

# AN ANTHOLOGY OF PWLL

By

VIC SHAPLEY

A BÔNAU CABBAGE PATCH

SUPPLEMENT

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## ANTHOLOGY OF PWLL - PART 1 By Vic Shapley

The family moved to Pwll in 1918, to a brand new house opposite Specks nurseries. Dad opened a draper shop there. He was also what they called in those days, a packman. That is he travelled the outlying districts carrying a waterproof covered parcel, selling clothes on credit, a shilling a week at most.

There were very few cars in those days, and little public transport, so it was a pretty hard life walking through wind and rain, very often to be greeted with, "Call next week". But he didn't do so badly, and was able to struggle on, paying off his mortgage and providing for a wife and five children. But a coal strike in 1921 and again in 1926 finished him and he was forced to sell up, house and all, to pay his debts.



We moved into a rented house and began the never-ending struggle with poverty, which was so much a way of life among the working classes of those days. But for all that, our childhood days were very happy. We lived across the road from Stradey Woods, which was guarded by a nine-foot wall, which we scaled with ease. Inside the woods was another world where our imagination ran riot. We were Robin Hood's merry men, intrepid explorers. Indeed, there was no end to the possibilities. We became expert at poaching rabbits and learned the art of tickling trout under the riverbank. Very often there

was added excitement being chased by one of the Gamekeepers, although we were not too keen on that. Gamekeepers were a nasty lot in those days, almost a law unto themselves. Yes, it was a wonderland, and we knew every yard of the estate: knew it like no member of the Lewis family, who lived in the Castle, ever knew it.

The beach was only a short walk from the houses, and well I remember the long hot summers spent on the sands in the days before the railway company spoilt it by tipping huge stones against the sea wall – the vandals! Between the houses and the beach were the marshes, and we knew where to look for weasel, otter and several kinds of wild duck, and in the wintertime sometimes some wild geese. Looking back we were very fortunate to have lived in such a boys paradise, and doubly lucky that it didn't cost us anything.

We spent hours out of doors, but we were always present at mealtimes, which was always a source of wonder to Mam. "I don't see you boys all day", she would say, "but the moment I put the cloth on the table, you turn up like magic". I can see her now, cutting bread and butter with the loaf hugged tight to her breast. We were five children, two boys and three girls around the table, and a plateful emptied in a flash! "More bread and butter, Mam", we would demand, and Mam, expert cutter though she was, could never get two pieces on the plate at the same time.



People baked their own bread in those days, and the bread tasted scrumptious. Baking day was a ritual. It started early in the morning with Dad removing the plate from against the oven, and stoking up a huge fire in the cavity. In a short time

it would be hot enough for baking and soon the house would be filled with the smell of baking bread. Just thinking about it now makes my mouth water. I reckon a loaf of that bread with Caerphilly cheese made a meal fit for a King!

Saturdays were very special days, when we received our sixpenny-piece pocket money. The girls made a beeline for the sweet shop, but my brother and I carefully hid ours for later in the day. After dinner, when the Scarlets were playing at home, we, in company of other lads from the village would walk up the road almost to Beach Road, before we climbed the wall of the Estate.

The woods reached to within twenty



(Stradey Woods)

yards of the football field where we would camp down and wait for the ground to fill up. Then began what we thought was out battle of wits with the two policemen who patrolled the edge of the woods. But they were no match for us. They had only to turn their backs, and two at a time we scuttled like hares, the twenty yards to be swallowed up in the crowd and quickly worm our way to the front. Looking back I don't remember the policemen making any great effort to catch us, but they were very strict when adults tried to sneak in.

A wonderful team we had in those days, the great Albert Jenkins was in his prime – truly the prince of centres. Mind, the rest of the team were no duds. They included Ernie

Finch, Ivor Jones, Dai and Arthur John at halfback – all internationals, and everybody's favourite uncapped Bobbie Evans. A great team and Stradey would be bursting at the seams on match days.

Home to tea, a quick wash, recover our sixpences, and we would be away again, this time a mile and a half walk to Llanelly, for the first house in the old 'Popular Cinema', where, for three-pence we would spend two hours in ecstasy, gaping at the exploits of 'Tom Mix' or 'Douglas



Fairbanks Senior' or laughing at the antics of 'Charlie Chaplin' or 'Harold Lloyd'. On the way home was the high spot of the week – two pennyworth of

chips in newspaper, smothered in salt and vinegar from Daniels Chip Shop in Pembrey Road. We would arrive home tired, but happy, with still a penny left unspent.

Of course there had to be something to blight all this happiness and it was school. Pwll School stood plumb in the centre of the village on the main road. The building is still standing but nowadays it is used as a Community Centre. It is there that we received our education, or what there was of it. Not, I hasten to say, through any fault of the teachers, but rather the lack of them. The School was ahead of its time in just one thing – it was co-educational, not through any forward thinking, but through lack of space. The Senior School was staffed by three teachers, a Miss McVicar, who always seemed to be on the verge of tears; Mr Arthur Hughes, a sad and disillusioned man; Mr Hughes, the headmaster, no relation to the aforementioned. You could say that the Headmaster was an eccentric would be putting it

mildly. His thoughts always seemed to be miles away and very often he forgot the very existence of the children in his classroom until they got out of hand. Then he would awake from his reverie and quickly restore law and order with a few lashes of his cane. They certainly believed in corporal punishment in those days!



The Headmaster was in charge of classes one and two, both in the same room with a space between the desks for demarcation. There was no Head's Office or Teachers Room, so if ever you were sent to the Headmaster for punishment you received a public flogging before class one and two, which I may say, they enjoyed immensely. Not that Mr Hughes (Arthur) in another room needed any help in flogging but he was dead crafty. If the culprit was a son of a councillor or Chapel deacon, or the son of a relative or close friend, he would pass them along to the Headmaster.

I'll never forget the day he sent Martin, not because Martin's parents fell into one of those categories, but he knew that his mother would defend her son with the ferocity of a tigress, and he wasn't having any of that. Martin's mother duly turned up for the showdown and wiped the floor with the Headmaster, much to the delight of classes one and two. When she had gone the Headmaster remarked rather sadly, "There is a

*difference, children, between Marged Thomas and Lady Howard Stepney."*

Miss McVicar was in charge of classes three and four. She didn't use the cane to keep order, for she was a gentle soul and she could put on such a hurt expression that we didn't have the heart to play her up. She taught English Literature and Poetry. She didn't like Shakespeare – she said he was bawdy. Kipling was also out of favour – he was too violent. Her favourite seemed to be Aesop's Fables which we thought sappy and didn't understand them anyway. But she did teach us tolerance and compassion, which were in short supply in those days.

Mr Arthur Hughes in classes five and six completed our education. His subject was arithmetic or sums as we called it. Years of overcrowded classes and unruly children had left their mark and he had become soured by it all. He looked at us with contempt and considered it an achievement if we learned enough to be able to count our pay when we started working, which was just around the corner.

And so we left school barely able to read and write, even if you were the brightest pupil in the school. Further education had to be bought and few parents could afford that. So, we had the choice of two careers – the Tinworks or the Mines, which gave truth to the old Welsh saying, "*Brawd mogi yw tagi*" - smothering is the brother of choking. I started working a week after leaving school, in the cold roll department of the old Marshfield Tinworks. Mam wasn't keen on the mines and what she really wanted was that I should seek an errand boys job for one of the town shops, with the view of progressing to Shop Assistant. As she said, you could even, in time, become the Shop Manager, if you are ambitious enough. That was the

trouble, I was not ambitious enough, and the thought of being an errand boy gave me the shivers. I had seen them struggling with enormous loads, being chased by dogs, and on the receiving end of numerous tellings off from dissatisfied customers. I reckon any boy who puts up with all that deserves to be a future Manager.



So, as much as I hated disappointing Mam, it was the Tinworks. The cold roll department was staffed mainly by girls, with a few boys for the heavier or dirties work. I was a greaser, and it was my job to see that the necks of two sets of rolls were kept well greased and running smoothly. Now this job was no great strain on the imagination, but it was vital that it be done properly, for if the grease wasn't removed frequently it was liable to become very watery, resulting in overheating and the danger of a cracked roll. But with experience it became second nature, and there was even time to look around. This proved to be my undoing!

The girls were employed as 'Rollers' and 'Catchers'. The Rollers sat on a bench on the receiving end of the rolls with a pack of tinsplate on their laps, and passed the sheets through the rolls one at a time with incredible speed. The plates passed through the rolls onto a long bench on the other side. This bench was six inches lower than the mouth of the rolls, enabling a pack to build up, and a pack built up very quickly indeed. The Catchers had to draw out the plates before they jammed the mouth of the rolls, lift them on edge, pack

them tidily and carry them to the next set of rolls. This job was soul destroying, for all the time the roller kept passing the sheets through as though hotly pursued by the hounds of hell! Safety precautions were practically non-existent and a false move could give a nasty gash. The company, in those days, didn't issue any protective clothing, so the girls had to protect their clothes with old potato sacks as aprons, and cut the uppers of old boots for hand protection.

Although the work was hard and conditions were grim, most of the girls became expert. But for a new girl it was a shattering experience, and in all my life I have never seen so many tears shed. Most of the greasers would help out the new girls, pulling out a few packs when they could. I really believed this was part of the management plan – they knew it would take a particularly hard boy to ignore the tears. This particular day I was helping out a new girl who was having great difficulty in coping, when calamity, a pair of rolls in my charge became overheated and there was a right old panic. "Seamore, Seamore" was the cry. I don't know if that was how it was spelt, but that is what they yelled out in unison to proclaim a burning neck. Of course, this brought the foreman up at the double, and the spanner men came dashing up to ease the tension on the rolls, and rolling of course, stopped. This was a dreadful crime in those days.

Well, eventually it was brought under control and rolling continued again. Now the foreman had time to turn to me – the cause of all the commotion. He was giving me a right old roasting when I foolishly interrupted and tried to point out to him the shortcomings of the system. He didn't take it very kindly for he promptly gave me the sack.

On my way home, and with my temper cooling rapidly, I was worried what had I done. What was I going to tell Mam, for there was something of a stigma about getting the sack in those days, and remember, it was my very first job. Then I had a flash of inspiration. They say that desperation breeds ideas, well, I was certainly desperate. I avoided the house and made my way to the brickworks at the far end of the village and asked the owner if there were any jobs



(Pwll Brick Works)

going. "Yes lad", he said, "we need a haulier in the level bach". (The level bach was one of two mines owned by the brick company). "Do you think you can do it, lad?" "Of course, Mr Roberts", said I, for this was no time for indecision. "Then report to the foreman at seven o'clock tomorrow morning".

The fact I was starting work straight away helped to smooth things over with Mam, who by now, I think, had given up the idea of trying to make a gentleman out of me. So here I was all set to sample the second of the evils. The 'level bach' was one of the two mines owned by the brickworks where they mined coal and fireclay. The fireclay for making bricks; the coal for firing the kilns. They also sold coal to the Llanelly Power Station - a flourishing concern.

I worked in the two, first as a haulier and then as a collier for fifteen years until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Working underground was no

less dangerous to life and limb than the tinworks, and miners were still subjected to exploitation, which the owners felt was their right, but their attitude towards one another was entirely different. Perhaps it was the nature of the work, the constant fight against overwhelming difficulties that made them so dependent on each other. Whatever it was they were kind and friendly and I spent the happiest days of my working life among them.

I have been an ordinary person all my life, never good at anything, but although I say it myself, I was a very good collier. I went into the industry before the advent of machines and learned the real skills. In those days a miner was not just a coal hewer, he also had to drill holes with a hand boxer, and know the exact place to drill them so that the explosives had

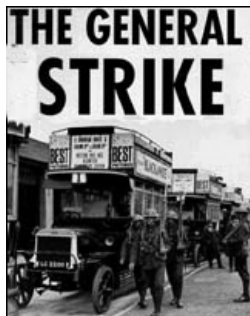


(Crown Colliery – Pwll)

the maximum effect without bringing the roof down, be able to prime and fire his own shots, and know exactly the right amount of explosives to use. He would need to use an axe with the skill of a carpenter for cutting props to size, and fashioning wedges to fasten the prop to the roof. Also, to notch a pair of timber with two arms and a collar, and most important of all, being capable of erecting these timber supports securely. Miners were very proud of their skills with an axe.

Timbering competitions were held in all the agricultural shows and competition was very keen. As well as all that he had to be able to lay a

tram-road complete with joints and laterals. He would have to know the geology of the seam, have a keen awareness of danger and the constitution and strength of an ox. Before anyone gets the wrong idea lets get things in perspective. There was nothing glamorous or noble about mining, apart from the ever present danger, the work was so hard it was soul destroying, the filth was degrading and the smell would be a severe strain to the stomach of a pig, for remember, as well as being your place of work, it was also your dining room, urinal and lavatory.



I had been working in the mines a year and a half when, calamity! Along came the 1926 coal strike. Even in those days of limited

communication they only fed the general public with what they wished them to know. For example, it was no strike at all but a lock out. The owners wanted the miners to accept a cut in wages and when they refused, they shut down the pits. For the first few days miners turned up to work as usual but found the gates locked against them. It was also nine months later, when thoroughly beaten, starved and demoralised they crawled back to work and by now it was a bigger cut. Even then the owners were not satisfied, they piled on the humiliation with manpower cuts and began their policy of victimisation of the men who their spies had reported for being militant. Yes, even in a united body such as miners, there were traitors who attended meetings and reported back to the owners. I think if ever

they had been found out there would have been murder done.

It was this period that put paid to Dads dream of becoming a big business man. First to go was the shop and the stock sold to more fortunate concerns at give away prices. Before the end of the nine months he had sold the whole business, house and all, to pay off his debts and feed his family, for he had a mortal dread that he would be forced to eat at the soup kitchen. Little did he know but we would have enjoyed it, for most of the village children ate there. But Father was a proud man and by paying his debts he saved bankruptcy, for he thought that after the strike he would be able to start afresh. Alas he never did and it was a dream that he carried for the rest of his life.

The stoppage left a legacy of infant mortality, malnutrition and rickets and a particularly vicious and contagious type of tuberculosis, which was known locally as 'the decline'. But most of all it left bitterness and hatred which lasted through the years until 1974 when honour was to a small extent satisfied, with a real strike, and this time well organised, which was completely successful and succeeded in bringing down a Tory government. But they can take heart, 1974 saw the last of the bitter men, for the 1926 miners who are not dead, have reached old age, and while they are not exactly mellow, are in no position to be a menace anymore. Even the owners are just the richest men in the cemetery. If, as the good book says, we all have to face our maker, I wonder how they explained their misdeeds away. Grim stuff, indeed but something that must be recorded. The good old days some people say. Gracious!

Now away with all that and let us get back to where we started recalling Pwll and the people who lived there.

It was a village of three parts from the stream the Llanelly side of the village to the old Tram Terminus, taking in the houses at the foot of the hill and including Stepney Road was called 'Erw Bach'. From the school to The Talbot Inn was called 'Gwilod Pwll'. The houses between the terminus and the school didn't have any particular name and were neutral.

There was great rivalry between Erw Bach and Gwilod Pwll, and even between the Christian denominations it was 'Gwir y Eglwys', 'Gwir Libanus' and 'Gwir Bethlehem', but they closed ranks and united against outsiders. If you were born outside the village, but had lived there twenty years, you were still not a Pwllite and referred to as Dyn dwad and named after your place of origin. For instance there was Dan Ammanford and George Swansea. Even Mr Bowen the minister of Capel Bethlehem came into this category – he was known as 'Bowen Bootle' because he came to Pwll from Bootle in Lancashire.

In such a close knit community it was almost impossible to keep any secret and if you had a skeleton in the cupboard, you had to keep the door securely locked. There always seemed to be two or three of the neighbours in our house. They were a bit of a nuisance at times, but they were also there if ever you needed help, or in trouble. You were never alone; you shared each other's joys and sorrows. In common with most villages in Wales, Pwll people were very generous in bestowing nicknames. Nowadays you scarcely hear them used but in my young days they certainly were. Apart from the usual tradesmen, 'Dai Llaith', 'Jack y Chips', 'Walters y Bwchwr' there were private ones like 'Twm Trad', whose claim to fame came from his big feet. There was 'Wil

Celwydd Gole' the liar. Wil never said a malicious lie, or lied about any person, so his title 'Wil white lies' was very apt.

Here is a story reputed to have come from him. He was cycling home from work in the early days of the war, when his light failed. Pushing his bike up Sandy Bridge he spied some glow worms in the hedge. He put two of



them inside his lamp and carried on riding again. But that wasn't all. When he was passing

Specks Nurseries, he was stopped by a policeman who told him he was showing too much light and that he was contravening the wartime regulations, so he had to take one of them out.

There was 'Dai Sebon Scent', so called because he always smelled of toilet soap in the days when everyone else used carbolic. 'Wil Cols', who picked cinders from the ash tips and 'Dai Williams Bach', folk singer. The headmaster was known somewhat irreverently as 'Trwn' on account of his big nose. There was 'Dai C.B.', ex soldier who evidently spent most of his service confined to barracks. 'Mary Ann Cabbage' who sold veg from her carriage bach, and 'Texas Dan' the well known village cowboy. Also 'Dai Spardin' the likely lad, 'Dai Pop' the temperance man, 'Dic y Lodge' who I presumed used to live in one of the estate lodges, and a host of others. 'Henry Hughes Council' would say that they were "Too numerous to mention" and, my goodness, there were some characters among that lot.

'Dic y Lodge' lived in a street called Sailors Row. Some unkind people called it 'The Rank' so they changed the name to Michels Terrace to give it more tone. Sailors Row was situated between two roads, and with the easy familiarity of those days, we used Dick's garden path as a right of way between the two roads. We didn't dream that we were imposing and I am quite sure that Dick didn't think so either, for he usually had a chat with everyone who went by.

I was walking the path one day when Dick called out, "Come and see this". He led me to the back of the house. There was a new building there and Dick, glowing with pride, said, "Well, what do you think of it?" "Very nice" said I, "But what is it?" "What is it be damned", said he. "Here, come in". And there it was - a brand new flushing lavatory, with a high cistern and a long chain.

Now, you might think, "What's so clever about that?" but remember I am writing of the days when they were a rarity and a new one almost merited an official opening. Dick gave the chain a demonstration pull, and was almost moved to poetry in his admiration for



modern engineering. As I walked away, I thought over what Dick had said and I was bound to agree - modern engineering was a wonderful thing when it enabled you to set it right outside your back door. In contrast, the old bucket system, which was always badly affected by changes of wind, was sited at the bottom of the garden and gardens were very long in those days. This could be a disadvantage, for on occasion, one would need to be a bit of a sprinter to reach the bottom of the garden in time.

It was a fortnight later when I had cause to use the path again, and I heard Dick before I saw him. He was shouting to the children, "Come out of that so and so place before I take my strap to you". It appeared that although the novelty of the new marvel had palled on Dick it had not so on the children, and for the whole fortnight they had been pulling away at the chain. Dick was frantic. "I'm sorry I had the beastly thing installed", he said, or words to that effect. "Do you know, by the law of averages, there cannot be more than a dozen pulls left on that chain before the bloody cistern collapses".

'Texas Dan' was well known throughout South Wales from Newport to Fishguard and in a good part of England as well. He had become addicted to cowboys through the early westerns and therefore lived the part. With big hat and string tie he would go striding down the village street greeting everyone with "Howdee folks. Mighty fine day I reckon." He perfected his cowboy accent by listening to the 'Big Bill Campbell Show' on the wireless, and faithful to Bill he copied his old log cabin act to entertain with, and we almost knew it word for word.

The part that never failed to bring the house down was his monologue entitled 'There's a bridle hanging on the wall'. In the story he told how he was trapped in the path of a cattle stampede, or as he put it, "a thousand head of cattle on the hoof", and he continued, "there was nothing for it but to get on that horse and ride and ride and ride" (suitable pause for effect). Then he would say, "Now, after three weeks of this here riding", then burst into the most infectious laughter and soon we would all be laughing with him. One could write for hours about Dan - he was unique.

Funerals, I'm afraid, were events that took place in our village far too often.

Every available man would be present for it was the custom in those days to carry the coffin. It was mounted on a stretcher like bier with four handles. Two men to each handle - eight all told - and off we would go with the mourners walking at the head. It was the duty of the undertaker to see that the carriers were relieved frequently, so you see, it needed every available man. But unless the death had been tragic, a child, or someone cut off in the prime of life, it would never be a particularly solemn, for the young men anyway. In fact we had many a giggle at a funeral.

Although money was scarce, almost everyone had a 'Sunday suit'. It might have been ten years old but it was only for church or chapel going, weddings and funerals. A half hour before the funeral rose, as they used to say, we would gather outside the house of mourning. The young men would gossip together watching with interest each new arrival. The older men wore bowler hats, some of which had been handed down from father to son for generations. There were high crowns, low crowns, curly brims and some green with age.

I shall never forget in one funeral, Dick turned up with a bowler hat resting on his ears, and Dick, true to form joined the young men, much to the delight of the lads, and to the embarrassment of his son, Colin. "Your hat's too big, Dad", said Colin crossly. "No", replied Dick, "it's my head is too small". Another day, as a funeral was on the move, Texas Dan who was carrying at the time, espied someone he knew among the onlookers. He raised his hand in greeting and called out, "Howdee Bill. We're just seeing old Fred off to Boothill".

One of my fondest memories of my young days was of playing football for the village team. Our team didn't

exactly set the football world alight, but they were a great bunch of lads. The recreation ground, for some reason or another, was called the 'Cae Pop', a field on the marshes the Llanelli side of Dafydd Jones' old brickworks. In the winter it would be almost ankle deep in water. Needless to say, the team's nickname was the 'Water Rats'. We didn't get a lot of support, but we could always depend



on two. Mr Morgan, the Church curate, and Mervyn, a drunk. Strange bedfellows. Mervyn was keen on football, but he was also keen on beer and Saturday was his big day. The midday session in the pub ended at three o'clock, so the football field was as good a place as any to while away the time until they opened up again. They both gave great vocal encouragement to the team. Mr Morgan, when things were going badly would urge us to greater effort with, "Now then boys bach. Steady does it", or "Hold it boys. Keep them out!" Sometimes he would get carried away with an oath, "diaw!" and look round guiltily. But when we were doing well he would cheer us on happily with "Come on the Water Rats".

Mervyn, on the other hand, when the going was tough would dispense with the niceties and yell out derisively, "Water Rats be damned. More like Water Lilies!" but when we did well he would call out "Come on the whores". I have a sneaky feeling he thought us effeminate. If there had been a late kick off and there often was, Mervyn could be seen hurrying through the exit long before the final

whistle. But to be fair, he always asked what the final score was.

Between the wars there must have been a dozen or more curates of Pwll Church, and even though one of them later became a Bishop, none of them could hold a candle to the Reverend W. D. Morgan M.A. Most of the curates were typical C of E clergy of those days, who read out the service from the book, and read out their sermon from their notes with plum fixed firmly under their tongues. They gave the impression that it was all a tiresome chore, with the result they preached to almost empty churches. But not so Mr Morgan. He was a humanitarian, a man who cared about people, a man who liked to be involved, hence his presence at the football games and every concert, dance or function in the village. He also took part in every burial service regardless of denomination, even agnostics or unbelievers. He wasn't content to wait for people to come to him - he went to them. He would counter every excuse you made for not attending church, and by his very persistence filled his church. Afterwards, we continued to go for we grew to love and admire him.

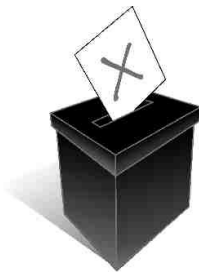
Pwll people of the early thirties will remember him with fondness. He was tall, well over six feet, he had outgrown his everyday suit so his trousers were six inches above his shoes, and he looked as though he would burst out of his jacket at any minute. He was a soft touch for spongers and a vivid memory of him is fumbling in his waistcoat pocket for a sixpenny piece for some poor unfortunate. Well, eventually he went the way of all flesh, he got married, and his wife was ambitious for him. He applied for a vicarage in North Wales and was successful, so it was goodbye Mr Morgan. Pwll Church

had never seen your like before, and sadly not since.

A favourite meeting place in pre-war Pwll was the old tram terminus shelter or the waiting room, as it was called. This was mainly the lair of 'Wil Selwydd Gole' and Joseph Evan. They stood there night after night in summer and winter, telling each other the most atrocious lies. Wil was the master liar, hence his nickname, but Joe, not to be outdone would do his utmost to compete and this very often led to friction between them. Everybody knew when they were not friendly, for then they stood as far apart as possible, and maintained a dead silence. These silences were liable to last for days, but that didn't stop them going there every night.

Joe's son had branched out as an undertaker and Joe, a firm believer in advertising, would give him a commercial as often as he could. "Now don't forget", he would tell everyone, "my son is an undertaker now. He makes coffins that are a pleasure to lay in." "Joe should know", Wil would chip in, "for he is the test corpse. He tries out each new coffin for size and comfort."

'Henry Hughes Postmaster', a kind gentlemanly soul, was a candidate for the rural council and during his election campaign he stopped at the waiting room to canvas Wil and Joe. "Now don't forget boys bach, to give me your vote on Tuesday", he said when leaving, and Joe, who had been very impressed with Henry's speech shouted enthusiastically, "Don't worry Henry bach, you'll get in even if I carry you on my back". Happily Joe



didn't need to carry Henry in on his back for he was elected and served with distinction for years. Joe said, "That Henry Hughes is a wonderful speaker. He would have made a fine preacher." "It's a good job he isn't", Wil retorted, "or he'd have us both in Chapel. Just think Joe, you and I in the big seat, fellow deacons of Walter and James". No starting at the bottom for Wil, but straight to the big seat!

Walter, or Wat as we called him, kept a grocer shop a few yards from the waiting room. He and his friend James were deacons and tireless workers for the Chapel. They held office in a friendly society called the 'Rechabites' and together with hordes of other schoolchildren I attended their weekly meetings at the Chapel Bach Salem, conducted by Walter and James. James was the doorman, and did his best to keep order and you can imagine he had his hands full. "Are you abstainers?" Walter would call from the pulpit. "Yes!" we would all yell. "Do you promise to be lifelong abstainers?" "Yes!" we would thunder. "Then lets sing our battle hymn", and he would belt out the anthem which ended with these words:

*'A loving happy youthful band,  
To drive intemperance from the land.'*

Walter and James, both long since passed on, were certainly lifelong abstainers, but I am afraid that most of the 'loving happy youthful band' fell by the wayside.

(Some of the photographs used in this supplement are representational and do not necessarily reflect the true likeness of any individual or location mentioned in the body of the text.)

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### In the Next Edition:

In the next edition of The Bônau Cabbage Patch we will be publishing the second instalment of Vic's superb Anthology of Pwll. In this edition Vic will take us for a walk around Pwll and introduce us to some of the characters of the village. It's an interesting and fascinating read so join us in September for this entertaining amble through Pwll.

**A Bônau Cabbage Patch  
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Diolch Cyngor Gwledig Llanelli.



Cyngor Gwledig  
Llanelli