

# YSTALYFERA YSTRADGYNLAIS

And

DISTRICT

1914-1918

Apart from my maternal Grandfather, who was gassed in the Great War and advised never to have children (obviously he rejected that suggestion because my Uncle and Mother both arrived safely in the 1920's) and my Father who, in WWII, was shelled in his dug out (by his own Regiment when practicing before he even went abroad) I am not aware of anyone in our family who fell in either war.

A question I am often asked is why therefore, have I researched the fallen from the Tawe Valley. Probably because my family did stay intact and I cannot imagine how it must have felt to have had that knock on the door and to find someone handing you a Black Edged Telegram, or because over the years I have visited so many cemeteries throughout the district and have seen how the "remembrance graves" of those who did sacrifice all, have been neglected and in some cases so damaged they have been taken down in the name of health and safety.

My research has thus concentrated on the fallen but as the Centenary approaches I thought it would make a change to see how those who, like my family, were fortunate to return to their homes and how in particular, Ystalyfera, Ystradgynlais and district fared during those years.

So with grateful thanks to the areas own newspaper of the day, the LLAIS LLAFUR, here below are some of the extracts gleaned from its pages in those four years of what our history today records as The GREAT WAR with an apology if, due to sheer volume, I may have left out information which others would have preferred to have been included.

25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915

**YOUR FRIENDS AT THE FRONT ARE ANXIOUS FOR ALL THE NEWS BRIGHTEN THEIR LIVES BY  
SENDING THEM THE“LLAIS”.**

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#### SILENT TRIBUTE TO THE DEAD

**She GAVE her all---What will you LEND to your  
Country ?**



**Buy National War Bonds and Certificates.**

## A "LLAIS" MAN IN BELGIUM

### **8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914 GRAPHIC SCENES FROM THE WAR AREA THE RUSH FROM THE CONTINENT**

Last week-end, Mr G. A. Greenwood, of the reporting staff of the "Llais," together with three friends, proceeded to Belgium, for their holidays. At that time there was of course little thought that they were heading for the very maelstrom of the war. Mr Greenwood and one of his friends managed to get back to London on Tuesday but the events which were packed into the three days since his departure from the metropolis, would suffice for a fairly long holiday, and will, we feel sure, be read with much interest. Mr Greenwood writes:—

Cosmopolitan London has fully demonstrated its cosmopolitan features during the days leading up to the present European crisis, and those who were privileged to be at Liverpool Street station on Saturday evening last will not soon forget the remarkable sights on that occasion.

### **TOURISTS AND RESERVISTS AT LIVERPOOL STREET STATION**

This great continental railway centre was literally packed with eager, excited, gesticulating and desperate foreigners bent upon reaching their own country at whatever cost. Here were Austrian, German and Dutch reservists, summoned to the fighting line, and there were hundreds of tourists anxious to know whether their plans for viewing the sights of the Continent held good. Hundreds were greatly disappointed. No Hamburg or Hook of Holland boats were sailing and a large number of tourists were compelled to abandon their proposed tours. A good many Germans and Austrians particularly desirous of getting to their respective countries took passage on our boat, the "Dresden," bound for Antwerp. The train was crowded, and upon embarking we discovered that the passengers included a very considerable proportion of Germans. The conditions of embarkation were interesting. Sentries, fully armed, paraded the quay, and upon getting away from the harbour the "Dresden," along with other boats, was subjected to a long and careful scrutiny by the searchlights.

### **ANXIOUS FOREIGNERS**

The conversation on board was naturally wholly monopolised by the developments in the European situation. The air was full of rumours, and a good number of those on board, especially the Germans, viewed the situation with grave misgivings. They had been told all manner of things, including such stories as that they would never be allowed to land in Belgium that they would be taken prisoners upon arrival, etc., etc. Many placed full confidence in these stories and particularly sad was the case of a young lad travelling with his sister. They were desirous of reaching their home in Alsace-Lorraine, and whilst we all did our little best to inspire them with hope and confidence, we realised to the full the grave difficulties with which they were faced. Contrary to our expectations we crossed the North Sea without the slightest interruption, and after dropping passengers at Flushing, we proceeded to Antwerp, reaching the quay at 8 a.m. Sunday morning, after a nine hours journey. We landed without difficulty, bid farewell to friends made on board whom we shall probably never see again, and inquired for our hotel. Here our really interesting experiences commenced. Soldiers were to be seen in every part of the town

### **A CITY IN WAR TIME**

The entire country is under mobilisation and at every street corner and on every boulevard troops were drawn up for the purpose either of proceeding to guard the frontier, or to occupy the fortifications of this city. Sentries were stationed at every point with fixed bayonets, and reservists were rushing around to join their respective corps at the places appointed.

All public institutions were deprived of at least part of their staffs and hundreds of influential citizens were compelled to manage their establishments entirely without servants. Our hotel

proprietor had his motor car seized for Army use and right emphatically did he express his indignation.

The city presented a truly wonderful sight throughout the morning, but at noon, when we heard that Luxemburg, an Independent state, had been seized by the Germans, the excitement became intense. Military preparations were hastened and more soldiers were called for service to the frontier. Belgium means to maintain her independence under any circumstances and the populace were enthusiastic in their send off to the soldiers.

### **BRITISHERS ADVISED TO RETURN HOME**

As the day wore on, the excitement increased and as English citizens we deemed it advisable to go to the English Consul for advice. His message was disconcerting. He informed us that the last ship for England would leave Antwerp the following day (Monday); he did not know what time; the subsequent service would be completely indefinite and to be safe we must embark on Monday.

We had, of course, to abandon entirely our proposed visit to the interior.

After this intimation we were compelled to submit to the circumstances, and spent the rest of the day in sight seeing in the Port.

It was wonderful. An hour spent in the Central Station can never be forgotten. This magnificent building was crowded with soldiers and their civilian friends, and all the military men were given preference in their journey to Brussels. Many civilians could not go to the capital.

Throughout the evening the boulevards and cafes were crowded with citizens and visitors eagerly discussing the situation and a passing demonstration against a German who had made himself disagreeable caused a temporary sensation, none the less significant. The average Belgian loves the German about as much as the devil loves holy water.

At 11 p.m. we retired, thoroughly tired and eagerly anticipating the events of the morrow. As will be seen, these proved to be more exciting than ever.

### **MILITARY IN POSSESSION**

Next morning we phoned to the steamship offices and were told that we must make our way immediately after breakfast to the quay. The "Dresden" the return ship might leave at any moment, or at 10, 2 or 7—the hour was quite uncertain. As might well be expected, we lost no time in making for the docks, and the journey thither was a never to be forgotten one. Everything was given over to military dominance and the troops were drawn up on every boulevard. The Catholic German Bank and other German offices were guarded by cavalry, and thousands of people clamoured at the big banks for the withdrawal of their savings. Prices of nearly all commodities had advanced enormously—some 100 per cent. We eventually arrived at the quay at about 9.30am and found a large crowd awaiting the sailing of the boat. The majority of them were English or had English connections, but many continental people were also anxious to embark. We waited here in suspense for some time until we were joined by a young Londoner who had been turned out of Germany. The number of passengers increased enormously during the morning and at noon numbered far more than the boat could carry.

### **WOMEN AND CHILDREN ONLY!**

After a sparse lunch,—many could not even get that—we prepared to embark, but had again to wait for some time. Meanwhile we heard that the Germans were already over the Belgian frontier, and would soon be marching on Brussels! Then came the news that children (there were 300 from the boarding schools), and women only would be allowed to embark, but if any room remained, men would be taken. At 3 p.m., the children were taken on board, and women were also allowed to embark. Then the males were called for, and there was momentary confusion. I was at the side of the queue, and my three friends were close behind. After about a dozen men had got through I was suddenly thrust from the crowd into the arms

of an official, and found myself on the ship. A little dazed, I naturally looked about with some anxiety for my friends. They were nowhere to be seen, until Mr Isaac Shepherd came along. He was the last male (beyond officials), to come aboard. The others, Mr Balmforth (Shipley), and Mr Van der Straten (London), had been pushed back, and were not allowed aboard. We two who had been more fortunate were of course, much distressed, and I desired to go ashore to them, but they prevailed upon me to remain aboard.

#### **ANTWERP IN A STATE OF SIEGE**

My anxiety was increased by the message from a reliable authority that Antwerp was declared to be in a state of siege, that the King and Queen had arrived there, accompanied by their suit and the members of the National Council, and that the Germans were still pressing into the country. A conversation with the vice consul elicited the fact that a further boat for England would leave Antwerp that night or at noon Tuesday. If absolutely necessary, British citizens would be accommodated on one of the cruisers stationed at Flushing.

Our friends were advised to apply to the consul for a pass to embark on the next boat, for which those possessing passes would be given preference. Meanwhile crowds continued to arrive at the quay, and were bitterly disappointed at not being allowed to embark, but a few more women and children were taken on board and at 7.30 p.m. we made preparations for setting sail.

Many of the British remained to see us depart, and with a cheer from them for us, and reassuring messages from us to them we left the quay. We were several times cheered by the crews of ships along the river, and for the first hour of the journey were continuously subjected to searching examination by the lights from British and Belgian warships. Having left Belgium, the passengers on board had very considerable apprehension as to our safety in the North Sea. It was a hazardous journey, but we were guarded for the most part by British men-of-war, and arrived at Harwich at about 6 a.m. No doubt all those who participated in this remarkable voyage will remember it for the rest of their lives. For twenty-four hours our experiences had been most exciting, and we may be pardoned, therefore if upon landing at Harwich, our pent-up excitement, burst and was translated into a demonstration of joy and gladness at finding ourselves once more on the shores of our own native land.

**G. A. GREENWOOD**

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#### **8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914**

#### **RUSH FOR NATURALISATION**

During the last few days commissioners of oaths have been busy in London hotels and restaurants swearing in new citizens – foreigners who preferred to become English rather than go to their respective countries. They are men who have been in this country for more than the qualifying period of five years; they do not wish to leave their places and their employers do not want to lose them.

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# ENGLISH SCHOOLGIRLS' EXPERIENCE

## AMAZING DIARY IMPRESSIONS OF THE WAR FROM A CONVENT

22<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 1914

The "Standard" gives the diary of an English schoolgirl, Miss Muriel Furness written in the convent at Eysden, near Vise containing a remarkably vivid narrative of the war as seen near Liege. Miss Furness writes:—

July 30<sup>th</sup>

This morning the Mother Superior received a letter from Bonn saying that all German girls from Bonn must return immediately owing to the fear of war. Of course, we scorned the idea and laughed at their parents. At dinner-time a French girl had a telegram saying that she must return at once. The nuns soothed our fears, but at tea so many telegrams were arriving that the Reverend Mother decided that the school holidays should commence on Saturday, instead of the Monday, as arranged. At supper we were told that we must go home to-morrow.

July 31<sup>st</sup>

We went to the station to see the Belgians girls off still thinking that there was no war.

### DUTCH GIRLS' PLIGHT

August 1<sup>st</sup>

It was impossible for the Dutch girls to return, as the trains were full of soldiers going to the frontier. In the afternoon we packed up everything and prepared to leave.

August 2<sup>nd</sup>

We rejoiced that we should go home to-morrow, but at tea time the Mother Superior came in crying like a child and told us that war had been actually declared. The sun- set to-night was most beautiful. It kept changing its colour that, we are told, is a sign of war.

August 3<sup>rd</sup>

In the morning we cleared the drawing-room so that the soldiers might come to camp there if they wanted.

### CANNON AND RIFLE FIRE

August 4<sup>th</sup>

At four o'clock this morning everyone was startled by a terrific explosion which shook the convent. We learned that the bridge at Vise had been blown up, as Belgium must defend her neutrality. We were told that cannons were being brought up. People began to come in from Vise—sped on by a hail of bullets. A German officer came to Vise. He commenced to read a proclamation, but before he had finished doing so he was shot dead. This, the nuns told us. This afternoon the Mother Superior told us to put up beds in the drawing-room for the wounded. We also hoisted a big white flag with a red cross. Doctors and nurses came from far and near. All the while we could hear the crackle of rifle fire and the roar of cannons. From above came the noise of aeroplanes. We went into the chapel and prayed for an hour.

### GERMANS DESTROY HOUSES

August 5<sup>th</sup>

We could not sleep at all during the night, so heavy was the artillery firing. During one half-hour-while we were at Mass- we counted no fewer than twelve aeroplanes, which flew over the house. We were told that the Germans were trying to build a bridge over the Meuse. They pulled down houses by the side of the river and used the debris to stem the current. As soon as they had the bridge half finished the Belgian fire would destroy it. It took 36 hours of hard work before the Germans had spanned the river.

August 6<sup>th</sup>

Many fugitives arrived from Vise. At tea time a German officer was brought in who had fainted from fatigue on the battlefield. After tea we heard the sound of aeroplanes, one of the nuns saw an aeroplane under fire. It kept dodging up and down with shrapnel bursting below



## **HOSPITALS**

### **An Appeal to All**

**8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914**

**Pontardawe Red Cross Women's Voluntary Aid Detachment  
To the Editor**

Sir.—will you kindly allow me to use your paper as a medium for an appeal to all residents in this district, and more particularly to those residing in Pontardawe, on behalf of the above. Recent international developments have placed this country in such a position that every man, woman, and child is bound to come forward to help, as far as they are able, to defend our country's liberty, our homes and our honour. The forces of the United Kingdom have been called upon to defend this country, and a large and important Branch of this immense organisation is the Nursing department. This may be called at any time, and the necessary arrangements are being made all over the country to equip the necessary hospitals, and prepare for the nursing of our sick and wounded. Hospitals are being prepared, and nurses enrolled, and a nursing establishment organised in this district which will, of course, require not only money, but also the necessary articles for fitting up a hospital such as beds, bedding, cooking utensils, basins, towels, bandages, etc., etc. All those who are willing to provide these requirements, in case of need, are asked to let me know, definitely, exactly what they will lend, and they are asked to have them in readiness for use at a moment's notice. I ask for them on behalf of our King and Country, and those who are going to fight for us. Also these who can, and will give their personal services are asked to come forward in this hour of need. I would add that a committee is being formed to regulate the whole management, of the department, and it is perhaps needless for me to say that every possible care will be taken of all articles lent for this purpose. Will those who are willing to act and help kindly write at one stating how they will help, and what they will lend to

ADA LLOYD,  
Plas Cilybebyll,  
Pontardawe,  
R. S. O., Glam.

6<sup>th</sup> August, 1914.

### **PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL HOSPITAL ABERCRAVE**

**29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914**

As intimated last week, a meeting took place at Abercrave House on Wednesday evening, called by Mr and Mrs. C. F. Gilbertson, to consider the question of arranging for a local temporary hospital. Those present were Mr and Mrs. Gilbertson, the Rev. J. Williams (Vicar of Colbren), the Rev. J. G. Hughes, Ald. M. W. Morgan, Conn. W. D. Walters, J.P., and Councillor D. R. Morgan. The Ystradgynlais Distress Committee had recommended a discussion on the advisability of opening a hospital in the neighbourhood for the purpose of receiving wounded soldiers from the front. Mr Gilbertson reported that he had communicated with the Red Cross Society on the matter, and that he was awaiting a reply from them. It was decided before proceeding further that a public meeting should be held at the Council School on Saturday evening to consider the matter further. We are officially informed that since the meeting, Mr Gilbertson has received a letter from the Red Cross Society stating that they think that they have received sufficient offers of hospitals for the time being, but thank the Abercrave district for their generous offer.

**21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 1916**

**RED CROSS HOSPITAL AT GLANRHYD**

By the generosity of the Gilberston family, **Glanrhyd House** Pontardawe, one of the most beautifully situated mansions in the Swansea Valley, is to be handed over to the St. John's Ambulance Association to be used as an auxiliary hospital for wounded soldiers. This has caused considerable satisfaction in the district and the heroes of the war will be sure of a hearty welcome.

We are also informed from a reliable source that arrangements have been made for thirty of the Workhouse Infirmary beds are to be handed over to the same institution and patients will now be accommodated at the infirmary.

**9<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1917**

**GLANRHYD HOSPITAL PONTARDAWE**

It is very pleasing to report the generous support that is being accorded to the convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers at Glanrhyd, Pontardawe. Various public functions are being organised throughout the district in order to meet the cost of maintenance, while gifts in kind, which are greatly appreciated, are being presented by ladies and gentlemen of the immediate neighbourhood. The following is a recent list of such gifts:

Mrs C G Gilbertson, daily papers; the Misses Gilbertson, games- croquet, bowls, football, quoits, dominoes, cribbage; Mr C G Gilbertson, cards, etc. Mrs Evans, rubbers; Mrs Percy Player, rhubarb, seakale, mint; Mr Gwyn Jones, cigarettes; Mrs Benshill, eggs; Mrs C Gilbertson, 33 eggs; 50 eggs, collected per Mrs Reese; Mrs Joel Davies, rhubarb and mint; Mrs Bowen, 1 dozen ash trays; Mr C P Gilbertson, 30 "Punch," 22 "Illustrated News"; Cardiff St. J.A.B., 4 hares, eggs; Mrs P Player, rhubarb, seakale; Mr W Hamer, Ty Gwyn, Rhydyfro, eggs; Mrs C Gilbertson, eggs; sweets, cigarettes, cricket set. Miss Gilbertson; 1,000 cigarettes, Mr E J Parkhouse: rhubarb, asparagus, Mrs P Player tobacco and cigarettes, steelworks employees; 3 shirts, Mrs Gough; eggs, collection at All Saints and St. Peter's Church; magazines, Mrs P M Lewis: apples, oranges and sweets, Mrs C Gilbertson; ladle, two aprons, Mrs Bowen; oranges, Mrs G S Phillips, Cwmgors Farm; gramophone, Miss Gilbertson; dozen card tables, Mr Cecil Gilbertson; book, Mrs Perry; cigarettes, Mrs Smith; 100 eggs, cigarettes, cucumber, lettuce, Miss Benthall; rhubarb and mint, Mrs Davies; rhubarb, Nurse Evans; fish and fruit, Mr David Smith, Gwynfryn, Alltwen; 36 eggs, Miss Williams, The Hollies, Penmaen; ham, onions, and rhubarb, Mrs Gough, Yniscedwyn; magazines, Mr Griffiths; two music books, Mrs Bowen; rhubarb, Mrs Joel Davies; rhubarb, Mrs Bevan rhubarb and leeks, Mrs Strick; magazines, Public Institute; magazines, Mr Brooks.

**29<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917**

**GUNNER EVAN DAVIES**

**Gunner Evan Davies** of the Royal Garrison Artillery, formerly caretaker at the Public Institute, has now left the Leicester hospital for Stamford Infirmary, where he will receive further treatment to his injured hand. It is hoped that he will be allowed to come to **Glanrhyd hospital** to recuperate.

**REGRETTABLE FRICTION BETWEEN OWNERS OF GLANRHYD & ST JOHN ASSOCIATION  
9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1918**

**PONTARDAWE HOSPITALS**

A meeting of the executive committee of the St. John Auxiliary War Hospitals took place at Pontardawe on Friday evening, when Mr G. Griffiths, Capital and Counties Bank, Ystalyfera, presided, in the absence of Mr Charles Gilbertson. The chief business discussed was the proposal of Messrs. Gilbertson, owners of Glanrhyd, to terminate the tenancy of that house by the St. John Association, and to convert the hospital into a Red Cross institution, to be re-equipped at their own expense. Mr F V Gilbertson attended the meeting in the absence of his brother, explained the position and the reason for the proposal. They were all aware he said, of the fact that the family had given Glanrhyd to be used as a hospital, and had also given Ynisderw House to the Guardians so that the Workhouse could be converted into an infirmary. They had also, doubtless heard that things were not going very well at Glanrhyd,

and it was thought desirable that some change should take place. The question of the doctors, the matron, and the capitation grants were but some of the causes of friction, suggesting that there was lack of good management somewhere. A determined effort had also been made to get rid of Mrs Royle, matron at Glanrhyd, and she had now been hounded out—a state of affairs that they as a family felt very much. The new temporary matron, on taking up duty, told the Red Cross girls that their services were no longer required, and she had also taken the management out of Mrs Royle's hands six days before her notice terminated, although the new matron had come there without credentials of any kind. Mr Gilbertson said he went immediately to Glanrhyd on hearing of this, and gave notice that it should be closed, and that they as a family should re-equip it at a cost exceeding £500. He had consulted the Pontardawe committee, and they had agreed with his action in the matter. Proceeding, Mr Gilbertson said that a letter he had received from Mr Herbert Lewis (secretary of the St. John Association) appeared to indicate that they, the St. John Association, were not prepared to accept the notice. He wished it understood that they all wanted to benefit the wounded, without any friction amongst themselves; and the best way out of the difficulty was by converting Glanrhyd into a Red Cross Hospital and allowing the infirmary to remain a St. John institution. This would then enable people to support whichever they chose.

The new hospital would be re-equipped at the Gilbertson family's expense, and would get 3s a day in respect of each occupied bed, and 6d for each disengaged one. The Red Cross Institution also gave more local autonomy, and he failed to see why they should submit to being controlled from Cardiff. He had also observed that there was always more friction in districts in which St. John institutions existed than where Red Cross hospitals were maintained.

In reply to the chairman, Mr. Gilbertson said he had consulted the Pontardawe committee because they were nearest, and they had approved of his action. The Chairman said the committee members from Ystalyfera and Ystradgynlais were very human, and felt that Mr Gilbertson should have brought the matter before the whole executive, and not confined himself to a section. Mr. Gilbertson replied that he would have to apologise, but he was so upset when he heard of the state of affairs at Glanrhyd that he acted somewhat rashly.

After Mr. Gilbertson had retired the Chairman asked whether the committee were prepared to discuss the matter then, or adjourn it for a week so as to allow them time to consider it. Mr Ben Williams, Cwmtwrch, said he could not give his vote on the question that day, as he ought to consult his committee. He also believed that after all it was a matter that Cardiff should thrash out.

Mr D J Bowen Pontardawe, was of the opinion that if the committer desired to transfer to the Red Cross, they could do so, but Mr Ben Williams disagreed. Mr. Henry James Cwmgorse insisted that they had collected the money expressly for the St. John Association. Mr J Edwards, Pontardawe, urged further inquiry, and suggested that Mr. Gilbertson be asked to meet them again. Mr Morgan Davies Pontardawe said he failed to see what right they had to deal with the matter at all. And from a legal point of view he failed to see there was any justification for the cancelling of the tenancy. The tenancy was in the hands of the association, and they had no right to deal with the matter before the inquiry.

Mrs D J Rees, Ystalyfera, asked if the Messrs. Gilbertson were agreeable to an inquiry taking place, but no one appeared to know. Mr Tom Williams, Ystradgynlais: They seem determined to fight it out.

It was ultimately resolved to adjourn the matter. The Chairman reported that the Christmas fare at both Glanrhyd and the Infirmary had been excellent. It was also decided that Mr Herbert Lewis be urged to attend to explain why Glanrhyd only received a grant of 2s whilst the Quarr Hospital Clydach, received 3s. It was expressed that the Glanrhyd Hospital had been equipped by the War Office. Mrs D J Rees pointed out that the Quarr Hospital had been









# CAMPS

## ALDERSHOT & SALISBURY PLAIN

**19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1914**

**HUTS FOR RECRUITS**

Owing to the enormous number of men enlisting in the Army and the impossibility of finding them, accommodation in existing, barracks, arrangements have been made to build as quickly as possible thousands of simple hut barracks at Aldershot and on Salisbury Plain. By the end of October it is anticipated the great majority of them will be ready, for occupation. ———

### HELPERS WANTED FOR Y.M.C.A. TENTS

**8<sup>th</sup> MAY 1915**

**TO THE EDITOR**

Sir,—May I be allowed a small space in your valuable paper to call the attention of your readers to the urgent need for workers in connection with the magnificent services rendered to the troops by the Y.M.C.A. I have in previous issues of your journal endeavoured to outline this great work. The call for helpers is urgent. The work offers a splendid opportunity to be of valuable service to anyone who for varying reasons is unable to join his Majesty's forces. It is useless anyone engaging in it unless urged by some ideal, social or religious, both for preference. The work is hard and wearying, but there is in it a great joy and satisfaction. My appeal is chiefly on behalf of that vast military area which includes Salisbury Plain, over which Mr F J Fedarb, of Bristol, exercises oversight. Anyone desiring further particulars could have same on applying to Mr Fedarb, Y.M.C.A., St. James Square, Bristol; or to the undersigned at the Y.M.C.A., Royal Field Artillery Camp, Corton, Wiltshire

Yours, etc

**JOHN DAVIES**

**6<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1915**

**TRACTION ENGINE**

The traction engine owned by **Messrs Edwards and Page** has been accepted by the Admiralty for transport service on Salisbury Plain

**22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 1915**

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**Miss Maudie Watkins** has again been invited to sing at a concert party on Salisbury Plain. Miss Watkins (Abercrave) will journey to the Plain in the course of a few days.

**17<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915**

**MR EDWARD JENKINS**

**Mr Edward Jenkins** Gurnos has been home for the weekend from Salisbury Plain, where he has been doing excellent work for the past couple of months in connection with the Y.M.C.A. He looks well and intends returning to his work on the Plain during the weekend.

**14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**WELSH SINGING**

Welsh soldiers on Salisbury Plain have made an impression with their singing. The Bishop of Salisbury in an interview with a representative of the "London Star" said:

"Many of the new comers to the Plain have strangely musical voices to the Moonrakers' ear; they also are fond of singing in groups and very pleasing music it is as the blended voices are carried over the downs to travellers on the old coaching roads. They are hardy soldiers, those singers, and as keen as they are hardy"

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**Y.M.C.A. WORKERS BACK**

**Mr Ben Williams**, son of Mr William Williams (Crydd) Gough Buildings, who is doing

Y.M.C.A. service at the Corton Camp on Salisbury Plain, is at present home for a few days' rest and returns on Monday. Mr Williams it will be remembered joined the Army some time ago but was discharged owing to ill health. Although by no means well yet, he has done good work for the Y.M.C.A.

**13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**QUEEN INSPECTS TROOPS**

It was the intention of the King to visit Salisbury Plain on Monday for an inspection of troops but as his illness cancelled the arrangement the Queen undertook the inspection for him. Her Majesty was accompanied by the Princess Mary.

**15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

**REV T J MORGAN**

**The Rev T J Morgan** formerly of the English Congregational Church has been paying a short visit to Ystalyfera this week. It will be remembered that Mr Morgan resigned the pastorate of Kingsland Road Church Bristol that he might assist in "war work" and is now in charge of one of the Y.M.C.A. huts on Salisbury Plain. Mr Morgan returned to the Plain on Wednesday, taking Mrs Morgan to assist him for a short time. We wish them success in their good work.

**17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1917**

**SWANSEA AVIATOR KILLED**

Mr J S Brown, a well known Swansea ironmonger and motor engineer, has received information that his youngest son, **Second Lieutenant George Trevor Brown**, was killed on Monday while flying on Salisbury Plain. It is understood he met his death while engaged in testing a machine. He only left home for duty last Saturday. He joined the Glamorgan Yeomanry at the outbreak of the war, later obtained a commission in the Welsh Regiment. He afterwards joined the Royal Flying Corps. He was 23 years of age.

**31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 1917**

**VOLUNTEERED FOR WORK**

**The Rev Ellis Parry** Godre'rgraig has volunteered for work with the Y.M.C.A. and will leave soon after Easter for Salisbury Plain. He has previously been with the Y.M.C.A. at Sling Camp when he was very popular.

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**MR JOHN DAVIES FORMER LLAIS JOURNALIST**

**10<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**JOHN DAVIES**

**Mr John Davies** of Ystalyfera, who is serving in the Y.M.C.A tents on Salisbury Plain, visited Ystalyfera during the weekend and was very heartily welcomed by old friends. The work in camp is exceedingly trying and Mr Davies looked very much better for his brief respite from duty. We learn that there is a probability of his going out to France shortly.

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

We regret to hear that **Mr John Davies**, of Ystalyfera, formerly engaged as a journalist locally, and who has acted as a Y.M.C.A. Camp leader at Corton, on Salisbury Plain, for the last 10 months, is suffering from a poisoned hand that he will have to leave his duties for some time. He is expected home this weekend.

We learn that **Mr Edwin Jenkins** (Gurnos) is also at home from the same camp.

**2 WEEKS WITH OUR BOYS AT THE Y. M. C. A. ON SALISBURY PLAIN**

**6<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916**

**WARM TRIBUTE TO LOCAL CAMP LEADER**

I have spent nearly a fortnight in a Y.M.C.A. hut at Corton Camp, on the fringe of the Salisbury Plain. This hut is under the leadership of **Mr. Jack Davies**, late of the "Llais" staff,



etc., when they are necessary? At the Y.M.C.A. whither does he go in all his troubles for advice and comfort? The answer is still to the Y.M.C.A.

#### **WHAT THE OFFICERS THINK**

What is the opinion held by the officers? The highest possible—they are glad to provide fatigues to get huts cleaned out every morning, and even to lend men to assist with the work of serving behind the counter. I have spoken to officers and asked them their opinion, and it is invariably favourable. Not only are they pleased with the existing huts, but they are delighted to hear that Mr Davies is extending his sphere of influence, and that he intends erecting a marquee further afield, to be convenient to the men who will soon be installed under canvas. He has secured the confidence of the officers as well as that of the men, and he has but to ask a favour to obtain it.

#### **SCHOOLMASTERS AS WAITERS**

My own experience was a delightful one. This was largely due to the fact that Mr Jack Davies, despite his deplorable politics, is one of my very best friends, so we understood each other from the first. My colleague Mr W E Rees was there also, and our experience of shining our own boots (as a start) and selling hundreds of cups of tea, coffee, and of mixing Bovril and Horlicks by the score, was one not easily to be forgotten. We had neither of us previously fancied ourselves as waiters, but having attended to orders as below, we feel we could honestly apply for a post in any restaurant now. Here is an order "Two teas, gov'ner, three oranges, a large packet of Players, a button-stick, two pairs of laces, and a ha'penny stamp, and three chocolate biscuits (the round ones) and two bars of marzipan." He puts down half a crown. You say one-ten-and-a-half, and give him seven- and-a-half change, with a smile and a thank you. He goes away with "I thank you sir." They never forget the pronoun in thanking you.

#### **ART AND GUNNERY**

The New Army is made up of a noble lot of fellows—fancy hearing the gunners playing Greig, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, and hearing them discuss the merits of Rossetti as a painter. They are as fit as youth and open air can make them, and to see them riding out exercising their lively mules in the morning, or carting manure to the fields, or practising their howitzer shooting is a sight that would convert Cwmgiedd out of its neutrality. The Plain is the most wonderful place in the world; I am told there are over a million men in training upon it now, and there seems room enough for millions more, and there are parts so lonely even now that you may see hares crossing the roads as you ride along. And of all the organisations established to add to Tommy's comfort none is so uniformly successful as the Y.M.C.A., and of all the huts I visited none seemed better organised, better disciplined, or doing better work than the one whose presiding genius is our old friend Mr Jack Davies. —

**By Mr WALTER JONES B A**  
Maesydderwen County School

**13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1917**

**WITH THE BOYS**

**Mr J Walter Jones** BA Headmaster at Maesydderwen County School has just returned after having spent his holiday behind a Y.M.C.A. counter on Salisbury Plain.

**12<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**Mr John Davies** ("Ap Ceithio" of the Llais) paid a visit to Ystalyfera over the weekend. Mr Davies has been in charge of a Y.M.C.A. hut on Salisbury Plain for a considerable time, and his strenuous work there has undoubtedly told on his health, for he was obliged to undergo medical treatment at a nursing home some weeks ago. Happily he is making a rapid recovery and hopes to be in harness again in a few days.

# RECRUITING

## **MINERS' AGENT'S STIRRING CALL APPEAL FOR MEN**

**3<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 1914**

**MEETING AT YSTALYFERA**

After the meeting of Tirbach work men at the Ystalyfera Church Hall on Monday evening, a public meeting took place to appeal for more recruits. Mr Wm. Griffiths (secretary of the Tirbach Lodge), presided, and supporting him were Mr Cecil Gilbertson (Abercrave House), Mr J D Morgan, J.P. (chief agent of the Anthracite district), and the Vicar of Ystalyfera (the Rev J Secundus Jones), together with the lodge officials. After speaking of the purpose of the meeting, the chairman called upon Mr Morgan who spoke in Welsh and referred at considerable length to the menace of German militarism, and urged that it was the duty of able bodied young men to join the forces in order to protect the country from Kaiserism. He spoke of the terrorism existing in the Father-land over Trade Union and industrial organisations. He had seen it at Inter-national Congresses, where the business was regulated by the military, who not infrequently took such steps to strike out items on the programme which they decided, should not be dealt with by the meeting. Such things could not happen in England. After what he had seen he was sure that life was freer and better in Great Britain than in the Kaiser's realm, and urged that it was necessary not only in our interests, but also in the interests of the German nation, that militarism in that country should be crushed. (Hear, hear, and applause).

## **SUCCESSFUL RECRUITING MEETING**

### **STRONG APPEAL FOR SWANSEA BATTALION**

**31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 1914**

**PATRIOTIC YSTALYFERA**

There was a large attendance at a recruiting meeting hold on Tuesday evening at the Church Hall, Gurnos, more particularly on behalf of the **Swansea Battalion Welsh Army Corps**. Considerable enthusiasm was displayed, and there is every room for hope that the meeting will have the desired results. The Vicar of Ystalyfera Rev J Secundus Jones, L.D, presided over the gathering and he was supported by Mr T W James (solicitor) Swansea; Major Perkins, Mr D J Rees ("Llais Llafur") Mr W J Crocker (recruiting agent), Swansea, and Mr G Griffiths, Capital and Counties Bank.

The Chairman said they were gathered together that evening for two purposes: To support the men who were fighting our battles at the front and for more men to go to their assistance. Their views as to the war might vary, but he believed that if the National leaders had heeded men like Mr Robert Blatchford and Lord Roberts-(applause)-five years ago, we should not have been landed in the war to-day. He believed that the Germans knew perfectly well that we were unprepared, whilst they had been preparing for years. That was why they had sought this war. Britain was in the war and must win. (Hear, hear.) There was no doubt about it that Belgium had done her part bravely. It was now time for British to do their part. (Applause)

Mr John Williams said it was his duty to move a patriotic resolution as follows:

That this meeting of the inhabitants of Ystalyfera, profoundly believing that we are fighting in a just cause for the vindication of the rights of small States and the public law of Europe, pledges itself unswervingly to support the Prime Minister's appeal to the nation and all measures necessary for bringing the war to a victorious conclusion whereby the lasting peace of Europe can be assured. Proceeding, Mr Williams said he did not believe that there was one person in the assembly who would have anything to say against the resolution. They might differ upon many points in regard to the war, but this was not the time for persuing their differences. This was the time for fighting and for fighting with such determination as to secure a lasting victory. (Applause) He could say a good many things in that part of his



**MUST GUARANTEE SUCCESS** They must place a sufficient force at the disposal of Lord Kitchener that success would be guaranteed. He had seen men received as raw recruits looking very poor stuff indeed, but at the end of a few weeks' training a wonderful change had been effected. If this could be done in those cases, it could also be done again. None of them, continued the hon. member, believed in war as war, but this war had become necessary because it had been forced upon us. (Hear, hear.) The Kaiser had entered this war upon many miscalculations, however, but that inhuman fiend, that devilish fellow was particularly mistaken in his assumptions regarding Britain. We had given him some surprises already, but we wanted more men in order that we could administer further shocks. Britain was not fighting for sordid gain, nor for territorial expansion, but to free Europe from the German military menace, so that peace and tranquillity might reign in the future.

**PROVISION FOR DEPENDENTS** Mr James, in seconding the resolution said he had heard his friend Mr Williams speak at many meetings since the outbreak of the war, but never to better advantage than that evening. Recently he (the speaker) had had to address a meeting of ladies, and he found it rather difficult. (Laughter) Personally he believed that women were as valorous as men, and he believed that it was unfair that men should put the blame for their failure to enlist on to the shoulders of the women, as many of them had done. ('Hear, hear, and applause.) Wales had done well in the matter of recruiting up to the present, but not as well as she might have done, and he urged that they should have more. He did not think himself that the Government were properly providing either for the men who were fighting, or those the men had left behind. Britain was a wealthy nation and could afford to do better. He would urge that the provision in future was of a more generous nature. (Applause) He had no sympathy at all with those who said they did not mind whether they were under British or German rule. Such people were not worthy of the description of Britishers. The difference between British and German rule was that in Britain the people owned the Government, whilst in Germany the Government owned the people. (Hear, hear.) If Germany won and came to govern England she would make us pay a huge indemnity of £600,000,000 or possibly £1,000,030,000. She would regulate our trade and shipping in her favour, and we should soon see the essential differences between British and German rule. The Colonies had responded admirably to the need of the motherland, and he thought that after the war they should have what they had long desired, some voice in the arranging of our Foreign Policy. He called upon the young men to enlist as a solemn duty in defence of their homes and their native land.

**ADVANTAGES OF PAL'S BATTALION** Major Perkins, who supported the resolution, said that a wounded British soldier speaking to a Sister in the hospital recently declared, "For God's sake, sister, if ever the Germans come her into this room shoot yourself." The soldier gave that advice after seeing the results of their foul atrocities, and he repeated it to those gathered in that room that evening. Britain must win in this war and they were holding that meeting in order to get more men to assist towards that end. They were appealing more particularly for the Swansea Battalion. It was to be one of the finest battalions in the kingdom, and it had a special advantage in that a group of pals could join together and could keep together throughout all their work and travels. Special facilities were offered in this direction, and he urged young fellows to give the matter their serious thought. Britain wanted a great army in order to win and further in order to influence the settlement according to her desires. (Hear, hear, and applause.) The resolution was then carried unanimously.

**THANKS** Mr W J Crocker proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman and re-echoed what had been said regarding the Swansea Battalion. Mr James seconded and the resolution was heartily carried, Mr Jones suitably responding. The vicar then proposed a cordial vote of thanks to the speakers, and in seconding, Mr D J Rees said there was a feeling abroad that Ystalyfera did not get its due in the records of recruiting for the district. They were, however,

living on the borders of Brecon, and everything was covered by that county. Personally he would like to see a definite company of Ystalyfera boys in the Swansea Battalion. Ystalyfera people would, he was sure, think a great deal of them. (Hear, hear.) The resolution was heartily carried and Mr John Williams responded. The National Anthem was sung at the close.

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**7<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

In connection with the Swansea Battalion, a recruiting office has been opened at the Capital and Counties Bank Ystalyfera, **Mr W H Woodliffe** acting as hon. Recruiting officer. It is hoped that there will be a good response

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

Congratulations are extended to **Mr W H Woodliffe**, Brentwood Alltygrug Road, who was gazetted Lieutenant on 14th July and expects to take up his duties almost immediately. Mr Woodliffe is not yet sure what his regiment will be – probably in the National Reserve Forces. He has done excellent recruiting work in the district and the commission is a fitting mark of his services in this direction. He has several years' service with the old Volunteer force to his credit.

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**WELSH ARMY CORPS**

(The Welsh Army Corps was formed in 1914. It was responsible for its own recruitment, billeting, supplies, and training. The Corps was disbanded in 1925)

**5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914**

**7,000 RECRUITS ENROLLED ALREADY**

Over 7,000 men have already enrolled in the Welsh Army Corps, and it is hoped to obtain the full 50,000 without undue delay. Headquarters have been established in High Street, Cardiff, and under the control of a Representative committee, of which Lord Plymouth is chairman, the scheme of organisation is now complete and in full working order.

Every Labour Exchange in the Principality has been made to serve the purpose of an auxiliary recruiting station, and substantial results are expected from the efforts of the managers of these exchanges. Many obstacles have to be overcome before the Chancellor's dream of a permanent National Army Corps becomes a reality, but with the inspiration of Captain Haggard's dying exhortation, "Stick it, Welsh!" the goal should be reached before many months are past.

So far, the total number of men recruited throughout Wales since the outbreak of war closely approaches 50,000 and thickly populated Glamorgan holds pride of place with an approximate contribution of 38,000 men up to date. When completed, the **Welsh Army Corps** will be an integral part of Kitchener's Army without the semblance of a separate existence. Cardiff, Swansea, and the Rhondda Valley as the three most populous centres, lead the way in recruiting for the corps, with the North Wales "Pals", Brigade at full strength. It is expected that the City of Cardiff Battalion will have attained full strength before the end of this week.

**APPEAL FOR WELSH CORPS**

**19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914**

**RECRUITING AT GURNOS**

There was a very good attendance at a recruiting demonstration, at Gurnos on Friday evening, held under the auspices of the Gurnos and Cwmtwrch sub-committee of the Ystradgynlais District Recruiting Executive. ....

They were holding that meeting chiefly to ask the help of the populace, and particularly the young people, in the formation of the new Welsh Army Corps. The new Welsh Army Corps had already done very well. About 8,000 men had been recruited, and three units were up to



war strength, the first and second Rhondda Valley Battalions and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He wanted to put it to the Swansea Valley that evening that they must not be beaten by the Rhondda (hear, hear). They were perfectly able to raise a battalion, he was sure. They had already done very well in that district up to the present. They had sent a Battalion up to war strength, of Territorials now in Bombay. Then they sent another 65 men later, therefore there were now two full companies up to full war strength from the Ystalyfera and Ystradgynlais districts. Now they were working to complete another company: the 5th Battalion of Reserves at Pembroke. Let them first get that up to war strength and then form a company or Battalion in the Valley for the New Welsh Army Corps. The nations had arrived that evening at the 129th day of the war, and no doubt they in the British Isles, and indeed the whole of the world would be only too delighted if they could know that ere another 129 days had expired, this terrible war would be ended. No one could say, although they hoped and prayed that it would be over before that time. But they could not tell and therefore they must be prepared and to end this war they must have a big Army at home in order to allow the standing army to go abroad. The longer the war dragged on, disease and death would follow even more terrible than it was to be seen to-day. We had had very lucky days those last two days (applause)—and, of course, we were delighted, but we must not exult too much. The nation must not think that because the fleet had had one victory there could not be a reverse to-morrow. We must still go on preparing for the final effort. A commanding officer from the front had said in his presence that at the beginning of the war men had stayed 19 days in the trenches without relief. It was awful then, but now reinforcements had gone and allowed the soldiers to have proper rest, but more men were still wanted. He put it to the young men that it was their duty to take their part in the relief of those brave soldiers who were fighting so nobly at the front...

## **ARMY VETERINARY CORPS**

This Corps was responsible for the medical care of animals used by the army; predominantly horses, mules and pigeons.

### **RSPCA FUND FOR SICK AND WOUNDED BRITISH HORSES**

**NOVEMBER 1914**

**TO THE EDITOR**

In spite of the excellent arrangements and splendid work carried out by the Army Veterinary Corps for the care of sick and wounded horses of the British forces at the front, the public has long felt a desire to co-operate in the humane and economic work of this department. It is interesting here to mention that already some 23,000 horses have been drafted in to its hospitals, and tended with such care that large numbers have been returned fit to the front.

The Army Veterinary Corps has already availed itself of the assistance of the R.S.P.C.A. by drafting a large number of its inspectors into the ranks of that corps, and the society has now received the official sanction of the Army Council to aid the cause in coping with the increased demand on its resources. This sanction is conveyed in the following words

"That they will be grateful for your Society's further assistance and approve of a fund being started by your Society for the purchase of hospital requisites for sick and wounded horses."

I have gladly accepted the position of chairman, of a special council to organise the fund, and I appeal with confidence to all for financial assistance to enable the R.S.P.C.A. to assist in coping with this admirable work. Cheques for this special fund may be sent to the Secretary, R.S.P.C.A., 105, Jermyn Street, London, S.W., or to Mr C A Phillimore, who has kindly consented to act as hon. treasurer, at Messrs Coutts and Co.'s Bank, 440, Strand, London W.C.

Yours faithfully, PORTLAND, Chairman



## **HOME SERVICE**

**26<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

### **RE ENLISTMENT SCHEME**

Sergeant Gould has received a notice to the effect that any man who has been enlisted and discharged since the outbreak of the war and who wishes now to re enlist in the infantry for home service only for the duration of the war, should send his name, number, previous regiment and present address to Mr Albert J Woodman, the local recruiting officer or to Sergeant Gould at the Ystalyfera Hotel. We believe there are several men in the district who come within the scope of the circular. Here is a good opportunity for them to be of service again.

## **19<sup>th</sup> PIONEER BATTALION RECRUITING**

**5<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

### **BRECON & RADNOR EXPRESS**

The recruiting detachment of the 19th (Pioneer) Battalion of the Welsh Regiment at present touring West Wales reached Ystalyfera from Brynamman on Friday and were accorded an enthusiastic reception, large crowds assembling in the gaily decorated streets. The soldiers were entertained to tea by Mrs Fleming Gough (Ynisedwyn House) at the Church Hall Gurnos. Mrs Gough was heartily thanked for her generosity. In the early evening there was a march through the town, the regimental bands (under Bandmaster Collins) heading the troops. The parade was watched by thousands of people, the majority of whom gathered on the square, where a recruiting meeting was held. Among the speakers were Major Anderson (Swansea), Vicar of Ystalyfera (Rev J Secundus Jones), Messrs G H Strick, J.P.; H J Powell J.P.; D J Rees and the regimental officers.

Several recruits were obtained and the men, remaining in the town for the night, were billeted on local residents.

### **WARM WELCOME FOR WELSH PIONEERS**

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

### **MERRY GATHERING AT THE CHURCH HALL**

A detachment of picked men from the 19<sup>th</sup> (Pioneer) Battalion of the Welsh Regiment has been engaged for the past few weeks on a recruiting tour of South and South West Wales, and last weekend the Swansea Valley was visited. The previous day, (Thursday), the detachment was in the Amman Valley. The men (numbering over 150) were billeted for the night in Brynamman, and marched down the valley to Ystalyfera on Friday morning, arriving at the Coliseum shortly before 1.30. They were greeted by a large gathering of the populace, and the streets were gaily decorated with flags and bunting for the occasion. The procession was headed by the two regimental bands (under Bandmaster Collins) and Major James, the officer commanding, followed, mounted. There were also four lieutenants accompanying the men, Messrs Edwards, Thomas, Lunt and Elfed. The men presented a very smart appearance, although some looked tired after their march and on arrival at the Coliseum, they were dismissed to their billet for which prior arrangements had been made by the local police. Later in the afternoon the men assembled in front of the Coliseum where they received their respective kit bags, and at 4.30 entered the Church Hall, where they partook of tea, kindly provided by Mrs Gough, of Ynisedwyn. After a bountiful repast, served by Mrs Gough and a number of willing helpers, cigarettes were distributed, and the men had a jolly sing-song, the programme including such topical choruses as "Tipperary," "Here we are again," and others. Two delightful cornet solos were rendered by a member of the regimental band.

In the course of an interval, Lieutenant Thomas mounted the platform, and in the course of a short address, said it was difficult for him to express on behalf of the officers and men their deep sense of gratitude to the inhabitants of Ystalyfera for their very hearty and cordial welcome, and to Mrs Gough for her very generous hospitality. They did appreciate that kindness most deeply, and he assured those present that the men would often think of it when

they were far away. Hearty cheers were then given for Mrs Gough, and the men joined vociferously in the singing of “For she's a jolly good fellow!”

Mrs Gough in responding briefly, thanked Lieutenant Thomas and the men for their expression of appreciation, and said she assured them of a very hearty welcome to Ystalyfera. She personally had enjoyed their presence immensely. She was sure that she and her friends had not entertained the men half as well as the men had entertained them. She was sure they were all brave fellows ready to die for their country, but she hoped that if and when they did go out, they would come back safely.....

**Sitting (left to right):**

Dr W J Lewis Ystalyfera, Rev J Secundus Jones Vicar, **Colonel and Mrs Gough – Ynisedwyn House**, Rev L T Jones curate and Captain Griffith

**Standing:**

Mr Arthur Thomas, Captain Cross CLB, Scoutmaster Ted Morgan, Lieutenant Evans CLB, second Lieutenant Gethin Owen CLB and Police Sergeant Davies Ystalyfera



**THE REGIMENT**

A few particulars concerning the regiment and its formation may not be out of place. The battalion is composed of pioneers (i.e. men who when necessary will go out to do advance work, trench digging, mining the ground, and other similar work, and it is for the most part composed of men specially fitted for the task. Major James and his fellow officers are all mining or civil engineers and most of the men have been engaged in mining, navvying, or some similar occupation, although there are others, whose employment has been of a less laborious nature. There are several local boys in the detachment, two or three from Ystradgynlais, and two or three from Ystalyfera. The officers are regarded as particularly capable men, having come from all parts of the world to join, and they have sacrificed incomes amounting in the aggregate to £25,000 per annum.

Sergeant Major McCarthy, the chief non-commissioned officer in the visiting detachment is an old Grenadier Guardsman, and went through the South African War. The bands have only been in existence for about six weeks in view of which fact their state of efficiency can only be regarded as amazing. Under Bandmaster Collins they have rapidly become an association of really excellent musicians, and where ever they have gone during their tour, they have had nothing but praise. The band is composed of men from all sections of the British Army particularly the Guards regiments. Bandmaster Collins has every reason to be immensely proud of his men.

### **ROUTE MARCH AND MEETING**

To return to Friday's doings, the men reformed at 6.30 p.m., and headed by the bands, had a route march through the town as an attraction for the meeting held at 7.30 p.m., near the Playhouse.

Mr H J Powell, J.P., presided over a large attendance, and in the course of a brief address urged upon the young men the seriousness of the call to the colours. Major Anderson, of Swansea (the district recruiting officer) said he had now visited Ystalyfera many times. He had nothing fresh to say to a local audience, but he did wonder sometimes why the young men did not show a deeper appreciation of the situation in which the country is placed by coming forward and offering their services in greater numbers. He wondered sometimes whether it was nervousness or timidity that the men did not go; it certainly was not for lack of reason. That reason he had already explained. The sooner the men came forward the sooner the war would be ended, and the less the expense to the nation. Britain was not engaged in a war of conquest; it was a war of self preservation.

Lieutenant Edwards, who was introduced by the chairman as a son of Principal Edwards of Bala-Bangor, delivered a forceful speech, in which he made an eloquent appeal for more men. He said he spoke to working men as one who knew their lives, and who had followed working class movements with great sympathy. Some asked "What matter if Germany wins?" Having home, food and clothing they argued that they would be no worse for a German victory. He would ask such men to look at Belgium. Had the working men of Belgium either home, food or clothing other than what charity had willingly and gladly provided them with. What had happened to Belgium would happen to a far greater degree if the Germans defeated Britain. Some said they would wait until they were fetched. That was not only the answer of a coward but also of a cad. If Germany won, Britishers would work not for Britain or for themselves, but for a foreign tyrant, who would grind them under his foot to save the German tax payer's pocket. Every man should stand shoulder to shoulder at this moment, all eligible citizens prepared to fight for the safety and triumph of his country. (Applause)

Mr D J Rees (editor of "The Labour Voice," said that he felt certain he voiced the feelings of Ystalyfera by welcoming the troops to the town on their route march, and he hoped most sincerely that their purpose in making up their battalion would be achieved and that they would be successful in getting recruits for other regiments also. He was clear in the conviction that the only means where by the national democratic life could be maintained was by the complete success of the Allied arms in this war. (Hear, hear)

Lieutenant Edwards afterwards explained that some difficulty had arisen in connection with the separation allowances of local men, who had first joined other regiments and had afterwards been transferred to the Pioneer Battalion, but as a result of the efforts of the officers, this had now been obviated and payment was being made as usual.

During the evening, the men wandered about the streets fraternising with the local residents, and Ystalyfera bore a very striking resemblance to a real military centre. Several recruits were obtained. The battalion left for Swansea by the 9.47 train on Saturday morning and were accorded a very enthusiastic send-off.











After proving their fitness for the work, places are found for them on farms where they are under the supervision of a Government inspectress and receive 18s per week.

**28<sup>th</sup> JULY 1917**

**DRYM MOUNTAIN**

About 37 acres on the Drym Mountain are being enclosed for the purpose of tilling next year and the work is being done by young women, clothed in the recognised garb of women farm workers.

**18<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

**PRISONERS OF WAR AS LAND WORKERS**

A comb-out of land workers is announced by the Board of Agriculture, which says that an arrangement has been made with the Ministry of National Service and the War Office for a definite number of 30,000 Grade 1 men to be made available from agriculture for military service not later than June 30<sup>th</sup>.

It is hoped that the large majority of these men will be recruited under the Proclamation of April 19<sup>th</sup> last, calling up men born in the years 1895-1899, but if the full number of men is not obtained under this Proclamation it will be necessary to obtain the remainder from men up to 31 years of age.

It is expected that, additional labour, including a large number of prisoners of war, will be made available for agriculture, to take the place of the men urgently required for immediate military service.

**15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

**YOUNG LADS: TO HELP WITH THE HARVEST**

In the current Parish Magazine, the Rev J Secundus Jones, Vicar of Ystalyfera, makes the interesting announcement that he is arranging to form parties of about half-a-dozen strong young lads to give part-time help with harvest work on farms in the neighbourhood. Any who is willing to join, should see the Vicar, who will give full particulars. This is undoubtedly a move in the right direction, and we hope the Vicar will immediately have a good number of volunteers. The writer has been assured that, in view of the very extensive sowing that has taken place this year, unless farmers are able to obtain some help at the harvesting, a very large amount of food stuff will certainly be wasted, merely because it will be impossible to garner it in time. We feel sure there are many in the district who would be ready to help, if only for a few hours, or half a day a week. The thing to do is to organise this help in such a way that the sum total of it at a given time and place would be substantial and adequate.

## **GAS MASK INVENTOR DIES OF PNEUMONIA**

Colonel E F Harrison, the inventor of the British gas mask, has died of pneumonia. When 47 he enlisted as a private in May 1915. He was going overseas soon, afterwards when there was a call for chemists to fight the German poison gas, and he was transferred to the Royal Engineers. He went to the Chemical Warfare Department, of which he was controller when he died.

For over a year he was in charge of research for defence and the manufacture of masks and respirators. It is due mainly to his brilliant work that our troops have been so well protected and that no new gas has been employed against them for which he had not provided the antidote. He built up an immense new industry and millions of his respirators have been issued to British, American, and Italian troops. He never spared himself not even when he lost his eldest son in the Battle of the Somme in July 1916.

## WAR DOG SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

14<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1918

DOG'S SERVICE IN THE WAR

Amongst the many activities of the war it is only right, that the national service of the brave dogs of Britain should receive attention. They have been in use officially for nearly two years as messengers, as sentries and as guards for places of vital importance. **In 1917 a War Dog School of Instruction was started** at Shoeburyness but was recently moved to Lyndhurst Hants. At first the dog recruits came entirely from the Battersea, Birmingham, and Liverpool Homes for Lost Dogs, and many a dog thus saved from the lethal chamber is now doing excellent national work. It is an interesting fact, and not without certain pathos, that many a brave soldier owes his life to some poor uncared for stray dog. Members of the public also generously gave their dogs.

The skill, courage, and tenacity of these dogs have been amazing. During heavy barrages, when all other communications have been cut, the messenger dogs have made their way, and in many cases have brought messages of vital import. Sometimes they have been wounded in the performance of their duties. During the great German assault this year part of our line in front of a famous town was cut off by severe barrage. A messenger dog was released with an urgent appeal for reinforcements. It ran three kilometres in ten minutes. A French Colonial division was sent up and saved the situation.

## COMPULSION BILL TO BE INTRODUCED NEXT WEEK

1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 1916

**A lobby correspondent states:**

I am in a position to state that the Bill to give legal effect to Lord Derby's recruiting scheme is already in existence and will be introduced in Parliament next week.

This will carry out the resolution arrived at Wednesday's Cabinet endorsing the pledge given by the Premier that single men of military age shall be called up for service before the married men's classes are called, and it will transform what has been a moral into a legal obligation to use Mr. Asquith's words.

**A SHORT BILL**

The is a short one and provides, it is understood, for the compulsory enlistment of all men of military age, with provisions giving power to exclude men engaged in reserved occupations, and giving power also to tribunals to grant exemptions from service where good cases are made out and sufficient causes shown.

There will also be power to appeal against the decisions of tribunals.

The Bill in its present form, I am told, deals with both single and married men of military age but the latter will not be called up until the single men's classes are exhausted. There will, in fact, be very little from Lord Derby's scheme, except that there will be compulsory instead of voluntary enrolment. This is the essential principle of the Bill, though its wording may be changed before it is finally presented to Parliament.

## AND MORE ON TRAINS

19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914

The delay in the arrival of the afternoon train from Swansea on Wednesday (it was an hour late), not only caused great inconvenience but considerable alarm.

A silly rumour was spread abroad that submarines had entered Swansea Harbour and a good many over credulous people believed the story until they were officially reassured.

## REFUGEES

**28<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

**23,000 COMING NEXT WEEK**

According to the agreement reached between, the British and Netherland Governments the first batch of Belgian refugees from Holland will arrive in England on Monday next. It is expected that the arrivals will number 600 a day, and the intention is to bring 25,000 people from Flushing. The inflow, however, may not stop at this figure. The ultimate number will be determined by the military operations on the Continent and by the offers of hospitality which may be available in this country where 80,000 Belgian refugees have already found homes. Even now refugees are reaching London at the rate of 2,000 a week. So long as the offers of hospitality come in the War Refugees Committee will have no difficulty of disposing of 600 people every day. At the time of the rush as many as 1,500 refugees were sent into the country daily, The Belgians who are arriving now mostly belong to the middle class. Many of them remained in Holland until they had exhausted their resources. But the additional 25,000 for whom homes are to be found in the United Kingdom are for the most part in a destitute condition, and will have to be clothed before they are allocated to homes. During the last few weeks there has been a great inroad on the stocks of garments at the clothing depot at 23, Warwick Square, and a representative of the "Morning Post" was informed that parcels of clothes were urgently needed to meet the demands that will be made on behalf of the starving Belgians.

Parcels of clothing destined for refugees are received at 333, Shorts-buildings, Strand.

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**14<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

**REFUGEES: ARRIVE AT YSTALYFERA**

Considerable interest was felt in the town on Friday last when it became known that the group of Belgian refugees, for whose coming the local committee had been preparing during the preceding fortnight, were to arrive by the 4.30 train from Swansea. A small party had been appointed to meet the Belgians in Swansea, while at Ystalyfera there was a huge crowd in and around the station, and along the street to Pantteg, eager to give a hearty welcome to our unfortunate guests.

As already announced, **Pantteg Chapel House** – generously given free of rent by Pantteg Church had been plainly but comfortably furnished; while Mrs Thomas, Pantteg Stores, had kindly arranged a bountiful repast. A number of ladies were in attendance, and the refugees, from the youngest to the oldest, were made to feel that they were amongst friends. They were given a real Welsh welcome.

The refugees are the family of Mynherr Louis VanderKerkhofe, by calling, a fisherman, and from the neighbourhood of Ostend. The family consists of Mynherr and Vrow VanderKerkhofe, two daughters, aged 17 and 19, five sons aged between 15 and 5 years, a son-in-law, Carlo Dijheselle, with baby one month old, and daughter-in-law with baby 16 months old. The husband of the latter – the eldest son of Mynherr van der Kerkhofe— is at present in hospital, having been badly wounded in the fighting in Belgium. The mother has managed to preserve a photo of her lad, and it rests on the most conspicuous spot in the room—the centre of the mantelpiece. And when mention was made of the son that was "somewhere"—she was not sure where—in hospital, the eyes of the Belgian mother filled with tears. And although they understood no word of her speech, the Welsh mothers that stood around, understood that common language of the tear right well, and responded to it as only mothers can.

A brother of Carlo Dijheselle is also fighting with the Belgian Army. The day after the party reached Lowestoft another boat arrived there, whose captain told Carlo Dijheselle that on the day they left a German bomb had fallen on the home of his parents which was destroyed.

Carlo is naturally wondering what fate has befallen his parents and brothers and sisters. The circumstances of this family's flight from their home are so interesting that we venture to reproduce some of the details given to our representative. From the beginning of October aeroplanes and Zeppelins were continually flying over Ostend, dropping bombs, and the inhabitants were in a state of terror. The fish market was badly damaged, also the gas works and several important buildings, besides dwelling houses in the humble portions of the city. Those of the inhabitants who could get away did so, and the boats were crowded daily. On Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, the last boat for England left, as on that day the attacks became more frequent and terrifying.

It was then that M VanderKerkhofe determined to take his family away, for the Germans were reported quite near. So on Tuesday night they were told to prepare, and next morning early the family, each carrying as large a load as possible, made their way to the wharf, and embarked on the father's little fishing smack. Hundreds of poor terrified people of all ages crowded the quays, and, in common with other craft, M VanderKerkhofe's little boat was in danger of being swamped. However, they at last got away with 57 souls on board, and after 30 hours tossing on the sea, they put into Lowestoft, where they were kindly received, and remained four days at the Seamen's Mission. They were then sent on to London, and remained for over a fortnight at St. George's Workhouse. They are anxious to express their gratitude to the people of Ystalyfera for the warm welcome they have received. The little boys are attending Pantteg School and are already making progress in England.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914**

#### **UPDATE**

Monsieur Louis VanderKerkhofe, son of M and Mme VanderKerkhofe, the Belgian refugees who, with their family were recently welcomed at Ystalyfera, joined his parents here on Monday. M Louis was a reserve soldier in the Belgian Army, has served since war broke out, was wounded near Antwerp, and had a very hard time of it, until he discovered his parents at Ystalyfera. The soldier, through his brother-in-law (Mr Carlo De Gheselle), who acted as interpreter, told our representative that he was engaged in his occupation of fisherman when war broke out, and returned on August 10<sup>th</sup> going immediately to the field of action. He fought in several of the battles against the Germans, including Tirlle-monde, Heliessesem and others, and has a very minute record of all his doings. One incident in particular is worthy of record.

Arriving at Capelle en aBis they found the Germans preparing for a repasts and behaving very roughly to the women who were preparing to serve them. The Belgian soldiers, however, quickly cleared them out and sat down to enjoy the good things themselves.

It was at Corditch, on the river Maas, 20 miles from Antwerp, that the soldier was wounded. It occurred on 9<sup>th</sup> October. The Germans were preparing to bombard Antwerp, and some of the Belgians were out reconnoitring. They had to pile up the dead bodies of soldiers to protect themselves from sight and when discovered they were obviously hopelessly outnumbered. They had to take to the river, but a great number failed to get away as the bridge had been blown down. VanderKerkhofe had a nasty bullet wound in the leg and had to creep along for a great distance before getting shelter. He was taken by ambulance to Antwerp. When the Germans were approaching Antwerp he was moved to Bruges, from thence to Ostend, Boulogne, and Calais, and getting some civilian clothing at the latter place, was brought across to England where he was hoping to find his people. He had been told in Ostend that his father and mother had crossed in their boat, and he was directed to Ystalyfera by the Seamen's Home Authorities, with who M Carlo De Gheselle had been in communication. The soldier is now almost well, although he limps rather badly yet. He passed through 48 towns and villages in the course of the campaign, and on one terrible occasion was for eighteen days practically destitute of food and shelter. All the officers of his regiment have been killed in battle, or have since died of their wounds.









**14<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

**YSTRADGYNLAIS**

A meeting of the Ystradgynlais Belgian Relief Committee took place on Monday evening at the Tabernacle Chapel, the Rector (Rev James Jones), presiding. The ladies' committee, among other business of the evening reported that the total sum raised by their collection was £42 5s 10d for the furnishing of the house, in addition to the gift and loan of various things. It was decided to hold this sum as a fund for reserve to meet any contingency that may arise in the way of clothing, etc. The money from the various places of worship for the maintenance of the refugees continues to be received satisfactorily, and the refugees themselves appear to be settling down to their new life.

Mr Tom Williams, London House, secretary to the committee, reported that the Glantawe Electric Supply Co. Ltd very kindly consented to put three new lamps in the house, do the necessary wiring, and supply the necessary current free of charge, whilst the local collieries. Ynisedwyn, Gurnos and Diamond had undertaken in turn to supply the house with coal,—supplies to be sent by the respective collieries every other three months. The committee and friends of the members desire to say how much they are indebted to three or four local residents for their great kindness in interpreting for the Refugees. Mrs Richards, of Penrhos a lady of French parentage who has lived for many years in this district, Mrs J Harris, B.A., and Mr John Walter Jones, B.A. (headmaster of the local County School), have all rendered very valuable service in this direction, and have undoubtedly helped to make the refugees feel more home-like than would otherwise have been the case.

**17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**BELGIANS GO TO LONDON: LEEMANS**

It will be remembered that in December last Monsieur Leemans, one of the Belgian refugees at Ystradgynlais, went away to Calais on service in the Belgian Government in December. He has now returned to London to take up service in the G.P.O., and Madame Leemans and their child have now travelled to the Metropolis to join him there. They have been highly gratified at the hospitality extended to them by local residents, and Mr T Williams (London House), secretary of the Refugee Committee, received a postcard on Tuesday expressing very deep appreciation for all that the committee has done on their behalf.

**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**BELGIAN LETTER OF THANKS YSTRADGYNLAIS**

An interesting letter has been handed to us, written by **M Leopold Adams**, one of the local Belgian refugees. M Adams has acquired his knowledge of the English language since his stay in the place, and he writes his first English letter to the people of Ystradgynlais, thanking them for their kindness to himself and his fellow countrymen during their stay in this neighbourhood. The letter reads

“To the Population of Ystradgynlais: Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,—we thank you from the bottom of our heart, and we shall never forget the service you have done us. Yes, it is a great service you have done us; for without you we really do not know what would have become of us. It was for us very sad our dear native land to quit and to go to an unknown land. We shall never forget the day that we came to Ystradgynlais. It is so rarely one meets true friends when one is in misfortune, that we greatly appreciate what you have done for us, and we shall be grateful to you all our lives for it. Accept, our dear friends, our deep gratitude for your kindness.

On behalf of the Belgian Refugees,  
L. Adams, Ystradgynlais

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# JOINING THE COLOURS

## ABERCRAVE & COLBREN

### COLBREN AND THE WAR

### COLBREN STATION

Colbren station is usually one of the most dull and prosaic of places. No one would dream of associating it with war. Yet nearly every day since the outbreak of hostilities, the station has presented quite a changed appearance. Recruits, mostly for the Territorial forces, are passing through Colbren in large numbers. They are usually sent on from Brecon via Colbren and Neath to Neyland and Pembroke, and change at Colbren on the noon train when their departure is watched by a group of interested onlookers.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 1914

### LOCAL MEN FOR THE FRONT

Several Territorial's as well as Reservists, are among those who have been called up in readiness for service when needed, and it is worth noting all left the district very readily, and with considerable enthusiasm.

### 29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914

### ABERCRAVE AND COLBREN

### A FRENCH RESERVIST RETURN

One of the residents in the French Colony at Abercrave was last week dispatched to the front as a reservist by M Le Bars, acting French Consul at Swansea, but has now returned—sent back by the French authorities because he was not needed, there being sufficient men there. He was only three days in uniform, but he profoundly claims that this is sufficient to qualify him for a medal, and he has consequently come back content to resume coal getting. He met some of the British troops at Boulogne, and his knowledge of English rapidly enabled him to strike up an acquaintance amongst them.

### 1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915

### RECRUITING

Some Abercrave boys have obeyed the call this week to the colours: **Idris Thomas, William Griffiths, Tom Davies, J Potter, Henri Lefechre, R Goldswain, J Lambert, M Parson** and **Gwilym Davies** having joined the 3rd Welsh Borderers. The boys left the place on Thursday.

### 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1915

### ABERCRAVE MAN AEROPLANE MAKING

The many friends of **Mr Morgan Lewis**, son of Mr and Mrs Lewis Twynyrodyn, who recently took up a post in the electricity department at the Leeds Corporation Works, has made a further change since leaving Abercrave for Yorkshire and has now secured a good post in the Grahame White Aeroplane Making Works, which are, of course, engaged on Government service. He is still very well and happy.

### 4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915

### PRIVATE DAN JONES

**Private Dan Jones** the well-known Colbren resident, who is in the 19th Pioneer Battalion of the Welsh Regiment, which recently visited the Swansea Valley on a recruiting march, is now at home on leave. He joined about four months ago, since when the regiment has been kept exceedingly busy. They are now stationed at Winchester.

### 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 1915

### HERBERT WILLIAMS

**Mr Herbert Williams B.A.**, son of the Rev John Williams (vicar of Colbren) and Mrs Williams has recently joined the Army as a commissioned officer we understand. Mr Williams has been teaching for some time past in a High School at Southend on Sea, near London.

### 13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915

### 8 NEW RECRUITS

There was a very large audience at the Council Schools .Abercrave, on Friday evening, when the last of the three recruiting rallies, arranged for the locality by the County Recruiting Committee, took place. **Alderman M W Morgan**, J.P. (Bryntawe), presided, and Sir Henry Jones, of Glasgow University (the most distinguished of living Welsh scholars) was the principal speaker. He gave a very fine address urging young men to come voluntarily rather than wait to be fetched, as they would be unless they answered to the free call. Mr Joseph Burgess (chairman of the Bradford Branch of the I. L.P.), also spoke, and we learn that there were no fewer than eight recruits at the close of the gathering.

### 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1917

### Alderman M W MORGAN J P

**Alderman M W Morgan** J P of Bryntawe Abercrave had a Bible class at the outbreak of the war at St. David's Church of 15 members. 14 of these volunteered early in the war for active service, while the remaining one, who was over military age, died, and he was left without any pupils. Two of the volunteers have since given a good account of themselves and have each gained the Military Medal.

### 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1917

### POWELL & MATHIAS

Two local boys – **Mr Morgan Powell**, son of Mr and Mrs Joseph Powell Trefleming and **Mr David John Mathias**, son of the late Mr and Mrs Mathias, left on Monday for Crystal Palace London, where they are being trained for the Navy.

### 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917

Mr and Mrs J Powell of Trefleming have received a letter from their son **Ordinary Seaman Morgan Powell**, relating his recent experiences. He was sailing on an armed liner to America when they encountered an enemy submarine, which torpedoed the boat. Four of the sailors on board were killed by the explosion. However, the boat was taken to Lough Swilly on the coast of Ireland and from there to Glasgow where it now lies for repairs. Powell is again on another liner sailing for Africa.

+ **O.S. David John Mathias** (Dyffryn House) was home on final leave a few days last week.

### 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918

Intimation reached Miss Sarah Mathias Dyffryn House on Sunday morning that her youngest brother **Private Isaac Howell Mathias**, Royal naval Division is a prisoner of war in Germany. Private Mathias is the youngest son of the late Mr and Mrs Howell Mathias and his only brother **Gunner David John Mathias** is serving with the Navy.

### 18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917

### ESIAH JONES

**Mr Esiah Jones**, second son of Mrs Jones Dolycoed, has been called to the colours and left Abercrave a fortnight ago to join the Wireless Telegraphy Section at the Crystal Palace London.

He was formerly a teacher at the Caehopkin Council Schools and before his departure Mr T D Griffiths, the headmaster, presented him with a wrist watch on behalf of the staff and pupils, as a token of the regard and esteem in which he was held at the schools. He was also an ex-pupil of the Maesydderwen County School Ystradgynlais.

### 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917

### HOME ON LEAVE

**Mr Esiah Jones**, son of Mrs E Jones Dolycoed, visited his home during the weekend looking well. He is now in the Wireless Telegraphy School at the Crystal Palace. On Sunday morning, the Rev Gilbert Jones Llangloffan, the special preacher at the anniversary services of Noddfa, presented him with a pocket Bible, on behalf of the Church, where he was a member.

**16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

**ON BOARD PATROL BOAT**

**Wireless Telegraphist Esiah Jones**, Dolycoed, is now on board a patrol boat in the Menai Straits. He was in training at the Crystal Palace London

**8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1919**

**ESIAH JONES DISCHARGED**

Mr Esiah Jones Dolycoed, who has been discharged from the Navy, has been appointed to the Abercrave Upper Department and commenced duties on Monday last.

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## **CWMGIEDD & PALLEG**

**29<sup>th</sup> MAY 1915**

Cwmgiedd and Palleg are both still without a recruit to their credit

**CWMGIEDD'S "NEUTRALITY" BROKEN**

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**IDRIS LEWIS**

It will be remembered that some time ago we stated that Cwmgiedd's neutrality had been broken by one young man joining the colours from that locality. That, however, was scarcely correct, as the recruit was just outside the district. This week, however, the deed has been done. **Mr Idris Lewis** "Plasycoed" has been accepted. The new recruit who has succeeded in saving Cwmgiedd's good name, is well known in the locality. He is not yet sure what port he will be sent to.

**18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

Cwmgiedd still observes neutrality as far as the war is concerned but we are informed from a reliable source that if she does decide to come out, it will be on the side of the Allies! Fears have been entertained in the neighbourhood that the neutrality was about to be broken by the action of one man but so far there is no foundation for the rumour that J---- H----- has accepted the King's shilling.

**27<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916**

**NEUTRALITY AGAIN**

A correspondent writes:

"Cwmgiedd is determined to maintain its neutrality at all costs, and has even carried its opposition to the extent of ignoring the Summer Time Act. On Sunday morning last while Ystradgynlais folk were enjoying an extra hour of sunshine, Cwmgiedd inhabitants were "turning over" for another nap, with the result that no one got up in time to go to chapel! Consequently the services for the day were held at eleven, three, and seven, instead of ten, two, and six as usual.

**28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1917**

**MISS ANNIE POWELL**

**Miss Annie Powell**, daughter of Mr and Mrs Tom Powell (grocer) Cwmgiedd, has been selected out of no less than 80 candidates as a nurse at the Glanrhyd War Hospital, Pontardawe. Miss Powell is highly qualified for such work, having obtained nursing and ambulance certificates in connection with the continuation technical classes. She will commence her duties on Saturday.



YEARGROUP's Collection of Postcards

### **CWMTWRCH**

#### **FRED EVANS: JAMES RICHARDS: WILLIAM THOMAS: HAROLD MARTIN**

Recruits have again rallied to the colours from the valley, three more having joined the Royal Engineers as drivers and are now stationed at Abergavenny, viz, Messrs **Fred Evans** near Old Tredegar, **James Richards** Felinfach and **William Thomas** Post Office Terrace. They left the place during the week.

**Harold Martin** (Lower Cwmtwrch) also went away on Monday, having joined the Royal Engineers stationed at the above place.

**24<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915**

#### **COMMISSION FOR CWMTWRCH MAN**

**Mr Tom Lewis**, son of Mr Howell Lewis, left Cwmtwrch on Friday for Tenby. Mr Lewis has received a commission in the 12th Welsh and after a preliminary course of instruction will join the regiment at Rhyl.

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

#### **CWMTWRCH**

A goodly number of Cwmtwrch soldiers have been home for their last leave during the week-end and returned full of buoyant spirits with the 4 o'clock train .on Monday for Winchester. They expect to go out to France before the end of this week. We wish them all the best of good fortune.



third son of Mr Davis Rees of the firm of Messrs D Rees and Sons, the well known contractors. He is a keen musician and took a great interest in Sunday school work. Mr Rees is a married man with a family.

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**10th FEBRUARY 1917**

No less than five boys from Godre'rgraig, all employed at the Tarreni Colliery, went together this week to Swansea for the purpose of offering their services to the military authorities. They are as follows:

**Johnny Harris, Willie Jenkins, David Joseph Davies, Sam Evans and William David Butler**

They all received a hearty send off from the people of Godre'rgraig

**YSTALYFERA**

**ENTHUSIASTIC SCENES IN YSTALYFERA**

**27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1915**

**VALLEY MILITARY DEMONSTRATION**

There were unique and interesting sights in the Swansea Valley yesterday (Thursday), when 200 men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh Regiment now stationed at Swansea marched up to Ystalyfera through the Valley, carrying their full war kit, and in sparkling regimentals. They were met at Clydach by the Clydach Silver Band in uniform, which accompanied them up the Valley, a halt being made at Godre'rgraig for the combined bands of Ystalyfera to join the procession. From thence the soldiers proceeded to the Church Hall. The vicar provided tea at the Church Hall, and to supplement the rations which the men brought with them, also provided cake. The route of the march was lined with thousands of men, women, and children coming from far and near, and the utmost enthusiasm was evinced, particularly at Ystalyfera, where the men had a most hearty welcome. The purpose of the demonstration was to arouse enthusiasm for a recruiting meeting held in the evening at the Ystalyfera Coliseum, where patriotic addresses were delivered by Colonel J E Thomas (officer commanding) Mr J W Jones, B.A., Mr G H Strick, J.P., and others. The Rev R G James (of the English Congregational Church) occupied the chair.

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**1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915**

**12 MORE FROM YSTALYFERA**

Several more recruits, about twelve in number have gone from Ystalyfera this week. They include the names of **T Davies, D J Evans, J Francis, E John Evans, Sid Thomas, Horace York, E Bevan, W J Davies, George Griffiths, and R Lewis (Graig)**.

More are expected to leave within the next few days. We are not allowed to publish names, but it is very probable that several prominent local young men be joining a well known Scottish regiment very shortly.

**YSTALYFERA RECORD**

**15<sup>th</sup> MAY 1915**

**6 SONS WITH THE COLOURS**

To Mrs Matilda Davies, who resides with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr and Mrs David J Jones, Ynysydarren Road, Ystalyfera, belongs the proud honour of having all her six sons with the colours, a record, we believe, not only for Ystalyfera, but for the whole of the valley. Mrs Davies, who is the widow of Mr Evan Davies, of Ystalyfera, is to be congratulated on her great sacrifice for her country at this crisis in its fortunes. Not only have all her sons joined the army, but one of her sons-in-law, **Mr Arthur Morgan**, has also gone to the army. The names are as follows:

**James Davies**, 7 Canal Terrace; Evan John Davies, Cyfyng Road; Edward Davies, Back of Vine; David Davies, Back of Vine; **Tom Davies**, Beynon's Row Albert Davies, Ynysydarren Road, Arthur Morgan, Beynon's Row. Four of Mrs. Davies' sons are married. This magnificent record should be an incentive to those who have not yet enlisted seriously to ask



themselves whether they too should not don the uniform.

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**ONE SON SAILED**

An interesting communication has been received this week from **Private James Davies** of Canal terrace Ystalyfera, who is with the R A M C, to the effect that he has sailed on the hospital ship *Mauretania* for the Mediterranean. Private Davies describes the *Mauretania* "like a big town and one can easily get lost if not careful". He is well and happy. Private Davies is one of six brothers serving for their King and country.

**15<sup>th</sup> JULY 1916**

**ONE SON WOUNDED**

News has reached that **Private Tom Davies**; son of Mrs Matilda Davies Beynon's Row, was wounded last week and is now in hospital in this country.

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**UPSETTING REMARKS**

**1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915**

**BY SIR IVOR HERBERT**

Considerable dissatisfaction prevails in the Ystalyfera district regarding the statement made at a Swansea meeting, on Saturday, in respect to recruiting in this part of the Valley. The meeting was an important one,—a conference of Labour representatives to discuss ways and means of getting more men, and the speaker to whom the re-mark is attributed was none other than Sir Ivor Herbert. As will be seen from our report in another column, Sir Ivor stated that whilst recruiting had been good in some parts of the Swansea district, if had not been in Brynamman, G.C.G., and Ystalyfera.

Regarding Ystalyfera there is not the faintest justification for the statement, and one can only think that Sir Ivor had been very badly misinformed. The fact of the matter is that Ystalyfera and district, from Godre'rgraig to Gurnos, have done remarkably well, certainly better than any other part of the Valley. On a moderate computation the district has sent 850 men, and more are continually going. This figure is actually greater than the quota according to population, and according to Mr Woodman (the recruiting officer) and Mr H J Powell, J.P., who has sworn most of the recruits in, as well as Mr W H Woodliffe, who has also taken a keen interest in the matter, the charge is one without the slightest justification or foundation. Yet more men are needed, and we are certain more men will come forward in the near future.

**5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

Thirteen more boys have joined the colours from Ystalyfera and district and left the place on Tuesday. One of the recruits was from Palleg\*

The names are as follows: **David T Price, Moses Walters, David Williams** (Gorof) from Ystradgynlais; **W T Davies and S J King** Cwmtwrch; **T Rees Davies** Brynmoel Palleg; **Stanley Morgan** Ystradgynlais; **W J Thomas and George Price** Godre'rgraig; **D J Rees** Cwmtwrch; and **Joseph Stamper, Daniel James Davies and T Laing** Ystalyfera.

**10<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915**

**100+ FROM COUNTY SCHOOL**

The number of old boys of the Ystalyfera County School who have joined the colours is mounting up remarkably, and we are now informed that the total is well over 100. Among them are a dozen commissioned officers, and many non-commissioned officers.

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**FOUR JOIN ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY**

A hearty send-off meeting was held on Saturday night at the Tinman's Arms, in honour of Messrs. **Edwin Price, Morgan Griffiths, David Jones** and **Penry Williams**, who have joined the R.F.A. The first three have been working at the Diamond Colliery, Ystradgynlais, whilst the latter has been in the service of his father, Mr Joseph Williams, fuel merchant.

Mr Gwilym Owen, the licensee, was the host, and Mr J Jenkins was voted to preside over the

proceedings, which were of a very hearty and enjoyable character. The chairman, in the course of a brief address, complimented the boys on their patriotism, and spoke words of cheer and encouragement to them. He was sure, he said, that they would do their duty nobly. An excellent, programme of songs, etc., was contributed by Messrs. Iago Davies, Isaac Davies, Ned Harries, J Kendrick, W Walters and others. A collection made among the friends realised £4, and this was handed to the recruits. Afterwards, a presentation was made of a silver cigarette case by the drivers and conductors of the South Wales Transport Co. (local service), to **Mr Evan Samuel**, one of their number who has recently gone for transport work. The four boys named left for their headquarters on Monday morning, and they had again an enthusiastic send off from their many friends.

**22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 1916**

**EDWIN PRICE**

**Private Edwin Price** of the R F A was home from the front at the end of last week and returned this week. Private Price was very popular in the district and was an ex-captain of the cricket club. His friends gave him a hearty send off.

**5<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

**GUNNER EDWIN PRICE**

**Gunner Edwin Price** of the Royal Field Artillery is home again from France. He visited his home a few weeks ago and on his return to France was requested to return to headquarters in England, as his battery had returned. He states they are now under orders for another destination, probably to the East. Gunner Price is well known in this locality being a prominent footballer and cricketer and captained the Ystalyfera First XI previous to the war.

**29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

**CHARLIE & TOM SMITH MEET EDWIN PRICE**

Mr and Mrs Smith, of Hen Felin, Gurnos, have, during the week received letters from their two sons who are both in France. The letters contain the interesting news that the brothers recently met for the first time during the three years they have been on active service. The letter from '**Charlie**' runs as follows:

"I have just been out for a fortnight's rest and as usual I made enquiries about Tom's lot, and to my surprise I found that they were also out for a rest, and only 14 miles away, so I got half a day off and borrowed a bike, and soon rode the 14 miles. When I got into their camp Tom was cleaning his harness, but he soon threw down the harness when he saw me, he was so surprised. He took me to see **Edwin Price**, and we three had a good time together."

**Tom's** letter says: "It was a surprise to see Charlie after nearly three years out here. We had a long talk about the good old times and you at home and wished we were there now."

**23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**DANIEL HARDING HOPKIN**

**Mr Daniel H Hopkin** of Ystalyfera, who for some two and a half years has been on the teaching staff at the Abercrave Schools has accepted a commission in the South Wales Borderers and will take up duties in that regiment after a short stay at the quarters of the Officers Training Corps in Bedford. Mr Hopkin is well known in the Abercrave district and leaves for national service with the good wishes of many friends.

**30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**GRANTED A COMMISSION**

As reported last week **Mr Daniel Harding Hopkin**, son of Mr J Hopkin Ynysydarren Road, has been granted a commission in the Special Reserve of Officers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers. Mr Hopkin was an assistant master at Abercrave Schools and was trained at Carmarthen College. He is an old Ystalyfera County School boy and a splendid athlete. He was a regular playing member of the Rugby, Hockey and Cricket Clubs of Ystalyfera. Lieutenant Hopkin is a brother to Mr John Hopkin, the well known cornet player. He left for his training centre last Saturday.

**8<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**STATIONED AT LIVERPOOL**

**Second Lieutenant Daniel Harding Hopkin** of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers was

home during the week for a few days. Lieutenant Hopkin is stationed at Liverpool.

**9<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1917**

**ON LEAVE**

**Second Lieutenant D Harding Hopkin** of the S W B and son in law of Mr and Mrs David Lewis Glenview arrived home on Monday for a few days. Lieutenant Hopkins has seen several months' service on Salonika, where he was wounded a few months ago. He was brought over to Prince of Wales Hospital London, where he remained for some time. Lieutenant Hopkins is now at Blackpool recuperating. Prior to his enlistment he was assistant master at the Abercrave Council Schools.

**25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**RECRUITING SLUMP**

The recruiting slump which is being experienced throughout Wales is also in evidence in the Swansea Valley, including Ystalyfera. There have been no enlistments in the town for quite a month past and the question that is being asked is whether some steps ought to be taken again to put the issue before the local men. The difficulty is however, to know whether men are more urgently required for munitions than for Army ranks.

**4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

**IORWERTH BEYNON REES**

**Mr Iorwerth Beynon Rees** of the staff of the Ystalyfera branch of the London and Provincial Bank has been granted a commission in the Special Reserve of Officers. He is proceeding shortly for training and will later be attached to the 7th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers, now on active service.

**25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

**ZOAR PRESENTATION**

On Sunday last at Zoar Sunday School the Rev William Jones presented Bibles to six young men who are leaving to join the colours. Messrs. **John and Harry Daniel, Owen Roberts Todd, Tom Gwyn Williams** and **Willie Evans** were the recipients. This makes 21 Bibles which have been presented to boys from the Sunday school who have joined the army. The Zoar friends are also sending parcels of Christmas cheer this week to all their boys who are serving with the forces.

**12<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**Cadet Owen Roberts-Todd**, a friend of Harry Daniels, both of whom joined together, has also been on leave. He is the son of Mr and Mrs Erasmus Roberts-Todd, the Wern, and has been sent back from the R.G.A. in France to train for his commission. He went from Ystalyfera to Gosport, his regimental headquarters.

**12<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

Another friend, **Gunner Gwyn Williams**, son of Mr Moses Williams, Clare Road, returned from France at the same time as Cadet Harry Daniels, and is in training at the same place.

**21<sup>st</sup> JULY 1917**

**Second Lieutenants Owen Roberts Todd** (Wern Road), **Henry Daniels** (Commercial Road) and **Glyn Williams** (Clare Road) have been at Ystalyfera this week prior to joining their units. All three officers have seen active service in France and Belgium, serving with the artillery and were recommended for their commission on the field.

**12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

**Gunner Owen Roberts-Todd** of the Royal Garrison Artillery, son of Mr D Erasmus Todd Wern Road, has been home on furlough. He has been in France for some time and has seen considerable fighting with his unit. He looks well and was heartily received by his old Ystalyfera friends.

**15<sup>th</sup> JULY 1916**

**RECEIVED NOTICES**

A considerable number of Ystalyfera men have received notices to report at the Military Depot early next week. A number, however, have received exemption for short periods by the

local tribunal.

**21<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

**D E EVANS**

**Mr D E Evans**, photographer, left Ystalyfera on Wednesday to join the Army. He will undergo his training at Farnborough and has the best wishes of his Ystalyfera friends and patrons. Mr Evans is attached to the Royal Flying Corps, as an instructor.

**7<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1917**

**MUSIC TEACHER FLUENT IN FRENCH**

**Corporal Tom G Samuel** (music teacher) and formerly organist at Gurnos Chapel, is now out in France. Owing to his fluency in the French language, he is at present acting as an interpreter. Corporal Samuel was sent to France after having missed his draft owing to illness, his regiment being sent to Egypt.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 1918**

**WOUNDED & DISCHARGED**

**Corporal Tom G Samuel** who has been wounded in France (in the Ypres push on 1<sup>st</sup> August) has now received his discharge from the army. Professor Samuel has been appointed organist at a Llandrindod church and will settle down in that district.

**18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917**

**WOODMAN'S TERRACE RECORD**

It is doubtful whether any street in the district can show a more patriotic record than Woodman's Terrace, Ystalyfera. Out of twelve houses eleven men have seen service, whilst others also belong to various voluntary organisations in connection with the war. The following are at present on service:—

**Sergeant A J Woodman** (recruiting sergeant); **Stoker Llew Edwards**; **Ordinary Seaman Gwyn Jackett**; **Private Evan Morgan** and **Private Tom Morgan**.

Messrs. **Arthur Lee** and **Hubert Trigg** have been discharged, whilst **Mr E J Trussler**, who was also discharged, has since died.

**Miss M Edwards**, who also lives in the same street, has volunteered for farm work, whilst **Mr Frank Jackett** is in the G.V.R.; Masters **Willie Morgan**, **Trevor Morgan** and **Jack Jackett** are boy scouts and Misses **Katie Morgan** and **Lucy Jackett** are girl guides.

**25<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917**

**ALSO FRED H BENNETT**

We are informed that Woodman's Terrace has yet another name to its roll of honour in the person of **Mr Fred H Bennett**, who prior to joining, lodged with Mr Edwards 2 Woodman's Terrace. He joined the Brecknocks in the early days of the war, went to India, and afterwards volunteered for Mesopotamia, where he is at present stationed.

### **YSTRADGYNLAIS**

**27<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1915**

**FOR THE ARMY: YSTRADGYNLAIS**

Two very popular Ystradgynlais boys, **Tom Idris Lewis** (Station Road) and **Ben Williams** (Gough Road) have already joined the forces and left on Monday morning for the headquarters of the Royal Engineers at Abergavenny. They had an enthusiastic send off by their many friends and a good number of readers will join with us in wishing them God speed in their service for the nation at this juncture.

**17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**A LOCAL CHAPLAIN**

Many of our readers will be interested to know that the **Rev Illtyd James**, Brecon Road, has received notification of approval by the authorities as a Nonconformist chaplain to the forces, and is holding himself in readiness to leave for an appointment with the troops. It will be remembered that Mr James was recently recommended by the Ystradgynlais Free Church Council for this appointment. Previously Mr James was pastor of the English Congregational Church and has also had a charge in the U S A. He is to be complimented upon his

appointment to such a patriotic post.

**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**RECRUITING RETURNS**

Recruiting has been brisk at Ystradgynlais during the week, 21 young men having joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the S.W.B. The prospects of still more joining the colours are bright. Lieutenant Evans has given us the following names:

**Tom Davies**, Ystalyfera; **P Rees**, **Walter Davies**, **David J Rees**, **J Cook**, **Fred Digwood**, **Charles O'Neil**, **S Andrews**, **Jenkin Jones**, **David Davies**, **Sid Baker**, **Thomas Lomasney**, **H Maker**, **Henry Corfield**, **David Howells**, **J Hoyes**, **Arthur Mainwaring**, **George Mainwaring**, **George Fitz Gibbon**, **M Jones**, and **George Mahood (Patsy)** all of Ystradgynlais.

**1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915**

**STILL RECRUITING**

More local boys have joined the colours amongst them being **J Davies**, **Richard Brown** and **David Jones**. They have joined the S W B.

**12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**FOR THE AERIAL CORPS**

Many local readers will be interested to know that **Mr S G Williams**, cycle dealer, late of Brecon Road and now of Station Road, has this week joined the Ariel Corps and left Ystradgynlais for the headquarters on Tuesday. He is well known and popular in the place and a host of friends will join with us in wishing him well.

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**LOCAL BOYS FOR MUNITION WORKS**

Some of the local boys who are home from Cardiff College have offered themselves for munition work. Two of them, **Messrs Stephen Williams** and **Sidney Morgan**, will probably go to Nobel's factory at Pembrey. We wish them all success.

**25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**CHAUFFEUR FOR THE ARMY**

**Mr Edwin Edwards** of Ynisedwyn Lodge, chauffeur to Colonel Gough, is among the week's army recruits from the district. Mr Edwards has been contemplating enlistment for several weeks and he returned home the other day after accompanying Col and Mrs Gough to Jedburgh Scotland, where they have gone for shooting.

**BIG RECRUITING RALLY YSTRADGYNLAIS: VISIT BY SIR HENRY JONES**  
**6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915** **STRONG PLEA FOR VOLUNTARY ENLISTMENT**

Since the commencement of the war, Ystradgynlais has been the scene of the largest and most impressive of all the recruiting meetings held throughout the locality, and the gathering at the New Theatre and Cinema on Wednesday evening was typical of those held in the town during previous months. The meeting had been well advertised, and very eagerly awaited. It was held under the auspices of the Breconshire Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, and the Joint Labour Recruiting Committee, the officials of which had been very fortunate in their choice of speakers. These were Professor Sir Henry Jones, who holds the chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University, and is undoubtedly one of the most distinguished scholars Wales has produced. Mr. Sidney Robinson, the respected member for the constituency also spoke, and Labour was represented by Mr Joseph Burgess, one of the, pioneers of the Independent Labour Party, and the present chairman of the Bradford branch (the largest in the country). A more excellent list of speakers it would certainly have been difficult to find. Interest had been quickened, in the locality by the presence in the town during the day of the Recruiting Band of the Brecknock Battalion, which came down from the headquarters for the occasion, and rendered patriotic airs in the streets as well as at the meeting. The result was that a very large audience assembled at the Cinema, the commodious building being almost

full when Mr. J. D. Morgan, J.P., took the chair at 6 o'clock. He was supported by the speakers as named, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Strick, Major Jessel (recruiting officer for Breconshire and neighbouring counties), Mr. J. P. Lee (Col. Gough's agent), Mr. W. Leyshon Watkins (secretary of the local recruiting organisation), and others.

#### **THE CHAIRMAN**

Mr. J. D. Morgan, who had a cordial reception, said that, if they lived until the following day (Thursday) they would enter on the 15<sup>th</sup> month of the war and so far there was no prospect of its conclusion. The question that they were faced with was the need of ending the war, with the vindication of the principles of right and justice, and if this end was to be achieved, the Allies must win. The ambition of Germany had always been to conquer and rule the whole world, and it was for England and the rest of Europe to see that this aim was thwarted. The enemy must be put down once and for all. (Hear, hear.) For this purpose an appeal had gone forth from the King, from Lord Derby, the Cabinet, and all the political parties in the House of Lords and the House of Commons for the service of the manhood of the nation. They wanted men and still more men. (Hear, hear.) Previously they had had an appeal for more shells and still more shells, and now industry had been so organised as to provide a surplus of shells and ammunition. Now they wanted the same results with the men. There were plenty who were eligible, plenty of recruitable age, and the object of that meeting was to get the men by voluntary means. They did not want them to wait to be fetched, but they wanted them to come out of their own free will. (Loud applause) If they did not, however, they would be fetched. He would not like to see any young man from Ystradgynlais, or from the county of Brecon, wearing the badge of a conscript. They would come if they realised their duty. It was no good their shouting against conscription. They wanted to make the voluntary system a success, but if it failed, then they must go by compulsion. (Hear, hear and applause.)

#### **URGENCY OF THE CALL**

Mr. Sidney Robinson, M.P., said he was down in that district a little over twelve months ago endeavouring to persuade the people of the locality to evince a more adequate interest in the war, and to urge the young men to come forward to join the colours. Now if it was necessary to ask that, then it was far more necessary to do so to-day. They saw more and more the menace of what defeat would mean; they saw the great interests involved to the nation; and the terrible results that would accrue in case of a defeat. The struggle was growing greater and greater, and the people realised the dangerous paths before them, but they knew that they could not have held aloof from the great struggle, Britain would have sunk to an insignificant position as a nation and would have lost her good name. They could hardly have realised twelve months ago that Germany would have sunk so low in her conduct of the war, but by their methods they had placed themselves in a position beyond that of a barbarian state, and it was the spirit that she had manifested that Britain was out to break.

Expressing satisfaction that the King was so quickly recovering from his mishap in France, which, he said, might have been very serious, the hon. Member said his Majesty had set a magnificent example to the nation in all his efforts. The men, too, had done wonderfully well, but now others were needed to follow those examples. It was true that the answer to the call meant a sacrifice, but those who were ready in the colours had made it. Mrs. Robinson and he, himself had lost five relatives in the war, so that they knew something of the extent of the sacrifice that was to be made. He hoped that that meeting would indicate that the young men were not going to lag behind or to shrink their duty. He wanted them to come voluntarily. He called to them in the name of their country—nay in the name of their God, because it was His battle. (Applause)

#### **MR. JOSEPH BURGESS**

Mr. Joseph Burgess, who had a hearty reception pointed out that the meeting was called under the auspices of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, a committee formed to

stimulate recruiting, and he was there that evening as a representative of the Labour Party. The Labour Party was a peace party yet he said with the fullest sense of responsibility that nothing rejoiced him more than the fact that there was no immediate prospect of peace being established. A peace now that would be inconclusive, that would give the Kaiser the right to say that the military system for which he stood had gained anything, that would be a disaster to civilisation. (Hear, hear.) Therefore he rejoiced that after two or three weeks of gloom and depression there was now an improvement that they were reasserting the compact entered into at the commencement of the war by the Allies, that there was to be no separate peace, for there could be no peace for Britain and their friends so long as Belgium and part of France was held by the Central Powers.

The war began so far as Britain was concerned in a very optimistic mood. They did not realise the magnitude of the task in front of them, and there had been mistakes which they had now to remedy. They were bound to have mistakes. They were not a military nation; and they ought to be proud of that. (Hear, hear.) They were now only learning the business, but they hoped they were so going to learn it that they would put down the nation that prided itself on being a military nation. (Applause) There were some men whom the Premier had described in words he (the speaker) hoped would stick to them, as “professional whimperers,” who found fault everywhere, but they ought to see what had been achieved, for the people knew where they had failed, and things were now going to be so altered that in the end there would be no question as to the result of the fight, and the Allies victory. Young men were coming forward now not so much through the fear of conscription as because of righteous indignation at the murder of Nurse Edith Cavell, that brave woman. Her murder was going to do more for Britain than anything that I had happened since the beginning of the war. Those who practised this policy of rightfulness knew nothing of the psychology of this country. (Hear, hear.)

Proceeding, Mr. Burgess dwelt further upon Miss Cavell’s death, and said they should all remember her words when she declared that “Standing on the threshold of God and eternity I realise that I must not hate anyone. That, declared the speaker, was the right spirit. They must not go into the war hating the German people. It was the system they should hate. Sir Henry Jones Hear, hear

## ----- **IS CONSCRIPTION IMMINENT**

**22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 1915**

There seemed to be practically a consensus of opinion among representative gentlemen from the Swansea Valley who attended the recruiting conference at Swansea that there are a lot of shirkers among the young men of the Swansea Valley and that nothing but conscription will bring them into the fighting forces. We do not think that this does full justice to the young men. There certainly is room for improvement in the recruiting returns, but on the whole the young men from these Valleys have responded as readily to the call as from any similar district in the kingdom. As to imminence of conscription there is a good deal of misunderstanding of Lord Haldane’s statement in the House of Lords last week. What he actually said was this:

The voluntary system is a system from which it would be most difficult for us to depart, yet we may have to reconsider the situation in the light of the tremendous necessity with which the nation is confronted. We are fighting for a cause which it becomes more and more clear is a cause in which we ought to lay down, everything we possess in the world. We are not face to face with that problem at present. It may come, but at present we have our hands full with the material we possess, and magnificent material it is. The qualification is all important. If compulsion does become necessary the riches of the capitalists as well as the bodies of





## FOLLOWING THE BOYS

### ROYAL NAVAL CHOIR CONDUCTOR: MR LEWIS JOHN CLEE

7<sup>th</sup> JULY 1917

LEWIS JOHN CLEE

The Welsh boys undergoing training for the Navy at the Crystal Palace are not unlike the other Welsh lads who are serving all over the world, in showing their love for singing. A young seaman at the Palace writes to say that they have a choir there, which he says, is not a bad one considering the fact that the boys come and go. The conductor of the choir is **Seaman Lewis John Clee**, brother of Mr W D Clee, the well known pianist, who works hard towards the happiness of the lads from Wales. About a week ago the choir entertained the soldiers at Beckenham, where they had "a ripping time" at the Y.M.C.A., which was "packed to the doors." The boys were warmly congratulated upon their splendid performance by the secretary of the Y.M.C.A., and were subsequently entertained to supper by the staff.

### WELSH TARS' CHOIR

CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917

The Welsh Bluejackets' Choir, formed of Welshmen of the naval forces at the Crystal Palace, which recently sang at the House of Commons, gave a concert, under the conductorship of **O.S. Lewis Clee**, on Tuesday night, at Upper Norwood, this following upon a similar one given at the Palace, when the programme included Comrades in Arms," "In the Sweet By and Bye" and The Sailors' Chorus," together with "Aberystwyth" in Welsh and "Hen Wlad fy Nhadau." The choir was assisted by Miss Joyce Edwards and Private Bosley, A.S.C., of Swansea, the former singing and the latter playing the violin. The following members of the choir also rendered solos, duets, and a trio: O.S. L J Clee, R C Jones, E G Hughes, G Broad, and E Lloyd. The elocutionists were O.S. W D John and W J Evans.

### WELSH CHOIR IN LONDON

CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917

The Welsh Choir of Naval Men quartered at the Crystal Palace and gathered from all parts of Wales, gave a very successful concert to over 500 soldiers in a South London Y.M.C.A. hut on Monday night, rendering a most varied and pleasant programme. It is interesting to note that the conductor (**Mr Lewis J Clee**) has just qualified as a physical training instructor. The course is heavy and occupies five months with 12 hours' training per day in Swedish drills, gymnastics, boxing etc. Throughout the whole period, however, Mr Clee has devoted his spare time to the interests of the choir, keeping it up under great difficulties.

### WELSH CHOIR AT THE PALACE

CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917

TO THE EDITOR

Sir – A few days ago your London correspondent gave an account of the visit paid by the Crystal Palace Welsh Choir. As conductor, it is my duty and pleasure to express my gratitude to the under mentioned who have supplied us with music free of charge:—Mr Lewis E Jones, of the Ministry of Munitions; Messrs. Educational Publishing Co., Cardiff; Mr D J Snell, Swansea; Messrs. Hughes and Son, Wrexham; and Messrs. Curwen and Sons London.

This has relieved the lads' pockets - a great consideration—and facilitated the work of training them. The choir has given seven concerts, and wherever it has been it is to re-visit. The music copies now in our possession have been in use for over four months, and their condition is not what it was. So we would be glad to get some new ones. Our choruses are: "Comrades in Arms." "In the Sweet," "Sailors' Chorus" (Codw'n Hwyl) and "Harlech" (E.R.C.-Harry Evans). With apologies for taking up your space.—

Yours, etc., **LEWIS J CLEE**

Crystal Palace London S.E.19

### WELSH CHOIR IN LONDON

#### CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917

Crystal Palace Welsh Choir gave another very successful concert on Wednesday evening at the Stockwell Baptist Church, South Lambeth Road SE. The choir was given a hearty reception and highly praised for the excellent programme. The following took part individually: PO Chapple, LS L J Clee (conductor) OS Ballinger, E G Hughes, W D John and Colebrook.

The choir has now been in existence for over seven months.

#### 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1918

Mention has already been made in these columns of the active part which **Seaman Lewis John Clee**, son of Mr John Clee, Pwllbach, together with the splendid choir which he has trained and conducts, takes in providing amusement and recreation for the soldiers and sailors stationed in and near London. The other day a first-class concert was given by them at the Shakespeare Hut, in Tottenham Court Road, and judging by the reception which they received, as "described by a Valleyite" who happened to be present, their efforts are very warmly appreciated. From the programme we find that the following took part—and their friends will recognise them as Swansea Valley boys - namely, **S.S. R C Jones, O.S. T Rowlands, L.S. Lewis J Clee, O.S. G Colebrook, O.S. A Bodycombe, P.O. Nicholas, O.S. T Rowlands, and Miss Joyce Edwards**

### SWANSEA

#### CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1918

On Thursday afternoon a meeting of the ladies committee was held to arrange matters for a flag day in aid of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. The following ladies were present: Mesdames Watkin Williams, Symons, Hill, David Harris John Lewis, W Watkins, W J Harris, and Morris Morgan. Leading Seaman L J Clee (conductor of the Welsh Choir Crystal Palace) attended and gave an account of the work of the Society and the choir.

#### CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1918

To celebrate their jubilee on Wednesday evening at the Royal Naval Depot Crystal Palace, The R.N.V.R Welsh Choir gave an excellent concert. Leading Seaman Lewis J Clee conducted and a varied list of pleasing items was highly appreciated.

#### 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1918

**Leading Seaman Lewis J Clee**, an instructor at the Crystal Palace and who is the conductor of the celebrated Naval Welsh Choir, has been home on furlough. He has made over 50 appearances with his party and has given concerts at the Queen's Hall and at the House of Commons.

#### CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 7<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918

Mr W J Clee of Ystalyfera has received a postcard from his son, **Instructor Lewis John Clee**, who is the conductor of the Welsh Naval Choir at the Crystal Palace. Referring to the recent meeting at the Albert Hall London, when there were 7,000 people present, he says that the party were praised by all. On that occasion Viscount Jellicoe at the conclusion of his address, presented Mr Clee with a baton and case and complimented him upon the excellent

work he had done with the choir and the service the choir had rendered to the Navy. Mr Clee collected autographs of Viscount Jellicoe, Ivord Crewe, Bishop of Hereford and Mr R C Millie, the Chinese Minister.

**8th JUNE 1918**

**PRESENTATION TO YSTALYFERA SAILOR**

Instructor **Lewis John Clee**, second son of Mr John Clee, Ystalyfera, who is conductor of the Welsh Naval Choir at the Crystal Palace, in a letter to his father, describes the Royal Albert Hall meeting on Saturday, when many men of note were present, including Viscount Jellicoe. The Welsh lads, he says, were given a splendid innovation and although only 40 in number, quite outclassed a mixed choir of 350 voices. At the conclusion of his speech, Viscount Jellicoe called upon Mr Clee and presented him with a baton and case, and complimented him on the excellent work he had done with his choir and the service they had rendered to the Navy. The choir cheered in response. Mr. Clee collected the autographs of Viscount Jellicoe, Lord Crewe, the Bishop of Hereford and Mr. R. C. Millie, the Chinese Minister and other notabilities. There were 7,000 people present at the gathering.

On the following Sunday the choir sang at Emmanuel Church, Dulwich, Sir Evan Spicer presiding. Sir Evan afterwards entertained the choir.

**29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

**CONCERT AT BALHAM LONDON**

We have received a programme of a concert held at Balham London, recently in the aid of the British and Foreign Sailor's Society. The popular Welsh Sailor's Choir, assisted by several well known artistes, under the conductorship of **Leading Seaman Lewis J Clee**, P.T.I., formerly of Ystalyfera, took part and acquitted themselves well. They sang "The Sailors Chorus" (Dr Parry), "The Little Church", "In the Sweet", "March of the Men of Harlech" and "Hen Wlad fy Nhadau". At the same concert Mrs Lloyd George gave an address.

**20<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**BROWNING SETTLEMENT**

On Sunday last, the R N V R Welsh choir from the Crystal Palace, sang at the Browning Settlement, Walworth, under the conductorship of **Instructor Lewis J Clee**. The singing of the choir was so much enjoyed that they were booked to appear again at an early date. Before leaving Mr Clee was presented by Mr T H Stead M.A., with a complimentary copy of his latest book entitled "No more war", considered to be one of the best war books yet published.

**THE WELSH CHOIR**

**CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 23<sup>rd</sup> JULY 1918**

Last Saturday afternoon the R.N.V.R. Welsh Choir (Crystal Palace), conducted by L.S. **Lewis John Clee**, sang at the Croydon Town Hall before the Mayor (Ald. Houlder, J.P.) and a large concourse of people. It was "Vindictive" day when the people were to make a special effort to buy War Bonds to replace the Vindictive of Zeebrugge fame. At the conclusion of their programme, the Mayor paid a high compliment to their singing. He declared he had never heard anything more beautiful than the rendering of "In the sweet by and by."

**WELSH SINGERS IN LONDON**

**CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 6<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

The R N V R Welsh Choir (Crystal Palace) conducted by PO Lewis J Clee, gave a concert at Deptford Town Hall in connection with a Red Cross week. Although depleted, the choir did extremely well and the singing was declared the best ever heard in the hall. Among those who gave solos were P O Chapple, P O and Mrs D A Nicholas.

## **CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

## **YSTALYFERA**

At a concert held in Croydon a few nights ago the sum of £100 was raised for the Welsh Prisoners of War Fund. The chief items in the programme were the choruses rendered by the Welsh Choir from the Crystal Palace, under Petty Officer **Lewis John Clee** of Ystalyfera. This choir has taken part in over a hundred concerts and has been the means of raising over £2,000 for good objects.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

## **BROTHER W D CLEE**

Our readers will be pleased to learn that notification has been received that **Private W D Clee** now of the Royal Air Force, has passed his examination in advanced Welsh as the result of a course of studies at the Welsh Summer School Barry. He is now a clerk with the RAF at Blanford and has formed a male voice party that bids fair to become a formidable rival to his brother's (**Lewis J Clee**) celebrated Crystal Palace Choir.

## **ORGANISED BY YSTALYFERA BOYS: TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS**

### **11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1919**

The R.N.V.R. Welsh Choir at the Crystal Palace has now broken up in consequence of demobilisation but it has a record that rebounds to its credit and leaves behind in London a reputation of the brightest nature.

**Mr Lewis J Clee**, who was the organiser and its conductor from beginning to end, is of course, a Swansea Valley boy, being a native of Ystalyfera and he is the headmaster of Pontlliw Council Schools.

There have been fitting acknowledgments of Mr Clee's work by the men who formed the choir and by the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. Before the men were demobilised, the members presented him with a leather wallet and collar case.

### **PRESENTATION TO CONDUCTOR**

The British and Foreign Sailors' Society added their tribute at Swansea on Friday. At a meeting of the local committee, to which some old members of the choir were admitted, Mr W G Foy, on behalf of the directors, presented Mr Lewis J Clee with a gold watch suitably inscribed. In making the presentation, the chairman spoke of the pleasure with which he performed the duty. It was in recognition of a great and noble achievement. The Rev R G James, the society's local superintendent and organising secretary (and late pastor of the English Congregational Church Ystalyfera), paid his tribute to the great work done. The choir had given over 120 concerts and had raised over £3,000. It had been of great value in other directions – the innumerable letters of gratitude from past members and parent showed clearly. Knowing the difficulties under which the conductor laboured it was indeed a great achievement. He had had no official help and no relaxation from his arduous duties as physical training instructor. Others who spoke in eulogistic terms were the Revs H C Mander, G M McLuckie BA, W J Morgan and Mr W A Jenkins. A petty officer added a tribute on behalf of the naval rating present and absent.

Mr Clee, in responding, declared it was his privilege to have been of service to his fellow countrymen. He pointed out that every Welsh lad had been welcome to the choir whether he could sing or not. The primary motive was to keep the lads together.

The singing of the National Anthem concluded a memorable meeting.

### **AN INTERESTING SURVEY**

Mr Clee has furnished a Press representative with some incidents in the life of the choir:

Mr Clee joined the Division in March 1917 and about a month later the choir came into being.

“One Sunday afternoon the boys were gathered around the piano at a Y.M.C.A. meeting and we were asked to sing. They did fairly well with hymns but there was only one soloist among them and his only number was a sentimental song. That man is now a very capable soloist, with a wide repertoire and has been favourably received by large audiences of discriminating music lovers.

“We took anybody who cared to join into the party, whether they could sing or not and this led to a few incidents. One day, for instance, a recruit to the party asked what he sang, replied, after some hesitation, “Well I used to sing soprano”.

### **EARLY DIFFICULTIES**

“These were the early difficulties and they had to be overcome by obtaining the aid of outsiders for solo efforts. But the talent soon revealed itself and was developed to a remarkable extent. Duets and quartettes were soon arranged and the choir, from a repertoire that consisted of hymns only built up quite an inspiring programme.

“Our first concert was in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon in June 1917” said Mr Clee, “and although we could sing hymns only, we soon had such a huge crowd around us that we had to move to the lake. The audience urged us to put up a receptacle for their contributions but of course we could not do that.

### **OTHER TRIUMPHS**

Other triumphs were the concert at 10 Downing Street at the invitation of Mrs Lloyd George, when the Premier himself came in to hear the choir and the big concert at the Royal Albert Hall. They sang at the Steinway hall and at a Tooting concert the party had an audience of 1,400.

“Difficulties?” said Mr Clee, in reply to a question, “Oh yes we had plenty. One of the greatest was the fact that the choir was being constantly depleted by drafts going away and once we had to give a very big concert on the night of a day when we suddenly lost 10 of our men. But it was a great success all the same.

“Then we had five concerts to give in about two or three days and we could not keep the same party together during that time, as there was a draft going out.”

Mr Clee, too, had his personal difficulties. Not the least of these was that he was keeping the choir together and qualifying as a physical training instructor at the same time. That meant rushing off to a practice after eleven hours’ work. But the choir never fell through, even temporarily.

### **BIG SUMS FOR CHARITY**

The big sums raised for charity ran to £200 or more on one occasion and in addition to such concerts as these the party gave many at Y.M.C.A. hospitals and other places where no charge was made for admission. They never received recompense, needless to say, and apart from the enjoyment they derived from singing, all they had was bare out of pocket expense and such refreshment as was offered them.

### **GOOD FRIDAY CONCERT**

#### **CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1919**

Under the conductorship of **Mr Lewis John Clee** (who it will be remembered, was the conductor of the Crystal Palace Royal Naval Division Choir) the Terrace Road Calvinistic Methodist Church Choir is giving a sacred concert on Good Friday evening. This is the first stepping stone in ambitious plans which the church has made for the immediate future.



Staff Officers at the Royal Naval Division Serving at the Royal Navy Depot  
Crystal Palace 1915

### **PONTLLIW SCHOOL**

Extract from PONTLLIW VILLAGE HALL – THE HISTORY (On Line)

“Officially opened on Wednesday September 3rd 1913 by Alderman Rees Harries, it did not accept its first pupils until the following Monday, September 8th. It is a measure of the need for a school in the village that 133 children were registered on the first day, and at the end of the first week this figure had risen to 147. Although opened on the Monday, the school was still lacking in some of the most fundamental items and it was not until the following day that work could really begin, when a cupboard and three blackboards and easels were borrowed from Penllergaer School. The school catered for the educational needs of all ages from four to fifteen and the Headmaster on opening day who incidentally was still headmaster 40 years later in the nineteen fifties was a Mr Lewis John Clee

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1953 opened with the sad news for the committee, the secretary, Mr Clee, had been taken very ill and fortunately had to tender his resignation from the post and also from his position of over 40 years, as Headmaster of the School”

(LEWIS JOHN CLEE 1886 – 1955 His Son Warrant Officer Reginald Owen Clee died 27<sup>th</sup> July 1944  
He was with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and died off Corsica See Ystalyfera WWII)

## **SOUTH WALES BORDERERS: LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM HOPE**

**24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1914**

### **THE EXPERIENCE OF 8 YSTALYFERA BOYS**

We have received the following letter from Mr William Hope, late foreman at "Llais Llafur" office, and we have no doubt it will be read with considerable interest by the friends of the young men concerned as well as by scores of young men who as yet have not made up their minds to go and do likewise

We met at the Drill Hall, Gurnos, in order to offer ourselves for the service of King and country. After being medically examined and pronounced fit, we were duly attested and sworn in, the ceremony being not unlike the marriage ceremony, with the difference that we were being wedded to the State instead of to our best girls. Then a disappointment awaited us, for we were ordered to proceed home on the reserve for a few days, owing to the unprecedented position being too much for the recruiting organisation. However, on the following Monday, we received our orders to proceed to Brecon, and in charge of the recruiting sergeant, we marched to Ystradgynlais Station to entrain., We were all in the highest spirits, outwardly at least, what we really felt can best be left to the imagination. On our arrival at Brecon, we proceeded to the barracks and were instantly admitted on production of our papers. Here a sight met our gaze which we are not ever likely to forget. There were hundreds of men—long men, short men, clean men, dirty men—in fact, all sorts of men, utterly different, yet how very much alike all actuated by the same desire to do their little bit for their country. Being greenhorns, we paid a visit to the "dry" canteen, where we had to pay for our first "feed" in the Army: but for two pence we had a meal of bread and cheese and tea which would tax the appetite of a navvy.

We spent the rest of the day wandering about the barrack yard and when evening came, another disappointment awaited us, for we were ordered to proceed home for a couple of days. However, on the following Wednesday week, we finally left for Brecon. The Swansea Valley never looked quite so green before, or so desirable to live in. On arrival at barracks we were at once formed into companies for drilling, and we fully realised that we were "Tommys" in earnest, and what a motley crowd we were. Cheek by jowl with a tall navvy, stood the dapper figure of a dandy bank clerk, the hard-bitten face of the one, and the indoor pallor of the other making a strange contrast. But I thought that in a few weeks, the two great levellers— sun and air—would produce a uniform appearance.

We spent the first night in barracks and owing to all the "biscuits" (which are small square mattresses to put on the iron bunks) being commandeered by the "old soldiers," we were compelled to sleep on the bare iron. What a glorious advertisement we would have made in the morning for a famous brand of back ache pills! Every picture tells a story is mild compared to our agonized attempts to regain the perpendicular. However, we were soon singing like larks, although we all carried a deep impression (in two senses) of our "beds." The next day we were drilled again, until dusk, when we were marched to a camp about a mile from the town, where we spent our first night under canvas. We were roused at 5.30 am for drill and parade, then breakfast at 8 am more drill, dinner at 1 pm drill again, and tea, the last meal of the day, being served at 5 pm

About this time, rumours began to float about that we were to proceed to Eastbourne, then to Lewes, and finally to Salisbury Plain, that evening. So everybody began to enjoy himself as only healthy manhood can and the fun, especially in the "wet" canteen, soon became fast and furious. The unwelcome call of "time" (at 9 pm) closed the revels, but the after effects were audible for hours.

At 11 pm we were all told to fall in and in a drizzling rain we marched to the station, eleven hundred, strong, to the strains of "It's a long way to Tipperary" "Rule Britannia," etc. We were all in the dark as to where we were actually going, and I'm sure we didn't care. I fell off to sleep, and when I woke we were running into Codford Station, which I find is on the west

border of Salisbury Plain, and about 14 miles from Salisbury town. It is a lovely old world English village, the majority of the houses being straw thatched. The countryside is all that could be desired, being an ideal place for military training. Our life here is one day very much like another. Reveille is sounded at 6 am parade at 6.30 route marched until 8 am breakfast at 8, squad drills from 9 until 12.30, dinner at 1, drills again from 2 to 4.30, tea at 5, lecture from 5.30 to 5.45. We are now dismissed for the evening, everyone having to be in and lights out at 10 pm. There are 12 sleeping in our tent, which we have christened the "Thirsty- first", and include the eight who enlisted on September 5<sup>th</sup>. At first we slept with only one blanket between us and mother earth. But we all enjoyed it, in spite of a somewhat too close acquaintance with earwigs, spiders and sundry other creeping things. After a few days, however, we were provided with boards for the floor of the tent, which although harder, is certainly more comfortable.

The oldest man in each tent is appointed orderly, and one man is appointed each day as his servant, whose duty it is to fetch the rations for the tent. Dinner is served in "dicksies" (dixies), which is a large tin containing sufficient for each mess. As the tea is also served in the same "dicksie," the resulting liquid is often indescribable. We are allowed a five mile radius, with certain exceptions; and on the whole considering there are many thousands of us congregated together, the conduct of the men is admirable. What has struck me most is the delightful democratic feeling which pervades the camp, the spirit of "camaraderie" being evident from the colonel downwards. If ever there was a Socialistic community, it is Codford Camp.

We have not yet received our uniforms, and the variety of garments, and what were garments, is reminiscent of a rag men's conference. You should have seen us on 'washing-day'. I am pleased to say that all our eight are in the pink of condition, and feel like lions. This being Sunday, the Roman Catholics were on Church parade at 8.30 a.m., and Protestants at 9.45. There seems to be no provision for us poor Nonconformists. I wonder why? Sunday is a day "off" after the roll call. The weather is glorious, and we are getting the colour of Red Indians. All the Ystalyfera boys wish to be remembered to all their friends at home; and on behalf of Dick and Gomer Evans, Jack Thomas, Emlyn Thomas, Evan John Williams, William John Evans, Wm, Ducrow, and D R Butler (Ystalyfera).

I beg to remain,  
Yours faithfully,  
WILLIAM HOPE.

P.S.—The other inmates of our Tent are William Sheedy (Newport) W Davies (Newport); Bert Cooper (Abercarn), and Ivor Lester (Abercarn)

## 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914

## YSTALYFERA NOTES

A letter received in Ystalyfera last weekend from **Lance Corporal William Hope**, of the South Wales Borderers (formerly foreman of the "Llais Llafur" printing department) indicates that the Welshmen who have enlisted for service in Kitchener's Army are having a very good time.

The letter, dated November 26<sup>th</sup>, says "We are now billeted in boarding houses in Winton, Bournemouth, having arrived a fortnight ago. It is quite the extreme from Codford Camp, and consequently the troops are having a high old time. It is a long town, with fine roads for training. The 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Borderers was inspected on Wednesday by the Inspecting General from the War Office, and I feel proud to say that his report was a most flattering one. We have been told that after a further short course of musketry we shall be ready for the Continent, and with this object in view, a French class for N. C. O.'s has been formed which I attend. You will be pleased to hear that our battalion are earning an excellent name for themselves in the town, the behaviour of the South Wales boys being admirable. In



recognition of this, several ladies have presented the battalion with instruments for a drum and fife band. I am in the best of health and spirits, and all the Ystalyfera boys are the same."

### **12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

### **HOPE WRITING FROM ALDERSHOT**

**Lance Corporal William Hope**, of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, South Wales Borderers, who was foreman in the "Llais" printing department until the outbreak of war, writes us this week from Aldershot as follows "At long last we have arrived at the heart of "soldierdom," the last station before we proceed to the work we enlisted for. It has been a long and strenuous training, but it has evolved from the raw material a battalion of soldiers fit to fight for a kingdom. I wish you could see us. I modestly believe you would be proud of the South Wales Boys. There is quite a colony of Welshmen in our near vicinity here, and one could easily imagine oneself back in the Swansea Valley again.

Mr Hope assures us that he is happy and well, and we are sure his many local friends will join with us in wishing him well in his future activity across the channel.

### **19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

### **ONE OF BEST SHOTS**

Many readers will be interested to know of the continued progress of **Lance Corporal Hope** of the South Wales Borderers, now stationed at Aldershot and formerly foreman of the Llais printing department. A correspondent with Mr Hope's Company tells us he has become one of the best shots of the battalion, in which direction he is rapidly making a name for himself. It will be recollected that last week we gave extracts from one of Lance Corporal Hope's letters, stating that the company expects to go to the front shortly.

### **25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

After a number of delays by which their patience has been well nigh exhausted, the Battalion of the South Wales Borderers in the New Army of which a considerable number of local fellows are members, received orders to prepare for going out to the front last week-end, and they left England on Wednesday. We are not at liberty to disclose their destination, but this will be revealed by the men themselves upon their arrival, a batch of at least a dozen Ystalyfera and Ystradgynlais boys are in the Battalion.

### **9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

A couple of postcards to hand at the "Labour Voice" Office during the week indicate that the batch of local boys, who have gone out to France with the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers, arrived at their destination safe and well. Our communications have come from **Corporal Hope**, formerly foreman of the mechanical department at this office and he writes: "Arrived here safely after a good crossing."

### **6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

### **CORPORAL HOPE IN FRANCE**

**Corporal Hope**, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company 6<sup>th</sup> (Pioneer) Battalion South Wales Borderers, formerly foreman in the printing department of the "Labour Voice," has been out in France with his regiment for about six weeks, and he now sends us an interesting letter dealing with his experiences, from which we extract the following passages:

I am glad to say that I am in the best of health and spirits up to the present, in spite of the fact that we are continually under fire. Our losses up to now have been comparatively slight, considering the hazardous nature of our work. We go to the trenches daily, and reside in barns, etc. This is an awful country for mud, and on our return from the trenches we are like animated pillars of mother earth. The work is, of course, hard and trying, but we didn't expect an Arcadian existence when we enlisted, so all's well. I only trust that the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion will





from us. The good thing about them is they keep us in practice with the bayonet! Ours is surely a lucky battalion. During the time we were in the trenches we heard very little firing, and never saw a single German, but it happened that the billets we had occupied previously were fired up on and destroyed immediately after we left them.

**Aubrey** (late of the Metropolitan Bank), had a narrow escape one day. He was standing in front of a loop hole, and had turned aside to get a light for his fag, when a bullet came through the hole. The fellow who was giving him a light was wounded, but Aubrey escaped. We are now billeted for three weeks rest in barns belonging to the farmers. They are large buildings, and the beds are arranged around the wall one above the other like fixtures in the shop. The food is good, but bread is very scarce and dear if we try to buy it. We have plenty of biscuits, but, of course prefer bread when we can get it. **Jack Almrott** (late of Eastman's) has been transferred now to the transports.

### 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1916

### OUT OF THE TRENCHES

Councillor H J Powell, J.P., has this week received a very interesting letter from his late assistant, **Private Tom Laing**, who writes on leaving the trenches for a short leave. He says they have had a very rough time in the trenches, with shelling and rifle fire, and also as regards weather. Snow had fallen for three successive nights and was followed by a keen frost. Private Laing describes a "dug-out," which is 6ft. high, 6ft. wide, and 25-30ft. long, and each has to accommodate about 38 men, so the space is limited. They manage to get a small fire at night, but he would like it made known that candles are invaluable, and that friends sending parcels to the front should put in a few candles.

He says that when on the firing step one night he remembered that the second Sunday in March was the day for "Jerusalem big meetings," and encloses a French 5 franc note (value 3s. 7d.) to be placed in the collection.

### 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916

### SHELLED

One of the most regular correspondents among our local soldiers is **Private Tom Laing**, who has sent another very interesting letter this week to Councillor H J Powell, J. P., his late employer. He was just out of the trenches after 16 days of duty, during the last three of which they were under heavy gun fire. At this time he had two narrow escapes from enemy shells. In the first case he had just risen from the fire step, where he had been sleeping for a few nights, owing to the dug-out being warm, when a shell fell on his couch and blew it to atoms, at the same time covering him with dirt and tearing his coat. On the other occasion he and his chum were coming through the trench when a shell burst at their side, the friend, who is a B.A. of Bristol, had his right arm shattered, and it has since been amputated. After leaving the trenches Private Laing was put on fatigue work carrying rations to the battalion, and other work really fatiguing, which he describes as work suitable for those whose consciences will not allow them to fight!

### 20<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916

### INJURED BACK

A very interesting letter has been received from **Private T Laing**, by Mr H J Powell. Private Laing's friends will be sorry to learn that he has been in hospital suffering from injury to his back, received when in the trenches. A shell from the enemy lines burst near him and displaced some sand bags which fell on his back. He had been 10 days in hospital, where he met several boys from the Swansea district. They were in tents pitched in an orchard, and had glorious weather, so had a good time. The only drawback was that they were out of the sound of shells, and could not sleep for several nights! Private Laing gives an interesting account of the work in which he has been recently engaged—the preparation of a mine under the German lines.

**3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 1916**

**BROUGHT TO ENGLAND**

We learn that **Private T Laing** has been brought to England and now lies in a hospital in Carlisle, suffering from nervous debility and strain to his back, from the falling of some sandbags.

**17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1916**

**Private Tom Laing** of 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters is now in a Cumberland Hospital, recuperating in the bracing air of the Lake District. He is very much better and hopes to visit Ystalyfera before again leaving for the firing line.

**15<sup>th</sup> JULY 1916**

**COMING HOME**

**Private Tom Laing**, late assistant to H J Powell, who has been in a North of England hospital for some time, will visit Ystalyfera next week. His many friends will give him a hearty welcome.

**22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 1916**

**SOUVENIRS**

**Private Tommy Laing** of the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters arrived home at Ystalyfera on Monday evening when he was met by a large number of his old friends. Despite the fact that he had been in hospital for some time, he was looking well. He has some interesting souvenirs, one being a small sugar scuttle made from a shell. He will return at about the end of the week. We join in wishing him the best of luck.

**23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**RHEUMATISM**

Intimation has been received by Councillor H J Powell JP that his former assistant **Private Tom Laing** is again in hospital suffering from rheumatism. He expects to be discharged from the forces at no distant date.

**2<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

**IT RAINS IN IRELAND**

An interesting letter has also been received from **Private Tom Laing**, of the Gloucesters, who is now in Ireland. In the course of his letter, Laing states that he had a bad crossing from Holy head to Dublin. A song was once composed of Ireland in which a line states "A little bit of Heaven fell from the sky". Referring to this song, Private Laing is of the opinion that it was written in a sarcastic mood. "When it did drop, he says, "They forgot to mend the hole it made in the sky, for it does nothing but rain here. I thought Swansea Valley was bad enough, but this place knocks spots off it for rain."

He also states that he is as far from the nearest village as Llynfan is from Cwmgiedd. It is doubtful after all, whether Erin is more desirable than France.

**18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917**

The local members of the V.T.C. are living in anticipation of an enjoyable time at the Varteg Range shortly, and it is expected that firing parties will visit the spot in the course of the next week or two. **Sergeant Lane** has been giving musketry instruction, and on Wednesday evening gave a lecture on the care, life, and management of the rifle. **Private Tom Laing**, former assistant to Lieutenant H J Powell, has come home on furlough after having been wounded in France, and on Monday evening gave instructions in bombing and musketry, and also gave some interesting anecdotes of life in France, and laughable insights into the manner of sergeant- majors and others as they really are. Private Laing has been recuperating in Ireland.

**4<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

**Corporal Tom Laing**, now of the Medical Corps and formerly assistant to Mr H J Powell JP Outfitter, is on furlough this week at Ystalyfera He has seen service in France with an English infantry unit but has now been transferred to the medical section on home service

**28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**Private Tom Laing** of the RAMC formerly of Mr H J Powell JP Wern has come home on furlough from London.

**21<sup>st</sup> JUNE 1919**

**Private Tom Laing** of the RAMC is at present spending his leave in Ystalyfera.

**13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1919**

**Mr Tom Laing** who prior to the war was an assistant with Mr H J Powell JP of Waterloo House and who volunteered for service in the early days of the War has now left for Cardiff to take up an appointment under Masters and Co the clothiers. His Ystalyfera friends will join in wishing him every success.

*Ready for Service.*

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## **SONS OF E T EVANS STATIONMASTER YSTALYFERA: E, E G & I A EVANS**

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**Ernest Evans** and **Ewart Gwynne Evans**, both sons of Mr E T Evans stationmaster Ystalyfera, have joined the 3/12 Brecknock (T) Battalion South Wales Borderers. Another son **Ivor A Evans** is with the 4th Devons in India.

### **SUCCESS OF AN YSTALYFERA BOY IN INDIA**

**11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1916**

**PRIVATE IVOR A EVANS**

Our readers will be interested to hear of a letter which we have this week received from **Private Ivor A Evans**, son of our highly respected Station Master. Private Evans is stationed at Wellington, in Southern India, with the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Devon Regiment, and for some time past he has applied himself to the study of Hindustani, the language of India. On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, he sat for an examination in the language at the Madras University, and was successful in obtaining a pass—the first man in his regiment to obtain this qualification. He says he is "feeling gloriously fit, and in good spirits," and we are sure his Ystalyfera friends will congratulate him on the perseverance and ability with which he has tackled such a language as Hindustani. Private Evans is evidently determined to rise in the service and we trust his endeavours will meet with the success they deserve. In addition to some papers printed in character, which, unfortunately we are unable to reproduce, Private Evans sends some notes on the language, which we are sure will prove of interest, and at the same time illustrate the difficulties which have to be overcome by a student of Hindustani. Private Evans says:

Hindustani, the "French of the East" is the universal language of India, and although there are several hundred different languages and dialects in the country, the Hindustani language is understood in any part. It is one of the Semetic languages, written in Persi-Arabic character, beginning at the end of the book and written from right to left. The order of the words in a sentence is precisely the same as in Latin. It is teeming with idioms and the style is very figurative, a literal translation from English into Hindustani would not be understood by an Indian, as a phrase—He is a great miser— would be—He sucks fat out of a fly, when translated into Hindustani. The following sentences will also give you an idea of the fascinating style of the language:

Prevention is better than cure - Build your bridge before the water comes.

Pearls before swine - Play a lute before a buffalo, and it keeps on chewing the cud.

A bird in hand is worth two in a bush - To-day's egg is better than to-morrow's chicken.

Something is better than nothing - A bamboo from a burning house

A hypocrite - Elephant's teeth (i.e. Tusks to show and teeth to chew)

To let out a secret -To throw a plate on a tiled roof

The lower standard consists of a written and an oral examination, and is an essentially necessary qualification for an officer of the Indian Army, who is allowed two years after leaving the Indian Cadet College at Quetta to obtain it. In the oral part, the candidate has to converse on present day topics with a native soldier and read from character at a rate of 30 words a minute, with due regard to meaning, and then translate orally what has been read to the examiner. In the written examination, translate from and into Persian character of passages taken from Indian history or Indian life.

**2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER**

"Before the Madras Board of Examiners in Oriental Languages at Bangalore, on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1916, **Private Ivor A Evans**, 2/4<sup>th</sup> Devon Regiment passed an examination in Higher Hindustani, and is now a qualified interpreter in the Indian Army in Hindustani. This qualification is the passport for all Indian Army Officers to staff and lucrative departments in the Indian Army. Percentage obtained in whole examination, 70 1-5th per cent."

It is said there are scholarships offered for Oriental languages in London, so that there may be a chance to try for a £50 a year scholarship at the University of London, if he is lucky enough

to return to England safely. He is now in the S. and F. Quarters, Wellington, Madras. The above very gratifying communication has been received this week by Mr Evans, the respected Station Master at Ystalyfera, and we are sure the whole community will rejoice with Mr and Mrs Evans on their son's success.

Another son, **Private Ewart Evans**, is also in India with the Brecknocks, and writes very cheerful letters to his parents.

**20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1917**      **PROMOTION FOR YSTALYFERA SOLDIER IN INDIA**  
A cablegram has reached Ystalyfera to the effect that **Sergeant Ivor A Evans** son of Mr and Mrs Evans, Station Master, Ystalyfera, had been gazetted (second lieutenant) and was leaving the West Malabar Coast for Cawnpore, United Provinces India. His many friends will be pleased to hear of his success. He has three brothers serving with the colours, one of whom is in Mhow, India. It will be remembered that we recently gave an account of Lieutenant Evans's extra ordinary progress in Hindustani, his proficiency in this difficult language gaining for him the highest distinctions at the examination.







Welsh. So the other day I was not surprised to hear inquiries, in an unmistakably Welsh intonation, if there were any Welshmen about.

The inquirer proved to be **Deputy Commissioner Herbert Lewis** of the St. John's Ambulance Association. After I had introduced myself as a Welshman from Barnsley, and explained my connection with "Llais Llafur," and the Swansea Valley, he told me that he had recently visited Pontardawe where he had been the guest of Mr F W Gilbertson. Many "Llais" readers will remember his visit, which occurred in the summer, and was for the purpose of distributing medallions and badges to Pontardawe members of the association. A report of the function appeared in the "Llais" at the time.

Deputy Commissioner Lewis has been for six years in command of the South Wales District, and it is no secret that the immense progress in ambulance work in the industrial areas during that period is largely due to his enterprise, initiative, and untiring activities on behalf of one of the most beneficent of all causes.

**LOCAL MEN IN FRANCE** After the outbreak of war he brought out a number of special Sanitary N.C.O.'s and orderlies of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade to take charge of sanitary squads at various places. These included **Sergeant J M Jones** Abergorky, **Sergeant Fisher** (Glanamman), and members of divisions at Glyncoirwg, Abergorky, Tonypany, Penygraig, Llanharran, Ogmere Vale, and Pontardulais. Among the latter were **Corporals J Davies** and **J Edwards**, and **Privates J J Griffiths, D Harrison, and J John**.

These Welsh Ambulance men are doing magnificent work. Upon their efficiency depends in a very large measure the health of the troops, and their immunity from contagious diseases, and the way in which they have done their work has now the high approval of everyone.

The scope of their work is necessarily as wide as the operations of our troops. In his travelling to and fro Mr Lewis has necessarily seen a great deal, and although there is much I cannot repeat I may mention that he has a particular enthusiasm for the efficiency of the British airmen.

It has fallen to his lot to behold with his own eyes airships "grappling in the central blue."

**AN AERIAL DUEL** Even in normal peace conditions there is something thrilling about an aeroplane. It gives one a queer blended impression of unreality, of daring and of the triumph of the human mind over natural obstacles. But under war conditions the thrill is intensified tenfold. Mr Lewis very vividly described the aerial duel. The British aeroplane circled in mid-air, now swooping on the German machine as a hawk does upon a pigeon, now soaring out of the enemy's range, and again returning to the attack. After ceaseless manoeuvring for position, watched from below with breathless interest, the British airman "got home," and the German machine seemed to stagger and gyrate, and then came crashing to earth. The British aeroplane circled round, and then made off on its triumphant return to the base. —————

#### WRITING FROM SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

26<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914

W S COLLINS ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

It being Christmas week I ought to take the opportunity of wishing everybody the compliments of the season, and right heartily I do so.

Apart from these dietetic and other obstacles to happiness the majority of the 50 men in my company are as happy as sand boys. In ages we vary from about 18 to 40. The last joined recruit is of Kitchener's Army and the oldest a Reservist. A more cosmopolitan crowd it would be difficult to gather together, as we have men from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and various parts of England, an engineer reservist from the banks of the Clyde, a medical student from Dublin, a reporter from Wales, a knut from a London suburb, etc., etc.

Apparently, we have taken up winter quarters under cover, and this, after the experiences of most of those attached to this Field Ambulance, is something which suggests home-like comfort as against the almost limit of human endurance. There are times, however, when the

feeling comes over me that barrack life is a peculiar thing, more especially when one wishes to write or in any way desires quietness. From early morning to late at night, there is one persistent babel of voices, interspersed with the sounds of a tin whistle, a violin, whistling, shouting, dancing and tramp of the feet of men coming and going. Under these circumstances I feel that only one hour of peace would be worth more than the best cooked meal an irresponsible cook might prepare in a greasy “dixie.”

From “reveille” to “lights out” life in barracks is something which would appeal to the average youth it is, perhaps, less appealing in its various aspects to one who shares Robert Blatchford’s liking for growing roses and watching earwigs in the garden. That laboured growl disposed of, I admit that we who are here have much to be thankful for. We have a roof over our heads, we get our meals at regular hours, and we know to a little what is expected of us in the way of duty.

**THE DAY’S DUTY** we are knocked up at 6.30 a.m., breakfast 7.15, clean up and general parade at 8.15. Our hospital is in a fine roomy factory, which has undergone miraculous transformation and is now capable of accommodating 1,000 patients. At present more than 500 sick or wounded are being attended to. To see a batch of wounded arrive is a sight not readily forgotten. Most of them are able to walk, some hobble, others are assisted by their comrades, and of course, sometimes they arrive by ambulance train from the front and are then conveyed by a fleet of Red Cross motor-cars—several of which are driven by ladies—to the hospital. Others arrive direct by motor cars—each car being capable of accommodating four lying-down cases or eight to ten sitting up cases. Most of them are able to walk others have to be carried on stretchers to their places, the medical and surgical “cases” being sent to their respective wards.

**HARD WORK** to feed and clothe and attend to the comforts of 549 sick and wounded is no light matter, especially if there are a big percentage of bed-cases. Whilst these sometimes do not receive the same treatment as would be the case under normal conditions, the devotion of those engaged in the work of attending to the sick is such that very few can, under any circumstances complain of their treatment. Many of the less sick cases are able not only to attend to their own needs but also to keep their sick comrades and the orderlies.

The doctor makes his round of the ward and then prescribes treatment for each case so that for about 2 and a half or more hours we are kept at it in dressing “cases,” giving medicines and otherwise carrying out the directions of the doctor. Bed cases get their meals served to them, breakfast at 7.30, dinner at 12.45 and tea at 4.30. They can scoff and in no error. Most of them find that the generous hospital allowance is insufficient and we frequently have to requisition more than we are entitled to from the Steward’s Store.

Breakfast consists of tea, bread and butter, bacon, and in some cases special foods such as milk, eggs, etc. Most of them get through the regimental menu. Dinner: stew, with plenty of vegetables and bread; tea, bread and butter; jam and cheese.

**INVALID APPETITES** from all sides of the ward which is a partitioned off portion of the factory, the partition being a woven cloth (like flax) weighted with sandbags—come calls for more bread, more jam, and more tea. *Oliver Twist* surely never was in it with these hungry Tommies who two or three days ago were in the trenches. Many cases of rheumatism, pleurisy, pneumonia, and frostbite have been admitted, the former predominating—and no wonder. There are also ordinary ailments that would affect men under civilian conditions. When “cases” are fit for discharge they are not sent direct to duty, but to a convalescent camp, where they remain until they are fit to resume their places in the fighting line.

**13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1915**

**W S COLLINS UNWELL**

Many readers will learn with regret that notification came to hand this week that **Mr W S Collins** of the Royal Flying Corps at the General Headquarters of the Expeditionary Force

and formerly of the "Labour Voice", is very unwell and is in hospital suffering from bronchitis and rheumatism. We are sure many readers will join with us in wishing him a speedy recovery.



**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**FROM W S COLLINS**

**Mr W S Collins**, of the R.A.M.C., formerly of the "Labour Voice" staff, who has been out at the front since the beginning of the war, writes a characteristic letter to a colleague. After dealing at considerable length with the causes and effects of the war, he goes on to detail some of his experiences in France, and says:

"I recently paid a visit to the cemetery in which are buried the bodies of all soldiers who die locally, and came across the grave of Sapper T R Edmonds, of Cardiff, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Glamorgan Field Co. Royal Engineers, who died at Tilques on 25<sup>th</sup> January. A large wooden cross has been erected over the place where he was buried, and like all the other graves of British soldiers, is well tended. They are all planted with flowers and are nicely "tucked" up with grass tufts. Every grave is marked with a regimental cross—six soldiers being buried in one grave and their names are engraved on a large cross, made of deal, painted a light pink. One portion of the cemetery is allotted for the purpose of accommodating French and another for Belgian soldiers, but the majority of those interred are British. I must not give you any numbers or they would be crossed out.

Re your question as to whether I am likely to get home soon. My fifth aunt! I wish with you there were truth in it, but dismally, dejectedly and dolefully and dismayed, I must reply in the negative. Pity 'tis so but 'tis true! I am as well as I can expect to be, but I know where I should be better. I am, however, fast learning French grammar; it is the limit and I'm getting old."

### **HOME FROM THE FRONT: HIS EXPERIENCES IN FRANCE**

**3<sup>rd</sup> JULY 1915**

**PRIVATE W S COLLINS CALL FOR RECRUITS**

**Private William S Collins**, formerly of "Llais Llafur," now in the R.A.M.C. detachment with the Royal Flying Corp, is paying his first visit home since the beginning of the war, and his leave has been specially extended by the War Office in order that he may undertake

recruiting work in the Swansea Valley. With this object in view, Private Collins has been addressing a series of meetings in the locality during the week, and on Tuesday he spoke to a large gathering at the New Theatre and Cinema, Ystradgynlais.

Mr Edwards (one of the proprietors of the Cinema) said he did not think Mr Collins needed any introduction to a Swansea Valley, and especially an Ystradgynlais audience. He was well known in the district, and would, the speaker felt sure, have a hearty reception. Continuing, Mr Edwards said he believed that the Ystradgynlais Cinema hold the record for amusement houses in the number of men it had contributed to the colours, as no fewer than six out of seven were in army service, and he was the only one left. (Applause)

**A WAR OF IDEAS** Private Collins, who had a very hearty reception, said that 11 months ago, when the first Expeditionary Force left for the great war very few thought that so long a time would elapse before they would again be permitted to see their homes.....

### **THE JOURNEY OUT**

..... Proceeding Private Collins went on to describe the journey out in that memorable first week of August. In the first stages of mobilisation they did not know where they were going to, but eventually they were sent to Southampton en route for Le Havre. Nothing struck him more forcibly of the magnificent power of the British Empire than the voyage across the channel. They were most carefully guarded by searchlights, and submarines and destroyers; everything possible to guarantee their safety. And the comradeship of the men was most striking. It was really touching to see how they clung to one another, often with their arms around each other's necks, as they slept on deck, going out in this the great adventure concerning which they then knew nothing. The troops were in a maze of uncertainty. They had never been taught, like the Germans, to realise what a great European war might mean. They had to learn by a long experience. Upon arrival at the French port, the British Tommies, were given a very hearty reception by the French people, who lustily sang "The Marseillaise," that soul-inspiring National Anthem of free France, beside which the British National Anthem seemed quite tame.

**WORK AT THE BASE** Proceeding, Mr Collins spoke of the immediate work of the men upon arrival in France. They were sent to a school, which was to be prepared for the reception of the first batch of wounded. The floor was caked with about four inches of dirt, and it took them two days to get to the wood. (Laughter) From that place he (the speaker) had instructions to proceed to the base, and he was not sorry to get away from the school. Afterwards he was engaged at an office in helping to organise preparations for the wounded, and he saw the first batch arrive from the front. They were not very badly wounded, and this seemed strange until they afterwards learned that those more seriously hurt had had to be left behind. Probably they were taken prisoners, but it was also probable that many had been foully murdered by the enemy. (Shame)

**GERMAN PREPAREDNESS** There was an old saying that "Twice armed is he whose cause is just. Thrice armed is he who gets his blow in 'fust—and the German advance at the beginning was due absolutely to the fact that they had been organising and preparing for the war for a very long time. Many of the British men went out under the impression that the war would be over in four or five months, and that they might be coming back for Christmas to be hailed as heroes. They had no conception of what modern warfare was like, or of the terrible unscrupulous frightfulness that the Germans could and would display. Thus the Allies had to retreat from Mons—the greatest retreat the world had ever known, and had it not been for the bravery, the courage, and the endurance of the Allied forces that retreat would have been a far more serious matter than it actually was. But for British soldiers, he had no doubt that Paris

would have fallen, and the men who mostly held the enemy were largely married men. With remarkable ability they kept the enemy fighting in the battles of the Aisne and Marne. (Applause) No words or pen of his could ever describe what the British force did and won at these critical stages. The force was a puny one, pitted against overwhelming odds, trained to the very day and the minute, for the great struggle. It was at that time that they who were non-combatants felt that they were not doing their duty in remaining behind whilst the brave fellows were sacrificing themselves in the fighting line. But they were kept working night and day in attending to the needs of the suffering and the time came, when the retreat was in progress that they too had to move. They only just got away in time, as the enemy in pursuit was within four miles of them, and had the German Ulbans got up it was perfectly certain that he would not be addressing the gathering that evening. However, they embarked in boats and were out for four days on the open sea until they got to one of the ports on the West Coast of France.



**TERRIBLE SIGHTS** Here, said Private Collins, they had a great welcome, the populace doing all they could for the comfort of the troops. As the fighting units were keeping the enemy at bay, they left the port and advanced to Boulogne, but his time there was limited, he saw very little of the place and its surroundings. The wounded were arriving in such large numbers that it was impossible to take them over to England, and one morning whilst he was out he saw sights quite sufficient to convince him that all his most frightful ideas of war had been justified. Apart from the soldiers who were wounded, thousands and thousands of refugees were continually arriving from the war area districts where homes, friends, and all they held dear had been ravaged and pillaged by the most ruthless and unscrupulous enemy we as a nation had ever had to face. The look of pained surprise on the faces of the children was terrible in its haunting pity, and there was no occasion for astonishment that strong men who saw some of these distressing sights should be melted to tears, as well as stung to determination to avenge such acts.

**THE MENACE TO BRITAIN** It was fortunate for Britain that it had such an efficient Expeditionary Force and still more fortunate that it had a Navy to guard the coast. It was God

help Britain if ever the enemy broke through the 37 miles of front now held by the British, who were pouring men and munitions there against the enemy. But the enemy could pour both men and munitions quicker and in greater quantity than the Allies, and there was urgent need, not only of material, but men. He often wondered what it would have meant if it had been that not only the homeland, but also the Colonies, had not responded in the splendid manner they did. The Colonies had really done magnificent work for they had realised that Great Britain was fighting for the greatest idea that had ever been defended by this island nation. (Hear, hear)

**IF GERMANY WON** The present position was entirely new, and Britain had either got to be prepared to make very great sacrifices to win the war or sink below something worse than vassalage, worse than the present plight of Servia and Belgium. If Britain did not win, then he said with all seriousness, God help Britain! If Germany carried her "Kultur" into this country, it would be of no avail for men to say that the war was not wanted, or anything of that sort, or that the Navy ought to be good enough. The fact was that the Allies did not yet know the real power of the Germans. This country was asleep. Britain had not yet realised that Germany got out more munitions and men than the rest of Europe put together, excluding Russia from the calculation of men. These were plain facts—ammunition in particular, as well as more men were needed. There should, however, be no mistake about the daring and bravery of the British troops, Man to man they could "knock lumps off" the Germans. (Laughter and applause) It was only during the time that the enemy could give seven or ten men to our one, and our ammunition was short, that the Allies could not stop them, and even then they did not get very far.

**THE WORK OF MERCY** Digressing for a few minutes, Private Collins proceeded to refer to the work of caring for the sick and wounded, and observed that in modern warfare bacteria was a greater foe to an army than its military enemy. In the war of 1870, whilst 138,000 wounded men died in hospital, no fewer than 328,000 died from illness. It was after this that antiseptics and X-Rays were discovered and used towards the mitigation of the sufferings of the sick and wounded, but disease was still the most dreaded enemy. The R.A.M.C. had accomplished wonderful results in preventing serious outbreaks. It was a fact that no less than 6 out of 10 of the British wounded were now being returned to the trenches after care in the hospitals. If the science of slaughter had advanced, the science of healing had advanced at a far greater rate. (Hear, hear.) The hospitals were splendidly fitted up, and could not be excelled. They stood for something more than efficiency in curing. They stood for prevention as far as it could be I gained.

Continuing, Mr. Collins expressed warm thanks to the Colliery workmen and Councillor Tom Williams for sending out a gift of 12,000 cigarettes in the earlier stages of the war, He observed that it was suggested that he should distribute them among the Welsh soldiers with the British army but to demonstrate how impossible that was he stated that at that time the British force was operating over an area as big as Wales. He gave the cigarettes as well as he could to wounded soldiers, and they were very greatly appreciated. During one distributing tour he was recognised by a man from his own home in Yorkshire, the only man who recognised him during the whole of his stay in France.

**THE APPEAL TO YOUNG MEN** In concluding, Mr. Collins said that as a trade unionist, -and he would go no further in uniform--(laughter)--but as a trade unionist he did honestly and sincerely say that the situation as he saw it, and as many of his friends saw it, was most serious. The British force now was engaged in a task as grave as ever, and a great many more men were needed. He specially appealed to the women not to stand in the way of young men

going out to assist the British troops. If they wanted to see the horrors of Belgium perpetrated in England, of course they should try to keep the men at home, but he knew that they realised what that would mean, and those women who thought of their honour as dearer than life itself ought to let their men folk go cheerfully and willingly. Married men were not wanted, because there were thousands of single ones who should go first. He urged them to rally to their duty.

RECEIVING RED CROSS PARCELS [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)



He could not think that the young men of Ystradgynlais who remained at home were cowards particularly in view of the bravery of those who had already gone. (Hear, hear.) Wales had great traditions in her long struggles against the Saxon foe, and he warned his young hearers that it would be a matter of never ending regret to them if they did not go forth to do their bit now. The more men who enlisted, the sooner we should have peace. (Hear, hear.)

#### 10<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915

#### RETURNED TO FRANCE

The limit of **Private W S Collins'** extension of leave was reached on Sunday evening, when he left Ystalyfera for France to return to his duties in the R.A.M.C. detachment with the Royal Flying Corps. Private Collins motored to Landore, where he got the boat train for Paddington, and after a few hours in London journeyed to the front via Folkestone and Boulogne. His visit to the Swansea Valley created a great deal of interest, and the reception accorded him wherever he went was a striking manifestation of his popularity with all parties and all classes. Many of our readers will join us in wishing him all good fortune and a safe return at the conclusion of hostilities.

#### 24<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915

A letter received by Ystalyfera friends from **Private W S Collins** this week indicate that he is now orderly in charge of the sanitary department at the Aircraft Park at General Headquarters and describes the work as interesting, although somewhat important. He gives an amusing description of the surprise expressed by his colleagues at his extension of leave recently, when he visited the valley on a recruiting tour.



### **30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

We regret to hear that **Private W S Collins R A M C.**, formerly of the Labour Voice, who as readers know, has been in France since the commencement of the war, is at present very far from well. He is suffering from an attack of muscular rheumatism, brought on by the very damp weather recently experienced in France. We hope he will soon recover.

### **27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**Private W S Collins**, formerly on the Llais Staff and now with the R A M C in France is this week spending a few days on furlough at his home in Yorkshire. He has been on sick leave for a while, and we trust this rest will fit him once more for his arduous duties at the front. The many friends of Private Collins will regret to learn that he does not feel equal to visiting South Wales on this occasion.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 1916**

#### **PRESENTATION AT TABERNACLE**

On Friday evening a presentation meeting was held at Tabernacle Vestry. The Rev J Emlyn Jones presided and most of the members of the Committee were present. The recipient was **Mr W S Collins** late of Wind Road who since the outbreak of war has been on active service in France. The presentation of a purse of money was made by the chairman and Mr Collins expressed thanks in appropriate terms. It may not be generally known that he has now been discharged from the Army having served his full time as a reservist.

### **8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

#### **PONTEFRACT**

**Lance Corporal W S Collins**, formerly of the Llais staff, writes a letter in his usual style to one of his old friends at Ystalyfera. He is now an orderly at Pontefract, where he appears to be doing well. He coolly advises us to get ready for another twelve months of the war!

### **17<sup>th</sup> MAY 1919**

#### **WELCOME TO A RETURNED LLAIS REPORTER**

The Chairman, at the conclusion of the meeting said, "We cannot allow the meeting to close without saying how very pleased we are to see our old friend Mr Collins again amongst us. He has been very faithful with us for many years and we are glad that he is back safe and sound and we are all pleased to see him – (Hear, hear).

### **19<sup>th</sup> JULY 1919**

#### **HIGH TRIBUTE TO LLAIS REPORTER**

At the Pontardawe Guardians meeting on Thursday, Mr J D Rees moved that the best thanks of the Guardians be extended to **Mr W S Collins** who, for five years before the outbreak of war, when he joined the colours, and since his return, had been a representative of "The Labour Voice." During the time Mr Collins had recorded the doings of the Guardians and the Rural District Council, the reports had been fair, impartial, and reported in the best possible manner in the interests of the Guardians, Council and public alike. As Guardians they were sorry that Mr Collins was leaving the district, and he felt that he was voicing the general opinion of members of the body and public alike in wishing him all success, and the best of health in his new appointment on "The South Wales Daily News."

The Chairman (Mr Henry Thomas) seconded the resolution. He said that Mr Collins had always, rendered verbatim reports in the most careful manner, and the thanks of the public were due to him. The resolution was carried unanimously, and ordered to be entered in the minutes.

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**“THE CINEMA” SONS  
22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 1916**

**PRIVATES EDWARDS and PAGE  
WOUNDED IN ACTION**

Mr Edwards, the Cinema, has received intimation that his son, **Private Evan Edwards**, of the Swansea Pals, has been wounded in action. Private Edwards, who is only eighteen years of age has sustained a wound in the thigh, and is also suffering from shock. He is at present in Newport hospital. Out of seven men connected with the Cinema, five are with the colours, two of them, **Privates Edwards and Page**, sons of the proprietors, having joined whilst under age. Mr Page has also done transport service on Salisbury Plain, the only one who has not done any war service being Mr Edwards, who is over-age. He, however, has done good work in connection with war charities both local and national.

Mr and Mrs Edwards visited their son at Newport on Tuesday, and brought back a good report of his satisfactory progress.

**2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**EVAN EDWARDS**

**Private Evan Edwards** of the Swansea Pals, who has been in Whitchurch hospital for some time, has now been removed to Abergavenny and will also be visiting his parents at no distant date.

**27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917**

**DISCHARGED: EVAN EDWARDS**

**Private Evan Edwards** has now received his discharge from the service. He joined up whilst still under age, with the Welsh Regiment, choosing as his unit the gallant “Swansea Pals.” He was with the unit when it upheld Welsh tradition at Mametz Woods and the Somme.

**27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1917**

**BACK HOME: FAMILY**

As Ystradgynlais people are aware, **Messrs Edwards and Page of the Cinema**, are always to the front in providing their patrons with the very latest and best in moving pictures. Every reader should make an effort to visit the Cinema next week on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, when the latest official film from every war front will be screened. These pictures were taken by Dr. Howard Baron, Ll. D., and war correspondent to "The Times" and "Daily Mail," and the lecture which accompanies each film will be of extraordinary interest. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the Italian official war film, "The Advance on Gorizia" will be shown, and we venture to predict a hug success for this film, which shows the transport of men, munitions, stores, artillery, etc., over the heights of Italy.

**9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**JARVIS PAGE**

Mr Page of the Cinema has received intimation that his son **Jarvis Page** of the RWF has been wounded in action. Private Page who is not yet 19, has sustained shrapnel wounds to his head and legs. He is now under treatment at a base hospital “Somewhere in France”.

**Private Jarvis Page**, whose wounds are reported elsewhere, has been removed to Dublin hospital, where he is making satisfactory progress. Mr Page, Private Page’s father, visited his son during the week and found him in as favourable condition as could be expected.

**26<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**RECOVERING: JARVIS PAGE**

**Private Jarvis Page** has come home from hospital after having being wounded. He joined in the early days of the war although he was under age, and went to France as soon as he was nineteen. He is now making a favourable recovery.

**27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917**

**MENTIONED IN DESPACHES**

Mr and Mrs Page, of the Cinema, have received from their son **Private Jarvis Page** the official notification sent him by the General of his division, complementing him on the fact

that his commanding officer had mentioned him in despatches for his gallant conduct on the field. Private Jarvis was severely wounded about a 1 year ago, but is now obviously taking part in the heavy fighting again.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917 YSTRADGYNLAIS BOY WINS THE MILITARY MEDAL**

In our last issue we stated that **Private Jarvis Page**, son of Mr and Mrs Page of the Cinema, Ystradgynlais, had been mentioned in despatches. His parents have now however received the Military Medal, which has been awarded to him in the field. The gallant act that won for Private Page this coveted distinction is not yet known locally.

### **BRECON AND RADNOR EXPRESS 20<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

Mr Page has learnt that his son **Private Jarvis Page** (20) has been wounded for the second time and is now in hospital in France. He enlisted in August 1914 and was awarded the Military Medal a few months ago.

### **CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918** Presentation of a Military Medal

A fete was held at Ystradgynlais Park on Thursday in aid of the local "S and S" Col. Gough was the president, and Mr Oswald Morgan the secretary. The music was provided by the Ystalyfera Town Band. In addition to a number of stalls for the sale of fancy goods and flowers, turns were provided by Celeste of London, who performed on the wire; Bros. Rees, gymnasts; Miss Doris Page; Griff and Maurice, operatic tramps; Mr Kendrick cornet soloist; and Miss Harris of Swansea, who gave a dancing exhibition.

During the afternoon Col. Gough presented the **Military Medal to Private Jarvis Page** for bravery on the field, when he carried despatches under heavy fire for two consecutive days when communications had been cut on. Private Page has been wounded twice. Others presented were Corporal Lewis, Pioneer T. Jones, Privates G. Prior, B. Powell, A. Marley, and Smith.

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### **SNIPPET TO BACK HOME**

**17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**GOOD SHOTS**

"The people at home run away with the idea that the Germans are rotten shots but that is far from being right. One of our boys tied a small Union Jack on a stick and stuck it on the parapet, but it had not been two minutes before it was twenty yards behind the trench. They only had to use two bullets to do it..... I don't think their big guns can come up to ours."

Rifleman A Needs  
1st Monmouthshire Regiment

### **SNIPPET FROM BACK HOME**

**9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**YSTRADGYNLAIS NOTES**

Swansea Valley people have begun to realise that this country is at war. The Local casualty lists have unfortunately been very heavy of late, and there are few homes in the district that have not lost a near friend or relative. The lighting restrictions have also had a depressing effect and people are beginning to realise the discomforts of darkened streets. A prominent tradesman says he has sold lanterns recently which he had thought of treating as obsolete. The Chambers of Trade in the different local ties are endeavouring to have the restrictions applied less stringently in the district.

## MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS

### SIGHTS TO MAKE THE BLOOD RUN COLD

#### FORMER YSTRADGYNLAIS MAN AT THE FRONT

1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915

YPRES

Gunner H H Barker, of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Staff, 7<sup>th</sup> Division of the Royal Field Artillery, who will be remembered by many Ystradgynlais readers as the former assistant to Mr A Webb, dentist, has been out at the front since the commencement of the war and a letter has just been received from him by Mrs D Phillips, Pantycelyn, Brecon Road, where Mr Barker resided for about three years prior to leaving the district. In the course of his letter, Gunner Barker says: I have taken part in many battles, but the worst time I had was for three weeks at the battle of Ypres in Belgium. It was awful, but you have probably read in the papers how last October and November the British held their own against overwhelming odds, and how the 7<sup>th</sup> division won immortal fame for the same thing. How I was not killed a dozen times a day during those terrible weeks I cannot say, but I was lucky enough, to come out of it without a scratch. The sights I saw would make your blood run cold. The Germans have burnt all the villages, and destroyed every church, and almost every building is a mass of ruins. I am no longer in Belgium now, but in France. However, we are quite near the frontier. The 7<sup>th</sup> division was again in the thick of it at **Neuve Chappelle** last month. This is a terrible war, but we are all confident of victory in the end. Germany's fate is sealed, but it will be a terrible struggle before peace is signed. Yet we have to see the matter through, because we are fighting for liberty of nations, and for our very national safety against tyranny and oppression, as well as against that horde of barbarians who are now ravaging a part of France and nearly the whole of Belgium. I think that the day of reckoning is not far off. There are thousands of Welshmen out here and I hear the language spoken almost daily. It is wonderful how this war has brought the Empire together and what a contented crowd we are,—men from all parts of the world, Canadians, Indians, Arabs, etc., and we are all united with the same fixed idea.

29<sup>th</sup> MAY 1915

#### YSTALYFERA MAN WOUNDED IN BELGIUM

We have also been privileged to receive copies of two very interesting letters sent by **W J Davies**, of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, who enlisted immediately after the outbreak of war, and went to France some time ago. Private Davies, who is a native of Ystalyfera, was wounded two or three weeks back in a fierce engagement, and had now been re-moved to the Exeter Hospital, from where he has addressed the following communications to his sister, Mrs Tom Lewis, of Millborough Road, Ystalyfera. In the first dated May 16<sup>th</sup>, he says:

Dear Brothers and Sister, I suppose that you received the p.c. I sent you from Belgium, also the letter that was sent from France. You will see now by the above address that I am in England, but I did think they would send me nearer home. I broke both bones and tore the flesh of my left arm last Sunday in the **Battle of Ypres**, which was a very fierce bombardment. I took part in the battles of Neuve Chapelle and Hill 60, but this was the worst of all. On Saturday, the 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup>, we fought hand to hand with Germans and we can easily hold our own in the open, although they could put six in the field in Ypres to our one. Every one of our officers were killed the Saturday before I got wounded and hundreds of our lads had gone. If ever I told you what we had gone through during the last three battles you would hardly credit it. I would have been home two days sooner if my arm had kept from bleeding. On my way to the French coast I had to break my journey owing to the state of my arm, so they took me first to St. Omer Hospital in France, that is General French's headquarters. I am not able to write any more to-day.





**14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

#### **AMONGST THEM YSTAYFERA'S BOYS**

After receiving the Regimental Colours at the hands of the King at Buckingham Palace last week, the Welsh Guards were given several days leave, and the Valley boys all returned home. Among those in the regiment from Ystalyfera are **Privates Bevan** (near Cambrian Colliery) **Leslie Thomas** (Pantteg) and **Tom Henwood** (Clare Road) and **Sidney Edwards** (Pantteg), all of whom appear to be in the best of health and spirits. One of the local boys was deeply impressed by Lord Kitchener who was present at the ceremony at the Palace and describes him as "A Man of Iron".

#### **WELSH GUARDS LEAVE FOR THE FRONT**

**21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1915**

#### **INSPECTION BY SIR FRANCIS LLOYD**

It came as news to many on Monday that part of the Welsh Guards regiment was leaving for the front. On that day General Sir Francis Lloyd, Commanding the London District, inspected the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Welsh Guards at Wellington Barracks. The men paraded in full service kit, with quick firers, ambulances and equipment wagons. General Lloyd was accompanied in the inspection by Lord Harlech, Colonel-in-Chief of the Welsh Guards, Lieutenant Colonel Murray Threipland, commanding the battalion, and Admiral Sir Richard Bulkeley. After the inspection General Lloyd said he had known the battalion since its inception, and had seen it grow into the magnificent battalion he saw before him. He now saw them go to the front absolutely certain they would, in common with the rest of the Division of Guards, set an example to the British Army. He knew they would maintain the glorious traditions of Wales to the fullest extent.

He wished them God speed and luck. Every Welshman would expect to hear of the brave deeds and the good service they would do in a very short space of time and throughout the rest of the war, and he and every Welshman and every Guardsman that was left, would do their utmost - and he knew he spoke for the Principality - to maintain the battalion in the magnificent physique he saw before him.

Again he said to them Good-bye God speed and all good fortune to every Welshman who joined them.

**28<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

#### **2 YSTALYFERA BOYS KILLED IN ACTION**

According to reports received, there seems to be little doubt that a good detachment of the Welsh Guard has gone to the Dardanelles and we are informed that **Privates Sydney**

**Edwards** (Pantteg) and **Tom Henwood** (Clare Road) are among the number to go with them. If this is so, we may expect to have some interesting letters for our reader's perusal shortly.

## WENT INTO ACTION SINGING

**23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**GREAT DISTINCTION WON IN BATTLE**

Details of the magnificent charge made by the Welsh Guards, when they received their baptism of fire, are coming to hand slowly, and we publish the following letter sent by a Cardiff Corporal telling of the Guards' bravery in the great drive which commenced on Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. Of interest will the letter be to our readers who are aware that many local lads took part in this attack, and in which **Private Tom Henwood**, Clare Road, Ystalyfera, lost his life. The Corporal writes under date 3<sup>rd</sup> September and says:

"I have been waiting patiently for fags, but none have come yet, and I don't expect I shall get them now as we are going into the trenches to-night. I expect by the time you get this letter you will have read the news of the poor chaps who have met their death fighting for their country, The Brigadier General addressed us this morning, and said that there had never been such a charge under such heavy shell-fire as we made to win Hill 70, and said we fought well. I suppose we have got to go again to-night and try to take another position, and I hope we shall succeed. I have got a bit of shrapnel in my thumb, but I hope it will work out soon."

In a letter dated September 30<sup>th</sup>, the same writer says:

"You will read with pride of the great victory that we won last Monday. We were told that, we had to capture Hill 70—the hill that has been won by the British three times and lost again—and we were told "to take it at all costs".

"We set out about 2.30 towards the battlefield, but before we could start we had to cross over about 400 yards of open country, but we did it. The hail of shell was a bit hot. Eventually we got into the trenches, but we were forced to move on, as the Germans had gassed us. We managed to get out, and then the battle began.

"The Germans were something like 300 yards this side of Hill 70, but we chased across those 300 yards like dogs after rabbits. The shell fire was terrible, and we lost a few men going over. Shells were coming over by the hundreds. How so many of us escaped them I do not know. We fought them back over the other side of the hill after nine-and-a half hours fighting.

"We then dug trenches and dug outs to shelter us from their shell fire. Now, all we have to do is to hold the hill, which we have done up to now. I have got a safety razor and a pipe which I took off one big Hun that I shot just before we reached the top.

"Do you remember me saying the boys would go into action singing? Well, my words came true, as they sang all the way until the shells began to whistle. Then we "ducked our nuts" and ran on.

"I think we lost about 500 men, but a lot of them were shot by snipers. They are very dangerous, and we have to keep watch for them.

"Tuesday was awful, as it was raining all night, and we had no top coats to put on, as we had to take our togs off to charge the hill, and now they are lost. I have not had a wash since last Sunday, and have not had my boots off since I came out of hospital, but we are all making the best of it, and hope to be home soon.

"Hundreds who have gone through the war since the commencement declare it was the fiercest battle of all. In view of the continuous shell fire that was rained on us I am glad to think I have come through without a scratch."

The last letter received is dated 1<sup>st</sup> October and contains the following:

"Just a few lines to let, you know I am in the best of health. We are having a day's rest after a bit of a rough time. No doubt you will see in the papers what we have done and been through, but what are left of us are still cheerful and happy in the knowledge that we have done a little

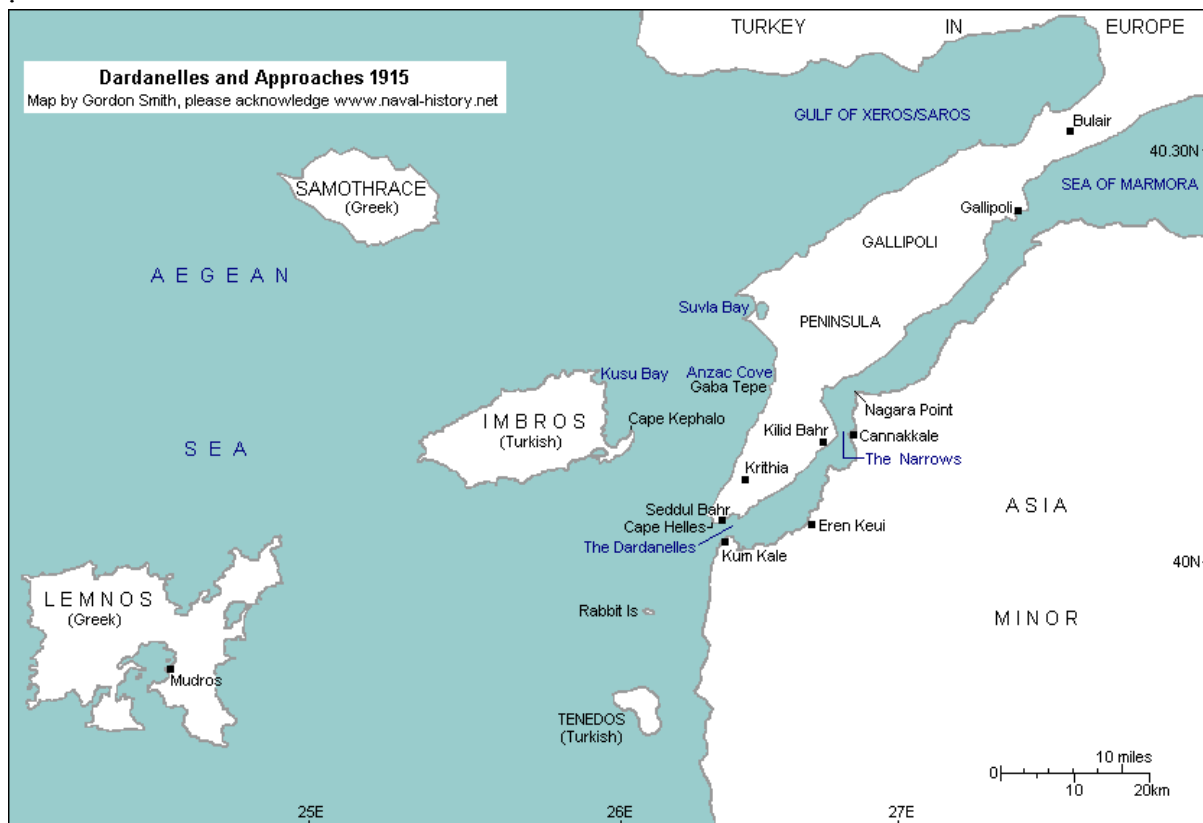
bit towards defeating the enemy. I hope you will soon send me some 'fags,' as I am "stoney broke." I lost everything and all I possess is what I have on."

## 2<sup>nd</sup> SOUTH WALES BORDERERS: **DARDANELLES**

23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 1915

PRIVATES BOWLETT & CLINTON: 2<sup>nd</sup> SWB

The many local families who had relatives in the great landing of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Wales Borderers, in the Dardanelles, will read with interest the following account of their experiences, given to a press representative by a wounded member of the regiment, now in hospital in the neighbourhood.



[www.naval-history.net](http://www.naval-history.net)

"I went out in March," said **Private Bowlett**, a fine young specimen of manhood, who appeared to be well on the way to convalescence, "and was engaged in the transport section. I took part in the memorable landing near Sedd ul Bahr, when it rained shot and shell for hours; but unlike so many of our fellows, I managed to escape unhurt.

"It was about 5 o'clock on the Sunday morning when the first man disembarked, but some time elapsed before the whole of our contingent were landed. Under the terrific fire of the enemy, we were gradually driven back to the water's edge. A large number of Turks appeared to be firing from well prepared concrete trenches, and they made great play with their concealed machine guns. By desperate and sustained efforts, however, we eventually got them on the run the same day, and when night fell we managed to make rapid cover for ourselves by scraping up the earth in front of us. It was reported that up front there were some 19,000 Turks in the immediate neighbourhood, and in some cases they were almost close enough for us to have shaken hands with them.

"At the particular spot where I was, our landing was partly covered by the steamship River





**LOCAL ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY MAN'S EXPERIENCES AT THE FRONT**  
**13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1917**

**GUNNER HARRY BREWER: THE SOMME**

A soldier visitor to the locality this week, who will be pleasantly remembered, is **Gunner Harry Brewer**, R.F.A., who is on leave after 17 months strenuous service on the British front in Flanders and France. Prior to enlisting—which he did immediately on the outbreak of the war, Gunner Brewer was employed by Mr William Morgan, builder, Glanrhyd, and also at one of the local collieries. During his leave he is staying with friends at Cilybebyll. Gunner Brewer bears interesting testimony to the startling development of British gunnery. When, 17 months ago, his battery went into action, in the Ypres region, the orders were to economise as much as possible in the use of shells, whereas the Germans deluged the British lines with their fire. Now, however, there is no stint, and the British guns are able to send over 200 shells to the enemy's 20. Gunner Brewer took part in some of the most momentous of the Somme battles, and his description of this historic battle ground was strikingly graphic. Questioned as to the attitude of the average British soldier towards the idea of "peace by negotiation," and whether "Tommy" was war wary, he replied. "'Of course, every sensible man is tired of the war, and would be glad to be back at work but 99 British soldiers out of every hundred at least, would emphatically raise their voices against a peace that was not dictated by the Allies. We want to end the war in Germany.'" Further questioned as to the spirit of the British soldier, Gunner Brewer replied simply "The average British soldier is a chap like myself, and I can assure you that although we are often tired and sometimes hungry, when the enemy succeeds in preventing supplies coming up to the front—we are never discouraged. We know there is plenty of ammunition behind us and plenty of food, and through all we are cheerful, for we are now certain that we have got the upper hand of the Huns. And this feeling is strengthened when, as now is the regular experience, we see the enemy being brought in as prisoners. Many of them great strapping fellows, six foot tall others puny, wizened chaps of four-foot- nothing almost but all moving with a dejected, slouching gait, and utterly miserable expression."

Gunner Brewer returns to France on Monday next.

**31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 1917**

**Cure's Story of Slavery in Redeemed Villages**

**ENEMY BURN DOWN HIS CHURCH BEFORE HIS EYES:**

Mr Philip Gibbs, the brilliant correspondent of the "Daily Chronicle, tells a remarkable story of an interview with the venerable priest of Voyennes, a village in the Somme area, won by British troops. Mr. Gibbs says:

To-day I have gone again through a number of the ruined villages which were liberated just a week ago from German rule. Across our front line trenches, through the barbed wire, and near the narrow strip of ground, which was No Man's Land, one comes at once into the country where French civilians have lived since the beginning of the war, as far removed from the life of their own nation as though dwelling in another planet, cut off from all news, of the progress of victory, passing through all the stages of hunger to starvation, and enslaved by the enemy of their people. They are now free and to-day being the first Sunday of their liberation, they had brought out French flags and the tricolour waved above the ruins of many villages, on the beams of roofless houses and burnt out barns.

I passed through a triumphal arch built at the entrance of the little town of Nesle, and in other places where the Germans had blown up mines at the cross roads and bridges, saw how groups of French soldiers gathered round old men and women, dressed in Sunday clothes saved up from the days before the war, listening to the tale of the sufferings which had made these women so thin and white and these old men weak, except in courage.

**A DESTROYED CHURCH** In the village of Voyennes, not far from Ham and one of the few hamlets not utterly destroyed, because the people of the district were herded here while



battle line, and very close to it. For 50 hours at a time the roar of guns swept round us week after week, and month after month, and the sky blazed around us.

**"LIKE A WOUNDED TIGER"** "We were afraid of the temper of the German officers after the defeat on the Marne, and after the battles of the Somme, Germany was like a wounded tiger, fierce, desperate, cruel. Secretly, though our people kept brave faces, they feared what would happen if the Germans were forced to retreat. "At last that happened and after all we had endured the days of terror were hard to bear. From all the villages around, one by one, people were driven out, young women and men as old as 60 were taken away to work for Germany, and an orderly destruction began, which ended with the cutting down of our little orchards and ruin everywhere. The commandant before that was a good man and a gentleman, afraid of God and his conscience. He said, 'I do not approve of these things. The world will have a right to call us barbarians.' He asked for forgiveness because he had to obey orders, and I gave it him."

An order came to take away all the bells off the churches and all the metal work. I had already put my church bells in a loft and I showed them to him, and said, "There they are". He was very sorry. This man was the only good German Officer I have met, and it was because he had been fifteen years in America and had married an American wife and escaped from the spell of his country's philosophy. Then he went away.

**BRITISH HORSEMEN ARRIVE** "Last Sunday, a week ago, at this very hour, when the people were all in their houses under strict orders, and already the country was on fire with burning villages, a group of soldiers came outside there with cans of petroleum, which they put into the church. Then they set fire to it, and watched my church burn in a great bonfire. At this very hour a week ago I watched it burn.

"That night the Germans went away through Voyennes, and early in the morning, up in my attic looking through a pair of glasses, I saw four horsemen ride in. They were English soldiers, and our people rushed out to them. Soon afterwards came some Chasseurs d' Afrique, and the Colonel gave me the news of the outer world to which we now belong after our years of isolation and misery.

"Our agony had ended. The Germans knew they were beaten, monsieur; a commandant of Ham said, 'we are lost.' After the battles of the Somme the men groaned and wept when they were sent off to the front. 'God,' they cried, 'the horror of the French and English gunfire; oh, Christ, save us!'

"During the battles of the Somme the wounded poured back, a thousand or more a day, and Ham was one great hospital of bleeding flesh. The German soldiers have bad food and not enough of it, and their people are starving as we starved. The German officers behaved to their men with their brutality. I have seen them beat the soldiers about the head, while those men stood at attention, not daring to say a word, but as soon as the officers are out of the way the men say, 'We will cut those fellows throats after the war. We have been deceived! After the war we will make them pay.'

So the Cure talked to me, and I have only given a few of his words, but what I have given is enough.

## **WOUNDED SERGEANT'S STORY OF BOMBED DUG-OUT**

**8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

**A FLANDERS RAID**

A wounded sergeant in a Welsh battalion which took part a few days ago in a big organised raid in Flanders-- the type of raid often magnified in enemy communiqués into attacks—described this successful enterprise to a press representative:

"Small raids on shaft heads and listening posts are simple affairs," he I said, "but a big raid, several hundred strong, has to be practised down to the minutest detail, watches being synchronised to a second and there is always a danger that the enemy has detected some

movement, and is waiting to receive you.

"This time we were out to bomb his dug-outs, and to find out anything we could, and having left our front trenches at dark at the time fixed, the whole of our raiding party crawled stealthily across No Man's Land in small sections, each of which had certain duties allotted to it.

"The enemy, evidently apprised, put up a barrage, but by the time we were all hugging the ground close beside his barbed wire, and as soon as he lifted his barrage we entered his trenches. The section in my charge was checked for a moment by a large water filled crater which had been scooped out by a series of our shells exploding in the same place. As the planks we carried would not span the hole, we waded in neck deep through the water.

"A few yards away we found a dug-out. I lifted the earth-coloured blanket strung across the entrance, and not a sound came up from the dark interior. As a test I flung two bombs —there was a terrific yell from within, and the next minute ten terrified Germans with "Kamerad on their lips and hands raised in submission came forth.

"By this time four of my section had been slightly wounded, and I sent them back to our lines in charge of the prisoners. The rest of us, finding no other dug-out, waited for the return signal. When it sounded the Germans, realising something was up, were putting up a heavy barrage. At such times every man trusts to luck to get through. "I was laid out with a piece of shrapnel, but four of my men in turn dragged me by the collar of my tunic through the barrage. Fortunately, my four rescuers escaped unhurt."

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## LIFE IN THE REALM OF DEATH

**27<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916**

Wild animals as a rule seem unfrightened and undisturbed by bombardment. The birds sing continuously through the deafening roar of the cannon, which perhaps they take for an inferior imitation of a thunderstorm. The lark rise, singing between the lines, the wren plays among the brambles that overhang the trenches, and even the migrants - the swallow, the cuckoo, and the Thigh nightingale have returned to their old haunts, just as though our universal war was a matter of no moment in the kingdom of the birds.

Near the lines the more leafy soil of the surface path gives way to the mud of a communication trench. Here trees and undergrowth have suffered more severely, but still on the ground (where a man can only set his foot at the risk of his life) plant, insect, and bird life go on undisturbed. In the destruction of a forest by shell fire there are two stages particularly noticeable in spring. At first trees are torn mercilessly and branches lopped off, but still in the tortured saplings and mutilated trunks enough life is left for the buds to put out and break into life. Here one might think that a lunatic gardener has been trying to cut and shape the wood into his lunatic idea of order and neatness. Then, if the shells continue to fall, everything green disappears, shredded into the torn earth below. The trees that still stand grow fewer and fewer; not a branch is left to them and alike in winter and in spring, bare and leafless, pathetic stumps protest against the folly of man.

Mr H Warner Allen,  
The British Press correspondent with the French Army

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## MILES OF SHELL HOLES

**27th JULY 1916**

A French soldier who has been through the German attacks at Verdun has written to a friend an account of his experiences:

For miles and miles you can see only shell holes," he says, "shell holes, by the thousand, quite close to one another, all mixed up, small and big ones, from 77mm. holes to the appalling excavations dug up by the gigantic 420mm. shells, which are as deep as the Thames and half as wide as Trafalgar Square, and which could easily swallow ten cartloads of hay with twenty horses.

"One day I got covered up with earth twice by shells that exploded one: one yard from me, without hurting me. Shells and bullets are spent by the million with the intention of killing people, yet not a bullet out of 10,000 hits its mark, not one shell out of a thousand wounds a man."



**SHELL HOLES ON THE RIDGE**

[www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

# **SUPPORT: FUNDING: COMFORTS**

**1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915**

**TREATS FOR SERVICEMEN'S CHILDREN**

We understand that arrangements have been made to raise and organise funds for the purpose of giving a treat to all the children of soldiers in the local recruiting district, viz.: Ystalyfera, Cwmllynfell, G.C.G., and Brynamman. The arrangements are in the hands of Mr Albert J Woodman, the local recruiting officer, and Miss Jessie Williams, of Wern, House. In addition to tea, there will be an entertainment, and a large number of artistes have offered their services, so many in fact, that Mr Woodman will have considerable difficulty in making a suitable choice! He has also obtained special permission from Mr Arthur Collins, of Drury Lane Theatre, to use several of the numbers from the famous Drury Lane pantomime. In addition Col. Gough has promised to give everyone of the children a medal commemorating the fact that their fathers are now serving in the colours. The treat should, therefore, be an immense success.

## **WHAT THE SOLDIER BOYS WANT**

**25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**HINTS FROM A VALLEY WARRIOR**

A prominent Valley soldier, who has been doing duty in France since the beginning of the war, writes an interesting letter to an Ystalyfera friend dealing with the life of the troops at the front. He says

“You might write a paragraph and get it inserted in the “Labour Voice” asking the people if they would care to have any suggestions as to what are the requirements of **Thomas Atkins** out here, the answer can truthfully be given Cigarettes, reading matter, bottles of sauce, cake, Welsh cakes, and letters, especially letters. If we are going to have another winter campaign, I think it might be suggested that a society be formed in Ystalyfera, Ystradgynlais, Abercrave, Cwmllynfell, Seven Sisters, and Pontardawe (in fact in every town village and hamlet) composed of Sister Susies, NOT engaged in sewing shirts or knitting socks and Balaclava caps and mittens and comforters—actually wasting wool—but in using the money they would otherwise spend in buying raw material and using their time, in making cakes and writing letters to their men friends in the trenches, in billets, or the lines of communication, in hospitals, and elsewhere.

Most of those I know prefer letters to postcards, and postcards to parcels, and newspapers to letters, or postcards or parcels. Whilst the contents of parcels have their use, nothing stimulates those out here more than to be kept in touch with what is going on at home, and to learn that the number of recruits under the voluntary system is not falling.

**18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

**LADIES KNITTING CLASS**

Interesting details have come to hand this week with regard to the ladies' knitting class, to which reference was made in these columns a few weeks ago. It will be remembered that last spring a concert was held to provide funds for giving a treat to the dependents of all the soldiers and sailors in the neighbourhood, and that as a result, tea was given to upwards of 500 women and children. A balance of £1 remained in hand, and the ladies' committee thought it advisable to utilise this as the nucleus of a fund for providing winter comforts for the men at the front. The ladies made a collection among them-selves, which augmented the fund by several pounds. Wool was bought, and work was commenced, and readers will be interested to know that a large parcel has been sent this week to the headquarters of the national fund for providing comforts for the Welsh troops, of which Mrs. Lloyd George is chairman. The articles sent include 15 scarves, 30 pairs of mittens, and a number of helmets and socks. More helmets and socks, which are not quite completed, will be forwarded at a later date.

## WAR SAVINGS ASSOCIATION

**4<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1916**

**FOR YSTALYFERA**

Mr Edward Black of Cardiff and Mr John Edwards Pontardawe, were the chief speakers at a public meeting held under the auspices of the National War Savings Committee at Jerusalem Vestry, on Wednesday evening. Mr. H. J. Powell J.P., presided, and a number of delegates were present to represent the various chapels in the district; otherwise the attendance was not as good as might have been expected.

Mr Black, who said he was addressing his seventh meeting that day, explained the Government's need of money to carry on the war, and dealt at considerable length on the necessity for the workers at home to assist in this way to further the excellent results which are being attained by the soldiers in the field. He then explained the method whereby in local centres, small branches are being established to raise money for this purpose. During the past five months a large number of the branches have been formed, and several million pounds have been contributed in this way.

Small associations are formed in connection with chapels, schools, works, etc. and these are affiliated to the national committee. Members subscribe any sum they should choose weekly, and this is invested in 15s 6d war savings certificates, which, at the end of five years will be worth £1 to the investor.

Mr John Edwards, of Pontardawe addressed the meeting in Welsh, and spoke very eloquently in favour of adopting some scheme whereby those who can only save a little should be encouraged to lend that little to the Government at this time. He explained how a local association is being successfully worked at Pontardawe, with Mr. Ernest Lewis as secretary, and urged Ystalyfera workers to form branches here, for the furtherance of this good work. At the close of the meeting it was unanimously agreed that an attempt should be made to form an association in connection with each chapel in Ystalyfera.

**15<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

The War Savings Association's appeal has evidently been responded to with a will, for in spite of local trade depression, excellent sums on the whole have been collected. Since the formation of the local societies the following amounts have been collected up to the end of October:

Godre'rgraig Chapel	£178/17s
English Congregational Church	£83/14s
County School	£142/18s/9d
Gurnos Chapel	£522/11s/6d
Jerusalem	£143/12s/6d
Pantteg	£30/6s/6d
Wern	£179/9s/6d
St. David's Church	£1,318/12s

**30<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1918**

A meeting of the War Savings Association was arranged to take place on Monday evening at the Ynisedwyn Schools, but owing to the poor representation no meeting was held. Having regard to the serious position of the country, it is a thousand pities that sufficient energy cannot be whipped up locally to form an association. The investors themselves would be paid a substantial rate of interest on their money, besides being satisfied that they were doing something to hold up the advance of the Hun.



**3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**YSTRADGYNLAIS**

In spite of vague rumours of opposition and pessimistic head shaking in regard to War Bonds Week at Ystradgynlais, there were those who believed that, given the opportunity, the ancient village of Gwladys would emerge second to none of the same "grade". And when going to press we are glad to be able to announce that the optimists have it, for by Thursday evening the respectable little sum of £43,000 had been reached, with certain sources still untapped.

It is therefore fairly safe to prophecy that the quota aimed at, namely £50,000 will be reached and probably passed by Saturday evening.



**As advertised in the Llais 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1918**

**10<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**WELL DONE YSTRADGYNLAIS**

**WAR WEAPONS WEEK TOTAL**

Ystradgynlais and district has reason to be well pleased with itself on the excellent results attained in connection with War Weapons Week. The barometer outside the collecting depot at Commercial Street rose above the £50,000 mark, and on Saturday evening, it was announced that over £57,000 had been collected. The week had involved hard work to the speakers, Councillors Ben Williams, J.P., Ivor Gwynne, J.P., Peter Wright, Newport, D. T. Jones, Cwmllynfell; Alderman M W Morgan, Revs James Jones and Lewis Jones, and Messrs J Dyfrig Owen, T R Thomas and Dan Daniels together with Mr Charles Edwards, the painstaking secretary, and Mr George Roberts, L. C. and M. Bank who as treasurer, rendered very valuable service in all districts.

Meetings were held at Ystradgynlais, Abercrave, Cwmtwrch, and the Gurnos, and were well supported. Amongst the large amounts received were: L. C. and M. Bank, £10,000; L. and P. and S. W. Bank, £10,000; Pearl Assurance o., £2,100.

**12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

Nearly £4,600 has been subscribed at Ystalyfera in war savings, but it is felt that although this result is encouraging that a substantial increase would be the result of a little organisation and enthusiasm on the part of the people of the district. For the purpose of furthering the campaign, a public meeting will be held at the Wern Chapel on Monday evening at 7.30, when Councillor H J Powell, J.P., will preside. The speakers will be Sir Thomas Hughes, chairman of the Welsh Insurance Commission; Mr T W Hughes, Dockers' Union, Swansea; and Mr Paul Cocks, Sketty, and others. A hearty invitation is extended to all.

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**Every attempt was made to inform and keep up to date the families and friends of our service men and women and what better way than to show the films that were actually being made on location at the time.**

**10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1916**

# THE CINEMA

YSTRADGYNLAIS

FRIDAY and SATURDAY JUNE 9 and 10

An Opportunity to Witness One of  
THE MOST SOUL- STIRRING EVENTS  
in the annals of the British Empire

## THE LANDING at SUVLA BAY

Together with some of the most Thrilling Episodes in

## THE DARDANELLES EXPEDITION

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This is NOT a faked picture, but one taken under Government Authority. . .

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TIMES AND PRICES AS USUAL

Abercrave people should not miss making the journey to Ystradgynlais this weekend, if it is only for the purpose of witnessing the greatest war picture yet produced.

**THE DARDANELLES EXPEDITION** is to be screened by special Government permission. It is a picture taken under difficult conditions when one operator was killed, three injured and four machines destroyed. This proves the picture is not "faked". A convenient bus service will be run.

## SOMME WOUNDED FILMED

Within a few days there will be liberate an official film entitled “Wounded Somme Heroes and how they are cared for”. It has been thought that the production of this picture will considerably alleviate the anxieties of relatives of soldiers.

## GREAT PICTURE BOOKED FOR YSTRADGYNLAIS CINEMA

19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916

Messrs. Edwards and Page, together with Messrs. T P Thomas (check- weigher), and Sid Bailey, of the Non- Political Club, were amongst the privileged few at the Oxford Cinema, Swansea, on Wednesday morning, when the latest picture, "**The Battle of the Somme**" was shown privately. They were deeply impressed with the picture which takes over an hour and a half to produce.

It should be of great interest to the inhabitants of Ystradgynlais and district to hear that Messrs. Edwards and Page have booked the picture for the end of the first week in October. Nothing has yet been shown in the Swansea Valley to equal this wonderful picture, and it is worth going many miles to see.

## YSTRADGYNLAIS LADS ON THE SOMME

21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 1916

LOCAL BOYS IN: BATTLE PICTURES

The picture, "The Battle on the Somme," recognised to be the last word in cinematography, proved of more than ordinary interest at the Ystradgynlais Cinema last week, as **no less than seven Ystradgynlais boys** could be plainly recognised on the screen. This is surely a record for any Cinema. A dramatic incident occurred on Friday evening, when **Private Evan Edwards**, son of Mr Edwards, one of the proprietors of the Cinema, who was wounded subsequent to the taking of the film, returned home on sick leave, in time to see the film, and his own and his comrades' photograph. He was recognised in the film by the audience, and as he crossed the building soon afterwards, he was heartily cheered. The section in which the lads appeared, depicted the "Swansea Pals" on parade drill at Ostend, prior to being moved up to the lines. All the boys were easily recognisable, and looked cheerful, and Private Evan Edwards was seen waving his hat before the camera. **Private Jarvis Page**, son of Mr Page, co-proprietor with Mr Edwards, was also seen, and as Mr Edwards drew attention to the local boys in the rank, who were all near each other, a good round of hearty applause was given. Spectators claim to have seen other boys from the locality in the groups, and this is no doubt correct.

It is a peculiar fact that of the seven men recognised by all present, three have been killed, and four wounded.

The boys referred to, are as follows: **Private Daniel Austin** (killed); **Private Richard Morgan** (killed); **Private Henry Hazell** (killed) **Private Evan Edwards** (wounded); **Private Jarvis Page** (wounded); **Private T. Chatford** (shell shock); and **Private T R Evans** (shell shock).

The whole of the film was thoroughly enjoyed by those present, but needless to add, the section showing our own local gallant lads, was most appreciated.

(See “The Cinema” Sons)

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during the evening.

Lance-Corporal George Wood, of the Brecknocks assisted by Lance-Corporal Howells and Private Lewis, also of the Brecknocks, gave jumping exhibition. He is the world's champion jumper.

Sergeant Brown, of Ystalyfera, was in charge of the shooting saloon of the V.T.C., and Messrs. Edwards and Page, of the Auntie Sally's etc.

Mr Slater, M.E., had the charge of the gates, and Mr Lawrence bailiff to Col. Gough was in charge of the sheep guessing.

The Chamber of Trade had a stall, the contents of which were raffled for.

Miss Jessie Williams supervised the sweet stalls, etc., and about 100 ladies, tastefully attired as nurses, assisted at the tea.

A concert was held in the evening, when local artistes took part.

## COMFORTS AND GIFTS

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

### PARCELS FOR GALLIPOLI

**It is officially announced that in view of the exceptional conditions of transit, it is necessary that parcels for the Mediterranean Expedition Force should be very carefully packed. Small parcels arrive in better condition than large parcels. If a large consignment has to be sent it is better to send two or three small parcels than one large one.**

**All parcels should be as nearly round as possible, and should be well padded with shavings, crumpled paper, or similar protective material. The outer covering should consist of strong linen, calico, or canvas, or other textile material and should be securely sewn up.**

**As an alternative, parcels may be packed in boxes made of strong double corrugated cardboard or strawboard. Parcels merely wrapped in paper or packed in thin cardboard boxes cannot be accepted. No perishable articles may be sent and anything likely to become soft or sticky, such as chocolate and sweets, should be packed in tins.**

**29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914**

### WELSH OFFICERS HINT: SEND PIPES

Lieutenant Colonel A Lloyd Jones, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Welsh Field Ambulance, writes to the Mayor of Swansea:

“If your townspeople are thinking of Tommy’s hardships, may I ask if they could extend to the Swansea men from home a little souvenir such as a pipe a piece? On the march the prized cigarette is not allowed, so a present of a pipe might get them into a less noxious habit. Later on, when on foreign service, some little token of warm clothing would be much appreciated.”

**NOVEMBER 1914**

### ABERCRAVE LADIES REMEMBER OUR SOLDIERS

A parcel of woollen comforts, for the use of the troops at the front, was dispatched from Abercrave this week. They were prepared by the Girls’ Friendly Society under the direction of Mrs W E Morgan, Maesygwernen. Great credit is due to Mrs Morgan and her helpers for their untiring efforts in aid of our gallant soldiers.

**28<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

### PANTTEG LADIES

Hearty congratulations to the Pantteg ladies who have been so busily engaged during the past few weeks. Mr W H Woodliffe, the recruiting officer writes to say that he sent on Thursday, 318 belts to the “H” Company of the Brecknockshire Battalion of the South Wales Borderers, care of Captain Woodliffe, all made at Pontardawe and Ystalyfera by the ladies of both places.

FIRST SERIES

Be Useful in  
Time of War

# Weldon's 2<sup>d.</sup> GARMENTS AND HOSPITAL COMFORTS

for our  
Soldiers and Sailors



Plain  
Knitted Sock.



Knitted Sleeping Helmet.

## HOW TO CUT OUT AND MAKE

DAY SHIRT	NIGHTSHIRT
NIGHTSHIRT	(Open at Back)
PYJAMA SUIT	NIGHTSHIRT
DRESSING GOWN	(Open Back & Front)
UNDERVERST	FLANNEL BELT
BED-JACKET	NIGHTINGALE
NURSE'S APRON AND SLEEVES	
SURGEON'S OVERALL	

PAPER PATTERNS of the Garments  
4<sup>d.</sup> each.

## HOW TO KNIT

BALACLAVA	SLEEPING
HELMET	CAPS
MITTENS	SWEATER
BELT	PLAIN SOCKS
NECK SCARFS	KNEECAPS, Etc.

## HOW TO CROCHET

SLEEPING CAPS AND SCARFS  
D'OYLEYS TO PROTECT LIQUID  
FROM DUST AND FLIES

HOW TO MAKE  
FLANNEL BALACLAVA HELMET,  
FLANNEL CRIMEAN SLEEPING CAP,  
COVER FOR HOT WATER BOTTLE,  
BANDAGES, INVALID'S SLIPPERS, Etc.

A SECOND SERIES of Garments and Hospital Comforts now ready, price Twopence.

**A REMINDER OF HOME FOR THE BOYS AT THE FRONT**  
**21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

In spite of the tragedy of the war, most, if not all of us living in these peaceful valleys, will soon be looking forward to Christmas, with its usual good cheer. We are not forgetful of the boys who are at the front, but what can we do! Lady Glanusk supplies at least one answer, and all, even the most humble in circumstances, can help. Lady Glanusk writes:

As Christmas will soon be here we must not forget our gallant Territorials who have left their homes and country to take their share in this terrible war. I propose we send them plum puddings, for which the sum of £25 is required, and if we have more money, to add other things, such as cigarettes, pipes, etc., according to what funds we have. Any sums from 1d upwards – all will show we are thinking of our absent friends.

Contributions for this area to be sent to Mrs Strick Cefneithin Lower Cwmtwrch

Yours  
EDITHA GLANFSK  
25 Belgrave Square

**5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914**

**12,000 CIGARETTES**

A parcel of 12,000 cigarettes was on Wednesday dispatched to **Mr W S Collins**, of the R.A.M.C., and late of “Llais Llafur” for distribution among the Welsh Regiments, and particularly local men where possible. The parcel was sent by Mr T Prosser Jones C.C., checks weigher of the Gurnos Colliery, and includes 9,000 from the colliery workmen and staff, 1,000 from Mr E E Evans, Oxford House, and 2,000 from Councillor Tom Williams Cynlais Stores. The dispatch is being made through the Imperial Tobacco Co. by Councillor Williams, who by the employment of his trade-name can get them at a cheaper rate than would otherwise be possible. The 12,000 cigarettes represent a total cost of £3 6s 8d. In the letter sent to Mr Collins by the same post as the “fags,” he was asked to pass on to Mr William Hughes, from Glantawe, 3,000 of the parcel for distribution. A parcel of 1,000 had been previously sent to Mr Hughes, but he could not be found.

**16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1915**

**FOR THE TROOPS**

We are informed that Mrs Morgan (Tymawr) has this week forwarded a large parcel of various comforts for British soldiers at the front the parcel including socks, mittens; mufflers etc and it will no doubt be very highly appreciated.

It is natural that Mrs Morgan should think of the needs of the soldiers, in as much as her own son Lieutenant Morgan, is also in his country’s service with the Brecknocks at Aden

**13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1915**

**TOBACCO FOR SOLDIERS**

Master Jeff Larkin, son of Col-Sergeant and Mrs Larkin of Bon Marche, Brecon Road Ystradgynlais, is to be highly complimented in the success of his collecting efforts for the “Weekly Despatch” tobacco fund. Up to the present he has collected £4 10s and has been the recipient of several postcards from friends of the grateful soldiers. Many of the subscribers have also had acknowledgments from the men – some of them from this district – now at the front.

**RUM FOR THE TRENCHES**

**9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

Large supplies of rum are again being sent to the men at the front, its medicinal value, says the Port of London Authority having been fully demonstrated to the military authorities. Stocks at the famous rum quay at West India Dock are more than ample, being half as big again as in normal times. The liquor is sealed and sent by the Port Authority in gallon jars supplied by the war Office.

## POSTCARD OF THANKS FROM FRONT

**13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1915**

**YSTALYFERA NOTES**

Mr. D. M. Evans, Swan Hotel, Ystalyfera, has received a very interesting postcard in acknowledgement from a soldier at the front, who was one of the recipients of a tobacco gift sent out by Mr. Evans recently. The writer, an Ystalyfera boy, **Private Tal Thomas**, of the 1<sup>st</sup> South Wales Borderers, writes: Just a line to inform you that my comrades and I have received your splendid gift of tobacco and cigarettes, and that we appreciate it very much. It is indeed a great boon to us all here at the front. —

Yours gratefully,  
An Ystalyfera Boy

Needless to say, Mr. Evans was proud to receive the card for the sake of its happy associations.

**22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 1916**

**PRIVATE TOM JONES SENDS A LETTER**

Our readers will remember that some time ago we published an account of work done for soldiers by the Ystalyfera ladies' sewing class. A great number of articles had been sent to the "National Fund for Welsh Troops" presided over by Mrs. Lloyd George. On most of the articles the maker had fastened her name and address and this has led to the receipt by Miss Williams, of the Woodlands, of a very interesting letter from **Private Tom Jones**, son of the late Mr. Wm. Jones, butcher, Gurnos, who is at present with the force at Salonika. Private Jones says:

No doubt you will be surprised to receive this letter from me. Last week we had an issue of comforts, which had been sent out by some kind friends in Wales. I was fortunate enough to receive a pair of mittens, and you can just imagine my great surprise and delight when I found your card within. These gifts are greatly appreciated by us, especially when they are made by someone with whom we are acquainted. Little did you think when knitting these mittens that they would reach a person from Ystalyfera, who is at present "doing his bit" in this part of the globe. I am pleased to tell you that I am in excellent health, although we have had a very rough winter. At present we are having delightful weather, but the heat will soon be unbearable. We are fortunate in being encamped on one of the hills overlooking Salonika, for the last few months we have been engaged in making this place into a veritable Gibraltar. All the military authorities are convinced that the position is now impregnable. Our battalion has gained an excellent name for its work in the trenches. In fact the general said were it not for the miners the work could never have been completed in so short a time. The work has been rather monotonous, but the men have done it cheerfully and with a good heart. We are now waiting for the Bulgars, who never come. Last Monday at dawn we were awakened by the buzzing of engines right over our camps, and soon we heard the report of anti-aircraft guns. We found that nine Taubes (German aeroplanes) were darting in and out amongst the white puffs of the exploding shells. Four of the aeroplanes were hit and brought down by our guns.

Private Jones in another letter informs his friends that he has been confirmed at Salonika. Letters of this kind from our "home" boys will give our ladies renewed energy in their good work. Miss Williams has altogether received 10 such letters, but only one from a local boy.

**19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

The members of the Tabernacle (Ystradgynlais) are making arrangements to send Xmas comforts to the boys serving from the church and for this purpose are organising an eisteddfod, which will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> November.



# PRISONERS OF WAR

## AN YSTALYFERA SOLDIER WOUNDED & A PRISONER OF WAR

5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914

## INTERESTING LETTER FROM PRIVATE WEEKES

Many readers will be interested to learn of the fortunes of **Private Enoch Weekes**, an Ystalyfera boy, and a brother of Mr. David Weeks, of Cyfyng Road, Ystalyfera, who as a reservist, had to rejoin his regiment, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh, when war broke out. Private Weekes was working in Neath at that time. Mr. David Weekes, insurance agent, the private's brother, has received several letters from him, some of which we have been privileged to examine. From them it is gathered that he sailed from Southampton to France the Wednesday following the declaration of war. The first letter gave a very vivid description of the battle of Mons, which, of course, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh went right through, and which the writer said would no doubt be one of the finest achievements of the war. He wrote particularly of the remarkable cheerfulness of the soldiers, and said Sir John French was revered to an extraordinary degree by all.

**GHASTLY SIGHTS** Writing from the trenches 'Somewhere' in France on October 13<sup>th</sup>, Private Weekes says

"Dear Dai,—I am pleased to tell you that I am still in excellent condition and with ordinary luck hope to remain so. I had been anxiously waiting a line from you, but am glad to know that all is well. We get plenty to eat and plenty of clothing, all that I would like you to send is a little tobacco and some matches, otherwise I get on AI under the existing circumstances. Unfortunately I am not allowed to tell you anything of our movements, only those which are a couple of days old. We have had a warm time; still, I can safely say that the blatant enemy had a warmer time. We had a glorious fight on September 24<sup>th</sup> cleared the enemy from a valley with great loss, whereas our losses were only about 100 killed, wounded and missing not at all bad considering the position the enemy held.

"People at home cannot realise what it means to have their country invaded. Innocent and inoffensive people are put to death on the slightest provocation. I cannot write more on this ghastly subject, it makes me sick.

"All the lads are going strong, and we all hope to return home after the close of the campaign.

"I WONDER, DAI, WILL ENGLAND FORGET HER HEROES AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD? I HOPE NOT BECAUSE IT WILL BE TO HER LASTING SHAME IF SHE DOES."

**BAD NEWS** Unfortunately less welcome news came to hand. A few days after the receipt of the above, Mr. David Weekes had a brief note from his brother stating that he had been in Flanders and taken prisoner by the Germans. He was unconscious for some time, and then upon recovery found himself in Mecklenburg. He fails to understand why he should have been taken all that way. Supplementing this by a letter dated November 6<sup>th</sup>, Private Weekes wrote

"Don't be down-hearted. I regret to tell you that I am a prisoner in Germany. Things don't look as bright as they did before still under the circumstances I don't complain much. It is bitterly cold here. We are only 40 miles from the Baltic. Take up your map, and you will find Gostrow in Mecklenburg, North Germany. Very hard lines for 'lights out' a bullet found its billet in my 'rapper,' which sent me to sleep. Still it didn't do me much harm. We had a very severe tussle with the enemy on the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October, and 1<sup>st</sup> November. A portion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh got cut off from its main body, and unfortunately I was one of the captured. We were confronted by superior numbers, but I can assure you that the cut offs gave a good account of themselves. The dispatches will have given you full details by now. To make sure, if spared, I will give you a full account later of what we actually did.

"I don't want to appear bombastic, but I can say this, Dai, that only for their bally artillery and their 'Jack Johnsons' the Germans would not have had a ghost of a chance. The way the

German officers treat their men is abominable. I don't think we Britishers would stand it. I am proud to say that, and conscientiously believe we have the best officers in the world. That is the opinion of all rankers. I must draw to a close now by saying that **Private Tom Thomas**, brother to Mrs George Honey, Pwllbach, is AI.

It might be added that Mr. Weekes is expecting a further letter from his brother almost daily, from which we again hope to give interesting extracts.

#### **LETTERS FROM AN YSTALYFERA BOY**

**17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

#### **A PRISONER IN GERMANY**

Mr. David Weekes, insurance agent, of Cyfyng Road, Ystalyfera, forwards us a batch of letters received from his brother, **Private Enoch Weekes**, of the Welsh Regiment, who along with a large number of men of his company, is a prisoner of war in Altdamm, Germany. A good deal has been said of late regarding the treatment of British prisoners by the Germans. We believe that several of the following passages will indicate that their life is not exactly a bed of roses.

In one he writes: "Am pleased to say I am in excellent condition now and we have all had money from home and have been able to buy a little extra food. You may depend upon it the money is spent wisely. I am only allowed to write two letters per month of two pages each. When this is all over I am looking forward to a good time with you all at home."

In another letter Private Weekes says if the friends of prisoners knew the circumstance, under which the latter have to live, they would send out money immediately.

Writing on February 4<sup>th</sup> a letter just to hand; Private Weekes says- "I was so pleased to hear my name called out on the money list. I had eight shillings, and they came in very useful. I haven't received the parcels yet, but I am expecting them any day."

Private Weekes adds that he had not been well lately, but that he is now improving.

**12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

#### **4 PRISONERS OF WAR**

There are four local soldiers who are prisoners of war in Germany—**Privates Tom Thomas** (Pwllbach), **Enoch Weekes** (Ystalyfera), **Daniel Jenkins**, Williams Street (Glanrhyd), and **J Rees** (Godre'rgraig), and on their behalf Private Weekes has recently written a highly interesting letter to Colonel and Mrs Gough, Yniscledwyn House. The local squire and his wife were delighted that the soldiers should have thus remembered them, and they immediately sent out a supply of tobacco and writing papers etc., to the men who are unfortunately in captivity. Moreover, they are arranging that the soldiers shall also have a supply of useful commodities from time to time a generosity which the men themselves as well as their relatives will value greatly.

**7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1918**

Amongst the prisoners of war returned from Germany is **Private Enoch Weekes**, of the Welsh Regiment brother of Mr David Weekes, Ynysydarren Road, who reached home on Wednesday after eight days travelling. Private Weekes was a reservist at the beginning of the war and was one of the Old Contemptibles. He was wounded and taken prisoner at the first battle of Ypres on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1914, since when his life has been one constant hardship. Whilst in hospital Private Weekes was inhumanly treated, and every opportunity was taken by the Huns of venting their spleen against the "hated Englishers." The food was wretched and scarce, and Private Weekes says that it was the parcels sent by the "Daily Post" Fund that, more than anything else, kept body and soul together. He spent the latter part of his captivity in Posen, where he was one of about two thousand. On being released the prisoners returned by tram to the Dutch frontier and marched with the swing of victory, whereas the Germans all round were depressed and heartbroken. On reaching Leith, the prisoners were given a hearty reception. Private Weekes said:

I have had four years and 26 days of it, and rather than go through it again I would shoot myself."

He wishes to thank through the columns of "The Labour Voice" all Ystalyfera friends and also the Wern Chapel congregation for their regular contribution of parcels and comforts. Private Weekes is a native of Ystalyfera but before mobilisation worked at Tonyrefail. He has now been given two months furlough.

**9<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1919**

**PRIVATE TOM THOMAS**

A presentation was held at the Ystalyfera Arms on Monday evening to **Private Tom Thomas**, brother of Mrs Honey Pwllbach, who has rejoined the Welsh Regiment for service in India, after having been a prisoner of war in Germany for four and a half years.

**15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1914**

**PRIVATE JENKINS: PRISONER OF WAR**

News has reached the district that a young man from this place, the son of Mr Daniel Jenkins, who worked as an electrician in some part of Germany has been detained by the military authorities in that country. Full particulars have not been received, but it is stated he is now a prisoner of war.

**5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914**

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**PRIVATE TOM LEWIS YSTRADGYNLAIS**

Many readers will be interested to know of the whereabouts of **Private Tom Lewis** of B Co. of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Welsh Regiment, a well known local man, who had been lodging here for some years. He was an Army reservist, called up when war broke out, and went straight to France, having been in the fighting line practically ever since the commencement of the war. He now writes to his brother in Church Terrace stating that he is a prisoner of war and is in Bremen Germany. Otherwise he is safe and well.

**23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 1915**

**TOM LEWIS UPDATE**

An interesting letter was to hand on Tuesday, by Mr W. H. Lewis, 11 Church Terrace, from his brother, **Private Tom Lewis**, who left here when the war commenced for the front and is, as previously reported a prisoner of the Germans. He writes: Just a few lines to say I am still in the land of the living, but I haven't heard from you for eight weeks. (The letter is dated early in December, and has been much delayed. Mr Lewis has written to his brother, so that obviously the letters have not been sent on).

Private Lewis continues: "Write back as soon as you can after receiving this, I wish I were back home again and would be very thankful if you would send me some eatables, a bit of butter, tin of condensed milk and some tobacco. I will tell you more when I get back."

This seems to corroborate the statement of others that our prisoners are being none too well fed by the Germans. Private Lewis concludes by wishing his relatives a Merry Christmas. He sends his best regards to The Boys.

**10<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**UPDATE FROM A PRISONER IN GERMANY**

A post card had just come to hand to Mr T Jeffreys, Gough Buildings, from **Private Tom Lewis** of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Welsh Regiment, a prisoner of war in Germany, whose letters have previously appeared in these columns. He writes:

"I wish it were all over. It has been snowing here for five days." Private Lewis who is a brother to Mr W Lewis, Church Terrace, asks for food, which implies that the prisoners are not yet properly cared for.

**1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915**

**A LETTER FROM GERMANY**

A letter has recently come to hand from **Private Tom Lewis** of Ystradgynlais, brother of Mr W Lewis of 11 Church Terrace, as already stated in the columns of the "Llais". Private Lewis is a prisoner of war along with many other members of the Welsh Regiments in Germany, and a little while ago several relatives and friends sent out a substantial sum of money, parcel of food and tobacco and other things to him there. A letter has now come to hand from Private Lewis stating that he has only received the wearing apparel sent on. We do not know whether this means that the prisoners are not to be allowed to receive food and money. It may be, of course, that there has been some delay, consequent on the huge correspondence which

has now to be dealt with.

**10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1916**

A letter has been received by Mr William Lewis Church Terrace, from his brother, **Private Tom Lewis**, who is a prisoner of war in Germany. The letter has been strictly censored and Private Lewis is not allowed to say much of his privations. He has received parcels every ten days and a pair of boots from the editor of the "Daily Post" Swansea. The local committee are considering ways and means of sending assistance to Private Lewis.

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**German Prisoners Daily Mail Battle Pictures**  
YEARGROUP's Collection of Postcards

### **WELSH PRISONERS OF WAR OUTWITING GERMAN CENSOR**

**13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1915**

Welsh prisoners of war in Germany are able to notify their friends in this country more fully of the conditions of prison and internment camp life than are their English colleagues and that without having recourse to the doubtful safeguard of invisible ink.

A letter which easily passed the German censor, and which is, and will long be, kept as a family treasure, contains the following. The words given here in brackets are the English equivalents of the Welsh word immediately preceding. The letter was written in English throughout, excepting the Welsh words, which the German censor took to be the names of other English prisoners. The letter reads:

"You will be glad to hear news of old friends. Mr Bwyd (food) is very bad here. Mr Bara (bread) is very much darker than when you saw him, and is quite hard. I never see Mr Cig (meat) and Mr Ymenyn (butter) but seldom; he was very bad indeed the last few times I met him. I used at first to meet Mr Llaeth (milk) every day, but he has not been here now for some time.



## ARTICLES MOST REQUESTED

**12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

### **WAR PRISONERS' BREAD**

Among the articles most asked for and most appreciated by British prisoners in Germany **bread** stands first, but some of the bread which is sent even before it leaves England is in a bad condition, and delays on the journey make it uneatable before it reaches prisoners. Accordingly those who are sending breadstuffs are asked to take special care in the preparation and packing of bread. Bread to be sent to Germany should be very well baked. It should not be packed in tins, but carefully wrapped in paper, grease proof if possible, then placed in corrugated cardboard or stout cardboard boxes. Under the best conditions it takes from ten days to three weeks for parcels to reach prisoners of war in Germany, and in most cases parcel post packages reach their destination in a shorter time than parcels by other agencies.

**21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1915**

### **NO TELEGRAMS FOR WAR PRISONERS**

**Telegrams are not delivered to prisoners of war in Germany, telegraphic correspondence not being permitted to prisoners, so the War Office has just been officially informed.**

**20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

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**PRIVATE JAMES EVANS**

A letter was received by his wife on Saturday from **Private James Evans**, of 4 Canal Terrace, conveying the information that he was a prisoner of war in Germany. It will be remembered that Private Evans, who is a son of Mr and Mrs Evans, of 27, Canal Terrace, had been missing for some time. He enlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Welsh Regiment in April last, and was drafted out to France in July. Since then he has spent most of his time in the trenches, and was in the battle of Loos on September 25<sup>th</sup>, then attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh. He was wounded there, and apparently taken prisoner, for no word was received from him until Saturday. He states that so far he is fairly comfortable and well treated. Private Evans has two children. His brother, **Private William John Evans** is with the 6<sup>th</sup> S.W.B. in France.

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916**

Mrs Evans, of Canal Terrace, has received a letter from her husband, **Private James Evans**, who was taken prisoner after the battle of Loos, and has been interned in a German camp ever since. Private Evans says he is good health, but complains that he has not received the parcels which have been sent him, and at the same time asks for writing paper, that he may write to all at home. Mrs Evans has also received a communication from a fellow prisoner of her husband, who is now in England, having been exchanged with others unfit for future service. He says:

“Your husband asked me to write when I reached England, to let you know he is well. The food the prisoners get out there is chiefly “black bread” and potatoes. I hope he will soon be home with you and his little children.”

**11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1916**

Mrs Evans of Canal Terrace wife of **Private Evans**, who until recently had been a prisoner of war in Germany for some considerable time, left on Tuesday morning for Switzerland, to visit her husband, in accordance with the Government scheme. A few Ystalyfera friends assisted Mrs Evans who was accompanied by a friend from Ammanford.

**6<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916**

### **LOCAL WOMAN'S VISIT TO SWITZERLAND**

In accordance with the scheme to enable wives of wounded prisoners of war to visit their husbands, Mrs James Evans, of 4 Canal Terrace Ystalyfera, recently visited her husband, **Private James Evans**, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Welsh Regiment, who was wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Loos, and who is now interned in Switzerland.

Mrs Evans journeyed to London where she was met and taken to the Y. W. C.A. buildings,

where she met some eighteen other women, also proceeding on the same errand. They remained in London from Tuesday until Friday, and thus had an opportunity of seeing the sights of the Metropolis. On Friday they journeyed from Southampton to Le Havre on board the "Honontio," and were met at the latter port and taken to their hotel. The journey was then continued to Paris, and thence to Pontarlier, Geneva, and Murrone, where they were met by their husbands. They remained here for fourteen days, during which time the Alps were climbed and the beauties of the neighbourhood generally surveyed.

On the return journey the party were taken to the tomb of Napoleon the monument of Joan d'Arc in Paris. During the whole trip Mrs Evans said that she enjoyed herself immensely, and the kindness of all the people en route could not be exceeded. Her husband, who was sent from Germany on account of his inability to work owing to injuries to his right arm, is now learning wood carving, and is looked after well by the Swiss authorities. He is in great demand as a singer, and the young Welsh tenor, as he is popularly called, does not lack engagements.

On the return journey Mrs Evans met many Tommies in France, who did everything in their power to assist the travellers. The authorities also were very considerate for their comfort as they provided taxis and accommodation at the best hotels. The party reached London on the return journey thankful that they had been granted the pleasure of seeing those near and dear to them and quite reassured that the unfortunate men were receiving every possible attention in their affliction.

**19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914**

**A PRISONER IN GERMANY: GEORGE JENKINS**

Several letters have also been received from Private George Jenkins, of 12 William Street, Glanrhyd Ystradgynlais who is in the Welsh Regiment, and is now a prisoner of war in Altdamm, Germany. In his communications home, Private Jenkins points out that he has no money, and appeals for some cigarettes, butter, sugar, cocoa, bakestone bread, and cake! He says that it is extremely cold in the captive camp, but otherwise he is quite well. Private Jenkins says he is afraid he will not get home for Christmas! We share his fears, unfortunately!

**BOOTS FOR PRISONER OF WAR**

**25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1916**

**PRIVATE GEORGE JENKINS**

A meeting of the Chamber of Trade was held at the New Swan Hotel on Tuesday evening, when there was a good attendance of members, over which Mr J. T. Owen presided. The chief item for discussion was the question of the local patriotic funds. It was resolved that a public meeting should be called: on Monday evening next, with a view to having all the monies of the different patriotic funds handed over to one representative central body.

Mr. J. T. Owen also brought before the meeting a letter he had received from a soldier's wife whose husband was a prisoner of war in Germany. The husband in the letter asked for a pair of boots, which the wife, who is a respectable woman, was unable to provide. Messrs. D. Lloyd and Sons, with their customary generosity, immediately undertook to supply the boots free of all cost.

**9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

Recently Mrs Caroline Jenkins of Glanrhyd received an urgent request from her husband **Private George Jenkins**, who is a prisoner of war in Germany, for a pair of boots. He described the hard conditions under which they (the prisoners) faced the coming winter. The case came to the notice of the Chamber of Trade and immediately Messrs D Lloyd and Sons volunteered to present the captive soldier with a good pair of boots, which they despatched the next day.

The genial bard "Creunantydd" in true minstrel fashion has woven a song around the deed

and the donor, of which we cull a verse:

Yn fwyn myn Awen ganu  
Am yr esgidiau gaed,  
Yn rhodd y gwr wnai'u rhoddi  
I George roi am ei draed;  
Bydd calon y carcharwr  
Yn llonach nag erioed,  
Y bore bo'n dderbyniwr  
Esgidiau Dafydd Lloyd.

**14<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1918**

**PRIVATE GEORGE JENKINS**

**Private George Jenkins** 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh, who was taken prisoner on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1914, has now been released from Germany.

**2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**SHERLOCK GIVENS CWMTWRCH**

A few weeks ago we announced the death in action of **Private Sherlock Givens** of Lower Cwmtwrch. This week we are pleased that Mrs Givens has received a postcard from her son stating that he is a prisoner in Germany. We trust Private Givens will soon obtain his release.

**7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1918**

We regret to report the death of **Mr George Givens** Cwmp hill, who passed away on Saturday last at the age of 45. Mr Givens had seen three years service in the army and was at present on furlough. He was the head of a family with an excellent service record, having lost one son in action, whilst another has been a prisoner of war in Germany but returned home this week and another is still on service. A large number attended the interment at Beulah on Wednesday.

**16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1917**

**PRIVATE DANNY JONES**

Mr and Mrs Benjamin Jones Gurnos are now receiving letters regularly from their son **Private Danny Jones R W F** who is a prisoner of war at Minden Germany. He was taken prisoner last November and latterly has been in hospital.

**31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**JOE WILDMAN**

News has been received that **Lance Corporal Joe Wildman** of the MGC is a prisoner of war in Germany. He has been reported missing since 21<sup>st</sup> March. He was employed at Tarreni Colliery and enlisted in September 1914.

**25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1919**

**JOE WILDMAN**

**Lance Corporal Joe Wildman** of the Machine Gun Corps has returned from Germany, where he has been a prisoner since the German offensive in March of last year. He is a brother to Corporal T Wildman Godre'rgraig. Both brothers enlisted in the Brecknocks in September 1914 and have seen considerable service in France.

**9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

**PRIVATE LEWIS LLEWELYN**

News has been received at Ystradgynlais that **Private Lewis Llewelyn**, who resided at Penrhos, prior to joining the colours, is now a prisoner of war in Germany.

**19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

**PRIVATE D J THOMAS**

**Private D J Thomas** S W B, son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Morgan's Buildings, has now written to his parents from a Stammlager at Friedrichsfeld, in Germany, where he is now a prisoner of war. Private Thomas was captured on 28<sup>th</sup> May and for a long time nothing was



heard of his whereabouts. He complains of the shortage of food and tobacco and asks that he shall receive parcels from home. Private Thomas has also to work hard at the camp in which he is stationed but he does not give the nature of his work.

### 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915

### PRIVATE DAVID ARNOLD

Intimation came to hand this week that **Private David Arnold**, son of the late Mr William Arnold, of Burchell row, Godre'rgraig, who is out with his regiment (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers), has been wounded in the Dardanelles. Private Arnold, who is only 19 years of age, enlisted the second week of the war, went out to the Mediterranean in April and was wounded on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Recently, he has been invalided home to Southampton, and hopes to come home to Ystalyfera before going back to active service again.

### 11<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917

**Private David Arnold** of the S W B, reported missing on 30<sup>th</sup> April last in Mesopotamia, has written to his mother Mrs Margaret Arnold of 6 Burchell Row Godre'rgraig, to say that he is quite well and is a prisoner of war in Turkey. He was twice wounded in the Dardanelles.

### BACK FROM CAPTIVITY

### GODRE'RGRAIG MEN'S EXPERIENCES

### DAVID ARNOLD: MACDONALD: CUNNINGHAM

### 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1919

Three Godre'rgraig men, in the persons of **Private David Arnold** 4<sup>th</sup> SWB, Sapper Archie MacDonald, RE, and Mr J A Cunningham, of the Mercantile Marine, have returned to Godre'rgraig after having been in captivity, the former in Turkey, and the two latter in Germany.

Private Arnold, in an interview with our representative, described the horrors of captivity under the Turks, and said he could not bear to recollect his experiences, so terrific had they been. He was taken a prisoner in 1916 and taken to Raazlin, where he spent the first year of his internment. On the second day after being taken prisoner, he and others were stripped of their clothes, and given others to wear which were filthy and ragged. Because they would not take off their clothes, each man was overpowered by about five Turks, and forcibly stripped. After this "change" of clothing, Private Arnold was marched for 400 to 500 miles across the desert, with no footwear, and put to work on the Baghdad railways. Work on the railways commenced at four o'clock in the morning and finished at 6 in the evening, with two hours interval at midday. A little Indian corn and a loaf of black bread, from which pieces of straw and even pebbles could be extracted, was the food, with a little rice water. The gangs employed on the railway were most cosmopolitan, consisting of Russians, Italians, British and French. Some indication of the hardships through which Private Arnold passed can be gleaned from the fact that out of 3,000 of who he was one, about 20 remained. On Christmas Day, 1917, they were promised a fairly decent dinner but were deceived and Private Arnold had only half a loaf of black bread, for which he had to sell his shirt,—for hid Xmas dinner. They were guarded by Germans, and the bad food was accounted for by the fact that it was supplied by contractors, who provided indifferent fare and worse, so as to make money on the transaction. Private Arnold had, however, one bright spot he sold over 200 shovels to Arabs and told the guards that the Arabs had stolen them! Towards the end, he was somewhat better treated and returned to this country via Egypt and Marseilles.

**Sapper Macdonald** was taken prisoner in March last at Bullicourt, and was put for some time to carry wounded behind the linens of the enemy. For three days after being captured, he was given nothing to eat, and was told that the Germans could not feed the British owing to the blockade! After being behind the lines for three months and a half, he was taken to work to some Belgian towns and latter, to Gutersloh in Westphalia. The Germans were in such a bad plight, that they could only provide paper bandages for the wounded. For a time he did not work because the food was too bad, and he was not expected to do so. The party to which

Sapper Macdonald belonged rushed the cookhouse one day so desperate had they become on account of the shortage of food. He had even seen men collect potato peelings from the rubbish pits, into which the latrines were emptied!

Towards the latter part of his captivity, he was better treated, but at the outset, officers and men were he herded together in barns. The German people, he said, had been gulled into believing that a tremendous number of ships had been sunk by the U-Boats and that even the British Navy had been sent to Davy Jones! When the armistice was declared, the prisoners were sent to the Dutch and Belgian frontiers.

**Mr J A Cunningham** was on a merchant ship at the outbreak of the war and was interned at Hamburgh in August, 1914. He was afterwards taken to Ruhleben, where he underwent considerable hardships. The food was bad, but became better when the revolution broke out. Mr Cunningham was at the same camp as **Captain Fryatt**, but the latter was removed to Belgium, where he was shot. Mr. Cunningham pays a high tribute to the Danes, into whose hands he was released. When asked as to the quality of the food, he replied, "It was little else than spuds and straw, and I feel that even now I cannot enjoy a square meal."

## **BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR**

### **WALKING OVER THE GERMAN FRONTIER INTO HOLLAND**

**16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

While nothing is officially known in London of any British prisoners having been released from German internment, some of them have already obtained their liberty, and are now in Holland, or on the way home.

A Press representative was informed that the authorities here had been agreeably surprised that some of them had "walked into Holland quite unexpectedly," and were being hospitably provided for by the Dutch Government. It is thought that they may have been told by German military authorities that they are at liberty to make their own way home, or to go to another country.

All parcels individually addressed to prisoners have been stopped as there is no chance of them reaching the men. Lord Newton explained that it was impossible to find out what was happening in the case of individual prisoners. It had therefore been decided to ask the public to send only unaddressed parcels, which will be dealt with by committees in Rotterdam, and probably Copenhagen, or some other centres. Those committees will find out the needs of individual prisoners and will see that supplies forwarded are distributed wisely.

See also:

**Isaac Howell MATHIAS**

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# AMBULANCE TRAINS

**NOVEMBER 1914**

The French trains have not proved to be so suitable for conveying wounded men as would the trains on, the Midland Railway, for example, and it makes one shudder to think of the sufferings of our poor wounded "Tommys" just after the beginning of the war, when they were compelled to make journeys of several hundred miles to reach the Base Hospitals. These conditions, however, have been greatly improved, and even before the advent of the All-British Ambulance train the lot of the wounded was made much more comfortable than had previously been the case.

The running of the first British Ambulance train has been so smooth and successful in every way that it has been decided that within the next few weeks that practically the whole of the present trains will be superseded and British trains substituted at an approximate cost of £25,000 per train. Money for this purpose is needed, and although over £100,000 has been promised, more must be forthcoming in order that the maximum of comfort shall be obtained for those who have to be transported over increasing distances from the firing line to the Bases.

The treatment and transportation of the seriously wounded cases prior to their arrival at the Base is one of the most difficult problems it has been the lot of the British medical profession to tackle. Never in the history of the world's warfare has such successful work being done by those charged with the duty of alleviating the pain and suffering of those who have received injuries in the fierce and terrible fighting which has taken place in Belgium and in France. On all hands, and from every arm of the Service, the work of the medical department has met with praise, and never was it so much deserved, in view of the conditions which have prevailed during the past three months. Night and day, in all kinds of weather, the officers have worked with a patience, courage and resolution, never equalled, and the men of the Corps have been grand. Officers and men deserve well of the Army and they deserve well of those who do not know what has been done and what they are doing.

## **THUMB NAIL SKETCHES FROM "SOMEWHERE" IN FRANCE**

**28<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1914**

He lay on a stretcher, one of a dozen or more, and he didn't even utter a word of complaint nor a groan. I asked him how he was getting on. "Oh! It's a bit rotten being here, but I've got to stick it! It's my right thigh, and it's in splints. Every jerk of the blasted train made me grind my teeth. All I want is to get into bed." He was the topical wounded "Tommy". He had been hit by a piece of shell which had fractured his right femur, and owing to the fierce fighting had been compelled to lie in the trench for 30 hours, and all the assistance his comrades were in a position to render was to apply the first field dressing until the arrival of an R.A.M.C. man who applied the man's rifle as a splint. When the firing and the shelling and the rushing had slackened, he had been removed by stretcher bearer to a field ambulance and was made as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Following that, when opportunity offered, he was conveyed to a Clearing Hospital and there his wound was dressed, and an injection of anti-tetanus serum made, whilst proper splints were adjusted, and after a rest he was removed to an ambulance train, in waiting.

**By Private W S Collins (Late of "Llais" Staff)**

## WOUNDED

### “BLIGHTY”

When a soldier is seriously wounded at the front he is, in the language of the trenches, "booked for Blighty." The word "Blighty" is one which the soldier has borrowed from the vocabulary of his Indian comrades, and many people have been puzzled to know its real meaning. It is a characteristic, but not very picturesque, adaptation of the Indian word Bilati" (home).

### 26<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1914

### MOTOR SOUP KITCHENS

The motor soup kitchen is an entirely new provision for the wounded. Its function is to keep in close touch with the field ambulances, so that it may provide a hot, nourishing drink for the wounded soldier after he has received "first aid" and before he is sent back to the hospital. Experience has shown the doctors that such a restorative—soup meat extracts, tea, coffee, and so on—helps the wounded man to bear the strain of a painful journey with much less exhaustion than if he were given only a cold restorative.

### 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1915

### BENJAMIN MORGAN

News was received that **Private Benjamin Morgan**, of 13 Burchell Row, who is also out at the front, had been wounded on Xmas Eve. Private Morgan, who is in the 1<sup>st</sup> Welsh, evidently had rather serious injuries, as he was brought to Cardiff Hospital immediately, and arrived there only four days after receiving his wounds. Private Morgan, it is interesting to note was an old soldier, whose reserve period had expired, but he volunteered for services and was accepted. We hope he will soon be restored again.

### 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1915

### ARTHUR THOMAS

**Private Arthur Thomas** of Godre'rgrraig, who has been out with the Expeditionary Force for some time, is reported to have been wounded, a message to that effect reaching his people a day or two ago. He was first reported killed but happily this was not confirmed. Private Thomas who is an old soldier was employed here at Tarreni.

### 22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 1915

### WOUNDED ON HILL 60: JOSEPH TREHARNE

News arrived a few days ago that an Ystradgynlais man, **Private Joseph Treharne**, of 21 College Row, had been wounded at the front whilst fighting on the famous Hill 60. Private Treharne received his injuries (which include the loss of an eye) last week, and he has been removed to Bristol Hospital. Private Treharne joined the Army before Christmas, and was only in training a few weeks before he went out to France. We hear with regret of the loss of his eye and trust he will speedily recover from the other wounds.

### 28<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915

### WOUNDED FROM THE FRONT

**Private Joseph Treharne**, of College Row, who has been out in France for some time has returned home this week, having lost an eye in the course of the fighting out there. He arrived in Ystradgynlais on Monday evening, and as it was expected that he would come to the local station the band, accompanied by many friends, went there to meet him, but he travelled to Ystalyfera Station. Private Treharne, who had his accident by bullet wound, has been in Cardiff Hospital for some time.

### 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916

### DISCHARGED FROM ARMY

The church schoolroom was the scene of another presentation meeting on Monday evening, when **Private Joe Treharne** of College Row, received a purse of money and a medal. Private Treharne, who has lost an eye in his country's service, has now been discharged from the Army.



**THE CHILD HE WILL NEVER SEE**  
From the painting by Gordon Browne R I

(Another Ystradgynlais man, **Private David Jones** (who is familiarly known as Dai Ben) and whose home is in Pelican Street, is also serving in the Army on Hill 60, which, we understand, he helped to mine. Latest messages say that he is safe and well.)

**19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**BACK TO ENGLAND: DAVID H JONES**

Another local soldier, **Private David H Jones**, 21 Pelican Street, who has been wounded whilst serving with the Welsh Regiment, writes home to his wife to say that he was removed from France to England during the weekend. Private Jones was first taken to Manchester Hospital, and later to Clitheroe, in Lancashire. It now transpires that Private Jones was wounded in both legs, and he has been far from well during the weekend, but attributes this partly to having been moved twice in only a few days' time. A statement has been made to the effect that Private Jones has had some award for special bravery on the field, but he does not mention this to his wife, who is therefore unable either to corroborate or deny the rumour.

**WOUNDED SOLDIER WELCOMED HOME**

**31<sup>st</sup> JULY 1915**

**GREAT DOINGS AT YSTRADGYNLAIS**

There were great doings in Ystradgynlais and district, on Tuesday evening, when the town turned out practically en masse to welcome home the first local soldier to come back

wounded from the front. The soldier in question was **Private David Jones**, of Pelican street, Ystradgynlais, more popularly known as "Dai Ben," who as previously stated in these columns, received his injuries whilst on active service in France, and has more recently been in Hospital in Lancashire.

Private Jones arrived by the 7.15 train at Ystradgynlais, on Tuesday evening, and was met at the station by a brake containing his father, Mr Benjamin S Jones, his brother, Mr Lewis Jones, and his sister, Miss Mary Jones. There was also a large crowd of friends and interested onlookers and the Ystradgynlais Band, under the conductorship of Mr J H Butler, also assembled in readiness to welcome the arrival. When the train steamed into the station, the band commenced to play patriotic airs, including "See the conquering hero comes," and heading the procession, proceeded down Station Road along Commercial Street and Water Street to Private Jones' home, where his wife and family were awaiting him. The band continued to give selections on the journey to Pelican Street and the thoroughfares were lined with crowds of sightseers, quite 2,000 people assembling along the route. The procession was marshalled by Mr Tom Lewis, who is to be complimented on its signal success. Private Jones was deeply touched with the welcome extended to him.

**11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**PRESENTATION: DAVID JONES**

A highly successful and enjoyable smoking concert took place on Monday evening at the Yniscedwyn Arms, to do honour to **Private David Jones**, of Pelican Street, who returned home wounded from the front some time ago. Private Jones, who is in one of the Welsh regiments, received his injuries on Hill 60 the scene of a very stern fight and his wounds were so serious that he has not yet completely recovered, although he returns to service this weekend, and will probably go out to the Dardanelles.

There was a large attendance at the "smoker" which was arranged by a local reception committee, recently formed, of which Mr C D Lake (newsagent) is secretary. Mr Griffith Jones occupied the chair and during the evening Mr Lake presented Private Jones with a pipe in case and pouch, together with a sum of £2 7s 6d in money, subscribed by his numerous friends. Private Jones suitably responded. Several local artistes took part in the programme and numerous addresses were given by local gentlemen. A delightful evening was spent.

**5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**WOUNDED AT THE FRONT: EVAN GRIFFITHS**

Intimation came to hand early this week that **Sapper Evan Powell Griffiths**, of the Engineers' Section of the Canadian Expeditionary Force had been wounded in France, and had been brought home to a Bristol Hospital. Mr Evans Griffiths who is a son of ex-Councillor William Griffiths, of Ystradgynlais, is well-known in the place. It will be remembered that he joined the army in Canada, and came over to England with his regiment before going out to France, during which time he paid two visits to his home. Mr Griffiths was visited on Tuesday by his brother (Mr William Griffiths) and his brother-in-law (Mr Edwin Williams, Temperance Bar). His injuries are in the right foot, and are not regarded as serious.

**19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**VISITORS TO MR EVAN GRIFFITHS**

On Sunday last Mr Sid James and Mr D J Jenkins (grocer) went over to Bristol for the purpose of paying a visit to **Sapper Evan Griffiths** of the Canadians, son of ex councillor Griffiths, of Ystradgynlais. As already stated Sapper Griffiths was rather badly wounded in France, the injuries being a good deal worse than was at first supposed. His friends, who spent a good part of Sunday and Monday with him in hospital, inform us now that although very far from being fully recovered, he is progressing nicely. He is still weak, however, and will not be able to come home for a considerable time yet. He receives every care and attention however and Messrs James and Jenkins assure us that despite his weakness, he keeps very cheerful.



**11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

**FLOOK: LETTER TO HIS PARENTS**

**Private George Flook** writes from Paignton Hospital, an interesting letter to his parents: "I left England early in May for Egypt and the Dardanelles. We landed at Lemnos and proceeded straight to the trenches, where we had a rough time for 14 days before we were relieved. After serving in the trenches I was wounded on July 24<sup>th</sup> by a shrapnel bullet, which entered my back and worked its way down to my leg. I was carried to the dressing station, and after receiving attention was placed on board the hospital ship Gurka, where I remained for a week before being landed at Alexandria. The hospital at Alexandria was under canvas and was far from comfortable. The orderlies were all natives, and did not look after us at all well, so after three weeks there you can guess, we were very glad to leave. From Alexandria I was brought to Paignton, and here I am receiving every possible kindness and attention, and thanks to the care of the sisters and doctors, am now progressing very favourably."

Readers will notice that this is the second letter in this week's "Labour Voice" in which mention is made of the kind and skilful treatment received at Paignton Hospital.

**15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**HOME ON LEAVE**

**Private George Flook**, who sustained serious injuries to his back at the Dardanelles landing, is now back at home with his parents at Gorof. He has been at Paignton American Women's Hospital for some time and is now we are pleased to state, progressing favourably.

**22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**RECOVERED FROM WOUNDS**

**Private George Flook** of Snow Terrace returns this week to his regiment after recovering from wounds received at the Dardanelles in the attack on Achi Baba. Flook was severely wounded in the back and had to be sent home to England, where he was treated at the American Hospital at Paignton for several weeks. He is now fit and before returning to active service has been the recipient of several presents from his Ystradgynlais friends.

**10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1916**

**PRESENTATION MEETING**

In our report of the presentation meeting at Sardis Vestry last week, we regret that the names of Privates Hector Jenkins and Ivor Richards were mentioned as recipients, instead of **Private George Flook** of the SWB and Private Thomas Prior of the Royal W Kent Regiment. The latter two received each a medal and purse of money.

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

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**YSTALYFERA DRUMMER WOUNDED**

News has come to hand on Monday that a well known Ystalyfera boy, **Drummer G E Roberts** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers, son of Mr George Roberts Pwllbach, had been rather seriously wounded in the Dardanelles. Drummer Roberts, who was formerly employed at the Gwauncaegurwen Collieries, joined the army in the second week in August but had not been out in the Near East very long. Further news of his condition is awaited with considerable interest.

**13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**IN HOSPITAL: GEORGE E ROBERTS**

**Drummer George E Roberts** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers, nephew of Mr and Mrs Roberts, Station Inn, was recently wounded in the Dardanelles, writes home to say that he is in the Orchard Military Hospital Dartford Kent, where he is now recuperating. He adds: "I have had a parcel from my fellow-bandsmen of the Cwmtawe Prize Band. They are all longing to see me."

We understand that Drummer Roberts expects to be home soon, when he is to have a welcome from the band.

**26<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

**RETURNS HOME**

(The many friends of **Private E Roberts** will be pleased to learn that he has sufficiently recovered from his wounds to return to his home at Pwllbach. He received a bullet wound through one of his cheeks, the bullet coming out through the opposite cheek and penetrating the shoulder. He was also wounded in the Dardanelles during the operations there.)



**Drummer Ernest Roberts** is home again on leave. Drummer Roberts earlier in the war saw some particularly active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula. It was here that he was severely wounded and was conveyed to hospital in Egypt and afterwards sent home. After completely recovering and after the withdrawal of our troops from Gallipoli, he was sent to France, there, after some exciting times he was again wounded – a bullet through his right cheek passed through his left cheek and buried itself in his left shoulder. He was brought back to “Blighty” and after some excellent treatment in hospital is almost fit again.

**6<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1917**

**TEMPORARILY DISCHARGED**

**Drummer Ernest Roberts** Pwllbach has been temporarily discharged after having been once wounded in the Dardanelles and later in France.

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**WOUNDED: PRIVATE PADDOCK**

Mr and Mrs Paddock, who live near Ynisedwyn Schools, have had notice that their son **Private Jack Paddock** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Welsh has been wounded in the operations at the Dardanelles. The statement has not been made officially, but has come from one of Private Paddock’s friends in his regiment. Up to the present, nothing has been heard of the matter from Private Paddock himself.

**16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**WOUNDED SOLDIERS CONDITION**

**Private Jack Paddock** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Welsh who, as previously reported in our columns, has been wounded in the Dardanelles and has also been stricken with fever, is expected home shortly. At present he is in hospital in Egypt and is, we are glad to say, now progressing favourably. His injuries consist of a bullet wound in the shoulder.

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**NEWS OF LOCAL BOYS**

**Private Jack Paddock** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Welsh who has been wounded in Gallipoli, is now at Brighton Hospital. He is making satisfactory progress and will arrive home about Christmas time.

**22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**RETURNED HOME**

**Private J Paddock** of the S W B and who has been at Brighton Hospital for some time, suffering from wounds received at the Dardanelles, returned home on Tuesday evening. He was accorded a rousing welcome although he journeyed to Ystalyfera and the local Scout band went to escort home. Private Paddock is an old member of the local troop. All wish him a speedy recovery.

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916**

**CONCERT FOR JACK**

There was a good attendance at the Church schoolroom on Wednesday evening last for the purpose of honouring **Private Jack Paddock**, who was wounded at the Dardanelles. Tea was served by the ladies and thoroughly enjoyed. A concert was subsequently held over which the Rector presided. Mr D T Price was the accompanist.

**26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916**

**RETURNS TO DEPOT**

**Private Jack Paddock** of the South Wales Borderers, who had been wounded in the Dardanelles, returned to his depot on Thursday after having been home on sick leave.

**7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1916**

**BACK IN HOSPITAL**

**Private J Paddock** of the S W B son of Mr and Mrs J Paddock Old Road, who was wounded in the Dardanelles, is again in hospital, this time at Salonika. He is suffering from an attack of dysentery.

**14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1916**

**IN MALTA**

**Private Jack Paddock** of the S W B, who was wounded in Suvla Bay, is now at Malta recovering from an attack of malaria.

**7<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**WELL EARNED REST**

**Private Jack Paddock** of the S W B, son of Mr and Mrs J Pritchard has come home for a well earned rest. He has seen service on the Salonica front, and also at the Dardanelles and is

now recovering from the effects of fever. Private Paddock before his enlistment in the early days of the war was very prominent in the Boy Scout movement.

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**18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**ANEURIN DAVIES**

**Private Aneurin Davies**, R.F.A., son of the late Private Tom Davies, Burchell row, Godre'rgraig, who has been wounded at the front (recently referred to in these columns), has been in hospital for some time, but is now convalescent, and is waiting his turn to come home for a short furlough. Writing home to his mother, Private Davies, who has been out practically since the beginning of the war, expresses deep appreciation of the kindness of Mrs Gough, of Ynisedwyn, who sent him underclothing to take the place of his supply recently washed away by a flood. He also makes a touching reference to a friend, an orphan, who has been fighting by his side and vividly describes the young man's intense loneliness at having no friend to remember him by writing or sending him gifts.

**18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

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**ANOTHER SOLDIER WOUNDED: JOHN SHELDON**

We regret to hear of another Ystradgynlais boy being wounded. This refers to **Private John Sheldon** of the 4<sup>th</sup> South Wales Borderers, whose home is in Glanley Street. Private Sheldon has lost his right arm from below the elbow by shrapnel and his left leg has been rendered useless by a bullet passing through his thigh. He is now in Cardiff Hospital and tells his relatives in a letter that he hopes to regain the use of his leg in course of time.

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**JEFFREY'S ARMS SMOKER**

On Saturday evening last a smoker was held at Mason Arms in aid of **Private John Sheldon**, of Gladstone Terrace, who has returned from the Dardanelles, having lost an arm. Sheldon was one of the 200 who volunteered to swim ashore at the first landing at Sedd-el-Bahr and again at Suvla Bay. He first saw action against the Germans in China, but was transferred with his regiment to the Dardanelles where he received his first wound. During the evening Private Sheldon was presented with an illuminating watch and £1 note. He is the first soldier in the district to return home after losing a limb.

**29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

**DEATH OF John Sheldon's FATHER**

The death occurred at Lower New Houses, Cwmtwrch on Sunday of Mr John Sheldon at the age of 65. Deceased who was a Lancashire man, came to the district a number of years ago and until recently was employed by the Gilwen Colliery Company. He leaves a widow and a number of grown up children. **One son** has seen considerable fighting in France and in the battles of Ypres was unfortunate in having his leg blown away. Deceased was of a quiet disposition and much respected in the district. The funeral took place on Thursday at Beulah Cemetery when a large number attended.

**25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

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**FREDERICK CHARLES & T MORGAN**

Intimation has just come to hand that **Private Frederick Charles**, of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, S.W.B. who prior to joining the colours lived with his parents at Gladstone Terrace and was employed at the International Colliery, Abercrave, has been wounded at the front. Private Charles, who was better known as Fred Bristol, from whence his people came many years ago, went out to the Dardanelles several weeks past, and was wounded on August 21<sup>st</sup> by shrapnel, the severest injuries being to the leg. The family have not yet had any detailed information on the matter, but as he does not expect to be brought home, it is not thought that the injury is serious.

**Sergeant T Morgan**, of Sunny Hill, Brecon Road, who, as already reported, was recently wounded whilst serving with the 4<sup>th</sup> South Wales Borderers in the Dardanelles, is now reported as convalescent, and is recuperating at hospital on an island off the coast.

**2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**REES EMLYN JONES WOUNDED**

Private Rees Emlyn Jones son of Mr Thomas Jones of Godre'rgraig has been slightly wounded during the fighting in the Dardanelles.

**9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**HE WAS WITH HIS BROTHER**

More details are now to hand concerning the manner in which **Private Rees Emlyn Jones**, son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Jones, of Bryneiron, Godre'rgraig (who, as reported in our last issue has been wounded in the Dardanelles), received his injuries. Private Jones, who is only 18 years of age, and is one of three brothers serving with the colours, is in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion S. W.B., together with his brother, **Private Llew Jones** who was alongside him when he was wounded. Jones is now an inmate of a Malta Hospital, and is making excellent progress towards recovery. In a letter sent home by his brother he says —“He got it quite simple. He had been boiling some rice for both of us, and we were about to sit down when he got it. It is only a flesh wound.”

**9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**YSTALYFERA GUARDSMAN'S GRAPHIC STORY**

**Complimented on Their Gallant Charge**

**T LESLIE THOMAS**

Numerous interesting soldiers' letters continue to reach the district.

The following are extracts from a letter from **Private T Leslie Thomas**, of Pantteg Ystalyfera, who is with the Welsh Guards in France

“Since I had wrote you we have been in one of the most terrific battles in the war—Hill 70. I am glad now that we were the Guards to make the charge. The Welsh Guards have made a name for themselves that will never be forgotten. Unfortunately our casualty list is very heavy. I came through it all right but, I shall never forget it. We left our billet at 3.30 p.m. and got into the charge at 6 p.m. We cleared the Germans out of the town—and then straight up the Hill, men falling right and left, but we kept on. The bullets were hailing all around us, and shrapnel bursting over head simply mowing men down. The Welsh Guards were the first there in fact we were well ahead. The Brigadier General has been to our billet this morning and he complimented us on the gallant charge we made. He said the Welsh Guards had already made a name for themselves. We were sixty hours in the trenches under the biggest cannon fire ever known. Some Canadian Regiment relieved us. In going out from the trenches the shells were awful, and we had four miles of open shell swept country to go through. We had the Prussian Guards up against us—terrible beasts. The Welsh Guards showed them the way to fight. When we had dug ourselves in properly and our machine guns mounted we were more at ease. Any German showing his head above the trench was simply met with a hail of lead. Going into action is a peculiar feeling, but although I say it, I was not in the least afraid. Should we be told off to go into a charge again I will be much more at ease.

**5<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

**SHELL SHOCK**

**Private Leslie Thomas** of the Welsh Guards, who is the son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas Central Stores Pantteg, is at present home on leave, recuperating from shell shock. He was the only one of his company to escape. His many friends are pleased that he has been so fortunate.

**30<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**WOUNDED**

Intimation has been received by his parents, residing at Pantteg Ystalyfera, that **Private Leslie Thomas** of the Welsh Guards has been wounded in the heavy fighting on the Somme. The wounds were sustained on 10<sup>th</sup> September and Private Thomas is now at the St. John's Ambulance Association's Hospital at Boulogne making slow progress towards recovery.

**21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 1916**

**IN A CANTERBURY HOSPITAL**

**Private Leslie Thomas** of the Welsh Guards, son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas Pantteg, is now recovering at a Canterbury hospital. Private Thomas was not so well at the end of last

week and his parents went to Canterbury on a visit. He, however, has taken a turn for the better and it is to be hoped that his recovery will be a speedy and complete one.

**21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 1917**

**DISCHARGED**

**Mr Leslie Thomas** formerly of the Welsh Guards and son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas Pantteg, who has been severely wounded in France, has now been discharged from the service. He is happily recovering from his wounds.

**16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**MATTHEW TOM POWELL**

**Private Matthew Tom Powell** Cwmtwrch has been wounded at the front. He belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh division and at present is at Cardiff Hospital. Private Powell left here at the outbreak of war (he and **Private Edgar Rosser** went together) and had a fine send off from the inhabitants of Gwys. His wounds are not as serious as was reported at the time. He had a fractured wrist and a bullet through the muscle of his arm.

Mrs Powell and her children journeyed to Cardiff last Wednesday to see him and found that he was making speedy progress. He is expected to arrive in Gwys someday this week.

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**ARRIVED HOME**

**Lieutenant Matthew Tom Powell** arrived here on Friday and had a hearty welcome from his friends. Lieutenant Powell has been in service since the outbreak of war and was wounded at the front a few weeks ago. He has been for the last month at one of the Cardiff Hospitals, where he has had a good cure of his wounds. He returns to the front shortly.

**16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**LOCAL SOLDIER GASSED: SAM JONES**

Another local soldier, **Private Sam Jones**, son of Mr Tom Jones Pelican Street, is home from the front. Private Jones has been badly gassed, as well as wounded by shrapnel. He arrived home from hospital on Monday and a smoking concert and presentation meeting is to be held on Friday at the Ynisedwyn Arms.

**16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**R W OWEN**

**Private R W Owen** (Station Road) is back from the Dardanelles and is now lying in a Manchester Hospital suffering from the effects of dysentery. Private Owen was a signaller in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers which is attached to the Australian

**4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

**TEDDY BEVAN**

**Private Teddy Bevan**, son of Mrs. Breeze, Ynisgeinon Cottage, Godre'rgraig, has been invalided home from France. Private Bevan is in the Welsh Guards, and took part in the fighting at Loos and Hill 70. He is one of the best shots in the battalion, and has been placed in the "snipers' section." Bevan frequently played "goal" for Ystalyfera Soccer Team and assisted the eleven against Mond Nickel Works in the Swansea Cup Final three seasons ago. Private Bevan is now at the Sheffield Hospital, down with pneumonia. We trust his illness will not prove serious, and that he will have a speedy recovery.

## **HOW THE BIBLE SAVED A YOUNG SOLDIERS LIFE**

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916**

**DAVID WILLIAMS & J LLEWELYN**

News has been received by their parents, Mr Joseph Williams, and Mr Benjamin Llewelyn, Lower Cwmtwrch that their sons, **Privates David Williams**, and **J Llewelyn**, have been wounded in action in France, and are at present in hospital. Both young soldiers have been in the trenches for some time, serving with the 14<sup>th</sup> Welsh Regiment (Swansea Battalion).

**Private Williams** was wounded by a sniper's bullet, and probably owes his life to the fact that he carried in his breast pocket the Bible which was presented to him by his friends at Beulah Chapel prior to his departure for the front. The bullet pierced the Bible, tore through its leaves and entered Williams' side.

**Private Llewelyn** is suffering from shrapnel wounds in his arm and leg, and the boys writing to their parents assure them the wounds are not serious, and hope soon to be back in the trenches.

**23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

**RECEIVED DISCHARGE: DAVID WILLIAMS**

**Private David Williams**, who lives near the New Inn Lower Cwmtwrch, is coming home shortly as he has received his discharge from the forces. He joined the forces during the early months of the war, and was gassed in action. It will be recalled that his life was once saved by a Bible he had in his pocket, which provided a billet for a bullet that would otherwise have ended his life.

**17th JUNE 1916**

**D REES**

**Private D Rees** of the Army Veterinary Corps, who is at his home in Oddfellows Street Ystradgynlais, received the usual present from the local reception committee during the week. He was kicked by a mule in Egypt and is now recuperating.

**2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**WOUNDED IN ACTION: GEORGE GRIFFITHS**

**Private George Griffiths** of the South Wales Borderers, whose home is at College Row Ystradgynlais, is at present at Cardiff hospital suffering from wounds sustained to his foot whilst in action in France. He is, however, making steady progress and hopes to be invalided home at an early date.

**21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 1917**

**ERNEST WILLIAMS**

**Second-Lieutenant Ernest Williams**, of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, son of Mr and Mrs Tom Williams, London House, has been wounded in France. Lieutenant Williams was in the "push" on Easter Monday, and had crossed the first German line in a charge, when at about 5.30 in the morning he received spinal injuries as the result of shrapnel wounds. On Wednesday morning, his parents received a communication to the effect that he was in a London hospital, having been brought over on Tuesday. Prior to joining the colours soon after the outbreak of the war, Lieutenant Williams was at Cardiff University, and was an old Ystradgynlais County School pupil. He enlisted into the R.W.F. as a private, and after being in France for six months he was sent home, and recommended for a commission. He has now been back in France for three months. So far he is making favourable progress, and his many friends will join in wishing him a complete recovery.

**31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**HOME ON FURLOUGH**

**Lieutenant Ernest Williams** son of Mr and Mrs Tom Williams London House, who is with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, is home on furlough after having gone through a musketry course at Altcar. He will return to his depot at Kimmel Park. Lieutenant Williams was badly wounded in France recently but now looks very much better. He joined up in the early days of the war

**26<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**W PERROTT**

Mrs W Perrott Zoar Road has received intimation from the War Office that her husband **Private W Perrott** has been received into hospital at Salonika, severely wounded. He left this country only 10 weeks ago. Previous to joining the Army in August 1914, he was engaged at the Ystalyfera Tin Plate Works. His many friends hope to hear better news soon.



**23<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

**RECOVERING FROM A SERIOUS ILLNESS**

**Private Azariah Williams**, of the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry, visited his home during the week. Private Williams is only just recovering from a serious illness but now looks the picture of health.

**2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

**AZARIAH WILLIAMS**

**Private Azariah Williams** of the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry, son of Mr William Williams, who has been in France for some time is reported to be in a French hospital on account of heel trouble.

**20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1918**

**AZARIAH WILLIAMS WOUNDED AGAIN**

Mr William Williams, the Boot Stores Gough Buildings, has been notified from headquarters at Shrewsbury, that his son, **Private Azariah Williams** Pembrokeshire Yeomanry, attached to the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh, has been wounded in the heavy fighting in France. He is now in a base hospital having received injuries to the left eye.

**27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**Private Azariah Williams**, son of Mr William Williams, boot manufacturer, Gough Buildings, now of the 9<sup>th</sup> Welsh has been on leave. He joined the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry in 1915 and was wounded a little while ago in the fighting in France. He has been under treatment at a Leeds hospital and has now been sent to Pembroke Dock, where he shortly expects to be re-drafted on active service.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**Corporal Azariah Williams** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Welsh, son of Mr William Williams boot maker Gough Buildings, has been home on leave looking fit and well. He is at present a gas instructor at Pembroke Dock. He was wounded in France six months ago.

**31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1918**

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**WOUNDED AGAIN: HOWELL LEWIS**

Mrs Howell Lewis Tanywern has received the news that her husband **Lieutenant Howell Lewis**, of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, has again been wounded in action. On this occasion he was shot through the groin, and is now at Southampton hospital. He had only just recovered from serious wounds previously received in action, and had only returned three weeks ago. He had only been in the trenches a few hours when his unit was ordered to attack, and it was whilst this attack was in progress that Lieutenant Lewis was shot.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**DARCY REES**

News has been received at Ystalyfera that **Lieutenant Darcy Rees** of the Australian Forces, has been injured by falling 100 feet from an aeroplane. Luckily his fall was broken by a tree. Lieutenant Rees' family hails from Ystalyfera.

**19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

**W C JONES**

The first casualty from amongst the boys who joined from the collieries is reported, as news has been received that **Private W C Jones** of the South Wales Borderers, son of Mr and Mrs W Jones Gough Buildings, has received a wound in the left leg. He writes from the base and states that he is on his way home to Blighty.

**9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

**ALEX JONES & THOMAS JOHN JONES**

**Lance Corporal Alex Jones**, son of Mr W D Jones Wind Road Ystradgynlais has been gassed in France. As a result of the effects of being overcome he was rendered blind for six days but is now reported to be recovering. He is at present in hospital at Boulogne. Jones has been in the Army for four years, saw service in India and returned to France with the Machine Gun Corps.

His brother **Lance Corporal Thomas John Jones**, known in local boxing circles as "Young





# DISCHARGED FROM ACTIVE SERVICE

## THE SILVER WAR BADGE

In WWI more than two million British soldiers were wounded and for many the wounds meant that they were no longer physically fit for active service. The Silver War Badge (also known as the Wound Badge, Discharge Badge or Service Rendered Badge) was given to the soldiers not only to honour the fact that they had served their Country but also to distinguish them as ex soldiers and not non serving soldiers who were targeted for cowardice.



## LIMBLESS SOLDIERS

3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 1916

### HOW THEY ARE CARED FOR AND "REFITTED"

How a soldier who loses a leg or an arm is dealt with was described in the House of Commons by Mr H W Forster. He is treated at the military hospital at Roehampton until his wound was healed, and he is granted full allowances. The fitting of the artificial limb takes place some four or five months after amputation, and the man remains at Roehampton until the limb has been passed as satisfactory by the consulting surgeon.

The man is then discharged from the Army as permanently unfit for service. When he is discharged his pension is awarded by the Chelsea Commissioners. He is usually given a pension at the full rate for two months, and at the end of that time the pension of 25s is reduced to a permanent pension of 10s 6d a week. When the final pension has been granted it is always open to reassessment. These artificial limbs are provided at the public expense.

11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915

### TOM JONES

The first Ystalyfera man to receive his discharge from the Army, as the result of wounds received while on active service, is **Private Tom Jones**, of Cambrian Cottages, whose arm has been so badly injured that it is feared he will never regain complete use of it. Private Jones has a very interesting tale to tell of the manner in which he was wounded while with the Brecknocks at La Heij, 26 miles from Aden and of his experiences since that time. It was on the night after the terrible desert march which has been already described in "The Labour Voice," and before the men had time to take any food, and had only drunk some dirty water, which, after the terrible thirst they had experienced, "tasted like wine." All of the company, who were fit, were told to guard the hospital, where an attack by the Turks was expected. Private Tom Jones and **Tom Baber** (son of ex- Sergeant Baber, Canal Terrace), were sent to watch at the back of the premises, where also were Lieutenant Woosnam and Lieutenant Morgan, and others. After about an hour the natives opened fire, and a sniper was observed to be very active from the window of a cottage a short distance away. Half a dozen men, of whom Private Jones was one, were told to fall back and attend to that cottage, but before Private Jones had time to get at the sniper, he saw a flash of light in front and immediately afterwards noticed his left arm hanging bleeding and useless—the sniper had got him. It was 2 a.m., and his mate was told to take him back to camp to be attended to, but they lost their way in the darkness, and Private Jones hid in a ditch while his friend went to find help. At last some Indian soldiers directed them to a place where Jones's wound was dressed. At

daybreak the company continued their retreat, and Jones was placed by the doctor on a camel, with Corporal Will Jones leading, but Corporal Jones could not be spared and was recalled, and the injured man was left to manage his huge steed as best he could. The camel first turned round and round and then made off with all speed in the direction of the enemy, but was finally captured and attached by ropes to the other camels, and so Jones got safely back to Aden.

He was then taken on the hospital ship Guildford Castle to Alexandria, where he was detained for a week, then sent on the Esturias to England to the American Women's War Hospital at Paignton. He cannot speak too highly of the care and attention bestowed upon him during the three months he was in that institution. He went under several operations to have pieces of the broken bone removed from his arm, and carries as a souvenir from the hospital a photograph of the arm as seen under the X-Rays.

On Nov 5<sup>th</sup> Private Jones went to Devonport and received his discharge from the Army as unfit for further service.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 1916**

### **J CORCORAN**

**Private J Corcoran** of the 1<sup>st</sup> S W B has now been discharged from the Army. He resides at Dumphries Place Wind Road Ystradgynlais and can be considered one of the heroes of Anzac and Suvla Bay, where he was wounded. An enemy shot pierced both ankles, breaking them; he was sent first to Gibraltar and thence to a hospital in London, from thence to a hospital in London, from which he was discharged. Corcoran is a single man and has lived in the district for many years.

### **11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1916**

### **CWMTWRCH: WILL LEWIS**

**Lieutenant Will Lewis**, son of Mr Howell Lewis of Cwmtwrch and formerly electric engineer at Ynisedwyn Colliery, who was discharged from the army a short time ago as medically unfit, has now been successful in obtaining a post as engineer on board the Mauritania. He left the district on Thursday to enter upon his new duties.

### **15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

### **EDGAR EVANS**

Friends will regret to hear that on account of the state of his health, **Gunner Edgar Evans** Alma House, has been discharged from the Army. Mr Evans patriotically responded to the call of his country soon after the outbreak of the war and joined the R F A. He was latterly stationed at Cromer on the East Coast.

### **15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

### **HECTOR JENKINS**

**Private Hector Jenkins**, residing with his brother in law, Mr Rees Thomas of 1 Wind Road, has just received his discharge from the Army, being medically unfit for active service. Private Jenkins, who formerly worked at Ynisedwyn tin plate works, joined the Welsh Regiment about 18 months ago. After going through his course of training, he was sent to France but only served in the trenches for a few weeks, when he was stricken with rheumatism and sent to hospital. He has been for three months in Brockenhurst Hospital Hants., and has now received his discharge.

### **13<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916**

### **WILLIAM HUGHES**

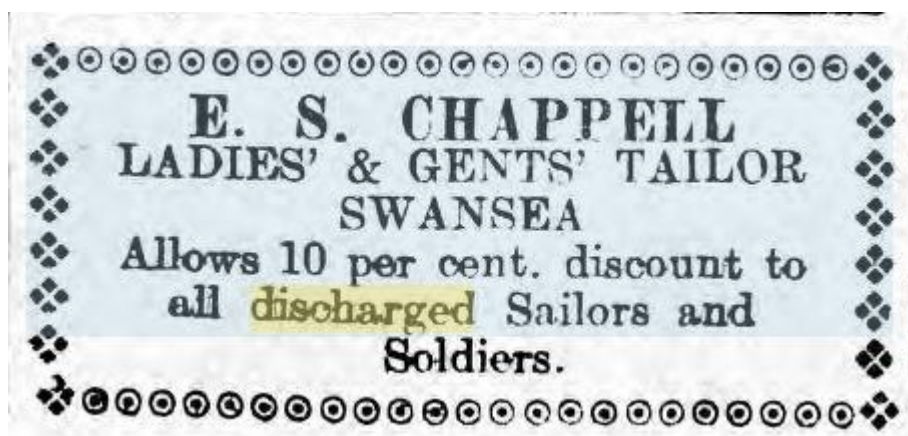
**Mr William Hughes** of Glantawe Row has now received his discharge from the Army. He has been doing his bit for his country with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers since the start of the war as an Army reservist and now his time having expired, he has been granted his discharge.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 1916**

### **SMOKING CONCERT: WILLIAM HUGHES**

A smoking concert will be held at the Masons Arms on Saturday evening, in aid of the family





**9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**GRIFFITH THOMAS**

**Private Griffith Thomas** a native of Gwys, and who has been at the front for many months has been discharged from the Army on medical grounds.

**16<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**WILLIAM DAVIES**

**Mr William Davies** late assistant to Mr Luther Lloyd ironmonger has been discharged from the Army and has again taken up his old duties.

**27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1917**

**STANLEY JONES**

**Private Stanley Jones**, who was employed at the local Co-operative Stores previous to his enlistment has now been discharged from the Army and started in his old employment on Thursday.

**3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

**EDDIE EVANS**

**Private Eddie Evans** of the Welsh Regiment is home on leave at Clare Road, and expects an early discharge. He has lost an arm in action and has been wounded on two occasions. Private Evans prior to the war was employed at the Tarreni Colliery and was a prominent Boy Scout and soon after the declaration of war joined up.

**10<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

**GARFIELD THOMAS**

**Mr Garfield Thomas** (son of Mrs Thomas Red Cow Hotel Ystalyfera) after serving a few weeks in France has now been discharged from the Army on account of a severe wrench of the knee suffered while engaged in trench duty. He has now returned to the well known establishment of Messrs Lewis Lewis and Co. Swansea, where he holds a responsible position.

**24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

**ARTHUR JONES**

**Drummer Arthur Jones**, late of the Brecknocks, of Pantteg Ystalyfera has recently been discharged from the Army. He had been with the colours since the beginning of 1915 and was a member of the regimental band, providing a great service as a piccolo player. Drummer Jones is very much broken in health and has been treated at Pembroke, Carmarthen and Neath Hospitals for the last six months.

**8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

**ELLIS JONES**

**Mr Ellis Jones** son of Mr and Mrs Oliver Jones Gurnos has taken up duties at the Gurnos School as a teacher. He joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brecknocks in October 1914 whilst only 17 years of

age and was at that time a school teacher. He has later seen service in France but has now been discharged.

### ABERCRAVE RECEPTION CONCERT

**2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

**JOHNNY WALTERS**

The Church Hall was filled to its utmost on Thursday night of last week, when **Private Johnny Walters, SWB**, who was wounded some months back at Ypres, and has now been discharged from the Army, was cordially welcomed by the residents of the district. The chair was occupied by Mr T Watkins, Moelfryn.

The following soldiers, who were home on leave, were also on the platform:

Private Evan Watkins. S.W.B

Private Idris Thomas, S.W.B

Private Dannie Watkins, R E, of the Canadian Regiment

Private Bomley (Australian Forces).....

**6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1918**

**CLIFFORD PRICE**

**Corporal Clifford Price**, son of Mr and Mrs David Price, Lucknow House, who was wounded in France in an assault in which the Worcesters took part, has now received his discharge on account of injuries inflicted to his leg on that occasion. He has completed over four years' service, having joined up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brecknocks in October 1914, being latterly transferred to the Worcesters. He was wounded in the offensive of last autumn.

**20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1918**

**HENRY WILLIAMS**

**Private Henry Williams**, 23<sup>rd</sup> Welsh, who joined from Cwmgiedd on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1915, son of Mr Thomas Williams, has been discharged from the army on account of an accident and illness. Private Williams has been in France for a considerable time.

**4<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

**J SCOTT HOPKIN**

**Mr J Scott Hopkin** formerly organist at St. David's Church, has received his discharge from the colours. Previous to enlistment he was an assistant master at the Wern Schools. He has seen much service with the Welsh Guards in France

**28th SEPTEMBER 1918**

**Mr J Scott Hopkin** (late Welsh Guards) who left the Wern to join the army has now returned and has taken up his old duties.

**27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**JOHNNY LEWIS**

**Private Johnny Lewis** 7 College Row, who has served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mons, has been discharged following severe shell wounds received in the fighting in France. He was wounded about 12 months ago and has been ill ever since.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**SAMUEL EVANS**

**Private Samuel Evans** Godre'rgrraig son of Mr and Mrs David Evans Cartre'rawel, has been discharged from the Army after having received wounds to the leg

**29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1919**

**JOHN SAMUEL**

We are glad to learn that official news has been received from the American War Office to the effect that **Private John Samuel**, of the American Forces and late of Wern Ystalyfera, is alive and was discharged from the United States Army General Hospital No 7, Fort Porter New York on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918. It will be remembered that news of his death was received some time ago.

## FLAG DAY IN SWANSEA: CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER 14<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915



### HELPING THE FRENCH FLAG

The 4 children of M. Le Bars, the French Consul of Swansea have been conspicuous among sellers of French flags at Swansea. Their costumes are of especial interest, as they represent (left to right) a French sailor, the national costume of Alsace, a Zouave and the national costume of Lorraine

**M. Le Bars spoke of the representative nature of the gathering which had met to appreciate the great services rendered by France in the cause of civilisation. He asked them to think of the French boys and the Frenchmen who had lived amongst them and who in August last left their wives and families in order to respond to the call of duty. M. Le Bars read out a list of those Frenchmen who had gone from Swansea and were now serving their country, while others that he mentioned had fallen on the field of honour. He added that Commandant Maggs that morning had given, on behalf of the Swansea Veterans, a French Cavalry sword, dated January 1814. The sword would be sold to the highest bidder and the proceeds given to the funds of the Red Cross Society (Cheers).**

**The band of the Second 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh took up a position outside the Exchange and accompanied the singing of the National Anthem. As the Mayor and the speakers were leaving the building, the band played the Marsellaise, Mr Tom Fry, an ex-President of the Chamber of Commerce, leading the singing.**



3<sup>rd</sup> from left M. Le Bars Acting French Consul in Swansea on steps of Exchange  
(Expected to have collected £350)

## NFDDSS

**THE NATIONAL FEDERATION of DISCHARGED and DEMOBILISED SAILORS and SOLDIERS** (NFDDSS) was a British veteran's organisation.

The organisation was founded in January 1917 by various London-based veterans groups opposed to the Review of Exceptions Act, which made it possible for people invalided out of the armed forces to be re-conscripted. It adopted the slogans "Every man once before any man twice" and "Justice before charity".

### **PANTTEG AND GODRE'RGRAIG**

**6<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**      **JOHN J BUTLER: ARTHUR THOMAS: WALLACEMONKLEY**

On Tuesday evening a presentation meeting was held at Godre'rgraig chapel under the auspices of the local **S and S Committee**, in honour of **Private John J Butler**; while two others were represented viz, **Private Arthur Thomas** (see Wounded) and **Seaman Wallace Monkley**. All three lads are from Gnoll Road, and it is interesting to note that as many boys have gone from this street as anyone in the district. A fine programme had been arranged by the committee and was as follows, Mr. Bowen Bevan took the chair while Miss Olwen Rees accompanied. Songs: Misses K M Brazell, Jennie Griffiths and Mr W T Davies.

Recitations: Miss Maggie T Jones, Messrs John F Jones, John Williams and Bowen Bevan. Mr. Ben Evans presented Private Butler with a cheque on behalf of the committee, while Mr. David Morgan spoke a few well chosen words.

**9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

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**CWMTWRCH: EBENEZER CHAPEL**

There was an excellent attendance at Ebenezer Cwmtwrch, on Saturday evening when a concert was held on behalf of the Discharged and Demobilised Soldiers and Sailors. The artistes included: Mr E Telorydd Nicholas Ystalyfera; Miss E A Joshua Godre'rgraig; Mr James Davies Cwmllynfell; Miss Ann Walter Cwmllynfell and Mr Gwernydd Morgan Pontardawe. ....

**31<sup>st</sup> MAY 1919**

**YSTALYFERA: SMOKING CONCERT**

A smoking concert, under the auspices of the Dr. Lewis Lodge, R.A.O.B., G.L.E., for the purpose of raising funds for the presentations to **discharged land demobilised soldiers and sailors** was held at the Old Swan Hotel, on Saturday evening, Brother D W Jenkins (K.O.M.) presiding, assisted by Brother Gibbon. Songs were given by Brothers Lewis Williams, Peter Meeney, W Gape, B. Poole, Watt Williams, M. Rogers, J S Sexton (with mouth organ); and W H Jones. The accompanists were Ronald Channing and Harry Thomas, Ystradgynlais. A substantial amount was raised.

**20<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1919**

**GURNOS: DISCHARGED GIVEN MEDALS**

On Tuesday evening next, the members of Gurnos Chapel will entertain their discharged men to a knife and fork tea and social function. The gathering will take place at the Church Hall, and after the tea seventy of the men will be presented with gold centred medals, suitably inscribed. The next of kin of two men, one of whom was killed, and the other died as the result of war service, will also be honoured. A fine concert has been arranged, and it is hoped that all the boys invited will attend.

**12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

**YSTRADGYNLAIS: TABERNACLE VESTRY**

The Ystradgynlais Soldiers' and Sailors' Reception Committee presented some of the local boys, who are home from active service, on Friday last at Tabernacle Vestry, when the Rev J Emlyn Jones, presided. Private Handel Lewis, of the SWB; Lance Corporal James Jenkins, of

the K.R.R; and Private William Hughes, of the SWB, who has now been discharged, received their medals.

Second Lieutenant E Williams, of the RWF, was also presented. Lieutenant Williams wears a, distinctive mark of the old days on his tunic in the form of a square of black material. This was universally worn in the old days of powdered pig tails, to prevent the grease of the hair staining the tunic. At the time it was abolished, the RWF were on active service, and were not included in the order. Thus Lieutenant Williams and his brother officers wear this square to the present day.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917** **YSTRADGYNLAIS: SCHOOLROOM MEETING**

The organisation of **Discharged Soldiers and Sailors** in the district is proceeding apace and a further meeting will be held on Saturday evening at the Church schoolroom, when Mr Molyneaux of Swansea and Mr Scott will address the meeting.

### **18<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918** **YSTRADGYNLAIS: FLAG DAY**

The local branch of the **Discharged and Demobilised Soldiers and Sailors Secretary** is to be congratulated on the success of the recent flag-day in aid of their funds, as no less than £11 was collected by the young ladies of the place. The discharged boys wish to tender thanks to all who took part and assisted in making the day a success.

### **7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1918** **SUPPORT FOR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS**

It has been decided by the local **Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers** that a flag day shall be held for the widows and orphans. Mrs Jack Morgan, Brecon Road has been appointed one of the official collectors. The federation is opening the list with a subscription of £5. It is to be hoped that every support will be given this worthy cause.

### **31<sup>st</sup> MAY 1919** **YSTRADGYNLAIS: PRESENTATIONS**

A number of presentations have been made during the week to returned demobilised and discharged soldiers, and amongst those who received cheques and testaments during the week were:

Private T W Griffiths, son of ex-Councillor W Griffiths, who has served in the M.G.C., and who joined up in August 1914;

Private J Mochram, of Wind Road, who has served in the Worcester Regiment

Private Benjamin Evans of 12 Wind Road, who has seen service in the Stafford Regiment in India and who was a reservist who joined up at the beginning of the war.

### **28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1919** **BRADBURY'S MEDAL**

The 364 and 365<sup>th</sup> presentations of "Bradburys" medal, and New Testament to returned discharged and demobilised soldiers, under the auspices of the S. and S. Reception Committee were made at Mr C D Lake's establishment this week, to ex-Private G G Evans, late of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh Regiment who, since joining, has lost the use of his left arm through wounds; and to ex-Private Edwin Biddle, D.A.M.C., who joined in 1915 and has served in Salonica.





# HONOURS and MEDALS

## SPECIAL MERITORIOUS MENTION YSTALYFERA

**16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1915**

**JOHN THOMAS KNOTT**

A Hereford paper states that one of the heroes of the sea, who has received recognition for distinguished service whilst in action, is First Class Petty Officer **John Thomas Knott**, of Grange Walk, Leominster, and a brother-in-law to Mr and Mrs W J Hopkins, of Bristol House, Ystalyfera. He was on the Aboukir when she was torpedoed and was amongst the survivors. Then he was transferred to the Brilliant and was engaged on the sloop Rinaldo in shelling German trenches on the Belgian coast when he was wounded in both legs by a shell. Mr Knott (who was visiting his relatives in Ystalyfera a few days ago, has now been promoted from the rank of leading seaman to that of First Class Petty Officer, and has in addition received the Distinguished Service Medal for operations around Antwerp. He has now happily recovered from his wounds, and has returned to duty.

**17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**JOHN T KNOTT**

In the official naval communiqué written by the Admirals of the Fleet and published by the Admiralty on Tuesday, special meritorious mention is made of some of the more notable incidents in the recent naval fighting. One passage reads “**Leading Seaman John Knott**, of the Brilliant, who when all the men at his gun had been killed or wounded and he himself severely wounded, endeavoured to fire his gun. Seaman Knott is specially commended.”

It will be remembered that Leading Seaman Knott who has since been made Petty Officer is a brother in law to Mr and Mrs W J Hopkin, Wern Ystalyfera, marrying a sister of Mrs Hopkin. He has many friends in Ystalyfera, and has often been a visitor here, having spent some time in the place since his thrilling experience on the Brilliant.

**12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**FOLLOW UP**

Mr Frederick Rees (Boot dealer) of Wern received on Sunday a highly entertaining letter from his niece, Mrs John Knott, who has been temporarily on the South Coast, in which the writer related their experiences during the visit of the Zeppelin on Friday last. Mrs Knott described how the people were warned of the approach of the Zeppelins by the police. She herself went out into the street as did also most of the residents and she had a perfect view of the enemy craft, which was illuminated by the British search lights. The Zeppelin did not drop bombs and no one therefore was injured.

Mrs Knott's husband, **Petty Officer Knott RN** who, as already reported, was recently awarded the DSO for gallantry, has been put in charge of the Guard at Garrick Castle Scotland and his wife has joined him there this week. Both have many friends in Ystalyfera and district.

## ----- YSTALYFERA BOY TO BE RECOMMENDED FOR THE D C M

**29<sup>th</sup> MAY 1915**

**WILLIAM J HAYES**

An interesting letter has been received by Mr Michael Hayes of the Old Wern Schools Ystalyfera, from his son, **Private W J Hayes** who has been wounded and returned to the Base depot at Rouen.

In the course of his letter he says:

“You mentioned that you were all sorry for me, because I was wounded, but you ought to be glad because it was nothing to what happened to my poor comrades and besides, I am pleased (and I know you are all) that I shall be on the Roll of Honour. The medical officer says that the Colonel intends recommending me for the D C M.

Private Hayes was wounded by carrying two comrades to safety under heavy shell fire.



### 30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915

Another Ystalyfera soldier has been at home this week. We refer to **Lance Corporal W J Hayes** (1st Welsh Regiment) who came on Saturday from hospital on 10 day's leave before going to the front again, and who, as already been announced in these columns has been four times wounded. Hayes was for some time orderly to his colonel. He arrived in England about three weeks ago and was on Friday discharged from hospital.

### 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915

There was a very interesting gathering at the Old Swan Hotel, Gurnos, on Saturday evening, when a smoking concert was held to give a hearty send off to **Private W J Hayes**, of the 1st Welsh, son of Mr and Mrs Hayes, of the Old School Lodging House, who has been home on furlough after being wounded during hostilities in France for the sixth time. There was a very large gathering, and happy evening was spent in song, complimentary speeches, etc. A collection made for Hayes just before the close realised the excellent sum of £1 10s.

Private Hayes left Ystalyfera to rejoin his regiment by the 9.45 a.m. train on Monday, and was given a great send off by many friends who gathered at the station.

(Another soldier, **Private T P Davies**, who happened to be in the place staying with friends at Gurnos called at the concert just before the close, and was also, given a hearty welcome. He had been wounded in France, and a collection made on his behalf realised nearly 10sh.)

### 4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915

The following is an extract of a letter received by **Lance Corporal William J Hayes**, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Hayes, Wern Lodging House, Ystalyfera, who has been six times wounded in action in Flanders. Lance Corporal Hayes did excellent work rescuing wounded men under fire: his commanding officer, Brigadier General C O Marden, with whom he acted as orderly, and a company commander, Captain Thompson, were both carried from the fire zone by Lance Corporal Hayes when wounded.

The Brigadier wrote to Hayes last month as follows:

"I recommended you for the DCM for your gallant conduct the day you were wounded, but unfortunately every recommendation does not get the Distinguished Conduct Medal. The Welsh too, have been unfortunate up to the present in not being in successful actions—those are the ones which bring the award. I take this opportunity of thanking you for looking after me when I was wounded, which you and the stretcher bearers did right well."

We know that virtue lies in the deed not in the reward. Much local feeling and disappointment have been occasioned by the fact that in spite of the recommendation referred to above, Hayes's undoubtedly heroic actions are to be allowed to remain unrecognised. Unfortunately Brigadier Marden has been removed to another command, so we fear no one else will take the trouble to see the matter through.

### 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916

### YSTALYFERA SOLDIERS BOXING SUCCESS

An Ystalyfera soldier in the person of Lane Corporal W J Hayes, of Old Wern Schools, Ystalyfera has won distinction in his regiment (2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Welsh) by his powers as a boxer. Hayes, who has been wounded three times in Flanders and returned to his duties on New Year's Day, was induced to enter for the heavy-weight championship of his regiment. He won this with some ease, knocking out his man in the final in the second round. He then entered for the brigade championship, and again fought his way to the semi-final, in which he met **Sergeant Sullivan**, of the Royal Munster Fusiliers. He beat his man here, and qualified to meet **Sergeant Corcoran**, of the South Wales Borderers, in the final. Unfortunately he had to meet his man soon after his previous fight, and the strain told on him, with the result that he

lost in the fourth round. Sergeant Corcoran was afterwards defeated in the divisional championship by Sergeant Sullivan, whom Hayes himself beat in the semi-final for the brigade championship.

Hayes is an Aberdare boy, and was recommended for the DCM last year for rescuing wounded under heavy fire.

**13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**W WHITAKER**

Many readers will learn with considerable interest of the honour bestowed upon a local soldier, who has been given the DCM We refer to **Sergeant W Whitaker**, of the R.F.A., who has resided in the place for many years. Sergeant Whitaker, who came here from Bristol was formerly employed by Messrs. D Rees and Sons, builders, and went out to France as a reservist at the beginning of the war. He has been wounded no fewer than three times, the last being comparatively recently, when he came home and stayed with Mr and Mrs Edwyn Nicholas, Wern Fawr. The reference to Sergeant Whitaker's achievement was contained in Army Orders as follows:

“Awarded the DCM for conspicuous gallantry, on the night of September 26<sup>th</sup>, he went out and twice succeeded in bombing the enemy's trenches, and returned unscathed. He has constantly taken part in arduous and enterprising night work.”

We most heartily congratulate Sergeant Whitaker on this honour conferred upon him.

**8<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

**YSTALYFERA: TOM SLOLEY**

An Ystalyfera soldier (Ynysydarren Road) home from the firing-line this week is **Sergeant Major Tom Sloley**, of the Royal Scots, and Sergeant Major Slowly has had rapid promotion, joining the colours at the outbreak of war as a private.

**23<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 1917**

**SERGEANT MAJOR TOM SLOLEY**

The good news has been received that **Sergeant Major Sloley**, of one of the Scottish regiments, has been recommended for the DCM. The details of the gallant act that brought the award are not yet to hand. Prior to joining he lived at St. David's Road Ystalyfera and was employed at the Tirbach Colliery. Sergeant Major Sloley, who has had rapid promotion, having enlisted as a private, has been through most of the big engagements in France.

**24<sup>th</sup> JULY 1917 CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER**

**THE DCM FOR BRAVERY**

**Sergeant Major Thomas James Sloley** of Ystalyfera joined a Scottish Regiment at the outbreak of war as a private and has served in France for over two and a half years. He has taken part in many of the most important battles and has escaped unscathed so far. He has been awarded the DCM for bravery and been recommended for a commission on the field. He leaves Ystalyfera on the 30<sup>th</sup> inst to join the OTC. Previous to the war he was employed as a stoker at the Tirbach Colliery Ystalyfera. Mr Sloley, who is 29 years of age and unmarried has been warmly congratulated locally, as he is the first Ystalyfera boy to bring this distinction to the place.

**15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918 CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER**

**A BAR TO HIS MEDAL**

**Sergeant Major T J Sloley** DCM son of Mrs Joseph Davies St. David's Road Ystalyfera, has just been awarded a bar to his medal for conspicuous gallantry.

**15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

**C.S.M. Tom J Sloley**, DCM of the 9th Battalion M.G.C. (Scottish Div.), son of Mrs Joseph Davies, St. David's Road, has been awarded a bar to his DCM for conspicuous gallantry in the field. The official record states that:

“C.S.M. Sloley was awarded the bar for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty at La Clytte on April 25<sup>th</sup>. When company head quarters and details were heavily shelled and severe casualties inflicted, C.S.M. Sloley and two others rescued wounded, bandaged them under heavy fire, with absolute disregard of personal danger, C.S.M. Sloley being himself

slightly wounded."

It is to be hoped that when he returns Ystalyfera people will give him a fitting public reception.

**21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**NO RECEPTION AS YET!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Company Sergeant Major T J Sloley** DCM of the MGC has again been home on leave for a second time receiving his distinction. No public reception has yet been accorded this hero and it is hardly to the credit that the oversight is intentional. The public has left the matter of giving local lads a worthy reception in the hands of the Reception Committee and has always given every support to any movement inaugurated for the replenishing of the funds. In view of this fact, it is certainly pertinent to ask why this hero has not been given a reception worthy of the distinction he has so nobly won.

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**MILITARY CROSS FOR OLD ABERCRAVE BOY**

**4<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1916**

**TOMMY MORGAN**

The residents of Abercrave will be gratified to learn that **Sergeant "Tommy" Morgan**, who was resident in Abercrave for quite a long time prior to his enlistment in the South Wales Borderers, has gained the Military Cross for bravery in the field, and will offer their sincere congratulations to him. He has been for twenty two months at the front, and has suffered all the hardships of the trenches. He will be better remembered as one who took a keen interest in sporting circles, and as Captain of the Abercrave Hockey Team, and he was mainly responsible, by his hard work, for the success of the club. It is to be hoped that Tommy will be able to pay a visit to Abercrave sometime in the near future, so that his many friends may show their appreciation in a suitable manner.



**16<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

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**GODRE'RGRAIG: W EDWARD JONES**

**Private W Edward Jones** of the Kings Own Royal Rifles is progressing favourably after having done his bit in France. He is now at an Edinburgh hospital. Private Jones is a son of Mr Edward Jones, Gnoll Road Godre'rgraig and was employed at the Tarreni Collieries prior to the outbreak of the war. His father has received a letter from Private Jones' orderly in France stating that he is to be awarded the Military Medal for gallantry on the field. The people of Godre'rgraig will doubtless give him a rousing welcome on his return. He has also another brother serving with the R A M C in Egypt.

**20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917**

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**YSTALYFERA: CHARLES ARTHUR PRICE**

Mr and Mrs Arthur Price 281, Tarreni Terrace, Ystalyfera, has received news that their eldest son, **Corporal Charles Arthur Price**, of the South Wales Borderers, has been awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry in action outside Salonika in May last. Previous to

enlisting in August, 1914, he worked at Abercrave Colliery. He has been abroad for two and a half years, first in France, and latterly in Salonika. As reported in these columns a few weeks ago, a younger son was killed near Ypres last August.

**7<sup>th</sup> JULY 1917**

**J R MABE**

**Corporal J R Mabe**, youngest son of Mr and Mrs J Mabe, Swanfield, Gurnos, is among the heroes who were recently honoured by the King, being awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the big push on Vimy Ridge. Corporal Mabe joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Surrey Rifles a fortnight after the outbreak of war, and was afterwards transferred to the Clerks' Section of the A.S.C. He was drafted to France in 1915, attached to the Headquarters of the 47<sup>th</sup> London Division.

**26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1918**

**HARRY WALWYN & ARCHIE MACDONALD**

Godre'rgraig is rapidly gaining prominence by reason of the military honours awarded to its young soldiers. **Lance Corporal Harry Walwyn**, of the Manchester Regiment, whose home is at Tarreni Terrace, has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery on the field whilst bringing in the wounded under heavy shell fire.

This is the second M.M. brought to Godre'rgraig. The first being awarded to **Private W E Jones** (now discharged) of the King's Own Royal Rifles, who resides at Gnoll road.

**2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

Two local heroes were presented at Godre'rgraig Chapel on Tuesday evening. They were **Corporal Harry Walwyn M.M.** and **Private Archie MacDonald.**

**12<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**HENRY DANIELS**

**Cadet Henry Daniels**, son of Councillor Dan Daniels, has this week been home on furlough at Ystalyfera. He has seen service in France with the R.G.A., and has been with the colours for about two years. He returned to England last November, having passed into a cadet battalion, and is now in training at Huckfield, preparatory to receiving a commission.

**18<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

**YSTALYFERA OFFICER'S GALLANTRY**

**Lieutenant Harry Daniels**, second son of Mr and Mrs Dan Daniels, Bryntirion Ystalyfera, has been awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and great devotion to duty. During the recent German offensive, Daniels and a company of 210 men were in charge of two howitzers. They were completely surrounded but with great foresight and bravery Lieutenant Daniels extricated himself from a very difficult position, saving the guns as well. Our latest MC is an old Ystalyfera County School boy, and prior to joining up was first hand at Central Stores Pantteg. He went through the Somme campaign in 1916 and was invalided home at the end of that year with shell shock and trench fever. Later he was recommended for a commission and was subsequently gazetted. He was in all the fighting around the Passchendale Ridges last year. Lieutenant Daniels will be officially decorated by the King when he comes on leave.

Mr Dan Daniels' eldest son is on the Headquarters' Staff in Mesopotamia where he has been for two years, whilst a daughter is at Gray's Inn Military Hospital London.

**12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

**PRESENTATION: HENRY DANIELS**

A presentation meeting, under the auspices of the S and S Reception committee was held at the Church Hall on Monday evening, when County Councillor D W Davies occupied the chair.

Presentations were made to **Lieutenant Henry Daniels MC**, who was highly complimented for his bravery and given a rousing welcome.

**19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

The friends of **Lieutenant Henry Daniels MC**, son of Mr and Mrs Daniel Daniels, together



**14th SEPTEMBER 1918**

**J T W JAMES**

A hearty send off was given **Lieutenant J T W James** son of Mr and Mrs James Penllwynteg Farm, when he returned to the front after a short leave. It will be remembered that he recently won the Military Cross for bravery in the field. He has the best wishes of his friends

**16th NOVEMBER 1918**

**NOW CAPTAIN: J T W JAMES**

We are pleased to congratulate **Lieutenant J T W James** MC Penllwynteg who has now been promoted to the rank of captain. Being attached to the Machine Gun Corps he is the first and only MC in the district and the deed that brought him the coveted distinction is chronicled in the following terms:

"During our advance this officer though wounded, remained in command of his guns, which he disposed on reaching the objective, with such skill that he was largely instrumental in breaking up the enemy's counter-attack. The enemy forced a retirement on our infantry, which he covered with his fire, although obliged to take up positions exposed to the enemy's fire and he finally withdrew his own guns with much ability and saving a great number of casualties by the skill with which he conducted the operation. His coolness and gallantry under very heavy fire were most conspicuous during the whole action."

Captain Jones is now under treatment at a French hospital suffering from influenza.

(On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1919 J T W James married Miss Maisie Williams, daughter of Stephen Williams Penybanc Ystradgynlais)

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**16th OCTOBER 1915**

**MARRIED: MORGAN DAVIES**

The marriage was held on Saturday morning, at Pontardawe Registry Office, between **Mr Morgan Davies** of Pentwynelen Farm Caehopkin and Miss Margaret James daughter of the late Mr David James and of Mrs James Caerlan.

**2nd NOVEMBER 1918**

**1st FOR COLBREN: MORGAN DAVIES**

We are glad to see amongst us this week **Private Morgan Davies** Welsh Regiment and son of the late Mr William Davies, Pentwynelen. Private Davies has been through all the recent heavy fighting and has been in France for four years. He has been awarded the Military Medal, and for his work as recently as last week in the taking of Guise, he has been recommended for the distinguished Medal. This is the first medal brought to Colbren, and all his friends feel proud of the distinction. It is intended to hold a presentation meeting for him on Saturday evening next.

**16th NOVEMBER 1918**

**MORGAN DAVIES**

At the Church Hall on Wednesday evening of last week a reception for **Private Morgan Davies** MM, son of the late Mr William Davies Pentwynelen Farm, took place. The chair was occupied by Alderman M W Morgan and the following took part: Solos Misses B Harries, L A Jones, Gwenna Jones, Sallie Jones, Aneurin Williams, Messrs Edgar Evans, Aneurin Donovan, W Donovan; recitations: Misses L Evans and J Watkins; pianoforte Miss J Watkins; penillion Mt Thomas Watkins.

**30th NOVEMBER 1918**

**YSTALYFERA: W C CHANNING**

The "London Gazette" Supplement of October 15<sup>th</sup>, records that **Corporal W C Channing**, Machine Gun Corps, has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field. The official record is as follows: "For great bravery west of Miraumont on August 22<sup>nd</sup> when the enemy attacked after two hours long bombardment, this N.C.O. managed his gun team with wonderful skill. He stood on the mount despite heavy machine gun and rifle fire, observing every movement of the enemy and directing the fire of his gun with deadly precision. Throughout the whole of the operations he set a splendid example of courage and



determination.” Corporal Channing is a son of Mr and Mrs Walter Channing, of Walsall House.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 1918**

**JOSEPH THOMAS**

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**Private Joseph Thomas**, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards, whose home is at Gough Road Ystalyfera, has been home on 14 days leave after being in France and Belgium for nearly a year, He has seen active service on the Somme, Ypres, Cambrai and Arras fronts and has been gassed twice – at Cambrai and Arras. Private Thomas met only two local boys during his stay in France and Belgium namely, **Private David Thomas** Gurnos Post Office and **Private Danny Weston** Cwmtwrch. He wishes to thank the local S and S Committee for the gift of money received. He left for France on Thursday night with the good wishes of his friends. It appears that he is the only Grenadier belonging to Ystalyfera.

**15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

**ALLS WELL**

A field card has been received from **Corporal J Thomas** (late of Gurnos) Grenadier Guards, who has been in the heavy fighting recently, stating that he is quite well and cheerful.

### **YSTALYFERA SOLDIER AND FRANCE'S DAY IN PARIS**

**3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**JOSEPH THOMAS**

Local readers and friends will be interested to learn that **Corporal Joseph Thomas**, of the Grenadier Guards, whose home is at 45 Gough Road, Ystalyfera, was one of a company of Grenadier Guards selected to represent the British Army at the Grand Revue, on France's memorable day of July 14th. Corporal Thomas says:

We arrived in Paris on Saturday, July 13th at 7 a.m., and were billeted at the Grand Palace, quite near the Champs Elysee, the most famous thoroughfare in Europe. Saturday was spent in sightseeing, and you may depend that after coming to Paris from the western front we fully appreciated the change. On Sunday, the day of the revue, we marched to our starting point, which was in the Bois de Boulogne, and we were allowed ten minutes rest before being inspected by M Poincare, the President, and M Clemenceau, the French Premier. After that we had a march through the principal boulevards of the city amid the cheers of thousands of Parisians. The whole city turned out to welcome us and a right royal welcome it was.

"Marching eight abreast the people afterwards told us that we presented a very soldierly appearance, and flowers were thrown at us in great profusion— but discipline forbade our decorating ourselves with them, much as we should have liked! That day I was proud to be a grenadier, and like my comrades I shall never forget it. The rest of the day and the whole of Monday was spent in sightseeing, despite the fact that the Hun was shelling the city with his long range gun”.

**23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

**LAST BATTLE: CORPORAL J THOMAS**

**Corporal J Thomas** of Gough Road Ystalyfera and of the Grenadier Guards, writing from France says,

“It may interest you and the readers of the “Llais” to know that I took part in what I believe, was the last battle of the war. We attacked Mauheuge at an early hour on the 11th inst. By 6 am we had taken all the forts and the town, and of course, by 11 o'clock the armistice was signed.”

**21<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 1918**

**JOSEPH THOMAS**

His friends will be proud to learn that **Corporal Joseph Thomas**, Grenadier Guards, whose home is at Gough Road, has been recommended for the Military Medal. The official intimation is as follows:

“For conspicuous courage and initiative throughout the battle between St. Python and Vertain, during the night attack on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1918. On one occasion his Platoon was held up by a machine gun, where up on he and another man (**Guardsmen G Smith**) at once

attacked and succeeded in putting the gun out of action, and taking the whole of the team prisoners, thereby enabling his platoon to continue and advance. This N.C.O. showed great courage and initiative throughout the advance.”

Corporal Thomas was in charge of a Lewis gun from August until the armistice was signed.

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## A CHARACTER OF YSTRADGYNLAIS

### GEORGE MAHOOD “PATSY”

**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**RECRUITING RETURNS**

Recruiting has been brisk at Ystradgynlais during the week. 21 young men having joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the SWB..... : including **George Mahood (Patsy)**

**17<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915**

**“PATSY” IN TROUBLE**

George Mahood (Patsy), of the SWB was charged with being drunk and disorderly in Commercial Street on Saturday, and with using obscene language to an army sergeant. The sergeant was not present, and Patsy demanded that he should appear. Patsy's proud boast was that he had been in the Army for a longer period than any other man in the world; he had served 24 years. He was ordered to rejoin his regiment without delay. On leaving the court Patsy produced a target, upon which many "bull's eyes" were marked, with the words "There's a good shot for you Sor, the best in the Army!"

**5<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**GEORGE MAYHOOD**

**Private George Mahood** SWB popularly known as “Patsy” has again re-appeared on leave despite the War Office “official” that he had “gone west”. At the Cinema on Monday evening, news was thrown on the screen and the cheering, whistling and shouting showed that “Patsy” would be acclaimed a local hero. Prior to joining he was very popular with the children.

We are in receipt of the following: 'Patsy' arrived at Ystradgynlais from France on Monday night on ten days' leave. Having got into the wrong train on several occasions, he was three days on the way, and reached Ystradgynlais in a very exhausted condition. Many friends offered to put him up, but he insisted on being taken to Mr Cartwright's (the photographer), where he was well attended to, and after a good rest, is now himself again and busy paying visits. 'Patsy' is without relatives or friends, except at Ystradgynlais, where he is always kindly treated. When he was granted leave, Ystradgynlais was at once his intended destination. He has been seventeen months at the front, taken part in several engagements, and had many narrow escapes. On one occasion a bomb dropped from aircraft fell a few feet from him, but fortunately did not explode, but as he says—he was born lucky!"

**20<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**PATSY: HOME TO YSTRADGYNLAIS**

**Private George Mahood**, of the SWB or to give him his popular appellation, - “**Patsy**”, has come home to Ystradgynlais on leave from France. Patsy is as bright and cheerful as ever and so keen is he on “strafing” Fritz that he did not want leave when it was offered him, but took it under much pressure from the comrades, who would otherwise be delayed in coming home. On one occasion Patsy was court martialled for going over the top before the order was given but was acquitted when he explained that he wanted to “have a go at the blighters.” He is looking forward to a good time.

**27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**PATSY ON LEAVE**

**Private George Mahood or "Patsy"** of the pre-war days, when he arrived at Ystradgynlais on Thursday morning last, dumped his full kit outside Mr Cartwright's studio. Patsy had been hospitably received by Mr and Mrs Cartwright on the occasion of his last visit, and felt that he was going home, Patsy, however, was only given about as much money as one with his generous shirt would spend in a day. He seriously contemplates returning at once to France, if the paymaster does not "dish out" something extra and if the beer in the Swansea Valley does not improve within the next few days.

**4<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1919**

**PATSY DEMOBILISED**

Private George Mahood (better known as "Patsy") has returned from France having been demobilised and is for the present staying with Mr Cartwright, photographer. Patsy has brought with him a splendid character from his captain and this also states that the field marshal commander in chief has awarded him the meritorious service medal for rescue work. Patsy has lived in Ystradgynlais for many years. He has been in France about three years and now that he has returned with such a good record it is hoped that he will, in due time, be given a suitable job here which will enable him to live happy.

**28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1919**

**YSTRADGYNLAIS: "PATSY" DECORATED**

For distinguished service and life-saving of men in a bathing parade during the summer of 1917, **Private George Mahood**, of the Labour Corps, formerly of the SWB and better known in the district as "**Patsy**," who follows the vocation of bricklayer's labourer, has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. From accounts published the decoration was well won by our old friend Patsy, as he was instrumental in saving a large number of British soldiers who were in difficulties in consequence of a heavy ground swell in the sea. Mahood very pluckily and at great risk went out time after time to bring back the men, and only desisted when he was physically overcome. He was rendered unconscious by his exertions. His acts were noticed and brought to the attention of superior authority, with the result that his services have been recognised. The medal carries with it a pension provided it is recommended by the man's commanding officer.

Many previous exploits of Patsy have been recalled in these columns and this is not the first occasion that he has rendered similar service as old readers will remember that during the great flood in Ystradgynlais 1913, when the river bank overflowed and Water Street was submerged Patsy waded and swam through the water in the street and carried the women and children and old men to the shelter of the Penybont Inn, where they were cared for, for several days by the late Mrs Mathias, although the Penybont Inn was under water and much damage was caused to beer, tobacco and cigars. Patsy conveyed a quantity of the damaged goods to his residence at Cwmbargoed Colliery, above "Tir Roger," where he had built himself a residence, and for months the tobacco and cigars were in evidence to the mortification of everyone with whom he came in contact.

On another occasion "Patsy" was in a public house at Abercrave. A miner with more money than sense challenged "Patsy" that he could not allow a squib used as a detonator of explosives, to be exploded, whilst holding it with his teeth "Sure" said 'Patsy' "I would hold a nine-point sivin fuse if ye'll pay for a gallon" The miner gave "Patsy" the squib and the arranged explosion took place, the result of which was that the victim was under the care of Dr Richards for two months and had to be fed on bread and milk and other slops for that period. As a result of this joke "Patsy" lost nine teeth.

"Patsy" is a strong swimmer, and takes to the water like a duck. He was standing on the Ystradgynlais Bridge when the Tawe was in full flood, and a bystander casually mentioned the fact that he did not think there was a single man in the district who would leap from the

bridge into the river. If ye'll pay for a pint I'll do it." said "Patsy". The bystander said he would, and without any more ceremony Private George Mayhood, late of the SWB jumped on to the rail of the bridge and plunged into the river and swam for several minutes against the current and under the bridge —and later he accompanied the crowd into the Ynisedwyn Arms.

"Patsy" is the greatest favourite of the children of the district, and whilst he has money there is nothing in life that gives him greater pleasure than to spend his earnings on sweets, etc., for the children. He was one of the first men in Ystradgynlais to join up as a volunteer and was about 50 years of age at the time, but gave his age as 37 when he enlisted. He is an old South African veteran, and served through the whole of the South African campaign with the Lancashire Fusiliers.

### 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1919

### PATSY'S ESCAPADES

Patsy, the flood hero, has repeatedly added to the history of Ystradgynlais but on Wednesday evening, all his previous escapades were easily out classed. Breathless and excited, Patsy rushed into the Post Office at 6.20, and casting a hurried glance at the clock, said, "Indade, Mister Morgan, Oi thought Oi'd miss my pension this time, shure enough. Oi've come from Ammanford in twenty minutes."

The question as to how he came over has not yet been solved. It is interesting to note in passing that Patsy has removed the "camouflage" from his upper lip.



THE SCENE SHOWS WATER STREET YSTRADGYNLAIS DURING THE FLOOD  
Flood water December 1911

A pre-1917 postcard Original photograph by W Cartwright  
Water Street houses demolished in late 1917

Postcard from Tim Barrell's collection and presented on the website of Alan Griffiths  
– **Old Ystradgynlais and District** –

Alan very kindly granted Yeargroup permission to reproduce it here

## LETTERS & POEMS

5<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917

EVERY SCRAP OF WASTE PAPER

As a result of the submarine warfare, no supplies of paper making materials have been received in this country for some weeks, and probably this state of affairs will continue indefinitely. The way in which the resultant shortage can be met is to convert waste paper into pulp.

The proprietor of "Llais Llafur" desires to appeal for ANY QUANTITY OF WASTE, for this purpose. Cardboard, scraps of white, coloured and brown papers, books, etc., will be paid for at the rate of 3s. 6d. per cwt. Small quantities as low as three pounds will be accepted at the Office of "Llais Llafur" on Saturday mornings up to 1 o'clock.

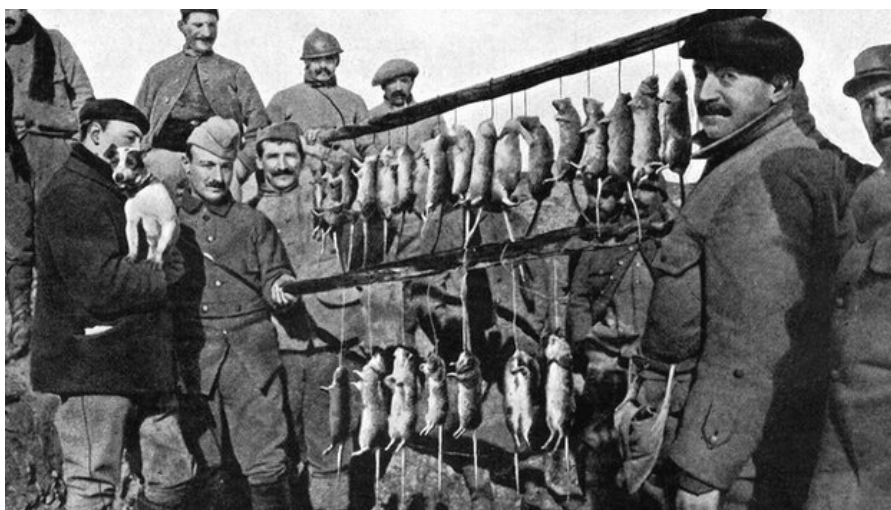
## FLEMISH TRENCH RATS FIERCE AND AS BIG AS RABBITS

1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 1916

FERRETS SUPPLIED

An Ashford (Kent) ferret dealer has, during the past few months, sent no fewer than 500 ferrets to the British troops in Flanders to assist in hunting out the hordes of rats which infest the trenches. Rat hunting has become quite a sport with the troops and owing to the abnormal demand for ferrets the price of these intrepid little fighters has risen in Ashford district from 1s to 5s each.

Soldiers returning from the trenches state that rats in Flanders sometimes attack men and are often as large as rabbits.



A little terrier dog shows off its catch after a 15 minute rat hunt in French trenches, September 1916  
Schools WWI (BBC Schools Pests)

15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916

RAT HUNTING IN THE TRENCHES

In a dispatch, from the French Army Headquarters, Mr H Warner Allen speaks of the efforts now being made by our Ally to make the winter lot of the men in the trenches a little more tolerable.

Not the least worrying of the smaller trench annoyances, says Mr Allen, is the matter of rats. Shelters and trenches no matter where they are made, whether in woods or open fields or on the mountain side, become immediately infested with the objectionable creatures. In one case within my own personal knowledge they drove a French officer out of a dug out into a damp and melancholy shelter which was to some extent protected from them by sheets of

corrugated iron. The plague had attained considerable dimensions before a really organised attempt was made to deal with it and there were many cases of rats actually biting men who were chasing them down the trenches.

Terriers have proved of considerable assistance. Trains full of dogs have been despatched to the front and poison has been fairly effective. Lately a reward has been offered for every dead rat brought in by the men in the trenches, and regular battles have been organised. In a single fortnight one army corps alone has disposed of no fewer than 8,000 rats. At a halfpenny a rat this has involved an expense of £16, and it was certainly money well spent. The sport of rat catching on such very advantageous terms has proved very popular among the men, who now suggest that the standing reward offered for the more dangerous and more exciting form of sport involved in the capture of a German machine-gun should be raised to a higher figure.

### **FORMER YSTALYFERA MAN WOUNDED IS CAPTURED AND ESCAPES**

**17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1914**

**T HUDSON**

**Private T Hodson**, who was for some time working at one of the Ystalyfera collieries, and was a prominent member of the R.A.O.B., was an army reservist, called up at the outbreak of war, and has since written the following letter to Mr and Mrs W L Gould, of the Ystalyfera Hotel. In the course of his communication, Mr. Hodson says:

"I have been at the front nearly the whole time, and managed by the mercy of God to escape injury, although I have seen hundreds die. Yes, I managed to escape up to the dawn of the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, when I was shot in the back and shoulders, and taken a prisoner by the Germans. I remained with them four days and whilst they were away for a few hours I managed to crawl away through a wood for nearly a mile, when I came across Prince Maurice of Battenburg and a sentry post of the 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles. I stayed with them till dawn, and then came down country on a stretcher and now I am in hospital at Lincoln awaiting an operation or something of that sort. I have been under the X-rays but have not heard the result.

### **LETTERS FROM YSTRADGYNLAIS MAN AT THE FRONT**

**13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1915**

**COAL BOX AVENUE: T M JONES**

We have had an opportunity of seeing two interesting letters which have been received in Ystradgynlais during the past week, one from **Private T M Jones**, Machine Gun Section of the Welsh Regiment, son of Mr and Mrs Jones, of Temperance Buildings, Oddfellows Street Ystradgynlais. As previously stated Private Jones went out with his regiment at the outbreak of war and has been on active service ever since. We understand that at the commencement, Private Jones' Battalion numbered 1,500 men but that now there are not more than twelve left.

In one letter to Mr T J Rees, hosier and outfitter, Gough Buildings, Mr Jones says:

"A man's life is not worth two pence whilst the shot and shells are screaming overhead. As we sit in the dugout nick named "Coal-box Avenue," we consider it paradise when night falls. The only thing that troubles Tommy there is the cold: but we are accustomed to it. We don't in the least, mind "Froggies" country. We get enough firewood which we collect from all the old buildings which have been struck down by the heavy shells. A German big shell weighs about 90 lbs. Fancy one of them hitting a poor chap! No doubt the Huns are a crafty lot of people, but I believe they are done. This war will soon end, and peace reign once more; but mind I am not down hearted, because I've had six months of it so I can't grouse can I? If I could only send you a diary about this I would with pleasure, but we are not allowed to say much. We have a chap here that was in the South African war and he says it was only a picnic to this one."

**SEVENTEEN DAYS IN THE TRENCHES** In a further letter to Mr Rees Meth Evans, 38 Gough Buildings, Ystradgynlais, **Private Jones** after gratefully acknowledging a gift from

his friend, says.

“Everything here is nip and run. Of course, I am not downhearted, but seeing the same thing day after day makes you feel a little miserable sometimes. Well a lot is said about the Brecknocks going to Aden, and I hear they complain of the weather being warm (Oh lor!), we’ve been up to our waists in water so you can guess how one feels after staying 17 days in “Coal-box Avenue,” but I don’t mind as long as I am in the best of health and good spirits. I am quite content with the “Froggies” country, although the sooner this war is over the better I shall like it. No doubt it has made a lot of difference to Ystradgynlais in colliery and public house life. I suppose all the boys go to bed early, and be snug beneath the blankets. We are the same,—I don’t think!

But there it’s all in the game. Believe me you should see the Germans run when our artillery lay their guns on them, but all the same they are the biggest lot of brazen beggars I ever saw. When we take a pot shot at them, then they have the sauce to raise their shovels up and signal what we have done. Well John asked me in his letter if I had seen Lewis Evans (“Becca”). To tell the truth I have seen him about once since he came to France. Nearly all the boys that came out here from my home are returning wounded or frostbitten. For instance one poor Sergeant of our Regiment has got to have both his feet amputated but we have got all troubles of our own, so it’s every man for his self now. And Will, my cousin, is at the base. I don’t know what has happened to him.

**15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1915**

**EVAN JONES**

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Mrs E Jones of Glannant Terrace received a long letter from her son **Private Evan Jones** a few weeks ago. He immigrated to Australia eight years ago and his mother heard nothing of him until he wrote home stating that he had been with the Anzacs in the Dardanelles campaign. He describes the famous landing and goes on to state that though he escaped being hit, he has been in hospital suffering from rheumatism. The next message Mrs Jones received was from the Military Authorities on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, stating that Private Jones had been removed to hospital at Tel-el-Keibr with rheumatism. She has had a further communication to the effect that he has recovered sufficiently to rejoin his regiment.

**17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**EVAN and HIS BROTHERS**

Three brothers **Sappers William H Jones** and **Thomas Jones**, both of the Royal Engineers and **Private John Jones** South Wales Borderers, were granted leave recently and visited their mother, Mrs Elizabeth Jones, Glannant Terrace, at the same time. The last named is now undergoing treatment at Glanrhyd Hospital Pontardawe, after having been wounded and another brother, **Private Evan Jones**, of the Australian Forces, is now in France.

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### **SIGHTS TO MAKE THE BLOOD RUN COLD**

**1<sup>st</sup> MAY 1915**

**HUGH BARKER**

**Gunner H Barker**, of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Staff, 7<sup>th</sup> Division of the Royal Field Artillery, who will be remembered by many Ystradgynlais readers as the former assistant to Mr A Webb, dentist, has been out at the front since the commencement of the war, and a letter has just been received from him by Mrs D Phillips, Pantycelyn, Brecon Road, where Mr Barker resided for about three years prior to leaving the district. In the course of his letter, Gunner Barker says:

“I have taken part in many battles, but the worst time I had was for three weeks at the battle of Ypres in Belgium. It was awful, but you have probably read in the papers how last October and November the British held their own against overwhelming odds, and how the 7<sup>th</sup> division won immortal fame for the same thing. How I was not killed a dozen times a day during those terrible weeks I cannot say, but I was lucky enough, to come out of it without a scratch. The sights I saw would make your blood run cold. The Germans have burnt all the

villages, and destroyed every church, and almost every building is a mass of ruins. I am no longer in Belgium now, but in France. However, we are quite near the frontier. The 7<sup>th</sup> division was again in the thick of it at Neuve Chappelle last month. This is a terrible war, but we are all confident of victory in the end. Germany's fate is sealed, but it will be a terrible struggle before peace is signed. Yet we have to see the matter through, because we are fighting for liberty of nations, and for our very national safety against tyranny and oppression, as well as against that horde of barbarians who are now ravaging a part of France, and nearly the whole of Belgium. I think that the day of reckoning is not far off. There are thousands of Welshmen out here and I hear the language spoken almost daily. It is wonderful how this war has brought the Empire together, and what a contented crowd we are,—men from all parts of the world, Canadians, Indians, Arabs, etc., and we are all united with the same fixed idea.”

#### INTERESTING LETTER FROM YSTRADGYNLAIS SOLDIER

1<sup>st</sup> JULY 1916

HUGH BARKER

"For he today that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition:  
And gentlemen in England now a-bed  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here  
And hold their man hoods cheap while any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day"

The above very appropriate quotation from Shakespeare's Henry V has been sent by **Private Hugh Barker** from the trenches, as contribution to the album of an Ystradgynlais young lady, Miss Maria Phillips. Pantycelyn, Brynawel, with whose parents Private Barker lodged when he lived at Ystradgynlais. The gallant soldier will be remembered as a canvasser for Mr Alfred Webb, the dentist. The quotation was embodied in a letter, so interesting that we are pleased to reproduce it:

“I am writing this in my dug-out by candle light, and as I am only about two miles from the Huns' first line of trenches the roar of the guns and the bursting of shells shake the wide earth around, as if an earthquake was in progress. All this, combined with rifle fire, trench mortars, and the 'tic-tac' of machine guns, spoil the harmony of what would be a beautiful night - the first one we have had lately, because we have had wet weather for the last few weeks. The flash of the guns and the 'star lights' illuminate the sky in a manner which has to be seen to be realised. The strange thing is how one gets used even to the horrors of war. All this does not worry us, for we have got into the way of taking it as part of our life, and we go about our duties with the calm confidence that this war will not last forever, and that victory is in front of us. I shall be pleased to see you all again after the war is over, if I have the luck to see it through. So far I have not had a day's illness, which is good, considering that I have been here almost from the beginning of the war.

I am proud to say I am one of poor Kitchener's first 10,000 volunteers and that I formed part of the original British Expeditionary Force which the Kaiser referred to as 'That contemptible little army' and which since those days has grown into such a formidable fighting force that he probably realises now the wisdom of Napoleon's maxim of war - 'Never underrate your enemy's fighting capacities, no matter how small he is.'"

Although I have met thousands of Welshmen out here, I have only come across one I used to know, and he was from Merthyr Tydfil. I am sending a few wild flowers which I gathered the other day near a place where many brave men have been buried. You will notice that their colours are those of the Allies the flag of freedom. I shall send you a Rosary as soon as I have an opportunity to get one.”





**Cann**, of the 10<sup>th</sup> Canadians, when shells began to burst all round, and clouds of poisonous gas rolled up. Private Cann was badly wounded by a shell but went on fighting until he was bowled over by the gases. In his own words he was "well gassed and wounded, practically to death, lying helpless and alone, when Private W J Davies, braving the gas, rushed up amid a storm of shot, shell, and fumes, and carried him bodily on his back to an old farmhouse used as a Red Cross dressing station. The medical officer there had partly dressed Private Cann's wound when the enemy directed a heavy shell fire upon the farmhouse. It caught alight. Private Cann was still lying helpless, when Private Davies, seeing it would soon be burned to the ground, seized Cann again, and bore him away from the building to the Red Cross dressing station in the next village, fully 700 yards distant. Private Cann was then dressed by another medical officer and passed on to a place of safety.

Private Davies, picking up part of the kit of a dead soldier, went back and joined again in the battle. Later, however, he himself was seriously wounded and sent back to England. By a remarkable coincidence he was sent to Exeter Hospital, there to meet Private Cann. "That's the man who saved me!—that's the man who carried me through hell to life," exclaimed the gallant Canadian upon first seeing his rescuer.

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**W J DAVIES**

Another local soldier who has been accorded a particularly hearty welcome is **Private W J Davies**, who has been staying with his sister and brother-in-law, Mr and Mrs Tom Lewis, Alltygrug Road. Private Davies is in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and has been out in France and Belgium for many months, during which time he made the brave rescue referred to in a recent issue of the "Llais." Private Davies was wounded about a month after receiving a nasty bayonet wound in his left arm, and also a bullet wound, in the same arm. He is now recovering rapidly and returns to his regiment to-morrow, (Saturday).

It was at the second battle of Ypres that Private Davies received the bayonet wound, and his account of the manner in which he got it is interesting. The enemy had subjected the English trenches to a fierce artillery fire, and a shell landed on the parapet right in front of Private Davies position, completely covering him with earth. He succeeded in extricating himself, and by this time the enemy were advancing in strong force His own particular spot of trench being filled, he had to seek cover the best he could, and now the Germans were on top of them, lunging and shooting. Davies' immediate opponent was quite a young lad, and feeling a spasm of pity for the youngster, he hesitated an instant in the attack,—and his generous instinct nearly cost him his life, for a huge soldier of the Prussian Guards made a furious lunge, which Davies side-stepped, but not in time to save his arm. With the help of a comrade he later bound up the wound, and kept on fighting intermittently throughout that day, (Saturday) Saturday night and the whole of Sunday. Just about sunset on Sunday evening, feeling wearied, he stretched out his wounded arm, to ease it, when— plop it fell to his side, and later it was found that the bone of the fore-arm was broken in two places.

There is every reason to believe that Private Davies will receive some recognition of his brave action in rescuing the wounded Canadian.

**25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**COUSIN OF: W J DAVIES**

Private W J Davies of Cyfyng Road Ystalyfera son of Mr William Davies is in the Royal Field Artillery stationed at Bedford and was home on leave last week looking remarkably well. He has a brother **Private Alwyn Davies (Killed 1917)** who is with the Brecknocks at Milford Haven and his cousin **Private W J Davies** of the Kings Own Light Infantry, who was recently wounded and came home on a visit, has now gone back to France.

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## GRAPHIC ACCOUNT BY AN OFFICER of 6<sup>th</sup> WELSH

17<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915

### SCREAMING "COAL BOXES"

An officer of the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh Regiment, Lord Ninian Stuart's battalion, which has recently been in the trenches, sends the following descriptive account of his experiences in the firing line "We have just returned from the front line trenches. The Germans were only 50 yards away from us. We had what we call a fairly peaceful time. The rifle fire was rather fresh at night, but the shelling by day was mild. We had a few over at breakfast time, and some six 'coal-boxes' dropped at tea time. So you see we are provided with music during meals. These 'coal-boxes' give you any amount of warning, as you can hear them screaming through the air before they explode. When the 'screaming' announces the coming of the shell everyone ducks, and then, after the explosion, we look for the damage. It was most interesting and fascinating during the whole show. At night star shells are continually being sent up, and these make the surrounding country as light as day. The men were perfectly splendid, and treated the performance just as if it were a birthday party. I am now completely happy because everything is so real, just what one has read about and seen in pictures.

The march up to the trenches is a magnificent experience. One passes through ruined villages and as you near the line you encounter troops held in reserve. The firing becomes much louder, and you can see the flash of the big guns right along the line on both your flanks, and star shells innumerable going up. Then you get into your communication trench and twist about a mile with bullets singing overhead, eventually reaching your line of trenches, which are quite comfortable and safe. Of course, we cook in them and live well. So we are quite happy.

This is a man's game, and the only place worth being at while this show is on. We are the only Territorial battalion in our brigade. Of course we are all proud of being put in with the Regulars, as it is a huge compliment when there are so many Territorial Divisions that we could have been pushed into. I was talking to the brigade major just before we came up here and he said our men were magnificent, and that we were one of the finest and best battalions that had passed through their hands. That is something to be proud of and it is very comforting to us all.

7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915

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W A JONES

The Rev W Jones, Zoar, has had an interesting letter this week from his son, **Private W A Jones**, of the 11<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters Staffordshire, R.F.A., who is with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt. Writing under date July 24<sup>th</sup>, Private Jones, (who before joining the colours was in a Porth grocery establishment), says he is "safe and sound, in good health and quite happy and contented. The weather is very hot but we are getting accustomed to it now.

30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915

### SIGHTSEEING: W A JONES

**Private W A Jones**, son of the Rev William Jones (Zoar), is with the British Expeditionary Force in Egypt, and has recently sent home a very interesting letter detailing his experiences there. He says:

"I have had the pleasure of seeing the Pyramids since I wrote home last. Although we are miles away from them, a cheap trip (costing 10s. 6d.) was made up in order to give us an opportunity of seeing them. I saw the Sphinx, the Pyramids, Temple of the Sphinx, Mosques, the place where Moses is supposed to have been found on the banks of the Nile in the bull rushes, and that ancient part of Cairo commonly called "The City of the Dead," or "The Tombs of the Khalifi." Inside the Pyramids are the tombs of the ancient Pharaohs of Egypt, there being a place for the queen, and a place for the king. Entrance to the Pyramids is affected at the side; the visit being made in stockinged feet otherwise there would be great danger of slipping whilst following the guides. There is nothing much to see inside except the

large empty tombs. Ancient Cairo, or the City of the Dead, is comprised mostly of ruined houses, and what I suppose must have been an old burial ground. We had a ride on the camels, and I can assure you I thoroughly enjoyed it. Private Jones has got some very interesting souvenirs of his visit, which he hopes to send home shortly.

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**TWO B. A.'s ENLIST: JEFFREYS and REES**

Among recent enlistments from Ystradgynlais have been **ex-Lieutenant Dan Jeffreys**, B.A., Gough-buildings, and **Mr J D Rees**, B.A., son of Mr John Rees, Ty Brychan, both of whom have joined the R.A.M.C. as privates, and went away at the beginning of the week. They have offered themselves for general service. Mr Jeffreys and Mr. Rees are well known and popular residents and we wish them all success in their patriotic service.

#### **DESCRIPTIVE LETTER FROM SERGEANT DAN JEFFREYS**

**15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

**YSTRADGYNLAIS BOYS IN FRANCE**

We are always pleased to receive letters from local boys who are "doing their bit" on active service, and this week we are sure our readers will be glad to read the following interesting communication which has come to hand from **Private Dan Jeffreys**, of Ystradgynlais, who is with the R.A.M.C. in France:

"We left England towards the end of January; sailed from a certain port, arrived safely at another certain famous port, tarried there two days in a rest camp—called a rest camp because getting to it involved a fair mile march up hill, and of course, after arriving, the rest came naturally. On a Sunday afternoon we left this port in a train containing a number of vans. On each van was the sign- "Hommes 40; Chevaux 8." I was a "hre," and with companions in one van, who grew blasphemous in ratio to the train's speed, proceeded to the unknown region. We travelled all night and I woke up next morning as the train passed through ----. All got out at a place near General Headquarters, and marched six miles to our first French billet-famous chiefly for fresh eggs and "ancient and fishlike smells." From there, after a tea and days' stay, we started for the front, travelling by very easy stages. A week in one place in charge of a large bathhouse (where in the alliterative epigram of one of my fellow countrymen), we Bathed Buggy Bantams

Still moving up the line we ran a (scabies) hospital for 10 days, and left this sphere of labour with manifest traces of unadulterated delight. Came on to more interesting work at a general hospital, and from there reached-about 10 days ago the last stage-up with the war zone at the advance dressing station. A section of our ambulance was sent some weeks ago for instructural purposes to another field ambulance. They came back loud in their praises, for they had been with a "Welsh" ambulance, the members of which, with true Celtic generosity, had given them a rattling good time. When they told me that they had been with Welshmen I was naturally nettled that an "anti-fat" course which I attended had prevented me from going. My vexation, however, was increased a thousand fold when told that some of the boys knew me and had kindly inquired after me: They were **Dai Watkins** and **D J Davies**, the latter a fellow-student at Ystrad County in the glorious pre-Maesydderwen days. Their many friends will be pleased to hear that these boys are doing well out here, are quite fit and ever keen: Life in the advanced dressing station is by no means a picnic, although we have diverting incidents to keep us from becoming prematurely blasé. For five days last week I lived in a damp dug-out, an adequate shelter, and when you had said that all its good parts had been exhausted. The bearers carried the wounded, or rather wheeled them from the aid posts to the A.D.S., where they were dressed and dispatched by motor ambulance down to the main dressing station. It was part of my day's work to relieve the bearers at the aid posts. This was done by day because the road was not particularly exposed. Nevertheless an occasional ping proved that it was not such a desirable highway as rumour maintained.

This week I am still at the “advance,” but on another part of the line. Life is one big study in contrast out here, for whereas last week I lay on damp boards with a shivering, voluble companion by my side, doing my best not to see large companionable rats, and vainly seeking what Shakespeare calls “The death of each day’s life,” this week Sergeant H- and myself occupy a large airy room in a French mansion, sleeping in nice beds, my first bed, by the way, since I left England, having my kit in a wardrobe, and actually eat my food at a real table! I heard the other day that the German Crown Prince lived here for three days when the Allemandes were in possession, but believe me that disturbing fact by no means detracts from the comfort of the bed.

Our men are posted by night here, and I have had some uncanny experiences. We go up the aid posts on cars which carry no lights; past the gaunt ruins of what was once a fine church. The bare walls—a lasting tribute to German Kultur – occasionally lit up by star shells make one imagine that the ruins are those of some old English monastery lit up by the pale beams of the moon. Day’s lightsome beams certainly “gilds but to flout these ruins gray.” On past the church, the rain in our faces, the driver by avoiding shell-holes, up through this town of the dead into the wind-swept glen, desolate, uncultivated spaces known as the “Front.” At times we go dead slow for we pass long, silent files of men coming from and going to the trenches. You have an impression of big packs, the silent click of the equipment with each step—not a single word passed – a very epic of silence. Star shells burst and the Red Cross on the car seems to spell blood – all is darkness, Stygian darkness and waste.

We reach the aid post, relieve the bearers, and start for “home.” This time with a different load –a load of maimed bleeding men, who groan every time the car bumps, and wonderfully good though the springs are, bumps are numerous. Back through the silent ghostly town, reaching the A.D.S. before midnight, then a gleam of light, stretchers are tenderly lowered, the warm hospital and barns inviting, wounds are dressed, the serious cases sent on – tired, but somehow wondering how the bullet which hit the car found no billet – we turn in, and another day’s work is done, another little bit accomplished.

Ever near the realities, close to the primeval, in touch with the fundamental, the R.A.M.C. “carries on.” We have our sad moments—when a noble young fellow in spite of all medical skill can accomplish, “goes west”. We have our gay moments when a man with a “cushy,” flesh wound, curses his ill-luck (sic) because his wound is not serious enough to take him to Blighty! We have also our moments of compensation when a wounded Tommy, thankful for any slight services rendered, gratefully murmurs “Thanks old chap. How much easier—and I always thought R.A.M.C. blokes were awful blighters!”

Sergeant Dan Jeffreys,  
R A M C Somewhere in France

#### **8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1919**

#### **SILVER MEDAL: DAN JEFFREYS**

**Staff Sergeant Dan Jeffreys**, B.A., of the R.A.M.C., son of Mr and Mrs Owen D Jeffreys, Argoed, has now appeared in the New Year’s Honours List, where it is recorded he has won the Meritorious Service Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty during last summer. He has previously been mentioned in dispatches, for which he received a certificate bearing the signature of the King, and has been awarded the Military Medal. Sergeant Jeffreys was expecting demobilization, but was stricken, with influenza, and instead of being sent home was moved forward with his division to the Rhine.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1914**

#### **EMLYN HOPKIN**

**Mr Emlyn Hopkin**, assistant master at the Godre’rgraig Council School and son of Mr David Hopkin, late of Alltygrug, being a member of the Officers Training Corps, has accepted a commission in Lord Kitchener’s Army.

**17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1914**

**LEAVING: EMLYN HOPKIN**

There were enthusiastic scenes at the Godre'rgraig Council Schools on Friday afternoon, when Mr Emlyn Hopkin BA, certified assistant, who is leaving to take up a lieutenancy in the Royal Field Artillery, had a rousing send off. The children were assembled in the central hall and Mr Davies head teacher, on behalf of the staff, made Mr Hopkin a present of a wrist band watch. Patriotic songs were sung with fervour and enthusiasm and Mr Hopkin left the school to the strains of "For he's a jolly good fellow" and ringing cheers from the children. Mr Hopkin left for Dublin on Wednesday.

**YSTALYFERA OFFICER IN GALLIPOLI**

**9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**HOW THE TURKS RALLIED: EMLYN HOPKIN**

An interesting letter has been received by a local resident, from **Lieutenant Emlyn Hopkin**, of Ystalyfera, who is with the Royal Field Artillery in the Dardanelles. Lieutenant Hopkin, who until the outbreak of war was a teacher at the Godre'rgraig Schools, is a son of Mr David Hopkin, now of Llandovery, but formerly of Gilfach-yr-Haidd Farm, Alltygrug Ystalyfera. He writes:

"I was at Cairo in Egypt, until some weeks ago, but since then I have moved much over land and sea, until now for some considerable period I have found myself in a place where death is with us every day, and is supreme over all. I am delighted to say that our division has acquitted itself very well, although casualties in some branches have been somewhat severe. Our artillery however, has escaped so far almost unscathed but we hope soon to contribute more than ever to the sound of destruction that is always raging around us. I can give nothing more than this statement of our fortunes in war for all ranks are enjoined to remain most secretive in all matters military, but I may say that we hope to realise our highest Gallipolean wishes ere Christmas is with us. To me the last three weeks have been somewhat disappointing, for the end of last month seemed to show signs of a complete severance of the main Turkish army from the line of communication. But they rallied with courage and tenacity, and will, I expect, put up a bold fight for many weeks yet."

**AN APPEAL**

**FOR PAPERS AND MAGAZINES**

Continuing, Lieutenant Hopkin speaks of the life of the troops in Gallipoli, and makes a strong appeal for papers and magazines. He says send all the magazines you can lay your hands on—decent and modern. I don't want you to buy up anything—simply tell our friends of my need and the need of the men under my command. I am sure you will be able to supply my wishes. (Mr George E Chappell, Wern, will supply Lieutenant Hopkins' address to those desirous of responding to this appeal).

Lieutenant Hopkins goes on:

"The weather is beautiful here just now, but the heavy rains are expected in a week or so. I am already draining my dug-out, but I may have to make another sooner than I expect. The land around is very sandy, and is remarkable for its barrenness—absence of vegetation, etc. It is difficult to discover how the cattle and sheep manage to find grazing material on this baked portion of the earth."

**30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**BROTHER JOINS COLOURS**

Mr Ieuan Hopkin, brother of Lieutenant Emlyn Hopkin, late of Godre'rgraig, has left Swansea to join the Naval Division. He is now stationed at the Crystal Palace in London.

**YSTALYFERA ARTILLARY MAN IN THE BALKANS**

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**EMLYN HOPKIN**

Mr G E Chapell Ystalyfera, has received an interesting letter from **Lieutenant Emlyn Hopkin**, son of Mr and Mrs David Hopkin, late of Gilfach yr aidd Farm, Ystalyfera, who

until recently was on active service in the Dardanelles campaign. Lieutenant Hopkins writes: "I am writing you these few hurried lines when resting on the lines of march and my first words to you are those of sincere thanks for letters, papers, and cigarettes that have reached me from your address.

You will be surprised to hear that we have left the regions of the Dardanelles and are now on our way to fight a new enemy, with whom we shall, in all probability, be in deadly conflict by the time this letter reaches you.

I am not sorry to leave the territory of our friends the Turks, for it had of late weeks become congested, and it was somewhat difficult at time for our guns to operate with all their effectiveness. Although we were constantly in danger of being shelled we could not always bring effective fire to bear upon the enemy. What is needed, and what I believe they have now provided at the peninsula, are guns of high angle fire. The Turk is quite a sport in his way, and can always be trusted to fight a clean fight. He does not by any means love his German ally, and is fully aware that defeat to him is only a matter of time. He is now fighting on high mountains, which if manned by British troops could be made impregnable for all time. These are the difficulties that our troops have had to meet, and are still meeting in that quarter. The infantry of our division with rare courage and dash did actually scale these precipitous heights, but failing to consolidate themselves, were obliged to retire to safer positions.

We are now proceeding towards a new area, and I feel as I always felt before a football match that we are going to win. The climate is much like that of Britain, but perhaps a little more extreme in character. To-day it is summery, tomorrow it will be winter again. One does not know what the day will bring forth; whether warm sun or the cold rain, and when it does rain, it leaves nobody in any doubt. It brings with it too, thunder and the lightning, and it is then that I remark to our doctor who is also a Welshman—"Mae'n diswyl yn debyg i wlaw, doctor," and his unchanging reply is "Debyg iawn, Hopkins bach, debyg iawn. j

In a postscript, Lieutenant Hopkin continues on November 5<sup>th</sup>:

We are now encamped right in the heart of a mountainous district. I believe we are the first English troops to reach this point, but we are moving in a few days after adjusting our guns and making certain internal rearrangements. I am glad to say that we are all full of fight and in excellent spirits. Don't be surprised if you see us coming home from the direction of the Rhine some fine morning.

*Mr G E Chappell begs to acknowledge the receipt of a large number of magazines and other periodicals including a huge bundle from the Godre'rgraig School children (where Lieutenant Hopkin was master prior to joining the colours), per Mr W T Clew. Three parcels have already been sent to Lieutenant Hopkin.*

#### **18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

#### **RETREAT IN SERBIA**

The retreat of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division of the British Army in Serbia has interest for this locality, for **Lieutenant Emlyn Hopkins** was doubtless in this retreat, if not in command of the abandoned guns. We shall look forward with interest to hearing again from Lieutenant Hopkins.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

#### **EMLYN HOPKIN**

There are Ystalyfera boys in every force on the fighting fronts. **Lieutenant Emlyn Hopkin BA** serving with the RFA, with the Salonica Expeditionary Force, writes to say that it is terribly hot there. It is often 100 degrees in the shade, making fighting and working impossible for the greater part of the day. Our men there are looking forward to cooler weather when they can make it hotter for the Bulgars and Turks.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

#### **GODRE'RGRAIG VISIT**

**Captain Emlyn Hopkin** visited Godre'rgraig School on Tuesday last, where he was on the staff prior to joining H M Forces. Before returning to this country he was stationed at Salonica. He joined up in September 1914. He looks fit and well although he has been laid up

for a time with malaria fever. He had taken part in the Dardanelles fighting.

#### **27<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1919**

**Captain Emlyn Hopkin** formerly of the RFA, who has seen service at Salonica, is on a visit to Ystalyfera.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

#### **THOMAS HENRY BOWEN**

Mr and Mrs Henry Bowen of 59 Gough Road have this week received a very interesting letter from their son, **Private Tom Bowen**, who is serving with the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh in France. In the course of his communication, Private Bowen says

"Our battalion has been very lucky since we've been out here. Only about five or six have been killed, and seven or eight wounded, out of 900 men. The trench we are now in is the one where **Sergeant O'Leary** won his Victoria Cross.

**Private John David Lewis** (another Ystalyfera soldier) is also in the trenches by us. He is in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and is from Clee's Lane. I hear the colliers are coming out on strike again, but I hope they won't."

#### **15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916**

Another local soldier home this week on furlough is **Private Tom Henry Bowen** of Gough Road, who has been in the firing line in Flanders for a considerable time. We wish him a pleasant holiday, which we are sure, is well earned. Private Bowen is attached to the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh.

#### **27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**Sergeant Tom Henry Bowen**, son of Mr and Mrs Henry Bowen Gough Road, who has been training as a musketry instructor and who is now returning to France, has been home on leave.

#### **28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1919**

#### **WEDDING: T H BOWEN**

At Calfaria Chapel, Clydach, on Saturday morning, the wedding took place of Mr Tom Henry Bowen, son of Mr Henry Bowen, of Gough Road, to Miss Rachel Cope, daughter of Mr and Mrs John Cope, of 47, Alltygrug Road. The bride, attired in a tailor-made navy blue costume with hat of grey georgette, was given away by her father. Miss Carrie Cope, sister of the bride, was bridesmaid, and she wore a tailor-made costume of blue. The best man was Mr Dick Richards. The Revs W Jones (Zoar), and Valentine Evans, Clydach, officiated. After the ceremony the party returned to the home of the bride's parents, where some 50 guests assembled. The bride groom is an ex service man, having seen some 4 and a half years service in France with the 5<sup>th</sup> South Wales Borderers.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

#### **GEORGE MILLICHIP**

**Lance Corporal George Millichip**, late sheet-man at Gurnos Midland Railway siding, has sent an interesting letter this week to his landlady, Mrs Davies, of Glan-yr-Ysgol, Penywnen Road. After enquiring for his many friends in Ystalyfera, he says—

"No doubt you will be surprised to know that I have been wounded; I am all right again now, but though it was only a slight wound, it was an experience I shall never forget. On the night of October 12<sup>th</sup>, the Sergeant asked me and another Lance Corporal to take a party of men to repair the barbed wire in front of the trench. Everything seemed very quiet, only a few snipers firing now and then and we worked hard for about a quarter of an hour, when all of a sudden, the Germans sent up a search light. Although we all dropped on our faces immediately, they had seen us, for they shouted, "Come on, Shropshires," and opened fire on us with a machine gun. I felt a sudden stinging pain in my side and spent a terrible few minutes, which seemed like hours. As soon as the firing ceased, I got back into the trench again, and the Sergeant bandaged me and sent me off to the dressing station. The next day there was a bombardment on our front, and our artillery gave the Germans something to go on with; though we had very



few casualties that day."

We are glad to know that Lance Corporal Millichip's wound was not serious, and hope he will manage to escape a repetition of the unpleasant experience.

## ----- **WORK OF THE MEDICAL CORPS**

### **11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

A R.A.M.C. man gives some idea of the dangers and difficulties under which the work of the Medical Corps is carried on.

"I have had," he says, "scores of narrow escapes. Twice I was in advanced dressing stations just alongside the trenches which were blown down, and for months night after night had to go out collecting the wounded or with burial parties in the dead of night, shells coming around us from all directions and being pestered by snipers. The latter are what stretcher bearers are always pestered with. At times I have seen them brought down from tree tops by our men. On a few occasions we have been out collecting wounded in the day time. Of course, that happens when our men have made an advance.

"Those times we have Germans to pick up also. I have nursed a good many of them, officers and men. We bearers have had to carry the wounded over two miles as the roads have been so bad the wagons could not get nearer. Night after night, week after week, we carried wounded on stretchers up to our waists in water and mud in places, and clearing our way through woods and fields which were in an awful condition owing to so much rain. We have been shelled out of four hospitals. The last time the shell came into the night orderlies' tent, killing four and wounding two. Still, we have not left, and are hanging on to the same place.

"We have also had air raids on our hospital. One dropped quite near me, and knocked all the windows out and a wall down. I was only about eight yards away. It gave me a proper shaking up and I was covered with earth. A R.A.M.C.'s life is not all honey."

### **25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

#### **JOHN C JAMES**

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**Private John C James** of the Royal Engineers, another Cwmtwrch soldier and a brother in law to Mr W D Rees (Craigtredeg) sends an interesting communication from the trenches. Private James is well and happy although he is more often than not "up to his half in mud". He says they undergo much danger every day in trench and billet. The artillery on both sides is very busy and the roar of the guns is loud and long. The trenches at present, through the wet weather are in an awful state, and the Engineers have their work "cut out" to keep them in condition for the infantry.

Proceeding, Private James says: "We had 'some' fright last Saturday, when the German artillery shelled us out of our billets. We had to take shelter in the collar of a brewery opposite our billet just across the road. We had to stop there an hour and a half, then when we got out we saw a large linen factory on fire; we got our pumps and saved nearly all the expensive machinery, although the biggest part of the building itself was destroyed."

Private James wishes to be remembered to all his friends at the Cwm.

### **25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

#### **ALBERT WILLIAMS**

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**Mr Albert Williams**, son of Mr and Mrs T J Williams, of the Garden Cottages, Gurnos, has been summoned to London in connection with his application to join the Aerial Service. Mr Williams, who works at the Yniscedwyn Foundry, has made several attempts to join the service previously, and we hope he has been successful this time.

### **30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

#### **SURRENDER OF FLEET BY AIR MECHANIC**

**Mechanic Albert Williams**, R.A.F. attached to the Grand Fleet, writes a letter of considerable interest to his parents, Mr and Mrs T J Williams, Gerddi, Gurnos, in which he



thoroughly enjoyed, which was as follows Pianoforte solo Master Cledwyn Lloyd Powell; solo, Miss Laing; violin solo, Master Cyril Gape; solo Mr Richard Williams; violin solo, Llew. Williams, (Ystradgynlais). Private Griffiths was then presented by Mr R W Hopkins (deacon) on behalf of the church, and with a cheque by Mr Tom Morgan on behalf of the Soldiers and Sailors Fund.

Mr Joseph Griffiths presented **Mr Alfred Counsel**, a discharged soldier with a cheque on behalf of the S. and S. Bardic effusions were read by Messrs. Abraham Phillips (Cwmtwrch), and W J Hopkins. The programme was then proceeded with and a pianoforte solo was given by Miss Ceinwen Lloyd; solo by Miss Laing; violin solo, Master Cyril Gape; recitation, Mr Abraham Philips; solo Mr Richard Williams; violin solo, Mr Llew Williams.

A vote of thanks to the artistes was proposed by Mr Griffith Griffiths.

**12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

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**IEUAN B CLEE and CLEDWYN CLEE**

An interesting letter has been received from **Bombardier Ieuan B Clee**, who is taking part in the "Big Push." During a particularly heavy "strafe," his shirt was torn by shrapnel, his wrist-watch was smashed, his right boot was cut, but, marvellous to relate, he still possesses a whole skin. His cousin, *Private Elwyn Clee, of the Welsh Guards*, (KILLED IN ACTION 1917) is in the London General Hospital recovering from shell wounds, while another cousin, **Trooper Cledwyn Clee**, of Ystradgynlais, has just arrived in France to do his bit against the Huns.

**9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

**IEUAN B CLEE**

**Bombardier Ieuan B Clee** of the Royal Field Artillery, son of Mr John W Clee Pwllbach, returned to France on Wednesday after having been on leave. He looked well and was well received by his friends at Ystalyfera.

**3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 1917**

**CLEDWYN CLEE**

News has this week been received of **Private Cledwyn Clee** of the Pembroke Yeomanry, after a silence of several weeks. He has written to his parents Mr and Mrs W H Clee Clifton House, informing them that he has been in the trenches for some time. Prior to the war he was employed at a Swansea bank.

**12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

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**WITH THE COLOURS T J LEWIS**

An interesting letter has been received by a member of our staff from **Farrier T J Lewis**, late of Coedeirion House Station Road, who is now stationed with the Royal Engineers at Deganwy North Wales. There are he says, many thousands of troops in this camp and the boys, who are now forming a male voice party, hold eisteddfodau at the YMCA camps and some good talent appears on the platform. Farrier Lewis recently took half the first prize out of eleven competitors in a solo competition, and about a week afterwards took the first out of sixteen competitors. After expressing appreciation of the fact that the "Labour Voice" keeps him in touch with home he concludes his letter by conveying his kind regards to all his old friends. We thank Farrier Lewis for his good wishes, and join in congratulating him on his success on the platform.

**28<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1916**

**WRITES FROM CONWAY**

**Sapper T J Lewis** of the Royal Engineers, late of Coedeirion House Station Road, writes us from Conway, after having been transferred from Deganwy, to the effect that he is in good health. A competition was recently held in connection with the Y M C A for the most humorous "battalion order". Sapper Lewis was awarded second prize. Sapper Lewis is also prominent in vocal solo competitions and has won several prizes.

**3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

**T J LEWIS**

An interesting letter has been received by us from **Sapper T J Lewis**, of the Royal Engineers, formerly of Coedeirion, Station Road, who has just arrived in France.

"We had a pleasant journey across," say Sapper Lewis, "and received quite a warm reception." Considerable travelling was done by rail and foot, especially the latter. The unit to which Sapper Lewis was attached travelled 37 miles in cattle trucks, and at the rate of about 60 miles a week! They are now within sound of the guns, and the ground is very wet and muddy. Sapper Lewis goes on to describe the relations of comradeship that have sprung up between the men, and says that all parcels are shared out to all the "pals" when they arrive. The spirits of the boys are excellent, and the general topic of conversation seems to be after war plans. As our Ystradgynlais readers are aware, Sapper Lewis is a singer of no mean repute, and is in much demand at concerts held behind the lines. The favourite song is "I want to go home now," or "The Prodigal Son." Our readers will join in wishing Sapper Lewis a safe return.

**9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1918**

**A LETTER: T J LEWIS**

Another interesting letter has been received this week from **Sapper T J Lewis** of the Royal Engineers, whose home is at Coedeirion Station Road. Sapper Lewis, who has been in France for some time says that although working hard, he is enjoying himself. The favourite pleasures of the boys, he says, is in sitting around a fire or stove and relating stories of pre-war days. He refers to the language of the Army and the new words that are being continually coined. He is highly satisfied with the food provided and is in high spirits at the prospects of a furlough in April.

**18<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

**T J LEWIS**

An interesting letter has been again received from **Sapper T J Lewis**, of the R.E. who is still in France with his unit. He describes in a vivid manner some episodes of the great drive of the Germans, and says that at the time of writing that a barn acts as his hotel, a building by the way, that had only just been vacated by French cattle. The retreat, says Sapper Lewis, brought much hard work in its train. Prior to receiving Fritz's attentions, Sapper Lewis was in the general office of a large dump. During the retirement, of which Sapper Lewis has give an interesting account he had many escapes from being hit by shell or shrapnel fire. He is in the best of health, and was expecting furlough, which, however, was cancelled. We feel sure our readers will be delighted to see Sapper Lewis' long expected leave becoming an accomplished fact.

**21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**WRITING FROM THE FRONT**

**Sapper T J Lewis** of the Royal Engineers of Coedeirion Station Road, whose interesting letters have from time to time been read by our readers, again writes from the front. Our readers will recollect that in his last letter, Sapper Lewis described the retirement of the Allies in the spring.

"I find it strange," he says, "to be writing not so very far from where I was on 21<sup>st</sup> March last. We are now continually on the move and practically back at our starting point."

During the retreat the British passed through many villages that were occupied by the French but these are now unrecognisable, as they have been practically destroyed.

We are pleased to state that Sapper Lewis is now in the best of health and spirits.

**2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

**FURLOUGH: T J LEWIS**

**Sapper T J Lewis** Royal Engineers of Coedeirion Station Road has been on furlough. He took part in the great retreat last spring and also in the advance of the last few months.

**19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1919**

**LOCAL CONCERT**

"The Ten Welsh Colliers", a local concert party, of which Mr Tommy Lewis Coedeirion, is the secretary, made a quite a hit at the Cinema on Wednesday evening of last week, when they had a packed house. Mr Tommy Lewis took the audience by storm in the Orderly Room sketch, when he was supported by a number of the party and he was also encored for his rendition of the "One Man Band," and their light comedy solo, "I want to go home" a song he had often rendered to entertain the boys overseas.

**12<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

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**WILLIAM REES JONES**

**Driver William Rees Jones** (son of Mr and Mrs Tom Jones, Penywern Road), with the Salonica Field Forces, writing to the editor of the "Labour Voice," describes the quaint dresses of the peasants of the Balkans, and their curious customs. The scenery also is highly interesting, but in spite of all, he longs to be back with "the boys" at Ystalyfera. The weather during the winter and early spring has been very trying. He also testifies to the pleasure he experiences in reading the news of the old home in the "Labour Voice," a copy of which he receives weekly. We desire to reciprocate his good wishes, and are glad that our news of the home localities is appreciated by the boys on active service.

**29<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917**

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**THOMAS JOHN JONES**

The following have been received from **Gunner Thomas John Jones**, R.F.A. (late of Twyn yr Ysgol, Graig- y-Merched), now in France—composed by him after one of his chums fell in action.

The sun shone down from a cloudless heaven,  
When we laid young Billy to rest;  
Our head's were bare, our eyes were dim  
With tears shed for one of the best.  
At work or at play, he was always the same,  
Cheerful, merry and gay,  
Doing his bit with the bravest of men  
To cancel the Huns' boasted "Day"  
Grieve not for him, dear friend of mine,  
But console yourself with the thought  
That out here in France, where  
Death reaps so well,  
For you and his country he fought

Gunner Jones' friends will be pleased to learn that he is quite safe, and "strafing" the Huns along with the best of the Welsh boys. His words are: "Cofion goreu i bawb."

**3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

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**DICK MILWARD**

The following interesting letter has been received from Mr Dick Milward late of Ystradgynlais, who at the time of writing was engaged on H.M.S. — somewhere in the East:

To the Editor, "Llais Llafur"

Sir,—I thought maybe you'd like to hear from a constant reader abroad. I am from Ystradgynlais, and at present serving in the Mercantile Marine connected with the R.N.A.S., doing good work out East. I was banks man at Ystradfawr Colliery until it closed, and from mechanical knowledge gained there, I have worked myself up to donkey man, the equivalent of fifth engineer in the Navy. The work is not hard, and the life's fine; good food, clean sleeping and living accommodation, what more does a man want? I have visited several towns out here of great interest to the Westerner, where the men are dressed in little else than shirts, and the children run about naked, and seem to live in the water, and will dive to the bottom of the harbour after a penny. Bazaars, with a motley conglomeration of rubbishy so-called curios, saloons at every street corner,—these are but a few of the things that interest and astonish the stranger. Arabs and Egyptians seem to do all the hard work out here. We have a crowd of Arabs aboard today, some of them mere children, working inside the boilers.

How they stand the great heat is beyond my understanding. There is a tram service here with a two-foot gauge, the trams being pulled along by ancient donkeys and carrying about twelve persons. Imagine this in one of the biggest and busiest Eastern seaports!

Things seem to be getting very lively out here, and believe me, there's going to be the biggest push of the war here soon, and I'm very optimistic as regards an early finish. I could write whole columns of interesting matter about this country, but doubtless your space and my time forbids, so I will close, wishing your paper every success. By the way, it is very acceptable out here and I get a copy every mail. Tell them all at home that with the Army, Navy and Air Services going strong as they are at present, we shan't be long before we're home again and although I'm willing to do my bit, there's no man longs for home more than, yours sincerely, Dick Milward.

Mr. Milward was quite correct in thinking we would like to hear from him, and we are sure our readers will join us in thanking him for his newsy letter. We shall be glad to hear from him again, so that his old friends— and other readers may see, through his eyes, some of the wonders of the East.

**3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

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**IEUAN EVANS**

In a letter sent home by **Gunner Ieuan Evans, R.N.V.R.**, of Pentwyn Stores, Godre'rgraig, from Colon, U.S.A., he says:

"On Saturday, in company with one of my shipmates, I went ashore. On returning to board the ship we found that it had left! We came across the wireless operator, who informed us that the vessel had proceeded to shelter owing to a hurricane which was in progress in some other part of the island. We were left ashore till Tuesday morning, and when the ship returned again it had been considerably damaged by the storm."

Gunner Evans enjoys good health, although he says the heat is terrific in that part. He expects to be home on leave in a short time at Godre'rgraig, where he will be heartily welcomed. His brother, Emlyn, is serving with the forces in Egypt, and was in the battle of Gaza. He also is in good health.

**24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1917**

**REACHED LONDON**

It is interesting to note that **Gunner Ieuan Evans** has reached London. Gunner Evans who is on the ss. – has just been on his second trip to the West Indies with important cargoes. He expects to be home over Christmas.

**8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

**HOME ON LEAVE**

**Gunner Ieuan Evans** of Pentwyn Stores was home on leave during the week. He is on the ss. Conway and looks "a jolly Tar". He returns on Friday and has the best wishes of his many friends.

**8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

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**R S ROGERS**

Mrs Rogers of the Vine Ystalyfera has received an interesting letter from her husband, **Driver R S Rogers** of the Royal Field Artillery, who was wounded in France, but who is now in Italy after having undergone treatment. Driver Rogers says that the reception given to our men has been a most enthusiastic one. The Italians, when our lads marched through the villages, have strewn flowers in the streets and given them refreshments on their way. All they have desired in return is a button or some other form of keepsake. The Italians seem very pleased at the fact that British soldiers are coming to their assistance and are doing all in their power to make them comfortable.

**8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

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**MAY GRIFFITHS**

Mr and Mrs William Griffiths Derwen Road have received an interesting letter from their daughter, **Nurse May Griffiths**, who is now in Egypt. Nurse Griffiths says that one of the

first doctors she met in the land of the Pharaohs was Doctor Patrick Walsh, brother of Doctor E Walsh Ystradgynlais and formerly his assistant. Doctor Walsh is in excellent health and this is gratifying in view of the reports that have been circulated to the effect that he had been killed in action

### SONS OF THOMAS GURNOS POST OFFICE

7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915

**GWILYM and DAVID THOMAS**

Among the local soldiers home on leave during the week has been **Private Gwilym Thomas**, formerly of the Gurnos Post Office, who is with the Welsh Guards, Private Morgan (son of Mr Morgan coachman Gurnos) who is in the Welsh Fusiliers, as well as Private T Laing formerly with Mr H J Powell JP, who is with the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. All looked happy and well. (3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1917 **Private Gwilym Thomas**, Welsh Guards son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas Gurnos Post Office, has arrived home from a Northern hospital, where he has spent many months suffering from "trench foot". He took part in all the fierce battles of last year in which the Guards participated but has now received his discharge).

19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916

**DAVID THOMAS**

**Private David Thomas** of the Welsh Guards, son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas of Gurnos Post Office, has now been sent to France and has just started taking part in the fighting. Strange to relate that he met his brother Gwilym recently in the trenches, Gwilym is also in the Welsh Guards and has seen some hard fighting.

LLAIS 25<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1917

**LETTER: DAVID THOMAS**

We have this week received an interesting letter from **Private David Thomas**, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Welsh Guards, son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas, Post Office Gurnos. Private Thomas writes his letter after coming out of the recent big push, and says he was sent to where the Welsh Division was stationed and where there were a large number of Ystalyfera boys. He met, amongst others, **Private W D Jones** (butcher), who formerly lived opposite the Old Swan Hotel, and who was an intimate friend of his in private life. The boys highly appreciate the "Labour Voice," and the link it forms with the valley. Describing the advance, Private Thomas says:

"The Welsh Guards went over the top in fine style, and were prepared to halt at nothing. They had the Kaiser's pets, or Cockchafers, up against them, but with great pluck and an effort, Gwalia's sons reached their objective."

Private Thomas, who expects to be home on leave shortly, has also met **Privates Johnny Evans**, his next door neighbour in civil life; and **Abe Guerrier** (Allygrug- road), as well as a Llansamlet friend. Another Welsh soldier, signing himself '**Red Dragon**,' Somewhere in France, sends to the "Western Mail" the following verses, depicting the battle Private Thomas speaks about, and in which so many Ystalyfera boys took part. The title of the verses is

#### **"Welshmen in the Flanders Battle"**

The sound of guns was deafening,  
That thirtieth of July,  
The Artillery of the British  
Made shells and shrapnel fly  
The thundering of the cannon  
Rolled on and on all night,  
The flashes of the "Heavies"  
Turned darkness into light  
At dawn the following morning

Division "Thirty-eight,"—  
 The gallant Sons of Cambria—  
 Went for the Germans straight  
 They swept along, brave warriors,  
 And chased the "Kaiser's Own"  
 Lloyd George's Welsh Division,  
 Its reputation's grown  
 They took the ridge at Pilkem,  
 "Cockchafers" failed to stand,  
 They forward went o'er Steenbeck,  
 And dashed across the land  
 The famous Guards Division  
 Fought nobly at their side,  
 And worthy Sons of Scotland  
 On right, sent Huns to hide  
 They kept advancing onward,  
 Courageous, gallant, true,  
 They fought for right and freedom,  
 They showed what Wales can do.  
 Descendants of Llewelyn,  
 Glyndwr and Picton brave,  
 Their name and fame won't vanish,  
 While shore is washed by wave

**1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917**

**WOUNDED: W D JONES**

Intimation has been received this week that **Private W D Jones** (butcher), late of Gurnos Shop Ystalyfera, has been seriously wounded by shrapnel in the face and arm in the fighting around Ypres. It will be remembered that but a few weeks ago Private Jones was home on last leave prior to going on active service for the second time, previous to which he had been in a Manchester hospital, having been wounded during the Somme operations on New Year's Eve last.

Only last week we published a letter from **Private David Thomas Welsh Guards** (late Gurnos P.O.) saying how he had met Private Jones by chance when returning from the lines. Private Jones' many friends in Ystalyfera will greatly sympathise with him in his very unfortunate luck.

**8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917**

**ALSO WOUNDED: DAVID THOMAS**

News has been received by his parents, Mr and Mrs William Thomas P O Gurnos, that **Private David Thomas** Welsh Guards, was wounded the beginning of the week in the shoulder and leg and is now at a base hospital in France.

His brother **Gwilym**, also of the Welsh Guards, is slowly convalescing at a North of England Hospital.

**15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917**

**W D JONES**

**Private W D Jones** SWB (late of Gurnos Shop) who was seriously wounded in France recently, (he was wounded as he was proceeding to the firing line for the first time. He joined up over 12 months ago) has now been brought to a Bradford Hospital. He has received a compound fracture of the shoulder and a bullet wound in the face but we are glad to say is progressing slowly. He was visited at the hospital last week end by a number of Ystalyfera friends who are at present engaged nearby on munition work. This is the second time Private Jones has been wounded this year.

**11<sup>th</sup> MAY 1918**

**ON LEAVE: DAVID THOMAS**

**Private David Thomas Welsh Guards**, youngest son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas



Gurnos Post Office arrived home on Wednesday on hospital leave after being wounded in France. A rifle bullet passed through his left wrist. This is the second time for him to be wounded. Private Thomas went through most of the heavy fighting recently in France.

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**15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

**J THOMAS**

A field card has been received from **Corporal J Thomas** (late of Gurnos) Grenadier Guards, who has been in the heavy fighting recently, stating that he is quite well and cheerful.

**23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

**LAST BATTLE: J THOMAS**

**Corporal J Thomas** of Gough Road Ystalyfera and of the Grenadier Guards, writing from France says,

“It may interest you and the readers of the “Llais” to know that I took part in what I believe, was the last battle of the war. We attacked Mauheuge at an early hour on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. By 6 am we had taken all the forts and the town, and of course, by 11 o’clock the armistice was signed.”



YEARGROUP's Collection of Postcards

## FURLOUGH

**13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1915**

**BROTHERS STANLEY & LYN THOMAS**

Congratulations to **Mr F S Stanley Thomas**, son of Mr David Thomas, Alltygrug Road who has been given a commission in the 18th (2nd Bantam) Battalion Welsh Regiment. Lieutenant Thomas, who is one of the ten old boys of Ystalyfera County School now holding commissions, joined the ranks of the North Wales "Pals" Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers in September and within a month became a corporal. In December he was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Many local readers are aware his brother **Mr Lynn Thomas**, has a lieutenancy in the 11th Battalion of the South Wales Borderers.

**5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**FREDERICK STANLEY THOMAS**

The military career of Lieutenant Frederick Stanley Thomas, fifth son of Mr. David Thomas, of Alltygrug Road, Ystalyfera, is somewhat remarkable, and Mr. Thomas is to be heartily congratulated on his rapid promotion. Lieutenant Thomas, who is 25 years of age, was on Whit-Monday gazetted as full lieutenant in the 18th Service Battalion Welsh Regiment. He enlisted in the ranks in September, joining the North Wales University Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He had served for three years in the Officers Training Corps at the University College, Aberystwyth. Soon after joining the colours he was promoted to the command of a platoon, with rank of corporal, and before Christmas had advanced to be a sergeant in his battalion. He applied for a commission in February, and three days later had orders to proceed to Porth Cawl, where he joined the 18th Service Battalion Welsh Regiment as second lieutenant. This is the 2nd Battalion of the Bantams of Glamorgan, and is in a very efficient state. Lieutenant Thomas has for some time been in command of a company, from which we judge that his recent promotion to be first-lieutenant is but a prelude to his full captaincy. The "Porth Cawl News" of May 27<sup>th</sup> remarks "Ystalyfera has reason to be proud of the promotion of Second-Lieutenant Frederick Stanley Thomas to lieutenant. This young officer has his heart and soul in his work, and is anxiously awaiting the opportunity of proving his courage and grit at the front." Ystalyfera heartily endorses these remarks.

**19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**THOMAS**

**Lieutenant Thomas**, who is now stationed at Porthcawl, came home on furlough last week suffering from a poisoned foot, but we are glad to know has made excellent progress towards recovery since his arrival. He was delighted with the excellent show made by the local members of the V.T.C., and commended them highly on their efficiency.

**27<sup>th</sup> MAY 1916**

**FURLOUGH FOR BROTHERS**

**Lieutenant Stanley Thomas**, son of Mr and Mrs David Thomas of Alltygrug Road, arrived home on Monday night on short leave. He returned to Aldershot on Wednesday to prepare for the review of troops on Thursday by the King. Lieutenant Thomas expects to be sent to France in the course of a few days with his regiment the 18<sup>th</sup> Welsh.

**Lieutenant Lyn Thomas**, the youngest son of Mr and Mrs Thomas, has also been home during the week to take farewell of his brother. Both brothers are looking well and fit for service. Lieutenant Lyn Thomas is signalling officer with the headquarter staff of the SWB and is at present stationed at Rhyl.

**3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 1917**

**LYN THOMAS**

**First Flight Lieutenant Lyn Thomas** the youngest son of Mr and Mrs David Thomas (Alltygrug Road) has been home on leave from France during the week. He looked well and received a hearty reception at the hands of his Ystalyfera friends.

**30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1917**

**LYN THOMAS IN HOSPITAL**

**Flight Lieutenant Lyn Thomas** of the Royal Flying Corps, son of Mr and Mrs David Thomas has been admitted to hospital in France suffering from shell shock. He was home on

furlough a few weeks ago and was the best man at the wedding of Lieutenant J Afan Jones B. A., and Mrs Afan Jones.

**17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**NEW DUTIES: LYN THOMAS**

Local readers will be interested to learn of the important appointment received by **Mr Lyn Thomas**, son of Mr and Mrs David Thomas, Alltygrug Road and late lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps, which is that of chief Western Divisional Administrator of the Food Production department of the Board of Agriculture. Up to the present he has been an inspector for four counties but his new post includes the whole of Wales, Shropshire and Counties of Hereford, Gloucester, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and the Forest of Dean. He will take up duties in a fortnight's time and his headquarters will be Llandrindod Wells.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**WEDDING**

A wedding of considerable local interest took place on Thursday at Mosley Parish Church, Birmingham, when **Lieutenant Thomas** formerly of the Air Force, but now of the Food Production Department, and stationed at Llandrindod Wells, son of Mr and Mrs David Thomas, Alltygrug Road, was married to Miss A Winnie Biddle, of Birmingham. The bride was given away by her father, Mr Edward Biddle solicitor and was attended by her sisters, Misses Mildred and Frances Biddle. Mr Gerrar acted as best man, whilst Lieutenant A Biddle, Lieutenant Stanley Thomas, Mr E V Thomas, Mrs Thomas, and Mrs Biddle were also present. Mr and Mrs Thomas have the best wishes of a host of Valley friends. After the ceremony the happy couple left for Church Stretton for the honeymoon.

**3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 1915**

**LESLIE THOMAS – W H JONES – W JOHN WALTERS**

A few local recruits have been home from their regiments during the past few days. Among them were **Mr Leslie Thomas** (son of Mr and Mrs William Thomas of the Grocery Stores) Pantteg who is in the Welsh Guards and Messrs **W H Jones** and **William John Walters**, also of Pantteg, who are in the Army Service Corps.

**3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 1915**

**HOME FROM CAMP: WILLIAM THOMAS**

**Mr William Thomas**, son of Mr Richard Thomas College Row and who is in Kitchener's Army, arrived home from camp on Tuesday for seven days' rest. Mr Thomas has been invalided home, he has been unwell for some time past, and is now recuperating prior to going out to France shortly. We hope he will soon be quite well.

**8<sup>th</sup> MAY 1915**

**J C MALLOWS**

**Private J C Mallows** of the Bantam Battalion was home on short leave at Rose Villa last week. He is the first Bantam from Abercrave and looks remarkably well. He has been busy recruiting and has taken seven boys back with him to Colwyn Bay.

**22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 1915**

**D J WILLIAMS**

Another visitor who paid a "flying call" at Ystalyfera on Tuesday was **Lieutenant D J Williams** of the Brecknocks, now stationed in Pembrokeshire. Lieutenant Williams was on his way to the Altcar Camp near Liverpool, where he is to undergo a course of Musketry drill. He is looking exceptionally fit and well and reports that all the local boys are in good condition.

**19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1915**

**IN CHARGE OF MUSKETRY**

The drills of the Ystalyfera Company were taken on Friday by **Lieutenant D J Williams**, and on Monday by **Lieutenant Stanley Thomas**, a popular young local officer, whose rapid promotion was referred to in these columns a few weeks ago. Lieutenant Thomas returned to Porthcawl on Wednesday. Lieutenant D J Williams' many friends will be interested to learn that he has been put in charge of the musketry instruction at Brecon, and started on his duties

on Monday.

**8<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**HOME: D J WILLIAMS**

Another officer home for a few days is **Lieutenant D J Williams** of the SWB (Breconshires) eldest son of Mr James Williams Wern House. Lieutenant Williams was also a schoolmaster at the Wern Schools before the war.

**9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**OFF TO INDIA**

The many friends of **Lieutenant D J Williams**, of Wern House, have learnt he is about to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Brecknocks in India. Early in the war Lieutenant Williams put his services at the disposal of his country. After a course of instruction at Altcar—where he took a “first” in musketry, he became musketry instructor of the Reserve Brecknocks. Second Lieutenant Williams now became Lieutenant Williams. He leaves with the best wishes of a large circle of friends and acquaintances.

**23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1916**

**PRESENTATION: D J WILLIAMS**

An interesting presentation was made at the New Swan Hotel on Thursday evening, when **Lieutenant D J Williams** of the Brecknocks, was made the recipient of a handsome leather suit case by his friends, prior to his departure for India. Mr Snorfitt, Blaenycwm, presided and in the course of his remarks wished Lieutenant Williams a bon voyage and a speedy and safe return. He also paid a tribute to the esteem and respect in which Lieutenant Williams was held in the neighbourhood. Amongst others who spoke were Messrs R L Morgan, James Williams, John Griffiths (London City and Midland Bank) J T Owen, W D Clee and – Roberts and – Morris of the Bank. Lieutenant Williams suitably responded.

**10<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915**

**JOHN JENKIN GAPE**

A visitor who has been especially welcomed in Ystalyfera during the week is **Seaman John Jenkin Gape**, son of Mr and Mrs Joseph Gape, of Pembroke House, Ystalyfera. Seaman Gape joined the Royal Navy early in March, and has now been promoted to the post of first class stoker on one of the principal British battleships, viz., the Tiger, which, it will be remembered played a part in the great North Sea battle when the German battleship “Blucher” was sunk. We are glad to know that he is very well and hearty, and is getting quite attached to his new life.

**18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

**JOHN JENKIN GAPE**

**Mr John Jenkin Gape**, son of Mr Joseph Gape Graig y Merched, who is serving on board HMS Tiger, is home on four days’ leave and looks the picture of health. “Life on the ocean wave” undoubtedly agrees with him.

**3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 1916**

**ON LEAVE**

**Seaman J J Gape** of HMS “Tiger” is home on leave and speaks enthusiastically of the readiness and the eagerness with which the fleet looks forward to meeting the Germans.

**17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1916**

**EXHIBIT ON SHOW**

An interesting exhibit is now to be seen in the windows of Mr G Davies newsagent, in the form of fragments of a German 12in shell that exploded on board the battle cruiser “Tiger” in the recent North Sea battle. They were sent by **Seaman J J Gape**.

**28<sup>th</sup> JULY 1917**

**JOHN JENKIN GAPE**

**A B John Jenkin Gape**, son of Joseph Gape of HMS Tiger, has come home on leave.

**20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917**

Writing to his parents at Graig y Merched **Stoker John Jenkin Gape**, who is on HMS Tiger, states that A.B. **Tom Williams**, of the same ship, and who previous to joining the Navy, stayed with Mrs Langdon at Penywern Road, had met with an accident, and had undergone an operation which happily, had proved successful, and he is progressing favourably. Williams is a native of Glais.

**31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**JOHN JENKIN GAPE**

Seaman **John Jenkin Gape** of HMS "Tiger" is also on leave

**10<sup>th</sup> JULY 1915**

**TED MORGAN**

Another local visitor home is **Mr Ted Morgan**, "Swan," who is staying with his sister and brother-in-law, Mr and Mrs Morgan, at Ynisgeinon Hall. He is in the South Wales Borderers, but has not yet been out to France. Private Morgan saw service in South Africa, where he has resided for the past four years, and rejoined to do his bit when he heard the call of the Motherland.

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**HENRY JONES**

A welcome visitor home this week is Henry, the son of the Rev Emlyn and Mrs Jones of Tabernacle (Ystradgynlais). **Mr Henry Jones** is engaged in a bank at Dover but he is also able to do service with the Anti Aircraft Corps, very useful and necessary work at a spot so near the seat of war as Dover.

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**WILLIAM JOHN DAVIES**

**Driver W J Davies** of the 1<sup>st</sup> Glamorganshire Battery of the Welsh Howitzer Brigade, son of Mr and Mrs J Davies fruiterer Wern, was home on furlough during the weekend and returned to Bedford on Monday. He joined in March and has been stationed at Swansea, Northampton and Bedford.

**20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**WILLIAM JOHN DAVIES**

**Private William John Davies** of the Howitzer Brigade R.F.A., son of Mr and Mrs John Davies greengrocer, Wern, has communicated with his parents this week stating that he was leaving camp for the front on Tuesday. Private Davies has been in the Army for several months and was last stationed in Winchester.

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**SOME NEWS: HENRY THOMAS LEWIS: TOM LEWIS**

Elsewhere we give letters received from the local boys out with the Brecknocks at Aden. Other soldiers there from whom letters have been received include **Private Haydn Morgan Jones**, son of Lance Corporal Jones of Heol y Gwaith Station Road, who has been very ill in hospital but is now improving. He was too ill to take part in the recent fighting. Before joining the colours Jones was employed at the Gurnos Colliery. His father is with the Brecknock Reserves in Pembrokeshire.

Private **Tom Lewis** of the Maxim Gun Section, whose parents live at 4 College Row, wrote last weekend referring to the brush with the Turks but he came out safely.

**Corporal Henry Tom Lewis** also wrote to his parents Mr and Mrs Benjamin Lewis 7 College Row, stating that he was well and had come through the scrap alright.

**20<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

**HENRY TOM LEWIS**

**Corporal Henry Thomas Lewis**, of the Brecknocks, son of Mr and Mrs Benjamin Lewis 7 College Row, has returned home on furlough from France. He was with the Brecknocks when they went in 1917 and saw service in Aden, Egypt and India. He was transferred to France about three months ago and looks fit and well.

**21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**TOM LEWIS**

**Gunner Tom Lewis** son of Mr and Mrs David Lewis 4 College Row has been wounded in France whilst serving with the MGG. Gunner Lewis, who has been in France for five months, has received injuries to his leg and has now been brought back to Cardiff Hospital.

**21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**TOM HUTCHINGS**

**Private Hutchings**, son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Hutchings of Gough Road Ystalyfera, who joined the army some time ago, is understood to have gone out to the Dardanelles and there has been some doubt as to whether he was not on the troopship sunk by an enemy submarine in the Aegean Sea. Private Hutchings was home on final leave about three weeks ago and if he sailed immediately afterwards, he would have reached Turkey before the catastrophe. He is in the R A M C and the ship is stated specially to have had men of that regiment on board.

**21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 1915**

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**HOME FROM THE FRONT: W J CHARLES**

**Private W J Charles**, some of whose letters have appeared in the Labour Voice is home on leave from the front. He left the trenches at noon on Saturday, and reached Swansea on Sunday. Private Charles has been at the front since the commencement of the war, and is one of the few survivors of the Welsh Regiment which was one of the first to go into action. He looks remarkably well and bears no evidence of the gruelling campaign he has gone through. He has brought some interesting relics from the battlefield with him. He is staying with Mr and Mrs Flook, Brynawel Road, and returns to France on Saturday. He has the best wishes of the people of Ystradgynlais for his safety.

**28<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915**

**PRESENTATION: W J CHARLES**

**Private W J Charles**, of Brynawel Road, who is in one of the Welsh Regiments, has been on leave from the front. He has been out since the commencement of the war and has had some remarkable experiences out in France. He returned on Saturday and the previous evening was entertained by numerous friends at a smoking concert at the Ynisedwyn Hotel, Mr J Lyddon M E manager of the Diamond Colliery presiding. Private Charles was presented with a watch and cigarette case.

**30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**COUSINS WOUNDED: W J CHARLES and TOM JONES**

We regret to announce that news has arrived this week to the effect that two local soldiers have been wounded. We refer to **Private Tom Jones**, of the 'Temperance Hall, Oddfellows Street, and **Private W J Charles**, who, we understand are cousins. The intimation has come from Private Jones writing home. It will be remembered that Private Charles, who has been previously wounded, spent several days in Ystradgynlais two or three weeks ago, and has only just returned to France. Both the soldiers obtained their injuries in one of the big engagements last Sunday week. Private Charles, whose wounds are stated to be serious, was first taken to the 4<sup>th</sup> General Hospital, Lincoln, and afterwards moved to Eastbourne, but Private Jones, who suffers both from injuries and shock, is stated at the time of writing, to be still in France. We hope to be in a position to give further details next week.

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916**

Mr W J Thomas school master has received an interesting letter from **Private Charles**, who as our readers are aware, is still in the firing line. Private Charles says he has been transferred from his old regiment the 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh to the Machine Gun Corps and says: "I did not care for the change but we are soldiers out here and orders must be obeyed."

He also mentions that he has met several of his old school chums recently, **Humphrey Davies** who is in the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh, and **Evan Griffiths** of Penrhos and has also seen **J M Jones** of Gurnos.

**4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

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**BOYS HOME ON FURLOUGH**

Ystradgynlais has borne the appearance of a military centre during the past few days, so many local soldiers having been at home on leave. Among the number were:

**Gunners William Jones**, of Penrhos, who is with the Royal Field Artillery, stationed at Bedford. He returned home on Wednesday and goes back to camp on Sunday.

**Mr Gwilym Morgan**, son of Mr Daniel Morgan, Pelican Street, who is with the Bantam

Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, has unfortunately been invalided home after a serious illness. He proceeded to the Army Medical Inspector at Whitchurch during the week-end. We understand that Private Morgan is somewhat anxious to get back to his regiment as he has two stripes for promotion awaiting him there.

**Private John Evans**, of the 38<sup>th</sup> Royal Engineers, has been home from Winchester, returning on Thursday. He is expecting orders to go to the front shortly.

**Private W Gould**, of the 16<sup>th</sup> Devons, was in Ystradgynlais during last week-end and was welcomed by his many friends. Private Gould has been rapidly achieving distinction as a pugilist.

**Private Sam Jones**, of the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh, whose home in Gough Buildings, has been suffering from pneumonia for some time, but is now at home, and is, we are glad to hear making good progress towards recovery.

**Lance Corporal Jack Davies**, Brecon Road, has also been home on sick leave, and

**Private Fuller** Glantawe has also been in Ystradgynlais visiting his people, and returned on Thursday.

**Mr Will Thomas** who is going to the Navy, and has been in training in the South of England, has been at home, and we learn, will join a ship on returning to duty.

**11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

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**MORE BOYS HOME: JACK ALMROTT**

Quite a large-number of local soldiers has been home on furlough again this week. For the most part they are men of the new Armies, who are preparing to go out to the front, and many expect to be there very shortly. They all looked hale and hearty, as though life in the ranks thoroughly agrees with them. Among the visitors was **Private Jack Almrott**, now in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, formerly local manager for Messrs. Eastmans, Ltd., the butchers. Private Almrott stayed at the home of his mother and father-in-law, Mr and Mrs Wm. Jeffreys, newsagents, Commercial Street, and was warmly welcomed by his many friends. At present he is stationed on Salisbury Plain, having been recently moved there from Birmingham. He returned to his regiment on Wednesday.

**18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**JACK ALMROTT and A E AUBREY**

**Private J Almrott** and **A E Aubrey**, formerly of Ystalyfera, who are also in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, are leaving the Midlands for Codford Camp and this is regarded as a decisive step nearer the front. Private Aubrey is expected in Ystalyfera on leave shortly.

**27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**OFF TO THE FRONT**

**Mr Jack Almrott** and **Mr Aubrey** left last week for the front

**1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**IN HOSPITAL: J ALMROTT**

His many friends will regret to hear that **Private Jack Almrott** (late manager for Messrs. Eastman's) is also in hospital. A shell from the enemy's trenches burst over his dug-out and he and some others were buried alive. Private Almrott was hurt by a falling stone, but we understand the injury is not sufficiently serious to occasion his friends much anxiety on his behalf. We wish him well.

**15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1916**

**BACK AT THE FRONT**

We are glad to learn that **Private Almrott** is now recovered from his illness and able to be back at the front.

**22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 1916**

**AGAIN WOUNDED: JACK ALMROTT**

News of a somewhat disquieting nature has come to hand with respect to **Private Jack Almrott**. It will be remembered that some time ago Private Almrott was transferred from his regiment to the transport section as driver. Three weeks ago he received a kick from one of the horses in his care and has been in hospital ever since. He writes in very good spirits but he says he suffers considerable pain internally. We wish him a speedy recovery.

## 15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1917 BRECON AND RADNOR EXPRESS

**Privates Jack Almrott and Sidney James** both of Ystradgynlais have been wounded in the face.

26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1918

**JACK ALMROTT**

**Private J Almrott** of the Gloucester Regiment, son in law of Mr and Mrs Jeffreys, the Emporium, has been home for a short rest. He has seen two years service in France and has lately been undergoing treatment at a Bristol Hospital after being gassed. He has now recovered sufficiently to rejoin his unit. Prior to joining the forces Private Almrott was manager at the local branch of Messrs Eastman's Ltd.

3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST 1918

**ON LEAVE: JACK ALMROTT**

**Private J Almrott**, formerly of Eastman's Ltd and son in law of Mr and Mrs W D Jeffreys, Emporium, has come home on leave. He is attached to the Gloucesters and has been wounded and gassed once. He expects to again be sent out on service.

7<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918

**WOUNDED 4 TIMES: ALMROTT**

News was received on Thursday morning that **Private Jack Almrott** of the Gloucesters, son in law of Mr and Mrs W Jeffreys (newsagent) had been wounded in the left leg. He has now been wounded four times and gassed once.

28<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1915

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**MARRIAGE: PRIVATE ALEC BOUNDS**

An interesting local marriage took place on Sunday morning at Ystradgynlais Parish Church, the contracting parties being **Private Alec Bounds** of the Canadian Regiment, brother of Mr Bounds, builder and contractor, late of Ystradgynlais and Miss Lizzie Morgan, daughter of Mr and Mrs Edward Morgan Sunny Hill. Private Bounds, who has been home for a few days' leave, was well known in the place and the bride is, of course, a member of a well known local family.

25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915

**HOME ON LEAVE: ALEC BOUND**

Among local soldiers home on furlough for a few days during the week was **Private Alec Bounds**, brother of Mr Bounds, the builder, formerly of Ystradgynlais. Private Bounds, who is with the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers, proceeds to the front soon and this was his last leave. He returned during the week-end.

13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915

**FRED and ALEC BOUNDS**

Quite a large number of local boys with the SWB are home over the week on furlough before going on Imperial Service. They all look remarkably well. **Private Fred Bounds** of the Canadians, who has been in this country for three weeks, has also been at Ystradgynlais, his brother **Private Alec Bounds** is now in France

7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1916

**WOUNDED: ALEC BOUNDS**

**Lance Corporal A Bounds** of the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadians, son in law to Mr Edward Morgan Sunny Hill has been seriously wounded in the leg, arm and face but is now making slow progress at a Boulogne hospital. He expects to be transferred to this country at an early date.

5<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917

**ALEC BOUNDS ON LEAVE**

**Corporal Alec Bounds** of the Canadians has returned to Ystradgynlais and is staying with his father in law, Mr Edward Morgan of Sunny Hill. Private Bounds has unfortunately lost a leg but is cheerful in spite of all and is otherwise in good health.

15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915

**Lance Corporal A Bounds** of the Canadians, who has had a leg amputated as the result of wounds received in action, has been on leave and appears to be making a good recovery.

20<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917

**Lance Corporal A Bounds** (Canadians) who has had a leg amputated as the result of wounds received in action has been on leave here.



**23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 1915**

**PRIVATE D H LEWIS & DRIVER W T OWEN**

Numerous soldiers were home here last week. Two of them were from the front, namely **Private D H Lewis** (Penrhos 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion S W B and **Driver W T Owen**, who is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Squadron of the Royal Engineers. They were entertained by the recently formed Soldiers' Reception Committee at Yniscedwyn Arms on Wednesday. Mr B L Thomas presided, a very enjoyable time was spent and several local artistes contributed to the programme. Suitable presentations were also made to the two soldiers on behalf of the committee and friends. Both returned to duty on Thursday.

**2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**JOHN REES**

A soldier visitor to Ystalyfera last week end was **Private John Rees** of the 26<sup>th</sup> Welsh, son of Mr David Rees near Vine. Private Rees, who is now stationed at Kinmel Park North Wales, enjoyed his last leave before going to the front, probably the Dardanelles.

**9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**W SMITH**

Among the local soldier boys at home on furlough during the past few days was **Private W Smith** of the 4<sup>th</sup> S W B a well known Ystalyfera man. Smith has been invalided from the Dardanelles suffering from dysentery but is now getting on well. Formerly he was a carter employed by Messrs D Rees and Sons, builders, but more lately he was with Mr A W Wincott Ystradgynlais.

**30<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1915**

**J COUNSELL**

Another soldier home was **Private J Counsell** of Beynon's Row. He has been out in France with the 6<sup>th</sup> Welsh for some time, and has had many interesting experiences. Quite recently he was going into action when he saw a piece of paper on the ground that seemed to be familiar and on picking it up he discovered it to be part of a page of "The Labour Voice". It contained, among things, a report of the Pontardawe Council meeting at which Ystalyfera matters had been discussed.

Private Counsell is home on a few days furlough. He has not been wounded.

**TOM THOMAS – DAVID THOMAS – TOMMY DAVIES and PHILLIP REES**

**13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

There was a very happy gathering at the Royal Oak Hotel last Thursday evening, when a smoking concert took place for four local soldiers, (home from camp), who are shortly going out to France. They were **Privates Tom Thomas, David Thomas, Tommy Davies and Phillip Rees** of Pantteg and district and all members of the South Wales Borderers. There was a large attendance, over which Ap Cledlyn (Mr D W Jenkins) presided and suitable presentations were made to the lads on behalf of their friends.

**11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1916**

**INVALIDED HOME: PHIL REES**

**Private Phil Rees**, son of Mr and Mrs Rees of the Royal Oak, returned from Brecon during the week, after having been invalided home on furlough. He is attached to the SWB and sustained a wound in the leg in the heavy fighting in France. Prior to be sent to Brecon, Private Rees was at a London hospital for some time. He is now making a good recovery.

**20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1915**

**SMOKING CONCERT: TOM JONES**

A smoking concert was held on Friday evening at the Mason's Arms, for **Private Tom Jones**, of the South Wales Borderers, whose home is at the Temperance Hall Ystradgynlais and who, as previously reported, was recently wounded in France. Since receiving his injuries, Private Jones has been in hospital in England and is now happily quickly recovering. Mr B L Thomas presided over the gathering, and there was a splendid attendance. A fine



the fighting against the Turks, and the difficulties under which the British troops laboured. He took part in the operation against Achi Baba, at the southern end of the peninsula, as well as at Suvla Bay, where he was eventually wounded in the thigh by a bomb, being thrown up into the air a considerable distance. As a result he lost consciousness, and remained in this state for the best part of 24 hours. Private Bevan is a quiet and unostentatious soldier, but the interview proved him to be possessed of intelligence and powers of observation beyond the ordinary, and his account of conditions and operations on the Gallipoli peninsula and at Malta, where he remained for several weeks, were of absorbing interest.

**4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

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**BROTHERS ALBERT and REGGIE THOMAS**

Amongst the local soldiers home on leave this week was **Corporal Albert I Thomas** Tanyrallt Allytygrug Road. Corporal Thomas who previous to the war, was in service of the Metropolitan Bank, is attached to the Glamorgan Yeomanry. He has for several months been employed as a dispatch rider in the East of England and is liable to be called up for service elsewhere at any moment. His brother, **Reggie Thomas**, is also with the colours and is on active service with the Brecknocks in India.

**25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1915**

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**BROTHERS DAVID and JAMES EVANS**

**Private David Evans** son of Mr and Mrs Evans (newsagent), Cwmtwrch, arrived home on furlough on Tuesday evening from Winchester. Private Evans, who is attached to the Bantams, expects to leave for the front early in the New Year. He was extended a hearty welcome by his many friends. Private Evans's brother **James Evans**, who is studying at Pontypridd for the ministry, is also home for Christmas vacation.

**1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 1917**

**DAVID EVANS**

**Private David Evans** of the Welsh Bantams (SWB) son of Mr and Mrs James Evans newsagent Lower Cwmtwrch, arrived home from France on Wednesday, where he has been for a considerable time and was given a cordial reception. Private Evans has taken part in many big fights, although he is only 20 years of age. He is one of four brothers with the colours.

**22<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

**BROTHER DISCHARGED: JAMES EVANS**

**Private James Evans**, son of Mr and Mrs J Evans (newsagent) Lower Cwmtwrch, arrived home on Wednesday from Blackpool, having received his discharge from the Army. Private Evans, (has spent 12 months attached to the Medical Corps) who has been in failing health for some time, was prior to his joining the colours, studying for the ministry in Pontypridd.

**9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1918**

**FURLOUGH: DAVID EVANS**

**Private David Evans**, youngest son of Mr and Mrs James Evans (newsagent) has arrived home for the second time from France and was given a warm reception. Private Evans, who has seen considerable fighting in Flanders and France, joined the original Welsh Bantams. He went through the Cambrai fighting recently.

**23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 1918**

**E W EVANS**

**Private E W Evans**, son of Mr and Mrs J T Evans (newsagent) Cwmtwrch, has been on his first furlough visit from France after 12 months' service. Prior to joining the army he was manager at a Bristol store of the C W S. His wife lives at Ton Pentre.

**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916**

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**PRIVATE BRYCHAN J RICHARDS**

**Private Brychan J. Richards**, of Cae'rbon, is home on short leave from the front this week. The reception committee has decided to present him with a guinea and a handsome medal suitably inscribed. The presentation will take place in the old Sunday school room, near Peniel Penrhos.

26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1916

### FROM THE BATTLE OF LOOS: B J RICHARDS

Private Brychan Richards is home from hospital, having been wounded at the Battle of Loos. He received shrapnel wounds in the back which have affected his left leg. On Friday last a concert was held at Penrhos to welcome him home and to present him with a medal and purse of gold. The local artistes did their duty as usual and a good programme was enjoyed by a large audience. We wish Private Richards a speedy recovery.

#### RECEPTION CONCERT AT PENRHOS

A concert took place at Peniel Old School, Penrhos, under the auspices of the Central Reception Committee of Ystradgynlais, to give a rousing welcome to **Private Brychan Richards**, the son of Mr David Richards, Cae'rbonnt Abercrave who has been wounded by shrapnel in his right shoulder, and also had a very narrow escape from a bullet under his jaw. He was in the battle of Loos, and is now home on short leave from the Newcastle-under-Lyne Hospital. The concert was presided over by Mr W E Jones, Penrhos, and the following programme gone through —

Solo, Miss Maudie Watkins Abercrave, who, sang "Laddie in Khaki" in fine style. We shall hear more of this promising artist in the near future. Solo, "Unwaith etto'n, Nghymru Anwyl," Mr Oliver Jones, and Mr Tom Jones, Penrhos, gave a splendid rendering of "I godi'r hen wlad yn ei hol." Contralto solo, Miss Nellie Davies, Abercrave who gave "Isabella," in a very sweet manner Recitation, "Irishman and the donkey," Mr Roger Anthony; duett, Misses Watkins and Davies, "Springtime"

Now came the chief object of the meeting, namely presenting to Private Richards a medal, suitably inscribed and a purse of money. Mr W J I Thomas (schoolmaster), the energetic secretary of the reception committee, made the presentation in an appropriate speech. The Revs D Aubrey, Penrhos, and C J Pipe, Nantyllyn, also spoke, and the latter gave some reminiscences of his visit to Germany a few years ago. A few hearty words were also spoken by the rector, the Rev James Jones, who was present as a representative of the reception committee of Ystradgynlais. The speeches over, a stirring war poem by Alfa was recited by Mr W Griffiths. A song by Mr Oliver Jones and "Till the boys come home," by Miss Maude Watkins, which brought the house down, concluded the musical programme. A good collection was made at the end of the meeting. The accompanist was Mr Tom Pritchard, Minyrhos, who carried out his duties very efficiently. After the singing of "Hen Wlad fy Nhadau" a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close.

#### BALAD FILWROL

(Efelychiad Dai Cwm Dulais) Brychan Richards.

Ir gad aeth Brychan Richards  
Yn wrol iawn ei wedd,  
Fe aeth yn ysbryd Glyndwr  
I fyd y gwir a'r cledd;  
Dihunodd tan Llewelyn  
Yn ei angerddol fron,  
I'r gad aeth Brychan Richard  
Fel cawr dros Gymru Ion.

I'r gad aeth Brychan Richard  
Fel cawr gan lawenhau,  
A chydag ef o'r hread  
Aeth llawer Will a Dai;  
Er mwyn yr hen fynydd-deedd

A breintiau hread n gwlad,  
Dilynodd "Brych" y dewrion-  
I'r Gad I'r Gad!! I'r Gad!!

I'r gad aeth Brychan Richards  
Pob parch i'r serchog gawr,  
Boed iddo gwympo'r German  
A Mawer Uhlan mawr;  
Wrth gami clod Cwm Tawe  
Fe genir clod y wlad,  
Am ddanfon llawer Brychan  
Fel "Brych" i faes y gad.

Boed ysbryd hen wroniaid  
I'r hread oes i lawr,  
Rhaid brwydro dros gyfiawnder,  
Rhaid cwympo trais i'r llawr;  
Ymgodwch fechgyn ieuainc  
I gwrdda hawliau'r wlad,  
Dilynwch Brychan Richards  
Dros Gymru tua'r gad.

Mae genym ni ein rhyddid,  
Mae genym ni ein hedd,  
A rhaid amddiffyn heddyw  
Y cyfryw gyda'r cledd;  
Mae'r gelyn ar y bryniau  
Yn dal maingelau brad,—  
O blaid cyfiawnder fechgyn,  
Dilynwn "Brych" i'r gad.

Dilynwn gamrau arwyr  
Yr oesau dros y gwir,  
Rhaid chwifio'r faner eto  
Dros Iawnder hread tir;  
Nid teg weld traed yr estron  
Yn sathru Belgium fad,  
Er mwyn y genedl fechan  
Dilynwn "Brych" i'r gad.

Mae'r Almaen wedi sathru  
Pob rhyddid tan ei hread,  
Ac wedi cochi llwybrau  
A diniweidiol waed;  
Er mwyn y fam a'r baban,  
Er mwyn tangnefedd gwlad,  
Ac er mwyn dal y bradwr  
Awn gyda "Brych" i'r gad  
—ALFA.

## 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1916

**Private Brychan Richards** Cae'rbont, who, as our readers may know, was sent to Brecon Hospital a short time ago, returned home on Saturday last and we are sorry to say, not much better, and he was removed to Manchester Hospital.

## 6<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917

### WOUNDED IN ACTION: BRYCHAN RICHARDS

News has reached Mr and Mrs David Richards Caerlan Abercrave that their son **Private Brychan Richards** SWB has again been wounded rather badly in the face. He was taken to hospital at Rouen but has since been removed to Surrey, where he is now being treated. We wish him a speedy recovery.

**1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 1917**

**RECOVERING**

Private Brychan Richards of the South Wales Borderers, who is at present at Neath War Hospital, visited his home during the weekend. He is looking much improved and is making favourable progress.

**22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 1916**

**JIM DERMODY**

The friends of **Seaman Jim Dermody** of Ark Cottage are pleased to see him home once more. Dermody, who is now engaged on a mine sweeper in the North Sea, has had a week's leave of absence.

**29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1916**

On Monday evening at the Tabernacle Vestry an interesting presentation consisting of a fountain pen and a purse of money was made to **Mr James Dermody** of Ark Cottages, who was at home on a short leave. "Jim" is engaged as a mine sweeper "Somewhere in the North Sea".

**19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1916**

**DISCHARGED: JIM DERMODY**

**Able Seaman James Dermody**, who was engaged on a mine sweeper, has now been discharged from the service owing to ill health.

**17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1916**

**D REES**

**Private D Rees** of the Army Veterinary Corps, who is at his home in Oddfellows Street Ystradgynlais, received the usual present from the local reception committee during the week. He was kicked by a mule in Egypt and is now recuperating.

**30<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1916**

**COLBREN PRESENTATION: HENRYWHITE**

On Thursday and Friday evening last, the Council School was filled to its utmost, when the school concert was held. There was an excellent programme of action songs, drills and recitations and the manner in which the children rendered their various parts reflected great credit on the work done by the head teacher and his staff. Everyone was quite satisfied with the entertainment, and many expressed the wish that, it would be repeated. From such an excellent programme it is invidious to select any items, but the following delighted the audience:- .....

The president for Thursday evening was J. E. Moore Gwyn, Esq., but in his absence, the chair was taken by Mr Rees Jeffreys, Penygraig.

Friday evening's concert was presided over by (Councillor David Lewis, J.P., and at this meeting **Private Henry White**, a local soldier who has seen service in Gallipoli, Egypt, and France, and now on sick leave, was presented with a clock on behalf of the residents of Colbren. It should be mentioned that all the Colbren boys who have been on active service have been presented and honoured with a grand concert, largely contributed to by the school children each time. There are between 70 and 80 men from the village serving with the colours, and already 15 have been presented.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**FURLOUGH: HENRY WHITE and JAMES VALE**

Two of our local boys were home on leave this week, namely Gunner **James Vale** and **Private Henry White**. The former is with the RFA at Wiltshire, whilst the latter is stationed with the Mons. Regiment at Kimmel Park Rhyl. Both boys look well.

**10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1917**

**BROTHERS: JOHNNY and STAN THOMAS**

On leave this week from France, is **Private Johnny Thomas**, of the Royal Marines, son of Mr and Mrs John Thomas, Oddfellows Street. Private Thomas joined the Marines two years ago, and after about nine months training at Deal was drafted out to Salonika. He was afterwards brought back to France, where he has seen some heavy fighting. He was granted

ten days leave, and returned on Sunday morning last. He was presented at the concert at Sardis on Thursday evening last by the Reception Committee. News has also been received that **Gunner Stan Thomas**, of the R.G.A, a brother of Private Johnny Thomas, who was formerly a photographer, has passed highly in a telephonic and signalling examination. He has only been a soldier of the King for about six months, and is stationed in Yorkshire. He received a high tribute from his officer, Captain J Martin. His Ystradgynlais friends will wish him further laurels.

**24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**BROTHERS: ON LEAVE**

**Gunner Stanley Thomas** who is with a Telegraph section of the RGA has come home on leave after being out in France for two years. His brother, **Marine Johnny Thomas**, has also been home. Both are sons of Mr and Mrs John Thomas Oddfellows Street.

**24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 1917**

**WILLIAM EDWARD REES**

**Private William Edward Rees** of Gnoll Road Godre'rgraig was given a public welcome by his neighbours on his return home from an Edinburgh hospital after having been wounded in France. Private Rees has also been previously wounded in the Dardanelles but is now making progress from his last battering and is quite cheerful.

**12<sup>th</sup> MAY 1917**

**REES JONES MEETS EMRYS JONES**

Another local boy home on leave last week was **Seaman Rees Jones**, son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Jones, Twyn-yr-Ysgol, Graigymrched. He looked remarkably well, and was warmly received by a host of friends. He has two brothers in the Army, both with the R.F.A., now in France.

**Seaman Emrys Jones**, also of Graigymrched, son of Mr and Mrs John Jones, was home last week and it was quite a surprise for him to see his old friend Rees Jones, two years having elapsed since they had joined the Navy together, but were soon separated. (Emrys Jones = His boat has been torpedoed)

**13<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1917**

**WILLIE BELL**

Ordinary Seaman **Willie Bell**, son of Mr and Mrs John Bell, Alltygrug, was on HMS Drake when she was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland, 18 men and 1 officer were killed by the explosion and the vessel was run into shallow water where she sank. Seaman Bell expects to be home on leave shortly.

**Private Henry Roberts**, son of Mr David Roberts, Church Road Pantteg has been home on draft leave, as he expects to be sent on Foreign Service. A few weeks ago he was admitted to hospital suffering from frost bite.

**28<sup>th</sup> JULY 1917**

**PRIVATE JONES**

There was a good attendance at the Wern Chapel on Wednesday evening, when Mr. D. E. Parry presided over a presentation meeting.....

**Private Jones** is the third son of Mr and Mrs David Jones, Wesley Terrace, and enlisted with the South Wales Borderers at the outbreak of war. He has taken part practically in all the big fights in France and Belgium, and has been fortunate enough to come through without a scratch. At the end of last year he volunteered for service with the Tanks, and he says, he has been "for many a ride inside, but it is not a joy ride." After a well-earned furlough, Private Jones returns to France on Friday with the best wishes of his many friends for a safe and speedy return. Three other members of the family are serving their country, a sister being with the V.A.D.





**1<sup>st</sup> JUNE 1918**

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**EVAN JOHN SAMUEL**

**Private Evan John Samuel** came home last Friday from Salonica, after having served nearly three years in France and Salonica. He was drafted out with his unit, the East Lancashire Fusiliers, to cover the Serbian retreat and he has seen some hard fighting. He joined up in 1914 and is the son of Mr and Mrs J E Samuel Clare Road. He is now on sick leave.

**8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1918**

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**EDWIN JONES**

Many friends were glad to welcome home on furlough the beginning of the week, **Corporal Edwin Jones**, late Wern Road. Corporal Jones saw some strenuous fighting in Salonica where he lost three fingers. He has latterly been with his regiment in Ireland. Corporal Jones looks every inch a soldier.

**22<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 1918**

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**TOM WHITE**

**Seaman Tom White**, son of Mr and Mrs Tom White Gorof, general manager of the G W R Swansea Valley Canal, has come home on furlough. His ship was recently torpedoed whilst 400 miles from land and he had a very trying experience.

**6<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

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**J R FINDLAY**

Amongst the visitors to Ystalyfera this week is **Private J R Findlay** of the Imperial Forces, who has been under treatment at Tunbridge Wells. He was recently wounded in France whilst on night guard being struck on the head by a Hun. A number of our men were killed in this way and Private Findlay has had part of his skull removed. He is now recuperating and visited his Aunt Mrs Chappell, Boot Stores.

**24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

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**IDRIS WATKIN – V R PERCIVAL – J R FINDLAY**

Mrs E Chappell Wern Boot Stores has had three interesting visitors from the Antipodes, who have done their bit with the Anzacs in France. They were:

**Bombardier Idris Watkins** of the Australian Field Artillery; **Corporal V R Percival** also of the A.F.A and **Private J R Findlay**, of the Australian Infantry, who is now returning to Australia after having received wounds in action.

**27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

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**JANE LEWIS**

**Miss Jane Lewis**, daughter of Mr and Mrs David Lewis 4 College Row Ystradgynlais, has come on furlough. She is with the W.A.A.C. and is at Bloomsbury as an officer's canteen attendant with the R F A.

**27<sup>th</sup> JULY 1918**

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**BROTHERS W RODERICK and MICHAEL J EVANS**

**Sniper W Roderick Evans**, of the —th Division, Sniping Company, son of Mr and Mrs James Evans 12 Darren Road, is home on sick furlough. He joined up in the 1<sup>st</sup> January of the war, and has seen some hard fighting at Arras, Somme, and Messines. He suffered from shock after the Somme battles, and was at Messines at the explosion of the mines. He has now had shrapnel wounds and has been sent home for a few days after having been treated at a French hospital. He has seen 23 months service in France, and before joining, was a furnace man.

His brother, **Michael J Evans**, joined the R.N.V.R.

**12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1918**

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**EVANS BROTHERS**

Among a number of other navy-men, whose names were mentioned last week, as having been home on leave, another name should be added, namely, **A.S. Michael John Evans**, Darren Road, who has been on active service for the last two years. He has visited America five

times in recent months, and has also been several times to the West Indies, on one of the celebrated ships of the Navy. His brother, **Private W Roderick Evans** was also home on leave recently and despite his three years hard campaigning he looked well, and full of enthusiasm. Their father, Mr James Evans has taken up work of national importance.

**12<sup>th</sup> JULY 1919**

**DISCHARGED: RODERICK EVANS**

**Mr Roderick Evans**, son of Mr and Mrs James Evans Darren Road, who has now been discharged after three years' service with the colours, has commenced business as a general haulier.

**10<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**WILLIE THOMAS**

**Signaller Willie Thomas**, son of Mr and Mrs T L Thomas Crown Cottages, is also on leave and returns today (Friday). He is on board one of the submarines that rescued the personnel of the hospital ship "Warilda" when she was recently sunk.

**SEAMAN WHO WAS SAVED FROM THE "WARILDA"**

**7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918 CAMBRIAN DAILY LEADER**

**SWANSEA SURVIVOR**

Among those rescued from the ambulance transport Warilda was Evan Richard Lewis AB, Royal Naval Division, son of Mr and Mrs John Lewis St. Helen's Avenue Swansea.

The news reached them on Sunday morning, conveyed by a young fellow named **W Thomas of Crown Cottage Ystradgynlais**, who was on the patrol boat that rescued a number of the men. He had himself carried Lewis on his back from the sinking ship.

AB Evan Richard Lewis, who is 21 years old, was formerly employed as a clerk in the GWR office at Swansea. He joined the Navy about two years ago and 12 months later was transferred to the Army. He suffered from trench fever and spent some time in hospital. Two months ago he returned to France and it is only a fortnight since he received shrapnel wounds in the legs and suffered a compound fracture of the right leg, which necessitated amputation.

AB Lewis is now in an English hospital. A brother, Private William Lewis of the Welsh, is now in France. Their other brother, Mt John Lewis, is a driver on the L and NWR.

**17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918**

**BROTHERS: HAROLD and JAMES ANDREWS**

**Flight Cadet Harold Andrews**, of the R A F son of Mr and Mrs R J Andrews, Butchers' Arms, has come home on leave from Eastbourne Shepley, where he is being trained for his commission. His brother, **Driver James Andrews** of the A S C, who is in London, is also home.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**WILLIAM EDWARD HARRIS**

**Private William Edward Harris** Gnoll Road Godre'rgraig is home on leave for the first time for two years. He has seen service with the Egyptian Force in Salonica and has also been in France.

**14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1918**

**JONATHAN HARRIS**

**Mr Jonathan Harris**, of Colbren, a seaman on the new ship HMS Ben-bow, which is at present stationed at Portsmouth, was home for a few days' furlough last week-end, and spent a happy time among his relatives and friends in the village. Mr Harris, who appears to be quite fit and well, is a deacon at Moriah Baptist Church, and was present at the services on Sunday. After the evening service he motored to Neath in order to catch the night express for Portsmouth so that he could rejoin his ship on Monday morning. He was given an enthusiastic send off.

## ON A LIGHTER NOTE

### WELSH SONGWRITERS

#### "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit-Bag, and Smile, Smile, Smile"

**Chorus** (sung twice after each verse)

Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,  
And smile, smile, smile,  
While you've a lucifer to light your fag,  
Smile, boys, that's the style.  
What's the use of worrying?  
It never was worthwhile, so  
Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag,  
And smile, smile, smile.

The full name of a World War I marching song, published in 1915 in London. It was written by Welsh songwriters, **George Henry Powell** under the pseudonym of "George Asaf", and set to music by his brother **Felix Powell**. A play presented by the National Theatre recounts how these music hall stars rescued the song from their rejects pile and re-scored it to win a wartime competition for a marching song. The song became very popular, boosting British morale despite the horrors of that war. It was one of a large number of music hall songs aimed at maintaining morale, recruiting for the forces, or defending Britain's war aims.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> AUGUST 1918

#### VISIT of an AEROPLANE

Great excitement prevailed in the vicinity on Sunday last when an aeroplane, piloted by **Flight Lieutenant Hamilton Morgan** son of Alderman and Mrs M W Morgan Bryntawe, appeared. His visit was not a long one and he returned to Shrewsbury via Llandrindod, where he alighted.

On Tuesday the aeroplane appeared again but this time descended on the mountain slope near Bryn Oer. As soon as the news spread, hundreds of spectators appeared on the scene, some bringing lunch, making it quite a picnic. Lieutenant Morgan and his friend the observer lunched at his home and returned in about two hours time. Several snapshots were taken before its departure. We are given to understand that another visit is expected in the near future.

All eyes at Ystalyfera were turned skywards on Tuesday, when Lieutenant Hamilton Morgan, Abercrave made some flights over the place. Pantteg people vowed that the machine came as far as Pantteg, and no further, whilst some men on Tirbach Colliery were equally certain that the aeroplane turned round over the Swan Bridge! The graceful movements of the plane caused many to remark that if they had the opportunity they would fly too! One old lady said she would go up if the airman promised to do nothing but fly respectably, and undertook not to loop the loop.

(Lieutenant Morgan was an old Ystradgynlais county schoolboy and was the first British airman to cross the Austrian lines in Italy)

### 17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1918

Hundreds of people gathered together on the mountain above Gwaunclawdd Colliery on Saturday to witness another aeroplane flight. Flight Lieutenant Hamilton Morgan, son of Alderman and Mrs Morgan Bryntawe, was the pilot. After having lunched at his home he returned back to Shrewsbury. The crowd of onlookers were greatly interested in the manoeuvring, more so because Lieutenant Morgan is an Abercrave boy and the only competent airman in the place.



**16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

**ST. DAVID'S YSTALYFERA**

A memorial thanksgiving service was held at **St. David's Church** on Monday evening, when the sacred edifice was packed to the doors. The service commenced with the singing of "All people that on earth do dwell" after which the Creed up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Collect was chanted. "Jesu, Lover of My Soul," was then impressively sung to the tune "Aberystwyth," the Vicar following with an address. In the course of his remarks, Mr Jones said they should tender heartfelt thanks to God for having permitted them to see the end of the most terrible war in history. It was more difficult to acknowledge the Lord than in defeat but the large congregation testified to the fact that they gave thanks in the hour of victory. The Rev gentleman referred to the boys that had gone from Ystalyfera many of whom, prior to joining, had never been outside the Swansea Valley. But when they had taken part in this great struggle of the nations, they had more than held their own, and every man that had had the opportunity, had gained distinction. They had shown traits of character that would be handed down for generations to come. Not a service had passed during the war at which they had not offered prayers on behalf of the boys, and for peace.

**16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

**ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

A thanksgiving service for peace will be held at the **English Congregational Church** on Sunday, when service men, on leave or discharged, relatives of fallen heroes, Boy Scouts and the Ystalyfera Choir will attend.

16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918  
ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
YSTALYFERA

Next Sunday, Nov. 17th, at 6 30 p m  
**Thanksgiving Service for Peace**

The Officers of the above Church heartily invite to this service:

Service men—on Leave or Discharged

Relatives of Sailors and Soldiers now serving, and of those who have fallen

Members of the Auxiliary Services, Ambulance men

The 1st Swansea Valley Troop and the Ystalyfera Boy Scouts will attend, and the buglers will sound "The Last Poet."

The Ystalyfera Choir (Mr Jack James) will sing.

Preacher: Mr B. C. WILLIAMS.

Mr R. C. Williams will lecture on Tuesday, 19th inst., at 8 p.m.  
Subject: "The League of Nations practically considered."

All invited Silver Collection towards Soldiers Xmas Fund.

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The first PEACE HOOTER was blown at **PWLLBACH**, by Mr Evan Williams, surface foreman. Now when Mr Williams is asked what he did in the war-----

The Central Cinema had exhibited an illuminated banner with the words  
“PEACE AND VICTORY WITH HONOUR”

Among the banners across the road on the Wern were two Revolutionary Red Flags, Tureg bags and even a German flag; whilst along side was the ferocious Welsh Dragon on one side and a Teddy bear on the other.

The Wern boys took about ten minutes to make an excellent model of a tank.

### **16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

### **ABERCRAVE**

The news of the signing of the armistice was heard with great joy on Monday when the hooters gave out the glad tidings. They were blown for an hour of more and those of the railway engines joined in the chorus on their journeys. Shooting followed and church bells rang, while the inhabitants quickly bedecked their houses with flags. The workmen were all granted a holiday on Tuesday and the shopkeepers, who were not going to be deprived of theirs, closed their premises and joined in the rejoicings.

### **16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

### **CWMTWRCH – CWMLLYNFELL**

Thursday evening was the occasion of great excitement in the Cwm when the unconfirmed report was circulated to the effect that the armistice with Germany had been signed. Immediately the sirens and hooters down the Valley were heard, the Cwm children commandeered old tins, kettles, and anything that could be made to produce discordant music, and cheered the Allied cause, saying at the same time some terrible things concerning the Kaiser. When the newsboys, however, came up, minus the papers the excitement died down.

On Monday it was renewed when the official news came through, and bunting and anything that would hang across the road were flown in the rain, even to the week's washing in some cases. On Tuesday morning, too, an additional excitement was afforded when one of the Ystalyfera bands, together with the Boy Scouts and Volunteers paraded the Lower Cwm.

### **16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1918**

### **YSTRADGYNLAIS NOTES**

Thursday last will never be forgotten by the inhabitants of Ystradgynlais. When the first rumours of peace were circulated the hooters were at once blown, church bells tolled, squibs let off, and bunting put out and people cheered and sang in the streets. The children were also exuberant in their joy, and sang patriotic airs. A search light was lit at the cinema and flashed round in all directions. On Monday the hooters again spread the news, and hundreds thronged the streets.

On Tuesday a band from Ystalyfera, together with the Boy Scouts and the Volunteers under Sergeant Rhys Rees, paraded the streets. The procession wended its way to the Mason's Arms, where a concert was held. The band, under Mr Paul Evans, gave selections, and Mr J Roberts, Glantawe, sang and the gathering united in singing "Rule Britannia" and "God Save the King". The National Anthem was again played outside with the Volunteers at the present arms. The parade then marched to Cwmtwrch and back to Ystalyfera.

## **HOW PEACE WAS WELCOMED BY THE GRAND FLEET**

The silent Navy celebrated victory and peace with a sudden and synchronised volume of sound which startled the country over a radius of a hundred miles. The towns and villages which skirt the shores (against which the Great Armada is at anchor) were tiring of their own jubilation when this mighty volume of sound from the ships' guns was loosed.

Battleships and cruisers, torpedo boats and mine layers, stunt ships and motor patrols, minesweepers, coalers, trawlers and pickets all gave voice at a synchronised moment and with the possible exception of the great bombardments in France no noise probably ever equalled the joyous roar of the Fleet. At 7 o'clock the "splicing of the mainbrace" or in the language of the landsmen, the serving out of the rum ration, took place; at 8 the ship burst into light, and from a thirty-mile line there rose the myriad notes of sirens, from the deep-throated hooter of the battleship to the strange wolfish "woof" of the torpedo-boats. A hundred searchlights crossed and re crossed the sky, flares were lit, star shells fired and in some of the greater ships even a firework display was given.

### **MR PHILIP GIBB'S DESCRIPTION OF PEACE AT THE FRONT**

Monday night, for the first time since August in the first year of the war, there was no light of gunfire in the sky, no sudden stab of flame through the darkness, no long spreading glow above the black trees, where for four years of nights human beings were being smashed to death.

It was silent all along the front with the beautiful silence of nights of peace. We did not stand listening to the dull rumbling of artillery at work, which has been the undertone of all closer sounds for 1.500 nights, nor have sudden heart-beats at explosions shaking earth and air, nor say in a whisper to oneself, "Curse those guns."

Other sounds rose from the towns and fields in the yellowing twilight, and in the deepening shadow world of the day of armistice. They were sounds of human joy. Men were singing somewhere on the roads, and their voices rang out gladly. Bands were playing, as all day on the way to Mons I heard their music ahead of the marching columns. Bugles were blowing.

In the villages from which the enemy had gone out that morning round about Mons, crowds of figures surged in the narrow streets and English laughter rose above the silvery chatter of women and children. British soldiers were still on the march with their guns and their transport and their old field cookers, and all along their lines I heard those men talking to each other gaily, as though something had loosened their tongues, and made them garrulous. Motor cars streaked through the Belgian streets, dodging traffic, and now and then, when night fell, rockets were fired from them, and there were gusts of laughter from young officers, shooting off Verey pistols into the darkness, to celebrate the end of hostilities by this symbol of rising stars, which did not soar so high as their spirits.

From dark towns like Tournai and Lille these rockets rose and burned a little while with white light. Our aviators flew like bats in the dusk, skimming tree-tops and gables doing Puck-like gambols above the tawny sunset, looping and spiralling and falling in steep dives which looked like death for them until they flattened out and rose again; and they, too- these boys who have been reprieved from the menace which was close to them on every night--fired flares and rockets, which dropped down to the crowds of French and Flemish people who cheered to them from below.

Late into the night there were sounds of singing and laughter from open windows in towns which had been all shuttered, with people hiding in their cellars a week ago or less and British officers sat down to French pianos and romped about the keys and crashed out chords, and led the chorus of men who wanted to sing any old song.

And in the midst of all this sound of exultation men had sudden silences, thinking back to the things which have passed.

**Mr Philip Gibbs in the "Daily Chronicle"**



YEARGROUP's Collection of Postcards

## **NOVEMBER 1918**

Mrs Lloyd George addressing the London Welsh Women's Temperance Union at the Welsh Chapel King's Cross said many people spoke of the vote having been given to women: she would rather say they had earned it.

So far she had not heard of any Member of Parliament who was willing to give up his seat to a lady, but perhaps that would come later.

We feel she concluded that the war is coming to an end. We cannot say how soon it will end but we have a feeling that it is near.

**What the new world will be like will depend very largely on how the women will act.....**

### **15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 1919**

### **SILENT TRIBUTE TO THE DEAD**

For the brief space of two minutes on Tuesday morning last, the King's wishes regarding the silent tribute to the dead was observed. The hooters at the collieries and works were blown and all railway traffic at the Gurnos junction was brought to a standstill. So far as the streets were concerned, they bore the usual appearance but the buses and a number of motor lorries drew up and did not proceed until the time was passed. The church bell was tolled and the edifice was open for those who desired to attend for silent prayer.