

# THE CAPTURE OF MAMETZ WOOD

'Twas a glorious July morning,  
And one I shall never forget.  
When, with but a few hours warning,  
We were told "The wood to get."

That night we slept out in the open,  
Our thoughts went to those at home:  
To Mothers and Fathers and brothers,  
And loved ones far over the foam.

At days break that beautiful morning,  
Our troops advanced to the fray.  
Just as the light was dawning---  
The light of another day.

We charged that wood like madmen;  
My God! What a charge we made;  
The observers who watched from behind us,  
Said 'twas better than on parade.

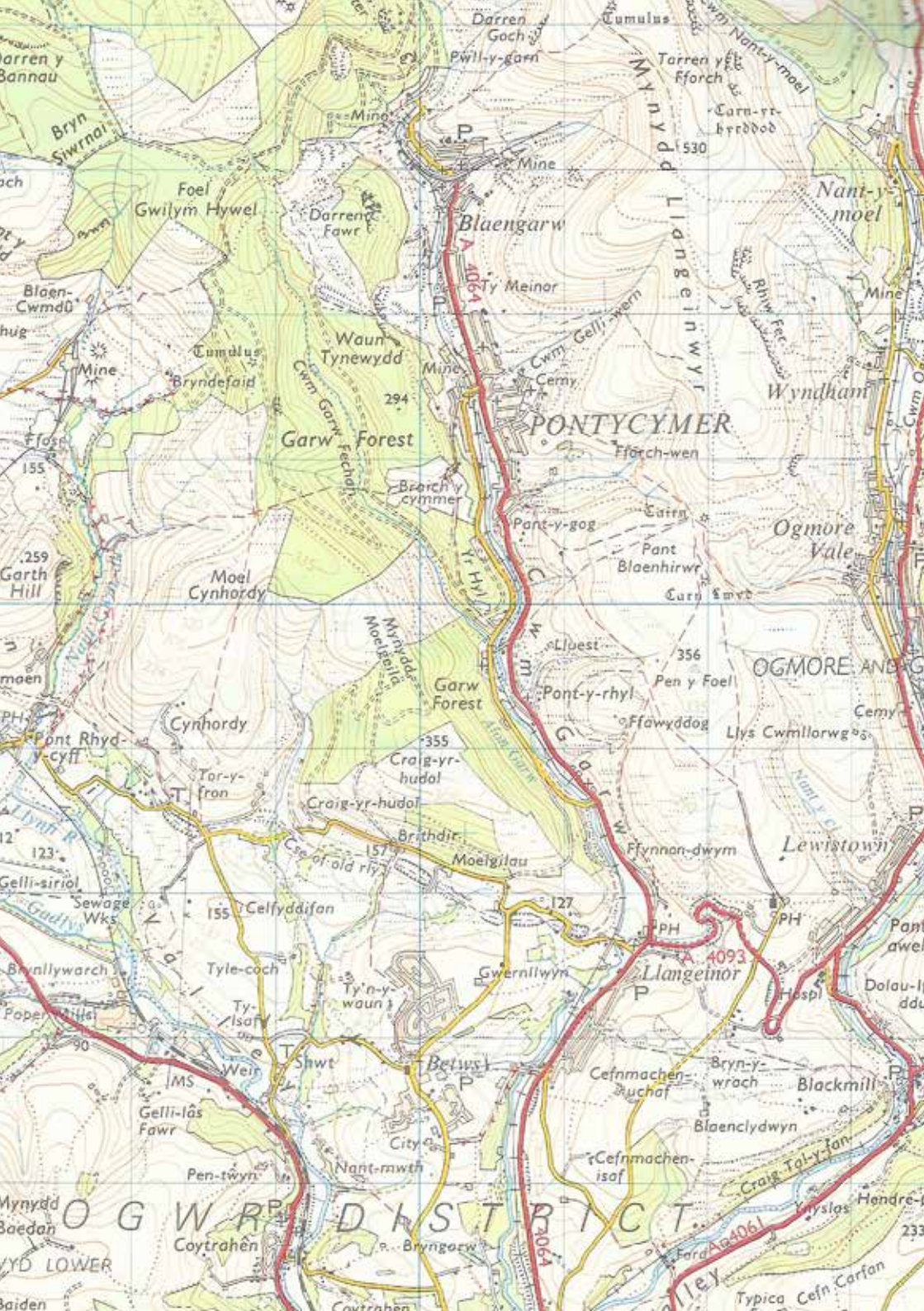
There was many a Garw boy fell that morn,  
With never a thought of fear.  
It never seemed to enter their minds,  
That for them the end was near.

There are plenty of names I could mention,  
But one I shall always revere.  
And that's brave Captain Lawrence,  
That tried 'old fusilier'.

You will have heard of the deeds of others--  
Deeds that have never been hid.  
But why so very little of what,  
The Welsh division did?

Pte Sydney Hatherell. Lower Church St, Pontycymmer. 14th July 1916.

# THE GREAT WAR IN THE GARW A WELSH VALLEY'S CALL TO ARMS



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This booklet could not have been produced without the interest and support of the residents of the Garw Valley, of Bridgend, Maesteg and Cefn Cribwr, who have freely shared with us their family photographs and memories.

Thanks are due also to the staff of Pontycymer and Bridgend Libraries and their associated services for their patient help, and to Porthcawl Heritage Society members for encouragement.

Particular thanks are due to Yiota Haralambos of Reach for her interest and support, and to the Garw branch of the British Legion under the chairmanship of Captain Peter Cole.

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Finally, we wish to acknowledge the help given us by BAVO for allowing us the use of their premises in Pontycymer whenever we have needed a meeting to pool our material and discuss the next section!

Any errors of fact or interpretation are our own.

Garw Valley Heritage Society





# INTRODUCTION

by Captain Peter Cole, President of the Royal British Legion, Garw Valley Branch

I have been asked by the Garw Valley Heritage Society to preface this booklet which has been written to mark the hundredth anniversary of the First World War that took place between 1914 and 1918.

It is an attempt to show the life and times of the men of this valley who volunteered or were enlisted to fight for King, Country and Nation, on land, sea and air. At first there were fears that the conflict would be over before they could get into position in France. Initially it would have been a great adventure, which to most would have enabled them to see London and then France. Later they would be subjected to mighty artillery conflagrations and the very real misery of trench warfare.

Many of those who left would never return and it would have been reported to their families back home that they were either dead, if that was known, or missing in action. Some of their names have been listed in the Garw Valley Books of Remembrance and they are read out every year on the nearest Sunday to the eleventh day of November, at the eleventh hour of that day. Those names have been added to by the research undertaken by the Garw Valley Heritage Society.

We must continue to remember that it is only through the efforts of the fallen and those that did return that we are able to enjoy the liberty which we have today.

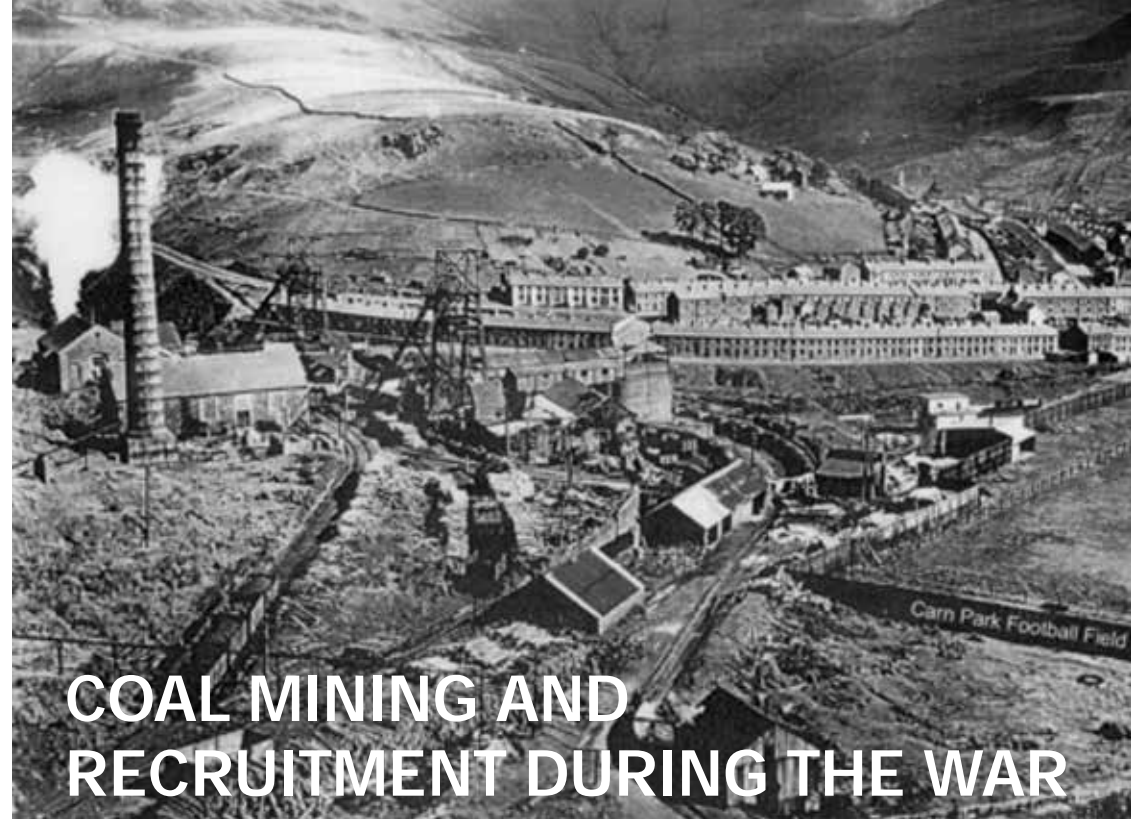
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM





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## COAL MINING AND RECRUITMENT DURING THE WAR

With the outbreak of war in 1914 coal mines were taken under government control. Generally seen as a good thing for the miners, there were increased safety standards and higher wages that were equalised over different areas.

Conscription was not introduced until February 1916, under the DOR (Defence of the Realm Act), but by then a fifth of all miners had left and enlisted in the Army.

The Glamorgan Gazette reported on 21st August 1914 that 'Garw recruits up to this date were 200'. By 9th November that year, 'Already over 250 Garwites have enlisted'.

On 21st May 1915 the Gazette reported the Rev. John Williams (Brynsiencyn) at a recruitment

drive in Llangollen, who said that 'the Garw Valley had a population of about 10,000-11,000 people and they have already sent 1,700 men to the colours up until the beginning of last week!'

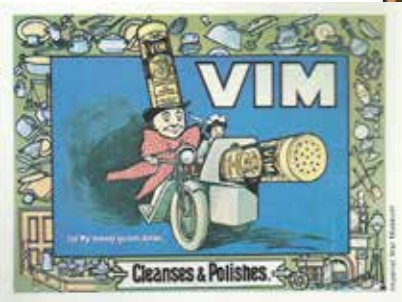
October 23rd 1915 showed that 'Recruitment for the Garw was brisk at first, but owing to the need for experienced miners it has slowed down to 550 recently', although by December 1915 'Over a thousand were sworn in at the Garw recruiting station'. The need for coal for the war effort became paramount and coal mining became a reserved occupation so miners as a whole were not allowed to join the army, but there is evidence to suggest that recruiting officers could and did turn a blind eye in individual cases.

# 1914

August 14  
Britain declares war on Germany



A resolution was proposed at a certain place of worship to end the war at any price: "nothing could be more disastrous to this country at the present time than the passing of unpatriotic resolutions".



Nevertheless a quote is given that says by January 1917, almost 3000 men had already left the villages (of the Garw) to fight.

The following pages give an indication of what they faced when they got to 'the front'!



## LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

It is from some of the letters that soldiers wrote home that we get our clearest picture of what life was actually like for these men who served in the war. The following are extracts and real letters from Garw soldiers, some unidentified, others named:

'August 9th 1916 - The time is drawing near for us to go back into the line - a most horrid line it is too, where shells are like peas and nothing short of hell. One day an officer was badly wounded and the poor devil who was with me taking him undercover was hit as well and has since died'.

A Garw Officer's letter of September 8th 1916 says-

"It was sad about poor Ned Lawrence\*. I was with him here for some time and in the trenches. Poor Jones who was at my last Dressing station was also killed and David was wounded. I had a very narrow shave when my dug out was blown half away whilst my servant and I were asleep in it! This is a Regular and Reserve ambulance crew; nearly all the personnel are regular soldiers and they came out with the 1st B.E.F. On one occasion they lost 6 officers in one afternoon during the retreat from Mons".

### Coal Mines in the Garw Valley 1914-1918

Name of Pit	Location	No. Employed
Braich-Y-Cymmer Collieries	Pontycymer	99
Cedfww Rhondda Colliery	Pontyrhyl	50
Cwm Cedfww Colliery	Betws	25
Darren Colliery	Pontycymer	240
Duchy Colliery	Pontyrhyl	150
Ffaldau Colliery	Pontycymer	350
Garw Colliery	Blaengarw	700
Glengarw Colliery	Blaengarw	600
International Colliery	Blaengarw	1000
Lluest Collieries	Pontyrhyl	40
West Rhondda Colliery	Moelgilau	50

*There were also a few very small levels being worked.*

August 12-20  
British Expeditionary Force lands in France

August 23  
The Battle of Mons

August 28  
The Royal Navy fight the Battle of Heligoland Bight

"Christmas Eve, and we are in the trenches again. It is fearfully wet here. Last night I got soaked through from head to foot; it was awful and the rats are mighty. I am 100 yards behind the front trenches and the noise is fearful. We lost a captain on our first day, killed by shrapnel".

Another Garw officer in the 13th Battalion Welsh Regiment wrote in an undated letter:

Extract of a letter from Driver C. Riggs of the Cardiff City Battalion. (Not dated but written sometime after 7 July 1916.)

*We see a Gazette now and then out here, and I can tell you it is a real pleasure to see it, or any newspapers from Blighty. There used to be 7 Garw boys in the Batt. But now we are only 5. We lost poor old Sgt. Rowlands and Shakespeare. \* I can truthfully say that they did their duty to the last. Please convey our deepest sympathy to their relatives.*

In one he writes of the Maxim machine guns that "have been trained on us to the extent that the sandbags are shredded to bits, and to make the thing complete we were attacked with gas on Monday night. I got a taste of it, but thanks to our gas hoods we were able to 'stand to". A later letter states that wearing the gas masks "you would think a species of Goblins had just come out of the earth---, so terrifying is our appearance".

Private A. Williams wrote several letters home to his parents in 17 Herbert Street, Blaengarw:

Sergeant James Vincent Murphy wrote from hospital to a clergyman friend on March 9th 1915 that he had suffered the effects of a bomb blast. He had crossed an open space of 150 yards, all the time being fired upon, in order to reach his men and get the wounded out. Once that was accomplished he reported the situation to his captain, but on his way back was hit by the blast of a bomb, which threw him into the air and he landed in a trench, covered in mud but otherwise unharmed.

Sergeant Murphy writes:

"I happened to fall into a half-flooded communications trench, full of frozen water and mud, and somehow crawled and swam back towards my lines. Our boys are still giving it to the Germans: the dirty blighters even shelled one of our burial parties. Our artillery were called up and gave them a hot time and silenced them once and for all".

He ends by writing that on arriving at hospital he heard a "Voice from Wales, the first I had heard since leaving home. How strange, and thousands of Welshmen out here too. In fact they were fighting on our left all the time (censored place name). I am sorry to have to tell you that there were not many of them left, and although the enemy were at least 10 to 1 against them the Germans never got through their line. But I know there will be many a sorrowing home in Wales because of it." His postscript asks that the recipient "calls in to my home at 50 Victoria Street, Pontycymer, and let my wife know I am fine and will write soon."



Private Williams ends one of his letters pleading for meat pies and bread and butter, as his teeth "are worn down to the gums by these Army biscuits", and in another, "anything you like in the way of preserves except jam, salmon and bully beef, as we see enough of that article out here". He also asks for cocoa sugar and tea, woollen socks and a mouth organ, and a knitted balaclava cap!

He makes a comment that he has one consolation in that "our homes in Wales are so far safe in comparison to these out here. I have been through little villages utterly destroyed - not a single home inhabitable, graves everywhere, farms, cattle and what were fine fields of corn have been ruined---".

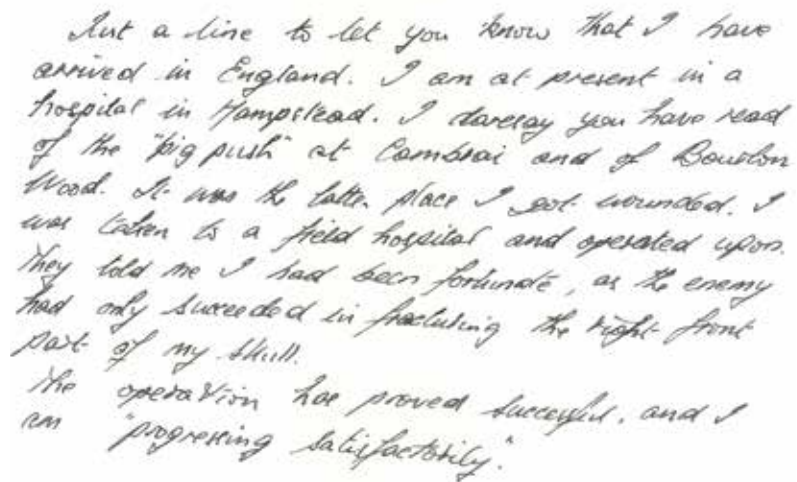
Food and rations were a constant concern:

Malaria, caused by mosquitoes, was at one time killing more soldiers and animals than the enemy.

Sergeant DE Lawrence of the 23rd Welsh (Pioneers) Salonika writes from the 'Crystal Palace', his name for their dugout:

"We never came out here for a picnic, and we haven't found one". He writes of the torrential rain, of constantly being wet, but the food is good and the officers do their best to keep the men happy. The men are never lonely as the mosquitoes are always with them to keep them company, and there is huge enjoyment to be had from swatting them!"

CSM Zebina Davies DCM. Written to his parents Mr & Mrs William Davies, of Blaendy Terrace, Pontycymer:



*Put a line to let you know that I have arrived in England. I am at present in a hospital in Hampstead. I dare say you have read of the 'big push' at Cambrai and of Bowdon Wood. It was the latter place I got wounded. I was taken to a field hospital and operated upon. They told me I had been fortunate, as the enemy had only succeeded in fracturing the right front part of my skull. The operation has proved successful, and I am 'progressing satisfactorily'.*

DCM Citation: During the attack this NCO took charge of the company on the Company Commander becoming a casualty and led it forward to storm an enemy strongpoint. Owing to the nature of the ground, the machine gun with him could not be fired effectively. He thereupon rushed forward into the open and fired the gun from his shoulder using the latter as a rest. His leadership and conduct are beyond all praise.

Not all soldiers served in Europe. Sapper Howard Rees wrote to his father in Pontycymer in 1916 from somewhere in the Dardanelles. His letter starts off with admiration for the eastern sunrises and sunsets, the flocks of wild geese migrating, which could be seen through the bombardment of shells from the Turks. The torrential rain, hail and thunder were incessant:

"Dug outs were soon flooded, and many collapsed. Everything became chaos, for we had nowhere to shelter---. Dozens upon dozens of men collapsed on the roadsides. The hospital became overcrowded and the patients were being sent from the field hospitals to the hospital ships as soon as they came in."

Private John James wrote from Egypt to his mother in 4 Wood Street, Pontycymer, on September 17th 1917:

"I am now in a proper hospital, it is all right here. The bullet is still in my ankle and I am to have a slight operation to have it removed". He complains about having plenty of corned beef but as it made him thirsty, and they did not have much water, he gave up eating and saved up his water until he had got enough to make some tea. He goes on to ask if Mrs Scott had heard from Bob, who had apparently arrived on another boat with the horses, and that he had met Jack Jones who lived up by Morgan the checkweigher.

Mosquitoes also bothered Trooper Layton Pritchard, who wrote on August 7th 1916, that on top of a long day in the blazing heat of a desert location, working with the stubborn mules who took fright at everything from cars to camels, there was no exhausted sleep to be had because of the ants and mosquitoes constantly biting and raising lumps. As for his comments on mules, who he says can 'kick a fly through the eye of a needle', they are so stubborn, Layton Pritchard may well find some rueful enjoyment from the poem entitled 'The Army Mule' (on page 12) by a soldier known only as E.H.B., who wrote from Gallipoli in 1916,

December 16

German Navy bombards several northern coastal towns resulting in many civilian casualties. German U-boats begin to take their toll on allied shipping. In a under 4 months of war, British army has suffered 90,000 casualties.

November 1

The Royal Navy fight the Battle of Coronel.

Sapper E. Watkins of Pontycymer writes from hospital:

Sapper Watkins did eventually come home but died of wounds (gas), he is buried in Pontycymer Cemetery.

*What a change to be here in hospital after being 12 months at the front! I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed actually getting in to a bed once more. It was a completely new experience to have clean sheets and quiet, and Nurses to look after you. I felt myself a lucky man to be alive. Mr Lloyd George said "I have seen men going through the door of a furnace of Hell, and I have seen some come back. And I am back for one, for the time being anyway? Please write to me here, and send me a Gazette, for I like to hear of the news of home."*



Not all soldiers wrote letters, preferring instead to send a card. These silk-embroidered cards were originally produced by the nuns who were displaced when their convents were being turned into hospitals or billets for thousands of British troops. The nuns were skilled embroiderers, more used to making church vestments, but they turned their skills into producing these silks of the allied armies' flags in order to obtain money to feed themselves.

As demand grew sentimental mottoes and greetings were included amongst the range of designs, placed in the pockets in the card, so a personal message could always be hidden. They were not often sent in the post because of their fragile nature but usually taken home by the soldier when he went on leave, a colourful reminder from a very bleak time.

# TRENCH ART

The very name Trench art conjures up the picture of a weary Tommy crouching in the mud of a trench or a dug-out, hammering out a souvenir for a loved one back home while dodging shrapnel and bullets. Although this vision is appealing, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact any noise out of the norm in trench warfare, would have brought down an enemy artillery barrage very promptly.

The reality was that Tommy would probably have bought this souvenir from a Belgian/French souvenir seller whilst he was on rest from the front line.

This art in its simplest form was very basic, such as a piece of broken duckboard with a lump of shrapnel (which had just missed you!) glued to it, or it could be a nose cap from an artillery shell, inverted to make an egg cup. If you soldered on an old cap badge there was an instant talking point, and a constant reminder of your own mortality.

With the exception perhaps of small hand-carved items, the vast majority of trench art is in brass of which there was an apparently limitless supply. Strictly speaking it was illegal for a soldier to remove shell cases, but this was war so exceptions were to be made. Displaced Belgian artisans were the among the first to realise that they were sitting on a veritable gold mine. Here were thousands of troops, with disposable income (a shilling a day) and plenty of raw materials. A 'marriage' literally made in hell! Shell cases could be hammered into ashtrays, candleholders, match holders and lighters, or just rubbed down and used as flower vases.

My first experience with trench art was at the homes of my grandparents. To keep me out of mischief I was often set to work polishing two huge and heavy metal vases which normally held pride of place on my Nanna's parlour mantelpiece. They were stamped La Bassee, and Bethune. It was not until many years later that I realised that they were French 75mm shell cases from 1915, and would have had a fascinating story to tell, if that were possible!



All the items shown have been collected by, and are in the possession of, the Garw Valley Heritage Society, and will be displayed as part of an exhibition to mark the centenary of the start of the 'Great War'.

November 24

End of the First Battle of Ypres, total allied casualties about 1,000,000. The real birth of trench warfare.

December 8

The Royal Navy fight the Battle of the Falkland Islands.

1915

January 19-20

The first Zeppelin raids on the U.K.



# THE ARMY MULE

I never would have done it if I'd known what it would be,  
I thought it meant promotion and some extra pay for me;  
I thought I'd miss a drill or two with packs and trenching tools,  
So I said I'd handled horses, and they set me handling mules.

Now horses they are horses, but a mule he is a mule,  
(Bit of a Devil, bit of a monkey, bit of a Blooming bounding fool).  
Oh, I'm using all the adjectives I didn't learn at school,  
On that prancing', glancing', Ragtime dancing' blithering Army mule.

If I had been old Noah when the cargo walked aboard,  
I'd have left the bears and tigers in, and never said a word.  
But I would have put a placard out to say the Ark was full,  
And shut the place up sudden like, when I saw the Army mule.

They buck you off when ridden, they crush your leg when led,  
They're mostly sitting on their tail, or standing on your head.  
They reach their yellow grinders out and 'gently' chew your ear,  
And their necks are India-rubber for attacking in the rear.

They are amusing when they're happy as a ladies riding school,  
But when the fancy takes them they're like nothing but a mule—  
With the off wheels in the gutter, and the near wheels in the air,  
And a leg across the traces, and the driver Lord knows where.

They are horrid in the stable, and worse upon the road,  
They'll bolt with any rider, they'll jib at any load.  
But soon we're bound across the sea, and when we cross the foam,  
I don't care where we go, if we leaves the mules at home.

For horses they are horses, but a mule he is a mule,  
Bit of a devil, bit of a monkey, bit of a bl—dy fool.  
Now I have used up all the adjectives I didn't learn at school,  
On that Ramping, Raw-boned, Cast steel jawboned,  
Army Transport Mule.

E.H.B. 8/12/16. Gallipoli



# WOMEN DURING THE WAR

The war brought women into the workplace as never before, facing discrimination and hostility. If they stayed at home looking after families, as most women in the Garw did, the government paid them a weekly sum known as a separation allowance. This was paid to all wives of soldiers and sailors, and it also paid an allowance to anyone who had been financially dependent on a servicemen before he enlisted. The amount women received depended on the rank of the servicemen and the number of children, so a soldier at the lowest rank meant his wife received 12 shillings and six pence a week (about 62 pence in today's terms) and wives of the lowest rank sailors received 11 shillings (55p).



By 1917 the government was paying more than 3 million women a separation allowance. If the man was killed in the war the separation allowance became a pension (see Gill Thomas, 'Life on All Fronts', Cambridge University Press 1989).

January 24

Royal Navy battle off the Dogger Bank, as the German Navy attacks fishing vessels.

April 22 – May 25

The second battle of Ypres. The Germans use poison gas for the first time, total British casualties for this battle, 60,000.

May 7

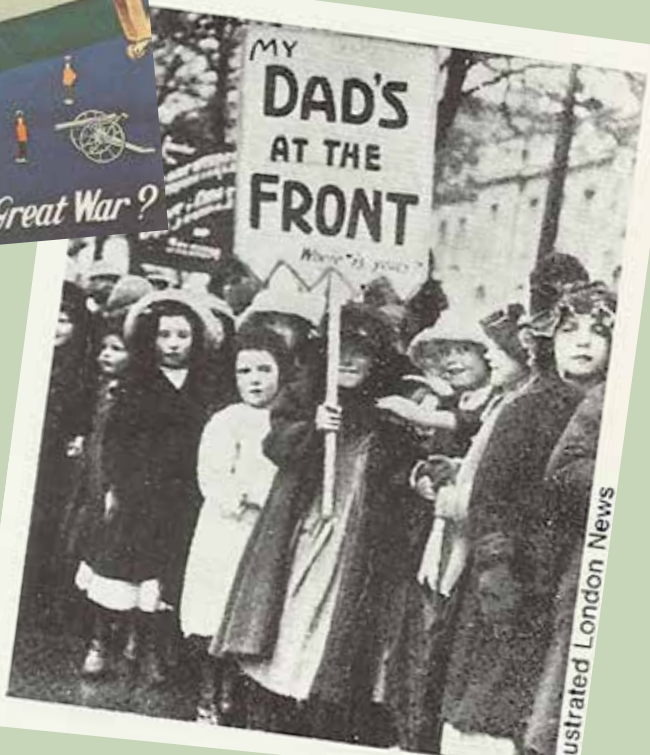
German U-Boat sinks Lusitania. The deaths of many Americans on board tests the neutrality of the U.S.A.



Women, like men, were divided in their reactions to the war, with some championing the cause and others worried by it. They did not have the vote, and movements such as the National Union of Women's Suffrage, a spearhead for women's rights in Britain that had long been campaigning, put political activity largely on hold for the duration of the war. The more militant Women's Social and Political Union did likewise after Emmeline Pankhurst had a meeting with Lloyd George, figuring that supporting the war would benefit the suffrage movement in the long term.

In the Garw, perhaps the most ardent supporter of women's suffrage was Miss Fanny Thomas, known to everyone as Fanny Bloomers, head mistress at the Ffaldau School in Pontycymer.

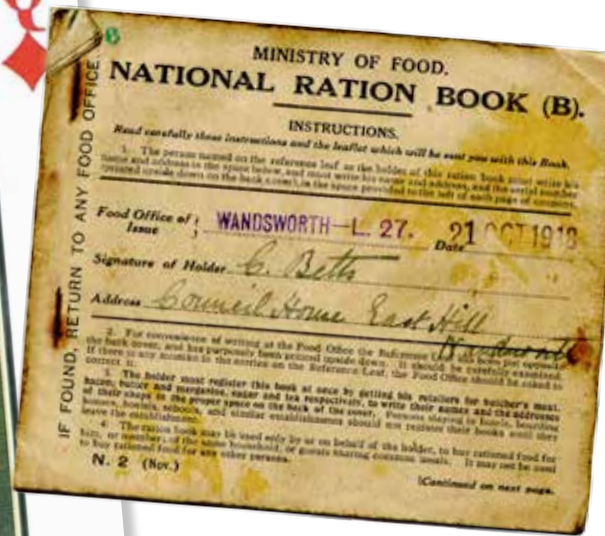
It was believed she had picked up her feminist ideas on a trip to America, and she became very outspoken in her views. She was the first woman to be elected to the local council, and the first woman in the valley to wear breeches, and the first woman to ride a motorbike! When Emmeline Pankhurst came to speak at a rally in Bridgend, Fanny Bloomers invited her to stay with her at Ffaldau House, such was the mutual respect and admiration.



May 25  
Cabinet Coalition formed.



With the aims of women's suffrage on hold, women became vital state 'tools', appearing on recruiting posters (and later cinema), applying moral and sexual pressure on men to join up, or be diminished. This accompanied the 'White Feather' campaign, where women were encouraged to give the feathers as symbols of cowardice to non-uniformed men. Some posters even presented young and attractive women as rewards for soldiers; music-hall songs such as "I'll Make a Man of You" sung by a pretty scantily-dressed young lady, were blatant in enticing the most reluctant young men to sign up.



May  
The Germans begin to use another new weapon, the Flame thrower.

# CHAPELS AND CHURCHES DURING THE WAR

From the outset of the war, the religious organisations rallied around to the cause of keeping their parishioner troops well supplied with 'comforts', the money for which was raised by holding concerts and bazaars. The welfare of the servicemen's families was also dealt with by general fund-raising.

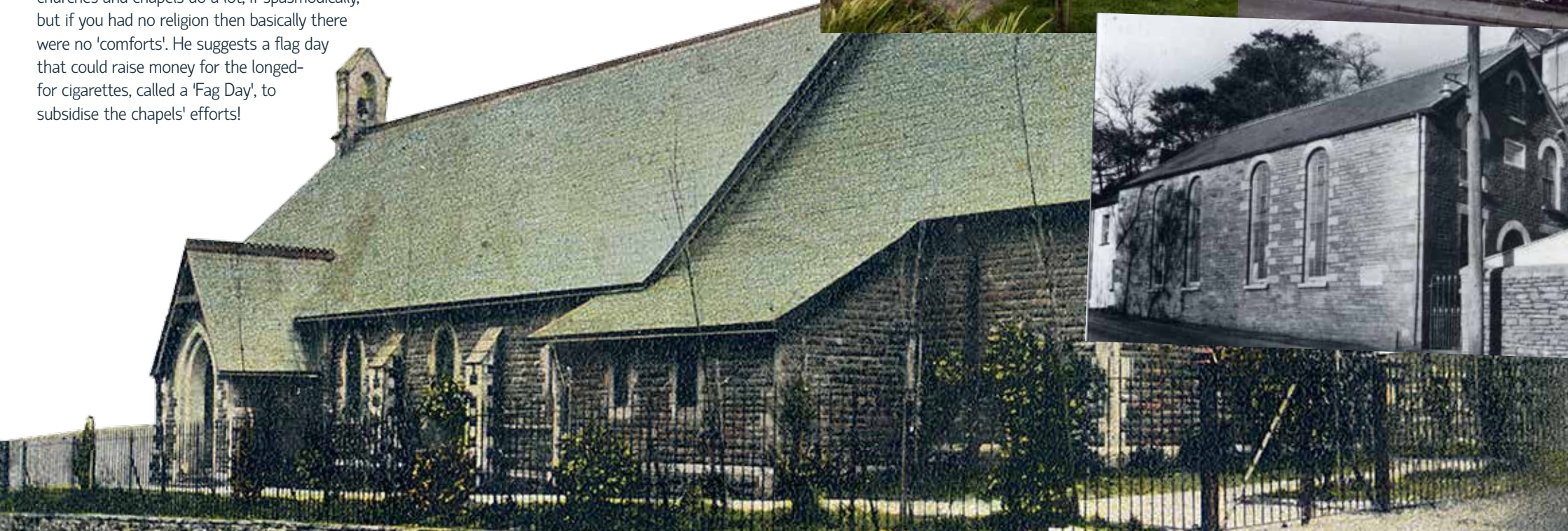
There is a letter sent in July 1917 to the Glamorgan Gazette by a minister of Salem chapel that exhorts the people of Pontycymer to do that bit extra to provide the 'comforts', often cigarettes, to those at the front. He says the churches and chapels do a lot, if spasmodically, but if you had no religion then basically there were no 'comforts'. He suggests a flag day that could raise money for the longed-for cigarettes, called a 'Fag Day', to subsidise the chapels' efforts!

Troops returning home on leave were given rapturous welcomes by the whole community, and before they returned to the front they were often given a special night laid on by their respective church or chapel, where they were presented with a token of esteem by the ministers on behalf of the congregation.

Very early on there was a half-hearted move to sue for peace from one Church, but this was thought to be just the 'ravings of peace cranks' and was reported as such in the local press.

On the whole there were no fiery exhortations from the pulpit or top bench to go out and kill for your God, King and Country; more of a quiet prayer and a blessing that the men would return home safe and sound.

Records show that out of 4 chapels in the Garw Valley a total of 124 men left. Many did not return.



June 4  
British and French advance on Gallipoli.

August 4  
Fall of Warsaw

September 25  
Battle of Loos. British troops advance but the wind changes direction and gas is blown back into their lines, causing many casualties.

# ODE TO THE TUNNELLERS

*Sapper Gomer Lewis from Nantymoel wrote this song in April 1916. A fitting tribute not only to the tunnellers but to all those who served in this war.*

The rifle, bomb, and booming gun  
Disturb the peace of the gentle Hun,  
But most of all he's said to fear  
The mines laid by the Welsh Pioneer.

Chorus.

Who are the men the Kaiser fears,  
Who drives him to the verge of tears,  
And who blows sky high his 'gentle dears'?  
Who! 'Tis the 19th Welsh Pioneers.  
Their uniform is mud splashed and stained,  
And polished buttons they much disdain,  
But judge them not by outward show;  
It's deeds, not swank, that tells you know.

Chorus

Now, girls, though their tunics are sadly worn  
And their puttees are all tattered and torn,  
Don't turn up your nose and sneer so,  
For every one's a blooming Hero.

Spr Gomer Lewis, Nantymoel.

# NAMES OF THE FALLEN

Private Aldridge J.  
r. Blaengarw  
Welsh Reg.

Gunner Aldridge T.  
r. Tylagwyn  
Royal Garrison Artillery

Serjeant Alport I.  
r. Pontycymer  
Royal Engineers

Private Andrews W.H.  
b. Pontycymer  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Corporal Angove E.J.  
b. Llangeinor  
Duke of Cornwall's L.I.

Private Archer A. E.  
r. Pontycymer  
Devonshire Reg.

Private Arthur J.G.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Bailey F.  
b. Pantygog  
Welsh Reg.

Private Baker E.J.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Begley D.  
r. Blaengarw  
Welsh Reg.

Private Board A.J.  
r. Pontycymer  
The King's (Liverpool Reg.)

Private Bonner J.  
b. Pontycymer  
South Wales Borderers

Rifleman Bowen J.  
r. Pontycymer  
King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Private Bowen W.H.  
b. Blaengarw  
South Wales Borderers

Private Britton A.S.  
r. Pontyrhyl  
Royal Warwickshire Reg.

Private Burton W.  
b. Garw Valley  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Private Cadwgan C.C.V.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Capel F J.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Private Carvell I.  
b. Llangeinor  
South Wales Borderers

Lance Corporal Chard D.R.  
r. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Private Clarke R.T.  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Rifleman Connelly D.  
r. Pontycymer  
King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Private Culliford P.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Gunner Darby P.  
r. Pontycymer  
Royal Garrison Artillery

Private Davies A.E.  
r. Pantygog  
National Reserve

Private Davies C.F.  
r. Pontycymer  
Cheshire Reg.

Private Davies D.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Officers Cook 1St. Class Davies D.J.  
r. Pontycymer  
H.M.S. Vivid Royal Navy

E. Davies  
(Details Unknown)

Lance Corporal Davies E.  
b. Betws  
Welsh Reg.

Private Davies G.W.  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Army Medical Corps.

Private Davies G.C.  
r. Pontyrhyl  
Lancashire Fusiliers

Sapper Davies G.  
r. Pontycymer  
Royal Engineers

Private Davies G. I.  
r. Blaengarw  
King's Shropshire L.I.

Private Davies H.  
b. Blaengarw  
Lancashire Fusiliers

Private Davies H.R.  
r. Llangeinor  
Gloucestershire Reg.

Private Davies H.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Lance Serjeant Davies J.E.  
r. Pontyrhyl  
Welsh Reg.

Private Davies L.M.  
b. Blaengarw  
Royal Army Medical Corps.

C.S.M. Davies M.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Private Davies S.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Gunner Davies T.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Garrison Artillery

Driver Davies W.  
r. Pontycymer  
Royal Army Service Corps.

Private Davies W A.  
b. Blaengarw  
South Wales Borderers

Private Davies W.G.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Davies W.J.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

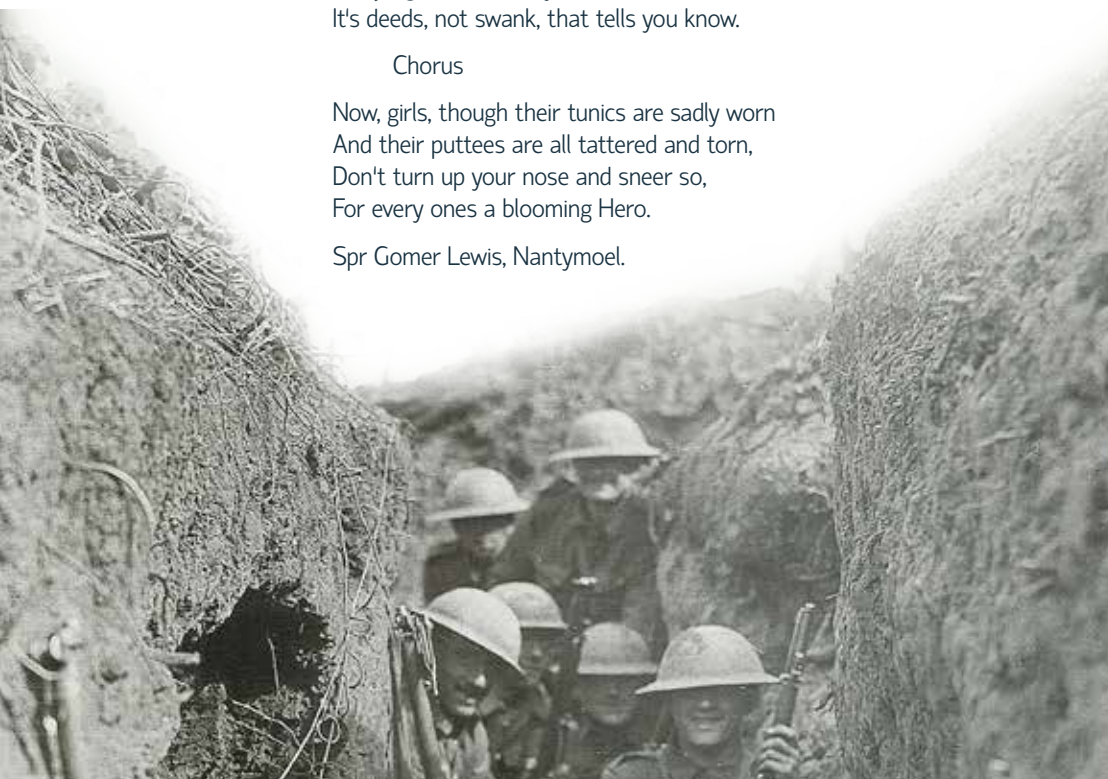
Private Davies W.  
b. Pontycymer  
Australian Infantry

Private Dent O.  
r. Blaengarw  
Gloucestershire Reg.

Private Eastman J.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Lance Corporal Edge E.G.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Corporal Edge S.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers



December 17

General Sir Douglas Haigh takes over the command of the B.E.F. In under 4 months of war, the British army has suffered 90,000 casualties.

Corporal Edwards W. b. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.	Corporal Greville A.R. r. Blaengarw South Wales Borderers	Private John D. b. Llangeinor Duke of Cornwall's L. I.	Private King W. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Private McManus A. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	2nd Corporal Phillips E. r. Pontycymer Royal Engineers
Lance Corporal Elsbury F.L. r. Pontycymer Duke of Cornwall's L.I.	Private Griffiths J. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	2nd Lieutenant John H.G. r. Pontycymer York and Lancaster Reg.	Private Kingston H. b. Blaengarw Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Private Michael E. J. b. Blaengarw London Reg.	Private Phipps M. r. Pontycymer Duke of Cornwall's L.I.
Private Evans D.E. b. Blaengarw Leicestershire Reg.	Corporal Gwyther C.S. b. Blaengarw Royal Engineers	Private John J.T. r. Blaengarw Welsh Guards	Captain Dr. Lawrence E.W. r. Pontycymer Royal Army Medical Corps	3rd Engineer Milburn W. r. Pontycymer Mercantile Marine	Corporal Plum R.V. r. Pontycymer Royal Army Medical Corps
Lance Corporal Evans E.J. b. Llangeinor Manchester Reg.	Driver Harley J. r. Pontycymer Royal Field Artillery	Private Jones A.L. b. Llangeinor Royal Army Medical Corps	Private Lawrence W.J. b. Llangeinor South Wales Wanderers	Rifleman Milton R. r. Pontycymer Rifle Brigade	Private Pope H. b. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.
Driver Evans J. r. Pontycymer Royal Field Artillery	Private Harries T. r. Blaengarw Loyal North Lancs Reg.	Private Jones D. r. Blaengarw Gloucestershire Reg.	Private Lewis A.C.E. b. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Private Moore C. r. Llangeinor Royal Sussex Reg.	Serjeant Price D. b. Betws Welsh Reg.
Private Evans J. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Private Harris A. r. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.	Private Jones D. r. Blaengarw Labour Corps	Private Lewis A. L. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Lance Bombardier Morgan I r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Serjeant Price W. r. Pontycymer Canadian Field Artillery
Evans S.H. (Name on Bethania Chapel Plaque)	Private Healey F.J. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Corporal Jones D.I. b. Llangeinor Royal Engineers	Private Lewis D.E. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.	Private Morgan J.T. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.	Corporal Pritchard T.L. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.
Corporal Evans W. r. Pontyrhyl South Wales Borderers	Pioneer Henry G.J. r. Pontycymer Royal Engineers	Private Jones D.W. b. Betws King's Shropshire L.I.	Sapper Lewis G. b. Llangeinor Royal Engineers	Private Morgan R. r. Blaengarw Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)	Private Protheroe G.R. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.
Private Fehrs H.C. r. Pontycymer Manchester Reg.	L/Serjeant Hitchings F.R.W.J. r. Betws Lancashire Fusiliers	Private Jones E. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Serjeant Lewis T.S. b. Pontycymer Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Driver Morgan T. b. Pontycymer Royal Field Artillery	Private Reading G.F. r. Pontycymer Army Service Corps.
Gunner Fisher J. b. Pontycymer Royal Garrison Artillery	Serjeant Hodgson P. b. Pontyrhyl Army Service Corps	Private Jones F.T. r. Pontycymer Machine Gun Corps	Private Llewellyn M.D. b. Blaengarw Royal Army Medical Corps	Private Morris W. r. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.	Private Reece C. r. Blaengarw Gloucestershire Reg.
Private Forey F. r. Blaengarw Somerset L.I.	Lance Corporal Holt W. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.	Private Jones G. H. r. Pontycymer South Wales Borderers	Private Lloyd D. r. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.	Private Nation W.E.G. r. Pontyrhyl Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Private Rees E. r. Pontyrhyl King's Shropshire L.I.
Private George T. r. Blaengarw Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Private Hopkins R.A. b. Llangeinor Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Private Jones H. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.	Private Lloyd D.O. b. Pontycymer Australian Infantry	Private Nicholas W.T. b. Llangeinor Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)	Private Rees J. r. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.
Private Goss A.E. r. Pontycymer King's Own (Royal Lancaster)	Private Howells W.J. b. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Private Jones J.R. b. Blaengarw Dorsetshire Reg.	Private Lloyd H. r. Blaengarw Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Private Oakley E. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Lance Corporal Rees H.J. b. Llangeinor Royal Welsh Fusiliers
Private Goss E. b. Llangeinor Somerset L.I.	Private Howells W.J. b. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.	Private Jones J.R. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Sapper Lushmore A.J. b. Blaengarw Royal Engineers	Gunner Oakley H.G. b. Llangeinor Royal Field Artillery	Private Rees O. r. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.
Gunner Goss E. r. Pontycymer Royal Marine Artillery	Private Hughes J.P. b. Blaengarw Welsh Reg.	Private Jones R. r. Blaengarw South Wales Borderers	2nd Lieutenant Maddock H.T. b. Pontycymer Machine Gun Corps	Private Osbourne G. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.	Telegraphist Reece J r. Blaengarw R.N. Volunteer Reserve
Serjeant Goss F.R. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Private James W. r. Blaengarw Somerset L.I.	Jones W. (Details Unknown)	Serjeant Mainwaring J. r. Pontycymer Royal Warwickshire Reg.	Driver Perkins E.A. r. Blaengarw Army Service Corps	Private Richards E.T. b. Blaengarw Lancashire Fusiliers
Corporal Goss J. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	3rd. Engineer Jenkins E.J. b. Blaengarw Mercantile Marine	Private Kear P. r. Pontycymer Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)	Private McCarthy A. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Private Perryman J. r. Blaengarw Cheshire Reg.	Private Roach G. r. Blaengarw Reserve Cavalry Reg.
Private Gould W T. b. Llangeinor Welsh	Private Jenkins W.T. b. Llangeinor Welsh Reg.	Private Kelly R. b. Blaengarw Royal Welsh Fusiliers	Private McCarthy J.C. r. Pontycymer Welsh Reg.	Able Seaman Phillips D.J. r. Pontycymer R.N. Volunteer Reserve	2nd Lieutenant Roberts I.C. r. Blaengarw Machine Gun Corps

Sapper Rossiter E.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Engineers

Private Rossiter F.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Hampshire Reg.

Serjeant Rowlands F.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Sebburn W.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Private Selwood J.  
r. Blaengarw  
Gloucestershire Reg.

Lance Corporal Seymour J.  
r. Pontycymer  
East Surrey Reg.

Private Shakespeare R.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Slack E.  
r. Blaengarw  
Welsh Reg.

Rifleman Smith G.W.  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Irish Rifles

Serjeant Smith J.H.  
b. Blaengarw  
Welsh Reg.

Private Spark J.J.  
r. Pontycymer  
South Wales Borderers

Private Spencer A.  
r. Pontycymer  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Private Stoneham  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Irish Reg.

Private Taylor D.J.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Serjeant Thomas E.  
b. Pantygog  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Private Thomas E.J.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Thomas E.W.  
b. Pontycymer  
Northumberland Fusiliers

Private Thomas J.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Thomas J.A.J.  
r. Betws  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Boy 1st Class Thomas H.L.  
r. Pontycymer  
H.M.S. Vivid Royal Navy

2nd Lieutenant Thomas H.W.  
r. Betws  
Rifle Brigade

Thomas S.  
(Name on Bethania Chapel Plaque)

Private Thomas W.  
r. Pantygog  
South African Infantry

Lance Serjeant Thurtell C.W.  
r. Blaengarw  
Northamptonshire Reg.

Private Tilley E.T.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Watkins D.  
(Details Unknown)

Corporal Watkins E.W.  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Engineers.

Private Watkins T.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private White G.  
r. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Private Whitford L.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Wile J.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

C.S.M. Wilkinson  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Willcocks J.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Williams A.  
r. Garw Valley  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Private Williams C.  
b. Pontycymer  
Durham L.I.

Private Williams D.R.  
b. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Williams D.E.  
b. Blaengarw  
Leicestershire Reg.

Private Williams G.H.  
r. Pontycymer  
Cheshire Reg.

Private Williams J.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Private Williams H.  
b. Llangeinor  
Welsh Reg.

Sapper Williams R.S.  
b. Llangeinor  
Royal Engineers

Williams S.  
(Details Unknown)

Private Williams T.  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Welsh Fusiliers

Private Williams W.T.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Serjeant Woolford P.  
r. Blaengarw  
Royal Engineers

Private Wyatt W.  
r. Blaengarw  
Welsh Guards

Private Vaughan J.J.  
r. Pontycymer  
Welsh Reg.

Private Young I.  
b. Blaengarw  
Gloucestershire Reg.

# SOME MILITARY HEROES OF THE GARW

The following pages describe in brief the military lives of just some of the Garw men who went to the War. There are many heroes who have remained, and will remain, unknown; all are to be commended for their service to the nation.

## Walter Durnell, M.S.M

Walter Durnell was born in 1882 in Marshfield Gloucestershire to parents William and Margaret, the only boy out of 5 children. His army service started in 1898 when at the age of 18 he enlisted in the Somerset Light Infantry for 7 years with 5 years in the reserve. His service in the Boer War resulted in 2 medals: the Queen's South Africa medal, followed by the King's South Africa medal.

After that war he and his wife Lily moved first to 16 Lower Church Street, Pontycymer and later to Oxford Street, to find work in the pits as a stoker. In 1914 he enlisted in the 8th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry where he became the Company Quartermaster Sergeant. He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the Bronze Victory medal, and the Silver British War medal, collectively known as 'Pip, Squeak, and Wilfred'. He also received the Meritorious Service medal, an unusual award given for valuable service and gallantry in the field.

## Sgt Edward George Sheldrake, D.C.M.

Sgt Sheldrake of 11 Victoria Street Pontycymer enlisted on 11 October 1914, transferred to the 9th Battalion Welsh Regiment and was in France by July 17th 1915. On the morning he won the Distinguished Conduct Medal his company (B company) were scattered and many of them wounded, including himself, but he rounded them up and led the way to safety, under heavy fire at all times. He attacked a German machine gun emplacement with grenades and carried on until evening collecting his men before agreeing to have his many wounds attended to. The report in the London Gazette tells of his gallantry and resource at Festubert\*, and his award of both the Croix de Guerre and the D.C.M.

*\*This well-documented battle was the first time the British used Chlorine gas; 48,000 men were lost that day.*



*Walter wearing his medals plus clasps, photograph courtesy of D. Dimmick.*

Every attempt has been made to include all those from the Garw who died in the conflict. Inevitably there may be omissions but these when known will be referred to the British Legion in Pontycymer and included in any future reprint.

# 1916

Battle of Jutland, classed as a British victory, but was really a strategic draw. Last time the High Seas Fleets would face each other. British losses were 14 ships and about 7,000 casualties.

### John Matthew Thomas, M.M.

John Matthew Thomas was working at Aberbaiden colliery, a drift mine near Kenfig Hill, when he enlisted at Bridgend on November 24th 1914 into the 10th battalion of the Welsh Regiment. He was involved in the Battle of Mametz Wood in July 1916, a battle which lasted 8 days and cost 4000 British Infantry their lives. Private Thomas was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in the field and devotion to duty under fire for his bravery in the battle. He was decorated with ribbons (to be replaced at a later date with medals, a customary practice), at Poperinge in Belgium in Sept.1916.

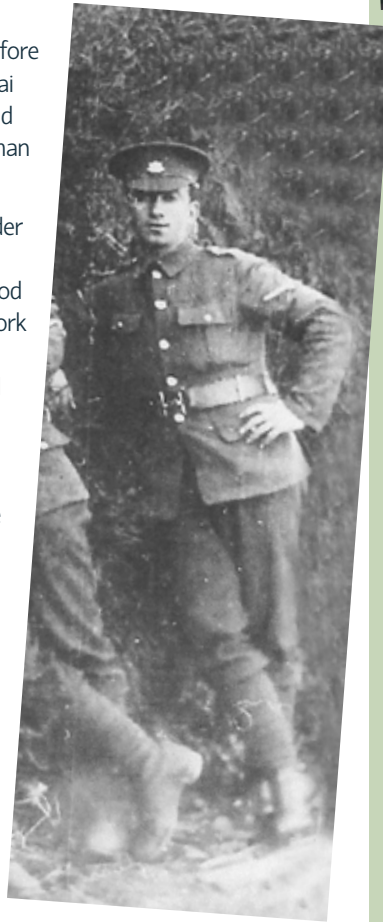
John developed trench foot, an extremely painful condition that led to his discharge and return home to Tondy. He was given a pension of 16 shillings and an allowance of 14 shillings and 2 pence for his wife and children - about £1.51 in today's terms. He was lucky that his foot eventually healed, and he was able to return to work in the mines. He never spoke much about his experiences in the war, but his grandson still has his medals and the badge his Betws friends presented to him on 14th December 1917.

### Joseph Henry Morgans

Joseph was Assistant Master at Ffaldau Boys School in Pontycymer before enlisting and being sent to France. He was severely wounded at Cambrai during the now famous first mass attack by tanks in December 1917, and was taken as a prisoner to Altdamm, now Dabie, in Poland, where German surgeons saved his leg, and his life.

Altdamm held over 15,000 Russian prisoners from their army's surrender in 1917, plus some French and 55 British servicemen. Conditions in the camp were hard, with neither guards nor prisoners receiving enough food due to the blockade by the Royal Navy. Corporal Morgans was given work in the camp Post Office where he helped his fellow prisoners read and write letters. At the end of the war the gates to Altdamm were opened and the prisoners left to fend for themselves. Joseph and a group of others walked the 175 miles to neutral Denmark where they received a rapturous welcome. From there they sailed to Leith in Scotland, then were later debriefed at Ripon in Yorkshire before finally making it home in time for Christmas 1918.

Joseph never spoke about his experiences but his daughter Nest recalled that he could not walk in cold weather due to the frostbite that he got in the camp; his children remember going up the mountain and gathering wool from gorse bushes to line his shoes to ease the pain. He returned to teaching in the Ffaldau School in 1919, and in 1938 he left to take up the headship of Betws School. He died in 1953 of a brain haemorrhage. His collection of postcards and photographs sent from Altdamm are now stored at the Imperial War Museum in London and give a rare insight into life in a PoW camp.



### Richard David Mathias, D.C.M.

Richard Mathias was born in Pleasant View Pontyrhyl, before his family moved to 3 Waunbant, Pontycymer, which is now a fish and chip shop. He joined the Grenadier Guards when war broke out, but later transferred to the Welsh Guards when they were formed, becoming a sergeant in no.4 Company of the 1st Battalion. He was awarded the

Distinguished Conduct Medal for his bravery under heavy fire: twice he went out onto open ground to drag wounded guardsmen back to safety. Later when attacking Mortaldje near Ypres he was the first soldier to lead into an enemy trench, fighting with his bare hands until he found a rifle to replace the one lost in the water-logged hole it had fallen into. Richard was awarded a bar on his DCM for his bravery and leadership. He continued to lead by example until shrapnel wounds necessitated his return home to Britain.

### Philip Woolford M.M.

Philip Woolford grew up in Blaenau Ffestiniog, but moved later to Blaengarw where he worked in the Ffaldau pit. When war broke out he joined the Royal Garrison Artillery but then joined the Royal Engineers 178th Tunnelling Company in France as a Sapper, where his mining experience held him in good stead. He was promoted to Sergeant and awarded a Military Medal for gallantry in the field, but was wounded on three occasions in 18 months. On his leave in August 1916 he married Edith and moved to Oxford Street in Pontycymer, but 5 days after leaving to go back to the Front in September 1916 he was killed in action, on October 2nd. Edith was heartbroken with grief.

### Sidney Charles Hatherall

Sidney Charles Hatherall worked in the Ffaldau colliery as a miner and lived at 13 Lower Church Street, Pontycymer. On 14th July 1915 he enlisted in Maesteg and became Private 34077 in the 20th Battalion Welsh Regiment. After training he went straight to the Western Front where he fought bravely until he was wounded on July 31st 1916. Some shrapnel from an exploding artillery shell hit him in the right foot and he was shipped back to the 2nd War Hospital Birmingham for treatment. He returned to his regiment for a short time before being transferred as a reinforcement to the 2nd Battalion South Lancashire Regiment as Private 32784. Again Sidney was severely wounded in battle in April 1918, this time in his right leg, and was sent back to Britain to the Keighley War Hospital for an operation. He was eventually discharged from the Army in February 1919 and returned to the Garw Valley.

His poem on the Battle of Mametz Wood is printed on the back page of this booklet.

September 15

The British secret weapon, the Tank went into action for the first time.



1917

February

USA severs diplomatic relations with Germany and begins its preparations for war in Europe.



Clarke's name and service number were engraved on the mirror case. Olivier immediately contacted the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and a professor of forensic archaeology was able to establish the bones were indeed those of Private Richard Clarke. Arrangements were then made to have his remains re-interred in the nearby military cemetery at Gore-Beuvry with full military honours.

NB When cases like this happen the War Graves Commission makes every effort to trace living relatives of the fallen, and in this case it was Richard's 75 year old nephew from Newport who was informed. Keith Clarke had very little knowledge of his uncle other than his father telling him that he had lost a brother in the Great War.

*\*A first-hand account of this mine going off and the battle for the crater can be found in the book 'Old Soldiers Never Die' by Frank Richards.*

### John Jones' Grandsons: A Tale of a Family Going to War

John Jones of Station Row Pontrhyll had many grandchildren, but at least 8 of them went to the war at its outbreak in 1914. One grandson John Peter Jones of Pant Street Pant-y-Gog was a stoker in the Ffaldau when he enlisted immediately in the Welsh Regiment. He then spent 4 years in action, being wounded several times and dying just 5 weeks before the end of the war near St Quentin on the Somme. His brother Frederick Coleman Jones joined the Navy and their cousins John Henry Gunsten and Herbert Edward Gunsten joined the Royal Field Artillery. Another cousin of theirs, Joseph Herbert Pascoe of Cuckoo Street joined the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

### Richard T. Clarke, laid to rest after 85 years

Richard Clarke was born in Brecon in 1897 but was working in a colliery in Blaengarw when he enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in 1914. On the 22nd July 1916 German sappers detonated a mine directly under the British forward trenches at Givenchy-la-Bassee. The mine contained 35,000 tons of explosive and was fired at 02.50 am killing 52 men instantly and leaving a crater 120 yards long, 70 yards wide and 30 foot deep in the British front line\*. The German infantry immediately attacked to get to the crater's edge first to establish a firing line; this attack was repulsed by the remaining British troops who named the crater Red Dragon in the dead men's honour, and it is believed that Private Clarke was killed at this point, becoming just another casualty of the Great War, with no known grave. He was only 19 years of age.

However a French 'detectorist' called Olivier Hancart, searching for war souvenirs on the old battlefield, came across some bones and scraps of an uniform and a shaving mirror in a ploughed field. Richard



Raymond Collishaw was perhaps the most famous grandson of John Jones, and much has been written of his exploits as a fighter ace and his skirmishes with, amongst others, Manfred von Richthoven, known as the Red Baron. All in all 6 of the grandsons came back, but two were not able to settle back into civilian life: William George Gunsten was discharged with wounds in 1918 but was accidentally shot by yet another cousin George Hooper, whilst out shooting rabbits. John Herbert Pascoe, badly shell-shocked by his experiences during the war, moved from Cuckoo Street to Bridgend. He went out one day to do some shopping and was never seen again.

February 23 – April 5

German forces strategically withdraw to The Hindenberg Line.

March 17

Baghdad taken by the British.

April 5

America declares war on Germany.

## The Thomas Brothers of Betws

The Reverend Morgan Thomas was the rector of St David's Church in Betws, with three sons who had fought in the war. Morgan Evan Thomas was a Second Lieutenant who served in the Royal Engineers and was awarded a Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty' The London Gazette of June 18th 1917 states: "He was in command of a detachment of men accompanying the infantry, and though wounded he carried out his task in a most gallant and efficient manner, returning only at the conclusion of the operation".

Morgan's brother John Arthur Jones Thomas was Private 11138 of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, but was wounded after bravely fighting in France. He was invalided out of the Army in September 1915 and returned to his family in Betws, but never recovered from his wounds, and died in December 1920.

The third brother was already well-known in the area as an all-round sportsman before his venture into the war.

# SPORTING HEROES OF THE GARW VALLEY

## Horace Wyndham Thomas

Horace Wyndham Thomas, one of three sons of the Reverend Morgan Thomas, went to study History at Cambridge University and had played rugby and cricket before returning home and playing fly-half for Swansea, the Barbarians and Blackheath. He won two caps for Wales against South Africa in 1912 and England in 1913. He moved to Calcutta to work and became captain of the Calcutta Football Club. When the club was disbanded, the mess funds of Indian silver rupees were melted down to make Rugby Union's Calcutta Cup, the prize given annually to the winner of the Scotland v England match.

In 1916 Horace Wyndham came back to Britain and enlisted in the Rifle Brigade where he became a Second Lieutenant. He lost his life at the battle in Guillemont in September 1916 and his body has never been found. His name appears on the Thiepval Memorial in France.



## Hopcyn Thomas Maddock, Garw's first rugby international

Born in 1881, he spent his early years in Pontycymer before going to Christ College in Brecon where he played rugby for the College 1st XV. On leaving college, he came back to play rugby for Pontycymer before joining London Welsh in 1910 where he became a legend. He usually played on the wing as he was a fast and elusive runner who scored 170 tries for the club, a record which still stands today, one hundred years later. Hopcyn often captained London Welsh: twice he scored five tries in a game and twice broke the record for scoring the most tries in a season. Hop as he was called played for Middlesex and Glamorgan, and in 1906 was picked to play for Wales against England and scored a try and won Wales the match. He kept his place in the side against Scotland and Ireland, scoring another try in the Scotland game. In 1907 he played in the first Championship match against England, scoring two of the six tries in an easy victory. Hop played in the next match which Wales lost to Scotland and was dropped from the team. Recalled in 1910 to play against France, he scored two tries and Wales won 49-14. Surprisingly after this game he never played again.

When Britain declared war on Germany Hop joined the Royal Fusiliers and became an officer in the Machine Gun Corps, fighting in France and Flanders. In 1918 he won a Military Cross in Les Mesnil when his unit was attacked and needed to retreat but Hop stood firm continually firing his gun until all his men crossed a bridge to safety before following. Temporary Lieutenant Maddock was badly injured when a shell severely damaged his shoulder on the battlefields in 1916 and though he returned to Britain he finally succumbed to his injuries in 1921 in Cardiff.



April 9

To take the pressure off the French army, Canadian divisions attack and take Vimy Ridge after very heavy fighting. British casualties were about 84,000.

May 14 – 15

Italian offensive opens. General Petain in command of French Army.

May

Canadian divisions attack and take Vimy Ridge after very heavy fighting. British casualties were about 84,000.

# A CHILD OF THE GARW IN 1915

My name is Megan and I am 10 years old and live in Meadow Street, Pontycymer. My father, and older brother Huw are fighting in France in the second battalion of the Welsh Regiment. Huw used to be a miner in the Ffaldau colliery. My younger brother Dai is 8 and my little sister Cerys is 7. Since my Da went to fight my mother has taken over his job and is Postmistress. She gets up every morning at half past 5 to meet the train with the miners on and takes the mailbags off it for sorting. I get up just after she leaves and I have to collect the eggs from our chickens and then fill the big copper from the tap outside and put it on the stove for heating. Then I have to refill the coal scuttle and re-stoke the fire before getting breakfast of bread and dripping for my brother and sister. Once we are washed, fed and dressed, I walk Dai and Cerys to their school at the top of the hill, then go to mine. We have a new teacher as our old one went to the munitions factory where she said she was paid much more than she got at teaching - I don't like the new one as much as the old one.

We learn history about how coal was found in South Wales, about the railways, the ironworks and how the ships in Cardiff carry coal from here all over the world. The world is seen on an atlas, where all the countries are different colours apart from a lot of them which are pink, which shows they are part of the British Empire, our teacher says. We have to do lots of things for the war effort like knitting scarves and we have to organise collections to buy War Bonds. I have to leave school a few minutes early so that I can collect Dai and Cerys, and when we get home I have to make the house tidy ready for Mam who will be tired out when she comes home. I then clean the oil lamp as it is often smelly when we light it - our neighbour gave it to us as our house is usually lit by candlelight but with the oil lamp some of our neighbours can come and sit with us doing knitting or sewing for the soldiers who are fighting. Once the little ones are in bed, Mam and I are ready to tackle the ironing, and we have to heat the heavy flat iron on the stove. Mam does the most as she is worried I might burn myself.

At the weekend we all have a bath which needs lots of hot water heated on the old stove, and more water is needed to wash our clothes which are always filthy from the coal dust everywhere.

On Sundays everyone goes to chapel and we all enjoy a good sing, and we pray for all

our fathers and brothers who have gone to war - already we are hearing of those who have died - three friends of Huw's from the colliery have been killed. Then we help friends and neighbours to pick any vegetables they have managed to grow, if they have a small allotment, as these can make very good soup and stews, as we don't get meat very often, and even then it is mostly sausages.

Then it is Monday again, and let us hope the war does not last much longer and Da and Huw can come home again!

## PLENTYN Y GARW

Fy enw i yw Megan, rwyf yn deng mlwydd oed ac yn byw yn Meadow Street, Pontycymer. Mae fy nhad a fy mrawd hynaf Huw yn ymladd yn Ffrainc yn ail fataliwn catrawd Cymru. Roedd Huw yn lowr ym mhwl glo Ffaldau. Mae Dai, fy mrawd bach, yn 8 a fy chwaer fach Cerys yn 7. Ers i fy nhad gadael am y rhyfel mawr mae mam wedi ymgymeryd a'i waith, hi yw'r post feistres. Mae hi'n codi'n foreuol am hanner awr wedi 5 i gwrrdd â thrên y glowyr i gasglu'r sachau post er mwyn didoli'r llythyrau. Rydw i'n codi wedi iddi gadael ag yn casglu'r wyau o'r cwt ieir cyn llenwi'r copr fawr o'r tap tu fas a'i rhoi ar y ffwrn i gynhesu. Wedyn mae rhaid ail lenwi'r bwced glo ag adfywio'r tan cyn paratoi brecwast o fara a thoddion i fy mrawd a chwaer. Unwaith mae'r tri ohonom wedi bwyta brecwast, ymolchi a gwisgo rwyf yn cerdded Dai a Cerys i'w hysgol ar ben y bryn yna ymlaen i fy ysgol i. Mae athro newydd gennym gan fod yr hen un wedi cael gwaith yn y ffatri arfael rhyfel lle oedd fwy o gyflog ar gael. Rwyf ddim mor hoff o'r un newydd ag oeddwn o'r hen un.

Rydym yn dysgu am yr hanes o sut y darganfywyd glo yn ne Cymru, am y rheilffyrdd a'r gweithfeydd dur a sut mae'r llongau yn cludo glo o porthladd Gaerdydd i weddill y byd. Mae'r byd i weld mewn atlas, mae lliwiau gwahanol yn dynodi'r gwledydd gwahanol, er fod nifer fawr yn binc sy'n golygu, yn ôl ein athro, eu bod yn rhan o'r ymerodraeth Brydeinig. Mae rhaid gwneud llawer o bethau i helpu ymdrechion y rhyfel fel gweu sgarffiau a threfnu casgliadau er mwyn prynu bondiau rhyddid. Mae'n rhaid i mi adael ysgol ychydig o funudau yn gynnar er mwyn casglu Dai a Cerys, ag unwaith rwyf gartref mae'n rhaid tacluso'r tŷ

yn barod i mam fydd wedi blino'n lan wrth gyrraedd gartre. Yna rwyf yn glanhau'r lamp olew sy'n dueddol o ddrewi cyn ei oleuo - rhodd gan ein cymdogion oedd y lamp gan taw canhwyllau oedd yn goleuo'r tŷ, ond gyda'r lamp olew gall cymdogion eraill dod i eistedd gyda ni i weu neu wniô ar gyfer y milwyr sy'n ymladd. Unwaith mae'r rhai bach yn eu gwllau mae mam a finnau yn dechrau ar smwddio, mae'n rhaid twymo'r haearn trwm ar y ffwrn. Mam sy'n gwneud y mwyafrif gan ei fod yn poeni y gallaf llosgi fy hun.

Ar y penwythnos rydym i gyd yn cael bath sy'n golygu gwresogi llawer o ddŵr poeth ar yr hen ffwrn, ac mae angen mwy o ddŵr twym i o olchi ein dillad sydd o hyd yn frwnt o'r holl llwch glo sydd ymhobman.

Ar y Sul mae pawb yn mynd i'r capel, rydym yn mwynhau canu emynau, ac fe weddiwn dros ein tadau a brodyr sydd wedi mynd i ryfel - mae newyddion eisoes wedi ein cyrraedd am farwolaethau - mae 3 o gyfeillion Huw o'r pwll glo wedi huno. Yna fe wnawn cynorthwyo ein cymdogion i godi a hel unrhyw lysiau maent wedi llwyddo i dyfu, os oes rhandir bach ganddynt, gall y rhain gwneud cawl arbennig, does fawr ddim cig ar gael, pan mae yna cig selsig yw'r rhain yn bennaf.

Yna daw dydd Llun eto, y gobaith yw na fydd y rhyfel yn parhau llawer mwy a bydd Dad a Huw gartref eto yn fuan!



June 7

Mines were exploded under the German lines at Messines Ridge, after a 17-day bombardment. the ridge is captured, after relatively light losses of 17,000.

July 31 – November 10

Third Battle of Ypres was fought. Better known as Passchendaele. The largest British gain was about 5 miles, and cost 300,000 casualties.

Nov 20 – Dec 3

The Battle of Cambrai. Tanks used on a large scale for the first time. (400)

# CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

Enthusiasm for the war was greatly encouraged through the schools as can be shown from this account of a patriotic concert held at the Rink in Pontycymer on December 17th 1914 by the children of the Ffaldau Girls' School.

The large gathering was presided over by the Rev. W. Saunders, C.C. and organised by Miss F.M. Thomas (see page 14), the School Mistress. The items most popular were the various anthems of the Allies, followed by 'Rule Britannia' and 'Land of Hope and Glory' by the choir.



There were lighter moments when Jeanette Harries and Anna Evans sang 'Daddy Wouldn't Buy me a Bow-Wow', and Winnie Simmons and Dilys Thomas sang 'Oh No John'. There was Morris dancing and a flag drill, but the purpose of the evening was never in doubt.

Patriotism was to be encouraged. There were several amusing skits such as 'How the Kaiser Leads his Army' and 'The Saluting Peril', and Dolly Lewis sang 'England Expects every Man to do his Duty'. 'A long way to Tipperary' went with a swing, as did the Russian dancing and the Marseillaise.

The evening was rounded off by a rendition of the Welsh National Anthem, and a vote of thanks to the performers was moved by the Rev. Campbell Davies (Vicar) and seconded by the Rev. D.D. Davies.



# THE KAISER'S ALPHABET

'The Kaiser's alphabet', printed below, proved a very funny item where 26 girls, each bearing a letter of the alphabet, gave their particular story of what the letter stood for.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>
is for our Army the finest and the best	is for our boys we know they'll stand the test	is for our colours, Red, White and Blue	is for our duty which we all know what to do	is for the enemy we are going to crush	is for the French, we will make them free again	is for the gas which the Germans often use	is for the hand grenades, the things we have to throw	is for the Iron Cross, which the Kaiser gives his men	is for the Japanese, our allies proud and strong	is for the Kaiser, the man who caused the wrong	is for the Letters, the things troops love to see	is for the Mother, with her they'd rather be
<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>
is for Nurses, for whom we all must pray	is for the Officers, who lead our troops each day	is for the Prussian Guards, who wear their helmets bright	is for the Quarter-master, who feeds the men who fight	is for the Russians, our allies through and through	is for the Sniper, who has deadly work to do	is for the Trenches, where the soldiers spend their time	is for the Union Jack, it is our empire's sign	is for the Victory, which we will soon proclaim	is for the Wire, which we put between our lines	is to (e) Xterminate, the Hun, just like a rat	is for the Yankees, will they help us to do just that	is for the Zeppelins, which bomb us from above

1918

March 21

The Germans advance, using fresh troops taken from the Eastern Front after the collapse of the Russian army.

April 5

German advance loses its momentum. They gained 40 miles in some places and inflicted 165,000 British casualties.

April 9

Lys offensive by Germany begins which again probed British positions.

# WORLD WAR 1 MEDALS AND SILVER WAR BADGE

These are some of the medals awarded to Garw Soldiers who fought in The Great War.

**1914-1915 Star**



Awarded to the men who served between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915.

**British War Medal**



Awarded to men who fought in any of the 3 armed services, Commonwealth or Imperial formation. Also to certain voluntary organizations.

**Victory Medal**



Awarded to men who served in the 3 armed services, Queen Alexandra's nursing service, British Dominion, Colonial and Indian Forces.

**Military Medal**



Awarded to non-commissioned officers and men of the Army for acts of bravery on the field.

**Military Cross**



Awarded to officers of the rank of captain or below and warrant officers for gallantry in the field.

**Distinguished Conduct Medal**



Awarded as recognition for distinguished, gallant and good conduct in the field.

**Meritorious Service Medal**



Awarded to warrant officers, NCOs and men duly recommended for performance of military duty other than in action against the enemy.

**Distinguished Service Order**



Awarded to officers who had rendered meritorious or distinguished service at war.

**Mercantile marine Medal**



Awarded to members of the Merchant Navy for one or more voyages into a war or danger zone during World War 1.

**Croix de Guerre (France)**



Awarded to all ranks of French and Allies for individual mention in World War 1 despatches.

**Decoration Militaire (Belgium)**



Awarded to military personnel of any rank for gallantry or devotion to duty.

**Silver War Wound Badge**



These badges were issued to officers and men who were discharged or retired from the military forces as a result of sickness or injury caused by their war service.

April 12

Haigh issues a Backs to the wall order, and the German advance is halted. Germans inflict about 100,000 casualties.

May

American troops in action. They are flung in at the deep end and suffer heavy casualties.

July

Americans arriving on the Western front at a rate of 300,000 a month.

# GARW GLEANINGS

The Garw Gleanings appeared in the Glamorgan Gazette for many years. They were written under the name of Lloffar Arall and were a mixture of news and comedy items that were regarded as being true. The names of the people in the stories were never written in the newspaper though most of the community would have soon known their identities as these items were regularly discussed throughout the valley. Here are some of the amusing items that appeared in the column during the 1914-1918 War, and shows how life on the home front went on as normal, despite the momentous outside events.

## HAS ANYONE FOUND MY TEETH?

After a recent concert in Pontycymer a young man lost his watch and his false teeth while being carried home by a pal.



July 12  
German dash for Paris.

## TIME FOR WORK?

Who was the Blaengarw Colliery worker who woke up thinking he had slept late for work? He dressed as quickly as he could and left his house without having his breakfast and went as fast as he could to the colliery.

When he arrived at the pit he found out the time was 2:30 in the morning. All except one found the episode very amusing.

*PS. He tried to explain matters by saying the hands of the clock had fallen down.*

## TERROR AT THE CINEMA?

A realistic moving picture of lions that was shown at the Hippodrome the other evening gave one young lady in the audience such a terrible fright that she clasped the young man next to her in a tight embrace.

## THE GERMANS HAVE ARRIVED!

A young man had such a fright at three o'clock in the morning that he was heard to shout loudly, "The Germans have arrived." What happened was that the legs of his bedstead had given way and he was left in the middle of the room with the bed having turned turtle.

## OUR BRAVE POLICE SENTRY

It is freely stated that one of the policemen on sentry duty in a powder house in a local colliery had an exciting experience the other evening. He heard a noise and after challenging three times, "Who goes there?" with no reply but still hearing the movement the police sentry fired his gun. On examination he found his dead alien was a SHEEP.

## BLAENGARW WHISTLING COMPETITION

The winner of the whistling competition in Blaengarw was awarded a packet of birdseed.

## PROHIBITION FOR THE GARW

A local gent said he was in favour of total prohibition. Of course he was fully justified in having the courage of his conviction but why was he carrying a bottle of beer under his coat?

## INCREASED TICKET SALES

There has been considerable increase in the sale of 1d. platform tickets in Pontycymer. Most of them being bought by young men. Is this due to the new young lady selling the tickets?

## THE LOST MINISTER



A young minister from the Rhondda Valley was to preach at Blaengarw last Sunday. He walked from the Rhondda but took the wrong path on the mountain and found himself in the Ogmere Valley. He was given directions and arrived in Blaengarw to take the evening service apologising for missing the morning service.

After the service a kind brother of the church agreed to go show the minister the way over the mountain. They took two oil lamps with them as twilight was already approaching. As the pair reached the summit of the mountain first one lamp went out and then shortly afterwards the other lamp went out. The kind brother had forgotten to fill the lamps up. It was a dark, drizzly night so the pair had to find shelter under an overhanging rock for the night. I must report that their words and thought that night were not fit for any Sunday Sermon. The pair went safely on their way the next morning.

## HUSBAND WANTED

Who is the lady who emigrated to the Garw Valley in search of a husband? If it is true she comes from a neighbourhood where there are a number of eligible bachelors. She must be hard to satisfy!

## A DISAPPOINTING ENDING

We sympathise with the local shop assistant who wore his new overcoat and hat to visit a local performance in order to sit near a certain young lady and was absolutely refused permission to escort her home.

## I HOPE WE WILL NOT BE IN THE GLEANING?

Two ladies from Pantygog way were locked out of their house so they had to climb in through the window. They feared that they would figure in the "Gleanings" but they'll never guess how it turns out that your worst fears come true.

## THE FIRST AIDER

A little child had a cut finger. The sight of blood upset her mother. A young lady with a Certificate in First Aid rushed to the rescue. Proudly reassuring the distracted mother, the young lady set to work and eventually managed to bandage the WRONG finger.

## GAS LEAK?

A local man thought he had discovered a leakage in a gas pipe in his house and straight away turned off the gas at the meter. He was nearly "asphyxiated" when his wife told him that the odour came from some hyacinths she had bought.

## DANCING QUEEN

The graceful poses of the Blaengarw young lady dancing in the main street in Pontycymer on Saturday night were much admired. Is that a farm or a public house?

## A STICKY SITUATION

Our sympathy to a young lady in church who couldn't leave her seat owing to her new dress adhering to the recently varnished pew. Can she claim compensation? If so from whom?

## THE LONGEST DAY

A young scholar of the Garw upon being told by her father on Monday that "today was the longest day of the year" replied, "I thought we were a long time in school today".



July 20  
Germans recross the Marne.

July 15  
Foch regains definite initiative by counter attack between Soissons and Chateau-Thierry.

# PEACE IN THE VALLEY

The war that had started in 1914, and was supposed to "be over by Christmas", finally came to an end with the cease fire announced at 11 o'clock on the 11th of November 1918. There were casualties right until the last moment.

The whole country, beaten down and sick with the horrors of it all, went into celebration. Plans were made in early 1919 for a monster procession to be formed at Ffaldau Square. It was to be headed by two bands, followed by members of public bodies, ministers and clergy, discharged and demobilised soldiers and sailors, ambulance and nursing brigades, boy scouts and girl guides, the Fire Brigade and the Police. Later in the afternoon a meeting was planned for the Hippodrome, when the Garw Male Voice Choir and local artistes would give renderings. The Reverend Saunders was to preside over formal presentations of artistically engraved emblems to war widows, discharged and demobilised soldiers and sailors. On the Monday the schoolchildren in both Pontycymer and Blaengarw were to be provided with a tea and fete.

Collections for those affected by the war had been made, and as recognition for their efforts during the war and the losses they sustained, Pontycymer widows and the demobilised were presented with 10 shilling notes (50pence in today's terms), and Blaengarw widows 1 pound. Orphans received 5 shillings (25pence), the demobilised 10 shillings, and Betws widows also received 10 shillings.

## PANTYGOG MARKET SHOW – 8TH AUGUST 1919

Rakers, Bakers, Lubricators, exhibit their veg's in a row;  
Farm fence breakers, Cabinet makers,  
Come to the Annual Show.

Drum bang, loudly they sang,  
O'er the hillsides sweet echoes rang.  
They convey giant Marrows in creaking barrows  
To the Pantygog Market Show.

Wise men should procure,  
Sullies' patented manure,  
That turns a mound of rubbish  
Into gardens that will flourish.

With Tubers colossal and giant peas,  
Friends do not be misers, please.  
For indeed you would be none the wiser,  
If you bought this fertiliser.

Kitch's fitch, ever so rich;  
A nice side of bacon, its odours awoken  
From slumbers and musical snores  
The neighbours who labour with spade and not sabre.  
At Pantygog's Annual Shows.

Sadd's boy, robust young lad,  
In bearskin and leggings, this youngster is clad;  
He looks round his pony, and sells Macaroni,  
And miles of Spaghetti, that makes one quite 'fretty'.

Hood's goods, superfine goods,  
Tied up in packets to prevent any spoiling.  
With customers rushing and fair ladies fussing,  
He never ceases toiling.

Ranger, ranger, sturdy Bushranger,  
Brave as a lion in the greatest of danger;  
Soldier apparent; and zealous adherent  
To the rules of this market show.

Cliff Butt, hero of Kut, sells Johnny Horners,  
With fruit in the corners, and string in the middle,  
Like Churgwin's old fiddle.  
At stall No 7. in the show.

Clothes, clothes, mannikins pose,  
From early morning until day's close.  
Suits made to measure, for work ,or for pleasure,  
At stall No 8. in the show.

Risk it, risk it; Buy Osborne's biscuit, stamped at the market store;  
Although it's annoying, to see people gnawing,  
And thumping with hammers galore;  
Those biscuits cemented, which brave men demented;  
Buy from the Pantygog Market show.

Might, right, a score of sham fights,  
Climbing the 'greasy', and aeroplane flights,  
There's the Flip-flap and the Big wheel.  
Swinging boats and the Scotch reel,  
Or take a long flight on the R34,  
At the Pantygog Annual Show.

Bob Harry.





*The Glamorgan Gazette* later reported for the 19th July 1919, the day of the jamboree:

"Despite the unsatisfactory weather on Saturday, the Garw was en fete, all the streets were beflagged with gay bunting. About 3,000 Garwites served in the war, and several hundreds made the supreme sacrifice. These brave lads were not forgotten. In the midst of their rejoicing they were uppermost

in the thoughts of the dear ones they died to save. Saturday was given over for 'the grown-ups', and the kiddies had their day on Monday. Unfortunately the weather behaved worse on Monday and it was impossible to carry out the full programme so all the children in the valley had tea in their respective schools".



## November 11

At 11am, the guns stopped firing. British and German troops were still fighting right until the last second.

