



Barmouth Sailors' Institute



(Founded in 1890 by the late Canon EDWARD HUGHES B.A.)

Sailors' Institute, The Quay, Barmouth, Gwynedd, LL42 1ET

Registered Charity No. 1057490

NEWSLETTER ISSUE ~~TWENTY~~ FOUR

(Edited & Published by Trevor Roberts)

November 2018



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Trevor Roberts.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Well here we are at Issue 24 and another year has passed. A number of new articles are within these next pages and I'm sure you will all find something of interest with some new facts and stories about Barmouth.

My thanks to the various authors who when asked always produce the "goods" and who have already provided a couple of new articles for our Issue 25.

The publication of this issue follows the sad news that Institute stalwart Tom Hughes has died. Tom had been at one time our caretaker here at the Institute, always on hand to open and close the Institute seven days a week. Beside us losing a friend Tom had been a hard working volunteer who was one of the Barmouth Characters who also had a passion for football and recently had the Football Stand named after himself. He also thought a lot of the harbour area, in particular the Sailors' Institute.

3 years ago Tom had, after some persuasion agreed to give a profile of himself and I then published his profile. As a memory and in honour of Tom I have reproduced this profile below. I know it will bring back many memories to our members who knew Tom and will feel that his own profile gives us an insight into the real Tom.

Finally, my thanks to all your officers who continue to give support to the Institute on behalf of the members. All the very best for the New Year, see you again in Issue 25 at springtime 2019.

Trevor Roberts

PROFILE: Tom Hughes

Question. Which Barmouth resident once denied entry to the Royal Albert Hall to both Petula Clark and Jack Train (ITMA star) on the same evening? Correct – Tom Hughes.

Born above Dicks Shoe shop (now Cynewydd Stock Exchange – next to the Oriel Galary) in 1931, Tom has spent his entire life living in Barmouth except for his two years National Service which he spent in RAF Uxbridge as a member of the Queen's Colour Squadron.

Educated in the Infant School which is now the Library, Tom completed his education aged 14 in the Council School (now Bendigedig) and started work at Criterion Stores. He'd only been there a few weeks when the school leaving aged increased to 15 and he was retrospectively sent back to school and rose from Class C to Class A in this extra year.

17 years as a gardener at Glan-y-Mawddach with that two years out in National Service followed by 5 years at Bryn Celyn in Arthog also in the gardening trade, Tom found himself out of work in his late 30s when the owner of Bryn Celyn died. Tom was then rehired

by Lady Russon; owner of Glan-y-Mawddach, and resumed gardening as well as chauffeuring duties including the somewhat "difficult to drive in a straight line" Rolls Royce automatic with power steering.

That period of National Service between 1953 and 1955 meant that Tom performed at the Royal Albert Hall Remembrance Service in the RAF Display Team twice and apart from being Prince Philip's bodyguard on one occasion, was involved in a total of 49 military parades welcoming foreign dignitaries such as the Shah of Persia, Princes Margaret, Queen Elizabeth and yes those celebrities who were due to appear on stage at the Royal Albert Hall but didn't have the correct passes. He could have been an extra in the film, the Dambusters but they only had uniforms an inch too short. Could have become a star!

He married Violet in 1957 and they had two sons, Ken who became a professional goalkeeper and is now in the fire service in Hinckley and Carl who also still lives and works in Barmouth.

Tom joined the County Council in 1975 and worked for them as maintenance crew operating between Bontddu and Dyffryn and in his final years with the Council went on to work at the Bowling Club, Putting Green and tennis courts before retiring.

Throughout his life, Tom loved his football; played his first game in 1946 for Barmouth, was groundsman, and manager, he rebuilt the stand and the pitch surround and was still helping with the ground until 2014. He still attends every game and coaches from the sidelines. He also found the time to join the Fire Service and served 20 years as a Retained Fireman. He fell off the engine once while going round the bend in Aberamffra Harbour and was left on the top floor on a call in Arthog when the ladder was taken away.

Since retirement he developed his love of painting which complemented the modelling skills he'd enjoyed all his life. His paintings are displayed and sold in Barmouth and Dyffryn and he has also begun to undertake commissions. He recently donated a model of the Chieftain Lifeboat to the RNLI in Barmouth and a special evening was held in his honour at the Lifeboat Station.

Exploiting his knowledge of the history of the town by joining the Sailors' Institute in around 1980 (anybody know exactly when?) and getting involved in helping with the Roundhouse (Ty Crwn) and Ty Gwyn (the Shipwreck Museum) as well as latterly with duties in the Institute itself. He has also been an active member of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. In spite of all his wide knowledge and experience, Tom has never been outside the UK. In fact he's also never been to Scotland nor to Northern Ireland. The closest he got was a scheduled military parade in France 1954 for which he failed to qualify and so didn't attend.

Secretary's tittle tattle

Most mornings I wake up and think, 'Oh dear, it's that time again and Trevor, our Editor will be after me for my words of wisdom!' It's a nice crisp sunny morning, so here goes.

Since my last prattle it has been a little busier than usual. The Institute has continued to run on an even keel. The outside of the building was painted in time for summer visitors and Corinne has continued to keep the inside looking spick and span for which we are grateful. The high winds contributed to the sand invading via the front entrance door but amazingly, hardly any filtered down through the roof. Good testament to Euron, our maintenance man keeping it in good order.

A couple of years ago I was approached by Ruth Guilding of the glossy magazine 'The World of Interiors', asking if she could do an article on our Institute. As one doesn't turn down such a suggestion lightly, the Committee agreed to her project. The end result came to fruition in the November issue of the magazine and by golly what a marvellous depiction it is. When Ruth and her photographer arrived around 8 o'clock, the morning dawned grey and miserable – typical of special visits! The photographer did not want any artificial lighting. His photographs are a real testament to his photographic skills. If you pass a copy in a Newsagents, it's worthwhile glancing at page 127!!

Also in the early part of the summer, Channel 5 asked if we would feature in their series of six programmes 'Walking Britain's Lost Railways' We had to wait until programme six to see the result.

By the time you read this, an interview with Committee member Alan Vincent on the Bronze Bell presentation in Tŷ Gwyn will have been aired on BBC Radio Wales. It was part of a roadshow broadcasting in Barmouth on a glorious sunny day which showed Barmouth at its best.

It is amazing that four years have past since Newsletter 19 in which I reported on the Battle of the Somme when so many Welsh men lost their lives. With this issue we commemorate the ending of such a bloody war. Records have conflicting numbers of Welsh casualties and indeed of the whole of the conflict. One usually associates with army casualties but the maritime services had massive losses also. When one considers 7000 plus ships of which 3700 were British, were sunk by U-Boats with anything up to 1000 plus sailors on board, the numbers soon mount up. Many ships sank in just a few minutes. Prince Albert, the future King George

VI, lost 229 of his comrades aboard HMS Collingwood during the battle of Jutland. A sobering thought as to the destiny of the Royal Family. I have recently been to a two day conference down in Pembroke Dock run by the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales to officially launch their WW1 U-Boat project highlighting activities around the coast of Wales. The 41 individual panels which various museums have produced over the time and include a nice one devised by our member Les Darbyshire, are now on the circuit with more still to be completed. We have our name down for them to come to Barmouth. When, I do not know. For locals, it's a case of 'watch this space' in the Cambrian News and posters around town. Nefyn, Porthmadog, Holyhead, Caernarfon Museums have produced panels so there's a lot of North Wales coverage to see including the trialling in Bala lake of the training of seals to track U-Boats. The idea was shelved when it was obvious they could be easily distracted by shoals of fish!!

On the 10th of November 2014, I visited the Tower of London and witnessed the Commemoration of the start of WW1 with the reading of the names of the fallen and the thousands of poppies in the moat and the poppy blood river cascading down the wall. Unfortunately, I learnt too late of this years commemoration 'Beyond the Deepening Shadow: The Tower Remembers'. Watching part of it on my lap top, I find it a very poignant and moving service which lasts over a four hour period. I am sorry I couldn't be present.

Rita and Helen of RCAHMW were so pleased with the result of their visit last March to the Institute, they asked if they could return. This they did for our July Coffee Morning. There wasn't a formal presentation. They were on hand to talk informally to people and they scanned some relevant artefacts which are now on their website. I'm hoping they will make another visit during which we can again involve the new Ysgol yr Traeth year six pupils. They are our future and we must try and get them involved with our maritime heritage. As ever, I thank 'David's Angels' and all who contributed to make our Coffee Morning a success once more. £263 was happily banked by our Treasurer.

Since Newsletter 23, GDPR has been fully introduced to our everyday life. I reiterate our policy of only using your details for Institute matters and at no time will they be shared with any third party outside our organisation. Should you wish to have your name removed from our list, please let me know.

For once, my piece is short and sweet relating all the positive side of running a unique building which is so very much part of Barmouth's maritime history.

You will see from the enclosed letter, our Annual General Meeting is to be held on Monday, 11th February 2019 at 1800hrs in the Reading Room and of course, not forgetting Membership renewal on 1st January 2019.

I will close wishing you all the Compliments of the Season and very much hope 2019 is kind to you.

Janet Griffith Hon. Secretary

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The rescue of the Notre Dame de Boulogne

There were no photographs to accompany newspaper reports in the early days of the Barmouth Lifeboat but accounts of early rescues were extremely well written. The words 'painted the picture' and each aspect of the rescue was meticulously described.

One such rescue was performed by Griffith Jones (coxswain from 1922 to 1930), Griffith was the son of William Jones, a fisherman living at Penycei, (now the Harbour Master's Office) who brought up 14 children in the house. This rescue by Griffith and his crew of the *Jones Gibb II* was reported in the Barmouth Advertiser on 1st September 1924.

It tells the story of the ketch the *Notre Dame de Boulogne*, of the French port Treguier. With a crew of four sailors, including a 16 year old boy, the vessel left Portmadoc harbour at 10 am on Sunday 30th August 1924, bound for Poole with seventy tons of slate; the vessel had gone aground on St Patrick's Causeway.

'Although the report was received when the majority of the crew were at dinner and wearing their Sunday best,' the article says, 'it is very creditable to think that, within a space of just a little over ten minutes from the time when the rocket summoning the crew was fired, the boat was launched and on its way on its errand of mercy'.

The weather was bad and it took **three hours** for the lifeboat crew to row out to reach the stricken vessel which was hard aground with the waves breaking over her; they stood by to see if she might float. But at 7.30 pm, realising there was no hope of saving her, the captain and crew decided to abandon ship and were then taken on board the lifeboat. The report tells us:

'The captain of the vessel displayed the usual courage of every seaman by absolutely refusing to leave until he had satisfied himself beyond all doubt that the vessel was unable to sail again, the cabin at the time being waist deep in water'.

Once the lifeboat reached the quay at 9.00 pm, the local community took over. The shipwrecked crew were taken care of by Mr R.W. Jones of Meirion House who was the local representative of the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. He arranged accommodation for them on the quay with Mrs Caradoc Evans at Minafon (now the Anchor Restaurant). None of the crew spoke English, so Mr Meurig O Griffith of Epworth Terrace acted as interpreter until the arrival of a Monsieur RLF Robert, a Belgian gentleman staying with Mrs Owen at Aelydon.

These names will be familiar to some of you, I certainly remember Mr MO Griffith and some the following who were on the lifeboat crew:

Coxswain Griffith Jones, Fron House; second coxswain Robert Jones, 11 Porkington Terrace; bowman William Jones, Tanycoed; John Jones, Edward Lloyd Jones, Harry Jones, Bronygraig; John Ellis Morris, Abermaw Terrace; John Richards, Red House; John Jones, Goronwy Terrace; Owen T Morris, Walsall House; Thomas Owen, Tanygraig; John Hugh Rees, Penrhyn View; Evan Richards, Penlan Cottage; Robert Jones, Minafon; William B Jones, Bronaber Terrace, and Thomas Lewis, Penybryn

A further report tells of the **Departure of Shipwrecked Mariners:**

The shipwrecked mariners of the French vessel 'Notre Dame de Boulogne' who were rescued on Sunday by the prompt action of the Barmouth Lifeboat from their perilous position of St Patrick's Causeway, left Barmouth on Tuesday for France, via Paddington. They received quite an ovation on their departure, and the captain of the vessel was visibly affected by his mingled feeling of regret and pleasure as he endeavoured to express his gratitude to all who had helped them through their trying experience.

According to the opinion of practical seamen, the men undoubtedly owe their lives to the able manner in which the lifeboat, under the command of Griffith Jones, coxswain, with his gallant crew, was so ably manoeuvred.

The shipwrecked crew greatly appreciated the kindness shown by Mr RW Jones, Meirion House, local agent of the Shipwrecked Mariners Society, who provided them with all that was necessary for their comfort, and arranged for their transport back to France.

This performance of the Barmouth Lifeboat adds further laurels to its long and unique record, and goes to prove that no more worthy object could be found for our support than the Lifeboat Institution.'

Barmouth is, and has always been, proud of its lifeboat, and it is so reassuring to learn that the crew were so well looked after by the locals until the time came for them to leave for home - just two days later.

Norma Stockford

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MR. FINNEGAN

I have to admit I suppose, that “Finnegan the Fruiterer” seemed a bit of a mouthful to say, but there was little doubt that to a small boy such as I was at the time, the man himself appeared like a character straight out of a story book – almost larger than life, in fact! (That was saying something when you consider that the town in which we lived, was just about a chock full of “characters” as a melon is full of pips).

In Barmouth, Mr. Finnegan hawked around a selection of fruit and vegetables on his coster barrow. The bodywork of this vehicle was painted a glistening green – except for the end of the handles which had been left virgin wood and which had been polished to a shine by the constant grip of the owner’s sinewy hands. The wooden-spoked wheels of this glorious contraption were attired with a coat of bright pillar box red paint that caused them to twinkle as they spun round when the equipage was under way.

The wares, whose merits were shouted abroad by Mr. Finnegan, were set out in colourful display that struck the eye with the reds and light green of glossy apples, the yellows of bananas and lemons, the soft bloom of green and purple grapes, the red of tomatoes, the frothy whiteness of cauliflowers and all the multi-hues imparted by a mixture of the bounties of the earth. If you did actually buy a couple of pounds of new potatoes or four oranges or a punnet of mustard and cress, Mr. Finnegan would moisten a convenient thumb across his tongue and with a flourish, tear off a brown paper bag that bore the device in blue capital letters on its side – Fyffes Bananas – from the bunch pierced through one corner and tied to a strut on the barrow.

This man may have been a humble purveyor of fruit and veg as I know his everyday self, but when I pictured him as young man, my mind’s eye transformed him into some kind of legendary folk hero, for Joe Finnegan had been a soldier in the Boer War.

Ordinarily, I suppose, this facts might have escaped my notice, but Mr. Finnegan was not only proud of his past exploits, but was a patriot into the bargain and as a result, continued to sport a replica of the uniform he had worn in South Africa about thirty years before.

His grey hair was cut short a military style and was topped by a genuine bush hat. The brim turned up at one side bearing a meticulously clean and shining regimental

badge that reflected the sun's rays with a dazzling brilliance.

The dark brown jacket was neat and carefully brushed to remove every stray hair and every speck of dust. The buttonhole sported the most perfect red or yellow rosebuds depending on what was the best from Joe's garden plot at the time. Set in colourful row at the level of his top pocket were the brave ribbons that I heard he won at Ladysmith and Mafeking and who's attached medals tinkled musically as he walked along.

A heavy looking watch chain draped itself in two graceful arcs across his waistcoat – testimony to the goldsmith's art – and one that seemed strong enough to hold a battleship which reflected its value dully at the world.

The well cut cavalry breeches flared with graceful curves about the thighs, whilst below his knees a pair of khaki puttees spiralled with mathematical precision from his ankles up around the calves of his legs.

Then there came a further shining delight with the prospect of Mr. Finnegan's boots. They were of black leather, to which a vigorous application of spit and polish had imparted a surface rarely seen outside the confines of mirror frame and which vied in sparkling allure with the glowing badge on the hat above.

All this glory was enough to turn the head of a small boy in admiration, but the effect so far almost paled into significance when one took in Joe Finnegan's expressive face. It still seemed to retain the deep tan acquired in South Africa all those years ago and all those miles away and was sufficiently unusual to draw attention to itself with its weathered lines and crevices that helped to produce that surface that looked like crinkled leather.

Then there were the eyes – dark and direct and piercing, so that if one happened to be caught in a glance, it was as if the man saw right into you and laid your soul bare. With eagle eyes like that how could you possibly hope to hide anything from his man of steel and whipcord?

That left just one more item to complete the ensemble. The crowning glory; the wonder of wonders; that which almost bordered on the realm of the supernatural – for the old warrior carried the most wonderful moustache! It wasn't one of those full and bushy ones; it wasn't one of those thin and droopy ones; and it wasn't one of those clipped toothbrush styles. But, from one end to the other it must have

measured at least three inches in length. This was a monument set in wax, as if arrested in time. It seemed as if it might bid fair to claim the title of the eighth wonder of the world – immutable, unchangeable. The fibres of hair were twisted like finely drawn strands of silky cotton and tapered to a point at both ends. It was impossible not to be full of admiration for the architecture of that wonderful moustache. Surely, a man who looked as glorious as this, must have won medals for heroic deeds and the utmost bravery. Perhaps even been decorated by Queen Victoria herself! Who could tell?

But then, suddenly somehow, Joe Finnegan appeared to grow into an old man as his age began to show. The autumn winds caused him to change from the dandy's white silk scarf that he had earlier worn, to the comfort of a woollen one that now crossed the front of his meagre chest. His voice, always a bit raucous and grating, was muted to a rather ineffectual scratchy whisper. He developed a bronchitic cough and those same winds brought tears to his old eyes – eyes that all those years before must have gazed like those of a hawk across veldt and kopje; across grassland and river and beyond scrubland and rocky slope.

That moustache lasted for as long as I can remember the old man, but one day his mortality was proved when he caught a cold standing by his barrow with its multi-hued cargo of edibles and calling his wares in a bitter wind. The glory that had, in my youthful eyes, been Joe Finnegan began to diminish and fade. Though my memories of him prove that old soldiers never die, the truth of the matter was conclusively found in the second half of the same adage when the old fellow faded away.

This article was written some time ago by Roy Speight whose father, Harold, was the deputy head and chemistry master at Barmouth County School. He gave Peter Crabtree permission to put it forward for publishing in the newsletter.

Joe Finnegan, one of Barmouth's characters, lived during the 1930's in Llyn Du at a house called Ladysmith, just opposite the R.A.O.B's HG – the old "New White Cinema". Something not mentioned in the above is that during the summer months he wore his white tropical uniform, medals and hat.

Peter Crabtree

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A lost world: growing up in Barmouth, 1919-36

David Ceredig Roberts ('Dewi') was born and brought up in Barmouth and retired to Dolgellau after war service and a career in the Birmingham car industry. He died in July aged 99 and is buried in Dolgellau cemetery. Here his family recall Dewi's memories of pre-War Barmouth.

After four years under constant bombardment in Malta, all Dewi Roberts wanted to do was get back to Barmouth and escape into the mountains on his beloved bicycle. But when eventually he did arrive home, the first thing he saw was the butcher's boy riding *his* bike. His mother had sold it, not expecting Dewi ever to return.

Mam was no sentimentalist. Already forty when Dewi was born in 1919, both his Victorian parents were far too old, as they saw it, to bother much about children. Dewi's sisters Evelyn and Mary were a good few years older and so, growing up, he was often left to his own devices. Hence his long bike rides.

Mam (Elizabeth Jane, née Warrington) and David Thomas Roberts (manager of Dicks's shoe shop in the High Street) had married young in 1900. They both came from Aberystwyth, where Dicks's also had a branch as well as in Caernarfon. Dewi was born in the front room over the shop and was perhaps christened David Ceredig in honour of the couple's Cardiganshire origins.

Mam was one of six formidable sisters (plus one brother). The Warringtons may have come to Aberystwyth with the Staffordshire Regiment during the Napoleonic wars, spawning a line of colourful patriarchs, including one who had dropped dead in the Old Black Lion pub in Bridge Street. Mam's only alcoholic indulgence was a glass of sweet sherry at Christmas, at which she would convincingly wince before accepting a top-up. As a very small boy, Dewi was introduced to Mr Lloyd, a kippah-wearing Aberystwyth Jew, who he thought had remarried his widowed grandmother.

Dewi's father was reticent about his own family. Some lived towards Ffestiniog and Bangor and one uncle was mayor of Wrexham between the Wars. But there may have been a family secret – an affair or illegitimate birth? – that lay behind Dewi senior's occasional bouts of depression. His brother John's death in the Spanish Flu epidemic would not have helped. Dewi senior had to take it steady, and at least once spent some weeks to a sanatorium in Denbighshire.

He traced his descent to a Scottish engineer called Peters who had moved to Wales to help Telford build the Menai bridge and had changed his name to Roberts. Since this was in the 1820s, when divorce was all-but impossible for ordinary mortals, the simplest explanation is that he was a bigamist starting a new life. A later Richard Thomas Roberts was a successful merchant sea captain in Aberystwyth. Later still in the 1870s, some Roberts brothers emigrated to Patagonia just as the most oppressive features of English ascendancy – narrow suffrage, church tithes and restrictions on the Welsh language – were fading into history. But so many

Robertses – especially Johns, Williams and Davids – inhabited nineteenth-century North Wales and Argentina that reconstructing the family's history seems impossible.

It was Mam, barely educated but shrewd with money, who kept the family show on the road. And quite a show it was. Few shoe-shop managers today could aspire to the still quite new, four-storey terraced house which they bought at the end of King Edward Street, Bryn Teg. It was furnished in the best style of the time, with chintz curtains, brown anaglypta wallpaper, mahogany furniture and lace antimacassars. There was a piano for the girls and a violin for Dewi, and the many rooms were stuffed with knickknacks – ebony elephants, Captain Roberts's shells and souvenirs from the South Seas and a huge model of his sailing ship in a glass case. Dewi had fishing rods and a model steam-train set. Every bedroom was equipped with thick Irish linen, big china chamber pots, brass bed pans and electric bells communicating with the kitchen. Maddie, probably a poor farm girl, skivvied as a live-in maid and liked to tease Dewi mercilessly.

A serial caster-off of worldly goods, Mam got rid of many of these treasures when she was widowed in 1956 and downsized to Bryn Teifi, a few doors down the road, where she trudged on as a seaside landlady into her 90s. Bryn Teg meanwhile entered family lore as an Aladdin's cave of Victorian wonders and small-town gentility, a world long gone in the general decay of the British seaside.

As a child Dewi went on shopping trips to Liverpool, sometimes chauffeured in the Tin Lizzie his father had bought in the early 1920s but was too nervous to drive. In the 1930s the family even took three Mediterranean cruises (for his father's health perhaps) aboard Canadian Pacific liners that remained for Dewi the epitome of luxury. He later sailed on one again as a troop ship. A child's fare for two weeks out of Liverpool cost just £25, but in an age long before mass tourism these travels were highly enterprising for a family of limited means.

On dry land, his father's idea of excitement was fishing or playing bowls at Bryn Mynach Road, where he won a silver rose bowl trophy. On the back of an old 'action' photo he identifies himself as the figure who has daringly taken off his coat. Mam, who had a fine contralto voice, also won prizes for running a children's choir. Another photo shows her, rather appropriately, dressed stiffly as an Edwardian-looking Queen of Egypt in some oratorio or other, or perhaps as Purcell's Queen Dido.

She was a determined collector of funds for SSAFA, not shy to deploy a degree of mild extortion as she did her Thursday rounds of the town, her black handbag bulging with cash. At home, the money would be carefully counted before being hidden in jugs and vases around the house. Never a penny went missing. In old age her efforts won her the British Empire Medal.

Dewi spoke only Welsh until he went to school aged seven. Traces of his Welsh Nonconformist origins endured in his soft accent and old-fashioned views about

money and social issues, although he was never religious and was always scathing about Welsh nationalism which had scarcely existed in his youth. His eldest sister was reluctant to speak Welsh at all and all three siblings always stuck to the prevailing anglicised version of local place names – Dolgelly, Carnarvon, Merioneth – a sign of their cultural self-assurance.

In extreme old age, Dewi remembered things that no-one left in Barmouth could. Before the promenade was built, he saw a tsunami flood Marine Parade, perhaps the same sea surge recorded by Pembrokeshire fisherman in 1924. When the circus came to town he was photographed, aged three or four, in front of a line of elephants in the High Street, a picture that sold for a long time as a postcard. Sometimes Royal Navy warships would moor out in Cardigan Bay and he was allowed aboard one of them with his father and other local sightseers.

As a boy he was thrilled by local legends, such as the secret tunnel behind the fireplace of today's Davy Jones's Locker (formerly a boathouse and tiny cottage) that had somehow allowed a medieval prince to escape to the harbour from a siege of Harlech castle; or the face of a female ghost that was said to appear in the round dormer window of the big house behind today's Carousel café.



Strongest of all were Dewi's memories of Barmouth's stifling religious atmosphere, with its dozen squabbling church and chapel congregations. Liberation from hellfire sermons and the endless boredom of Sundays at home arrived in the 1920s

with motor cars, the cinema (deemed highly sinful by many) and radio. For Dewi's generation, hearing Dame Adelina Patti on the wireless or seeing the wonder-dog Rin Tin Tin at the pictures were marvels that helped bring about a social revolution, quickly undermining the power of the preachers. His family's Welsh Presbyterian chapel on Beach Road is now a down-market discount store.

Dewi had a limited but sound education, reinforced by rote learning and a liberal use of the cane. He was shy but was good at football, nicknamed Dewi Dicks and then Dixie Dean after the David Beckham of the day. Despite living by the sea, he never learnt to swim until his army mates threw him into the Mediterranean. But he liked a fight and even learnt to box, by sheer fluke knocking down the school bully with a single blow. At home his scrapes and black eyes were routinely ignored by teachers and parents alike. At twelve he won prizes at shows with his pet spaniel, Elfin, his grandfather having taught him the trick of keeping a piece of liver in his pocket to make the dog look alert. Later, an anglicised and rather rakish brother-in-law taught him how to develop photographs. But his abiding passion was that icon of inter-War, high-tech chic, the motor car.

When he was seventeen, Dewi effectively became an economic migrant, not unlike an East European today. One of his Wrexham uncles found him an elite apprenticeship with Wolseley Motors in Birmingham, the 1930s equivalent of becoming a cyber-engineer. Cooped up at Drews Lane factory, he penned an anguished, homesick letter to his parents, who gave it short shrift. But he soon abandoned the Birmingham Welsh chapel and settled down as an honorary Brummie. And when war broke out three years later, he joined up quickly, despite being in a reserved occupation, craving both adventure and an escape from Mam.

Dewi loved the sea and wanted to join the Navy, but somehow found himself in the Royal Artillery. He was lightly wounded in Malta and served in occupied Germany before returning to Birmingham. Moving back to Wales after he retired in the 1980s it was, surprisingly, to Dolgellau rather than Barmouth that he returned. The rivalry between the two towns was longstanding, the one maritime and touristed, the other rural and quite ingrown. Driving down from Dinas Mawddwy as the lights of Dolgellau appeared through the rain and coal smoke, Dewi was always ready with the same quip: 'City of a Million Dreams!' But since his youth both towns had changed beyond recognition. Barmouth's 'pobl dierth' now holiday in Dubai or Barbados, and Dolgellau is an empty shell – no railway, no courthouse, no county council. The world Dewi grew up in has vanished as completely as the drowned kingdom of Cantre'r Gwaelod. Perhaps his ninety-nine years were enough.

DAVID ROBERTS (son)

Footnote: An obituary covering Dewi's whole life was published in The Times on 4 August. More of his reminiscences of Barmouth appeared in The Cambrian News on 18 August 2018.

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Pamphlet by Archibald Keightley, M.D. (Cantab)
on the Desirability of establishing a
NATUR-KURHAUS on the Orielton Hall Estate.

Pointing out the unique advantages and unrivalled position the estate affords as a health resort, the climate being considered the most uniform in the kingdom.

Foreword: This brief description merely touches on the advantages which may be derived from the various treatments to be obtained. It outlines the wishes of many physicians both in Germany and America. Then it will be found that an effort has been made at Orielton to realize for sufferers the conditions which, as a rule, are to be found only on the continent of Europe and to secure for them those comforts which, with the methods of treatment, are found at their best in the Sanatoria of the United States.

Brook Street, London W. May 3, 1905

Barmouth as a Health Resort

There is in Great Britain to-day a need which makes itself felt increasingly by all practitioners who have the continuous well being of their patients at heart. We who look to the restoration of that balance - that equilibrium which IS health - and who know that the unstable equilibrium called by the generic name of disease, is in the main caused by unhealthy habits, mental no less than physical: we who are not content to apply a mere temporary stop gap to inroads of that nature, know also that the lion in the path of progress is our inability to control the environment of our patients. And here again, the mental environment is meant, quite as much as the physical environment. Bad habits of exercise, breathing, dressing, sitting, walking, playing and working: of eating and drinking: and last but not least, of thinking in grooves leading to nervous waste and jar, all conduce to unhealthy conditions.

The resumption of hygienic habits in all these things is vital to well being, for such pathological conditions in their turn become hotbeds of disordered functions and, in time, of disease. In many cases, good hygienic habit has never been known - as, say in many cases of the wrong exercise of the respiratory organs - while in

others it has been thrust out of sight by the strenuous demands of modern life.

What we want above all else is to be able to put our patients into surroundings which shall not only be helpful from the physiological standpoint, but which shall also appeal to all that is highest in Man, as well as to the sense of natural beauty and its deep repose. Fine scenery, high and pure air, such nearness to home as may make the patient more receptive to the idea of travel and necessary sojourn - all these have their effect on the nervous system and tend towards the restoration of healthy vibrations by the removal of causes of worry and discord, until the patient is strong enough to control himself amid the innumerable exigencies of life, and to govern his thoughts in the right direction both in good and evil fortune.

The various nature cures which are found so useful on the Continent - water cures, open air treatment, electrical treatment, dietetic precautions suited to the individual need after strict scientific examination: hygienic exercises, massage, rest-cures, the use of electrical currents, light and baths - each modern discovery in its due turn, all play their part in the restoration of health, and each should be at hand in a really scientific and up-to-date Sanatorium. Such an establishment would be primarily eclectic, for the requirement of one constitution or one mind is not that of another. Hence, we who wish to restore health permanently in chronic cases - the most difficult to deal with - should have at hand not one recuperative method, but a wide range from which to choose.

The proposed health Institute at Barmouth would meet these requirements in a unique manner. There is no similar Institution in Great Britain.

THE CLIMATE OF BARMOUTH is one of exceptional equality: there are no extremes of heat and cold.

THE SITE OF THE SANATORIUM is sheltered from the North and North-West and almost entirely from the North-East, East, and South-East. It faces almost due South and has a splendid view of the mountain range of Cader Idris across the Estuary.

The site is flooded with sunshine all through the day from the time that the sun rises until it sets, and the average daily hours of sunshine are shown by the Meteorological Records to be longer than those of any place in these Islands, with the exception of places on the South Coast, and this difference is shown to be really of no importance when compared with the advantages which

Barmouth possess. The disadvantage consists of an hour less sunshine per day. The advantage of the Sanatorium in especial is, that it is situated at a place which is not relaxing, even though its climate is mild.

It has frequently been stated that Barmouth is a relaxing place, and the fact that the myrtle, delicate fuschias, verbenas, veronicas, escaloneas, hydrangeas in profusion, eucalyptus trees, and other delicate plants grow freely in the open air, would lead one to this conclusion. But so much depends on situation. The open and yet sheltered site of the Sanatorium gives the advantage without the drawback and my experience of Barmouth for ten years drives me to the conclusion that the relaxation is really due to the reflection and radiation from the rocks behind some of the houses, especially in the middle and Western parts of the Town. The Orielson Hall site has not this disadvantage to contend with, situated as it is 280 feet above the sea level of the Estuary. The average sunshine record for Barmouth is over 1,756 hours per annum.

Of what constitutes climate, the character of the air is an important factor. In the neighbourhood of Barmouth the air is proved to be of exceptionally good quality: it is the combination of sea and mountain air, with the advantage that by reason of the "draw" of the air between the mountains which form the estuary of the Mawddach, there is always a sufficient frictional interchange to make the air very thoroughly oxygenated and even ozonic, thus imparting invigorating and life-giving qualities.

AS REGARDS THE WATER. In close proximity above the Sanatorium there are Springs, of which the rights are vested in the property. This water, on analysis, proves to be very good as drinking water, and compares most favourably with the famous Malvern water, as regards purity and potability.

The supply of the town itself has been secured from lakes situated on volcanic soil some five miles away from the town and is shown by analysis to be of exceptional purity, this even to the extent of constituting a difficulty from its softness.

AS REGARDS THE SCENERY. All who have been in Wales know the general character of the scenery, but the peculiarly appealing qualities of the view in and around Barmouth have to be seen to be appreciated. One need only refer to the various guide books to discover the universal testimony which is borne to the scene which is spread before one: and it is scarcely possible to over-estimate the value of the forces of Peace and Quiet which can fall upon the mind and nerves of those who are so situated as to be obliged to let this peace into their lives and dwell with them. By such means

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the quiet which is necessary counteracting remedy to the rush and strain of modern life, can be secured.

Those who will study the plans of the Sanatorium will see that it is being built with a view to secure the necessary quiet between room and room. The regulations will show that the work of the house will be carried on without disturbance to those residing there, while care and attention has been paid to securing rest and peace without any noise or disturbance interfering with the scenes spread before one.

In dealing with invalids who require rest, there are usually great disadvantages. Those whose health has broken down under the strain of modern life, are rarely able to go into the country or away from England, without the necessity of having some friend or relative, or others, to take care of them. Frequently the entire family goes away together, and the invalid is shut up in some hotel or apartments with those, who - with the kindest intentions in the world - have a wearing effect on his or her irritated nerves. Or, the invalid is one suffering from pains of various severity, or from conditions which require good nursing for their relief. Such conditions cannot be got under the ordinary circumstances of life in Hotel or apartment. All are not possessed of the wealth and leisure necessary to command suitable conditions for the separate life of the invalid. In the case of the "Natur Kurhaus", this has been one of the chief considerations.

As will easily be perceived, the invalids will reside at the Sanatorium: they thus become possessed of every necessary in the way of food, climate, scenery, and quiet for their recovery. They will, in addition, have at their command all the physical means of baths, open air, gymnastic and electrical treatment, as will be detailed below, which can conduce to their recovery. In addition their friends or relatives or children, can stay in the Hotel where they will have every amusement and pleasure which the residence in such a place can afford, and the latter will have the satisfaction of knowing that their sick friend or relative is being cared for under the most perfect circumstances: and we must hope that they will see a daily improvement during the hours that they are allowed to visit the patients.

IN REGARD TO THE BATHS. A completely fitted and well organised establishment for treatment by heat and light will be provided, whether derived from the sun or from artificial electric production. Water treatment in all its forms by douches, sprays, packs, jets, etc., will be carried out, and reaction can be secured by application of heat or cold. Let it suffice to say that the most modern appliances will be used, and care taken that no expense

shall be spared to render this establishment second to none on the continent of Europe, or in America.

It must not be supposed that the term "open air cure" is confined to the treatment of consumption. That is far from being the case. The application of "open air" to those who suffer from consumption is but one of many uses to which this form of treatment can be put. The training and education of the body to react properly to the varying conditions of heat and cold in contact with the open air, is one of the most important elements in the regulation of the hygiene of life.

In brief, the treatment at this Sanatorium consists of a system of training by which those who are out of health can recover it, and by which those who are moderately well and those who are recovering their health, can not only obtain health, but continuously maintain it. They will be taught how to get well and how to keep so.

IN REGARD TO THE SYSTEM OF EXERCISES. All forms of active motion by means of exercises done by the individual (gymnastic training), passive exercises done by others (massage and mechanical movements), respiratory exercises, Jui-Jitsu training: all will find their appropriate place in this establishment: and while it is trusted that the fads and fallacies of fanatical pioneers in the various processes of health culture will be avoided, there will be no element left unnoticed which can add to the possibilities of the Institute.

One important point should be mentioned, viz. the needs of children. In modern life as it is at present exists, the needs of the children constitute a very great demand. It is well known that every effort is made in the body politic to secure the control of the education of children. What can be more important than the life-education of children who may be made stronger, healthier, and better members of society by the education and training given to their bodies? It is in the early years that the training of every function should take place, and so form a firm basis of healthy strength.

As the child grows it is placed between two opposing forces. (A) The unregulated, or ill-regulated non-hygenic customs of its environment, the unnatural strai of modern conditions. These play upon and assist in the development of (B) any inherent tendencies.

The exercise, the dress, the diet of the child above all, his habits and methods of thought, tend away from the normal. Thus it is rare to find a child who breathes properly: modern dress has

deflected the normal method of breathing which the child has as an infant, but which it gradually loses. His food, the ventilation of his rooms, do not assist the action and re-action of his skin. He imitates the non-hygienic habits of the adults by whom he is surrounded, or he contracts abnormal modes of eating, sitting, playing, standing, lying, from other children. He needs training in the acquirement of hygienic habits which will provide invaluable to his later life.

It would not be right in the scope of this pamphlet to enter fully into all the other points in connection with this subject: but every thinking man or woman must know by theory and experience that the training and education of the children committed to their care means anxious thought and, in many instances, heart rending failure.

We trust that the Sanatorium may ultimately prove to be the means of restoring health to many children and making their lives happier and sounder. The training and education of both mind and body will encourage their guardians to hope for their sound health, and may induce others to adopt the sound system of training whose good results are patent and noticeable.

Thus it will be seen that the effect of such a Sanatorium will be, in the first place, to endeavour to promote the healing of those who are ill, by removing them from the conditions in which their illness came upon them; By placing them under other conditions which will best conduce to the getting rid of troubles which are present; and further, by preventing any recurrence of such troubles. The rules for the healthy must necessarily undergo modification when we consider this. With the healthy man or woman, while diet, fluids, exercise, movements- mental and physical - all combine to keep them in good order and eliminate that which is bad in their systems and promote the necessary balance of waste and repair; in the sick person, who is either bedridden, or too weak to carry on such pursuits, it is necessary to substitute some equivalent which shall make up the balance.

It is not needful here to enter into a discussion of all the avenues into the body and the avenues out of the body, but let us sum up the one under Nutrition, and the other under the head of Elimination, and we shall then see that the channel which exists between the two is called the Circulation. Therefore, any proper methods of the application of heat, of cold, of electrical stimulation, of the circulation of air, of movement, are means of restoring the necessary balance to "all the ills to which the flesh is heir". In their multiplicity these ills may really be reduced to their simple causes: the Nutrition, Elimination, and the Circulation are at

the root of them all. Consequently, any Institution which is devoted to striking at these underlying principles, which are at the root, not only of all disease, but also at the root of the maintenance of health, will constitute a most powerful factor in the life of the Nation.

As will be seen from what is said above, this Institution will be provided with all the best known means of carrying on this work. The Sweating baths, sun baths, massage in its various forms, electrical stimulation, breathing exercises, and Rest and Peace, amid scenery of great natural beauty, will be all combined in the building up of the mental and physical health on the one hand, and the elimination of poisons on the other.

How great an area is covered by the application of such principles may be seen by the intelligent inspection of the following partial list of diseases which can be treated at such an Institution.

IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ARE NOT INCLUDED:

Chronic catarrhal affections: the results of Pleurisy, Asthma, Emphysema: Chronic affections of the larynx and pharynx: Catarrh of the nasal and frontal cavities and Catarrhs of the stomach: Sprue: Chronic constipation: chronic disorders of the liver and kidneys, and a large number of chronic disorders peculiar to women. All forms of Neurasthenia, neuralgia, Sciatica, Hysteria, Hypochondria, and the various commencing paralyses. All the various forms of Nervous Debility of the spine, and more especially of the sympathetic system: the various troubles in connection with the circulation, Haemorrhoids, the result of heart affections, chilliness of the extremities together with Grave's disease. The constitutional affections such as rheumatism, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, anaemia, corpulancy: and diabetes. Scrofula, and many affections of the lymphatic glands, may all be effectively treated.

It will thus be seen it is NOT proposed to treat those suffering from consumption, uncompensated heart disease, and advanced disease of the kidneys, together with epilepsy and insanity.

Printers: The Principality Press, Cardiff

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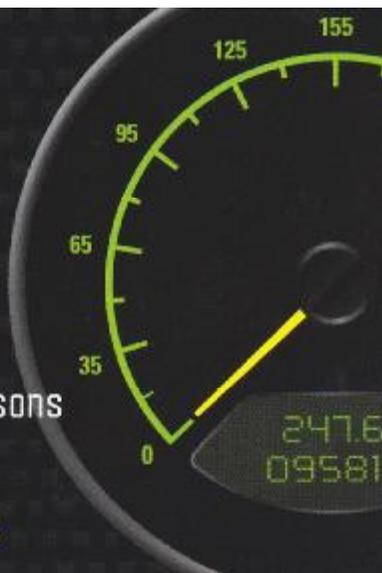
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Owen Glynne Jones

Overlooking the harbour at 11 Porkington Terrace is a slate plaque to commemorate Owen Glynne Jones, a pioneer of rock climbing. The plaque was placed as part of the Barmouth Arts Festival and unveiled on Thursday 13th September 1984 by Eric Jones, the noted mountaineer. Later that evening, the HTV video "The Only Genuine Jones" was shown at the Community Centre, telling the story of this remarkable man. Also present was Ioan Bowen Rees (at the time, the Chief Executive of Gwynedd Council) who had written about Owen Glynne Jones in this book "Galwad y Mynydd". The festival committee was indebted to Mr. Rees for his advice, and also to Mr and Mrs Frank Prosser who consented to the plaque being placed on the wall at the house.

Owen Glynne Jones was born in the London district of Paddington on 2nd November 1867 but his parents was originally from Barmouth. When his mother died in 1882 (and later his father in 1890), his sister, Margaret Ellen, came to live with their cousin, Mrs John Evans in 11 Porkington. Owen Glynne therefore spent his holidays with them and began climbing in the area, especially on Cader Idris. An avid reader of mountaineering books, he progressed in the sport through his remarkable strength, climbing ability and his scientific outlook which enabled him to work out new climbs and develop the technique of rock-climbing.

Having gained this B. SC. with his first-class honours at Imperial College, he was appointed the first physics master at the City of London school in 1982.

He was now able to go climbing in the Lake District as well as North Wales, and came to know experienced climbers and contribute written articles before producing his own book "Rock-Climbing in the Lake District" with photography by the Abraham brothers. After his death the Abraham's produced "Rock-Climbing in North Wales" using Owen Glynne's notes. Geroge Abraham married another of Owne Glynne's cousins – Winifred Davies, herself a very good climber.

Every year, Owen Glynne would make a visit to the Alps and make some important first winter ascents. He served on the first committee of the Climber's Club in 1898 and was elected to the Alpine Club.

A dedicated and inspiring teacher who advocated physical fitness, he felt that great benefit was gained from “participation sports” like mountaineering. Although he made many first ascents, the most popular climb created by him is the ordinary route on the Milestone Buttress of Tryfan in Snowdonia.

In August 1899 he was climbing in a party of five on the Dente Blanche, near Zermatt in Switzerland when a terrible accident caused him and three others to fall to their deaths. The only survivor was his fellow schoolteacher, F. W. Hill who struggled for two days to climb down the mountain and raise the alarm.

Owen Glynne’s grave is in the village of Evolena, with a commemorative tablet in the English Church of Zermatt. There is also a memorial to him at the City of London School, and it is fitting that there is also a plaque at Barmouth.

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