

## REMEMBERING PENTREDŴR

From the first day of March 1945 till the 30th March 1968, BRYN GOLAU was my home. Over fifty years have flown by since then and surely there is a great deal of rust on the cogs by now, but the memories, I hope, are reasonably clear and accurate, and here are a few of them.

### HOME

Whitewashed cottage, four windows, a door in the middle, two up two down. Tied to it four outhouses - one a workshop to keep motor-bikes, one a house for the chickens, a coal house and on the end a house for the pig - although no pig lived there during our time there, if ever! That was the skeleton of the house. Gradually, an extension was built, a small kitchen with a room behind as a washroom/utility - dolly tub and mangle - and later, a bathroom. Some distance from the house, the 'ty bach' (toilet) and further along a shed that my eldest brother, Cyril, used to renovate his vintage motor-bikes - a lifetime passion. Although the amenities were pretty basic, the biggest problem was that there was no water in the house. In fact, we had to walk down a field to a well and carry the water to the house in buckets. That was a family chore each Sunday night, to have a supply of water for my mother's washday on Monday, and many other days as well. Not an exciting job and one which rose tempers on wintry days when you slipped and spilled half of the water and you had to go back and re-fill again! Some relief came when my brother bought an engine capable of pumping the water up to the house. Ah! the joy of turning the tap! A pity the joy could not have been extended to 'pulling the chain' for it remained a bucket and spade job till we moved. To tell the truth, it was a farce to talk of a 'bathroom' for there was no water in the taps until we went to the well and started up the engine! The owners of the house were the Robertson family of Llantysilio Hall and we paid rent to them on a very important date in the calendar.

I don't know how many acres of land there were with the house, but there were 20+ sheep grazing, hay to harvest, chickens and a dog to keep. An evening to look forward to was when a friend from Ty Canol, Eglwyseg, came to 'talk sums' about buying and selling, for we knew that there would be a 'knife and fork supper' after the bartering, before bed. It was important to get the best outcome as it was a substantial contribution to the family's income.

### THE SCHOOL

I only had to follow the path down two fields, and I was there. Must be careful to watch where I put my feet in the second field as the farmer kept cows there and they made for mud where the ground was wet. What do I remember about the school itself? Two rooms, coal fire, milk melting before them Winter time, two school yards, 'ty bach' (toilet) on the top yard. "Ga i fynd i top iard sir"? Sometimes with haste!

Miss Charles, the kind infant teacher, then Miss Menna Hughes (then Mrs. Davies), her playing the piano. Blackboard and chalk, lessons about nature on the radio and then the country walks to find those things which we'd heard about. The Headmaster listening to the cricket on the radio at break times. The Headmaster and teacher walking in the snow up to the school from The Britannia Inn where the car refused to co-operate.

Handwriting tests on Friday afternoons, and much praise for the neatest. Agony of the 'long divisions' and more homework till the penny dropped - at long last! Sewing afternoons in the little class, "We shouldn't really be sewing today because the King has died". I never understood why we shouldn't.

Going to sing in a concert in the Memorial Hall, Llangollen, with two other girls, Mavis and Doreen Patrick, two sopranos and me an alto. Representing the school - asked to sing again, 'encore' they said, not realising that none of us understood the word nor the significance of the honour.

Dr. Sybil Edwards, School Doctor, calling to check our backs, eyes, feet and eyes. Sometimes the dentist too. Prayer before dinner. Prayer before we left for home.

## **CHAPEL**

There were two chapels, a Methodist and a Wesleyan. We were members in the Methodist - Chapel Bethesda.

What do I remember about the Chapel? A chapel, a vestry with a boiler room behind, attached to the chapel house. Long wooden benches. Modulator on the wall. A cupboard full of tea cups, plates and teapots. Tables brought in when required. 'Seiat' meetings and various societies held their gatherings there. Refreshments after funerals. Tea at the table there after Taid's funeral, Nain in her best black and a very smart hat with a pearl pin on the side.

We had to 'pay for your seat' in the chapel in those days. We were on the left, half way down. Don't dare be late and show yourself up. Three times most Sundays, ten in the morning, Sunday School at two and evenings at six. Rigorous work being religious. Light by oil lamps of an evening. Smell of paraffin. Harmonium. Having the opportunity to play it at a very young age thanks to the encouragement of Mrs. Eluned Evans and her ongoing support.

My first attempt on the organ came during a service taken by a preacher from Rhos who was reduced to tears mid-way through his sermon and prayer. Quite an unusual occurrence for a young girl (not used to displays of emotion). Deacons in the 'Set Fawr'.

"Yn bresenol fe wneir y casgliad" ("Presently we shall do the collection"). Richard Evans's melodious bass voice announcing the collection – he joined with his brother Eddie Evans and

together they formed the foundation of bass in the singing, which was four-part. There were four organists who took a turn in rota at that time.

Sunday School trips. Rhyl, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Southport, New Brighton. Sunday School Eisteddfod, an important date for the chapel when we could show our talent and pit our wits against the other chapels within the circuit. Bethesda Chapel Eisteddfod. A stage appeared as if by magic before the pulpit. Mrs. Eirwen Jones, the wife of the Rev. Llywelyn Jones as the music adjudicator but being her namesake gave me no favours or more prizes. Shame.

My sister, Glenys, sang 'Y Deryn Pur' - the first time she'd ever sung in public as an adult. After the Sunday services, everyone stood outside in two circles, women by the steps and the men across the road by the fence. Good sermon? Poor sermon?

## **LEISURE**

Cricket and hopscotch with the village children on the road by the White Hart - not a car in sight. With my friend, Gillian, we'd walk along the Eglwyseg road to the Eglwyseg church then towards Tanyfron and down the hill till we came to this house which we thought was derelict, Pandy. Here there was a stream with a wooden bridge over it and I found the setting quite magical - I wrote a short verse about it.

"Dim ond darn o bren digelfydd ddengys greithiau gwynt a glaw, Tanddi'r arian ddwr yn llifo beunydd tua'r Ddyfrdwy draw".

Along the field by Penclawdd - Cae Dentur (where fleece were dried?) and home. Wonder what we talked about? Gillian was a quiet, extremely clever girl, so.....

MANWEB came and changed our lives. Lighting, heating, no kettle on the fire. Television - the eye on the world.

## **COMMUNICATION**

If I needed to send a message home I would telephone Elza Post and she would shout up the field at the back of her house. Someone always heard her. Mrs. Eluned Evans - I remember her saying there was some sort of system where the houses from across the valley could 'send a message' - some kind of semaphore possibly?!

## **SETTING THE CLOCK**

Mr. Bond walking up the field past our house on the dot of eight to catch the minibus to go to the quarry to work. Aunty Myfanwy hanging out the clothes on a Monday morn, barely light.

## **LANGUAGE**

English was the language on the yard, although it was believed that it was a Welsh school, and a strong desire by the Headmaster to make it so. Few families had Welsh within the home, but those children who came to live there from away were more than likely to leave with Welsh language skills. Those children from Welsh homes retained the language to this day.

## **NOISES:**

Birds, motor-bikes, Fergie tractor, my young brother, Gareth, standing on the fence before the house singing his head off, Eddie Evans whistling all day on his tractor, someone calling the cows in for milking.

## **EXCITEMENT:**

Lorry crashing above the house - full of eggs and chickens. Lucky it did not land on the roof of the house.

## **SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY BASE**

Flourishing W.I. which I did not wish to join - even though somebody kindly bought me a membership - I tried hard not to make use of it (no disrespect). Whist Nights. Celebrating and bringing in the New Year. All the villagers made an effort - writing 'topicals,' dressing up, dancing, skiffle groups, young and old joining hands for Auld Lang Syne.