



-ment, including the widening of Bronllwyn and Heol-y-Pentre. It has requested and been granted a site meeting to discuss the problems of the Old Bakery and High Corner sites as action on these sites is considered a matter of urgency.

#### 4. Allotments.

Several avenues are being explored in an attempt to meet the demand for allotments in Creigiau, Pentyrch and Gwaelod-y-Garth. A lease of British Railways land in Creigiau has been signed and some allotments have already been made available. It is hoped that more land will become available in the near future.

#### 5. Public Footpaths.

It is intended to reintroduce the practice of 'walking the bounds' during this summer and it is hoped that members of the public will join Council members when notified that this is taking place. Any obstruction or blocking of public footpaths should be reported to Council members.

### MINDING ONE'S OWN BUSINESS

W.J.GEORGE (Clerk to the Council 1952-76)

To keep one's counsel and to mind one's own business could be regarded as a virtue. Everyone believes that if other people would mind their own business that the world would be a better place to live in.

The man in the corner shop must mind his own business if he wishes to succeed. He must project an image acceptable to the public. His business must be well stocked to meet the needs of his clients. His presentation and manner efficient and agreeable.

We all flatter ourselves that we mind our own business. But do we? Every person should ask: What interest do I take in local affairs? When did I vote in Council elections? When, in fact, did I look after my own business?

Voting for councillors is your own business. Not to partake in elections, is to neglect your own business and thereby leaving responsibility to others.

The existence of Councils administering the functions of local government has been described as the difference between slavery and civilization. Without the control which local government exercises, we would have to resort to tribal customs.

Local government performs a variety of services too numerous to enumerate. Whilst many of its services have been transferred to national boards, there still remain a variety to warrant our concern and interest.

The disinterested citizen who does not vote may never think of him/herself as a landowner, a shareholder in vast undertakings, of property and millions of pounds invested in Municipal housing controlled by a 'board of directors' elected by the public and answerable to them.

The failure to vote to maintain the services that local government provides and for the continuance and proper conduct of municipal services is, in fact, a vote against their existence. Even the careless citizen who does not vote, directly pays the cost of numerous services. To deny oneself participation does not afford relief from contributions to the costs of services provided.

We live in an area in which local government is administered by its lowest tier - the Community Council.

Its functions may be restricted; the need for existence often challenged. But its strength lies in its power to harness and reflect local opinion. In the absence of such a body one would have to resort to individual objections with the consequent chaos and disappointments.

A Community Council has the legal right to make representations on behalf of inhabitants within its area of administration. It can make demands on the upper tiers of control. It has unrestricted control over its own finances.

So much is happening in local government which is only known to those actively interested or engaged in its administration and to those whose interests are directly affected.

The Local Government Boundary Commission which has

been sitting for over two years is reviewing Local Government structure in Wales, with particular reference to Community Councils. It seeks to disentangle the present system from the inconsistencies and anomalies of the 1974 Act.

Recent revelations of corruption and evidence of disgraceful brawls in Council Chambers may be responsible for a measure of cynicism in our assessment of what is good in local government.

It would be dangerous and unwarranted to allow the machinations of a few individuals and the uncontrollable antics of some idiots to blot out the rays of brilliant achievements of a large majority of dedicated men and women who have been, and still are, responsible for maintaining high standards of administration of local government in this country which are the envy of the world.

In the emerging pattern of our life we in our community may sometimes be found guilty of stubbornly resisting changes. It is the duty of the council to balance the retention of the environment with the demands of progress.

We cannot foresee the end results and may not be aware of the consequences of developments which inexorably pursue their course, and in their forward march effectively depriving the community of its heritage at each stage; blotting out scenic beauty, grassland, hedges and views of coastline either vanish or destroyed by the permanency of brick and stone. It is the function and duty of the Council to minimise the effect of rapid changes and to exert its influence to steer planning and development to an acceptable pattern.

It demands vigilance and determination to 'mind one's own business', to be aware of what is happening and to exert its influence to preserve our heritage.

The distance between registering complaints or objections and fulfilment is often long and arduous. Even when projects are agreed so many factors intrude. 'No provision in the estimates' is the greatest hurdle to overcome.

The larger authorities to whom complaints are referred are never reluctant to take action when the climate is favourable. All major schemes are so dependent on availability of money.

In this parish we have witnessed the problem caused by rapid development straining the existing resources. Sewerage services in Creigiau have been extended beyond their capacity and distressing problems of hygiene the inevitable result.

The widening of roads, removing dangerous hazards, have been the subject of discussions and agreements, for years but no evidence of progress.

Such delays are interpreted as 'the ineffectiveness of the Council, whereas records can prove persistent efforts for solution.

The parish/community of Pentyrch is undergoing rapid social and physical changes. It is unique inasmuch as the council has to cater for three communities with diverse interests which create problems which present a challenge to its aim to give satisfactory service.

### STEETLEY QUARRY DISPUTE/AN OBJECTION.

In the first issue of "Link" you will be publishing a letter contributed to the 13th May edition of the Pontypridd Observer by Community Councillor George Davies under the heading "Steetley Quarry dispute: a Defence"

I understand that your motive in re-printing that communication is to record for posterity the views of one of the principal participants in this dispute. I gladly accept, therefore, to state the contrary views of those of us who would be directly concerned and affected by the granting to Steetley of their application for planning extensions at their quarry on the Little Garth. It needs to be said, at the outset that the Pentyrch Community Councillors, including Councillor Davies, who are in favour of the application, have no experience of the misery of living in "the firing line" of the present quarrying operations. Their homes are safe.

Blasting has been carried on continuously in the existing quarrying area for the last 30 years and the vibration caused by the ever increasing intensity and proximity of the explosions is already a serious hazard to the safety of the homes of all of us who live near. My

own house, which has withstood the storms and tempests of the last 200 years with walls a yard thick now shakes alarmingly and my neighbours in the Garth Newydd Council House Estate, in Nant-y-Garth and in Georgetown complain of ornaments falling off mantelpieces and of cracks appearing in their walls.

The blasting we are now having to endure still takes place on the Morganstown and Radyr sides of the Little Garth and we are, therefore, to some extent shielded from even worse effects by the land which remains unquarried on the upper slopes of these other sides of the hill. But the application to extend Steetley would take the quarrying up to the top of the hill, if not over the top and down towards us, so that our homes would be completely exposed to the full force of this destructive bombardment. Moreover, on our side of the Little Garth there is still an extensive wood full of mature and beautiful deciduous trees, particularly a number of superb beech trees. This wood, which will be destroyed if planning permission is granted, at present provides a screen which still just manages to preserve the original appearance of the beautiful little valley between the Garth Mountain and the Little Garth although, as everyone knows, who uses it, the charm and safety of the mile-long road which runs up through the valley to Pentyrch have been destroyed, long ago, by the continuous procession of large, dusty lorries travelling to and from the Steetley Company's existing workings. Already, the traffic carried by the present road to Pentyrch is way beyond tolerable limits and it is impossible to believe that the road can take any additional industrial use. As a result of complaints from the inhabitants, a ban is soon to be imposed on lorries over three tons in weight passing through the village of Pentyrch. This means that all heavy-duty lorries making for the entry to the Steetley workings, located half-way up the Pentyrch hill road, will only approach that entry from the bottom of the hill and return the same way, so that that short stretch of the 14 ft wide road down-hill from the Steetley entry to the Ynys Bridge roundabout will have to carry all the Steetley traffic, something more than twice the existing heavy-duty traffic on this part of the road. This monstrous increase in traffic is bound to be a terrible hazard for all these who live in the Heol Berry council houses, especially the children.

But all that Councillor Davies has to say about these very real anxieties, the destruction of a heritage of beauty and all the other painful consequences described in my last paragraph is that "It is regrettable that there is bound to be some disfigurement of the environment". However, we must not worry, all will be well, because "the company has promised to minimise as much as possible any damage it causes and will seek to preserve and even restore the beauty of the area". (the underlinings to these quotations are mine!)

Councillor Davies' argument for the granting of the planning extension is deceptively simple. Here is an undertaking which provides valuable employment in the locality. It is, unfortunately, in difficulty because of an imbalance in the relative proportions of the two qualities of stone quarried. By far the greater proportion consists of high grade dolomite which is "valuable and rare" but which, unhappily, the company, in order to keep going, is forced to sell as inferior stone to be used for road-making and other crude civil engineering and agricultural purposes. This imbalance can only be corrected by the extension of planning permission to allow the company to quarry additional substantial deposits of low grade stone which will then replace the high grade ore now being sold for road-making and thus help to conserve that high grade ore for the service of the anticipated expansion in the steel industry in S. Wales over the next 25 years. While there are other deposits of dolomite in S. Wales they are negligible and of inferior quality. Between here and Derbyshire only Steetley have the genuine metallurgical 'McCoy' (and they own all the stuff in Derbyshire too) If, in the present and projected quarrying operations, some homes are damaged, a cherished and lovely wooded hill is annihilated and some children killed on their nearest road what does it matter? The vital, supreme thing is employment and (oh! how unfortunately, in this case) employment ennobled by the fact that the expansion of the steel industry in S. Wales is dependent upon it.

I do not share Councillor's Davies' touching faith in the facts and arguments presumably advanced by the Steetley Company so I sought out and obtained the comments of an independent authoritative expert on all types of quarrying currently being carried on in S. Wales. He happens, also, to be very familiar with steel-making processes and the particular use in them of dolomite. He tells me that dolomite is NOT in short supply in S. Wales. In Risca there is a dolomite quarry now planning a five-fold increase in its dolomite production. In Tintern there is a dolomite quarry with considerable deposits and, not two miles away from the Steetley quarry, within the jurisdiction of the Pentyrch Community Council itself, there is the Creigiau quarry chock-full of dolomite waiting to be mined and owned by the British Steel Corporation. All of these sources can produce high grade metallurgical dolomite entirely suitable for use at Llanwern and Port Talbot.

These specific contradictions of Councillor Davies' assertions could, of course, have been inferred from Steetley's trading policy. This is a great company, profitable and with ample resources. Is it conceivable that such a company would sell "valuable and rare" raw material for road-making when they could, if it was really valuable and rare, leave it in the ground until its increasing scarcity value accumulated to vast potential profits. Alternatively, if this material was no longer rare and valuable in this locality; if, in fact, there was too much dolomite around, any company would jump at the chance of selling it for road-making. I suspect that the decision to adopt that alternative policy was the real reason for selling the "valuable and rare" for road-making and that some ingenious character thought up the "imbalance" argument which, at one fell swoop, appeared to offer a splendid reason for supporting the application for additional planning permission while also providing a plausible explanation for the otherwise totally incomprehensible squandering of the huge annual quantity of the "valuable and rare". Perhaps, however, Councillor Davies has forgotten that the company assured me, though their local manager, that if the extended planning permission is granted it will not be acted upon for at least 10 years. If the true purpose of the extended planning application is to correct that unfortunate "imbalance" would it not be acted upon immediately or, at least, as soon as possible, which, in quarrying practice, usually requires a preparatory period of not more than two years, not at least 10 years. Otherwise, the annual squandering of 400,000 tonnes of the "valuable and rare" on road-making would go on for another eight years - the very thing we are assured, in Councillor Davies' defence, the extended planning permission is intended to prevent?

It is all very puzzling. I wonder, however, if there could be other and cogent reasons for making this planning application about which we have not so far been told. For instance, suppose that Steetley had decided to pull out of the 'Little Garth' perhaps in order to sell the undertaking. Would not the sale price be significantly improved by the inclusion of this additional planning permission? Or suppose Steetley were thinking of closing the whole place down for a period until the market in dolomite and road-stone improved? They have the resources which would enable them to wait. When they re-opened would not the exploitation of the additional planning permission help them to make even greater profits? Councillor Davies is an experienced trade unionist and, as he says so emphatically in his defence, he is no friend of the bosses. He will surely have thought of all the possible reasons for this application and has, I am sure, already obtained from Steetley a firm undertaking that they will not pursue either of the imaginary courses suggested above.

I began this letter with a reference to posterity. I wish I could be as sure of the verdict of the Mid-Glamorgan Planning Committee as I am of the verdict of the future generations of this parish. Of course, we who object to this planning application understand the importance of work. Councillor Davies is not the only one who remembers the bad old days and never wants to see them again. But if conservation is to mean anything there must be occasions when a community decides that too great a price can be paid for employment requiring intrusive and dangerous industrial processes.

We who lived all our lives in this parish have seen the Steetley industrial processes progress inexorably from

what began as a nuisance to what is now a menace. Many of us have had to live with this for 30 years already and, however much we may hate it, we will have to go on, living with it, under the existing planning permission, for another 13 or 14 years, which may well be long enough to complete the destruction of our homes.

Is that not enough?

(COUNCILLOR) NEST JEREMY.

#### STEETLEY QUARRY DISPUTE: A DEFENCE

In view of the extensive coverage given in the "Observer" to the discussion by the Taff-Ely Borough Council of the application by Steetley's, Taffs Well, to extend their operations in the Garth Wood, and in view of the fact that Penytrch Community Council seem to be a minority group in supporting that application, I would like to state my reasons why I, with the majority of the members, favoured the application.

There are two qualities of stone quarried at Taffs Well. The higher quality is a basic raw material used in iron and steel making. The lower quality with impurities is used for civil engineering and agricultural purposes. The higher quality Dolomite, which is essential in the iron and steel industries in Wales, has two essential products—"Dolosenter", a flux used in iron making, and "Dolmet", a burnt product used as a fluxing agent in the basic oxygen steel process. To produce both these important products requires a stone that is low in impurities of iron oxide, silica and alumina.

It is important to state that the company is of the opinion based on the White Paper "British Steel Corporation Ten-Year Development Plan or Strategy" (which indicates increased investment, modernisation in the Welsh steel industry over the next decade), that the modern methods of iron and steel production used in South Wales will require a supply of both iron and steel making "dolomite fluxes" for at least 25 years.

High grade dolomite is valuable and rare. For, despite widespread borings, it has been discovered that the only large reserve of the stone of the requisite quality within 200 miles of Taffs Well is at Whitewall in Derbyshire. Other dolomite deposits in South Wales are too poor in quality or too small in tonnage to be suitable for the Welsh industrial requirements.

The position as I understand it at Taffs Well is that under present planning permission there is an imbalance between the two quality types of stone. With the present planning permission there remains at Taffs Well only one million tonnes of non-metallurgical stone and 13 million

tonnes of high quality metallurgical stone. In recent years the company's stone extraction has averaged one million tonnes per annum, about 40 per cent, of which has been used for metallurgical purposes. It is therefore obvious that if there is no extension of planning permission, and the quarry is to continue at its present level of production, that the more valuable and rare stone will be used for inferior though necessary purposes of civil engineering and agricultural activities.

Or alternatively, production will have to be drastically reduced and the lower quality non-metallurgical stone sales virtually eliminated. Both possibilities are unacceptable with many ramifications, including the viability of the company, the disastrous effects on the economy and associated industries. (The Glamorgan Brick Co., Ready Mixed Concrete and the Wimpey Asphalt have leasehold sites production sites on the company. The labour force of these companies being about 130 persons. There is a capital investment which exceeds £10 million altogether on this site).

It is regrettable that there is bound to be some disfigurement of the environment, but the company has promised to minimise as much as possible any damage it causes, and will seek to preserve and even restore the beauty of the area.

To the objectors of this application I would say it is easy to object to anything that is unpleasant, but if the thing objected to is of the present dimensions and importance, then any reasonable objector should come forward with rational alternatives.

Do the observers suggest that quarrying should take place elsewhere, and if so, where? The present policy of the Mid. and South Glamorgan is to meet the existing demands for limestone in industrial South Wales from the development of the present quarries.

Do the objectors suggest that the maintenance of supplies of stone for road building, structural concrete sectors, and other engineering projects cease forthwith? And do they suggest that this company should confine its activities to the production of metallurgical stone, which would mean a reduction of half its workforce and increase in the price of its dolomite to the steel industry of Wales, which is barely competitive at the present?

I do not work for this boss and I have spent a lifetime as an active trade unionist fighting against bosses. But in this case I feel that I must fight for this boss because of the men he employs and their jobs. To refuse planning permission here is not wise planning but the negation of it.

GEORGE C. DAVIES.

COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR

#### THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. CATWG, PENTYRCH.

A.W. REES M.A. (VICAR OF PENTYRCH)

The Parish Church is dedicated to St. Catwg and I am often asked by newcomers and by visitors who this saint was. The best known of all the Welsh saints is, of course St. David but we must not forget that there are many other great figures in the history of the Welsh Church, such as Illtyd, Dyfrig, Teilo and our own Catwg. These men founded religious settlements in different parts of Wales and they were given the title "sant" which in those days simply meant "abbot". From these centres they spread out to carry on evangelistic work. This was at the period of the 5th. and 6th. centuries before St. Augustine landed in Kent to originate the Roman influence in England which was to prevail until the Reformation. The existence of these Christian "colonies" so long ago testifies to the extreme antiquity of the Welsh Church and to its independence from "across the border".

Catwg or Cadoc founded a monastic colony at Nant Carban, now known as Llanccarfan where the ancient church is dedicated to him. The extent of his influence can be seen in the fact that at least ten of the old churches in the Diocese of Llandaff bear his name, as do several others in what is now the Diocese of Monmouth. Although no stone churches were built in Wales before the Norman Conquest there were in many places "cells", the fore-runners of the parish churches, and it is highly probable that a religious foundation, beginning with one such cell, has existed at Pentyrch for 1,400 years. This was

originally an offshoot of Catwg's monastery at Llanccarfan. To this day vestiges of this ancient tradition remain. The name of the spring just below the Church "Ffynon Catwg" may well confirm this as also might the name of the little stream into which it runs - "Nant Gwladys" - which is the name of Catwg's mother. Incidentally it is pleasing to note that modern builders have renewed the tradition with "Parc St. Catwg" and "Heol-yr-Eglwys". Our church today has a very fine pulpit upon the panels of which are carvings depicting legendary events in the lives of both David and Catwg. I like to draw the attention of the children to the figures of the bird, the mouse, the bell and the stag which play their parts in the particular stories.

Space precludes me from giving much detail about the subsequent history of the Church. Suffice it to say that by the eleventh century Pentyrch was under the influence of Teilo's monastery at Llandaff and in the twelfth century it became a parish under the control of the Diocese of Llandaff in which it has remained to this day. From the year 1100 there is documented evidence of parochial affairs largely of a financial nature. Things do not change! The first Vicar was Eniaur in 1147 and I myself am the twenty-seventh.

The earliest church building at Pentyrch was probably a wooden structure but through the evidence of twelfth century relics we can safely assume that the first stone church belongs to early Norman times. This church is said to have consisted of simple nave and chancel with bell cot and priest's door. An entry in the Churchwarden's Accounts for 1834 shows that it had a gallery. This



long period of seven hundred years was not without its tribulations as old records show but nevertheless there was no such upheaval as often happened elsewhere. Perhaps its secluded, even hidden, location saved it from the depredations experienced in other churches in Tudor, Stuart and Protectorate periods. By the 19th. century, however, the building, like its great sister at Llandaff was rapidly falling into decay, and thus it was that the present church came to be built in 1857.

#### CAERYRFA CREIGIAU.

Barry Davies

The earliest known documentary reference to the farm of Caeryrfa is in a deed dated 1570 preserved in the Glamorgan County Record Office, recording its conveyance to Lewis Llywelyn of Rhydlafer, gent., by Morgan John Richard of Penytrch, husbandman & Elizabeth his wife and Morgan John Robert of Llanedeyrn, gent., and describing the property as follows:-

"One tenement called Caeryrfa etc., between a parcell of land called Penlloyne Kynvyne on east part, parcell called Carne on the South part, one parcell called Lloyne-y-Brayne on West part and one rivulet called Nant-y-Casser on North part"

This confirms the modern south, west and north boundaries of Caeryrfa but not the eastern boundary for a large part of the land on the east side of the road, which has been part of Caeryrfa farm for the past 200 years, was, at that time a separate farm known as Cefngwarwig. The ruin of Cefngwarwig farmhouse can still be seen alongside the former Barry railway line. It was occupied as a cottage within living memory.

In passing it is of interest to note that the brook Nant-y-Casser has given its name to the Cae sar's Arms although there is certainly no association with Caesar!

It is likely that Morgan John Richard of Penytrch had mortgaged his land to Morgan John Robert of Llanedeyrn and the sale was occasioned by the latter wanting to be repaid. From a later deed we find that William Lewis Llywelyn of Rhydlafer sold Caeryrfa to Miles Lewis of Gabalfa, gent.

Further references to Caeryrfa occur in 17th century surveys of the lordship of Meisgyn:-

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1625 | Caeryrfa, part of Penllwyn Cynfin Uchaf, William Miles 6d. David Thomas 3d. |
| 1630 | Johan Owen, widow 6d., David Thomas 3d.                                     |

Joan Owen was the widow William Miles of Gabalfa, the son of Miles Lewis of the same. The Miles family of Gabalfa were rising minor gentry who were at this time busily building up an estate. They also acquired Henstaff in St. Brides super Ely nearby, but their advance was frustrated by failure of male heirs before they managed to

This church consists of chancel, nave, vestry, south porch and a very handsome and distinctive spire which contains two bells. One of these is pre-Reformation and engraved with the name "Sancta Catrina", and the other is "William Howard, 1700". The account book for the period 1824 to 1869 has been preserved and we have details of the contact and the costs involved in the new building. There has been some interesting speculation as to the architectural influence of the work of the rebuilding of the Cathedral at Llandaff about the same time upon the more modest project at Pentyrch. We have many valued possessions in the Church both ancient and modern. There are the carved corbels on the chancel arch and in the chancel itself. These are figureheads of Bishop, Archdeacon, Dean, two Vicars and three Churchwardens as cherubs. Unfortunately one of these has been decapitated in a recent attack of damp which we have now eradicated! There is the handsome pulpit to which reference has been made, the beautiful three-light strained glass east window, the carved Reading Desk, and the Lectern. The Silver Alms dishes provide an interesting link with Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli).

I could expand upon the Ancient Relics which are to be found here. These include an ancient font and other remains from the 13th. century and a number of documents and registers of considerable interest to antiquarians. I will, however, conclude this article by going outside into the graveyard which is set off so beautifully by the Lych Gate. The graveyard is indeed itself a lesson in Social History. Some of the stories which it unfolds are fascinating and certainly it affords ample opportunities for research. The Yew Tree which is in such a prominent position is at least five hundred years old.

We certainly have cause to be proud of our Parish Church. Its long history proclaims the durability of the Christian faith. Since, however, we cannot live by tradition only we must use that tradition as an inspiration for us now and in the years to come. This we aim to do.

acquire major gentry status.

- |      |                     |
|------|---------------------|
| 1638 | Morgan Miles 6d.    |
|      | William Thomas 3d.  |
| 1666 | Griffith Thomas 9d. |

The latter was Mr. Griffith Thomas of Hendresguthan whose father Evan Thomas had purchased Caeryrfa in order to make provision for his two daughters. In his will Evan Thomas of Hendresguthan states, "Whereas I have reserved power by a deed of settlement to myself to charge the tenement of lands called Kaer Erva in the p(ar)ish of Pentirch with any summe or summes of moneys not exceeding £200 to the use of any children of...Mary my deceased wife by me begotten...I doe hereby charge the said...landes with the sum of eight score pounds...to the use of Elizabeth Thomas one of my daughters...yearly out of the rents issues and profits...and I doe hereby charge the said tenement with the summe of forty pounds to the use and benefit of my daughter Mary Thomas...after the expiration of eight years devised to Elizabeth..." Griffith Thomas held the land in Trust for his sisters.

In 1689 Griffith Thomas mortgaged Caeryrfa for £200 and in 1713 he conveyed it to Anne Edwards of Llantrisant widow.

On 5th June, 1716, Anne Edwards leased Caeryrfa for 99 years or three lives to William David of Pentyrch, weaver, his wife Catherine and William Thomas son of Thomas Morgan Meiricke of Llanfabon. Among the conditions laid down in this lease, Anne Edwards undertook to erect one new barn of two couples within four or five months and to allow William David 10/- every three years towards repairs...William David was to lay out 10/- every three years towards ditching. He was to live in the house. He was also allowed to dig lime for repairs and liming and underwood to burn with his own coal.

In 1723 Anne Edwards mortgaged Caeryrfa for £200 and in 1727 she sold it to Charles Talbot for £390 since it has remained part of the Castell-y-mynach estate. For its whole history since 1570 Caeryrfa was apparently at no time owner occupied. This lends some interest to the house itself, solidly built, with the date 1672 on a plate under the eaves - at the time when it belonged to the Hendresguthan family.

There is much evidence to be read in the ruin of Caeryrfa which is listed in P. Smith, 'Houses of the Welsh

Countryside" as a type B house-chimney backing on entrance. As it survives Caeryrfa has a three room plan but examination shows the third room to be a later addition. The original house in 1672 was a two unit plan with end chimney.

Prior to its separation as a farm Caeryrfa had been a part of a larger holding known as Penllwyn Cynfin embracing also Cefngwarwig, Creigiau Farm and Penllwyn with its centre being probably on the latter site. This was a Welsh manor or estate which had been granted in the 13th century to one Cynfin ap Cynfin a prince of Ystradyw in Breconshire and a refugee from Norman aggression. Among the descendants of Cynfin was Cadwgan Mawr y Fwyall a figure to whom tradition has ascribed a hero's role in two different periods - or, perhaps, more reasonably, confused two different heroes. Cadwgan Mawr it was who successfully defended the Welsh laws and customs of Mess-gyn threatened by the De Clare lords in the 13th century and Cadwgan y Fwyall was one of Owain Glyndwr's captains in the 15th century, from whom derived the Ystrad y Fodwg battle-cry 'Cadwgan hog ei fwyall'.

But older far than this farm and Penllwyn Cynfin put together is the cromlech which is Caeryrfa's chief claim to fame. It is sobering to realise that this is by far the oldest surviving building in the parish and it was built by new stone age farmers for the burial of their dead between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago. Although this is no evidence of unbroken occupation the existence of this monument is an important starting point for us to ponder the age of our community. All that remains of the structure today is one capstone supported by two props. The capstone is 9'8" long by 5' broad at its widest and terminating in a point. The present entrance faces north and is 3' between the props. It is aligned north and south. All we have therefore are the surviving elements of what was once a complex tomb covered by a mound which may have been either a round barrow or a long barrow. It is interesting to note that the cromlech is sited almost exactly on the dividing line between the coal measures and the free-drained limestone land which was typical of the territory where the first farmers made their settlements.

Throughout I have used the spelling Caeryrfa although the Ordnance Survey and the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments favour Cae'r-arfau. The latter assumes the final element to be arfau meaning arms or weapons. But R.J. Thomas in his M.A. Thesis "Astudiaeth o enwau Lleodd Cwmwd Meisgyn" took it to be yrfa a mutation of gyrfa meaning cwrs or rhedegfa, i.e. a racecourse. I admit that the former is a more convincing meaning than the latter but it cannot be disputed that all the written references confirm the local pronunciation to have been yrfa not arfau for at least the past 400 years. Personally I am inclined to believe the word to be aerfa meaning a place of battle or slaughter.

In this short note we have managed to unravel a good deal of information about the farm and the house and its owners but very little about the farmers who lived and worked in Caeryrfa. It is not possible to compile a complete list of tenants before the later date 18th century let alone identify them. The first tenant whose name we know was a certain Evan Humphry who was rated at £13 for his occupation of Caeryrfa in 1650. The last was Mr. Evan Thomas whose son now farms in Stormy Down and whose daughter is at Pantyogored. They came from Llwynrcwn Isaf in Llantrisant where they are freemen of the Borough. They typify the many local farming families who have been here for centuries literally shaping the face of our parish.

#### OUR DWINDLING HERITAGE

##### DEMISE OF THE GWAELOD-Y-GARTH CANAL AND ITS NATURAL HISTORY POTENTIAL

Dr. Mary E. Gillham.

Three matters featuring in our third parish news sheet, "Y Garth", in February 1977 are directly related, although this may not have occurred to the compilers. The back page was devoted to a fascinating article on past iron mining on Little Garth Hill and historic facts relating to the Pentyrch Forge and Ironworks - with a little plug in one corner for the news sheet as a vehicle for local history.

The Leader, headed "Feeder Danger", explained that almost 200 years after its construction, the Gwaelod canal

or feeder which supplied these ironworks had suddenly become dangerous, in spite of the silting which had mellowed the formerly sheer sides. "One child was nearly drowned", it stated: but is there any pond, river, stream or sea-front of which this cannot be said? The Taff itself, a short field's width away, is far more dangerous and no-one has suggested filling that in! The article proceeds: "Rubbish is being dumped which is attracting rats and vermin". It is the misfortune, not the fault, of this interesting historic area that vandals have chosen to desecrate it: we can scarcely blame the canal for their misdeeds. To fill it in because we cannot control the behaviour of the despoilers is to add insult to injury.

The third item concerns the Job Creation Programme and schemes to clear natural growth and replace it with artificial grassland. A dubious exchange. Would these well-meaning efforts not have been better directed to clearing unattractive rubbish and reinstating the pleasant waterway which once flowed gently beneath the trees along the western side of the Taff flood plain?

"Better access to piggery" is cited as another reason why the feeder should be filled in (the writer avoids use of the more evocative term, canal). But there has always been good vehicle access to the piggery and the waterway alongside has served as a useful recipient for the surplus plant nutrients seeping from the pigsties - the resulting eutrophication giving rise to local growths of duckweed and boosting the water mint, water cress and water pepper. The organic effluents will now, presumably, flow utilised to the Taff, which is already overburdened with sewage, the breakdown of which uses up the oxygen needed by a healthy fish population. Previously the sludge was able to settle out and the nitrogen, phosphorus and other chemicals pass into the tissues of the water plants and the animals dependent on them, to be recycled in the normal way.

The 1961 2½" O.S. map shows the canal as a continuous waterway from the upper weir to the Walnut Tree Viaduct (now also demolished). During the subsequent decade the lower section was replaced by football field and light industry. The next length, between the viaduct and Ynys Bridge had disappeared under the old car yard long before. The final stretch under the Little Garth beechwood is still traceable from the road bridge to its exit to the Taff at the lower railway crossing of the river above Morganstown.

#### HISTORY OF THE OLD CANAL

In the late eighteenth century water power for the Pentyrch iron furnace was obtained from the brook flowing down Cwm Llwydrew from Coed y Bedw. This was dammed near the furnace and brickworks to form a pond on the site of the present Heol y Berry housing estate. The substantial head of water which it held was discharged over a water wheel and the surplus ran out into the Taff. The dam was subject to silting up, however, and had to be constantly cleared out, so another source of water was sought.

The first castings were made at the Pentyrch Ironworks in 1743, although the local iron had been used since Roman times about 2000 years ago. Some 40-45 years later, prior to 1790, the weir was built at Taffs Well and water from immediately above it diverted into the feeder on the west bank to give the furnace a more adequate supply. The canal ran along an intermediate river terrace below the one holding the old mine tramway, and re-entered the Taff where the river turns to flow due east between Ynys House and Tongwynlais. There was a second weir there, known as the Lower Weir to distinguish it from the Upper or Portobello Weir at Taffs Well, this lying downstream from both furnace and forge. (At this time there were no bridges across the Taff between Pontypridd and Llandaff, crossings being by ford or ferry).

Taffs Well Weir was removed by the Glamorgan River Board in April/May 1970 to prevent flooding of the Treforest Estate upstream. This lowered the level of the river 8 ft. where the Gwaelod feeder left and the junction was blocked up with gravelly soil in the greater complex of pink dolomite blocks from the Carboniferous limestone ridge to the south and blue pennant from the coalfield around Pontypridd to the north. A fair plant cover became established by the following summer - mostly of arable weeds but with a fair sprinkling of tree seedlings - first stage on the way back to the woodland.

Sufficient water seeped from the hillside to keep the old canal course full and this remained as a haven, for wild life - bright with flowers in summer and a sanctuary for

water-loving birds and wee timorous beasties of the undergrowth throughout the year. Although off the beaten track, it was well known to naturalists, to youngsters with the jamjars and fishing nets which would be so inappropriate in the polluted Taff alongside and to those who sought only quietude and the healing of green places after the day's toil. But that era of the early seventies is past. There is now only a swathe of newly disrupted soil, with the docks, thistles, nettles and other undesirables already staking a claim to territory vacated by the tall stands of yellow iris and pink balsam.

#### FLOWERS OF THE OLD CANAL

The upper stretch of the canal showed little flow and the water lay clear over its silty bed, with no coal dust in suspension. Lesser water parsnip and hemlock water dropwort put out lacy white flowers at two levels and the lovely, though invasive, Himalayan balsam left no site unexploited, sprouting from cracks in old logs and the masonry of the almost forgotten industrial past - itself exploited by honey bees far into November, when all other nectar bearing flowers had faded. Bright green balls of water starwort, with pinhead yellow flowers, occupied water a foot deep near the little iron footbridge, where shading by over-arching alders excluded all else but grasses.

As the tree canopy opened out downstream the upstanding reed canary grass and trailing flote grass gave way to fine clumps of bristle-fruited bur-reed, while aerial roots feathering from the osier bases turned deep crimson in the sunlight. Branching heads with delicate white petals reared from among the spear leaves of greater water plantain, with clear blue trumpets of greater skullcap clustered about their bases. The white circlets of gispywort flowers and creamy froth of meadowsweet graded into massed pink heads of hemp agrimony and these to the mauve and purple of lesser and greater willow herb and water figwort. Flowers of elder and dogwood dipped into the water from the woodland regrowth above, those of the guelder rose behind maturing into brilliant bunches of shiny fruits which lasted well into winter.

A stream entered below the piggeries, enlivening the flow and nuturing a good stand of great bulrush or reedmace and the golden orbs of kingcups, which were among the first to brighten the spring scene, with more sober golden saxifrage below and starry lesser celandines above. This tributary drains out of the Llan drift mine which penetrates the riverside scarp beneath tall trees and leaches quantities of ferric iron from the iron-bearing coal shales. Bacteria which have a special affinity for this metal, reprecipitate it as a gelatinous orange sludge of iron hydroxide, which is startlingly bright in the gloom of the woodland.

The lively current below had cleared the silt from the stones and gained further impetus where joined by the trout stream from Coed y Bedw, via an unlovely concrete settling tank. There are fewer waterside plants from here down, but two rather nice kinds are pink cat's valerian and comfrey, with red-tipped, white trumpet flowers. The Cambridge and gentian blues of forget-me-not and brooklime spill down from upstream, while creeping Jenny, lesser spearwort and pink butterbur are not far to seek. This stretch alongside the high sandstone wall now ends abruptly where the water is diverted at right angles to the Taff, through an iron sluice spanning the 3 ft. gap in the 8 ft. wall opposite.

#### BIRDS OF THE OLD CANAL

The stretch of freshwater at the junction of steep woodland and level pasture (now ruined by dumping) provided the best of all worlds for birds of water, woodland and grassland to mingle along the feeder before despoliation.

Kingfishers, loveliest of all water birds, once frequented the area, particularly where the fast-flowing current encouraged fish life, including the speckled brook trout from Coed y Bedw. The pair nesting in the bank of the Taff below the old car yard used to fish here, being unable to see their quarry in the main river because of the suspended coal dust. (Those nesting further down the Taff repair to the Glamorgan Canal between Tongwynlais and Whitchurch to fish - in a stretch of canal that was saved from infilling by public outcry and is now an attractive and much used nature reserve in the hands of the City Parks Department). Alas Gwaelod.

These kingfisher's nesting activities came to grief at least once, when rubbish dumped into the river from the junk yard blocked the nest entrance and the parents were

watched hovering outside with fish in their beaks, unable to get to the hungry youngsters within. Another pair tried to set up home in the lower part of Coed y Bedw but village children stole their eggs three years in succession - too young or too insensitive to appreciate how much more pleasing the brilliantly alive blue and chestnut fledgelings are than the heap of white eggs in a matchbox - or lost. We shall be lucky in Gwaelod-y-Garth if these living jewels favour us with their presence again.

Second brightest of the water birds, the grey wagtail with primrose yellow underparts and long mobile tail, haunted the feeder both summer and winter, although most leave their winter foraging grounds along the banks of the lower Taff and adjourn to the hill streams further north for the summer breeding season. Birds were carrying food to young in June 1971 and may well have continued to nest here. Dapper pied wagtails sometimes joined them, although these are equally at home by the Taff and in the village street, where some nest under house eaves, alongside the house martins.

Moorhens reared fluffy, wisp-headed broods of chicks in the canal during the first half of the seventies, youngsters of the first brood sometimes helping to feed those of the second. In 1971 there were two nests 30-40 yards apart. One was in a stand of soft rush some 4 ft. from the bank in a marshy overflow at the lower end of the stagnant section. Built mainly of rush stems, it had incorporated in its fabric an eight inch slab of wet cardboard and a larger sheet of crumpled white paper, both woven well in. The second nest was of more orthodox materials, couched among greater water plantain and over-topped by twisted spears of reedmace in the zone of iron deposition. This may have been constructed by the same pair, one for each family or a second one for brooding the chicks when away from the home base.

The odd mallard dropped in to feed among the canal sedges when lighting along the river valley. Though principally plant-feeders, these were not above dabbling up tadpoles which hatched from the big balls of frogspawn laid in the quiet of the canal rather than in the turbulent river, where they would too easily get washed downstream. Once in a while a grey heron would come stalking across from the river to poke around for frogs and sticklebacks before winging majestically away.

Add to these specifically waterside creatures the host of woodland birds - bullfinches and long-tailed tits, tree creepers, woodpeckers and the rest - water voles and weasels, newts and grass snakes, dragonflies and mayflies, and one begins to glimpse the rich heritage which we are letting slip too easily through our fingers in this so materialistic age. How can we make amends?

Children have to learn to stand on their own feet and meet the challenges of the natural world as well as those of the more dangerous urban one. The access road has a whole rubble-covered field to wander around and rubbish can be carted away to the dumps where it should have gone in the first place. We are too late to save this site - but what about a community project to renovate the remaining stretch of canal below Ynys Bridge, through a pleasant patch of lime-rich woodland recently opened out drastically for pony jumping?

There is no water in the top half of this at present, but any who have been following the efforts of the young people and members of the Glamorgan Naturalists' Trust in Pontypridd in reinstating the derelict stretch of the Glamorgan Canal near the Brown Lennox Chain works, will realise the potential of such schemes. Why not make this our community's contribution to the mass of "European Wetlands Year" campaigns hatched up in 1976 and put into operation throughout Britain and beyond? This would be our own special part in the "Taff Valley Project" launched nearly a decade ago to beautify our exploited valley from Merthyr to the sea.

Look through the trees to the river next time you travel the road to Morganstown and picture the fishermen along the reinstated canal bank, the youngsters with their jamjars and the oldsters with their dogs on the new 'towpath'. This roadside stretch is not the 'secret place' for wildlife that the other was, but it has good amenity potential. The channel is there and much of the masonry, probably the puddle clay as well. There is even a yardful of earth moving machinery a few yards up the road.....

Pentyrch offers anyone interested in local history a challenging case for study. It is hoped that these brief notes will kindle an interest particularly among new residents in these aspects of the village's past which helped to shape the present community.

Although almost every Age of Man has left behind material evidence for our attention, the area remains largely neglected by both amateur and professional research. There are many 'tell-tale' features which suggest that the spade of the archaeologist will one day find rich diggings around our village. This terrain was perfectly placed for strategic defences and the Garth Mountain would always have lured wanderers. Climatic changes over the centuries may have altered the forest pattern and reduced our rivers to trickling streams but there are still many places which give us a mysterious sense of their great antiquity. Chiefly among these are the 'Cromlech' at Caeryrfa; the tumulus on the Garth known locally as 'The Pimple'; the site of an Iron-Age homestead at Llwyndaddu; traces of the Ancient British Way which proceeded from Radyr through Pentyrch to Rhiwsaeson.

Axe-heads and various flints have been found in the district tracing human occupation back to the Middle and New Stone-Ages. Also ancient human and animal remains have been discovered in local caves. During the Bronze Age, humans lived, worked and probably fought here. There is said to have been a Roman Camp at Pentyrch and as they occupied the whole district it is highly likely that the Romans would have had need of the rich and easily accessible mineral deposits.

Most churches in Wales are dedicated to 5th and 6th century British Saints. Our man is Catwg of Cadoc who was born around 500 A.D., the son of the Lord of Gwynllwg. He was known as Catwg Ddoeth, Catwg the Wise and Good and is said to have founded a bond village around a magic well in Pentyrch known since as Ffynnon Catwg and established a church site nearby. The stream which runs from the well is still called Nant Gwladus, perhaps after St. Gwladus the mother of Catwg.

The settling of the Normans in South Wales in 1091 was partly due to the treachery of Iestyn Ap Wrgan one of whose palaces is said to have stood at Pentyrch. One of the places that can claim to have been involved in the great Norman share-out of Glamorgan lands is Pantygograd. It is worth noting that recent renovation work in this 'listed' building has revealed a beautiful Mediaeval staircase.

Some of the earliest documentary references to Pentyrch are contained in Bulls addressed by Pope Honorius to Bishop Urban IN 1128.

In 1314 Pentyrch is described as forming part of the De Clare lands and in 1461 the hamlet was paying a Reeve of £2.0.4p. to Richard Neville, Lord of Glamorgan. A 1535 document called Valor Ecclesiasticus described the character of crops and other revenues produced in the locality. Documents of this period relating to Church affairs within the Llandaff Diocese are fairly numerous.

The landowning Matthew family of Llandaff, Radyr and Pentyrch were very prominent over two centuries and were responsible for re-establishing the Iron industry in the neighbourhood.

Edmund Matthew who owned the major Pentyrch Ironworks during the reign of Elizabeth 1st carried on a reasonable activity for over twenty years exporting cannon and general ordnance to the Spanish (who were not exactly friends of ours at the time) until a Privy Council Order put a stop to it in 1602. Peter Semayne a Cardiff merchant took over the lease and ignoring the embargo continued to smuggle out cannon balls to unfriendly foreign parts until he too was arrested some years later. The Works remained in ruins until the industry was revived around 1740 at the site where Heol Berry now stands at the foot of the Pentyrch Hill.

Under the successive ownership of Messrs. Price, Lewis, Reynolds and Blakemore the Pentyrch furnaces thrived for over a century. A Quaker tradition among the later owners and the forward thinking of the workers led to the introduction of many benefits for all concerned; distress funds and sick relief schemes were pioneered there. A Benefit Club formed in 1786 was one of the earliest Friendly Societies in South Wales. An 'Oddfellows' group flourished there for many generations.

After 1837 under two generations of the Booker family the Works enjoyed mixed fortunes and, unable to meet the

cost of a proposed conversion to the Bessemer Steel Process, saw the Liquidators move in to dampen the fires in 1879. The failure of the West of England and District Bank into whose coffers the Somerset Bookers had placed their money had not helped matters. The last furnace flame flickered out in 1885 thus ending a notable period in the history of Pentyrch. The smelters and puddlers, smiths and carpenters who trudged that long hill from the Works to the village for the last time were conscious of the end of an important era. The concern had been famous in its day, reaching its peak in association with the Melingriffith Works during the Napoleonic Wars. The men themselves despite the last troublesome decades suffering low wages and hellish conditions of work had lost none of their ideals. It is recorded that they were the first generous contributions to the fund raised for the building of the old Royal Infirmary in Cardiff.

An interesting surviving product of the Pentyrch Ironworks is a large fire-grate dated 1743 which is now embedded in a boundary wall at Craig Y Parc having been removed from the old Portobello Inn, Taffs Well in 1914.

#### COAL

From the 18th century onwards there were always pockets of activity around the base of the Garth Hill where coal was practically "picked away" from quite near the surface.

In MALKINS "The Scenery, Antiquities and Biography of S. Wales" published in 1804 reference is made to a mine on the mountainside at Pentyrch which had been a smouldering fire for many years. It tells of the son of a Llantrisant clergyman who, whilst out in pursuit of game, fell into "miniature volcano up to his middle and was much scorched"! Certainly one of the fields of Caerwen on the slopes of the Garth is called Cae Poeth-"Hot, or Burning Field."

The Coed y Bedw drift mine commenced in 1827 and continued for half a century. In the Llan pit disaster during the 1870's five hundred men and boys were trapped for several days with twelve losing their lives.

The South Cambria Colliery Co. employed a fair number of local men at Ty'Nycoed Drift for twenty years up to 1915.

Old workings which stretched from Gwaelod y Garth to Craig Gwilym have been left several delectable air-shafts and trail-shafts. However, Nature has reclaimed the whole area long since, making it one of outstanding beauty. Pentyrch has never really lost its essentially rural character.

#### HOUSES

Although Pentyrch was widely spread out with scattered clusters of dwellings it was always closely knit in social terms. The inhabitants had a fierce sense of belonging to the "old parish". Families were identified with houses to such a degree that long after the cottages had vanished the associations lived on. Even today at least one family is better known by the name of an ancestor's cottage than by its registered name!

Thatched cottages were numerous in Pentyrch until the early part of this century. These have gone the same way as over a hundred terraced houses which were condemned as unfit for habitation just after the last war.

Cefn Bychan farmhouse is one of the oldest dwellings in the village with its 16th century interior. The existing structures at Llwyndaddu, Penygarn, Cefn Colstin and Pentwyn all have old interior features. Also, Tyn-y-coed and Blaenbielli stand on ancient sites. The now derelict Penllwyn and Caerwen are reminders of a proud farming heritage which has taken some severe blows in recent times.

In 1825 there were over sixty active farms and smallholdings in the parish and in that year the inhabitants appealed to the Epiphany Quarter Sessions to review the level at which property values had been assessed to the Poor Rate. A meeting was held in the Navigator's Arms. The objections were examined by Mr. Evan David of Radyr and Mr. John Jenkin of St. Y Nill.

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*... unfortunately, space does not permit the inclusion of all this article in this issue, but the completion in the next issue due out in December will include the origin of the names of places in Pentyrch, and fascinating theories and historical detail that combine to complete "The Pentyrch Story"*