

MERTHYR CYNOG COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER – March 2015

(Funded by Merthyr Cynog Community Council)

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A School Report – we were pleased to have this chatty report from Judith Morris to share... ..

Cradoc School has had another very busy year!

We've said farewell to a number of staff, notably Mrs Sheila Norman who retired after giving sterling service for over 20 years. Her cheery smile is much missed by staff and children alike, and we wish her best of luck in this new chapter of her life.

This last year has seen many formal changes - permanent staffing secured, Government initiatives introduced, County streamlining and development, not to mention our own improvement plans. I'm extremely fortunate and privileged to have a team of dedicated, hardworking, talented teachers, ably assisted by a very good team of support staff. I would wish to thank publicly all staff for their hard work and dedication. They do their utmost working with me to make certain that your children receive the very best learning opportunities.

Cradoc School's vision is to provide a rich, relevant and broad education, helping pupils of all abilities develop skills and knowledge preparing them for each stage of education and, ultimately, adult life. Writing this report I asked children for *their* highlights of the year which included: computerised robotics, sandcastles, Caerphilly Castle, hamster wheels, Christmas concert, politicians in Parliament, parachute games, Egyptians, smoothies, the medieval knight, writing advertising jingles, running in sports day, music competitions, Pythagoras, War Horse in London, archery, teddy bears picnic, tartan patterns, working outside.... confirming just what an eclectic range of experiences they receive!

We're very lucky to have such great community support, enriching opportunities. Thanks go, yet again, to the PTA for considerable support, financially and physically. In five years they've raised over £33,000 to benefit the School, which is enriched by your efforts, thank you.

We're grateful to local community councils for support in slowing traffic outside school. Governors actively seek solutions to ease parking problems and appeal to all drivers to help.

We're blessed with wonderful school grounds. Looking to the future, we strive to make best use of them and thank the community for support in time and effort. Donations of "bits and pieces" like wood and plants help development. A long-term project, ideas are listed in the school newsletter and website. We'll contribute to the community in which we learn by introducing our "Cradoc in Bloom" project, improving areas by planting, and tending to bulbs and flowers in particular spots. Children will develop a sense of belonging to their community, learn benefits of serving others, and advance their scientific knowledge. Offers of help would be appreciated!

I'll end by thanking pupils for being such a credit to school and parents. They make a great effort with their learning and all activities, resulting in very good achievement. Well done.

Looking forward to another successful year.

Best wishes, Judith Morris

Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner – Monday 15th Dec saw the annual gathering of those on pensionable age in the Community Hall. From far and wide they came, determined to eat well, to talk well – and to sing well! This lovely gathering is popular and well attended by locals and those from further afield. A three-course meal was served to 25, and was followed by a sing-a-long of popular carols. Each attendee took a small gift home afterwards. Apparently the NOISE in the Hall was pretty loud as the opportunity to have a good old natter was seized with enthusiasm by everyone present, in between mouthfuls of course.

*Don't forget the grand FUN AUCTION on
May 8th at 7pm*

Christmas Church and Chapel Services

Christmas Eve in Merthyr Cynog church was a truly festive affair, and the Church was packed in anticipation. Around twenty children from the parish dressed up to act out a simple and enjoyable nativity play, and members of Pontfaen YFC sang Christmas carols. The singing was accompanied by Jonny Davies on drums and Chris Davies and George Cooper on guitars. Mince pies and refreshments were kindly provided to round off the night, before some very excited children rushed home to wait for an extra special new day to arrive!

For some years now Ebenezer Chapel has held its Carol Service in the Community Hall, and we like to think of it as a service that is for the whole community. That is demonstrated by the excellent congregation attending each year. The 21st December 2014 was no exception, with over 60 people in attendance. The Hall becomes a place of worship lit with candles and decorated with holly. Revd Michael Hodgson welcomed everyone in his own inimitable style and there were several traditional readings and carols

Much anticipated is the item traditionally offered by the children. This year they took part in a re-telling of the nativity through the alphabet, after which they then joined in singing a carol. Afterwards Father Christmas managed to find his way to the Hall, leaving Rudolph and the other reindeer in Tymawr's field having a good graze; he gave all the children there a present and wished everyone a very Happy Christmas before leaving for Lapland and a good sleep before his big night on Christmas Eve. After the final carol we all enjoyed refreshments provided by the ladies of the Chapel and exchanged good wishes of the season with friends and relations. Agreement was unanimous that it had been a wonderful start to the Christmas celebrations.

A Diary Date For Your Diary!

*****FUN AUCTION*****

Friday 8th May

Put this in your diaries *RIGHT NOW!!*

This event has to be one of the highlights of the Merthyr Cynog Hall's year where there are many bargains to be had to suit everyone's wallet and purse - for those buying! And for those selling? What better way could there possibly be to get shot of your old tat and unwanted Christmas presents? Someone will be daft enough to buy them, knowing that every penny goes to support the Community Hall.....

It is always a great deal of fun. My first exposure to a Hall Auction was where I got nobbled into buying what I thought was a door knocker.....which was in fact a pair of knockers, which were in fact a pair of innocent plant holders. I still have them, and in fact might put them into the auction this year! Star Lot!!

Pontfaen YFC

Once again our local young person's group had an enjoyable time mounting their entries in the Brecknock Drama Festival Competition. Their Panto entry was Robin Hood which they performed again, in the Hall, for all to enjoy, as well as being invited up to Rhayader Community Centre. Their One Plus, featuring Jonny Davies on drums did very well indeed for the Club.

UPPER CHAPEL EISTEDDFOD

This year's Eisteddfod is scheduled to take place on Saturday July 25th, and as the Upper Chapel Eisteddfod is renowned throughout Wales - and fast becoming an institution - for those who have never experienced this particularly Welsh competition, the one held in our very own Community Centre would be quite simply a revelation.

For such a small village community, and spread over a wide area to boot, it is an amazing achievement to host an event that sees singers and those doing recitations come from all over Wales, and beyond, just to take part.

There are many competitions catering for all ages: children are welcomed to perform in the afternoon, and in the evening the Champion Solo competition attracts as many as 30 entrants.

It is, without doubt, a huge undertaking for a small committee to organise, and fund, and without the help and support of the community in and around Merthyr Cynog it would be unlikely to survive. Numbers of entrants in every category are needed, and in particular it would be good to see more children competing, between the ages of under ten to 18 years of age. Singing, reciting, playing musical instruments are categories where local children could have a go, and as evidenced by the Young Farmer's Club's entries and productions the area is positively teeming with talent. Parents? Encourage your family to compete! If you need more information, the following local organisers have volunteered to answer your queries. Adrian 690307, Glenys 690218 and Annette 622892 will be pleased, so pleased to talk to you.

Children - if you read this - pester your parents to be in the Eisteddfod!

Merthyr Cynog & District WI

The local WI has a full program of events and activities for the coming year, ranging from delightful trips out to talks and demonstrations in the Hall. The emphasis is more often than not of having some fun, and every evening meeting ends up with lots of chat and a Merthyr Cynog tradition - refreshments.

WIs throughout the land depend upon numbers of members to keep going, and these inevitably wax and wane. At the moment MC WI has 14 members, and more would be most welcome. Any lady reading this who would like to find out more, the MCWI allows a sort of "Try Before You Buy!" system whereby you can come along lots of times before you actually join - just to be sure, to be sure.

The WI meets on the FIRST TUESDAY of the month in the Community Hall at 7pm. Just turn up and you will be royally welcomed! OR, if you prefer, call Annette on 622892 and have a chat, before coming along to what will be an enjoyable and friendly evening.

DONT FORGET THE FUN AUCTION. MAY 7TH.

FUN AUCTION MAY 7TH

**HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
WHAT? THE FUN AUCTION!
DON'T FORGET IT**

We welcome again an erudite article from our local historian - this time about the Post Offices in the area.

Snippets from a booklet published by The Welsh Philatelic Society published March 2003.

It lists the dates when the local Post Offices opened and closed.

Pontfaen opened 1894 Closed 1981.

Merthyr Cynog opened 1935 Closed in 2003

Upper Chapel opened 1836 Closed 1979

Pontfaen was opened more than 40 years before Merthyr Cynog and Upper Chapel.

It is interesting to note that Llandefaelog Fach was opened as early as 1884 and Lower Chapel was opened even earlier in 1843 (over 90 years before Upper Chapel), before Sennybridge (1852) and Llanwrtyd Wells (1853). It has been suggested the Castle Madoc Family at the time had influenced the opening of the Post Office.

Working Conditions and Wages

The village shop became a minor 'scale payment' post.

In 1902 a Postman would earn between 15/- [75p] and £1 per week for a six or seven day duty, walking 16 miles and carrying up to 35 lbs, or cycling 26 miles and carrying 50lbs' weight. Hours often included working split shifts. John Hellard, a retired third generation postman from Brecon, describes his father's duties between the wars:- to the Brecon Office by 6.00 a.m., sort his delivery and then cycle 15 miles to Upper Chapel, having called at various off-road farms *en route* to deliver letters. There was a postman's shelter just beyond the post office at Upper Chapel (in the field next to the school) and here he would fill in three or four hours (time not paid for by the Brecon office), repairing boots he had collected from farm workers on his way and which he would return on his way back, late afternoon, as well as emptying letter boxes.

County Times – May 1st. 1801

Success – Miss Gwendoline Mabel Williams of Nantyrwgweiddyn Merthyr Cynog has successfully passed the examination and gained certificate of proficiency for the advanced stage of the theory and practice of butter and cheese making at Aberystwyth University College of Wales. She is to be congratulated upon her success.

County Times – July 14th. 1855

MERTHYR CYNOG – On Tuesday and Wednesday, the 3rd and 4th July the reopening of a beautiful and commodious chapel was celebrated by the Calvinistic Methodist members in this parish which is situated about nine miles north-west of Brecon. The interior of the edifice is 39feet long by 32 feet wide with a vestry room 2 feet x 15 and a dwelling house under the same. The height of the building from the plinth to the square is 20 feet. The interior is beautifully furnished with rising seats and a handsome platform decorated with scarlet velvet cushions and the panels lined with the same material and the flooring also carpeted at the expense of the young ladies of the neighbourhood. In fact, taken altogether, the chapel is one of the finest places of worship of its kind in the county. Great credit is due to the architect, and also to Mr. Roger Williams, contractor, for the manner in which he work has been executed. The following ministers officiated on the occasion . On Thursday evening at 6 o'clock the Rev. D. Williams, Trecastle and Dr. H. Jones (Classical teacher at Trevecca College) preached. The collection at this service amounted to £12.10s. 7d.; at 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning the Rev. E. Williams (Defynock) and Dr. H. Jones preached and the collection realised £26.19s.10d; at 2 o'clock in the afternoon the Revs. E. Rees, (Brecon) and D.W. Davies (Presbyterian Church, Brecon) preached in English and the sum of £7.8s was collected; at six o'clock the same evening the Rev. R. Davies (Llandillo'r fane) and Benjamin Morris (Cefn-coed-y-Cymmer) £3. 2s. 7d. collected making a total of the handsome sum of £43.10s. We must not omit to mention the great kindness and hospitality of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to all the strangers on this occasion, provisions being provided on a large scale at the vestry-room; also at Mr. Prossers' (Bwlch-y-ddwy-allt) Mrs. Morgan (Llwyn llwyd) and Mr. Morgan (Pentre) all of whom from the commencement, assisted largely in subscribing and in other ways.