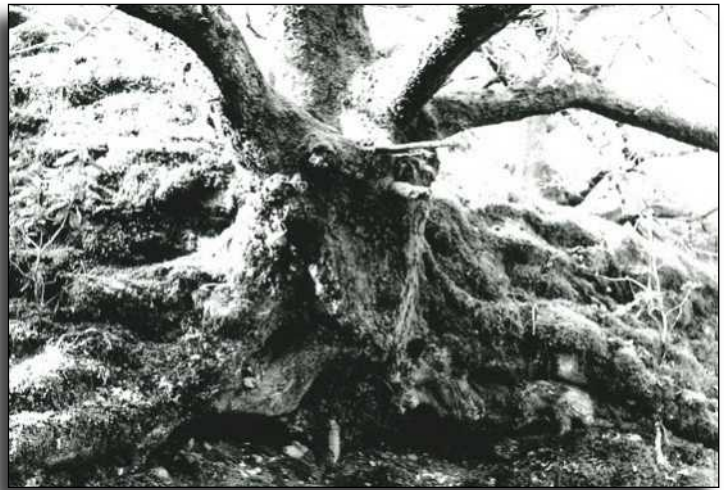
In the darkness, however, they become the guardians of the village, striving to protect us from the less kindly spirits of the deeper forest.

Some people are unable to see these spirits, however hard they look but certain (some would say eccentric) people are able to spot them immediately. Which are you ?



A spirit of the forest, 2000.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



A spirit of the forest guarding the village, 1999.

Picture by Ray Gunn.



A watchful spirit of the forest, 1999. Picture by Ray Gunn.

All these four guardians were spotted around the boundaries of the village. Do you know of any more ? We would like to see them.



A guardian of the village, 2001.

Picture by Ray Gunn.

FOR YOUR OWN PICTURES & NOTES .

Well that's all for this book. Of the 950 photographs in the file, we have included over 850 in the book but that is only a fraction of what was available to use. Similarly, a lot of the text was edited for various reasons and some things had to be left out altogether. Some details, such as dates and time periods were deliberately made a little vague, ie to the nearest decade, to protect people's private family details etc and sometimes simply because we didn't have accurate dates. As mentioned in the introduction though, the purpose of this book is to try to give a feel of what has happened in the village over the last hundred years or so and what it was like to live through that period, through the memories and snaps of the people who were here.

Looking at it now we are on the last page we can see some things that we would and should have done differently to make it easier to read. However, it's taken us so long to put it together once, there is no way we are going back to rewrite it all over again. Similarly, we researched publishing and binding methods in an effort to keep the costs and cover price to a reasonable level within easy reach of the people for whom we primarily wrote the book.

We hope you enjoy it and keep it in the sideboard for your grandchildren to find one day. Feel free to use this page and the next one to add your own family's notes and pictures to make it a more personal record of your knowledge of Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws.

P S, On a final note, while we do not feel immediately inclined to start a second volume, we may, when we recover from this one, get the urge to do so one day. So if you should come across any particularly interesting pictures or stories of the village or it's inhabitants we are still collecting !

THE END .

FOR YOUR OWN PICTURES & NOTES.

FOR YOUR OWN PICTURES & NOTES .

Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws

In Pictures and Words, Past and Present.

Esgairgeiliog / Ceinws is a fairly ordinary small village tucked away in a corner of the Corris valley. In the past it was often overlooked by travelers passing by on the main road on the other side of the river.

However, like many such villages it does have an identity and a history all of its own and the more you look into it the more fascinating and interesting it becomes. With several very different industries waxing and waning over the last two centuries, each bringing with it its own collection of trades, professions and impacts on the landscape.

What really makes the character of a village though are the people who live in it and how they react to the environment around them, whether natural, industrial or social. Much of this book is about those people and the way they lived, worked and laughed throughout the twentieth century. Memories of the things they did and said often reflect as much about the customs and habits of the times they lived in as of the people themselves.

We really hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we enjoyed writing it and as much as many of the people here enjoyed contributing to it. Read it in the good spirit in which it was created.



The authors, Ray and Julia Gunn returned to live in Esgairgeiliog in 1982 after twelve years away in the RAF. Julia is a native of the village and Ray came here as a teenager from a small village on the edge of the Cotswolds. They both now work in Machynlleth, Ray as a postman and Julia in the local supermarket. This is their first book.

£12