

# CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

**PRESIDENT: THE LORD ABERDARE**

**VICE-PRESIDENTS: TOM EVANS, JOHN F. MEAR AND KEN COLLINS**

# HANES



NEWSLETTER OF THE CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY  
CYLCHLYTHYR CYMDEITHAS HANES CWM CYNON

ISSUE NUMBER 45

WINTER 2008

**GRAND CHRISTMAS EDITION**



## EDITOR'S NEWS BOARD

### WEBSITE

The Society is pleased to announce that after several months work on the part of its Joint Editors and a professional Web designer it now has its own Website. This can be found at [www.cynonvalleyhistorysociety.org](http://www.cynonvalleyhistorysociety.org). The site is both informative and artistic. It sets out our aims and objects, lists the Society's publications and gives notice of our annual programme of lectures. It also provides links to the Glamorgan Record Office, the National Library of Wales, Cynon Valley Libraries and its important archive of local history photographs, the Cynon Valley Museum and other local history societies. It is hoped to develop the site in the near future to include HANES on line and exhibitions of documents and photographs. Those who do not own a computer can see the site by visiting the Aberdare Central Library or its branches. It is hoped that a celebratory launch of the website will take place in the New Year when it can perhaps be projected onto a screen.

### BLUE PLAQUES

It is understood that the nine commemorative plaques that are to be located on sites at Abercynon, Aberdare and Hirwaun have now been manufactured and are likely to be set up early in the New Year. Details of the awards are given in Hanes 42. It is hoped that unveiling ceremonies of the plaques on flagship sites such as the Gadlys Ironworks, the Market Hall and at Abernant-y-Groes Colliery can be arranged. The Welsh Rugby Union has expressed a great interest in the memorial to Dr. Teddy Morgan, so it is likely that his birthplace at Agents Row will also be included.

### FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

If you have any material (photographs, documents or reminiscences) relating to the history of the Society, our Secretary or the Joint Editors would be glad to hear from you.

### OFFICERS (2008-2009)

**David Leslie Davies** (Chairman), Miles Burton (Vice-Chairman), Alan Abraham (Hon. Secretary), John Davey (Hon. Treasurer), Ken Collins (Minute Secretary), Haydn Williams (Programme Secretary), David Leslie Davies and Geoffrey Evans (Joint Editors).

Committee Members: Elfed Bowen, Geoffrey Evans, Alan Vernon Jones and Hywell Vaughan.

### IN MEMORIAM

It is our sad duty to record the death of Society member Mrs. Avril Richardson



## **CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE, 2008** ***NEGES V CADEIRYDD, 2008:***

For some years, it has been the pleasant duty of the Society's chairperson to write a Christmas message for the issue of *Hanes* which circulates in December.

This year, that responsibility and privilege fall to me as I take this opportunity of wishing each member, friend and supporter of the Society a happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. *Carwn ddymuno i bob aelod a chyfaill i'r Gymdeithas Nadolig Hapus iawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda o waelod calon.*

At such a time, one inevitably looks back upon the year that is swiftly passing and forward towards a year that will soon dawn. Such reflection is probably something those of us who take an interest in history find instinctive.

Despite living in worrying times, with all the talk and debate about deflation, job-losses, repossession and a 'credit crunch', we can look back on 2008 as another year of achievement for the Society.

Throughout the year, we have maintained a programme of interesting, informative and extremely varied monthly lectures. Our ability to do so is due mostly to the diligent yet calm and quiet work of our efficient programme secretary, Haydn Williams, to whom we owe a real debt of thanks. I should also like to formally thank each of our speakers for their support. Likewise, each member of our committee for the constant commitment they display towards the Society.

It would be remiss of me not to single out three people for their particular work during the year.

The first of these is Ken Collins. In October, Ken stood down as our long-serving treasurer after more than 30 years in post. I think this must make him our longest-serving officer ever. In recognition of his immense loyalty, Ken was made an honorary vice-president in September, thereby joining those other stalwarts whom we continue to honour, Tom Evans and John Mear. I'm sure we all wish John Davey well in picking up Ken's wand of office!

Secondly, we acknowledge and thank Geoff Evans for his sterling work in editing both *Old Aberdare* no. 10 and each number of our newsletter, *Hanes*.

*Old Aberdare* no. 10 was launched at a successful social evening held at the Cynon Valley Museum in July when we were delighted to welcome Elaine Morgan,

Mountain Ash, as our chief guest. Its content is as varied and informative as ever and it makes an excellent Christmas or birthday present. (Please see Elfed Bowen or any other member of the committee for copies).

*Hanes*, too, remains vibrant under Geoff's guidance. Since it was established as an occasional bulletin in July 1984 (since when it has become a quarterly and reached issue no. 45), it has carried a wealth of shorter articles. I look forward to the day when either the entire series can be republished in book form or (at least) a selection made of its most compelling articles.

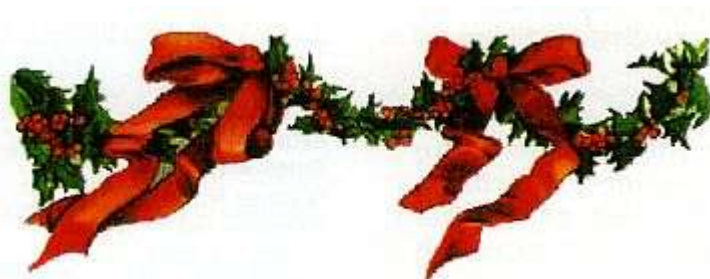
Finally, I thank my predecessor as chairman. Alan Abraham remained in post for three years at a challenging time for the Society following the loss of stalwart officers Bryn Evans and Doug Williams; vice-president Tom Evans' decision to stand down from the committee after nearly 40 years and Ken Collins' signal that he wished to retire as treasurer. Alan provided us with continuity and stability and has continued to do so as secretary. I hope you will forgive me for pointing out that, among Ken and Alan's many qualities is the fact that they are *Cwmamanites* either by birth or adoption!

In September, we changed the venue of our general and committee meetings after many years at our previous 'homes'. We wish to thank the officers of both the parish of Aberdare and of Aberdare RFC for their co-operation over the years in making their premises available to us. Similarly, we thank the officers of Green St. Methodist church for their welcome in recent months. We feel the move has been a success — particularly from the point of view of parking and access.

As 2009 approaches, we look forward to a continuing programme of varied talks. Of particular note will be the visit of our president, Lord Aberdare, who will speak to us in June on the life and work of Hector Berlioz. We were founded and remain, after all, a history society - not simply a society of local history. While our ambitious publishing programme has inevitably reflected the history of our own district, we take pride in the fact that our lectures have always reflected a wide scene.

On behalf of the committee, I extend Seasonal Greetings to everyone engaged in the life of the Society. May we all experience a joyful Christmas and New Year; and may the future bode well for us, our families and our home district. *Estynnaf gyfarchion tymhorol, a dymunaf iechyd a llwyddiant i bob un. Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i bawb!*

**DAVID LESLIE DAVIES.**





The Society's emblem or 'Coat of Arms' was created by the late and much missed Douglas Williams. It has great artistic merit and a good deal of thought went into its design. The device made its appearance sometime between 1982 and 1984, and has adorned all our publications since that date. New members and readers will perhaps be unaware of the symbolism, so this issue sets out its description as recorded by Douglas in the very first edition of HANES in July 1984.

**The centre consists of a quartered shield. Top-left is the lamb and flag of St. John to represent Aberdare. Top-right is the emblem of the old County of Breconshire, part of which has always been in the Cynon Valley, including the site of the first local ironworks (Hirwaun 1757).**

**Bottom-left are the three red chevrons on a yellow field symbolising the old county of Glamorgan. Bottom-right is the rowan leaf symbolic of Mountain Ash. Supporting the shield are two roan horses; these are the 'brocks' of Hirwaun — wild horses which roamed the Common, and mentioned by John Leland in the 16<sup>th</sup> C. Encircling the shield is a broad band of unity, and two leeks indicative of our Welshness. Above the shield is a smaller shield containing a miner's lamp. This signifies the main industry of the district in previous times, and also the world-famous Thomas and Williams No.4 safety lamp made locally. The lamp also stands for the light of learning. The whole rests on the Robertstown Bridge, built at Abernant in 1811 — perhaps the oldest tramway bridge in the world. The motto contains the title of the Society.**

We set out below a very rough attempt at emblazoning the arms (putting it into heraldic terms) Quarterly 1. Azure a pascal lamb proper 2. Per pale dexter Sable a fess cotised Or between two swords in pale argent hilted gold the upper sword point - upwards the lower point - downwards. Sinister Or three rerebrace 2 and 1 displayed azure (The Arms of Brychan) 3. Or three chevrons gules. The Arms of Glamorgan originally De Clare. 4. Argent a berried Rowan branch proper (for Mountain Ash). The whole within a circle azure surrounded by two leeks and pierced by a sword. Supporters two rampant horses dexter purple, sinister proper. The crest: on a shield or a miner's lamp lit argent. Beneath the arms an iron bridge proper.

Argent = silver  
 Or = gold  
 Azure = blue  
 Gules = red  
 Purple = purple  
 Dexter = left  
 Sinister = right  
 Rermouse = bat.



# SCALPELS AND COLOGNE

## CHRISTMAS PRESENTS I KNOW I WON'T BE GETTING.

Two interesting items of local interest were recently offered for sale on the Internet's eBay auction site.

The first was a slim stainless steel box; small and ordinary looking. Inside were a few remaining surgical instruments. Engraved on the lid of the box was the name *Dr. Banks, Aberdare*. They once belonged either to Isaac Banks or his son, the aristocratic Mr. Harry Banks FRCS of Ty Mawr, Aberdare. Isaac Banks, MB, MD, B.Ch, B.A.O. of The Hollies, Trecynon was, in 1901, surgeon to the Cottage Hospital, the Industrial Schools and the Bwllfa and Merthyr Dare Collieries Ltd. Harry Banks had a private practice in Park Lane and was surgeon to the Aberdare General Hospital.

The second item dated from about 1865 and was a luxurious leather Gladstone travelling case complete with its rich interior fittings: silver topped toiletry jars and bottles, ivory backed monogrammed hair and clothes brushes, razors, scissors, tooth-picks and button hooks. The case originally contained a pocket for a notebook, but this probably interesting item was unfortunately missing.

The brass clasp of its carrying handle was engraved *H.C. Lewis, Aberdare S. Wales*. Its original owner was Herbert Clark Lewis, the eldest son of Sir William Thomas Lewis Bart., First Baron Merthyr of Senghenydd, who lived at Mardy House.

Currently little is known of H.C. Lewis. He was High Constable of Miskin Higher in 1890; recording his year of office in *The High Constables of Aberdare* (Aberdare 1894), D. M. Richards wrote, "*Unfortunately during his term of office Mr. Lewis, who has always identified himself with all movements for the advance of the interest of Aberdare, was, unavoidably abroad for the benefit of his health, and he took little active part in any public movement in the town.*" Although a Civil Engineer, H.C. Lewis bred Shorthorns on the family estate at Hean Castle, Saundersfoot. In 1892 he toured Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the Antipodes, and the case may have accompanied him on that trip.

Herbert Lewis succeeded as the second Baron Merthyr. His second Christian name, Clark, commemorates William Southern Clark, Lord Bute's first Mineral Agent who originally lived at Mardy House and who brought his successor William Thomas Lewis (later Lord Merthyr) into his office.

The travelling bag sold for £200, its reserve price. There were seven bids. Personally, of the two items I would have liked to have owned the case of scalpels.

Hanes is grateful to Mr. Colin Rees of Winchester for bringing these items to the Editor's attention.

### HANES ON HANES WHAT OUR READERS THINK OF IT.

Hanes was first published in July 1984 and was the inspired creation of our present Chairman, David Leslie Davies. The Newsletter has had three Editors, its founder, John Mear and the present incumbent. A comment on these, "It is very interesting to see how each editor's particular "hobby horses" are reflected in those issues for which each has been responsible; it's quite striking."

"...always very stimulating and interesting."

"I continue to enjoy the issues of Hanes and marvel at the amount of research they represent."

"Congratulations on the variety and interest contained within recent issues."

"Thorough, varied and accomplished."

"Varied, interesting, well chosen and presented."

Issue no.35 ..."first rate and very necessary." (On the history of the General Strike of 1926 and subsequent Lock-out)

(Full details on request.)



## ODDITIES

Over the years we have come across a number of disparate and odd facts relating to Aberdare; we publish a first selection of these in this issue.

“And that David ap Ieuan Gwilym Gethyn, of the parish of Aberdare in the Lordship of Glamorgan, being a vagabond, had on the Monday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity in the fourteenth year of the reign of the said king (1476), at Meneth below the fief of the said Maghan, purloined by theft, seized and made off with, against the peace, one horse worth ten shillings from the goods and chattels of Llewellyn ap Ieuan Berston then and in the same place found.” This Aberdare vagabond failed to appear before the court and was outlawed on Tuesday 4th June, after the usual process. (T.B. Pugh, Ed. *The Marcher Lordships of South Wales 1415-1536*, Cardiff 1963, p.96).

### How to become an outlaw - a beginner's guide

1. Do something seriously wicked, (i.e. felonious).
2. Go missing — hide out in the great forest of Llwydcoed or Miskin.
3. Grand Jurors will then order the Sheriff on three separate occasions, to arrest you.
4. The Sheriff will Return that you cannot be found.
5. After you have been summoned five times to appear at the Sessions and failed to do so, the Justices in accordance with the law and custom of the Lordship will pronounce sentence of outlawry.
6. You are now an outlaw!

**FROM A SURVEY OF THE MANOR OF MISKIN** (of which the Parish of Aberdare formed a part) dated 1630. Item, “So every Tenant and Freeholder within the said Manor hath the liberty of hawking, hunting and fowling within the Manor upon their own land.” Item, “Tenants (are) compelled to show their arms.” Item “The inhabitants of Aberdare and Llanwonno (are) responsible for the Beacon at Brythell (? Twyn-y-Briddallt, on the mountain between Cwmaman and Ferndale, being the highest point in the valley, 1470 feet above sea level, and once the site of a Roman marching-camp). From a Manorial Survey of the Manor of Miskin.

\*\*\*\*\*

“Thomas ab Thomas of Aberdare, who died in 1673, had bequeathed to his nephew, Harry Thomas, ‘all the implements of the plow except two iron link chains’ which he was to lend to the Testator’s wife during her lifetime, and she, in turn, had to ensure that ‘the said two link chains, be delivered to Harry Thomas “weighing the same weight that she received them from him.” N.L.W. PR (LI) 1673. (Quoted in Glamorgan County History Vol. IV at page 331).

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Aberdare Cemetery opened in 1870. Even before the end of the year there were complaints by the grave-diggers of the lateness of the hours at which funerals came to the ground, and the “unreasonable length” of the services held at the cemetery chapels.

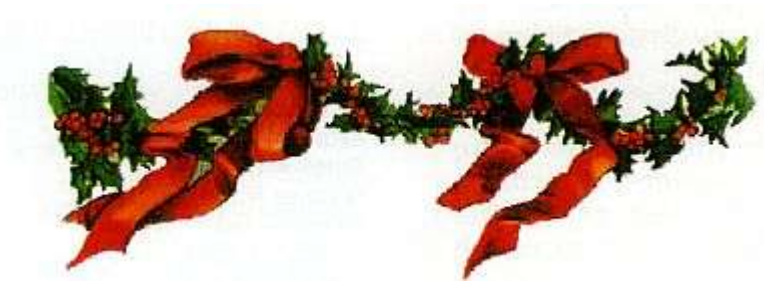
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### SAY IT WITH FLOWERS.

**SIR GEORGE ELLIOT AND HIS WORKMEN.** - A large consignment of geraniums and other bedding plants were recently sent from London by Sir George Elliot to the Powell Duffryn collieries and works for distribution among his workmen. This is only a repetition of what the honourable baronet has done in past years.... (Aberdare Times, Saturday, Nov 29, 1884.)

\*\*\*\*\*

November 1909. There were sixty-six applications for the post of Sexton and Superintendent of Cemeteries. Out of a short list of six, Mr. William Gwynne, of 11 Union Street, Trecynon was appointed. His salary was £90 per annum, rising by two annual increments to £100, with house and coal “to the extent of not over 15 tons per annum free.” The Revd. R. Ivor Parry who originally published the text of this news item commented at the time — “As Mr. Gwynne was in charge of a cemetery and not a crematorium one wonders what he did with fifteen tons of coal every year!”



## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THIS VALLEY?

### **NUMBER TWO**

1. What was the name of the much quoted traveller who visited Aberdare in 1803?
2. Who compiled a famous report in 1853 on the town's sanitary conditions?
3. Who was responsible for building St. Elvan's, and other churches and schools in the parish?
4. Real names please, who was?
  - (a) Alaw Goch
  - (b) Blind Rees
  - (c) Telynog
5. What was the name of the first Non Conformist Chapel in Aberdare? Another point for the date of its foundation.
6. Who built the almshouses in the village in 1724? Where were these built?
7. By what other names are Park Schools known?
8. Where was the first modern Iron works in this valley built?
9. What nicknames were given to (a) Aberdare people (b) Hirwaun people?
10. You pass it every day. When was the Aberdare Market built?

### **THE WORLD'S EASIEST QUIZ.**

1. How long did the Hundred Years' War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get catgut?
4. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. What colour is a purple finch?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. What is the colour of the black box in a commercial airplane?

Answers on page 10.



## CHRISTMAS IN THE OLD DAYS

*These reminiscences of bygone Christmases were written by John Davies (Pen Dar) and published in The Aberdare Leader in December 1924. Pen Dar gives no specific period for the five recorded events although they date from approximately 1872 to 1901.*

### WAITS

Fond memories come back when I see all the preparations that are being made for the Christmas holidays. The traditional waits are as popular as ever. About a fortnight before the great day, straggling parties and groups of school children are piping, more or less melodiously, chiefly in unison, "While Sheppers wash their frocks by night" and "En 'lad y Nhadau," etc. These are the tunes, and many others I could mention, which were sung when I was a boy. It was great fun. Of course, we knew who were the kindest and most generous people. They generally had our favourite tunes. The amount given in response to our singing did not matter much. A ha'penny, or a penny, was quite satisfactory.

### Hospitable Houses

There were houses then which gave a hearty welcome and patronage to the waits singers. The Wilkinsons, who lived in Canal Head House, were noted for their hospitality. The lady, Mrs. Wilkinson, would send the servant to the door, and invite the party indoors. Christmas cake and drinks would be distributed around, and a jolly half-hour would be spent in singing and talking. Scuborwen was another hospitable house. Parties were invited into the large warm kitchen. The lady, Mrs. Thomas, would then come in, have a short chat, and ask for a repetition of one of the favourite choruses. Ten or Twenty shillings would be handed quietly into the treasurer's hand. (The charitable Mrs. Rachael Thomas was in residence at Ysguborwen House in 1880. The pound of that day is worth at least £50 in today's money. Ed.)

### A Special Waits Party

A Christmas Waits party, which deserves special mention, is the one which is every year organised somewhere near the Cross Inn Square, Trecynon, on Christmas Eve. Their one great song is "When there's love at home". They do the practice and the performance at once, and in the same place every year. They march after closing-time up the Park Lane, enter very respectfully; and gather together before the front entrance of Dr. Banks' residence and there the ever-green "Love at Home" is rendered in solo, duet, trio and chorus, doubled and trebled. It's a great performance. The doctor's reception of the party must be very cordial, seeing that the seasonal visit is never missed. This is one of my pleasurable anticipations every Christmas Eve, to listen from a distance, to the singing of this party. (Dr. Isaac Banks had set up a medical practice in Aberdare by 1901. Ed.)

### The Old Town Band

The Old Town Volunteer Brass Band, under the conductorship of Mr. Ben Morris was a great institution in our estimation as boys. Following this band around the town at Christmas-time was very interesting. Of course, the public-houses were all very jealous concerning the visitation and playing of the band before their premises. Each landlord was anxious to excel and outdo the other in his generosity. The result was that the members of the band were well "wetted" and kept quite moist inwardly. Some of the bandsmen on these occasions had willing stand-bys at their side, ready to help in the drinking, and to carry the instruments. The satisfaction could be seen beaming on the faces of the players as they waited for the round of the tot.

### Other Christmas Observances

A prominent feature and a common spectacle forty and fifty years ago on the roads leading from the town on Christmas Eve were men carrying small four gallon casks, full of beer, upon their shoulders to their homes. These were brought in order to make to make merry over the holidays and to tide over the closing hours of Christmas Day. Many a comic episode occurred when some of these improvident fellows could hardly carry themselves home leave alone the four gallon casks. Sometimes the casks were seen to be rolling down backwards over the Abernant Road, Gadlys Road and Mill Street, while its owner would be struggling to his feet in an effort to re-capture the runaway cask. This custom also has disappeared, and the small cask has gone out of use.



## MORE WOMEN



The Editor has received an interesting letter from founder member Mr. E.J.K. Rees in response to the contents of *Hanes 44*. The relevant part of this is set out below together with our observations.

“Women, it seems, were the traditional brewers — hence Brewster Sessions. Brewster is the feminine of Brewer C/F Spinster and Spinner.

The Cynon Candle Factory at Aberaman was in existence some time before 1868, and in 1880 its proprietor Jane Williams in her bill heading is described as Tallow Chandler and Cheese Merchant. By 1908 it had become a well known Botanical Brewery owned by Greenhalgh.

The Blue Bell (not Bell) Inn in Mill Street, Trecynon was certainly kept by Mrs. Mary Morgan as early as 1831 when a Society of Women called *THE TRUE FRIEND IN NEED SOCIETY FOR WOMEN UNDER THE AGE OF 45* was set up there”.

E.J.K.R

Mr. Rees has raised a number of interesting points and questions in his letter. His remark that women were traditional brewers is fully justified. Prof M.M. Poston in *The Medieval Economy and Society* says, “*In most villages ale was also provided by “alewives” specialising in brewing, and were numerous in most villages.*” (Pp.148 and 224). This tradition was upheld in Aberdare in 1880 when Charlotte Jones ran the Abergwawr Brewery (See *Hanes No.43*). With regard to the public house in Mill Street kept by Mary Morgan; the name appears in Pigot & Co’s 1835 Directory of Merthyr Tydfil...and Neighbourhood, as *Bell, Mill Street* (sub Taverns and Public Houses). The Directory was, I believe, referring to Mill Street (Welsh Heol-y-Felyn) as the area of Aberdare which later became known as Trecynon. This is probably the same pub as Mr. Rees’s “Blue Bell”, which at a later date had the address of 58 Mill Street. It is known to have been in existence in 1826. It closed in 1926 and became a private house. It probably gave its name to adjacent Bell Street. There was also a Bell Inn at 52 Cardiff Street (1861-1907), and also three pubs with the name Belle Vue.

The important business of Tallow Chandler is also worth noting as this was a most important trade in its day. Nowadays little thought is given to the use of candles, yet they were essential for illuminating shops and homes, and also provided miners with light underground. Can you imagine just how many candles were used to light say Dyffryn or Aberaman Houses prior to 1850, and the invention of the Kerosene Lamp which destroyed the candle trade? A Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers was set up in London in 1300 by Oynters, (Tallow Melters) to regulate oils, ointments, lubricants and fat based preservatives, and to manage candle making using animal fats (tallow). After 1830 distilled Paraffin was used to make candles. The Worshipful Company would have had no connections with Aberdare, but there are records of tradesmen who supplied Aberdare with its candles.

### 1835

David Davies\*, Hirwaun, Tallow Chandler  
William Jones, Mill Street (again the district).

### 1846

John Lewis, Aberdare and Llwydcoed.

1848 John Lewis, Aberdare

Hugh Jones, Mill Street

### 1865

Rees Lewis, Aberaman

### 1852

John Lewis, Commercial Street.

William Longman, High Street.

Edward Pugh.

\*Later a colliery owner. David Davies (or Davis) of Blaengwawr.

# WHAT WE DID THEN

## CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE WORKHOUSE.

**1897.** There was a long standing Christmas tradition in Aberdare that both the inmates of the Workhouse, and local school children be given some sort of treat each Christmas at the expense of the Board of Guardians. This usually took the form of a dinner for the paupers, and a tea for the children to include such luxuries as coffee and tea, and (horrors!) a pint of beer for the paupers. The beer was sometimes provided free of charge by local breweries. Each year the provision of beer was opposed by the Temperance Societies and others, and there was always controversy over this issue

For example, at the December, 1897 Meeting of the Board, Alderman David Davies moved that the usual treat be given to the inmates of the Workhouse, and to school children. The Temperance Society once again opposed the provision of beer. Further, one of the Guardians, Mrs. Williams, a Cwmamanite, moved that no beer should be awarded to the paupers, but the Guardians, if they so desired, should present them with useful items such as pocket handkerchiefs. After a somewhat heated argument a vote was taken that resulted in twenty five members agreeing to the gift of the pint being made, and sixteen opposing the motion.

Shortly after the Board had made its decision, a correspondent signing himself "Ratepayer" wrote to the Aberdare Times complaining that he and other Ratepayers of the town usually had to foot the bill for free beer for the paupers. He commented that whilst he and his fellow Ratepayers had to work for all they had, THEY received nothing free.

## THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS - 1958.

- A suggestion to floodlight the parish church of St. John for the Christmas period was made by Coun. David Hill, B.A., and approved by Aberdare District Council on Monday night.  
*"There would be no finer symbol of the real spirit of Christmas than the spectacle of this simple medieval church standing floodlight against the night sky,"* he said.

**1987** Switching on Aberdare's Christmas lights could prove a bigger eye-opener this year than ever before. For instead of arriving in a helicopter as in previous years Father Christmas will turn up by balloon on Friday, 27 November. Borough Council workmen at the Gadlys Depot have been hard at work building a mock hot air balloon which will be hoisted above the Central Library and lit up with fairy lights. But now the Council's own director of Technical Services, Mr. Dewi Morgan, says he is not convinced the idea will work.

"I've got my doubts about it", Mr. Morgan admitted. "I'm just hoping for a still night. If it's windy it could end up anywhere. I'm very nervous about it. Even if nature is kind there could be problems with the crowd being able to see the 15 foot by 10 foot balloon however. It could be that it won't have much visual impact for the people standing at ground level, and if it is a foggy night they might not see it at all". (The Western Mail, 20 November 1987)

## ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ.

1. Benjamin Heath Malkin.
2. Thomas Webster Rammell.
3. The Revd John Griffith.
4. (a) David Williams. (b) Rees Hopkin Rhys. (c) Thomas Evans
5. Yr Hen Dŷ Cwrdd (The Old Meeting House). It was built in 1751.
6. Eleanor Mathew of Aberaman. Roughly on the site of the Library.
7. Ysgol y Comin, Comin Junior School formerly Aberdare British School, founded 1848.
8. At Hirwaun in 1757
9. Snakes (or possibly sneaks), Brocks.
10. 1853. (Rebuilt in 1903 after a fire)

**WORLD'S EASIEST QUIZ ANSWERS.** (1) 116 years. (2) Ecuador. (3) Sheep and Horses. (4) November. (5) Squirrel Fur. (6) Dogs. (7) Albert (8) Crimson. (9) New Zealand. (10) Orange- of course!

## HOW DID YOU SCORE ON THE LOCAL HISTORY QUESTIONS? (NOT TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY!)

10 points: First class! You deserve a lap of honour in the Mayor's car.

8-9 points: Very good. You are obviously an informed member. Proceed to the top of the class.

5-7 points: Fair, but could be better. How? By joining the Cynon Valley History Society immediately, and by reading *Old Aberdare* and *Hanes*

3-4 points: Greater effort needed next term.

1-2 points: Very disappointing. (Are you, perhaps, a history graduate?)

0 points: You deserve to be exiled in Merthyr Tydfil!

## THIS MARKING AND GRADING SYSTEM WAS INTRODUCED BY DAVID LESLIE DAVIES IN 1984.

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