



ATGOFION O'R BORTH

Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy

Menai Bridge and District Civic Society

MEMORIES OF MENAI BRIDGE

Menai Bridge Civic Society is updating its records, photographs and Website to make them more accessible to members. We will try to add to these regularly throughout the year and publish extracts with your Newsletter. New contributions are always welcome, as is help with identifying people in photographs.

Memories of Menai Bridge by Roland Williams.

Roland, known by everyone, as Rol Bach, became one of the longest serving firemen on Anglesey, having joined in August 1921 when he was 20. He was based in Menai Bridge. Rol was interviewed by the BBC about his early years in the Fire Brigade. This is an extract taken from the transcript of the recording. Rol Bach died in 1978.

**See our Website at
www.menaibridgecivicsociety.org.uk**

Memories of Menai Bridge

Volume 2

..... On long journeys, the (fire) engine would be towed by a motor lorry. Such a one was one Sunday night when they went to a hotel fire in Bull Bay. It was heavy going, towing the old steamer. Another regular occurrence was haystack fires. In Valley, they attended one belonging to Sir R. J. Thomas and would get there in under an hour. There was a Fire Brigade in Holyhead but they would never come out of the town, although it was mentioned that two firemen came on their bicycles from Holyhead to help.

Summoning the firemen was a slow job. The postmaster would get a telephone message and would have to go round himself or send a postman. Rol was nearest and might be required to run round to call the others. "Well, Mr. Owen, the surveyor was the captain then and he lived in Pen Clip. We had to go up and fetch him and we couldn't go with a bicycle up there. On the way up I used to call—there was one chap in Mountain View— I called him, and Robbie's father, ain't it? And Cole - well he lived opposite the Catholic Church there. He was nearest the Fire Station. And I called for Tony Pritchard's father on the way up—John Rowlands (Liverpool Arms), John Owen (Green Bank). It was a heck of a job to run round. It would take a good half hour to run round. I was young then—I could run then." And I remember a fire down in Moelfre and the first thing, naturally, when we get to the fire, we'd want to know where the water is. So this farmer told us 'There's a pond down somewhere there'. So we couldn't take the motor lorry down there— we'd have to drag the old steamer down there. I went there and I saw it. I said 'This won't last long. It'll be dry before long.'

Although the farmer claimed that it had never been dry, Rol was proved correct and they were then told that there was another pond higher up. They couldn't drag the machine up there so they asked him to lend them a couple of his horses to draw the machine up to the top. Before agreeing, he wanted to know who was going to pay for the horses. Rol was disgusted. "And his place was on fire! He had to give horses. The surveyor told him that he had to charge the Insurance."

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY.....

"All the Anglesey Fire Brigades were having a competition. It was the Menai Bridge Carnival and we had a big mobile camp in the football field. There's a well in the Mona Products and we were pumping water from there into this mobile van. We'd done one part of our competition then the siren went. Ned Rowlands was on phone duty in the station when

the siren went. Holyhead were called out; a fire in a corn field in Dothan. They went off. About a quarter of an hour later, the siren went again – Llangefni were called out. So Beaumaris were going on now. They took our pump from the competition. The blinking siren went again— Menai Bridge to Malltraeth—Take all the blinking pumps off! Off we went. The blinking competition went west and there was never a competition afterwards. "

The H.M.S. Conway was used as a training ship. In 1953 she was being towed back to Liverpool for a refit. It was a very tricky operation to manoeuvre her through the Menai Straits and the Swellies with its numerous rocks and could only be done on the highest tide of the year—a Spring tide. She foundered on The Platters—the last group of rocks before the Suspension Bridge. The Menai Bridge Fire Brigade worked on her for almost 12 hours, to just before midnight and were again called back at 4.30 a.m. on the 16th. All to no avail!

"Well, we went on the Conway. We were watching the Conway go through. We saw her going on the rocks. I went home and when I was having dinner the siren went and naturally it was a fire call. Instead of that it was a call to the Conway.

We went there. The War Department boats took the pumps— took us all out there. But it was a heck of a job to take the pumps up the companion way and take them down steep steps and then down again right to the bottom. And then, once we were there at the bottom the tide was going out. She keeled over so the Captain shouted 'All hands ashore! Abandon Ship!'

Rol and the Merryweather Steam Engine.



..... Ar siwrneiau hir, byddai'r injan dân yn cael ei thynnu gan lori.

Un felly gafwyd un nos Sul pan aethon nhw i dân mewn gwesty ym Mhorth Llechog. Roedd yn waith caled, tynnu'r hen stemar. Peth arall fyddai'n digwydd yn rheolaidd oedd tanau teisi gwair. Yn y Fali, aethon nhw at un oedd yn perthyn i Syr R.J.Thomas a dweud y bydden nhw yno mewn llai nag awr. Roedd yna Frigâd Dân yng Nghaergybi ond fydden nhw byth yn mynd allan o'r dref, er bod sôn i ddau ddy'n tân ddod ar eu beics o Gaergybi i helpu.

Job araf oedd galw'r dynion tân. Byddai'r postfeistr yn cael neges ffôn a byddai'n rhaid iddo fynd ei hun neu anfon postmon. Rol oedd yr agosaf a falle byddai'n rhaid iddo redeg o gwmpas i alw'r lleill. "Wel, Mr. Owen y syrfewr oedd y capten bryd hynny ac roedd yn byw ym Mhen Clip. Roedd rhaid i ni fyd i fyny i'w nôl ac allen ni ddim mynd efo beic fyny fanna. Ar y ffordd fyny ro'n i arfer galw - roedd un o'r hogia yn Mountain View - ei alw fo, a thad Robbie, ynte? A Cole - wel roedd o'n byw am y ffordd â'r Eglwys Gatholig. Fo oedd agosaf at yr Orsaf Dân. Ac ro'n i'n galw am dad Tony Pritchard ar y ffordd fyny - John Rowlands (Liverpool Arms), John Owen (Green Bank). Roedd yn goblyn o beth i redeg o gwmpas. Byddai'n cymryd hanner awr dda. Ro'n i'n ifanc bryd hynny - gallwn i redeg bryd hynny."

A dwi'n cofio tân i lawr ym Moelfre a'r peth cynta, yn naturiol, pan da ni'n cyrraedd tân, yw cael gwybod ble mae'r dŵr. Felly dyma'r ffermwr yma'n dweud wrthon ni 'Mae 'na bwl lawr fanna'n rhywle'. Doedd dim gobaith o fynd â'r lori lawr - byddai'n rhaid llusgo'r hen stemar lawr na. Es i lawr a gweld y pwll a dweud 'Wnaiff hwn ddim para'n hir. Bydd yn sych cyn pen dim.'

Er bod y ffermwr yn honni nad oed byth wedi sychu, Rol oedd yn gywir ac yna dywedwyd wrthynt fod yna bwl arall yn uwch i fyny. Ni allen nhw lusgo'r peiriant i fyny felly gofynnnon nhw iddo roi benthyg pâr o'i geffylau i dynnu'r peiriant i'r top. Cyn cytuno, roedd y ffermwr eisiau gwybod pwy fyddai'n talu am y ceffylau. Roedd Rol mor flin. "A rodd ei le fo ar dân! Roedd rhaid iddo roi'r ceffylau. Dywedodd y syrfewr wrth y gallai godi ar yr Yswiriant."

GŴYL A GWAITH

"Roedd Brigadau Tân Ynys Môn i gyd yn cael cystadleuaeth. Carnifal Borth oedd hi ac roedd gennym ni wersyll symudol mawr yn y cae pêl-droed. Mae 'na ffynnon yn Mona Products ac roedden ni'n pwmpio dŵr o honno i'r fan symudol ma. Roedden ni wedi gwneud un rhan o'r gystadleuaeth ac yna aeth y seiren. Ned Rowlands oedd ar ddyletsydd ffôn yn yr orsaf pan aeth y seiren. Galwyd Caergybi allan; tân mewn cae ŷd yn Dothan. Ffwrdd â nhw. Tua chwarter awr wedyn, aeth y seiren eto - galwyd Llangefni allan. Felly tro Biwmares oedd hi rŵan. Fe dynnon nhw'n pwmp ni o'r gystadleuaeth. Aeth y diawl seiren eto - Porthaethwy i Falltraeth - Tynnwch y diawl pypiau i ffwrdd! Ffwrdd â ni. Aeth y diawl cystadleuaeth i'r gwellt a chafwyd mo'r un gystadleuaeth wedyn."

Roedd yr H.M.S. Conway yn cael ei defnyddio fel llong hyfforddi. Yn 1953 roedd hi'n cael ei halio'n ôl i Lerpwl i gael ei hatgyweirio. Gwaith dyrys oedd ei symud hi drwy Afon Menai a'r Swellies a dim ond ar benllanw'r flwyddyn y gallech chi wneud hynny - llanw mawr. Fe suddodd hi oddi ar y Platters - y grŵp olaf o greigiau cyn Pont y Borth. Gweithiodd Brigâd Dân Porthaethwy arni am bron i 12 awr, tan ychydig cyn hanner nos a chawsant eu galw'n ôl am 4.30 a.m. ar yr 16eg. Ond doedd dim yn tycio!

"Wel mi aethon ni ar y Conway. Roedden ni'n gwyllo'r Conway'n mynd drwodd. Fe'i gwelton ni hi'n mynd ar y creigiau. Es i adre a phan o'n i'n cael cinio aeth y seiren ac roeddwn yn meddwl mai galwad dân arferol. Yn lle hynny roedd yn alwad i'r Conway. Aethon ni yno. Aeth cychod yr Adran Ryfel â'r pypiau - a mynd â ni i gyd allan yno. Ond roedd yn waith caled ofnadwy mynd â'r pypiau i fyny i'r llong ac yna mynd â nhw i lawr grisiau serth ac wedyn reit lawr eto i'r gwaelod. Ac yna, unwaith roedden ni ar y gwaelod roedd y llanw'n mynd allan. Fe wnaeth hi droi drosodd felly galwodd y Capten 'All hands ashore! Abandon Ship!'



Trip i'r Bermo yn 1928.

A trip to Barmouth in 1928.

Mae Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy yn diweddar ei chofnodion, ffotograffau a'i Gwefan er mwyn ei gwneud yn haws i'r aelodau eu gweld. Byddwn yn ceisio ychwanegu at y rhain yn gyson drwy gydol y flwyddyn ac yn cyhoeddi pigion gyda'ch Cylchlythyr. Mae croeso mawr bob amser i gyfraniadau newydd, yn ogystal â help i adnabod pobl yn y lluniau.

Atgofion o'r Borth gan Roland Williams.

Roedd pawb yn adnabod Roland fel Rol Bach, ac ef oedd un o'r dynion tân fu'n gwasanaethu hiraf ar Ynys Môn, wedi ymuno ym mis Awst 1921 pan oedd yn 20 oed. Roedd wedi'i leoli ym Mhorthaethwy. Cafodd Rol ei holi gan y BBC am ei ddyddiau cynnar yn y Frigâd Dân. Dyma ddarn a gymerwyd o drawsgrifiad ei recordiad. Bu farw Rol Bach yn 1978.



Roedd Rol Bach yn fab i Rowland Williams, Adeiladwyr, yn Glyn Derw, Ffordd y Ffair. Bu'n gweithio yng nghwmni adeiladu'r teulu ac yn ei amser hamdden roedd yn dda iawn am drefnu nifer o wibdeithiau bws i weddill Ynysydd Prydain.

Rol Bach was the son of Rowland Williams, Builders in Glyn Derw, Wood Street. He worked in the family building business and in his spare time was a great organiser of many coach trips and excursions to the rest of the British Isles.

**Ewch i'n Gwefan yn
[www.menaibridge
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