

BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NEWS UPDATE

FEBRUARY

Pearl G. Jones

01495 310 931

Annual Meeting January 21<sup>st</sup>  
2015

In the absence of the Chairperson the President chaired the meeting until the incoming Chairman was accepted by the members.

The President explained that due to ill health Mrs Havard would be unable to attend, she added "our thoughts are with her and we thank her for the many hours she spent working and guiding us, she is being missed

Mrs Margaret Lewis another long standing and faithful member was wished well as she leaves to live near her daughter and her family, a comforting thought even if we have to lose her.

The Chairman Mr Nicholas Beswick was duly installed with a unanimous vote.

It was agreed the Vice Chairman be selected from within the Committee.

Year 2015/16

President No election in Perpetuity  
Pearl G. Jones

Officers

<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Nicholas Beswick</u>
<u>Vice Chairman</u>	John Hill *
Treasurer	John Child
Secretary	Efion Lloyd Davies
Assistant Secretary	Pearl G. Jones

Committee Members

Ann Axford  
Hywel Axford  
Merril Caleb  
Michael Edwards  
John Hill \*  
Audrey Jenkins

It was discussed and unanimously agreed to continue with six committee members reverting back to the number we were in the past.

Members could be co-opted if and when found necessary, also, as had been done in the past and according to the constitution.

At the first Committee Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 Mr John Hill was duly elected Vice Chairman; with a unanimous vote.

Membership Fees £6.00 for 2015 now due, quite a number were taken by The Treasurer at the meeting but if you have forgotten or were not at the meeting this is a little reminder.

If you have do not yet have your membership card the following information be of interest. Some of you have already been asking.

22<sup>nd</sup> April – Luncheon Club – Carvery at "The Farmer's Arms," Cwmdu with an interesting afternoon visit – literature out February – please ask if you don't have yours  
13<sup>th</sup> June – Visit to Oakchurch Garden Centre and Farm Shop Herefordshire followed by an afternoon Coach Tour.

Literature out March/April

15<sup>th</sup> July – Visit to "The Speech House" in The Forest of Dean + lunch + guided tour and the history + afternoon visit to on the Mortimer family ~Symonds Yat Rock on the return journey.

Literature out March/April.

18<sup>th</sup> December – Chris Barber – Tribute to Alexander Cordell

We agree Alexander Cordell certainly publicised Blaenafon, many of the sites described in the lecture lay derelict and forgotten until Cordell had the foresight to write his first novell based on the Mortimer family "The Rape of the Fair Country" which proved an overwhelming success, fame came from thereon. As an excellent story writer credit must be given to him and the tribute was duly given.

During the lecture Chris Barber mentioned the art work being done by Michael Blackmore of Abergavenny, many members will remember and have purchased, the plates and mugs the society produced to commemorate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary; all the art work and illustrations were done by Michael and most of the illustrations in work produced by John Van Laun also by the same man. Chris compared Alexander Cordell to Dylan Thomas, an unfortunate comparison, but then we are all allowed to our own opinions. Dylan Thomas I feel stands alone.

Looking through my past copies of "News Update" magazine I discovered one from January 1997 which contained an article written by Barbara Griffiths. The following is a copy, which I found interesting because it deals with life at that time in Brynmawr, she talks about one or two buildings that are no longer there. I am repeating it for the members who were not with us in 1997 and would not have read the article before. I enjoyed it, I hope you will. Barbara was our first female chairperson, she also designed the badge that we wear, she was the wife of Norman Griffiths, both dedicated members and are unfortunately no longer with us, but whom we remember with affection. My granddaughter Hannah R. Foley, Comprehensive School, helped me with the 'set up' needed at that time to get the magazine put together and into print - I had just purchased a computer and felt I needed considerably more instruction.

## BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

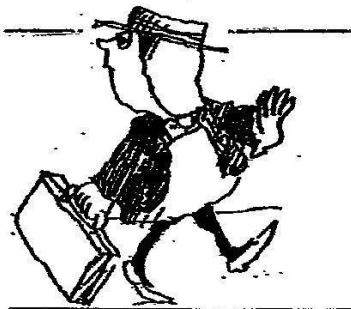
### A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

I was born in Brecon and lived there until I was eleven, when we moved to Brynmawr in October 1945. I had been in the Girls Grammar School for six weeks and moving to a new, mixed school was quite an upheaval. The lessons were different as was the uniform and I discarded my hat with its daisy emblem on the front very quickly.

During the war my father had been drafted in to Police Force and he had been stationed in Brynmawr, so he knew many of the townsfolk. After he was demobbed, he went back to his job in what is now known as the D.S.S. Almost immediately he was transferred to the office in Abertillery and we had to move. Brynmawr, therefore, was his obvious choice of residence. My parents rented a house in Somerset Street, and for the first time I lived in a house lit by gas, as we only had electricity in Brecon. My parents were worried that I could not manage this and I had to go up to bed with a little oil lamp.

Brecon was a small rural town miles away from other shopping areas. Brynmawr was so different and exciting. From the Market Square my friends and I went shopping somewhere different every Saturday. Buses ran to Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Tredegar, Pontypool, and Abergavenny and all of these were good shopping centres in those days. There were two cinemas in Brynmawr, the Cosy Cinema and the Market Hall. There were two "houses" everyday except Sundays and the programme changed every Thursday. This meant that it was possible to see four different shows

every week - which we often did, and went to the Astoria Cinema in Ebbw Vale on Saturday as well. There never seemed to be films shown then which were unsuitable for our age. A house programme consisted of the main film, a short film and a news reel, and if you missed the short film in the first house, you could stay there during second house and see what you



had missed. Some people stayed for the whole houses the pictures were so popular that it was never possible to get into second house Saturday unless you queued for at least half an hour. We just accepted this as part of life. If the film was particularly good, we would view most of the film standing in the aisle keeping an eye open for a seat when someone left. There were lots of clubs run by the chapels then and a thriving Youth Club held in the then Senior School where we now hold our History Meetings.

We had no swimming pool in Brecon only the river Usk in which to bathe. My mother would not allow me to go in the river, so the "Baths" in Brynmawr was a new experience for me. I played out on the streets in the evening, there were no cars to speak of and no violence. In Brecon I used to go picking blackberries and hazel-

nuts in the Autumn. Once in Brynmawr, we went over Ben Ward's Fields for whimberrics which were unknown to me until then, as whimberrics grow on moorland.

Everything was still rationed as far as I remember, and the Co-Op was a large thriving shop where Davics' the wallpaper shop is now at the top of Beaufort Street. In it were little cages which took the money you gave for your goods across a network of wires into a central office, and your change came back the same way. Butter was cut from a large block and biscuits were kept loose in big tins. We used to go down to Maggie Price's shop which was where Kwik Save is today. She was very popular because she would take next month's sweet coupons, something that wasn't strictly legal. I found Brynmawr to be a very friendly place, and with so much more to do, settled down quickly and enjoyed my new life to the full.

*Barbara Griffiths*

### JUBILEE CELEBRATION 1999

As you are aware the society hopes to achieve something special to mark the Jubilee Celebration 1999. The Committee would still like members to participate in this effort, initially by giving Christine, our Secretary, some ideas, and later by helping to make the whole thing possible.

REF. the above article is a "News Update April 1996 under Jubilee Plans.

### GOOD LUCK

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Gwyllim-Jones on their recent marriage. We do not usually publish this type of information, but owing to the exceptional circumstances we are this time taking exceptional measures.

