Yma **Hyd**

Blaengwrach and Cwmgwrach Timeline Project

merry christmas

Work to date:

The Timeline team has now been running for nearly 2 years and in that time quite a lot has been achieved.

- 🔴 The Website now contains **45** articles, from industry, to Personnel stories, Religion, and much more. ✓
- 🔴 The Village Timeline has **42** entries. ✓
- 🔴 This is the **6th** Newsletter. ✓

Latest Articles:

The last 2 months has seen the three articles on St. Mary's church being added to the website, I hope you have found them informative and interesting. (see next page)

We also recorded Gary Jones and Glyn Davies talking about their memories of the High Street and work. I really enjoyed doing this and hope to do more in the future.

Latest Articles (cont.):

The first article looked at the life of one of the most notorious Vicars of Ystradyfodwg (Rhondda Valley) and curate of Glyncorrwg and Blaengwrach, namely Y Ffeiriad Coch. (The Red-Haired Priest).

The second article looked at the route the priests would have taken from Glyncorrwg to carry out services at Blaengwrach called Ffordd Y Ffeiriad. (The Way or Route of the Priests)

The third article on the 400 year old history of Y Capel Bach (St. Mary's Church) has taken me a long time to put together, and I have relied heavily of the work carried out by the following:

*   D. Rhys Philips in his book "The History of the Vale of Neath".

*   Roger Lee Brown called "Through Cloud and Sunshine".

*   I have also found articles online to explain some of the religious laws of the time and found newspaper articles in The British Newspaper Archive and the National Library of Wales newspaper archive which gives you a more personnel history of the Chapel.

*   I hope you will enjoy these articles as much as I did piecing them together.

Tit Bit's:

> **GLYNNEATH.**
> On Sunday, the houses here were inundated, roads rendered impassable, bridges injured, the canal in several places filled with *debris*, and some of the chapels almost unapproachable. The water found its way into Mr W. Davies, the baker's, cellar, in which were 35 sacks of flour, a large quantity of tobacco, fruit, &c., all of which were injured. The bridge near the station was so injured that no cart can pass over. Many houses at Cwmgwrach and Pontwalby were injured. At Maes-y-Cwndrid the water in the houses was over five feet deep.

> JAMES.—THOMAS.—On the 12th inst., at Resolven Church, by the Rev. David Griffiths, M.A., Mr. David James, of the Venallt, to Miss Mary Thomas, of the Miners' Arms, Cwmgwrach, in the parish of Resolven.

for the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust

NOTES

1   *Morgannwg,* xxx (1986), 71; xxxi (1987), 84-5; xxxii (1988), 90; and xxxiv (1990), 94.

Blaengwrach, **West Glamorgan (SN 86 05)**

A survey was undertaken for Welsh Office Highways Directorate of the area affected by the A465 Aberdulais-Glynneath road improvement. Two Second World War pillboxes were recorded (SN 8696 0545 and 8645 0478), defending the road and rail bridges at Blaengwrach. The pillboxes are simple concrete structures, with a protected entranceway and Turnbull muzzle pivot mounting for a Vickers .303 machine gun.

M. Locock
for the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust

Try our Jigsaw below:

W.E. Bowen, Photography Collection

https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=2624d4d61b0f

Jigsaw Instructions: Click Link > Go to Page > Click on screen to start.

Christmas Traditions:

Have you ever wondered where the Christmas traditions we celebrate at Christmas have come from. Well below, I have explained a few of them.

In Wales especially in Glamorgan the Mari Lwyd is an old Welsh mid-winter folk custom that had almost died out. It is a pre-christian tradition believed to bring good luck to the household they visit.

The tradition consists of a horse's skull covered by a white robe and dressed in festive lights, baubles for eyes and streamers for a mane, being carried from door to door on a pole by a young man, accompanied by his friends. At each house the group recites songs or more traditionally rude rhymes, which the household has to respond to in a similar fashion. If the Mari Lwyd wins they gain entry too the house, causing as much mayhem as possible and been offered food and drink.

In the UK the Christmas tree was first introduced in 1800 by the wife of King George III, Queen Charlotte, who brought the tradition from her native Germany, where it was common custom to have a Christmas tree in your home. She requested a Yew tree be brought to Queen's Lodge in Windsor, which she decorated herself.

https://www.historytoday.com/archive/history-matters/first-christmas-tree

Christmas Crackers have been with us since about 1845-1850. They were invented by a Mr Tom Smith a London sweet maker. He had the idea after visiting Paris in 1840 were he was inspired by the French Bon Bon's, almonds wrapped in colourful paper. He first tried selling sweets like this with a motto or riddle inside but was not successful.

Then in 1861 he launched a new range which were called " Bangs of Expectation" which he developed to include sweets and toys and could be pulled in half. The bang itself was provided by the Brooks Firework company, and the rest as they say is history.

https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/crackers.shtml

Mistletoe grows on a number of trees such as Willow, Apple and Oak trees. It has been suggested it was first used by the ancient Druids who would hang it in their house as a good luck charm and to ward off evil spirits. In Norse mythology it is used as a sign of love and friendship, but it was banned by early Western European Christians due to it's early link to paganism and superstition.

Kissing under the mistletoe was first recorded in an English musical in 1784, and in "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens there is an illustration of kissing under the mistletoe.

The name mistletoe comes from two Anglo Saxon words. Mistle meaning dung, and tan meaning twig or stick. So basically poo on a stick, not very romantic is it.

https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/mistletoe.shtml

Boxing Day falls on the 26th December which is also St. Stephen's Day an early followers of Jesus and may have been the first Christian martyr. St. Stephen is associated with charity and in the Middle Ages it was the day when Alms boxes were collected in churches for distribution to the poor. It was also the day when rich landowners would give gifts, sometimes in the form of food left over from their Christmas Day celebrations, to the people working or living on their land.

In the early 20th century it was a day when milkmen, butchers etc would receive their box from the people who they delivered too over the course of the year.
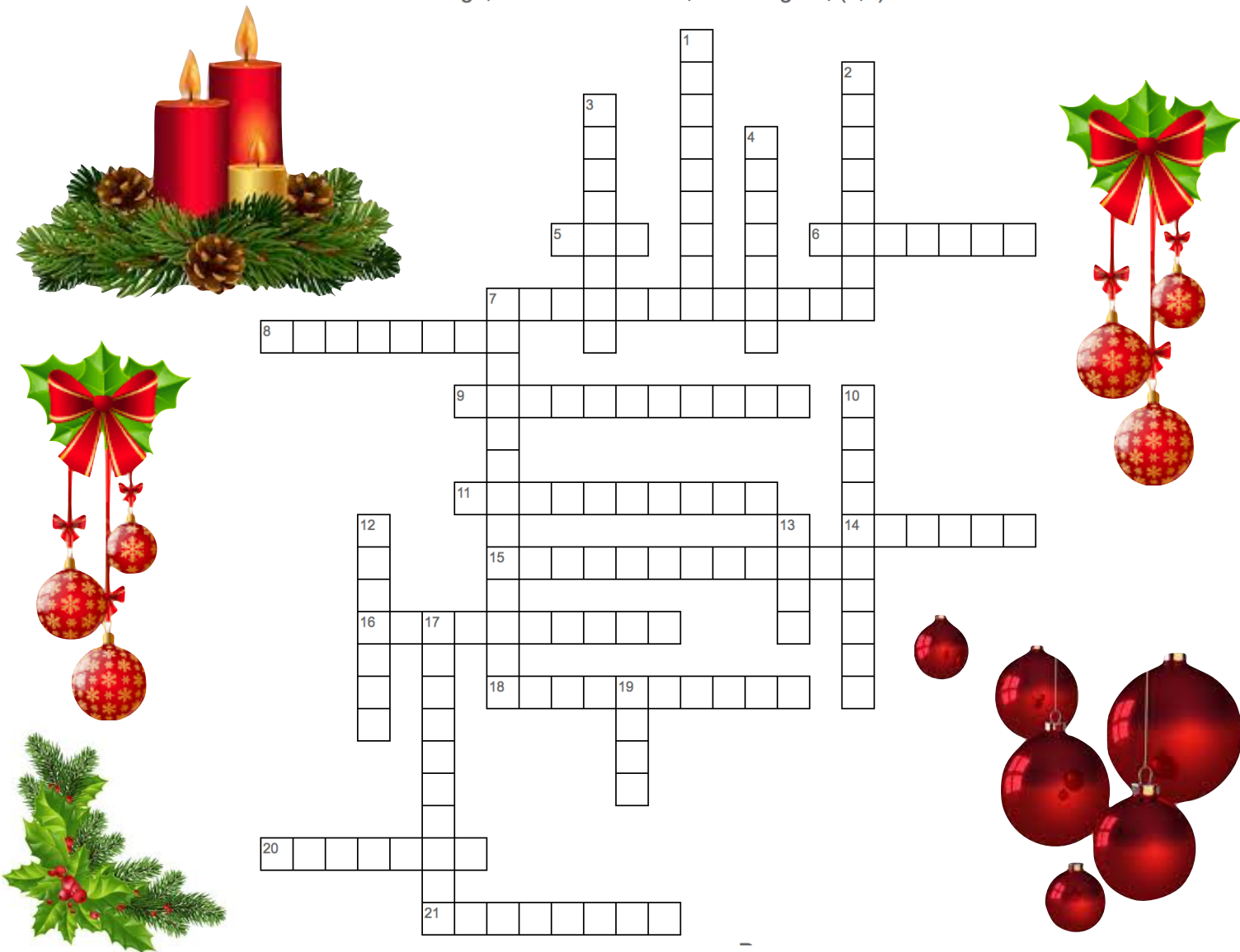
https://www.whychristmas.com/customs/boxingday.shtml

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.

Print page to fill in crossword, answer available in a weeks time.

Christmas Crossword

All answers can be found in the village; Clue - W for Welsh; E for English; (4,3) = number of letters in answer.

Across

5 Chicken shack (E 3)
6 Surname of man with Handle Bar moustache (E 7)
7 Only pub left in the village (E 8,4)
8 Sheep dip up the mountain (W 2,6)
9 Famous school teacher in the 40's ,50's 60's (E 6,5)
11 Village barber and photographer (E 5,5)
14 Colliery name or name of street (E 6)
15 Who moved to the USA and is a keen contributor to the village face book page (E 5,6)
16 Village Cup winning Jazz band (E 10)
18 Aberpergym church saint name (W 5,5)
20 Name of house where famous collector of Welsh songs lived (W 4,3)
21 Street named after river (W 4.4)

Down

1 River crossing with a colour in it's name (E 3,6)
2 Old shop in Fothergill Road (E 8)
3 Aircraft make that crashed during WW2 on top of Graig Y Llyn
4 Highest altitude farm name (W 3,1,3)
7 Famous village rugby player who played for Wales and Lions (E 5,8)
10 Original name of St. Mary's church (W 1,5,4)
12 Name of restaurant in the old billiard hall (E 3,4)
13 Wels name of valley river (W 4)
17 Name of Brook which divides the villages (W 4,5)
19 Nickname of village history books author (E 4)