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## Website link below

<https://gwrachtimeline.co.uk>

Here is the website link so you can find the site easily.

## Get Involved

We are looking for people to get involved with the project by providing:

- \* old photos of the village
- \* their memories of the village
- \* War records of their relatives
- \* history of associations, e.g. scouts, cubs, cadets, marching bands etc.

## Latest News:

I'm starting to gather a bit of pace on the History website in the last month. In that time a number of articles/videos have been added to the site, namely:

- \* A video of the Scouts carnival in 1981 which also shows the Minorettes marching through the village.
- \* A video of the Minorities Jazz Band competition in the school field, again from 1981. There are four Jazz bands shown two from England and two from Swansea. (I don't know who won though)
- \* A great article about William Arthur Jenkins, written by his daughter Sylvia Jenkins and her partner Paul Sparks.

## In progress are the following articles and videos:

- \* A video of a coronation jubilee celebration which took place in Hoel Nedd in 2002.
- \* A video of the last service to be held Siloh Chapel before it closed. The film was taken by Jackie Bowen.
- \* A timeline of the main events of Capel Bach (St Mary's Church) from 1695 to 2021, that 326 years of history right there.

## Looking to the months ahead:

- \* The route of Ffordd Y Ffeiriad the track that runs between St Mary's church in Blaengwrach and St John the Baptist's church in Glyncorrwg.
- \* Also one of the main characters who would have used the above route, Ffeiriad Coch (the Red Priest) who would have travelled on Ffordd Y Ffeiriad to hold services at both churches. He was a bit of a character by all accounts.

## Visualising the village:

One of the targets for the Timeline team which we discussed in our first meeting was the importance of visualising the history of the village. There are a number of ways to do this, for example Videos, 3D Images, Drawings, Old Photographs and Models. In this section of the newsletter I would like to talk about model making.

At the start of the Covid lockdown I thought a useful thing for me to do with my free time under lockdown was to try my hand at model making. I had previously made some toys 20 odd years ago, so had a rough idea of what to do.

I choose the Venallt ironworks to model first, as that had a number of different buildings I could work on to build up my experience. It was a bit of trial and error at first, I had to decide on what scale to use, and in the end I went for Double-O-Gauge (scale 1:76.2), as that was a good size for railway engines, not too big but also not too small either. Then I had to choose what wood to use, how to join the pieces together and how to make it look realistic.

Once I had cut the wood to the right size and glued it together, to make it look realistic I used paper printed from a photograph of the engine house, and for the roof tiles I found something online to use and stuck these to the wood. The same for the cooling tower I printed from the photos I took of the bottom section of the tower and for the bricks I again found something online. (Photo 1)

Not being entirely satisfied with the outcome, although it didn't look too bad. I then experimented with clay, having looked at some online youtube videos. For this I used clay glued to the wood and scored to look like stones or tiles and then painted. This gave a more realistic finish to the building. (Photo 3)

You can see some of the results in the pictures below, not too bad for a first go I think, although you may disagree.



With winter just around the corner, I think I will try to finish the project off, I'll keep you informed on how I get on.

But, it did get me thinking as well, **I wondered if anyone else would be interested in model making and making models of the old building of the village.** It's not too difficult, as you can see, even I can do it. There is not a great expense for materials or tools, so not a huge outlay to start and it's quite a fun thing to do.

**Let me know if you would be interested?**

You never know, we could even start a model making group up.

## From South Yorkshire to South Wales:

Latest news from Michael Cole from South Yorkshire who was writing his degree Dissertation on Pentreclwydau colliery. If you remember he asked the people of the village for their memories of the colliery by way of a questionnaire, we also helped him with Photos of the colliery. So I'd like to thank Harry Caswell, Glyn Davies and Joff Whaite for their support of Michael.

Now the good news, he achieved a first class degree, and has allowed us to use his dissertation as an article in our Timeline website. So congratulations Michael on your success and thank you for your contribution to our website.

**"I just wanted to update you now that I have received the mark for my dissertation (90%) and my final degree classification (First Class Honours)".**

## Ffordd Y Ffeiriad:

One of the things that has piqued my interest over the last 2 -3 months has been the research I have done on the road between St Mary's church in Blaengwrach and the mother church St. John the Baptist church in the parish of Glynccorrwg.

I first became aware of the path whilst reading Dr. Rhys Philips book "The History of the Vale of Neath", a book I would highly recommend if you can get a copy of it. The track was used by the people of Blaengwrach to worship in Glynccorrwg church, as in those day's people had to worship in their own parish church and as there was no church in Blaengwrach they had to travel to Glynccorrwg, or be fined 12 pence, a lot of money in those day's. Once Y Capel Bach was built in circa 1700, then the priest of Glynccorrwg would travel to Blaengwrach to carry out services, hence the name of the track Ffordd y Ffeiriad (Way of the Priest).

In order to understand the route of the track I had to refer to old maps and especially the Tithe maps, as the known route, I believe, has been lost over time. The track out of Glynccorrwg was quite easy to identify as there was only one track shown that went in the direction of Blaengwrach. The route from St. Mary's church was a bit more difficult as there were a number of way's to get to Glynccorrwg, e.g. by the Parish road, along the valley of the Gwrach brook or up past Tai Brics and through the forestry.

I have not quite completed the research yet but it looks like the most likely route was via the Parish Road. Apparently the Parish road did not just go to Rhigos, as what I remember, but it branched to the right towards the old farmhouse called Blaengwrach. Due to all the mines and opencast working above the village the road is, I believe, now no longer visible. If anyone has any photos or information of this part of the parish road then please can you let me know.

One of the other clues to the direction of the path is a pile of stones on top of Craig y Llyn called Cairn Ffeiriad which I believe the priests would use as a point of reference. From this point the road dropped down into Glynccorrwg or if you went the other way dropped down towards Blaengwrach.

I have attached some screenshots of the various clues to the route of the track below:

**From Blaengwrach****From Glyncorrwg**

Wouldn't it be great if we could organise an annual walk to Glyncorrwg as a way of celebrating the dedication and determination of our ancestors in walking over Craig y Llyn to worship.

Perhaps if anyone from St Mary's church is reading this newsletter they could get in touch to see what could be organised.

**A call to Arms:**

**Anyone interested in writing an article for the website or would like to get involved in some way, we would only be too grateful to hear from you.**