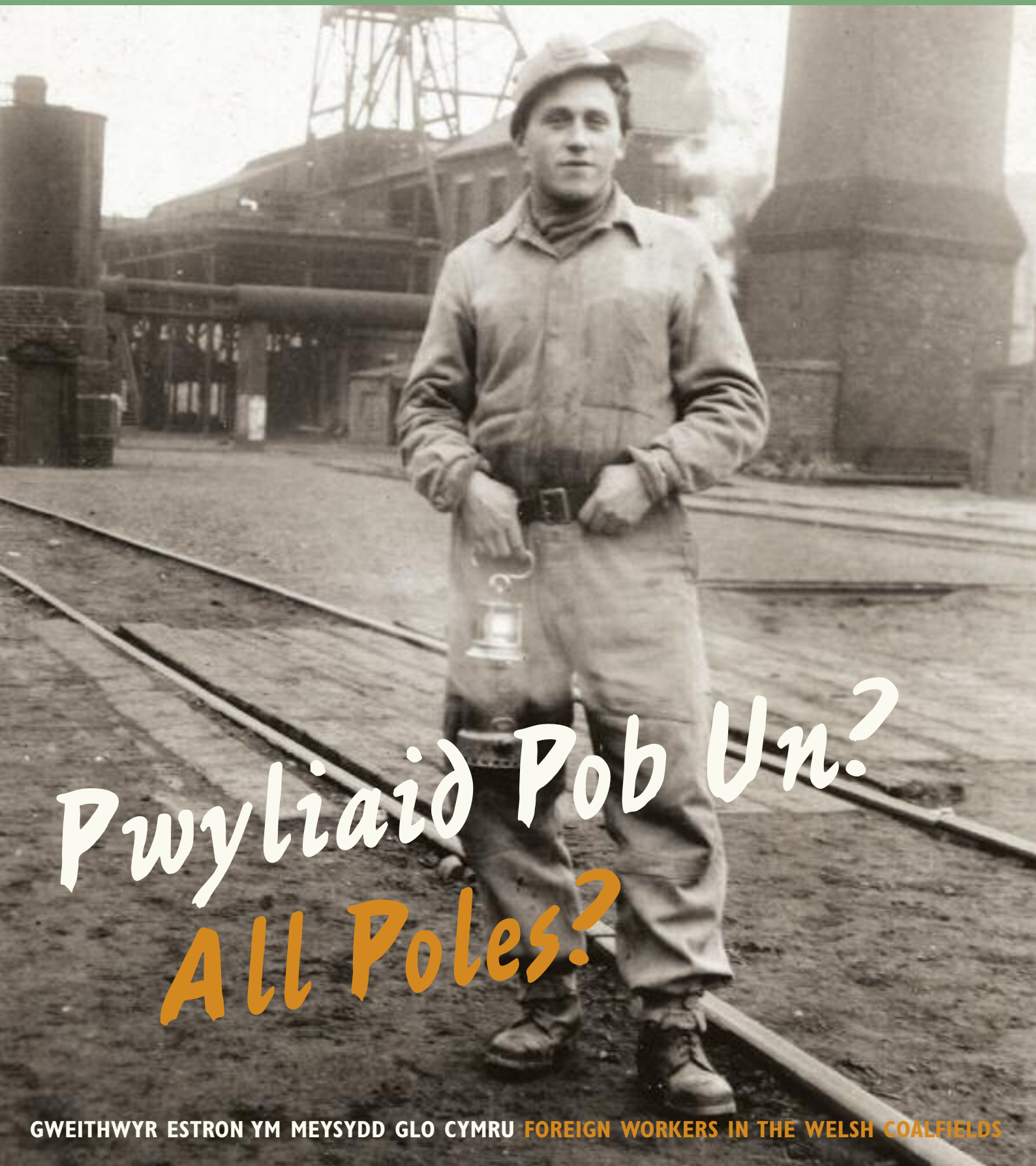


BIG PIT: AMGUEDDFA LOFAOL CYMRU **BIG PIT: NATIONAL COAL MUSEUM**

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GLO **COAL**



Pwyliaid Pob Un?
All Poles?

GWEITHWYR ESTRON YM MEYSYDD GLO CYMRU **FOREIGN WORKERS IN THE WELSH COALFIELDS**

Gweithwyr Estron ym Meysydd Glo Cymru

'Roedd pob un ohonom, Tsieciaid, Pwyliaid, Slaflaidd, i gyd ar wasgar oherwydd y rhyfel.'
Milan Copic

Yn dilyn yr Ail Ryfel Byd, roedd galw mawr, a chynyddol, am lo. Roedd adnewyddiad a thwf yn sgil y rhyfel yn gofyn am ddigonedd o ynni rhad, a dim ond glo allai gyflenwi'r angen. Roedd angen recriwtio mwy o lowyr ar hast. Un ffynhonnell ar gyfer y rhain oedd y miloedd o bobl Ewropeaidd oedd wedi gorfod ffoi o'u gwledydd genedigol yn ystod y Rhyfel.

Er bod angen mawr am y dynion hyn ym Mhrydain, nid oedd croeso iddynt bob tro, ac roedd tipyn o wrthwynebiad o du cyfrinfeydd lleol Undeb Cenedlaethol y Glowyr. Roedd mwy o anesmwythyd pan ddechreuwyd recriwtio Eidalwyr ym 1951, ac nid oedd pethau ddim gwell pan geisiodd y Bwrdd Glo Cenedlaethol recriwtio ffoaduriaid o Hwngari ar ôl chwyldro 1956. Erbyn hyn, roedd grŵp arall eisoes wedi dod i mewn i'r maes glo. Ym 1954, daeth y grŵp peirianyddol Almaenaidd, Thyssen UK, i weithio yn ne Cymru gan ddod â rhai o'u cydwladyr gyda hwy.

Yn yr un modd â mewnfudwyr heddiw, roedd y 'gweithwyr estron' hyn yn wynebu amheuaeth i ddechrau. Roedd hyn yn deillio'n rhannol o anwybodaeth ac yn rhannol o ofn y bobl leol o ddiweithdra. Er gwaethaf hyn, dim ond ambell i achos o erledigaeth bersonol a glywsom gan y bobl a gyfrannodd at y llyfryn hwn.

Daeth y dynion ifanc hyn i Brydain ar ôl blynyddoedd o galedi, perygl a thrychineb. Cefnodd llawer ohonynt ar y maes glo cyn gynted ag y gallent, a gadawodd nifer ohonynt Brydain hyd yn oed, ond enillodd y rhai a arhosodd enw da am eu dyncwch a'u gwaith caled. Er eu bod yn dod o nifer o wledydd, y duedd oedd i'r glöwr Cymreig eu hystyried fel 'Pwyliaid pob un'. Fe briodion nhw â merched lleol ac ymgartrefu yma; ar waliau eu hystafelloedd byw yn aml fe welir lluniau o'u plant a'u hwyrion, sydd wedi eu magu fel Cymry. Mae nifer o'r rhain wedi ennill graddau prifysgol; mae nifer wedi ennill anrhydeddau dros Gymru ar y meysydd chwarae. Er gwaethaf eu balchder yn eu mamwledydd gwreiddiol, mae'r rhan fwyaf bellach yn ystyried eu hunain yn Gymry. Yn yr un modd, dylai Cymru fod yn falch ohonynt hwythau a'r rhan y maent wedi ei chwarae yn ei hanes.

Ceri Thompson

Curadur



Cyflwynir y llyfryn hwn er cof am Piotr 'Peter' Ananicz, Genowefa 'Jenny' Winogorski a Prudence Fulop.

Foreign workers in the Welsh Coalfields



'All of us, Czechs, Poles, Slavs, all scattered because of the war.'
Milan Copic

Following the Second World War, the demand for coal was high and generally rising. Post-war recovery and growth demanded cheap and abundant energy that could only come from coal and there was an urgent need to recruit more miners. One source for these was among the thousands of Europeans who had to flee their home countries during the Second World War.

Although Britain desperately needed these men they were not always welcomed with open arms and there was much resistance from local National Union of Mineworkers' lodges. There was more disquiet when the recruitment of Italians began in 1951, and things were no better when the National Coal Board tried to recruit among Hungarian refugees after the 1956 revolution. By this time another group had already entered the coal field. In 1954 the German mining engineering group, Thyssen UK, came to work in south Wales bringing some of their own countrymen with them.

As with today's immigrants, these 'foreign workers' faced much initial suspicion, which arose partly from ignorance and partly from the fear of unemployment among the local population. In spite of this, the people interviewed for this booklet report only occasional personal hostility.

These young men came to Britain after years of hardship, danger and tragedy. Many left the coal industry as soon as they could, many even left Britain, but the ones who stayed earned a lasting reputation for toughness and hard work. Even though they came from many countries they tend to be regarded as 'all Poles' by the Welsh miner. They married local girls and settled down; on their living room walls can often be found photographs of their children and grandchildren, who have been brought up as Welsh. Many of these have gained university degrees; some have won sporting honours for Wales. In spite of their pride in their original homelands, most now regard themselves as Welsh. In turn Wales should be proud of them and the part they have played in her history.

Ceri Thompson

Curator

This booklet is dedicated to the memories of Piotr 'Peter' Ananicz, Genowefa 'Jenny' Winogorski and Prudence Fulop.

*Mae bywyd wedi
bod yn gymhleth*

CEFAIS FY NGENIYN KATOWICE, GWLAD PWYL,
ym 1925 ac roeddwyn yn fachgen ysgol ym 1939 pan dorrodd y rhyfel. Ar ôl i'r Natsïaid ymosod ar wlad Pwyl cefais fy anfon i'r Almaen fel llafurwr gorfodol. Dihangais sawl gwaith, cefais fy nal sawl gwaith, a chefais fy anfon i'r carchar sawl gwaith! Yn y diwedd, cefais rybudd, pe bawn i'n dianc eto y byddent yn 'cael gwared arna'i'. Felly i ffwrdd â fi eto! Fe deithiais i drwy wlad Belg, Ffrainc a Sbaen ac oddi yno i Gibraltar, ac ar long Brydeinig oedd yn hwylio am Lerpwl. Fe'm hanfonwyd i wersyll ar gyfer pobl wedi'u dadleoli yn yr Alban lle rhoddwyd cyfle i ni i ymuno â'r fyddin, a dyna a wnaeth y rhan fwyaf o'm cydwladwyr. Fe ymunais i ar 23 Mawrth 1942.

Roeddwn i'n aelod o Adran Arfog Cynatf gwlad Pwyl, a anfonwyd i Ffrainc ym 1944. Fe frwydron ni drwy Ffrainc a gwlad Belg ac ymlaen i'r Almaen, lle'r arhosais fel rhan o'r lluoedd meddiannol. Ym 1946 fe'm hanfonwyd yn ôl i Brydain i gyn-wersyll byddin America yn Guildford a ddefnyddiwyd i gartrefu milwyr Pwylaidd. Rhoddwyd dewis i ni i aros ym Mhrydain neu fynd yn ôl adref i wlad Pwyl. Aeth nifer go lew yn ôl, roedden ni mewn gwersyll yn yr Alban erbyn hynny ac roedd llong yn gadael o Leith unwaith yr wythnos yn llawn bechgyn Pwylaidd. Ni chlywsom ganddyn nhw byth wedyn. Ar ôl cael fy rhyddhau o'r fyddin fe ddes i Gymru i weithio yn y pyllau glo. Es i Ganolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale yn y Coed Duon i ddechrau ac yna fe es i Lofa Western yn Nant-y-moel tan 1961. Ar y cychwyn, roeddwn i'n byw mewn hostel ym Mryncethin ac yna mewn llety gyda phobl yn Nant-y-moel. Yn y lofa, bues i'n gweithio ar y ffas gyda dyn profiadol i ddechrau, wedyn fe es i weithio ar yr hedins yn cloddio, yna ar y ffasys cludo, gyda beltiau'n gyntaf wedyn y cludwyr cadwyn. Yn y diwedd es i i dorri ffyrdd, a dyna a wnes am y rhan fwyaf o'ngyrfa yn y lofa, gan ymdeol ym 1981.

Fe briodais i a Mary ym 1951 ac mae dwy ferch, ac wyrion gennym hefyd. Rydw i wedi bod nôl i wlad Pwyl unwaith neu ddwy dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf ac wedi gweld rhai o'r hen berthnasau sy'n dal i fyw yn yr ardal lle cefais fy ngeni. Mae fy mywyd wedi bod yn gymhleth; yn drist ac yn hapus, mae gennyf atgofion gwael; yn arbennig o'r amser pan oeddwn i'n chwarae mig gyda'r Almaenwyr. Rydw i wedi bod yn y yma ers chwe deg pedwar o flynyddoedd – mae gennyf dŷ, glo am ddim a phensiwn glöwr – *not bad ynte?*



**UCHOD: ALOYJZY
A MARY HELLIS,
1950au**

**ABOVE: ALOJZY
AND MARY
HELLIS, 1950s**

Alojzy ('Pal') Josef Hellis, Llanharan

My life has been complicated

I WAS BORN IN KATOWICE, POLAND, IN 1925 AND was a schoolboy in 1939 when war broke out. After the Nazis invaded Poland I was sent to Germany as a slave labourer. I ran away a few times, was captured a few times, and was sent to prison a few times! Eventually they warned me that if I ran away again I would be 'got rid of'. So I ran away again! I travelled through Belgium, France and Spain and from there to Gibraltar and a British ship bound for Liverpool. I was sent to a Displaced Persons' camp in Scotland where we were given the chance to join the army, which most of my countrymen did. I joined up on 23 March 1942.

I was a member of the First Polish Armoured Division, which was sent to France in 1944. We fought through France and Belgium through to Germany, where I stayed as part of the occupation forces. In 1946 I was sent back to Britain to a former American army camp in Guildford which was used to house Polish soldiers. We were given the choice of staying in Britain or going back home to Poland. A tidy few went back, we were in a camp in Scotland by then and a ship used to leave from Leith once a week full of Polish boys and we never heard from them again. After demob I came to Wales to work in the mines. I went first to the Oakdale

Training Centre in Blackwood to be trained and then went to Western Colliery in Nantymoel until 1961. I stayed first in a hostel in Bryncethin then in lodgings with people in Nantymoel. In the colliery I first worked with an experienced man in a stall on the coal face to get experience and after that went into heading work on a driveage, conveyor faces, first belts then chain conveyors. I went driving roadways, which I did mostly for my time in the colliery. I retired in 1981.

I married Mary in 1951 and have two daughters and grandchildren. I've been back to Poland a couple of times over the last few years and saw some of my relatives who still live in the area I was born in. My life has been complicated; it was sad, it was happy, I have bad memories; especially of the time when I was playing hide and seek with the Germans. I have been in this country for sixty-four years – I've got a house, free coal and a miners' pension – not bad is it?

Alojzy ('Pal') Josef Hellis, Llanharan



Gallai'r byd wedi agor drysau i mi!

CEFAIS FY NGENI YN SUVAJA, CROATIA YN YR hen lwgoslafia ym 1929. Roedd fy nhad yn ddyn cyfoethog oedd yn berchen ar dir a siopau ac roeddwn mewn ysgol breswyl gan milltir oddi cartref pan dorrodd y rhyfel. Cafodd fy mhentref genedigol ei losgi'n ulw gan ffasgwyr Croataidd ar 1 Gorffennaf 1941. Ymunais â'r gwrthwynebwyr Brenhinol ['Chetniks'] i ymladd yn erbyn yr Almaenwyr a'r Natsïaid lleol, ac yn ddiweddarach yn erbyn y partisaniaid Comiwnyddol. Pan gipiodd y Rwsiaid Belgrad, yr unig ddewis oedd tynnu allan o lwgoslafia a chroesi i'r Eidal drwy Trieste ym mis Ebrill 1945. Ymunon ni â byddin Prydain yn yr Eidal gan wasanaethu yn Napoli, Bologna a Cazete.

Wedi i ni gael ein rhyddhau o'r lluoedd fe'n dosbarthwyd fel 'Pobl wedi'u Dadleoli' a chynigiwyd lleoedd i ni ymgartrefu ynddynt fel Canada, Awstralia, UDA a Phrydain. Yn bersonol, ofynnodd neb i mi i ble roeddwn i am fynd, fe gefais brawf meddygol ac aed â fi i Brydain lle cefais bunt o arian poced a phaned o de. Cefais fy anfon i wersyll ym Market Harborough ger Caer-lŷr lle dysgwyd Saesneg i ni; roedd rhaid i ni ddysgu Saesneg cyn cael gweithio. Ar ôl chwe wythnos cefais brawf ar fy ngallu i siarad Saesneg a barnwyd fy mod i'n ddigon rhugl i gael gwaith – roeddwn i wedi dysgu Saesneg mewn chwe wythnos! Y dewis oedd gweithio mewn pwll glo neu ar fferm, doedd yna ddim dewis arall. Glöwr oeddwn i am fod ac aed â fi i Ganolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale yn ne Cymru i ddysgu hanfodion mwngloddio ac aethon ni ar sawl trip i Lofa Tylorstown i weld pwll yn gweithio. Ar ôl yr hyfforddiant cychwynnol aethon ni i fyw yn Hostel Pen-coed ac oddi yno cawsom waith yng Nglofa Britannic, Gilfach Goch.

*Yn bersonol, ofynnodd neb i mi
i ble roeddwn i am fynd, fe
gefais brawf meddygol ac aed â
fi i Brydain lle cefais bunt o
arian poced a phaned o de*

Cefais i ddamwain dan ddaear ym 1953, pan gefais fy nghladdu dan gannoedd o dunelli o lo a charreg, a doedd neb yn gwybod ble oeddwn i. Roedd y person

The world would have been my oyster!

I WAS BORN IN SUVAJA, CROATIA IN THE FORMER Yugoslavia in 1929. My father was a rich man, he owned land and shops and I was in a boarding school a hundred miles away from my home when the war broke out. My whole village was burnt and destroyed by Croatian fascists on 1 July 1941. I joined the Royalist resistance ['Chetniks'] fighting against both the Germans and local Nazis, and later the Communist partisans. When the Russians took Belgrade we had no option but to pull out of Yugoslavia and cross to Italy via Trieste in April 1945. We joined the British Army in Italy and served in Naples, Bologna and Cazete.

*Personally I was never
asked where I wanted to go,
just had a medical, and was
brought over to Britain
and given a pound pocket
money and a cup of tea*

After we were discharged from the forces we were classed as 'Displaced Persons' and offered places to settle such as Canada, Australia, USA and Britain. Personally I was never asked where I wanted to go, just had a medical, and was brought over to Britain and given a pound pocket money and a cup of tea. I was sent to a camp in Market Harborough near Leicester where we were taught English, which we had to learn before being allowed to work. After six weeks I was tested on my ability to speak English and was regarded as fluent enough to get work – I had learned English in six weeks! We had either to work in the coal mines or on a farm, there were no other choices. I was to become a coal miner and was brought down to Oakdale Training Centre in south Wales to learn the basics of mining as well as going on a number of trips to Tylorstown Colliery to see a working pit. After initial training we were sent to Pencoed Hostel to live and from there given a job in Britannic Colliery, Gilfach Goch.

In 1953 I had an accident underground, I was buried under hundreds of tons of coal and stone and no one knew where I was. The person who rescued me was actually one of my comrades from during the war. That same year I was

a achubodd fi'n un o'm cymdeithion o'r rhyfel. Yr un flwyddyn cefais dŷ cyngor yn Beddau a symudais i Lofa Cwm. Rhaid i mi ddweud bod y glowyr yn Gilfach Goch yn bobl arbennig a byddaf yn eu cofio am byth, cymaint felly fe symudais i nôl i'r Gilfach Goch ar ôl tair neu bedair blynedd ar ddeg yn Beddau. Er gwaethaf hynny, mae llawer o ffrindiau gen i yn Beddau – mwy o bobl arbennig! Yn ystod fy amser yn y pyllau fy mhrif waith oedd agor hedins a ffyrdd. Fi oedd y dyn cyntaf yng Nglofa Britannic i ddefnyddio overthrow Eimco (rhaw fecanyddol) a dril carreg Silver Dart. Gan ein bod yn gweithio ar gontractau roeddwn yn ennill mwy na rheolwr y lofa – a doedd hynny ddim yn ei blesio o gwbl! Roeddwn i bob amser yn ennill arian da yn y pyllau. Ym 1973 cefais ddamwain ddifrifol gan frifo 'mhen yn y Cwm a bu raid i mi roi'r gorau i'r gwaith glo am byth.

*Ond yn anffodus,
daeth y rhyfel i
droi'r cyfan yn
llwch.*

*Pob un ohonom,
Tsieciaid, Pwyliaid,
Slafiaid, i gyd wedi
mynd ar wasgar
oherwydd y rhyfel*

Priodais i a Margaret, merch o'r Gilfach, ym 1950 a chawsom ni dri o blant, dau fachgen a merch. Erbyn hyn mae gen i saith o wyrion a saith gor-ŵyr. Rwy'n falch fy mod wedi dod i Gymru. Rwy'n cyd-dynnu'n dda â'r bobl a does dim rheswm o gwbl gen i gwyno; er bod dod o deulu cefnog a gweithio fel glöwr yn dipyn o siom am wn i. Oni bai am y rhyfel byddai'r byd wedi agor drysau i mi – fy uchelgais fel bachgen ifanc oedd bod yn rheolwr banc. Ond yn anffodus, daeth y rhyfel i droi'r cyfan yn llwch. Pob un ohonom, Tsieciaid, Pwyliaid, Slafiaid, i gyd wedi mynd ar wasgar oherwydd y rhyfel.

Milan ('Mel') Copic, Gilfach Goch

given a council house in Beddau and transferred to Cwm Colliery. I must say that the miners in Gilfach Goch were great people that I will never forget, so much so that after thirteen or fourteen years in Beddau I went back to Gilfach to live. In spite of that I also had a lot of friends in

Beddau – more wonderful people! During my time in the mines I mostly worked driving Headings and roadways. I was the first man in Britannic Colliery to use an overthrow Eimco (a mechanical shovel) and a Silver Dart stone drill. As we were working on contracts we earned more than the colliery manager – and he didn't like that at all! – I was always on good money in the pits. In 1973 I had a serious head accident down the Cwm and had to finish in the mines for good.

*As it was,
unfortunately,
war came and
everything turned
to ashes.
All of us,
Czechs,
Poles, Slavs,
all scattered
because
of the war*

I married Margaret, a Gilfach girl, in 1950 and have three children, two boys and a girl, and now seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. I'm glad I came to Wales. I get on very well with the people and I can't complain at all; although coming from a rich family and ending up as a miner was a bit of a come down I suppose. If it wasn't for the war the world would have been my oyster – as a boy, I always wanted to be a bank manager. As it was, unfortunately, war came and everything turned to ashes. All of us, Czechs, Poles, Slavs, all scattered because of the war.

Milan ('Mel') Copic, Gilfach Goch



TOP: MR COPIC
YN 17 OED
GWAELOD: MEL COPIC
A'I WRAIG MARGARET,
TUA 1970

TOP: MR COPIC AT
17 YEARS OLD
BOTTOM: MEL COPIC
AND HIS WIFE
MARGARET, ABOUT 1970

*Wyddwn i ddim
beth oedd
golchi llestri!*

GANED FY NGŴR, ERYK JOSEF WOSZCZYCKI, YM mhentref Golasowice, Silesia ym 1921. Roedd yn un o deulu o gigyddion ac roedd yn cofio mynd i'r farchnad gyda'i dad mewn cart a cheffyl. Pan ddechreuodd y rhyfel daeth yr Almaenwyr i mewn i wlad Pwyl un ffordd a'r Rwsiaid y ffordd arall. Roedd hi'n amser ofnadwy – pan aethom i weld ei hen gartref yn y 1960au, roedd tyllau bwled i'w gweld ym mhob man yno. Daeth Eryk allan o wlad Pwyl ar gefn beic gyda thorth o fara dan un fraich a salami dan y llall! Dihangodd drwy'r sector Rwsiaidd a llwyddodd i gael lle ar long y Groes Goch yn y Baltig.

Wedi cyrraedd Prydain, ymunodd â Byddin Pwyl Rydd a daeth yn negesydd. Yn ystod y cyrch drwy'r Iseldiroedd ym 1944 fe'i saethwyd drwy ei goes, roedd bob amser yn dweud na theimlodd ddim nes iddo syrthio oddi ar ei feic. Fe'i hanfonwyd nôl i ysbyty ym Mhrydain ond ailymunodd â'i uned yn yr Iseldiroedd yn nes ymlaen. Ym Mhrydain, cyfarfu â Churchill oedd yn rhoi sylw mawr i'r Pwyliaid – a dywedodd ei fod yn falch iawn ohonynt.

*Daeth Eryk allan o wlad Pwyl ar
gefn beic gyda thorth o fara dan
un fraich a salami dan y llall!*

Roedd hi'n wahanol ar ôl y rhyfel – 'ewch nôl adref!' Gallai fod wedi dychwelyd i wlad Pwyl ond cafodd rybudd gan ei dad, oedd wedi aros yno, i beidio â mynd nôl oherwydd agwedd y Rwsiaid. Gan ei fod wedi dianc i Brydain roeddent yn ystyried ei fod yn enciliwr. Cafodd ei anfon i ganolfan Corfflu Adleoli yn yr Alban cyn mynd i hyfforddi fel glöwr yng Nghanolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale ger y Coed Duon ym mis Mai 1946. Daeth i'r Coed Duon ar ddydd Sadwrn ac fe gwrddon ni yng nghaffi Eidalaid 'Ma's' y dydd Mawrth canlynol. Buom ni'n dau gyda'n gilydd am y 53 mlynedd nesaf nes iddo farw ym mis Mai 2002. Pan orffennodd hyfforddi aeth i weithio yng Nglofa Britannia. Dim ond yng Nghytiau Oakdale y câi fyw nes iddo orffen ei hyfforddiant, ond wedi hynny bu rhaid iddo ffeindio llety. Roedd fy Modryb Bet yn cadw lojers ond dywedodd ei mam, Mam-gu Smith, oedd wedi colli ei mab Frank yn Sisili ym 1943, "Da ni ddim eisiau hen estroniaid yma!". Fodd bynnag, cyn gynted ag y gwelodd Mam-gu Eryk cymerodd ato'n syth – roedd

*I never knew
what it was to
wash dishes!*

MY HUSBAND, ERYK JOSEF WOSZCZYCKI, WAS born in the village of Golasowice, Silesia in 1921. He came from a family of butchers and he remembered going to market with his father in a horse and cart. When the war started the Germans came into Poland one way and the Russians the other, it was a terrible time – when we went to see his old home in the 1960s there were still bullet holes all over it. Eryk got out of Poland on a pushbike with a loaf of bread under one arm and a salami under the other! He escaped via the Russian sector and managed to get on a Red Cross ship in the Baltic.

After getting to Britain he joined the Free Polish Army and became a dispatch rider. During the advance through Holland in 1944 he was shot through the leg, he always said that he didn't feel anything until he fell off his bike. He was sent back to a hospital in Britain but later rejoined his unit in Holland. While in Britain he met Churchill who was all over the Poles – said he was really proud of them.

*Eryk got out of Poland on
a pushbike with a loaf of bread
under one arm and a salami
under the other!*

After the war it was different – 'get back to your own country!' He could have gone back to Poland but his father, who had stayed there, warned him not to go back because of the attitude of the Russians. As he had escaped to Britain they regarded him as a deserter. He was sent to a Resettlement Corps base in Scotland before being sent for mining training in Oakdale Training Centre near Blackwood in May 1946. He came to Blackwood on a Saturday, we met in 'Ma's' Italian Café on the Tuesday and were together for the next 53 years until he died in May 2002. When he finished training he went to work in Britannia Colliery. He was only allowed to live in the Oakdale Huts until he finished his training, after that he had to find digs. My Auntie Bet used to take in lodgers but her mother, my Granny Smith, who had lost her son Frank in Sicily in 1943, said 'We don't want any old foreigners here!'. However, as soon as Granny saw Eryk she fell for him straight away – he was good with her, he used to bring her an ice cream from the café every day. He lived with Granny Smith for eighteen months until we were married on 16 December 1948.



e'n dda iawn gyda hi, a byddai'n dod â hufen iâ o'r caffï iddi bob dydd. Bu'n byw gyda Mam-gu Smith am ddeunaw mis nes i ni briodi ar 16 Rhagfyr 1948.

Hyfforddodd fel ffitiwr yng Nglofa Britannia a bu'n gweithio yno am dri deg pedwar o flynyddoedd. 'Big Eryk' oedd ei enw ym Mritannia erioed a 'Little Eryk' oedd ei ffrind, Eryk Jazabek. Cafodd un neu ddwy o ddamweiniau cas dan ddaear. Torrodd ei dibia a'i ffibwla pan dorrodd cadwyn gludo; cafodd thrombosis yr ysgyfaint oherwydd fflwyn metel yn ei waed; bu raid iddo wisgo staes ar ôl straenio ei gefn ac roedd ganddo lawer o lwch yn ei ysgyfaint – roedd ei frest yn wael iawn ac aeth i Ysbyty Llandochau sawl gwaith – ond ni wnâi roi'r gorau iddi gan ei fod yn weithiwr caled fel y rhan fwyaf o'r Pwyliaid. Yn y diwedd cymrodd ymddeoliad cynnar ym 1982 a chafodd daliad o £600. Pe byddai wedi para tan 1983 pan gaeodd Britannia, byddai wedi cael taliad llawer uwch.

Aethom i wlad Pwyl ddwywaith. 1964 oedd y tro cyntaf. Roedd gwlad Pwyl dan reolaeth gomiwnyddol ond roedd gan Eryk basbort Prydeinig erbyn hynny. Fe yrron ni'r holl ffordd yn ein Morris 1100. Roedd yn hyfryd iawn bod yng ngwlad Pwyl, aethom yn gyntaf i weld ei frawd yn Kawozice ac yna i'r tŷ lle cafodd Eryk ei fagu – roedden ni ddwy filltir oddi yno pan ganodd gorn y car fel petai'n dweud 'Dwi'n gwybod lle'r ydym ni nawr!' Roedd y groes ar

**UCHOD: ERYK
WOSZCZYCKI (3YDD
O'R CHWITH)**

**ABOVE: ERYK
WOSZCZYCKI
(MIDDLE ROW 3RD
FROM LEFT)**

He trained as a fitter in Britannia Colliery and worked there for thirty-four years. He was always known in Britannia as 'Big Eryk' and his friend Eryk Jazabek was 'Little Eryk'. He had a couple of nasty injuries underground. He broke his tibia and fibula when a conveyor chain snapped; he had a lung thrombosis from a metal splinter in the bloodstream; he had to wear a corset after staining his back and he also had a high percentage of dust on his lungs – his chest was really bad and he went into Llandough Chest Hospital a few times – but he wouldn't quit as he was a real worker as most of the Poles were. He eventually took early retirement in 1982 and got a payment of £600. If he had lasted until 1983 when Britannia finally closed he would have had a much bigger pay out.

We went to Poland twice. The first time was in 1964. Poland was under communist rule but Eryk had a British passport by then. We drove all the way there in our Morris 1100. It was wonderful to be in Poland, we first went to see his brother in Kawozice and then to Eryk's childhood home – we were 2 miles from there when he beeped the car horn as if to say 'I know where we are now!' The cross on the top of the church was lit up – what a homecoming! We went to a church service for the miners and there was a crowd three deep outside. Fair play for the Poles, they think more of their miners than bank managers. He was glad that he went back – he saw what had gone on since he escaped. We went to



CHWITH: NYK WOSZCZYCKI (AIL O'R CHWITH) MEWN GRWP YN DATHLU YMDDEOLIAD EI FFRIND, JOE HUGHES, O LOFA BRITANNIA; GWAELOD: MARY A NYK WOSZCZYCKI

LEFT: NYK WOSZCZYCKI (2ND FROM LEFT) IN A GROUP CELEBRATING HIS FRIEND JOE HUGHES'S RETIREMENT FROM BRITANNIA; BELOW: MARY AND NYK WOSZCZYCKI



ben yr eglwys wedi ei goleuo – am groeso adref! Aethom i wasanaeth i'r glowyr yn yr eglwys ac roedd torf tair rhes y tu allan. Chwarae teg i'r Pwyliaid, maen nhw'n meddwl mwy o'u glowyr nag o'u rheolwyr banc. Roedd yn falch ei fod wedi mynd nôl – cafodd weld beth oedd wedi digwydd ers iddo ddianc. Aethom i dri lle gwahanol ac ym mhob un roedd rhaid i ni lofnodi wrth gyrraedd a llofnodi wrth adael wedyn – a dim ond ychydig filltiroedd oddi wrth ei gilydd oedden nhw. Aethom eto ym 1966, ond y tro hwn aethom ni â'r plant gyda ni.

*Aethom i wasanaeth i'r glowyr
yn yr eglwys ac roedd torf
tair rhes y tu allan.
Chwarae teg i'r Pwyliaid, maen
nhw'n meddwl mwy o'u glowyr
nag o'u rheolwyr banc*

Roedd yn ŵr da ac nid oedd rhaid i mi wneud heb ddim. Buom yn briod am hanner cant a thair o flynyddoedd a chawsom dri o blant a phedwar ŵyr. Roedd gan y Top Club glwb triapiau ac roedden ni'n mynd i bob man gyda'n gilydd. Roedd yn arfer bod yn hoff o rasio ceffylau hefyd, byth yn rhoi punnoedd ar geffylau cofiwch, dim ond ceiniogau – byddai'n gwneud 16 ceffyl ac ni fyddai'n costio punt iddo! Ond cofiwch, pe byddai bwci yn ceisio'i dwyllo, lwc owt fyddai hi wedyn. Roeddwn i wrth fy modd yn coginio ond fe oedd yn golchi'r llestri bob tro – wyddwn i ddim beth oedd golchi llestri!

Mary Woszczycki, Y Coed Duon

three different places, in each one we had to sign in and sign out after – and they were only a couple of miles from each other. We went again in 1966, but this time we took the kids.

*We went to a church service for
the miners and there was a
crowd three deep outside.
Fair play for the Poles, they
think more of their miners than
bank managers*

He was a good husband and I never went without. We were married fifty-three years and had three children and four grandchildren. The Top Club used to have an outing club and we went everywhere together. He also used to love horse racing, never put pounds on a horse mind, only pennies – he used to do 16 horses and it wouldn't cost him a quid! If a bookie tried to cheat him mind, you could look out. I used to love doing the cooking but he always used to do the dishes – I never knew what it was to wash dishes!

Mary Woszczycki, Blackwood



*Gweithwyr caled
oedden ni!*

*We were real
sloggers!*

FE'M GANWYD I DEULU O FFERMWYR SERBIAIDD yn Strmica, ger Krain ar arfordir Dalmatia yr hen Iwgoslafia ar 5 Awst 1925. Roeddwn i'n un o ddeuddeg o blant, saith bachgen a phum merch. Ar ôl i'r Almaenwyr ymosod ym 1941 ymunais â'r gwrthwynebwyr Brenhinol, y 'Chetniks', ac es i ffwrdd gyda nhw pan aeth hi'n rhy beryglus i aros yn fy mhentref. Treuliais weddill fy amser yn Iwgoslafia yn ymladd ac yn cuddio. Roedd y wlad wedi mynd i'r diawl, Almaenwyr yma, Comiwnyddion acw; wyddech chi ddim pwy y gallech chi ymddiried ynddo! Yn y diwedd bu rhaid i ni ddianc pan ymosododd y Rwsiaid. Lladdwyd fy mrawd, Dragan, oedd flwyddyn yn hŷn na fi, wrth i ni ddianc i'r Eidal.

Yn yr Eidal ymunais â Chetniks eraill oedd yn gweithio i fyddin Prydain. Ar ôl y rhyfel allwn i ddim mynd adref gan fod comiwnyddion Tito'n rheoli Iwgoslafia. Cefais gyfle i ddod i Brydain ac ym 1947 roeddwn yng Nghaergrawnt yn dysgu

I WAS BORN TO A SERBIAN FARMING FAMILY IN Strmica, near Krain on the Dalmation Coast of the former Yugoslavia on 5 August 1925. I was one of twelve children, seven boys and five girls. After the Germans invaded in 1941 I joined the Royalist resistance, the Chetniks, and went away with them when it became too dangerous for me to stay in my village. I spent the rest of my time in Yugoslavia fighting and hiding. The country had gone to hell, Germans here, Communists there; you didn't know who to trust! Eventually we had to get out when the Russians invaded. My brother, Dragan, who was a year older than me, was killed while we were escaping to Italy.

In Italy I joined other Chetniks working for the British Army. After the war I couldn't go back home because Tito's communists were in control of Yugoslavia. I was given the chance to come to Britain and in 1947 ended up in Cambridge learning English. Once I had learnt some English I was offered work in either the farms or the coal mines. There wasn't

UCHOD: DRAM GLO OLAF GLOFA Tŷ-MAWR

ABOVE: LAST DRAM OF COAL AT TYMAWR COLLIERY

Saesneg. Ar ôl dysgu rhywfaint o Saesneg cefais gynnig gwaith un ai ar y ffermydd neu yn y pyllau glo. Doedd dim llawer o arian ar y ffermydd felly dewisais i'r pyllau glo ac fe'm hanfonwyd i Ganolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale lle treuliais rywfaint o amser yn yr hostel cyn cael llety gyda Mrs Morgan ym Mhentwynmawr.

Ar ôl yr hyfforddiant cychwynnol es i weithio yng Nglofa Celynen South. Nid oedd baddonau pen pwll yno bryd hynny felly roedden ni'n defnyddio baddonau Celynen North. Ar ôl ychydig o flynyddoedd trosglwyddais i'r Hostel yn y Ddraenen Wen ger Pontypridd ac es i weithio yng Nglofa Tŷ-mawr er nad oedd baddonau yno chwaith ac roedd rhaid i ni ymolchi yng Nglofa Lewis Merthyr. Roedd gan bob un ohonom, yn Bwyliaid ac Iwgoslafiaid, enw da fel gweithwyr – gallai rhai o'r gweithwyr lleol fod wedi dysgu gwers gennym – gweithwyr caled oedden ni! Gweithiais yn yr hedins a'r ffas – yn pacio, codi cylchoedd, coedio – y cyfan. Roeddwn i'n gweithio'n galed i ennill tamaid ond doedd dim cymaint o gyflog ag yr hoffen i fod wedi ei gael cofiwch! Roeddwn i bob amser yn mwynhau cael bechgyn ifanc i weithio gyda fi, er eu bod yn meddwl mod i'n gweiddi arnyn nhw drwy'r amser. Roeddwn i'n ceisio cyd-dynnu gyda phwy bynnag oedd yn gweithio gyda fi, er bod ambell un yn codi 'ngwrychyn. Un diwrnod, cymrodd rhywun fy mloc (coed tân consesiwn). Roeddwn wedi ei dorri, ei holli, ei glymu a rhoi fy marc arno ac roedd rhywun wedi mynd ag e. Gwylltiais i'n ofnadw a bygwth taflu'r lleidr oddi ar y bont pe bawn i'n ei ddal!

Priodais â Margaret ym mis Rhagfyr 1954. Fe gwrddon ni ar fws; gwelais i hi a phenderfynu dod i'w hadnabod. Drwy Iolanda, merch Eidalaidd oedd yn gweithio mewn Caffi Bracchi, trefnais i gwrdd â Margaret, oedd yn ffrind iddi. Erbyn hyn mae gennym un ferch ac un ŵyr. Pan oedden ni'n byw yn Nhrehafod daeth llifogydd mawr. Torrodd wal yr afon ac fe gollon ni'r rhan fwyaf o'n dogfennau a'n lluniau. Yn fy amser sbâr roeddwn i'n cadw rhandir – roeddwn i wrth fy modd yn garddio ac yn aelod llawn a ffyddlon iawn o Glwb Wayne Morgan yn Nhrehafod! Ar y cyfan roeddwn i'n cyd-dynnu â phawb – ac yn arbennig y merched! Roeddwn i'n cyd-dynnu â'r Cymry yn well na fy mhobl fy hun gan fy mod i bob amser yn dadlau â nhw. Rwy'n ystyried fy hun yn Gymro bellach. Roedd rhai pobl yn erbyn 'estroniaid' ond dim ond ambell un, a chymrais i ddim sylw gan fod y rhan fwyaf o'r bobl leol yn bobl dda. Roeddwn i'n lwcus iawn gyda fy iechyd hefyd a chollais i fawr o waith ond fuodd cefn tost arna'i ar un adeg ar ôl gweithio dan do isel.

Doedd dim gwahaniaeth gen i fod dan ddaear fy hun ond rwy'n cofio un o fy ffrindiau yn dweud y diwrnod y caeodd Glofa Tŷ-mawr – 'Torrodd fy nghalon y diwrnod cyntaf yr es i i lawr i'r pwll, ond mae'r diwrnod olaf wedi dod a dydw i ddim yn ddigalon mwyach.'

Nic Dronjak, Llanilltud Faerdre

much money on the farms so I chose the collieries and was sent to the training centre in Oakdale where I spent some time living in the hostel there until I got lodgings with a Mrs Morgan in Pentwynmawr.

After the initial training I went to work in Celynen South Colliery. There were no pithead baths there at the time so we used to use the Celynen North baths. After a few years I transferred to the Hostel in Hawthorn near Pontypridd and went to work in Tymawr Colliery although, again, there was no baths there and we had to bath in Lewis Merthyr Colliery. All of us Poles and Yugoslavians were known as good workers – some of the local workers could have taken lessons from us – we were real sloggers! I worked on both headings and coal faces – packing, raising rings, timbering – everything. I worked hard to earn money but not as much pay as I would have liked mind!. I always liked having youngsters working with me although they reckoned that I always shouted at them. Whoever I worked with I tried to get on with, although some used to annoy me. One day someone pinched my block (concessionary firewood). I had cut it, split it, tied it up and put my mark on it and then it was gone. I got very annoyed and threatened to throw the thief off the bridge if I caught him!

I married Margaret in December 1954. We met on a bus; I saw her and decided to get to know her. I arranged through an Italian girl called Iolanda who worked in a Bracchi Café to meet Margaret who was a friend of hers. We now have a daughter and one grandson. When we were living in Trehafod there was a big flood. The river wall broke and we lost most of our documents and photographs. In my spare time I kept an allotment – I loved gardening and was a paid-up member of the Wayne Morgan Club in Trehafod – a devout member! All in all I got on with everybody – especially the girls! I got on with Welsh people better than with my own as I always used to end up arguing with them. I consider myself a Welshman now. We had some people who were against 'foreigners' but only a few and I took no notice because most locals were very decent people. I was also very lucky with my health and never lost much work but I did have a bad back through working in low conditions.

I never minded being underground myself but I remember one of my friends saying on the day that Tymawr Colliery closed – 'My heart was broken the first day I went down the pit, now it's the last day and I'm not depressed any more.'

Nic Dronjak, Llantwit Fardre

Mae gen i fywyd da

I have a good life

GANWYD PIOTR ('PETER') ANANICZ I DEULU O ffermwyr ar 5 Ionawr, 1919 yn Jauholec ger Wilejka yn nwyrain gwlad Pwyl. Ar ôl i'r Rwsiaid ymosod ar ddwyrain gwlad Pwyl anfonwyd Piotr i Siberia fel llafurwr gorfodol mewn gwersyll coedwigo lle'r oedd yr amodau'n wael iawn; os oedd y carcharorion yn gwlychu nid oeddent yn cael gorwedd i gysgu rhag ofn i'w dillad rewi. Cafodd Piotr frath rhew yn ei draed a dim ond drwy ymdrechion meddyg Pwylaidd yr oedd wedi dod yn gyfeillgar â hi yr arbedwyd ei draed. Roedd bwyd yn brin iawn – mae Piotr yn cofio cymryd dogn bara oddi ar bobl oedd wedi marw o'r teiffws. Roedd llawer o drais yn erbyn y carcharorion. Tynnodd un gard ei rifolfer a saethu dyn oedd yn sefyll o'i flaen am ddim rheswm amlwg. Gan fod Piotr yn ddyn cryf cafodd yr orchwyl o gario cyrff i gael eu claddu mewn ffosydd. Câl ddogonau bwyd ychwanegol am wneud hyn.

Fyddai neb yn credu beth ddigwyddodd – lladdwyd llawer o'n bechgyn gorau

Ym 1942 rhyddhaodd Stalin garcharorion Pwylaidd o Siberia a chaniatáu iddynt deithio i Bersia (Iran) i ymuno â byddin Prydain. Roedd yn siwrnai arw ac fe ddefnyddion nhw sawl dull o deithio gan gynnwys mulod, lorïau, trenau ac ar droed. Bu farw tri o'i gymdeithion ar y ffordd. Ar un trênn heintiwyd pob un â llau – bu un ohonynt farw drwy 'gael ei fwyta'n fyw gan lau'. Mae Piotr yn cofio gadael y trênn a throchi mewn afon gerllaw i gael gwared ar y llau. Ym Mhersia ymunodd â'r Ail Gorfflu Pwylaidd dan y Cadfridog Anders, a daeth yn ynnwr gydag 8fed Catrawd Wrthawyrennol PA (Magnelaeth Pwyl). Ym 1943, ar ôl ymarfer ym Mhalesteina ac Irac, fe'u hanfonwyd i Alecsandria yn yr Aifft cyn cael eu hanfon i ymladd yn yr Eidal. Eu brwydr fwyaf nodedig oedd Monte Cassino ym mis Mai 1944. Ar ôl wythnos o frwydro caled a cholledion, codwyd baner gwlad Pwyl uwchben adfeilion y fynachlog, oedd wedi ei throï'n gaer gan fyddin yr Almaen. Roedd yn amser erchyll, fel

PIOTR ('PETER') ANANICZ WAS BORN ON 5 January, 1919 in Jauholec near Wilejka in eastern Poland to a farming family. After the Russians invaded eastern Poland Piotr was sent to Siberia as a slave labourer in a forestry camp where conditions were very bad; if the prisoners got wet they couldn't lie down to sleep in case their clothes froze. Piotr contracted frostbite in his feet and only saved them through the efforts of a female Polish doctor who he had befriended. Food was almost non-existent – Piotr remembers taking the bread ration from people who had died of typhus. There were many acts of violence against the prisoners. One guard pulled out his revolver and shot a man who was lined up in front of him, for no apparent reason. Because Piotr was a strong man

he was given the task of carrying bodies away to be buried in trenches. He was given extra rations for this task.

What happened no one would believe – a lot of our best boys were killed

In 1942 Stalin released Polish prisoners from Siberia and allowed them to travel to Persia (Iran) to join the British Army. It was a rough journey and they travelled by various modes of transport such as mules, lorries, trains and even walking. Three of his comrades died on the way. On one train they were all infected with lice – one of them died from being 'eaten alive by lice'. Piotr remembers leaving the train and immersing himself in a nearby river to try and get rid of the lice. In Persia he joined the Polish 2nd Corps under General Anders and became a gunner with the 8th Anti Aircraft Regiment PA (Polish Artillery). In 1943 after training in Palestine and Iraq they were sent to Alexandria in Egypt before being sent into action in Italy. Their most notable battle was Monte Cassino in May 1944. After a week of heavy fighting and loss of life, the Polish flag was eventually raised above the ruins of the monastery, which had been turned into a fortress by the German army. It was a terrible time, as Piotr said 'What happened no one would believe – a lot of our best boys were killed'.

At the end of the war in 1945 the Polish troops were given a choice of places to go such as New Zealand,



UCHOD: PIOTR ANANICZ, TUA 1944

ABOVE: PIOTR ANANICZ, ABOUT 1944

y dywedodd Piotr 'Fyddai neb yn credu beth ddigwyddodd – lladdwyd llawer o'n bechgyn gorau'.

Ar ddiwedd y rhyfel ym 1945 cafodd y lluoedd Pwylaidd ddewis o leoedd i fynd iddynt fel Seland Newydd, Canada, Awstralia neu Brydain. Dewisodd Piotr Seland Newydd i ddechrau ond newidiodd ei feddwl; roedd wedi cael digon ar deithio a chyrhaeddodd Brydain ar 25 Gorffennaf 1946. Cyfarchodd Churchill y lluoedd Pwylaidd a gofynnodd iddynt aros ym Mhrydain gan y byddai angen dynion cryf ar y wlad ar ôl y rhyfel. Cafodd ddewis ffermio neu fwyngloddio – roedd e am fynd i lawr i'r pwll. Anfonwyd Piotr i Ganolfan Hyfforddi'r Glowyr yn Oakdale ym mis Mehefin 1947 ac aeth i fyw yn hostel y glowyr yn Ystrad Mynach. Ar ôl hyfforddi fe'i hanfonwyd i Lofa Windsor ym mis Gorffennaf gan fyw mewn llety yn Abertridwr. Roedd wedi gweld y ferch a ddeuai'n wraig iddo o gwmpas y pentref a gwnaeth yn siŵr ei fod yn cael ei anfon i weithio gyda'i thad er mwyn cael dod i'w hadnabod. Pan gwrddon nhw gyntaf yr unig eiriau Saesneg oedd ganddo oedd 'good night' a 'nice day', fodd bynnag, fe ddysgodd ddigon o Saesneg i ddod yn ei flaen – yn cynnwys 'y geiriau drwg i gyd'. Fe briodon nhw ar 1 Ebrill 1950 ac mae ganddynt dri mab a dwy ferch.

Gweithiodd wedyn yng Nglofeydd Bedwas a Nantgarw a bu yno adeg ffrwydrad Glofa Bedwas ym mis Hydref 1952. Cariodd Piotr ei ffrind Pwylaidd, Ignacy ('Joe') Lisak allan ar ei gefn. Roedd 'Joe' wedi cael ei losgi'n ofnadwy a phan ddaeth â'i ddillad gwaith adref roedd croen wedi llosgi yn dal yn sownd wrth ei siaced. Oherwydd ei brofiadau yn ystod y rhyfel, yn arbennig ar ôl ei amser yn Siberia, dioddefodd Piotr o salwch nerfau yn ystod y 1950au. Collodd flwyddyn o waith ac roedd yn 'byw ar dabledi'. Diflasodd Ann ar hyn, taflodd bob tabled i'r tân a dweud wrtho am fynd nôl i lawr y pwll – fe wnaeth hynny a chymerodd e'r un dabled byth wedyn. Bu Piotr yn byw yng Nghymru am 60 mlynedd, gweithiodd yn galed ac ni wnaeth erioed ddadlau o ddifrif â neb. Fodd bynnag, cymerodd un neu ddau o 'bobl dwp' yn erbyn ei genedligrwydd a cheisio tynnu arno trwy ei alw'n 'estron' – bygythiodd un i losgi ei gytiau ieir i lawr. Er gwaethaf hyn, wnaeth e erioed ddifaru dod i Brydain – 'Wna i byth anghofio'r hyn yr es i drwyddi ond rwy'n falch i mi ddod i Gymru. Dydw i ddim wedi gwneud yn rhy ddrwg, mae gen i fywyd da.'

(Fel adroddwyd wrth Ceri Thompson)



say 'Goodnight' and 'Nice day' in English, however he quickly learned enough English to get by – including 'all the naughty words'. They married on 1 April 1950 and have three sons and two daughters.

He later worked in both Bedwas and Nantgarw Collieries and was involved in the Bedwas Colliery explosion in October 1952. Piotr carried his Polish friend, Ignacy ('Joe') Lisak, out from the district on his back. 'Joe' had been badly burned and when he brought his working clothes home there was still burnt skin attached to his jacket. Because of his experiences during the war, especially after his time in Siberia, Piotr suffered a nervous breakdown during the 1950s. He lost twelve months work and 'was living on tablets'. Ann got fed up of this, threw every tablet on the fire and told him to get back down the pit – he did and never took a tablet again. Piotr lived in Wales for 60 years, worked hard and never really quarrelled with anyone. However, one or two 'ignorant

persons' took against his nationality and tried to goad him by calling him a 'foreigner' – one even threatened to burn his chicken cots down. In spite of this he never regretted coming to Britain – 'What I went through I'll never forget but I'm glad I came to Wales. I haven't done badly, I have a good life.'

(As told to Ceri Thompson)

UCHOD:
GWEITHWYR O
WLAD PWYL YNG
NGHANOLFAN
HYFFORDDI YSTRAD
MYNACH, 1947.
PIOTR YW'R AIL O'R
CHWITH

ABOVE: POLISH
WORKERS IN
YSTRAD MYNACH
TRAINING CENTRE,
1947. PIOTR IS
2ND FROM LEFT



Tad arðderchog

GANED FY NHAD, STANISLAV CELMER, YN LISK, ger Poznan yng ngwlad Pwyl ar 19 Tachwedd 1927. Hanai o deulu o ffermwyr ac roedd yn un o ddeuddeg o blant, naw bachgen a thair merch. Roedd yn dair ar ddeg oed pan ymosododd yr Almaenwyr. Un diwrnod fe ddaethant i'r fferm a dweud wrth mam-gu a tad-cu fod ganddynt ugain munud i bacio dillad a dweud ffarwel wrth dad a dau o'i frodyr cyn mynd â nhw i weithio fel llafurwyr gorfodol mewn ffatri awyrennau Almaenaidd.

Roedd bywyd yn galed yn y ffatri, os oedd yr Almaenwyr yn amau bod un o'r awyrennau wedi ei difrodi byddent yn dod i'r ffatri ac yn curo neu hyd yn oed yn lladd rhai o'r gweithwyr. Penderfynodd y brodyr geisio dianc. Cafodd un brawd ei saethu a'i ladd wrth ffoi a bu raid i'r ddau arall wahanu ac ni welodd y ddau mo'i gilydd byth wedyn. Rydyn ni'n credu bod fy ewythr wedi mynd i Awstralia i fyw.

Gwnaeth fy nhad ei ffordd ar draws yr Almaen ar ei ben ei hun, gan gysgu mewn mynwentydd

Gwnaeth fy nhad ei ffordd ar draws yr Almaen ar ei ben ei hun, gan gysgu mewn mynwentydd. Fe wnaeth e hyn am ei fod yn credu y byddai'r Almaenwyr yn annhebygol o fentro iddynt yn y tywyllwch! Roedd hi'n wanwyn, felly fe lwyddodd i 'fwyta o'r caeau' ac yn y diwedd cyrhaeddodd Brydain. Ym Mhrydain, ymunodd â Byddin Pwyl Rydd ac aeth nôl i Ewrop gyda nhw ar ôl ymosodiad y cynghreiriaid ym 1944. Ni welodd fawr o ymladd ac aeth i'r Almaen yn y diwedd fel rhan o'r lluoedd meddiannol.

Yn ystod ei gyfnod yn yr Almaen ar ôl y rhyfel bu'n byw ar ei ddyfeisgarwch gan wneud arian drwy gynlluniau fel gwerthu 'coffi' i'r Almaenwyr – roedd hanner y tun yn sothach gyda gorchudd tenau o goffi go iawn – unrhyw beth i fyw. Gwylltiodd un ddynes a'i drywanu! Yn y diwedd cafodd adael y fyddin a dod i Brydain tua 1946.

Ar ôl gadael y fyddin dewisodd fynd i'r pwll ac fe'i hanfonwyd i Ystrad Mynach i hyfforddi. Bargod oedd ei lofa gyntaf ym 1947, ond wedyn gweithiodd gyda chontractwyr mwyngloddio y Cementation Company cyn gorffen ei yrfa fel glöwr yng Nglofa Bedwas lle gweithiodd nes iddi gau ym 1985. Clywais fod ganddo

A marvellous father

MY FATHER STANISLAV CELMER WAS BORN IN LISK, near Poznan in Poland on 19 November 1927. He came from a farming family and was one of twelve children, nine boys and three girls. He was thirteen years old when the Germans invaded. One day they came to the farm and told my grandparents that they had twenty minutes to pack clothes and say goodbye to him and two of his brothers before they were taken as slave labourers to work in a German aircraft factory.

Life was tough in the factory, if the Germans suspected that one of the aircraft had been sabotaged they would come to the factory and beat up or even execute some of the workers. The brothers decided to try and escape. One brother was shot and killed in the attempt and the other two had to split up and never saw each other again. It was believed that my uncle ended up in Australia.

My father made his way on his own across Germany, sleeping in graveyards

My father made his way on his own across Germany, sleeping in graveyards because he thought that the Germans would be unlikely to venture into them after dark! It was spring so he managed to 'eat from the fields' and eventually got to Britain. In Britain he joined the Free Polish Army and went back to Europe with them after the Allied invasion of 1944. He didn't see much fighting and ended up in Germany as part of the occupation forces.

While stationed in Germany after the war he did a lot of 'ducking and diving' making money by such schemes as selling 'coffee' to the Germans – half the tin was rubbish with a shallow covering of genuine coffee – he did anything to survive. One woman got angry and stabbed him! He was eventually demobbed in Britain around 1946.

After demob he chose mining and was sent to Ystrad Mynach for training. His first colliery was Bargoed in 1947 but he later worked with the Cementation Company of mining contractors before ending his mining career at Bedwas Colliery where he worked until it closed in 1985. I was told that he had a marvellous name as a good worker in Bedwas. He married my mother, Eileen Davies, in 1956.

He first went back to his home village in 1962. I remember us going on a train from Harwich all the way to Poland. While we were in Poland the police used come to the farm to check on us every other day. He used to

STANISLAV CELMER

enw rhagorol fel gweithiwr da ym Medwas. Priododd â mam, Eileen Davies, ym 1956.

Aeth nôl i'w bentref genedigol ym 1962. Rwy'n cofio mynd ar drên o Harwich yr holl ffordd i wlad Pwyl. Yng ngwlad Pwyl ei hun, byddai'r heddlu'n dod i'r fferm i gadw golwg arnom bob yn eilddydd. Byddai dad yn mynd i wlad Pwyl bob tair blynedd (byddai'r rheolwr ym Medwas yn rhoi chwe wythnos o'r gwaith iddo gael mynd). Roeddwn i'n hoff iawn o wlad Pwyl. Fel yr ŵyr hynaf ddylwn i fod wedi etifeddu fferm y teulu ar ôl marwolaeth tad-cu ond glöwr oeddwn i nid ffermwr, a doeddwn i ddim yn hoff iawn o'r syniad – oedd yn rhyddhad i 'mherthnasau Pwylaidd! Tad-cu oedd arweinydd y gwrthwynebwyr lleol yn erbyn yr Almaen, ac ar ôl y rhyfel fe'i gwnaed yn faer a rhoddwyd tir iddo i gydnabod ei wasanaeth (fodd bynnag, ar ôl iddo beidio â bod yn faer, aethon nhw â'r tir oddi wrtho unwaith eto!) Rwy'n dal i gadw cysylltiad â 'mherthnasau yng ngwlad Pwyl ac maen nhw'n dal i ffonio ac ysgrifennu, yn arbennig ar adeg y Nadolig.

Parhaodd fy nhad i fod yn ddinesydd Pwylaidd. Cynigiwyd dinasyddiaeth Brydeinig iddo yn y 1960au ond byddai wedi costio tua ugain punt iddo, felly wnaeth e ddim trafferthu. Roedd yn weithgar ar hyd ei oes a cholodd e erioed ddiwrnod o waith. Cadwodd randir am ddeg mlynedd ar hugain ac roedd allan yn dawnsio'r noson cyn iddo farw yn 2002. Cynhaliwyd ei angladd yn yr iaith Bwyleg gan offeiriad Pwylaidd o Gaerdydd. Roedd bob amser yn falch iddo ddod i Gymru. Bu farw fy mam chwe blynedd o'i flaen a gofynnais iddo pam nad aeth yn ôl i wlad Pwyl gan y byddai wedi gallu gwerthu'r tŷ a byw'n dda yno, ond dywedodd mai yma oedd ei gartref a'i deulu bellach ac mai yma yr oedd am aros. Roedd e'n dad ardderchog.

Gary Celmer, Nelson



TOP: STANISLAV A EILEEN CELMER GYDA'U WYR, GARTREF YN NELSON, 1997
GWAELOD: STANISLAV A'I FRAWD, JOSEF CELMER, 2000



TOP: STANISLAV AND EILEEN CELMER WITH THEIR GRANDSON AT HOME IN NELSON, 1997
BOTTOM: STANISLAV AND HIS BROTHER, JOSEF CELMER, 2000

go to Poland every three years (the manager at Bedwas used to allow him to have six weeks off work to go). I used to love Poland. As the eldest grandson I should have inherited the family farm after my grandfather died but I was a miner not a farmer and didn't fancy it – my relations in Poland were very relieved! My grandfather had been the leader of the local resistance against the Germans and, after the war, was made mayor and given land in recognition of his war service (however after he stopped being the mayor they took the land back off him again!) I still have contact with my relatives in Poland who still phone and write, especially at Christmas.

My father always remained a Polish citizen. He was offered British citizenship in the 1960s but it would have cost him about twenty pounds so he didn't bother. He was active all his life and never missed a day's work. He kept an allotment for thirty years and he was out dancing the night before he died in 2002. His funeral was all in Polish with a Polish priest who came up from Cardiff. He was always glad that he came to Wales. My mother died six years before him and I asked him why he didn't go back to Poland as he could have sold his house here and lived well over there. However he said that his home and family were here now and he wanted to stay. He was a marvellous father.

Gary Celmer, Nelson

BENEDYKT ('BEN') WINOGORSKI



DE: MILWYR PWYLAIDD YN DARLLEN MAP (BENEDYKT WINOGORSKI SYDD YNG NGHANOL Y RHES FLAEN)

RIGHT: POLISH SOLDIERS MAP READING (BENEDYKT WINOGORSKI IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FRONT ROW)

Cymro cant y cant - er ei wreiddiau Pwylaidd!

GANED FY NHAD, BENEDYKT ('BEN') WINOGORSKI, ym mhentref Wabrzezno ger Bydgoszoz, ngogledd gwlad Pwyl, ar 22 Mai 1922. Dechreuodd weithio fel saer maen, ond ar ôl i'r Almaenwyr ymosod ar wlad Pwyl cafodd ei orfodi i weithio fel llafurwr fferm. Cafodd amser caled ofnadwy, byddai'r Almaenwyr yn ei guro â ffyn ac yn ei gloi yn y twlc gyda'r moch dros nos. Felly fe ddihangodd. Ddywedodd e erioed wrtha i beth yn union ddigwyddodd rhwng yr amser hynny a phan gyrhaeddodd Brydain. (Mae ei bapurau yn crybwyll iddo gyrraedd yma mis Mai 1944) ond yn y diwedd ymunodd â Lluoedd Pwyl Rydd a brwydrodd fel is gorporal ym Mataliwn Cyntaf Troedfilwyr Gwlad

Hundred per cent Welsh - with Polish roots!

MY FATHER, BENEDYKT ('BEN') WINOGORSKI, WAS born in the village of Wabrzezno near Bydgoszoz in northern Poland on 22 May 1922 and started work as a stonemason, but after the Germans invaded Poland he was made to work for them as a farm labourer. He had a terrible time, they used to beat him with sticks and lock him up at night in the pigsty with the pigs. So he ran away. He never told me what exactly happened between then and when he arrived in Britain (His papers mention that he arrived here in May 1944) but he eventually joined the Free Polish Forces and fought as a lance corporal in the 1st Polish Infantry Battalion (Highland) of the 1st Polish Armoured Division through France, Belgium and Germany.



*Byddai'r Almaenwyr
yn ei guro â ffyn ac
yn ei gloi yn y twlc
gyda'r moch dros nos.
Felly fe ddihangodd*

*They used to beat him
with sticks and lock
him up at night in the
pigsty with the pigs.
So he ran away*

UCHOD: MILWYR
PWYLAIDD WRTH JEEP
YN YR ALMAEN
(BENEDYKT SYDD YNG
NGHANOL Y RHES
FLAEN);
YNG NGHANOL
DINISTR PENTREF

YN YR ALMAEN, MAE
BENEDYKT AR Y DDE;
DE: GRŴP O FERCHED
PWYLAIDD AR FFERM
YN YR ALMAEN
(‘JENNY’ YW’R AIL O’R
CHWITH YN Y BLAEN);
BENEDYKT YN

LIFRAI’R FYDDIN;
FFOTOGRAFF ANEGLUR
O BRIODAS BENEDYKT A
‘JENNY’ YN YR ALMAEN
ABOVE: POLISH TROOPS
BY A JEEP IN GERMANY
(BENEDYKT IS IN THE

**MIDDLE OF THE
FRONT ROW); IN A
DESTROYED GERMAN
VILLAGE, BENEDYKT IS
ON THE RIGHT.
RIGHT:** GROUP OF
POLISH WOMEN ON A
FARM IN GERMANY

(‘JENNY’ IS THE 2ND
FROM LEFT IN FRONT);
BENEDYKT IN ARMY
UNIFORM;
BLURRED PHOTO OF
BENEDYKT AND
‘JENNY’S’ WEDDING DAY
IN GERMANY



Pwyl (Ucheldir) Adran Arfog Cyntaf Gwlad Pwyl drwy Ffrainc, gwlad Belg a'r Almaen.

Roedd mam, Genowefa ('Jenny') Nowaczyk, o wlad Pwyl hefyd. Dydw i ddim yn gwybod y stori i gyd ond rwy'n meddwl ei fod yn ei hadnabod o wlad Pwyl ac iddo fynd i chwilio amdani pan oedd yn yr Almaen gyda'r fyddin. Aed â hi i weithio ar ffermydd yr Almaen gyda'i theulu cyfan. Fe briododd nhw yn Papenburg-Spitting, ar y ffin â'r Iseldiroedd, ym 1946. Bu farw eu plentyn cyntaf, fy chwaer Helena, yn yr Almaen ym mis Hydref yr un flwyddyn. Rhoddwyd dewis o wledydd iddynt lle gallent ymgartrefu a dewison nhw Brydain er bod brawd mam wedi mynd i Ganada. Dewisodd fy nhad fwyngloddio fel gyrfa a daethon nhw i fyw yn Hostel Ystrad Mynach ym 1948. Dechreuodd weithio yng Nglofa Bargod ond yn ddiweddarach gweithiodd i gwmnïau mwyngloddio Cementation a Thyssen. Mae'n debyg bod yr NUM wedi dweud y byddai 'estroniaid' fel fy nhad yn gostwng safon y gwaith yng nglofeydd Cymru, ond mewn gwirionedd dwi'n meddwl eu bod wedi codi'r safonau! Daeth nôl at yr NCB pan ddaeth ei gontractau i ben ac yn y diwedd roedd yn gweithio yng Nglofa Cwm a Llanilltud Faerdre. Fel y rhan fwyaf o lowyr yr adeg honno, roedd yn hoff o'i beint, rhoddai ambell i swllt ar y ceffylau ac roedd yn mwynhau garddio. Bu farw ym Mhentre'r Eglwys ym mis Ebrill 1973 a ddywedodd e fawr ddim wrthyf am ei gefndir, felly mae'r hyn y gwn i amdano'n dod o'i bapurau ac oddi wrth aelodau o'i deulu.

Gweithiodd mam yn galed ar hyd ei hoes hefyd; gweithiodd ar fferm yn Aberbargod yn pluo ieir, yn ddiweddarach gweithiodd yn Ysbyty Dwyrain Morgannwg, Pentre'r Eglwys ac yn y diwedd roedd yn glanhau yn Somerfields yn bedwar ugain oed – a hyd yn oed wedyn bu rhaid i ni ei pherswadio i orffen! Bu farw yn wyth deg un oed wedi gwneud llawer o ffrindiau ym Mhentre'r Eglwys lle'r oedd pawb yn ei hadnabod fel 'Jenny'. Hoffwn i fod wedi adnabod dad yn well, ond dydych chi ddim yn rhoi'r amser nac ydych? Aeth e erioed nôl i wlad Pwyl ond aethon ni â mam yn ôl ym 1994 i aros gyda'r teulu, ac rydyn ni wedi bod yn ôl unwaith neu ddwy ers hynny. Rwy'n dwlu ar wlad Pwyl, maen nhw'n bobl fwy hamddenol ac yn gwneud mwy gyda'r teulu. Efallai am na allant fforddio mynd allan am ddiod, maent yn tueddu i aros i mewn gyda'r teulu a chael potel o Fodca yn lle! Gweithiais innau fel glöwr hefyd o 1966 i 1986, yn gyntaf yn y Groes-faen ac yna yng Nglofa'r Cwm. Rwy'n teimlo gant y cant yn Gymro ond rwy'n falch o fy ngwreiddiau Pwylaidd hefyd.

Jerzy ('George') Winogorski, Pont-y-clun

My mother, Genowefa ('Jenny') Nowaczyk, was also Polish. I don't know the whole story but I think that he knew her from Poland and went to find her when he was in Germany with the army. She had been taken to work on German farms along with her entire family. They married in 1946 in Papenburg-Spitting on the Dutch border. Their first child, my sister Helena, died in Germany in the October of that year. They were given a choice of countries where they could settle and chose Britain although my mother's brother went to Canada. My father chose mining as a career and they came to live in Ystrad Mynach Hostel in 1948. He started work in Bargoed Colliery but later worked for both the Cementation and Thyssen mining companies. Apparently the NUM stated that 'foreigners' like my father would lower the standard of work in Welsh collieries but I think that they actually raised the standards! He came back to the NCB when his contracts finished and ended up working in Cwm Colliery, Llantwit Fardre. Like most miners at that time he liked his pint, put a few shillings on the horses and enjoyed gardening. He died in Church Village in April 1973 and never told me much about his background so what I do know about him comes from his papers and members of the family.



UCHOD: BENEDYKT A 'JENNY' GYDA'U BABI 'GEORGE'

ABOVE: BENEDYKT AND 'JENNY' WITH BABY 'GEORGE'

My mother also worked hard all her life; she worked on a farm in Aberbargoed plucking chickens, later worked in East Glamorgan Hospital, Church Village, and finished up cleaning in Somerfields at the age of eighty – and then we had to coax her to finish! She died at the age of eighty-one having made many friends in Church Village where she was always known as 'Jenny'. I wish that I had known my father better but you don't always take the time do you? He never went back to Poland but we took my mother back in 1994 and stayed with the family and have been back a few times since then. I loved Poland, they are more laid back and more family-oriented, probably because they can't afford to go out for a drink but tend to stop in with the family and a bottle of Vodka instead. I also worked as a miner from 1966 to 1986, first in Groesfaen then in Cwm Colliery. I feel 100 per cent Welsh but I am also very proud of my Polish roots.

Jerzy ('George') Winogorski, Pontyclun

Dewch i weithio yng Nghymru - digonedd o arian

Come and work in Wales - plenty of money!

GANWYD FI YN TUCHOLA, GER BYDGOSZCZ, gwlad Pwyl, ar 30 Ionawr 1925. Ffermwr oedd fy nhad ac roedd gennyf frawd a dwy chwaer. Oni bai am y rhyfel byddwn wedi bod yn saer. Ym 1943 anfonwyd fi i Sweinmunda fel llafurwr gorfodol mewn parti gwaith yn rhofio tywod o un lle i'r llall i guddliwio'r safle rocedi cyfrinachol yn Peermunde rhag ymosodiad o'r awyr. Ni chefais fy nhrin yn dda iawn yn Sweinmunda. Pan fomiwyd y safle bu bron iddyn nhw â dinistrio'r lle a lladdwyd cannoedd o bobl, yn Almaenwyr a Phwyliaid. Yn ystod yr anrhefn rhedodd pump ohonom i ffwrdd gyda'n gilydd. Cafodd dau eu dal, lladdwyd un ac yn y diwedd llwyddodd dau ohonom i ddianc i Gibraltar. Bu rhaid i ni fynd drwy Ffrainc a Sbaen i gyrraedd yno. Roedd llawer o Bwyliaid yn byw yn Lille ac fe helpon nhw ni i ddianc drwy roi hen ddillad i ni yn lle ein dillad Almaenaidd.

Es i o Gibraltar i Lerpwl a chefais fy recriwtio i Adran Arfog Cyntaf Gwlad Pwyl. Fe ddes yn yrrwr tanciau yn gyrru tanciau Sherman. Anfonwyd ni i Ffrainc ar ôl Dydd D ochr yn ochr â'r Canadiaid. Roedden ni'n symud yn ein blaenau mor gyflym fel bod ein hawyrennau ni ein hunain yn ein bomio – lladdodd Awyrlu America lawer iawn o Bwyliaid! Fe es i mor bell â Caen lle cafod fy nhanc ei ffrwydro. Cefais anaf

DE: TANC SHERMAN GWARCHODLU ARFOG CYNTAF GWLAD PWYL, (MAE ALOJZY YN Y CANOL AR Y DDE)

RIGHT: SHERMAN TANK OF THE 1ST POLISH ARMoured DIVISION (ALOJZY IS MIDDLE RIGHT)



I WAS BORN IN TUCHOLA, NEAR BYDGOSZCZ, Poland, on 30 January 1925. My father was a farmer and I had a brother and two sisters. If it wasn't for the war I would probably been a carpenter. In 1943 I was sent to Sweinmunda as a slave labourer in a working party

gwael i fy mhen-glin a bu raid fy anfon yn ôl i Brydain i'r ysbyty. Wedyn, arhosais fel gyrrwr tanciau ar faes tanio yn Frazerburgh, yr Alban. Ar ôl gadael y fyddin gallwn i fod wedi mynd yn beiriannydd neu'n gogydd (roeddwn i wedi gwneud rhywfaint o goginio yn y fyddin). Yn lle hynny fe es i weithio yn y pyllau glo – dywedon nhw 'Dewch i weithio yng Nghymru – digonedd o arian!' Felly bant â ni i Ganolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale am dri mis ac yna Glofa Crumlin Navigation am un mlynedd ar ddeg. Roeddwn i'n gweithio ar y ffyrdd – y 'rippings' – doedd dim dŵr – roedd hi'n llychlyd iawn – blydi uffernol. Dwi'n difaru na es i Lundain i fod yn gogydd neu'n beiriannydd yn lle. Ond roeddwn i'n gaeth yma.



shovelling sand from one place to the other to camouflage the secret rocket site at Peenemunde from air attack. I was not treated very well at Schweinfurt. When the site was bombed they nearly flattened the place and killed hundreds of people, Germans and Poles. During the confusion five of us ran away together. Two were caught, one was killed and two of us eventually escaped to Gibraltar. We had to get through France and Spain to get there. There were a lot of Poles living in Lille and they helped us escape by giving us old clothes instead of our German ones.

I got from Gibraltar to Liverpool and was recruited into the 1st Polish Armoured Division. I became a tank driver driving Sherman tanks. We were sent over to France after D-Day alongside the Canadians. We

advanced so fast that our own planes were bombing us – the American Air Force killed a lot of Poles! I got as far as Caen where my tank was blown up. I received a bad knee injury and had to be sent back to Britain to hospital. After, I stayed as a tank driver on a firing range in Frazerburgh, Scotland. After demob I could have gone as a mechanic or a chef (I had done a bit of cooking in the army). Instead I went to work in the pits – they said 'Come and work in Wales – plenty of money!' So Oakdale Training Centre for three months, and then Crumlin Navigation Colliery for eleven years. I was working on the roadways – the 'rippings' – no water – awful dusty – bloody terrible. I wish I'd gone to London to be a chef or a mechanic instead. But I was stuck here.

Priodais â Hazel ym mis Medi 1950 ac rydyn ni'n dal i fyw yn y tŷ lle cafodd ei geni. Roedd ei thad wedi bod yn daniwr yn Crumlin Navigation cyn y rhyfel ac fe'i lladdwyd yn y pwll. Gweithiais i yng Nglofa Nine Mile Point am ryw dair blynedd cyn dod i Lofa Oakdale lle'r arhosais tan 1969. Tra'r oeddwn i'n gweithio yn Oakdale, bu raid i mi gael llawdriniaeth am dorllengig a agorodd dair gwaith, a dywedais i wfft i hyn, dwi wedi cael llond bol ar y pwll! Gormod o straen yn codi cylchoedd deuddeg troedfedd. Wedyn es i i ffatri leinins breciau Girlings am ddwy flynedd ar bymtheg. Roeddwn i wrth fy modd yn Girlings, dim cymaint o arian, ond roedd hi llawer yn fwy diogel. Ymddeolais o Girlings ym 1984. Rwy'n hoffi garddio ac roeddwn i'n arfer mwynhau peint, ond pan fydda i'n mynd allan ar nos Lun dim ond soda a sudd cyrens duon dwi'n ei gael gan fy mod yn mynd yn y car – mae'n rhy bell i mi gerdded bellach.



Rwy'n hoffi chwaraeon hefyd (ar wahân i griced – diflastod llwyr!) a gwylio teledu Pwylaidd y gallaf ei gael ar fy nheledu fy hun. Rydyn ni wedi bod nôl i wlad Pwyl rhyw ugain gwaith i gyd. Fe es i'n ôl i yno ar gyfer hanner canfed pen-blwydd Adran Arfog Cyntaf Gwlad Pwyl ym 1992. Rwy'n caru'r wlad, ond allwn i ddim mynd nôl bellach i fyw gan fod fy nheulu agos yma – mae gen i dri mab, tri wŷr a thri gor-wŷr.

Alojzy ('George') Juhlke, Oakdale

UCHOD:
ALOJZY JUHLKE

ABOVE:
ALOJZY JUHLKE

Too much strain lifting twelve foot rings. I then went to Girlings brake linings factory for seventeen years. I definitely liked Girlings, not so much money but a lot safer. I retired from Girlings in 1984. I like the garden and used to enjoy a pint but when I go out on a Monday I only have soda and blackcurrant because I go in the car – it's too far for me to walk now. I also like sport (apart from cricket – a dead loss!) and watching Polish TV which I can get on my television. We have been back to Poland about twenty times altogether. I went back to Poland for the fiftieth anniversary of the 1st Polish Armoured Division in 1992. I love Poland but I couldn't really go back there to live as my immediate family is here now – I have three sons, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Alojzy ('George') Juhlke, Oakdale



Gwaed coch ar
eira gwyn

Red blood across
the white snow

CEFAIS FY NGENI YN TAUROPE GER RIGA YN Latfia ar 9 Mawrth 1925. Ffermwyr oedd fy nheulu. Ym 1940 goresgynnodd y Rwsiaid Latfia a daeth yn weriniaeth Sofietaidd – diflannodd 30,000 o bobl dros nos. Democrat oedd fy nhad a gwrthododd ymuno â'r Blaid Gomiwnyddol, felly cafodd ei esgymuno. Ym Mehefin 1941, roeddwn i fod i ymuno â'r Comiwnyddion Ifanc a mynd i Foscov, ond ymosododd byddin yr Almaen y mis hwnnw a gyrrwyd y Comiwnyddion allan. Ymunais â lluoedd Latfia ym 1943. Roeddwn mewn catrawd wrth-danciau yn y 15fed Adran yn ymladd dan reolaeth yr Almaen. Roeddem am sicrhau na ddeuai'r Rwsiaid yn ôl i Latfia.

Roeddwn i'n ddeunaw oed. Cefais dri mis o hyfforddiant ac fe'm hanfonwyd i flaen y gad yn erbyn y Rwsiaid. Fe gollon ni lawer o fechgyn o gwmpas Gdansk ac fe'm saethwyd yn y ddwy goes a threuliais chwe wythnos yn yr ysbyty. Bu rhaid i ni ailymgynnull yn ardal Rostock i gael ail gynnydd i frwydro yn eu herbyn. Roeddem yn eu dinistrio'n llwyr cyn belled â bod gennym ffrwydron rhyfel, ond roeddent yn dal i ddod tuag atom nes bod yr holl ffrwydron rhyfel wedi gorffen ac yna byddent yn ein goresgyn. Dyna sut

I WAS BORN IN TAUROPE NEAR RIGA IN LATVIA on 9 March 1925. My family were farmers. In 1940 the Russians occupied Latvia and it became a Soviet republic – 30,000 people disappeared overnight. My father was a democrat and refused to join the Communist Party so he was blacklisted. In June 1941 I was supposed to join the Communist Youth and go to Moscow but the German Army invaded in that month and the Communists were driven out. I joined the Latvian forces in 1943. I was in an anti-tank regiment in the Fifteenth Division fighting under German control. We wanted to make sure that the Russians didn't come back to Latvia.

I was eighteen years old. I had three months training and was sent to the front against the Russians. We lost a lot of boys around Gdansk and I was shot in both legs and spent six weeks in hospital. We had to regroup in the Rostock area to have a second go at them. We were absolutely killing them as long as we had ammunition, but they would keep coming until the ammunition had all gone then they would overrun you. That's how the Russians won the war, they used masses of people against you – you couldn't shoot enough to stop them. I still have nightmares about it all – red blood across the white

UCHOD: GWERSYLL
GOFRESTRU YN
ROTENBERG, YR
ALMAEN, 1946.
'JOHN' YW'R AIL O'R
CHWITH

ABOVE: LOGGING
CAMP IN
ROTENBERG,
GERMANY, 1946.
'JOHN' IS 2ND
FROM LEFT

yr enillodd y Rwsiaid y rhyfel, roedden nhw'n defnyddio lluoedd mawr o bobl yn eich erbyn – allech chi ddim saethu digon ohonynt i'w rhwystro. Dwi'n dal i gael hunllefau am y cyfan – gwaed coch ar eira gwyn. Doeddwn i ddim yn casáu'r milwyr Rwsiaidd mewn gwirionedd, dim ond y gyfundrefn yr oeddent yn ymladd drosti. Ond os nad oeddech chi'n eu lladd nhw bydden nhw'n eich lladd chi. Fe amddiffynnon ni Berlin am ddau ddiwrnod, ond ychydig iawn o ffrwydron rhyfel oedd gennym – roedd popeth yn dod i ben. Cawsom orchymyn i fynd i Brandenburg, ond gyrhaeddodd ni ddim am i ni ildio i'r Americanwyr. Doedd gennym ni ddim ffrwydron rhyfel erbyn hynny.

*Rhoddyd deg swllt ar hugain
i ni a dillad isaf thermal yn
'anrheg gan y Frenhines'*

Roeddwn i mewn gwersyll carcharorion rhyfel am flwyddyn tan fis Mawrth 1946. Yna cawsom ein hanfon nôl i'r Almaen fel 'Pobl wedi'u Dadleoli' i ymuno â dinasyddion Latfia oedd wedi'u dadleoli, mewn gwersyll a archwiliwyd gan y Cenhedloedd Unedig. Nid oedd gobaith o fynd nôl i Latfia, oedd bellach dan reolaeth y Rwsiaid. Pe bawn i wedi mynd yn ôl byddwn wedi cael fy anfon i Siberia fel Gelyn y Wladwriaeth Gomiwnyddol. Rhoddyd dewis o wledydd i mi, a dewisais i Brydain. Rhoddyd deg swllt ar hugain i ni a dillad isaf thermal yn 'anrheg gan y Frenhines'. Dysgwyd Saesneg i ni mewn hen ganolfan RAF yn yr Alban. Roedd pobl yr Alban yn groesawgar iawn; roeddem yn bwyta wrth yr un byrddau mewn caffis ond nid oeddem yn gallu sgwrsio llawer, dim ond ysgwyd ein pennau. Ar ôl dysgu rhywfaint o Saesneg, fe geision ni brynu rhywbeth o siop, oedd yn ddewr iawn, ond cyn gynted ag y siaradodd y siopwr fe gerddon ni allan, doedd dim digon o Saesneg gennym ni i ateb. Roedd angen cael wyth deg y cant yn yr arholiad cyn y gallech chi gael gwaith. Ar ôl pasio'r arholiadau, cawsom ddewis rhwng ffermio a mwyngloddio. Roedd ffermio'n talu pum deg saith swllt yr wythnos o gyflog a'r pyllau glo'n talu pum punt – felly es i'n lŵwr!

Roedden ni'n byw yn y 'Cytiau' yn Oakdale ac fe gawson ni ddillad gwaith, helmed, menig, lliain a sebon. Cawson ni wyth wythnos o hyfforddiant cychwynnol yn Oakdale, aethon ni i ymweld â phyllau glo eraill fel Nine Mile Point a chawson ni hyfforddiant ar sut i ddefnyddio rhaw. Dechreuais i weithio yng Nglofa Windsor ym mis Mawrth 1947. Ddes i'n atgyweiriwr cynorthwyol gyda Jack Randall. Symudais i allan o'r gwersyll i lety yn Abertridwr ac ymhen amser cwrddais â

snow. I didn't really hate the Russian soldiers just the regime they fought for. But if you didn't kill them they would kill you. We defended Berlin for two days but we had hardly any ammunition – everything was coming to an end. We were ordered to go to Brandenburg but didn't reach there because we surrendered to the Americans. We had no ammunition by then.

*We were given thirty shillings
and thermal underwear
which they said was 'a present
from the Queen'*

I was in a prisoner of war camp for twelve months until March 1946. We were then sent back to Germany as 'Displaced Persons' to join up with displaced Latvian civilians in a camp looked after by the United Nations. There was no hope of going back to Latvia, which was now under the Russians. If I had gone back I would have been sent to Siberia as an Enemy of the Communist State. I was given a choice of countries and chose Britain. We were given thirty shillings and thermal underwear which they said was 'a present from the Queen'. I was taught English in a former RAF base in Scotland; Scottish people were very welcoming; we ate at the same tables in cafes but couldn't converse much, just nodded. After learning some English we tried buying something from a shop, very brave, but as soon as the shopkeeper talked we walked out, didn't know enough English. You had to get eighty per cent in the examination before you could get work. After passing the exams we were given the choice of farming or mining. It was fifty-seven shillings a week farming, five pounds mining – I went mining!

We lived in the 'Huts' in Oakdale and we were issued with working clothes, helmet, gloves, towel and soap. We had eight weeks initial training in Oakdale, we were sent out on pit visits to Nine Mile Point Colliery and trained how to use a shovel. I signed on in Windsor Colliery in March 1947. I became an assistant repairer with Jack Randall. I moved out from the camp to lodgings in Abertridwr and eventually met Mari in a dance at Abertridwr Church Hall in summer 1949. We married in Eglwysilan Church in 1951; we now have two daughters and three grandchildren.

I wasn't really fussy on mining because of the dangers but I had to work three years in Windsor before I was allowed to leave the coal industry. I then got a job building the surface buildings at the new Nantgarw Colliery, but they told me if it rained I couldn't work. I couldn't get a guaranteed wage so I went back to the pit in Bedwas Colliery. I was advised to go to mining school as I could speak

UCHOD: CERDYN
COFRESTRU 'FY
MHASBORT I GYMRU'

ABOVE:
REGISTRATION/
IDENTITY CARD
'MY PASSPORT
TO WALES'



GYDA'R CLOC O'R
TOP: YNG
NGHANOLFAN
HYFFORDDI
OAKDALE YN AROS
AM Y BWS I LOFA
WINDSOR. 'JOHN'

YW'R AIL O'R
CHWITH (DAETH Y
CHWECH O'R
ALMAEN GYDA'I
GILYDD);
'JOHN' YNG NGLOFA
WINDSOR YM 1949;

'JOHN' (CHWITH)
GYDA GEORGE
MILBERG (LATFIAD
ARALL) YNG
NGLOFA WINDSOR,
1949

CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP: TRAINING
CENTRE IN
OAKDALE WAITING
FOR THE WINDSOR
COLLIERY BUS.
'JOHN' IS 2ND

FROM LEFT
(ALL SIX CAME
FROM GERMANY
TOGETHER);
'JOHN' AT WINDSOR
COLLIERY IN
1949;

'JOHN' (LEFT)
WITH GEORGE
MILBERG
(ANOTHER
LATVIAN) IN
WINDSOR
COLLIERY, 1949



COLLECTING CENTRE
PASSPORT
DATE

for
date
from

PASSPORT
DEPARTURE
- 2 JUN 1948
BRITISH
GERMANY (BZ)

Conditions of entry
MORGAN
SENCHENYDD

10
FULL
BUTTON
COUPONS
YONK
Permitted to land on condition
that the holder registers at once with
the Police, enters registers at once with
as may be specified by the Ministry
of Labour and National Service, and
does not leave such employment
without the consent of the Ministry.

regist. 28/8.42

Arbeitsamt Vertriebs
Nebenstelle Kottenburg

MINISTRY OF LABOUR & NATIONAL SERVICE
Suitable for Employment in Great Britain
subject to Medical Examination etc.
Signed
Date

Mari mewnawns yn Neuadd Eglwys Abertridwr yn haf 1949. Fe briododd ni yn Eglwys Eglwysilan ym 1951; ac erbyn hyn mae gennym ddwy ferch a thri ŵyr.

Pe na fyddai'r rhyfel wedi digwydd, byddwn i wedi aros yn Latfia a mynd yn bensaer. Yn lle hynny, cafodd fy mywyd ei chwalu gan bwerau cul y byd

Doeddwn i ddim yn arbennig o hoff o fwyngloddio oherwydd y peryglon, ond roedd raid i mi weithio yn Windsor am dair blynedd cyn y gallwn adael y diwydiant glo. Cefais waith wedyn yn codi'r adeiladau ar yr wyneb yng Nglofa newydd Nantgarw, ond dywedon nhw na chawn i weithio os oedd hi'n bwrw glaw. Doedd gen i ddim sicrwydd o gyflog, ac felly es yn ôl i'r pwll yng Nglofa Bedwas. Cynghorwyd fi i fynd i ysgol fwyngloddio gan y gallwn siarad Saesneg yn eithaf da erbyn hynny. Cynhaliwyd y cwrs fel dosbarth nos ac fe gostiodd hanner coron i mi. Fe ddes i'n daniwr yn gyntaf ac yna'n oruchwyliwr yng Nglofa Windsor. Tra'r oeddwn i'n oruchwyliwr cefais ddamwain yn y gwaith, cefais fy nal rhwng dau gerbyd a chefais ddolur i' nghefn. Yna fe gefais dorllengig a bu raid i mi golli llawer o waith. Oherwydd hyn, fe ddes yn beirannydd diogelwch ym 1979. Yn ddiweddarach, yn ystod fy amser yng Nglofa Nantgarw, oedd wedi ymuno â Windsor, roeddwn i'n gyfrifol am yr amgueddfa NUM a gadwyd yno ac roeddwn i'n arfer hebrwng ymwelwyr ar achlysuron arbennig. Cymrais ymddeoliad o Lofa Nantgarw ym 1984. Mae'r cyfan yr ydw i wedi ei gyflawni yn ystod fy mywyd wedi dod diolch i gyfleoedd addysgol gwych y Bwrdd Glo Cenedlaethol.

Ers ymddeol rydw i wedi bod o gwmpas y byd dair gwaith, yn bennaf gan fod un o fy merched yn byw yn Seland Newydd. Ar ôl cwmp Wal Berlin ym 1989, es i nôl i fy ngwlad enedigol am y tro cyntaf mewn hanner canrif. Roedd rhai o fy nghymdeithion wedi mynd yn ôl yn gynharach, ac fe'u hanfonwyd nhw i Siberia i gael eu 'hail-addysgu'. Roeddent yn ddynion wedi torri wedyn. Y tro cyntaf i mi fynd nôl, fe es i â'r car drwy'r Iseldiroedd a'r Almaen. Erbyn i ni gyrraedd Latfia roeddent mor emosiynol wrth weld yr arwydd 'Gweriniaeth Latfia' fel na allem siarad. Rydyn ni wedi bod nôl bum gwaith ers i Latfia gael ei hannibyniaeth. Mae'r wlad yn cael ei hailadeiladu'n raddol ar ôl hanner canrif o ormes. Pe na fyddai'r rhyfel wedi digwydd, byddwn i wedi aros yn Latfia a mynd yn bensaer. Yn lle hynny, cafodd fy mywyd ei chwalu gan bwerau cul y byd.

Evalds Janis ('John') Licitus, Bedwas

English quite well by then. The course was held as a night class and cost me half a crown. I became first a fireman then an overman in Windsor Colliery. While I was an overman I had an accident in work, I was caught between two mine cars and damaged my back. I then contracted a hernia and had to lose a lot of time. Because of this I became a safety engineer in 1979. Later, during my time in Nantgarw Colliery, which had merged with Windsor, I was in charge of the NCB museum that was housed there and I used to show visitors around on special occasions. I retired from Nantgarw Colliery in 1984. All I have gained in my life is down to the National Coal Board because of its wonderful educational opportunities.

If the war hadn't happened I would have remained in Latvia and become an architect. Instead my life was shattered by the bigot powers of the world

Since retirement I have been around the world three times, mainly because one of my daughters lives in New Zealand. After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, I went back to my home country for the first time in fifty years. Some of my comrades went back earlier, they were sent to Siberia first to be 're-educated' but they were broken men afterwards. The first time I went back was by car through Holland and Germany. By the time we got to Latvia we were so emotional at seeing the sign 'Republic of Latvia' we couldn't speak. We have been back five times since Latvia got independence. The country is being rebuilt slowly after fifty years of repression. If the war hadn't happened I would have remained in Latvia and become an architect. Instead my life was shattered by the bigot powers of the world.

Evalds Janis ('John') Licitus, Bedwas



CHWITH: 'JOHN' A MARI AR DERAS TY'R ARGWLWYDDI YN AROS I GŴRDD Â DUGES CAERLOYW FEL CADEIRYDDDES CLWB YSBYTYWYR CYMRU, HYDREF 1999

LEFT: 'JOHN' AND MARI ON THE HOUSE OF LORDS TERRACE WAITING TO MEET THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER AS CHAIRMAN OF THE HOSPITALERS CLUB OF WALES, OCTOBER 1999

Fel Arglwyddi Prif Ustusiaid

We were like Lord Chief Justices

FE'M GANWYD YN ZIROVNICA, GER IDRIA, Slofenia ar 15 Tachwedd 1928. Mewn gwirionedd, fe'm ganwyd yn Eidalwr am fod yr ardal wedi ei hymgorffori yn yr Eidal ym 1920, er gwaetha'r ffaith nad oedd Eidalydd yn byw yno, ar wahân i warchodwyr y ffin. Ar ôl 1920, rhoddwyd taw ar holl addysg drwy gyfrwng Slofeneg a chefais fy addysg drwy gyfrwng Eidaleg. Roedd hi'n sefyllfa gymhleth, roedd tad-cu wedi bod yn filwr Awstraid, dad yn filwr Eidalaidd, fe ddes i'n filwr gerila Slofeniaidd ac aeth fy mrodyr i fyddin Iwgoslafia yn y pendraw.

Roeddwn i'n dal yn yr ysgol pan ddechreuodd y rhyfel. Dechreuwyd rhyfel gerila, lle byddai'r Comiwnyddion yn lladd un milwr Eidalaidd neu Almaenaidd a byddent hwy yn dial drwy ladd deg dinesydd Slofeniaidd – lladdwyd teuluoedd cyfan. Nid oedd modd i ni barhau fel yna, felly ym 1942 fe ddechreuodd gwrthryfel yn erbyn y rhyfel gerila. Ond roedd unrhyw un oedd yn meddwl yn wahanol i'r partisaniaid Comiwnyddol yn cael eu lladd. Fe ofynnodd ni i'r awdurdodau Eidalaidd am arfau i ymladd nôl – dywedon nhw mai cydweithredu oedd hynny, ond doedd gennym ni ddim dewis – mae rhyfel yn beth erchyll. Aeth hyn ymlaen tan fis Mai 1944 pan ddaeth y 'Gard Gwyn' i'm gweld yn y goedwig lle'r oeddwn i'n gweithio a 'ngorfodi i'r lluoedd gwrth-Gomiwnyddol. Roeddwn i'n bymtheg a hanner mlwydd oed, ond dywedon nhw fy mod i'n ddigon mawr i gario dryll. Roedd rhaid i chi fod yn Gomiwnydd neu'n wrth-Gomiwnydd y dyddiau hynny, doedd dim byd yn y canol. Cefais flwyddyn o ymladd yng Ngwarchodlu Cartref Slofenia, y 'Domwbranci', o fis Mai 1944 ymlaen.

Fe'n gorfodwyd i encilio i'r Eidal ym Mai 1945, a dyna pryd y cwrddon ni â Byddin Prydain am y tro cyntaf. Clywsom gerbydau yn y pellter ac roedd raid i ni baratoi ein hunain gan nad oeddem yn gwybod pwyl oedd yn dod. Roeddent ni'n barod i danio, a dyna lle'r oedd y Tomis Prydeinig yma, dim helmedau am eu pennau, reifflau wedi eu taflu ar y cerbyd sgwtio. Anwybyddon nhw ni (doeddent ni ddim yn gallu siarad Saesneg beth bynnag), roedd ganddynt gwpanau bychain yn eu dwylo ac roeddent yn chwilio am ddŵr poeth i wneud te. Pa fath o blydi milwyr oedd y rhain? Fe wnaethon nhw eu te (gyda llaeth, pa mor hurt oedd hynny?), ei yfed, yna troi rownd a bant â nhw.

Symudon ni ymhellach i ganol y tir, ac erbyn 8 Mai roeddent wedi rhoi ein harfau i lawr. Dosbarthwyd ni



UCHOD: FELIX YNG NGWARCHODLU CARTREF SLOFENIA YN 15 OED, 1944

ABOVE: FELIX IN THE SLOVENIAN HOME GUARD AT 15 YEARS OLD, 1944

I WAS BORN IN ZIROVNICA, NEAR IDRIA, SLOVENIA on 15 November 1928. I was actually born an Italian subject because the area had been incorporated into Italy in 1920 in spite of the fact that there were no Italians living there, apart from the border guards. After 1920 all education through Slovenian was stopped and I had all my education through Italian. It was a complicated situation, my grandfather had been an Austrian soldier, my father an Italian soldier, I became a Slovenian guerrilla fighter and my brothers ended up in the Yugoslavian army.

I was still in school when the war started. A guerrilla war was started, the Communists would kill one Italian or German soldier and they would retaliate by killing ten Slovenian civilians – whole families were killed. We couldn't go on like that so in 1942 we rebelled against the guerrilla war, however anyone who thought differently to the Communist partisans were killed. We asked the Italian authorities for weapons to fight back – they said it was collaboration but we had no choice – civil war is terrible. This went on until May 1944 until the 'White Guard' came to see me in the forestry I was working in and pushed me into the anti-Communist forces. I was fifteen-and-a-half years old

but they said that I was big enough to carry a gun. You had to be either Communist or anti-Communist in those days, there was nothing in between. I had a year of fighting in the Slovenian Home Guard, the 'Domwbranci', from May 1944. Then we were forced to retreat into Italy during May 1945 and that's when we first met the British Army. We heard vehicles in the distance and had to take up positions as we didn't know who was coming at us. We were ready to fire, and then came these British Tommies, no helmets on, rifles slung on the scout car. They ignored us (we couldn't speak English anyway) and they had these little cups in their hands looking for hot water to make tea. What bloody soldiers were these? They brewed up their tea (with milk, how crazy was that?), drank it, then turned around and off they went.

We moved further inland and by 8 May had put our weapons down. The British classed us as Surrendered Enemy Personnel (S.E.P.s). The main body of our troops couldn't get to Italy and made for Austria instead. Once they had entered Austria the British gathered them up and told them that they were being sent to Italy. Instead they were sent back to Yugoslavia where 12,000 were killed by the Communists. They had been betrayed by the British, the slaughter was unbelievable – bodies were just

gan y Prydeinwyr fel Personél y Gelyn oedd wedi Ildio (S.E.Ps). Ni allai prif gorff ein milwyr fynd i'r Eidal felly aethant am Awstria. Ar ôl cyrraedd Awstria casglodd y Prydeinwyr nhw at ei gilydd a dweud wrthynt eu bod yn cael eu hanfon i'r Eidal. Yn lle hynny, cawsant eu hanfon nôl i lwgoslafia lle lladdwyd 12,000 ohonynt gan y Comiwnyddion! Roeddent wedi cael eu bradychu gan y Prydeinwyr, a'r lladdfa'n anghredadwy – taflwyd cyrff blith draphlith i'r ffosydd. Clywsom am hyn yn yr Eidal a doedden ni ddim yn gwybod a fydden nhw'n gwneud yr un peth i ni. Tra'r oeddem yn yr Eidal gwelsom golofn o filwyr Pwylaidd yn teithio i fyny i Awstria. Roedd yn ymddangos eu bod yn gwybod pwy oedden ni a chododd pob un ei law. Milwyr go iawn oedd y rhain dim fel y rhai Prydeinig cyntaf a welsom. Daethom i arfer â'r Prydeinwyr ar ôl sbel a'r ffordd yr oeddent yn siarad (er nad oeddem yn deall eu hiaith o hyd), felly pan ddaethom ar draws uned oedd yn ymddangos fel bod ganddyn nhw ryw fath o nam ar eu lleferydd fe ofynnon ni beth oedd yn bod arnynt a dywedwyd wrthym mae Cocnis oedden nhw!

Ym 1947 aethon ni o'r Eidal. Anfonwyd ni i wersylloedd yn yr Almaen ac fe'n hailenwyd yn Bobl wedi'u Dadleoli. Cefais ddigon ar fywyd gwersyll a chlywais fod gweithwyr yn cael eu recriwtio i fynd i Brydain, felly gwirfoddolais i ym mis Tachwedd 1947 ac fe ddes i'n Weithiwr Gwirfoddol Ewropeaidd – rwy'n dal i fod yn hynny, a minnau wedi ymdeol ers ugain mlynedd! Aed â ni i wersyll RAF yng Ngorllewin Drayton lle, am y tro cyntaf ers ugain mlynedd, roedd gennym gynfasau gwyn a gobennydd – fel Arglwyddi Prif Ustusiaid! Am sioc anferth ar ôl cysgu ar y ddaear. Roedd tua chant a hanner ohonon ni yno ac roedd gennym ddewis beth i'w wneud, naill ai ffermydd, gweithfeydd brics neu'r pyllau glo. Roedd hi'n rhy boeth yn y gweithfeydd brics; roeddwn i wedi diflasu ar ffermio felly'r pyllau amdani! Cawsom ni wersi Saesneg yn Bottisham yng Nghaergrawnt, dyn wedi bod yn yr RAF oedd ein hathro. Er syndod, cyn hynny, hyd yn oed ar ôl ein holl gysylltiadau â'r Prydeinwyr; doedd gen i ddim gair o Saesneg ar wahân i gyfri i ddeg a rhegi.

Ym mis Mawrth 1948 rhannwyd ni'n grwpiau a'n hanfon i ffordd, rhai i Sir Efrog, rhai i Ganolbarth Lloegr ac fe es i i Gymru i Oakdale lle'r oeddwn i'n byw yn y 'Cytiau'. Cawsom ein rhannu eto i hosteli eraill, es i i'r Ddraenen Wen yn gyntaf a gweithio yng Nglofa Llanbradach ond yn fuan



slung into ditches. We heard about this in Italy and didn't really know if they were going to do the same to us. While in Italy we saw a column of Polish troops travelling up into Austria. They seemed to know who we were and they all waved, these were proper soldiers not like the first British ones we had seen. We got used to the British after a while and the way they spoke (although we still didn't understand their language),

so when we came across one unit which seemed to all have some sort of impediment in their speech we asked what was wrong with them only to be told that they were Cockneys!

In 1947 we left Italy and were sent to camps in Germany and renamed Displaced Persons. I got fed up with camp life and heard that workers were being recruited for Britain, so I volunteered in November 1947 and became a European Volunteer Worker – I still am and I have been retired for twenty years! We were taken to an RAF camp in West Drayton where, for the first time in twenty years, we had white sheets and pillows – we were like Lord Chief Justices! What a tremendous shock after sleeping on the ground. There were about a hundred-and-fifty of us and we had a choice of what to do, either farms, brickworks or the mines.

TOP: FELIX YN EI DDILLAD CYFFREDIN, 1946
GWAELOD: FELIX YN CAEL MEDAL URDD SANT IOAN AM WASANAETH HIR, YNG NGHANTIN GLOFA WINDSOR, 1970

TOP: FELIX IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, 1946
BOTTOM: BEING PRESENTED WITH ST JOHNS LONG SERVICE MEDAL IN WINDSOR COLLIERY CANTEEN, 1970



trosglwyddais i hostel newydd ym Mhontygwindy. Roedd hyn yn gwneud y tro yn iawn i mi gan fy mod yn ddigon agos i weithio oriau ychwanegol! Roeddwn yn gynorthwydd i drwsiw'r châi rhan o 'nghyflog ei dalu o gyflog y trwsiw'r. Roedd e'n talu pum swllt ar ben fy nghyflog o £3 a chweugain. Un diwrnod anfonwyd fi'n ôl i'r ffordd i ofyn bar rhwygo a gwelais ei docyn. Roedd £18 arno a dim ond pum swllt oedd e'n ei dalu i mi! Felly gofynnais am fynd i bacio ar y ffas yn lle hynny.

Symudais i Lofa Windsor a chael llety gyda ffrind gan fod ei landleidi eisiau lojer arall. Cefais ddechrau gweithio yn y nos ac yn fuan ar ôl dechrau, cawsom gwmp yn y ffas ac roedd yn rhaid parhau i weithio. Pan ddaethon ni nôl i waelod y pwll yn y bore gwelodd yr Is Reolwr ni a gofyn beth oedden ni'n ei wneud a dywedon ni bod rhyw gwmp bach wedi digwydd. Edrychodd arnom a dweud 'Pam na wnaethoch chi wthio'r llipryn main 'na i fyny'r twll?' – fi yr oedd yn ei feddwl, felly dywedais i 'Gwell gwrthio bastard tew fel ti i fyny 'na!'. Roedd yn hoffi hynny ac roedden ni'n cyd-dynnu'n dda o hynny ymlaen. Yna cyflwynwyd llwytho â phŵer a ddechreuais i wneud llawer o waith arbrofi ar sut i wella'r prosesau torri a llwytho. Magais ddiddordeb mawr hefyd mewn Cymorth Cyntaf ac fe wnes i 120 awr o nyrso gwirfoddol yn Ysbyty'r Glowyr yng Nghaerffili yn ystod Rhyfel Corea. Fe wasanaethais i am un mlynedd ar bymtheg fel dyn achub rhan amser yng Ngorsafodd Achub Pyllau Tredegar Newydd a Dinas. Ar ôl damwain a wasgodd un o fy fertebrâu, hyfforddais fel swyddog ac yn y diwedd fe ddes i'n oruchwyliwr. Ches i ddim problemau fel swyddog mewn gwirionedd er i un dyn ddweud wrthyf 'Fydd dim un dyn estron yn rhoi gorchmynion i mi' ond dywedais i 'Bydd hwn yn!'. Gofynnodd y rheolwr i mi unwaith pam nad oedd byth drwbl yn fy adran i a dywedais wrtho fy mod i bob amser yn ceisio bod yn deg a phob amser yn esbonio i'r bechgyn beth oedd yn digwydd. Roeddwn i wastad wedi casáu cael fy ngwylio gan swyddogion pan oeddwn i'n gweithio a wnes i erioed wneud hynny pan ddes i'n swyddog.

Priodais ag Iris Wynne, merch o Senghenydd, ym 1953 a chawson ni ddau o blant, un bachgen ac un ferch. Rydw i wedi bod yn ôl i Slofenia saith deg pedwar o weithiau ers 1966. Ym 1991 es yno am chwe wythnos fel cynrychiolydd Prydain i Gynhadledd Byd Slofenia. Pan oeddwn i yno datganodd Slofenia annibyniaeth oddi wrth lwgoslafia ar 25 Gorffennaf. Roedd unedau o fyddin lwgoslafia yn dal i fod yn Slofenia ac roedd yr ymladd yn parhau. Roedd ein milwyr wedi gosod rhwystrau ffyrdd a gofynnon nhw i mi pam fy mod mor wirion â bod yno ar adeg o'r fath. Atebais 'Rhowch ddryll i mi ac fe ddechreuia i eto – roeddwn i'n gwneud hyn cyn i'r un ohonoch chi gael eich geni!' Mae Slofenia'n dechrau gwneud yn dda erbyn hyn, mae safonau byw yn codi, mae ganddi system ddemocrataidd, digonedd o dwristiaid, ond Cymru yw fy nghartref bellach ac rydw i wedi bod yn byw yma ers pum deg naw o flynyddoedd.

Felix Srenchencko Jereb, Senghenydd

It was too hot in the brickworks; I was fed up of farming, so the pits it was! We learned English properly in Bottisham, Cambridge, our teacher was an ex-RAF man. Surprisingly, up to then, even after all our connections with the British; I had no English except for counting up to ten and swearing.

In March 1948 we were put into groups and sent off, some to Yorkshire, some to Midlands and I went to Wales to Oakdale where we lived in the 'Huts'. Then we were divided again to other hostels, I went to Hawthorn first and worked in Llanbradach Colliery but soon transferred to a new hostel in Pontygwindy. This suited me as I was near enough to work overtime! I was a repairer's assistant and part of my money was paid out of the repairer's wages. He paid me five shillings on top of my £3 ten shillings wages. One day I was sent back in the roadway to fetch a ripping bar and found his docket. It had £18 on it and he was only giving me five shillings! So I asked to go packing on the coal face instead.

I moved to Windsor Colliery and got lodgings with a friend of mine whose landlady wanted another lodger. I got a start on nights and soon after starting we had a fall in the face and had to work on. When we came back to the pit bottom in the morning, the Under Manager saw us and asked what we were doing and we said that there had been a bit of a fall. He looked at us and said 'Why didn't you push that long piece of piss up the hole?', meaning me, so I said 'Better to push a fat bastard like you up there!' He liked that and I got on very well with him afterwards. Then power loading came in and I got very involved with experimenting how to improve cutting and loading. I also got very interested in First Aid and did 120 hours of volunteer nursing in the Miners' Hospital in Caerphilly during the Korean War. I also did sixteen years as a part-time rescue man in New Tredegar and Dinas Mines Rescue Stations. After an accident that crushed one of my vertebrae I trained as an official and I eventually became an overman. I had no real trouble as an official although one man told me 'No foreigner is going to give me orders', but I said 'This one will!' The manager once asked me why there was never any trouble in my district and I told him that I always tried to be fair, always explained to the boys what was going on. I had always hated being watched by officials while I was working and I never did that when I became an official.

I married Iris Wynne, a Senghenydd girl, in 1953 and had two children, one boy and one girl. I have been back to Slovenia seventy-four times since 1966. In 1991 I went there as a British representative to the Slovenian World Congress for six weeks. While I was there Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia on 25 June. There were still Yugoslavian army units in Slovenia and fighting was going on. Our troops had set up road blocks and they asked me why I was so daft as to be there at such a time. I answered 'Give me a gun and I'll start again – I was doing this before you lot were born!' Slovenia is starting to do well now, living standards are rising, it has a democratic system, tourists galore, but Wales is now my home and I have lived here for fifty-nine years.

Felix Srenchencko Jereb, Senghenydd

'Low Cushion' oeddwn i

CEFAIS FY NGENI AR 21 EBRILL 1925 YN LOG (neu Sattrok fel yr oedd bryd hynny), yn nwyrain Slofenia. Roedden ni'n byw mewn tyddyn ond roedd fy nhad yn gweithio mewn chwarel leol hefyd i gadw dau ben llinyn ynghyd. Roedd pedwar ar ddeg o blant i'w bwydo a phan oeddwn i tua deg oed rhoddwyd fi i weithio ar fferm arall. Doeddwn i ddim yn cael fy nhalu am hyn; ond roedd y ffermwr yn fy mwydo ac yn fy nilladu. Gadewais i'r ysgol yn bedair ar ddeg oed a pharhau i weithio ar y fferm honno nes i'r Almaen oresgyn Slofenia. Cefais fy nrafftio gan yr Almaenwyr, i agor ffosydd ac ati, ac ar ôl tri mis anfonwyd fi i ymuno â byddin yr Almaen yn yr Almaen. Roedd rhaid i bob un o'n dynion ifanc fynd – bu farw dau o fy mrodyr yn y rhyfel; lladdwyd y cyntaf yng ngwlad Groeg ym 1944 a bu farw'r llall yn Rwsia. Pan fu farw fy mrawd cyntaf roedd gennyf bythefnos o seibiant ac achosodd hyn dipyn o benbleth i mi. Roedd nifer o Slofeniaid wedi encilio o'r fyddin, ond pe bawn i wedi encilio byddai'r Almaenwyr wedi saethu mam. Ar y llaw arall, pe na bawn i'n encilio, byddai'r partisiaiaid yn ei saethu. Penderfynais fynd yn ôl i'r fyddin gan ei bod yn fwy tebygol y byddai'r Almaenwyr yn ei saethu na'r partisiaiaid. Wrth lwc, llwyddodd i osgoi'r partisiaiaid a goroesi.

Ym 1944 anfonwyd ni i flaen y gad yn Rwsia lle buon ni'n gwasanaethu tan fis Mai 1945. Roeddwn i y tu ôl i flaen y gad yn y ceginau ond roeddwn i'n arfer mynd â bwyd i flaen y gad. Un diwrnod es i ar goll wrth wneud hyn a chefais fy hun yn nhir neb rhwng y rhengoedd blaen, ond ffeindiais i'r ffordd nôl, roeddwn yn lwcus. Ar ddiwedd y rhyfel fe'n daliwyd gan y Rwsiaid ac aethon nhw â ni i Gorki, 250 cilomedr i'r dwyrain o Moscow, fel carcharorion rhyfel. Cawsom ein trin yn eithaf da yn Rwsia gan mai lwgoslafiaid oedden ni, er iddyn nhw fynd â phob dim oddi arnom yn cynnwys fy lluniau a fy llyfr tâl. Ond roedden nhw'n trin y carcharorion Almaenaidd yn wael iawn. Cadwyd ni yn y gwersyll tan fis Rhagfyr 1945 pan gludwyd ni i i Rwmania lle treuliais bythefnos yn helpu i gael gwared â llau carcharorion eraill. Roeddem i fod i gael ein hanfon adref ond, ychydig cyn i ni groesi ffin Awstria ac lwgoslafia, cefais fy nhynnu oddi ar y trên a'm rhoi mewn carchar Prydeinig dros nos. Cefais ddewis i fynd i wersyll 'Pobl wedi'u Dadleoli' yn Awstria neu dros y ffin yn lwgoslafia. Roeddwn i wedi siarad gyda'r

They called me 'Low Cushion'

I WAS BORN ON 21 APRIL 1925 IN LOG (THEN known as Sattrok), in East Slovenia. We lived on a smallholding but my father also had to work in a local quarry to make ends meet. There were fourteen children to feed and when I was around ten years of age I was put out to work on another farm. I didn't get paid for this; the farmer only fed and clothed me. I left school at fourteen years old and continued working on that farm until the Germans occupied Slovenia. The Germans drafted me, digging trenches etc. and, after three months I was sent to join the German Army in Germany. All of our young men had to go – two of my brothers were killed in the war; the first was killed in Greece in 1944 and the other died in Russia. When my first brother died I had a fortnight's leave and this was a bit of a dilemma for me. A lot of Slovenians had deserted from the army, but if I deserted the Germans would have shot my mother. On the other

hand, if I didn't desert, the partisans would shoot her. I decided to go back to the army as it was more likely for the Germans to shoot her than the partisans. Luckily she avoided the partisans and survived.

In 1944 we were sent to the Russian front where we served until May 1945. I was mostly behind the lines in the kitchens but used to take food up to the front. One day I got lost while doing this and ended up in no-man's-land between the lines but

I managed to find my way back, I was lucky. At the end of the war we were captured by the Russians and taken to Gorki, 250 kilometres to the east of Moscow, as prisoners of war. In Russia we were treated quite well because we were Yugoslavians, although they took everything off us including my photographs and pay book. However they treated German prisoners very badly. We were kept in the camp until December 1945 when we were transported to Romania where I spent two weeks helping to delouse other prisoners. We were supposed to be sent home but, just before we crossed the Austrian/Yugoslavian border, I was taken off the train and put in a British jail overnight. They gave me the choice to go into a 'Displaced Persons' camp in Austria or over the border into Yugoslavia. I had spoken to other prisoners about the reception we would have had in Tito's Yugoslavia so I didn't feel safe going home and decided to stay on in Austria. I found work in a sand pit and worked there until early 1948. Around this time there were posters around offering work in Britain. The posters mentioned farming and factory work but nothing about the pits. I volunteered.



UCHOD: ALOIZ YNG NGHANOLFAN HYFFORDDI OAKDALE (AIL O'R CHWITH, RHES FLAEN), 1948

ABOVE: ALOIZ AT OAKDALE TRAINING CENTRE (2ND FROM RIGHT, FRONT ROW), 1948

carcharorion eraill am y croeso y byddem yn ei gael yn lwgoslafia Tito felly doeddwn i ddim yn teimlo'n saff yn mynd yno, a phenderfynais aros yn Awstria. Llwyddais i gael gwaith mewn pwll tywod a gweithiais yno tan ddechrau 1948. Tua'r un amser roedd poster i'w gweld o amgylch yn cynnig gwaith ym Mhrydain. Roedd y poster i'n sôn am ffermio a gwaith ffatri ond dim byd am y pyllau glo. Gwirfoddolais i.

Roeddwn i eisiau gweithio ar y ffermydd mewn gwirionedd, ond roedden nhw wedi rhoi fy enw i lawr i fynd i'r gwaith glo felly i lawr y pwll â fi! Aethon ni i Market Harborough i ddysgu Saesneg a mwynloddio ac yna i dde Cymru a Chanolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale. Fe dreulion ni ddau fis a hanner yn hyfforddi yno cyn i mi gael llety preifat yng Nghefn Fforest a gwaith yng Nglofa Britannia lle'r arhosais am bymtheg mlynedd ar hugain cyn colli fy ngwaith ym 1983. Yn y lofa, gweithiais ar y ffas a gwnes i rywfaint o waith tyllu am ddŵr a samplau, ond gweithiais i'n bennaf fel trwsiw'r. Y rheswm am hyn oedd bod fy mhengliniau'n dost ar ôl penlinio o hyd wrth weithio ar y ffas. Roedd hi'n haws i mi weithio fel trwsiw'r a chael sefyll ar hyd y sifft. Ar wahân i dorri fy mys a nifer o grafiadau, dim ond un anaf difrifol ges i pan ges i fy nal rhwng dram ac ochr y ffordd. Ces fy nghario allan gyda phelfis wedi torri a threuliais wyth wythnos yn yr ysbyty. Roeddwn i'n lwcus, er bod gennyf dri deg y cant o lwch a rhywfaint o emffysema a bronchitis.

Cwrddais ag Evelyn ym 1954 a phriodod ni ym 1955. Roedd hithau hefyd yn cael ei chyflogi gan y Bwrdd Glo fel dynes cantîn yn Swyddfeydd Tredomen. Erbyn hyn mae gennym ni dri o blant, deg o wyrion a thri gor-ŵyr. Yn y pwll, 'Low Cushion' oeddwn i gan na allai'r dynion ynganu fy enw'n iawn. Galwodd rhywun yn y tŷ un noson i ofyn i'r wraig os oeddwn eisiau gweithio oriau ychwanegol – gofynnodd ef am Low Cushion ac ni wyddai hi pwy oedd hwnnw!

Oni bai am y rhyfel, mae'n fwy na thebyg y byddwn i wedi bod fel fy nhad, yn cadw tyddyn bach a gweithio yn y goedwig i ennill mwy o arian. Es i'n ôl i Slofenia ar fy mhen fy hun am y tro cyntaf ym 1964; ym 1968 aethon ni i gyd. Dim ond ychydig o ystafelloedd oedd yn yr hen dŷ ar gyfer yr holl blant 'na – rwy'n synnu sut roedden ni'n dod i ben. Pan oeddwn i'n byw yno doedd dim trydan, nwy na dŵr tap, ond mae popeth ganddynt erbyn heddiw. Er nad ydw i'n berson gwleidyddol ar y cyfryw, rydw i yn pleidleisio yn etholiadau Slofenia gan fy mod i'n ddinesydd Prydain/Slofenia ar y cyd. Er hynny, nid ydw i eisiau bod yno nawr gan mai yng Nghymru mae fy nheulu. Pan ddaethon ni yma, doedd dim byd gennym, felly bu'n rhaid i ni weithio a chynilo neu fe fydden ni wedi bod yn dlawd am weddill ein hoes. Ces i 'ngalw'n 'Fastard estron' sawl gwaith am weithio'n rhy galed. Roedd rhai dynion yn ein herbyn ar y dechrau, y gŵyn oedd bod 'Blydi estroniaid yn dwyn ein gwaith' ond roedd popeth yn iawn wedyn.

Mr Aloiz ('Low') Krizan, Ystrad Mynach

DE: 'LOW', JOE PERSA, FELIX JEREB, TONY MIKUS, STAN DERNULG, CLWB ATHLETAU TREDOMEN, TUA 2000

RIGHT: 'LOW', JOE PERSA, FELIX JEREB, TONY MIKUS, STAN DERNULG, TREDOMEN ATHLETIC CLUB, ABOUT 2000



I actually wanted to work on a farm but they had me down for the pits so down the pits I went! We went to Market Harborough to learn the English language and mining then to south Wales and Oakdale Training Centre. We spent two-and-a-half months training there before I got private lodgings in Cefn Forest and a job in Britannia Colliery where I stayed for thirty-five years until I got redundancy in 1983. In the colliery, I worked on the coal face and did some water and sample boring, but mostly I worked as a repairer. The reason for this is that I developed a beat knee while working on the coal face through kneeling all the time. It was easier for me to work as a repairer and be able to stand up through the shift. Apart from a broken finger and a lot of lacerations, I only had one serious injury when I got trapped between a dram and the side of the road. I was carried out with a fractured pelvis and spent eight weeks in hospital. I was lucky although I have thirty per cent dust and some emphysema and bronchitis.

I met my wife Evelyn in 1954 and we married in 1955. She was also employed by the Coal Board as a canteen lady in the Tredomen Offices. We now have three children, ten grandchildren and three great grandchildren. In the colliery I was known as 'Low Cushion' because the men couldn't say my proper name. Somebody called to the house one night to ask my wife if I wanted overtime – he asked for Low Cushion and she didn't know who that was!

If it wasn't for the war I would probably have been like my father, keep a smallholding and work in the forestry to make up the money. I went back to Slovenia on my own first in 1964; in 1968 we all went. The old house only had a few rooms and all those kids – I wonder how we used to manage. When I lived there was no electricity or gas, no running water, now they have everything. Although I'm not really politically minded I do vote in the Slovenian elections as I am a joint British/Slovenian citizen. Even so I wouldn't want to be there now as my family is in Wales. When we came we had nothing so we had to work and we had to save or we would have been poor for the rest of our lives. I was called 'A foreign bastard' a few times for working too hard. Some men were against us at first, it was 'Bloody foreigners, taking our best girls and our best jobs' but it was OK afterwards.

Mr Aloiz ('Low') Krizan, Ystrad Mynach

*Mae pethau'n
digwydd - beth
wnewch chi?*

FE'M GANWYD ARY PYMTHEGFED O DACHWEDD 1926 yn Lodz, gwlad Pwyl. Roedd dad yn filwr parhaol, yn Uwchgapten cudd-wybodaeth ym myddin gwlad Pwyl, pan dorrodd y rhyfel. Roeddwn i'n hyfforddi i fod yn beilot yn awyrlu gwlad Pwyl bryd hynny, ond rhoddodd y rhyfel daw ar hynny i gyd ac fe es i'r mudiad gwrthwynebu tanddaearol yn lle hynny. Roedd yn fater o un ai ymladd y diawliaid neu fynd yn llafurwr gorfodol neu i wersyll crynhoi. Gwelais rywfaint o ymladd tra'r oeddwn yn y mudiad gwrthwynebu. Roeddwn ni'n arfer gweithio ar y ffermydd yn ystod y dydd, neu guddio o'r neilltu, a difrodi yn y nos – ffrwydro! Gwylltiodd yr Almaenwyr ac fe saethon nhw bobl ddiniwed – lladdwch un Almaenwr, fe saethan nhw ddinasyddion. Doedd y Wehrmacht ddim yn rhy ddrwg ond yr SS a'r Gestapo, nhw oedd y diawliaid. Yr amser hynny cwrddais â Karol Jozef Wojtyla, roedd e'n un o'r rhai oedd yn ymwneud â'r mudiad gwrthwynebu, y tro nesa i mi ei weld oedd pan ddaeth i Gaerdydd ym 1982 – erbyn hynny, fe oedd Pab John Paul yr Ail.

*Roedd hi'n anodd mynd
ar draws Ewrop ond roedd
yn fantais gallu siarad sawl iaith
ac fe gawsom lawer o help gan
y bobl leol, yn arbennig
yr ymladdwyr dros ryddid*

Dechreuodd pethau boethi a dihangais o wlad Pwyl ar ddechrau 1941. Roedd hi'n anodd mynd ar draws Ewrop ond roedd yn fantais gallu siarad sawl iaith ac fe gawsom lawer o help gan y bobl leol, yn arbennig yr ymladdwyr dros ryddid – roedd y Twrciaid yn gymorth mawr, ac yn eich hebrwng yn syth at y Prydeinwyr. Yn y diwedd cyrhaeddais ogledd Affrica mewn llong danfor Brydeinig ac ymuno â Byddin Pwyl Rydd dan y Cadfridog Anders. Dim ond un ar bymtheg oed oeddwn i, ond dywedais mai deunaw a hanner oeddwn i. Oherwydd fy nghefnidir cefais fy rhoi yn y gwasanaethau arbenigol. Rwy'n siarad sawl iaith, yn yr ysgol beilotiaid roedd disgwyl i chi siarad

**DE: MAM, FY
CHWAER, FI A DAD,
PAN OEDDWN I'N
12 OED**

**RIGHT: MY
MOTHER, SISTER,
MYSELF AND MY
FATHER, TAKEN
WHEN I WAS 12**

*Things
happen - what
can you do?*

I WAS BORN ON THE FIFTEENTH OF NOVEMBER 1926 in Lodz, Poland. My father was a regular soldier, a major in Polish army intelligence, when war broke out. I was training to be a pilot in the Polish air force at that time but the war stopped all that and I went into the underground resistance movement instead. It was either fight the buggers or end up as a slave labourer or in a concentration camp. I saw some action while I was in the resistance. We used to work on the farms in the day, or just hide out of the way, and in the night carry out sabotage – blow things up! The Germans got annoyed and shot innocent people – you kill one German soldier, they shoot civilians. The Wehrmacht weren't too bad but the SS and the Gestapo, they were the buggers. During that time I met Karol Jozef Wojtyla, he was one of those who were involved with the resistance, the next time I saw him was when he came to Cardiff in 1982 – he was then Pope John Paul II.

*It was difficult getting across
Europe but it was handy
being able to speak several
languages and we got a lot of
help from the locals, especially
the freedom fighters*

Things got hot and I escaped from Poland at the start of 1941. It was difficult getting across Europe but it was handy being able to speak several languages and we got a lot of help from the locals, especially the freedom fighters – the Turks in particular were very helpful, they escorted you straight to the British. I eventually got to North Africa by British submarine and joined the Free Polish Army under General Anders. I was only sixteen but said that I was eighteen-and-a-half. Because of my background I was put in special services. I speak several languages, in the pilot school you were expected to speak the languages of all the countries that bordered Poland. I had also parachuted while I had been in pilot school – the first time I used a parachute it was terrible, my stomach was in my mouth, but after that you don't take too much notice. However, British



iaith pob gwlad oedd yn ffinio â gwlad Pwyl. Roeddwn i wedi parasiwtio yn yr ysgol beilotiaid hefyd – roedd y tro cyntaf yn erchyll, roedd fy stumog yn fy ngheg, ond ar ôl hynny dydych chi ddim yn cymryd fawr o sylw. Eto, roedd parasiwtio Prydeinig yn system wahanol – gwahanol barasiwt – mor wahanol â dydd a nos!

Gwelais ymladd yn yr anialwch gyda'r Long Range Desert Group – fe ddifrodon ni feysydd awyr a storfeydd cyflenwadau Almaenaidd. O'r anialwch aethon ni nôl i'r Eidal cyn blaen y gad i stopio colofnau cyflenwi'r Almaenwyr ac i'w hatal rhag ffrwydro'r pontydd. Cwrddais â Peter Ananicz gyntaf yn yr Eidal. Ymladdodd ym Monte Cassino ac roedd yn un o'r rhai a gododd baner gwlad Pwyl uwchben yr adfeilion. Y tro nesaf i mi ei weld oedd yn Abertridwr – roedd hynny'n sioc! Gwelais ychydig o ymladd ym Monte Cassino ond cawsom ein hanfon yn fuan i Brydain i baratoi ar gyfer glaniadau Normandi. Cawsom ein gollwng i mewn i'r Iseldiroedd y tu ôl i rengoedd y gelyn yn ystod cyrch y cynghreiriaid drwy Ewrop. Pan ildiodd yr Almaen hyfforddwyd ni i fynd i Malaya a rhoddwyd lifrai trofannol i ni, ond ildiodd y Siapaneaid cyn y gellid ein hanfon yno. Mae rhyfel yn beth creulon – y pethau sydd raid i chi eu gwneud, rwy'n dal i gael hunllefau hyd heddiw. Ond mae pethau'n digwydd, beth wnewch chi? Ar ôl y rhyfel ces fy rhoi yn yr Almaen gyda'r lluoedd meddiannu ar ddyletswyddau diogelwch, yn cynnwys cyfnod ar 'Checkpoint Charlie' ym Merlin. Roedd llawer o Almaenwyr – swyddogion gwersylloedd crynhoi a dynion SS – yn cymryd arnynt fod yn gyn-lafurwyr gorfodol o wlad Pwyl ond fel arfer roedd modd eu dal gyda chwestiynau penodol i'w twyllo hyd yn oed os oedden nhw'n siarad Pwyleg da. Ar ôl i ni adael y fyddin ni chawsom fynd nôl i wlad Pwyl gan fod y Rwsiaid yno. Roeddent yn ein hystyried yn fradwyr felly cawsom loches wleidyddol ym Mhrydain. Dwi'n meddwl bod Prydain wedi bod yn eithaf teg gyda'r Pwyliaid – ond dylai Churchill fod wedi rhoi ychydig mwy o bwysau i wneud gwlad Pwyl yn wlad rydd. Fodd bynnag roedd Stalin am i'r comiwnyddion gael cymaint o dir â phosib.

Dewisais fwyngloddio pan ddes i i Brydain gan fod y bechgyn eraill i gyd yn gwneud hynny – pan mae dyn yn ifanc, mae'n fodlon mentro. Ar ôl hyfforddi yng Nglofa Woodhouse, Sir Efrog fe ddes i Gymru – dywedodd y bechgyn eraill 'Dere i Gymru – paid ag aros yn Lloegr' ac fe ges i waith yng Nglofa Windsor. Roeddwn i'n byw mewn hostel, i ddechrau yn Ystrad Mynach – yna cwrddais â Peter Ananicz eto ac fe gafodd e lety i mi ar draws y ffordd iddo ef – dywedodd 'Paid ag aros mewn hostel, mae fel y fyddin – cer i fyw bywyd dinesydd go iawn!' Pan briodais i, fe brynon ni dŷ yn Senghennydd. Yn ddiweddarach, es i i weithio yng Nglofa Bedwas. Treuliais ddeg mlynedd yn y pyllau glo, fel arfer yn yr hedins neu'r ffyrdd. Doeddwn

parachuting was a different system – different parachute – as different as day from night!

I saw action in the desert with the Long Range Desert Group – we sabotaged German airfields and supply dumps. From the desert we went to Italy again ahead of the front line to stop the German supply columns and to stop them blowing up the bridges. I first met Peter Ananicz in Italy. He fought at Monte Cassino and was one of those who raised the Polish flag above the ruins. The

next time I saw him was in Abertridwr – that was a shock! I saw a little bit of action in Monte Cassino but we were soon sent to Britain to prepare for the Normandy landings. We were dropped into Holland behind enemy lines to disrupt the Germans during the allied drive through Europe. When Germany surrendered we were trained to go to Malaya and issued tropical uniforms but the Japanese surrendered before we could be sent. War is a cruel thing – the things you have to do, I still have nightmares. But things happen, what can you do? After the war I was stationed in Germany with the occupation forces on security duties including a period on

'Checkpoint Charlie' in Berlin. There were a lot of Germans – concentration camp guards and SS men – pretending to be former slave labourers from Poland but you could usually catch them out with trick questions even if they spoke good Polish. After demob we couldn't go back to Poland because the Russians were there. They regarded us as traitors so we had political asylum

in Britain. I think that Britain played pretty fair with the Poles – but Churchill should have pressed a bit more over making Poland a free country. But Stalin wanted the communists to have as much land as possible.

I chose mining when I came to Britain because all the other boys were doing it – when you are young you just take a chance. After training in Woodhouse Colliery, Yorkshire, I came to Wales – the other boys said 'Come to Wales – don't stop in England' and I got a job in Windsor Colliery. I was living in a hostel first in Ystrad Mynach – then I met Peter Ananicz again and he found me lodgings across the road from him – he said 'Don't stop in the hostel it's like the army – go to a proper civilian life!' When I married I bought a house in Senghennydd. I later I went to work in Bedwas Colliery. I spent ten years in the pits usually in the headings and driveages. I didn't like it much



UCHOD: 'ZIGGY' YN HYFFORDDI YNG NGLOFA WOODHOUSE, SIR EFRUG

ABOVE: 'ZIGGY' TRAINING IN WOODHOUSE COLLIERY, YORKSHIRE

i ddim yn rhy hoff o'r gwaith, felly pan ges i gyfle, es i i weithio yn y ffatrioedd, a dyna lle fues i nes i mi ymddeol ym 1991.

Priodais â Jean, merch o Bontypridd oedd yn byw yn Senghennydd, ym 1958. Mae gennym un ferch o'r enw Ann. Ar ôl i mi golli fy ngwraig ac ar ôl i Ann briodi symudais i fflat y cyngor yng Nghaerffili. Roedd gen i ddiddordeb mawr yng nghrefftau ymladd y Dwyrain a ddysgais yn gyntaf gan fy nhad yng ngwlad Pwyl. Enillais bencampwriaeth Jujitsu Ewrop ar 5 Mawrth 1976, a fi oedd 'Perfformiwr Gorau'r Dydd'. Rwy'n bumed Dan mewn Karate. Dihangodd fy nhad o wlad Pwyl hefyd. Daeth i Brydain a gwasanaethodd yn adran cudd-wybodaeth y Fyddin yn ystod y rhyfel. Ar ôl y rhyfel aeth i Detroit yn America ac ymunodd â'r Gwarchodlu Cenedlaethol. Pan fu farw cafodd angladd milwrol – gynnu'n tanio dros y bedd a phopeth.

Mae bywyd yn beth rhyfedd iawn, pe na fyddai'r rhyfel wedi digwydd byddwn wedi bod yn beilot yn Awyrlu parhaol gwlad Pwyl ac efallai yn ddiweddarach yn beilot cwmni hedfan. Fyddwn i byth wedi dod i Gymru, a byth wedi mynd yn löwr.

Zigmund ('Ziggy') Pawlowski, Caerffili

so when I had my chance I went to work in the factories instead where I stopped until my retirement in 1991.

I got married in 1958 to Jean, a Pontypridd girl who was living in Senghennydd. I have one daughter called Ann. After my wife died and my daughter got married I moved to a council flat in Caerphilly. I was very interested in martial arts which I first learned from my father in Poland. I won the European Jujitsu championship, and was 'Best Performer on the Day', on 5 March 1976 and am a fifth Dan in Karate. My father also escaped from Poland, came to Britain and served in Army Intelligence during the war. After the war he went to Detroit in America and joined the National Guard. When he died he was given a military funeral – guns over the grave and everything.

Life is a very funny thing, if the war hadn't happened I would have been a pilot in the regular Polish Air Force and perhaps later an airline pilot. I would never have come to Wales, never become a coal miner.

Zigmund ('Ziggy') Pawlowski, Caerphilly

STANISLAV ('STAN') BIELSKI

*Y peth gorau
wnes i erioed
oedd dod
i Gwmbrân*

CEFAIS FY NGENI YN POZNAN, GWLAD PWYL ym 1927. Symudodd fy ngheulu i Ffrainc ym 1929 ac aeth fy nhad i weithio yn y pyllau glo lleol yn ardal Pas de Calais. Yn ystod y rhyfel, fues i'n gweithio dan ddaear yn cario coed i'r dynion. Roedd yr amodau'n wahanol i Gymru; roedd y diogelwch yn iawn ond roedd y llwch yn ofnadwy, mae'r rhan fwyaf o fy hen bartneriaid wedi marw, eu hysgyfaint yn llawn llwch. Yr Almaenwyr oedd yn rheoli Ffrainc bryd hynny ond dim ond ychydig ohonynt oedd yn fy ardal i, ac fel bachgen ifanc, ychydig o gyswllt ges i â nhw. Ar ôl i'r Cynghreiriaid ymosod ym 1944 ymunais â Lluoedd Pwyl Rydd ym Mharis. Anfonwyd fi i Brydain fel rhan o'r Fyddin Bwylaidd, roeddwn i'n droedfilwr fel un o

*The best thing
I ever did
was coming to
Cwmbran*

I WAS BORN IN POZNAN, POLAND IN 1927. MY family emigrated to France in 1929 and my father went to work in the coal mines in the Pas de Calais region. During the war I worked underground myself carrying timber for the men. Conditions were different from Wales; the safety was OK but the dust was terrible, most of my old butties there are dead, lungs full of dust. The Germans were in control in France then but there were only a few in my area and, as a young boy, I didn't have much to do with them. After the Allies invaded in 1944 I joined the Polish Free Forces in Paris. I was sent to Britain as part of the Polish Army, I was in the infantry as a Bren carrier crew man. We were given three months training ready to be sent to the front but the Allies had gone so far into

ddynion yn y criw cario gynnu Bren. Rhoddwyd tri mis o hyfforddiant i ni i'n paratoi i fynd i flaen y gad, ond roedd y Cynghreiriaid wedi mynd mor bell i'r Almaen fel nad oedd ein hangen ni, felly arhoson ni ym Mhrydain. Pan ddaeth y rhyfel i ben roedden ni yn yr Alban. Gallwn fod wedi mynd yn ôl i Ffrainc ar ôl y rhyfel ond roedd rhai o'r bechgyn am weithio ym mhyllau glo Prydain felly arhosais innau hefyd.

Pan gefais i adael y fyddin, fe ddes i dde Cymru i Ganolfan Hyfforddi Oakdale a byw yn y 'Cytiau' yno am ryw dri mis cyn mynd i Lofa'r De, Glynccorwg ym 1947. Priodais fy ngwraig Sylvia a symud i'w phentref genedigol, Abercregan, ym 1948. Bues i'n gweithio yno tan 1966 pan symudon ni i Gwmbrân a chael gwaith yn Precision Forgings, yna Girlings. Doeddwn i ddim yn hoff o waith ffatri a dim ond am ychydig wythnosau wnes i aros yno. Penderfynais fynd nôl i'r pwll, yn gyntaf i Lofa Bedwas ac yna i Lofa Blaenserchen ym 1967. Bues i'n gweithio yno nes i'r pwll gau ym 1985. Gwnes nifer o swyddi yn y pwll ond agor a thrwsio ffyrdd oeddwn i'n bennaf. Chefais i ddim llawer o anafiadau difrifol dan ddaear gan fy mod i bob amser yn ceisio gofalu amdanaf fy hunan. Yr unig dro y ces i fy anafu go iawn oedd pan ddaeth carreg o'r to a chladdu ei hun yn fy nghlun. Fe dreuliais i wythnos yn yr ysbyty cyn mynd yn syth nôl i'r gwaith.

Roedd gennym dîm pêl-droed fel arfer yn Hosteli Pen-coed, a chwaraeais i dros Abercregan yn ddiweddarach. Ro'n i hefyd yn chwarae tennis bwrdd yng Nghynghrair Pen-y-bont a bûm yn chwarae sgïtls am flynyddoedd. Ond yn bennaf roeddwn i'n hoffi yfed! Does gen i fawr o gyswllt gyda Phwyliaid eraill gan i mi gael fy magu yn Ffrainc yn siarad Ffrangeg. Dysgais ychydig o Bwyleg yn y fyddin ond roeddwn i'n ei chael hi braidd yn anodd gan fy mod i'n dysgu Saesneg hefyd. Rydw i wedi bod nôl i Ffrainc sawl gwaith i weld perthnasau, mae gen i chwaer, Marie, yn byw yn Lens o hyd. Mae gennyf bump o blant, tri ar ddeg o wyrion a deunaw gor-ŵyr. Roeddwn i'n eithaf hapus yn gweithio yn y pyllau glo, yn arbennig ym Mlaenserchen. Pe bawn yn gwybod pa mor dda oedd Blaenserchen byddwn wedi mynd yno ddeugain mlynedd yn ôl. Y peth gorau wnes i erioed oedd dod i Gwmbrân!

Stanislav ('Stan') Bielski, Cwmbrân



UCHOD: 'STAN' A'I CHWAER MARIE YN LENS, PAS DE CALAIS, TUA 2005

ABOVE: 'STAN' AND HIS SISTER MARIE IN LENS, PAS DE CALAIS, ABOUT 2005

decided to go back into the pits, first to Bedwas Colliery then to Blaenserchen Colliery in 1967 and worked there until it closed in 1985. I did a few jobs in the colliery but mostly driving and repairing roadways. I didn't have many serious injuries underground as I always tried to look after myself. The only time I was really injured was when a stone came from the roof and embedded itself in my calf, I spent a week in hospital and then went back to work.

We used to have a football team in the Pen-coed Hostels, and I later played for Abercregan. I also played table tennis in the Bridgend League and played skittles for years. Mostly though I liked drinking! I don't have much contact with other Polish people as I was brought up in France speaking French. I learned to speak some Polish in the army but I found it quite hard as I was also learning English. I have been back to France quite a few times to see relatives, I still have a sister Marie living in Lens. I have five children, thirteen grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren. I was quite happy working in the pits, especially Blaenserchen. If I had known how good Blaenserchen was I would have gone there forty years ago. The best thing I ever did was coming to Cwmbrân!

Stanislav ('Stan') Bielski, Cwmbrân

Germany that we weren't needed so we stayed in Britain instead. When the war ended we were in Scotland. I could have gone back to France after the war but some of the boys wanted to work in the British pits so I stayed on as well.

When I was demobbed I came to south Wales to Oakdale Training Centre and lived in the 'Huts' there for about three months and then to the South Pit, Glynccorwg in 1947. I married my wife Sylvia and moved to her home village of Abercregan in 1948. I worked there until 1966 when I moved to Cwmbran and got a job in Precision Forgings, then Girlings, but I didn't like factory work and only stayed there for a few weeks. I

*Dim alcohol,
dim merched
a dim rhegi!*

GANWYD FY NHAD, FERDINAND PRISTAVEC, YM mhentref Borovnica, Slofenia, ar 17 Mai 1926. Pan adawodd yr ysgol ym 1940, aeth yn brentis teiliwr yn Ljubljana. Ym 1943 ymunodd â'r 'Gwarchodlu Glas' (y 'Domwbranci' – y gwarchodlu cartref gwrth-Gomiwnyddol). Ymunodd â dynion a merched ifanc eraill, heb eu hyfforddi, i warchod pentrefi yn erbyn cyrchoedd y Comiwnyddion liw nos. Thaniodd y rhan fwyaf ohonynt yr un ergyd, doedd gan rai ddim bwledi i wneud hynny hyd yn oed. Erbyn 1945 dim ond basn Ljubljana oedd heb ei reoli gan gomiwnyddion Tito ac fe gynyddon nhw'r pwysau ar y Domwbranci. Ffodd fy nhad gyda'i gymdeithion i Palma Nova yn yr Eidal. Roeddent yn fwy lwcus na'u cymdeithion a ffodd i Awstria dim ond i gael eu dychwelyd i Slofenia trwy rym gan y Prydeinwyr – llofruddiwyd 15,000 gan y Comiwnyddion.

Daeth fy nhad yn gogydd yn y gwersylloedd amrywiol y buont ynddynt yn ystod y ddwy flynedd a dreuliodd yn yr Eidal. Doedd y Prydeinwyr ddim yn hael o gwbl gyda dognau bwyd, ac ar un adeg yr unig beth oedd gan fy nhad i'w fwyta oedd crwyn tatws. Ym 1947 cafodd ddewis i fynd naill ai i America neu i Brydain. Dewisodd Brydain fel nifer o Slofeniaid eraill. Symudwyd nhw i wersyll yn Bottisham, Caergrawnt lle dysgon nhw Saesneg. Daeth fy nhad yn ffrindiau gydag Oto Gluk ac anfonwyd nhw i Doncaster i hyfforddi fel glowyr. Fodd bynnag, gwrthododd glowyr Sir Efrog weithio gyda nhw ac fe'u hanfonwyd i Gymru. Fe gyrhaeddodd nhw Nantgarw ar ddiwedd 1948 a byw am rai wythnosau mewn hostel, ond cafodd ef ac Oto lety'n fuan gyda theulu Kemp yng Nghilfynydd. Roedd gan y teulu Kemp reolau tŷ pwysig: dim alcohol, dim merched a dim rhegi. Fodd bynnag, roedd y pantri bob amser ar agor. Roeddent yn yfed mewn lleoedd eraill, yn canlyn merched mewn lleoedd eraill, yn rhegi mewn Slofeneg ac roedd pryddau mor hael yn cael eu paratoi iddynt fel nad agoron nhw ddrws y pantri erioed! Arhosodd yno nes iddo briodi mam ym 1953 a symud i gartref ei theulu yn Aberfan.

Ddydd Gwener 21 Hydref 1966 oedd pen-blwydd ei fam – ond byddai'n cael ei argraffu'n barhaol ar gof fy nhad am reswm arall. Dyna ddiwrnod trychineb Aberfan – y diwrnod dreuliodd fy nhad yn tyllu yng ngweddillion ysgol y pentref am gyrrff

*No alcohol,
no women and
no swearing!*

MY FATHER, FERDINAND PRISTAVEC, WAS BORN IN the village of Borovnica, Slovenia, on 17 May 1926. When he left school in 1940, he became an apprentice tailor in Ljubljana. In 1943 he joined the 'Blue Guard' (the 'Domwbranci' – the anti-Communist home guard). He joined other untrained young men and women guarding villages against the Communist night time raids. Most never fired a shot, some never even had the ammunition to do so. By 1945 only the Ljubljana basin was not controlled by Tito's communists and they turned up the pressure on the Domwbranci. My father fled with his comrades to Palma Nova in Italy. They were luckier than their compatriots who fled to Austria only to be forcibly repatriated by the British to Slovenia – 15,000 were murdered by the Communists.

My father became a cook in the various camps they were in during the two years they were in Italy. The British were far from generous with rations and my father was, at one time, reduced to eating potato peelings. In 1947 he was given the choice to go to America or Britain. He, and many other Slovenes, chose Britain. They were moved to a camp in Bottisham, Cambridge where they learned English. My father became friends with Oto Gluk and they were sent to Doncaster for coal mining training. However the Yorkshire miners refused to work with them and they were sent to Wales instead. They arrived in Nantgarw in late 1948 and lived for some weeks in a hostel but soon he and Oto obtained lodgings with the Kemp family in Cilfynydd. The Kems had important house rules: no alcohol, no women and no swearing. However, the larder was always open. They drank elsewhere, dated their girls elsewhere, swore in Slovene and had such generous meals cooked for them that they never opened the larder door! He stayed there until he married my mother in 1953 and moved into her family home in Aberfan.



UCHOD: 'MAE'R DYN NAD YW'N YMUNO Â'R FRWYDR GWRTH-GOMIWNYDDOL YN BRADYCHU EI GENEDL'

ABOVE: 'HE WHO DOESN'T JOIN THE ANTI-COMMUNIST FIGHT BETRAYS HIS NATION'

Friday 21 October 1966 was his mother's birthday – but it would be indelibly engraved in my father's memory for another reason. It was the day of the Aberfan disaster – the day my father spent digging in the wreckage of the village school for the bodies of young children. I remember him talking about it with tears in his eyes. It could have been even more devastating for him – I had been a pupil at the school a mere three months earlier in the very classroom where every pupil died.



plant bach. Rwy'n cofio gweld ei lygaid yn llawn dagrau wrth siarad am y peth. Gallai fod wedi bod yn waeth byth iddo – roeddwn i wedi bod yn ddisgybl yn yr ysgol dim ond tri mis cyn hynny, yn yr union ystafell ddosbarth lle bu farw pob disgybl.

*Roedd ei hwyneb bron fel wyneb
plentyn heb yr un grych arno,
ac roedd yn wlyb gan ddagrau.
Roedd eu cofleidio tawel fel
petai'n para am byth*

Aethon ni i Slofenia am y tro cyntaf ym mis Gorffennaf 1968. Pan stopiodd ein car yng ngowt cartref y teulu, roedd pawb yn llygadrwth ac yn methu â chredu ei fod wedi dychwelyd. Symudodd neb ac ni wnaeth neb ei gyffwrdd gan eu bod yn gwybod bod yn rhaid iddynt aros i'w fam ddod allan o'r tŷ a'i gofleidio'n gyntaf. Menyw fechan o gorff, wedi ei gwisgo mewn dillad tywyll gwerinol, yn gwisgo ffedog a phensgarff oedd hi. Roedd ei hwyneb wyth a thrigain oed bron fel wyneb plentyn heb yr un grych arno, ac roedd yn wlyb gan ddagrau. Roedd eu cofleidio tawel fel petai'n para am byth. Yn y bythefnos yr oeddem yno, anaml y byddai'n gollwng gafael ar law fy nhad. Roedd hi wedi credu am gyfnod rhy hir ei fod wedi marw, ynghyd â'i gŵr a'i dau fab arall a fu farw oherwydd rhyfel greulon.

Cofiaf fy nhad fel dyn tawel, yn araf i ymyrryd a chyda llais tawel. Fy mam fel arfer oedd yn gyfrifol am ein disgyblu ond os oedd hi'n dweud 'Fe ddyweda i wrth dy dad' roedden ni'n gwybod ein bod mewn trwbl. Roedd yn llym ond ddim yn galed, dyn hynod o dduwiol a fyddai'n bwyta llaeth cynnes a bara ar ddydd Gwener y Groglith, byth yn fwriadol yn colli'r Offeren ar y Sul ac a oedd yn mwynhau cymdeithasu gyda'i ffrindiau Slofenaid. Bu dad yn dioddef o glefyd y llwch am ugain mlynedd bron, gan fyw'r pum mlynedd olaf yn ddibynnol ar silindr ocsigen. Bu farw ar 29 Awst 1978. Mae'n rhannu bedd gyda'i wraig, Edna May, a fu farw ar 17 Ebrill 1983. Ni allai fyw mwyach heb y dyn a roddodd gymaint o flynyddoedd o hapusrwydd iddi.

Tony Pristavec, Aberfan

CHWITH: 'COGYDD Y FYDDIN BRYDEINIG',
NAPOLI 1946

DE: FERDINAND AC EDNA MAY PRISTAVEC

LEFT: 'CHEF TO THE BRITISH ARMY',
NAPLES 1946

RIGHT: FERDINAND AND EDNA MAY PRISTAVEC

*Her face was almost
childlike in its lack of wrinkles
and it was wet with tears.
Their silent embrace seemed to
last for ever*

Our first visit to Slovenia was in July 1968. When our car pulled up in the courtyard of the family home, everyone stared in disbelief that he had returned. No one moved and no one touched him because they knew that they needed to wait for his mother to emerge from the house and embrace him first. A tiny figure, simply dressed in dark peasant clothing, wearing an apron and a headscarf. Her sixty-eight year-old face was almost childlike in its lack of wrinkles and it was wet with tears. Their silent embrace seemed to last for ever. In the two weeks we were there, she rarely let go of my father's hand. For too long she had thought that he was dead, along with her husband and two other sons that were the victims of a cruel war.

I remember my father as a quiet man, slow to interrupt and with a soft voice. My mother usually looked after discipline but if she said 'I'll tell your father' we knew we were in trouble. He was strict but not tough, a highly devout man who would eat warm milk and bread on Good Friday, never deliberately missed Sunday Mass and who enjoyed socialising with his Slovenian friends. My father suffered from pneumoconiosis for almost twenty years, living out the last five dependent on an oxygen cylinder. He died on 29 August 1978. He is buried with his wife, Edna May, who died on 17 April 1983, no longer able to live without the man who gave her so many years of happiness.

Tony Pristavec, Aberfan



Blue Scar

GANWYD FY NHAD ANTHONI ('TONY') GERHARD Demmel ar 26 Awst 1923 yn Dabrowka Mala, Katowice, gwlad Pwyl. Nid enw Pwylaidd yw Demmel; rwy'n credu efallai ei fod yn tarddu o'r Almaen. Cafodd fy nhad-cu waith gyda rheilffyrdd gwlad Pwyl fel gorsaf-feistr mewn lle o'r enw Lonschnik, i'r gorllewin o Katowice. Bu'r teulu'n byw yn yr orsaf am sawl blwyddyn. Yng nghanol ei arddegau enillodd fy nhad ysgoloriaeth gyda rheilffyrdd gwlad Pwyl i astudio peirianeg mewn coleg technegol, ond newidiodd ei fywyd yn ddramatig pan gychwynnodd y rhyfel.

*Byddai'n dweud sut y byddai'r
brwydro'n peidio am ddyddiau
er mwyn i'r chwyfedig a'r meirw
gael eu casglu, rhywbeth nad
yw'n cael ei grybwyll yn aml yn
y llyfrau hanes*

Ni wnaeth erioed sôn am beth yn union ddigwyddodd pan ddechreuodd y rhyfel, ar wahân i ddweud bod e a nifer o'i ffrindiau 'wedi diflannu', ond rwy'n credu ei fod wedi ei garcharu yn yr Undeb Sofietaidd nes iddo gael ei ryddhau i ymuno â Byddin Pwyl Rydd (Ail Gorfflu Gwlad Pwyl), a ffurfiwyd gan y Cadfridog Wladislaw Anders, a ymunodd â'r Cynghreiriaid yn yr Eidal wedi mynd drwy ogledd Affrica. Wrth siarad am yr ymgyrch yn yr Eidal, roedd dad yn tueddu i sôn am bethau ysgafn fel gwneud cymysgedd llethol o bwnsh gyda joch o Grappa. Byddai'n dweud sut y byddai'r brwydro'n peidio am ddyddiau er mwyn i'r clwyfedig a'r meirw gael eu casglu, rhywbeth nad yw'n cael ei grybwyll yn aml yn y llyfrau hanes. Roedd yn bresennol yn ystod y frwydr am Monte Cassino, ond eto ychydig a ddywedodd ar wahân i'r ffaith na ddylai'r fynachlog fod wedi cael ei dinistrio.

Ar ôl iddo gael gadael y fyddin, symudodd i Abergwynfi yng Nghwm Afan. Cafodd lety gyda



Blue Scar

MY FATHER ANTHONI ('TONY') GERHARD DEMMEL was born on 26 August 1923 in Dabrowka Mala, Katowice, Poland. The name Demmel isn't Polish; I think it may be of German origin. My grandfather found work with the Polish railways as a stationmaster in a place called Lonschnik, west of Katowice. The family lived on the station for a number of years. In his mid-teens my father won a scholarship with the Polish railways to study engineering in technical college, however his life would change dramatically when war broke out.

*He would mention how battles
would cease for days in order
for the wounded and dead to be
collected, something seldom
stated in history books*

He never mentioned exactly what happened when the war started, apart from saying that he and a number of mates 'just disappeared' but I believe that he must have been interned in the Soviet Union until being released to join the Free Polish Army (2nd Polish Corps), formed by General Wladislaw Anders, which joined the Allies in Italy via north Africa. My father did speak about the Italian campaign although it tended to be about light-hearted events such as making a lethal concoction of punch laced with Grappa. He would mention how battles would cease for days in order for the wounded and dead to be collected, something seldom stated in history books. He was present during the battle for Monte Cassino, again saying little apart from the fact that he believed that the monastery should never have been destroyed.

After being demobbed he moved to Abergwynfi in the Afan Valley. He found lodgings with a family named Hodges from Waun Street, Abergwynfi, who had a number of sons around his age and was treated as one of their own. He worked in the Ocean Colliery for a number of years. During this time he met my mother who worked in



theulu o'r enw Hodges yn Waun Street, Abergwynfi, oedd â nifer o feibion tua'r un oed ag ef ac fe gafodd ei drin fel un ohonyn nhw. Gweithiodd yng Nglofa Ocean am nifer o flynyddoedd. Yn ystod yr amser hwn cyfarfu â mam, oedd yn gweithio yn 'Conti's', caffi Eidalaidd yn Station Road, Port Talbot, tra ei fod yn cael amser o'r lofa ar gyflog i fod yn ecsdra yn y ffilm Blue Scar (er nad oes golwg ohono yn y ffilm!). Ar ôl priodi â mam symudodd i Wolverhampton i weithio yn ffatri dears Goodyear. Roedd yr arian yn dda ond roedd e'n gweld eisiau'r cyfeillgarwch a brofodd wrth weithio yn y pwll glo, a chan fod hiraeth ar mam hefyd, dychwelodd y ddau i dde Cymru. Ar ôl dychwelyd cafodd waith yn hen waith dur Port Talbot ('Top Steel' fel y'i gelwid) cyn cael ei drosglwyddo i Waith Abaty Margam (oedd newydd ei adeiladu), yn gweithio yn y felin boeth nes iddo ymddeol ym 1980.

Rydw i wedi bod i wlad Pwyl sawl gwaith ers 1989, ar wyliau ac i ymweld â pherthnasau. Ar sawl achlysur cynigiais fynd â dad, ond wnâi e ddim dychwelyd gan ddweud ei fod yn lle gwahanol i'r un a adawodd e. Rwy'n credu byddai'r profiad wedi bod yn rhy emosïynol iddo, gan fod ei dad a'i fam wedi marw ddechrau'r 1980au.

John Demmel, Port Talbot

**CHWITH: MILWYR
PWYLAIDD Y TU
ALLAN I 'HOTEL
SZEREGOWYCH',
YR EIDAL, 1944
(MAE ANTHONI
YN Y CANOL)
UCHOD: ANTHONI
DEMMEL,
AWST 2005**

**LEFT: POLISH
SOLDIERS SITTING
OUTSIDE 'HOTEL
SZEREGOWYCH',
ITALY, 1944
(ANTHONI IN
MIDDLE)
ABOVE: ANTHONI
DEMMEL,
AUGUST 2005**

'Conti's', an Italian café in Station Road, Port Talbot, while having paid time off from the colliery to be an extra in the film Blue Scar (he never actually appeared in it though!). After marrying my mother he moved to Wolverhampton to work in the Goodyear tyre factory. The money was good but he missed the friendship experienced working in the coal mine and, with my mother being homesick, returned to south Wales. On return he found employment in the old Port Talbot steelworks ('Top Steel' as it was known) before being transferred to the (then newly built) Margam Abbey Works, working in the hot mill as an operative until his retirement in 1980.

I have been to Poland a number of times since 1989, on holiday and to visit relatives. On many occasions I offered to take my father, but he wouldn't return saying that it was a different place to the one he left behind, and I believe that it would have been too emotional an experience, as his mother and father passed away in the early 1980s.

John Demmel, Port Talbot

Roedd y ffas i gyd ar dân!

FE'M GANWYD I DEULU O FFERMWYR YM mhentref Zawadiv yn yr Wcráin, ar 5 Chwefror 1927. Roeddwn i'n dal yn yr ysgol pan ddechreuodd y rhyfel, ond ym mis Mehefin 1942 aed â fi i'r Almaen ar drên wartheg fel llafurwr gorfodol mewn gardd fasnachol. Roedd yn waith caled o saith o'r gloch y bore tan ddeg y nos. Doedd gen i ddim ystafell wely iawn ac roedd yn rhaid i mi gysgu yn yr atig. Ar ôl y rhyfel fe es i wersyll ar gyfer 'Pobl wedi'u Dadleoli'. Yn ddiweddarach, gofynnwyd i ni pa wlad yr hoffem fynd iddi. Doeddwn i ddim eisiau mynd yn ôl i'r Wcráin am nad oeddwn yn hoffi Stalin na'r Comiwnyddion gan fy mod wedi byw dan eu gormes cyn y rhyfel, a beth bynnag, roeddwn i wedi clywed bod pobl oedd wedi mynd yn ôl wedi diflannu! Hyd yn oed wrth ddod yma roedd gen i fap ac roeddwn i'n gwylio i ba ffordd yr oedd ein trên yn mynd gan fod y Rwsiaid yn arfer dargyfeirio trenau i Ddwyrain yr Almaen. Roeddwn i'n arfer gwneud yn siŵr ein bod yn mynd y ffordd iawn! Fe ddes i Brydain a dysgu Saesneg mewn ysgol i fyny yn Sir Efrog a rhoddwyd dewis i mi ble i weithio – fferm neu bwl glo. Er fy mod i'n dod o dras ffermio, doeddwn i ddim yn hoffi ffermio. Roeddwn i wastad wedi bod eisiau gwneud gwaith peiranyddol. Es i wersyll y Ddraenen Wen ger Pontypridd ac yna i Lofa Bedwas. Cwrddais â fy ngwraig Margaret, oedd yn byw drws nesaf i mi pan gefais lety go iawn. Fe briodod ni ym 1951, ac mae gennym ferch a dau ŵyr.

Roedd sŵn ofnadwy fel bod wrth ymyl peiriant jet

Gweithiais ym Medwas gyda ffrind da o'r enw Joe Lisak. Doeddwn i ddim wedi bod yno bythefnos pan ffrwydrodd y lle. Roeddem ni'n gweithio mewn hedin, roedd hi'n boeth iawn – ag awyru gwael. Un diwrnod roeddem ar stop gan fod y tîrfesurwyr wedi dod i wneud y pwyntiau. Eisteddais gyda fy nghefn at y ffas yn eu gwylio. Roedd un ohonyn nhw yn trio tanio'i lamp, rhoddodd gynnig arni unwaith, fe oleuodd ac yna diffodd eto'n syth, rhoddodd gynnig arall arni – diffoddodd, chwythodd i mewn i'r lamp a rhoi cynnig arall arni, ddigwyddodd dim, yna chwythodd ynddi eto, a rhoi cynnig arall arni – yn sydyn reit daeth fflam allan ac aeth yr holl hedin ar dân. Rhoddais fy nwylo dros fy wyneb. Roeddwn i'n gwisgo menig lledr ac arbedais fy wyneb ond allwn i ddim arbed fy nghlustiau a llosgwyd fy nghorff hefyd – llosgiaidau hanner cant y cant. Roedd sŵn ofnadwy fel bod wrth ymyl peiriant jet. Wrth gwrs, roedd yna nwy, tân a

The whole face was on fire!

I WAS BORN IN THE VILLAGE OF ZAWADIV IN THE Ukraine, on 5 February 1927 to a farming family. I was still in school when the war broke out, but in June 1942 I was taken to Germany in a cattle train as a forced labourer in a market garden. It was hard work from seven in the morning till ten in the night, I had no proper bedroom and I had to sleep in the attic. After the war I went to a Displaced Persons' camp. Later we were asked which country we wanted to go to. I didn't want to go back to the Ukraine as I didn't like Stalin or the Communists, having lived under them before the war, in any case I heard that people who had gone back had disappeared! Even coming over here I had a map and was watching which way our train was going because the Russians used to divert the trains into East Germany. I used to make sure we were going the right way! I came to Britain and learned English in a school up in Yorkshire and was given a choice of where to work – a farm or a coal mine. Although I was of farming stock I didn't like farming, I always wanted an engineering job. I went to Hawthorn camp in Pontypridd and ended up in Bedwas Colliery. I met my wife Margaret, who was living next door to me when I got proper lodgings. We married in 1951 and have a daughter and two grandchildren.

There was a terrible noise like being next to a jet engine

I worked at Bedwas with a good friend called Joe Lisak. I hadn't been there a fortnight when it blew up. We were working a heading, it was very hot – poor ventilation. One day we were on stop because the surveyors came to do the point. I sat with my back to the coal face watching them. One of them was trying to light his lamp, he tried once, it would light then go out straight again, he tried it again – went out, he blew in the lamp and tried it again, nothing happened, then he blew it again, and tried again – then suddenly a flame came out and the whole heading went on fire. I put my hands over my face, I had on leather gloves and saved my face but I couldn't save my ears and my body was burned as well – fifty per cent burns. There was a terrible noise like being next to a jet engine. Of course there was gas, fire and fine dust – so the whole face was on fire, but it went out. Everything went dark, I was blind and panicked a bit, and I couldn't see anything. I followed the conveyor out but before I got to the end I saw a light, phew – that was joy, I started fiddling with my cap lamp and it came on. I walked through the face into the roadway and saw that help was coming – a bit late! All my skin was hanging, shirt burnt, bits and pieces. I was

llwch mân – felly roedd yr holl ffas ar dân, ond fe ddiffoddodd. Aeth popeth yn dywyll, roeddwn i'n ddall ac wedi dychryn braidd, ac ni allwn weld dim. Dilynais y cludydd i fynd allan ond cyn i mi ddod i'r pen gwelais olau, diolch byth! Roedd hynny'n llawenydd mawr i mi, dechreuais chwarae gyda fy lamp dalcen a daeth y golau ymlaen. Cerddais drwy'r ffas i'r ffordd a gweld bod cymorth ar gyrraedd – braidd yn hwyr! Roedd fy nghroen i gyd yn hongian, fy nghrys wedi llosgi, popeth yn ddarnau. Aethpwyd â fi i Ysbyty'r Glowyr yng Nghaerffili. Dwi'n cofio eistedd, yn cael fy rhoi mewn rhwymynnau, ac yna mynd mewn ambiwlans i Gas-gwent.

Roedd fy ffrind Joe Lisak yn iawn ond doedd ganddo fe ddim menig ac roedd ei ddwylo wedi llosgi mor ddrwg fel y bu raid iddyn nhw dynnu ei ewinedd i gyd allan. A'r Tîrfesurwydd oedd â'r lamp yn ei ddwylo, roedd ei ddwylo fe'n ofnadwy, wedi llosgi'n ddrwg, ac yn stiff. Roeddwn i mewn ystafell ar fy mhen fy hun â rhwymynnau o 'mhen i'm traed. Arbedwyd fy ngwallt gan fod gen i helmed ar fy mhen, roedd fy nhraed yn iawn gan fod gen i esgidiau gwaith, roedd fy nghoesau wedi llosgi, roedd fy stumog wedi llosgi, roedd hyd yn oed fy mhen ôl wedi llosgi fel na fedrwn eistedd arno a bu raid i mi gael clustog. Beth bynnag, cefais gwpl o lawdriniaethau. Y peth gwaethaf oedd eu bod nhw wedi fy rhoi mewn siaced blastig – mae'r marciau yn dal gen i lle'r oedd y lastig yn cau rhag i'r aer ddod i mewn. Cefais fy mwydo'n dda, ar y dechrau allwn i ddim bwyta cinio iawn gan fod fy ngwefusau wedi crebachu. Roedd raid i mi sugno drwy welltyn. Fe ddes i'n well ac wedyn ces i fwyd da, roedden nhw'n arfer dod yn ôl yn rheolaidd a dweud 'Mwy o bwddin reis?' neu 'Gymerwch chi ragor?' – ltha reit! Bob dydd fe ges i wy a sieri, dim ond er mwyn fy nghryfhau, wn i ddim faint o bwysau roeddwn wedi ei golli, doedd gen i ddim nerth, allwn i ddim codi cwpan, ond fe ddes i drwyddi.

Pan ddes i adref, agorais i ddrws y cwt glo a gweld y glo, a chefais fy nharo gan y sglein – dychrynlyd! Felly es i ddim byth nôl (i'r ffas) ond fe es i weithio i efail y gof yn lle hynny, yn weldio – y cyfan lot. Dyna beth oeddwn i am ei wneud ac arhosais i yno nes i mi ymddeol. Roeddwn i'n arfer gweithio yn y siafft yn edrych ar ôl y pibelli, y ffrwynau a'r rhaffau – doeddwn i ddim yn hoff o waith siafft ond yn y diwedd, fe es i i lawr i waelod y pwll hyd yn oed. Doeddwn i ddim yn fodlon mynd ymhellach i mewn na hynny cofiwch. Pan gaeodd y pwll llosgais i raff y pwll – roedd y caets ar blatfform – ar hytrawstiau. Felly fe dorrais i'r rhaff a dyna ni – dim mwy o Bedwas!

Theodor Palczykewycz, Bedwas

TOP: THEODOR, ELWANGEN, 1947
GWAELOD: THEODOR WRTH ARWYDDLUN YR WCRÁIN, YNG NGWERSYLL Y DDRAENEN WEN, PONTYPRIDD



TOP: THEODOR, ELWANGEN, 1947
BOTTOM: THEODOR BY UKRAINIAN EMBLEM IN HAWTHORN CAMP, PONTYPRIDD

taken to Caerphilly Miners (Hospital). I remember sitting, being bandaged up, then back in an ambulance to Chepstow.

My friend, Joe Lisak, was OK but he didn't have gloves and all his hands were burnt so badly they had to pull all his nails out. The Surveyor who had the lamp in his hands, his hands were terrible, badly burnt, they were stiff. I was in a room on my own. They bandaged me up from the bottom to the top. I saved my hair because I had my helmet on, my feet were all right because I had my boots on, my legs were burnt, my stomach was burnt, even my behind was burnt so I couldn't sit on it and had to have a cushion. Anyway, I had a couple of operations. The worst was that they put me in a plastic jacket – I've still got the marks where the elastic was around it to stop the air getting in. They fed me well, at first I couldn't eat a proper dinner because my lips had shrunk, I had to suck with a straw. Got better so then I had good grub, they used to come back regular and say 'You want more rice pudding?' or 'Second helpings?' – Yes! Every day I had egg and sherry, just to build me up, I don't know how much weight I had lost, no strength, I couldn't pick a mug up, terrible, but I came through.

When I came home I opened the coal house door and saw the coal, the shining hit me – frightening! So I didn't go back (on the coal face) but went to work in the blacksmith shop instead, welding – everything. That's what I wanted and stayed there until I retired. I used to work in the shaft looking after the pipes, bridles and ropes – I didn't like shaft work but in the end I even went down to pit bottom but I wouldn't go any further in from there. When the pit closed I burnt the pit rope – the cage was on a platform – on girders. So I cut the rope and that was that – no more Bedwas!

Theodor Palczykewycz, Bedwas

Edrychwch - dwi'n dal yma!

FE'M GANWYDYN KORSUN-SCHEVCHENKIVSKYI Raion Cherkaska Oblast, yr Wcráin ar 26 Rhagfyr 1926. Cefais fy magu gan mam-gu a tad-cu tan 1933. Roedd Stalin eisiau troi'r Wcrainiaid yn Gomiwnyddion. Wrth gwrs, doedden nhw ddim yn fodlon derbyn hyn felly fe roddodd bwysau arnom a chymryd pob briwsionyn o fara oddi arnom. Roedd fy nhad yn byw yn Rwsia ei hun bryd hynny y tu allan i Voroshilovgrad. Pan welodd beth oedd yn digwydd daeth yn ei ôl i'r Wcráin a mynd â fi gydag ef i Rwsia i fyw gydag e a mam, fy mrawd a fy chwaer. Ymwelodd fy mrawd Konstantine a minnau â chartref mam-gu a tad-cu ar 15 Mehefin 1941. Dechreuodd y rhyfel rhwng yr Almaen a Rwsia ar 21 Mehefin 1941 felly ni chawsom fynd nôl adref. Ym mis Mai 1942 daeth yr Almaenwyr a mynd â fi, ynghyd â'r holl fechgyn a merched eraill yn y pentref, ar y trên i'r Almaen. Ces fy ngorfodi i fynd i weithio fel llafurwr gorfodol ar fferm ym mhentref Zelendorf, ger Soltau, Berlin. Enw'r ffermwr oedd Theodore Glasser. Roeddwn i'n lwcus i gael fy anfon i fferm – os ydych chi'n llwgu ar fferm mae rhywbeth yn bod arnoch chi! Roedd wyth buwch odro a 360 o ieir. Roedd rhaid i mi godi i'w bwydo, carthu, godro'r gwartheg a chasglu'r wyau. Roedd gwraig y fferm yn bladres fawr, ro'n i'n arfer gorfod mynd â'r wyau mewn basged iddi hi eu pwyso. Byddwn yn arfer ei gwyllo yn y gegin a phan na fyddai hi'n edrych byddwn yn arfer cymryd rhai o'r wyau i mi fy hun. Os oeddwn i wedi bod yn chwarae o gwmpas roedd hi'n arfer dweud '*Dim cinio i ti heddiw*' ond roeddwn i'n arfer meddwl '*Stwffia dy ginio*' – ro'n i eisoes wedi cael chwe wy.

Pan gyrhaeddodd y Rwsiaid Saltau, ffodd y ffermwr a'i deulu gan ddweud wrthyf am edrych ar ôl y fferm. Ond yn y pendraw, cyrhaeddais i'r gwersyll i 'Bobl wedi'u Dadleoli' yn Branderburg. Gwersyll dros dro oedd hwn yn llawn pobl o amrywiol genhedloedd. Fe es i am brawf sgrinio gwleidyddol a dywedais wrth y ddynes yno fy mod o'r Wcráin. Cynghorodd hi fi i ddweud mai un o wlad Pwyl oeddwn i neu cawn fy ngyrru i Rwsia. Roeddwn i'n gwybod mai trwbl fyddai'n fy nisgwyl i yno gan fod yr uchelseinyddion yn y gwersyll yn dweud '*Ie, chi'r bastards o'r Wcráin, dim ond un peth sy'n eich aros chi - bwled*'. Gan mai 'Pwyliaid' oeddwn i bellach, anfonwyd fi i'r sector gorllewinol. Ym mis Ionawr 1948 cefais y dewis o fynd i sawl gwlad wahanol. Ym Mhrydain



**UCHOD: LLUN
ADNABOD WASYL
FEL LLAFURWR
CAETH, 1941
DE: WASYL
(CANOL) EI
FRAWD A'I
CHWAER
WYTHNOS CYN
DECHRAU'R
RHYFEL**

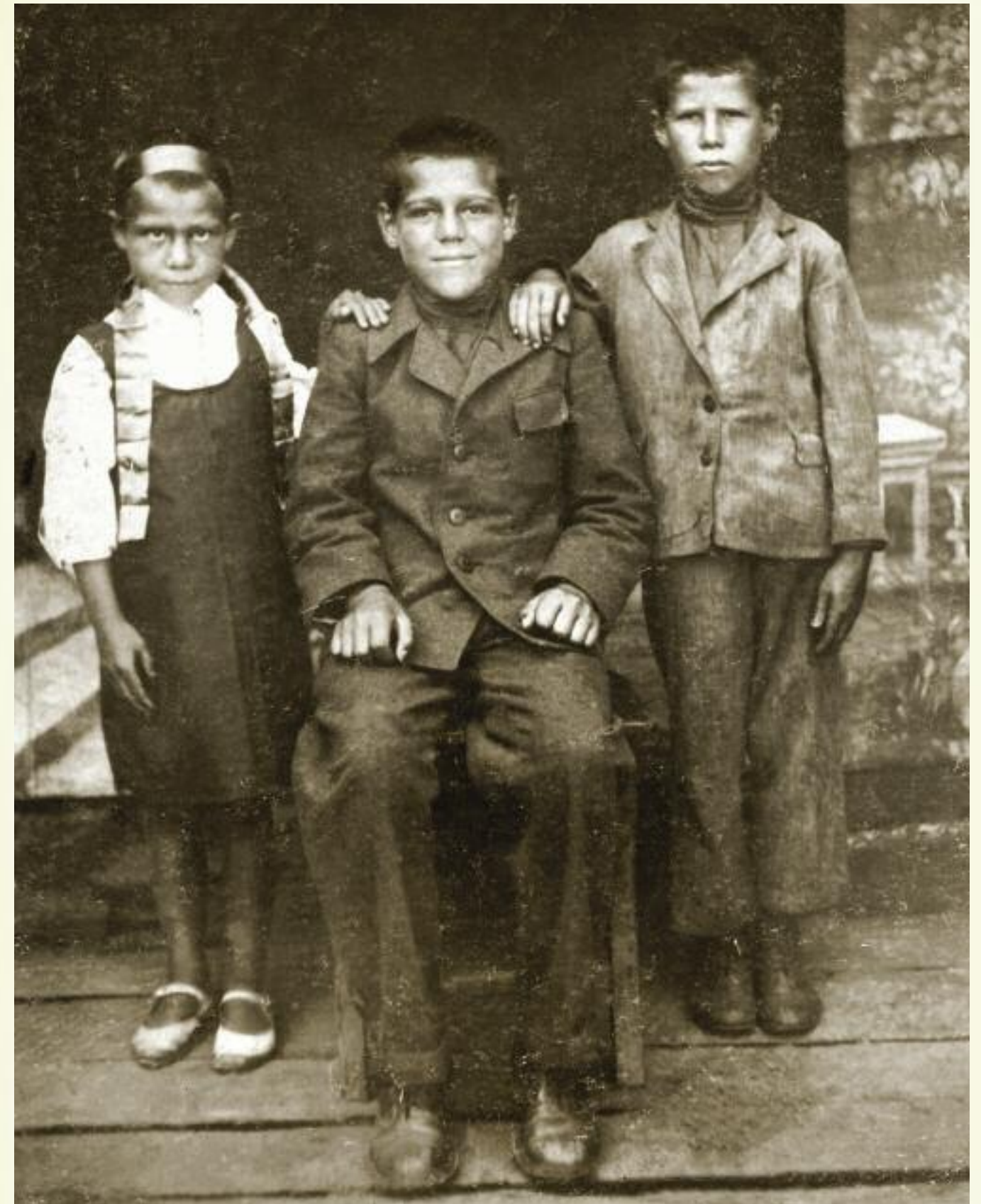
**ABOVE: IDENTITY
PHOTOGRAPH OF
WASYL AS A SLAVE
LABOURER, 1941
RIGHT: WASYL
(CENTRE) AND HIS
BROTHER AND
SISTER A WEEK
BEFORE THE WAR
BROKE OUT**

Look - I am still here!

I WAS BORN IN KORSUN-SCHEVCHENKIVSKYI Raion Cherkaska Oblast, Ukraine on 26 December 1926. I was brought up by grandparents until 1933. Stalin wanted to convert the Ukrainians into Communists. Of course they wouldn't accept this so he put pressure on and took every crumb of bread from us. My father was living in Russia itself at that time outside Voroshilovgrad. When he found out what was happening he came back to the Ukraine and took me to Russia to live with him and my mother, brother and sister. My brother, Konstantine and I visited my grandparent's home on 15 June 1941. War broke out between Germany and Russia on 21 June 1941 so we couldn't go back home. In May 1942 German troops came and took me, along with all the other boys and girls in the village, by train to Germany. I was then sent to work as forced labour on a farm in the village of Zelendorf, near Soltau, Berlin. The farmer's name was Theodore Glasser. I was lucky to be sent to a farm – if you starve on a farm there's something wrong with you! There were eight 'milkers' (cows) and 360 chickens. I had to get up feed them, clean them out, milk the cows and collect the eggs. The farmer's wife was a big bugger, I used to have to take the eggs in a basket for her to weigh. I used to watch her in the kitchen and when she wasn't looking I used to take some of the eggs for myself. If I had been messing about she used to say '*No dinner for you today*' but I used to think '*Stick your dinner up your arse*' – I had already had six eggs!

When the Russians reached Soltau the farmer and his family fled telling me to look after the farm. I ended up in a Displaced Persons' camp in Brandenburg. It was a makeshift camp full of all nationalities. I went for political screening and told the lady there I was from the Ukraine. She advised me to say that I was Polish or I would be sent to Russia. We knew that we would be in trouble there as the loudspeakers in the camp used to say '*Yes you Ukrainian bastards, only one thing waiting for you – a bullet*'. Because I was now 'Polish', I was sent to the western sector. In January 1948 I was given the choice of going to several different countries. In Britain we were given the choice of working on a farm, in a brick works or in coal mining. I chose coal mining because there was a chance of schooling. After training at Oakdale, I chose to work at Llanharan Colliery. I lived in the Pencoed Miners' Hostel. I was the youngest in the hostel and I was used as an interpreter as I liked languages and picked them up quickly. There used to be a small cinema in

Ym mis Mai 1942 daeth yr Almaenwyr a mynd â fi, ynghyd â'r holl fechgyn a merched eraill yn y pentref, ar y trên i'r Almaen



In May 1942 German troops came and took me, along with all the other boys and girls in the village, by train to Germany

rhoddwyd y dewis i ni weithio ar fferm, mewn gwaith brics neu mewn pwll glo. Dewisais y pwll glo gan fod cyfle i gael addysg. Ar ôl hyfforddi yn Oakdale, dewisais weithio yng Nglofa Llanharan. Roeddwn i'n byw yn Hostel Glowyr Pen-coed. Fi oedd yr ifancaf yn yr hostel ac roedd y bois yn defnyddio fi fel cyfieithydd gan fy mod yn hoff o ieithoedd ac yn eu dysgu'n gyflym. Roedd sinema fechan yn arfer bod ym Mhen-coed ac roedd nos lau bob amser yn 'noson pictiwr' i ni. Roeddwn i'n arfer eistedd y tu ôl i res o ferched Pen-coed a daeth yn ohonyn nhw'n wraig i mi. Priodais ag Eirwen ym 1956 ac mae gennym ferch o'r enw Ann. Roedd hi'n waith caled dan ddaear ond roedd fy mhartneriaid yn fois da. Fe gaeon nhw bwl Llanharan ym 1962 a gallwn i fod wedi trosglwyddo i lofa arall ond fe ges i waith fel turniwr yn ffatri ddodrefn Christie Tyler.

*Allen ni ddweud dim
- roedden ni'n rhy
brysur yn crio a
chusanu*

Pan gipiwyd fi gan yr Almaenwyr, wyddai fy rhieni ddim i ble roeddwn i. Collais gysylltiad â 'mrawd a chwaer (Halia) nes i mi ofyn am gymorth Y Groes Goch, a lwyddodd i ddod o hyd iddyn nhw hanner cant a chwech o flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach. Wyddwn i ddim beth oedd wedi digwydd i fy nheulu tan hynny, bod mam a dad wedi marw. Digwyddodd yr aduniad ar raglen *Surprise! Surprise!* Cilla Black, ym mis Chwefror 1997. Allen ni ddweud dim – roedden ni'n rhy brysur yn crio a chusanu – fe dorrodd fy sbectol yn y cynnwrf! Roedden nhw'n meddwl fy mod i wedi marw; mae fy enw ar gofeb y dref hyd yn oed fel un a laddwyd yn y rhyfel. Hoffwn fynd yn ôl, dileu'r enw a dweud: 'Edrychwch – dwi'n dal yma!'

Wasył ('Bill') Welykyi, Pen-coed



TOP: TYSTYSGRIF HYFFORDDI, 1948;
GWAELOD: WASYL YN HOSTEL
PEN-COED, TUA 1948

TOP: TRAINING CERTIFICATE, 1948;
BOTTOM: WASYL AT PENCOED
HOSTEL, ABOUT 1948

Pencoed and Thursday night was always 'picture night' for us. I used to sit behind a row of Pencoed girls and one of them became my wife. I married Eirwen in 1956 and have a daughter Ann. It was hard graft underground but my butties were good boys to work with. They closed Llanharan in 1962 and I could have transferred to another colliery but instead I found a job as a turner in Christie Tyler's furniture factory.

*We couldn't say
anything - we were
crying and kissing
too much*

When the Germans took me, my parents didn't know where I had gone. I also lost touch with my brother and sister (Halia) until I asked for help from the Red Cross who were able to find them fifty-six years later. I didn't know what had happened to my family up to then, that my mother and father had died. The re-union actually took place on the Cilla Black show *Surprise! Surprise!*, in February 1997. We couldn't say anything – we were crying and kissing too much – I even broke my glasses in the excitement! They had thought that I was dead; my name is even on the town cenotaph as being killed during the war. I would like to go back, cross it out and say: 'Look – I am still here!'

Wasył ('Bill') Welykyi, Pencoed



*O Transylfania
i Tesco*

FE'M GANWYD YN NHRANSYLFANIA AR 10 Gorffennaf 1939. Ar ôl y rhyfel es i fyw i Bwdapest a mynd yn gigydd. Yn ystod chwyldro 1956 dihangais i Awstria ynghyd â 120,000 o Hwngariaid eraill. Fel 'Person wedi'i Ddadleoli' cynigiwyd dechrau newydd i mi mewn gwledydd eraill, dewisais naill ai Ffrainc neu America. Yn lle hynny cynigiwyd gwaith i mi gyda'r NCB. Wyddwn i ddim am Gymru bryd hynny. Roedd tua naw deg pump ohonom a ddaeth yr un pryd, anfonwyd hanner ohonom i'r hostel yn Hirwaun, a'r hanner arall i'r Ddraenen Wen ger Pontypridd.

Fe ddes i i'r Ddraenen Wen, lle bûm yn byw tan tua 1959, a chefais chwe wythnos o hyfforddiant yng Nghanolfan Hyfforddi Bargoed. Ddes i weithio yng Nglofa'r Cwm ym 1959. Yn anffodus, gwrthododd Undeb Cenedlaethol y Glowyr i unrhyw un o'r 'gweithwyr estron' aros yn y pyllau glo. Felly bu rhaid i mi chwilio am waith mewn ffatri leol oedd yn eiddo i Hwngariad. Arhosais

*From Transylvania
to Tesco*

I WAS BORN IN TRANSYLVANIA ON 10 JULY 1939. After the war I went to live in Budapest where I became a butcher. During the revolution of 1956 I escaped to Austria along with 120,000 other Hungarians. As a Displaced Person I was offered a new start in other countries, I chose either France or America. Instead I was offered work with the NCB. I didn't know anything about Wales then. There were about ninety-five of us who came at that time, half of us were sent to the hostel in Hirwaun, the other half to Hawthorn near Pontypridd.

**UCHOD:
CONTRACTWYR
CEMENTATION
YNG NGLOFA
CREUNANT, TUA
1976. THIAMER
YW'R AIL O'R
CHWITH YN Y
RHES FLAEN.**

**ABOVE:
CEMENTATION
CONTRACTORS AT
CRYNANT
COLLIERY, ABOUT
1976. THIAMER IS
SECOND FROM
LEFT IN FRONT
ROW.**

I came to Hawthorn, where I lived until about 1959, and received six weeks initial coal mining training at Bargoed Training Centre. I came to work in Cwm Colliery in 1959. Unfortunately the National Union of Mineworkers refused to let any of us 'foreign workers' stop in the pits. So I had to find work in a local factory which was owned by a Hungarian. I stayed there for a short time then got work in another factory called Chrome Leather. By the 1970s

THIAMER ('TOMMY') FULOP

yno am gyfnod byr ac yna cefais waith mewn ffatri arall o'r enw Chrome Leather. Erbyn y 1970au llwyddais i fynd yn ôl i'r gwaith glo fel contractwr. O 1975 i 1977 bûm yn yr Iwerddon yn torri siafft ar gyfer Glofa Mogul yn Tipperary ar ran cwmni mwynloddio o Ganada. Pan orfennais yno cefais waith gyda'r Cementation Company ac wedyn gweithiais i Thyssen UK hefyd. Gweithiais yng Nglofa'r Creunant ym 1978 yn torri'r drifft ac yna trosglwyddais i Lofa Oakdale lle'r arhosais tan gaeodd y pwll. Treuliais rywfaint o amser hefyd yng Nglofa Ynysowen yn trwsio'r siafft – roeddwn i'n ennill tua £1,000 yr wythnos am wneud hynny! Ar ôl i mi orffen yn y pyllau glo es i i weithio i Tesco yn gyrru faniau.

Rhaid i mi ddweud fy mod i wedi gweld Cymru'n lle rhyfedd braidd ar y dechrau ond, ar wahân i'r NUM, croesawodd y bobl leol ni – bues i'n chwarae pêl-droed dros Rydfelin a Ffynnon Taf. Ym 1961 priodais â Prudence ('Pru') Kedward, yr oeddwn wedi cwrdd â hi pan ddes i yma gyntaf. Fel bachgen ifanc ni fyddwn wedi gallu dychmygu dod yn löwr Cymreig ond dydw i erioed wedi difaru gwneud hynny.

Thiamer ('Tommy') Fulop, Pentre'r Eglwys

I managed to get back into coal mining as a contractor. From 1975 to 1977 I went to Ireland to sink a shaft for the Mogul Mine in Tipperary for a Canadian mining company. When I finished there I got work with the Cementation Company and later worked for Thyssen UK as well. I worked at Crynant Colliery in 1978 driving the drift, and then transferred to Oakdale Colliery where I remained until the pit closed. I also spent some time in Merthyr Vale Colliery repairing the shaft – I was earning about £1,000 a week for doing that! After I finished in the pits I ended up working for Tesco driving home delivery vans.

I must say that I found Wales a bit strange at first but, apart from the NUM, the locals welcomed us – I played football for Rhydfelin and Taffs Well. In 1961 I married Prudence ('Pru') Kedward, who I met when I came here first. As a youngster I would never have imagined becoming a Welsh miner but I have never regretted it.

Thiamer ('Tommy') Fulop, Church Village

ARNO WOLFF

Dros driddeg mlynedd yn Niwydiant Glo Cymru

GANWYD FI YN NWYRAIN PRWSIA YM 1931, LLE bûm yn byw tan 1944, pan fu rhaid i ni ffoi rhag Byddin Rwsia. Bu farw fy nhad mewn brwydr ar flaen y gad yn Rwsia. Cafodd fy mam a fi gartref newydd yn Neumunster, nepell o Hambwrg. Ar ôl tair blynedd yn gweithio i Lofa Concordia yn Oberhausen, darllenais fod Schachtbau Thyssen yn edrych am lowyr i weithio siafft yng Nghymru. Fe ddes i Gymru i weithio yng Nghynheidre ym mis Ionawr 1955. Roedd yn gryn ysgytwad diwylliannol. Wyddai braidd neb ohonom fod gwlad o'r enw Cymru na'r iaith Gymraeg yn bod.

Almaenwyr oeddem ni i gyd yn gweithio yn y siafftiau i gychwyn; roedd yn waith caled dan amodau gwlyb. Pe baech chi'n sythu'ch cefn ychydig o weithiau byddai'r

My thirty-three years in the Welsh Coal Industry

I WAS BORN IN 1931 IN EAST PRUSSIA, WHERE I lived until 1944, when we had to flee the advancing Russian Army. My dad had died in action on the Russian front. My mother and I found a new home in Neumunster, not far from Hamburg. After three years, working at Concordia Mine in Oberhausen, I read that Schachtbau Thyssen was looking for miners to work as shaft sinkers in Wales. I came to Wales to work at Cynheidre in January 1955. It was quite a culture shock. Hardly anyone of us knew that there was a country called Wales or that there was the Welsh language.

Initially we were all Germans working in the shafts; it was hard work in very wet conditions. If you straightened your back a few times you were asked if you wanted a ticket to

ARNO WOLFF



goruchwylwyr yn gofyn a oeddech chi am gael tocyn i fynd nôl i'r Almaen. Prin y cawsom ni benwythnos rhydd, roedd yn saith niwrnod o waith yr wythnos, ei hoffi neu beidio. Yn raddol, ymunodd glowyr lleol â ni – wedi eu denu'n bennaf gan y cyflogau da yr oedd Thyssen's yn eu talu. Arhosodd y rhan fwyaf o'n cydweithwyr newydd, ond dewisodd rhai adael, rhaid i mi ddweud, am eu bod yn gweld y gwaith yn rhy galed. Roedden ni'n cyd-dynnu'n dda â'r Cymry ac o dipyn i beth daethom i ddysgu am eu ffordd o fyw ac fe'n gwahoddwyd i'w cartrefi. Gwnaethon ni ffrindiau newydd a pharodd y cyfeillgarwch am flynyddoedd. Roeddwn i'n ffodus fy mod yn gallu siarad rhywfaint o Saesneg gan i mi ddysgu rhywfaint yn yr ysgol. Roedd hyn yn ei gwneud yn haws i mi dynnu sgwrs gyda merched lleol, ac fe wnes hyn gyda llwyddiant amrywiol. Peth arall oedd yn ddieithr i ni oedd oriau agor y tafarndai. Roedd pob dim yn cau am 10 o'r gloch a doedd dim byd ar agor o gwbl ar y Sul. Cymerodd amser i ni arfer â hyn. Roedd ein llety mewn cytiau Nissan yn sylfaenol iawn. Pedwar dyn mewn dau fync dwbl ym mhob ystafell fechan, gyda braidd digon o le i bedair wardrob, bwrdd a dwy gadair. Roedd hiraeth yn drech na rhai ac fe adawon nhw, ond arhosodd cnewyllyn ohonom ac ymgartrefu yma.

Unwaith yr oedd y siafftiau wedi eu hagor, enillodd y cwmni contractau'n torri hedins caled ac yn agor ffasys glo. Ym 1956 dechreuais weithio yn dyfnhau'r siafftiau yng Nglofa Brynlliwr ger

go back to Germany. We hardly had a weekend off, it was seven days a week, like it or lump it. Gradually we were joined by local miners who were mainly attracted by the good wages that Thyssen's paid. The majority of our new work-mates stayed, but a few, I must say, opted out because they found the going too hard. We got on very well with the Welsh boys and slowly learned about their way of life and were asked to their homes. Friendships were formed that lasted for years. I was fortunate that I spoke some English which I had been taught in school. This made it much easier for me to chat up the local girls, which I did with varying degrees of success. Another thing we found very strange was the opening hours of the pubs. At 10 pm everything closed and on a Sunday nothing was open at all. That took some getting used to. Our accommodation in Nissan Huts was very basic indeed. Four men in two double bunks to a small room, with just enough room for four wardrobes, a table and two chairs. Some were overcome by homesickness and left, but the hard core of us stayed and settled down.

UCHOD:
'SIAFTWYR A
BOSYS' THYSSEN,
1960au. MAE
ARNO WOLFF AR
Y CHWITH
PELLAF YN Y
CEFN

ABOVE: THYSSEN
'SHAFTSINKERS
AND BOSSES',
1960s. ARNO
WOLFF IS ON
THE FAR LEFT AT
THE BACK

Once the shafts were sunk the company won contracts driving hard headings and opening coalfaces. In 1956 I started work deepening the shafts at Brynlliwr Colliery near Gorseinon and I found myself lodgings in the village with old Mrs Powell. She was a real character. There was always a Woodbine dangling from the corner of her mouth and she was not too concerned if some of the ash ended up in the frying pan. On the first day in my lodgings I came back from

Gorseinon a chefais lety yn y pentref gyda'r hen Mrs Powell. Am gymeriad! Roedd Woodbine bob amser yn hongian o gornel ei cheg a doedd hi'n poeni fawr os oedd rhywfaint o'r llwch yn syrthio i'r badell ffrio. Ar fy niwrnod cyntaf yn y llety fe ddes adref o'r gwaith ac fe sylodd arnaf a dweud 'Ro'n i'n meddwl dy fod ti'n gweithio yn y pwll, pam wyt ti mor lân? Roedd fy niweddar ŵr yn dod adre'n ddu bob dydd.' Esboniais fod gennym gawodydd yn y lofa. Sylwais wedyn ei bod wedi llenwi bath tun â dŵr poeth o flaen y tân i mi gael ymolchi! O'r adeg honno, dechreuais ymdoddi i'r ffordd Gymreig. Cefais groeso mawr yn y clwb lleol (dynion yn unig!) a lleoedd eraill. Yn raddol ehangodd Thyssen i weithio yng Nghwm Rhondda. Roeddwn i'n gweld bywyd yno'n wahanol i'r hyn yr oedd yng Nghynheidre. Roedden ni'n byw mewn carafannau ar dir y lofa. Anaml iawn yr oedd unrhyw dynnu'n groes rhwng bechgyn yr NCB a ni.

Felly yr aeth y blynyddoedd heibio, tan i mi gwrdd â Maureen, y ferch a ddeuai'n wraig i mi, ym 1962. Fe briodod ni ym mis Tachwedd 1963. Yn haf 1964 symudon ni i'n cartref newydd yn Llangennech, a ganwyd ein mab cyntaf, Mark, y flwyddyn wedyn. Ym 1968 ganwyd Darren, ein hail fab. Rydym yn dal i fod gyda'n gilydd ac yn hapus hyd heddiw. Yn y cyfamser, yn y gwaith dringais y llwybr serth i ddod yn Steiger (is-fformon). Doedd rhai o fy nghydweithwyr ddim am fod yn rhan o ddigwyddiadau lleol a dim ond yn troi ymysg ei gilydd – doeddwn i ddim yn un o'r rheiny! Rhaid i mi gyfaddef serch hynny i mi gymryd rhan yn nathliad blynyddol y carnifal Almaenaidd ym mis Chwefror/Mawrth bob blwyddyn yn ein clwb yng Nghynheidre. Roedd hi'n dipyn o sioe, pawb yn gwisgo gwisg ffansi ac yn mwynhau. Wrth i fy nau fab dyfu a dechrau chwarae rygbi, roeddwn yn cefnogi'r clwb lleol, a'r Sgarlets wrth gwrs, ac yn teithio i Gaerdydd yn aml i wylïo'r gemau rhyngwladol.

Trosglwyddais i'r NCB fel glöwr ym 1981, ond anfonodd y Rheolwr fi i Goleg Rhydaman, a llwyddais i gwblhau hyfforddiant fel Dirprwy. Fel y dywedodd un Arolygydd Pyllau, 'roedd y potsiwr wedi troi'n giper'. Canfuwyd fy mod yn dioddef o glefyd y llwch ac es i weithio yn siafft 3 a 4 yng Nghynheidre. Gorffennais weithio ym 1988 oherwydd iechyd gwael. Gallaf ddweud yn onest fy mod yn ystyried fy hun yn fwy o Gymro nac Almaenwr. Yr unig dro dwi'n teimlo fel Almaenwr yw pan fo'r tîm pêl-droed yn chwarae; fel arall rwy'n gefnogwr brwd o'n tîm rygbi ni. Mae'r hanner cant a dwy o flynyddoedd yng Nghymru wedi bod yn anodd weithiau, ond gan amlaf maent wedi bod yn flynyddoedd hapus ac ni fyddwn wedi dymuno colli'r blynyddoedd hynny.

Arno Wolff, Llangennech

work and she stared at me and said 'I thought you worked in the mine, why are you so clean? My late husband always came home black'. I explained to her that we had showers at the colliery. Then I noticed that she had filled a tin bath with hot water in front of the fire for me to have a wash! From then on my integration into the Welsh way of life really began. I was made very welcome at the local club (men only!) and at other places. Gradually Thyssen expanded to work in the Rhondda Valley. I found life different there to Cynheidre. We lived in caravans directly situated on the colliery grounds. There was hardly ever any disharmony between the NCB boys and us.

So the years went by, until in 1962 I met my future wife, Maureen, and in November 1963 we got married. In the summer of 1964 we moved into our new home in Llangennech, the following year our first son Mark was born, followed in 1968 by our second son Darren. We are still happily married to this day. In the meantime at work I climbed up the greasy pole to become a Steiger (charge hand). A few of my colleagues didn't feel like being involved with the local events and only mixed amongst each other – I was not one of them! I must admit though that I took part in the annual celebration of the German carnival in February/March of each year in our club at Cynheidre, this was quite an event, everyone wearing fancy dress and enjoying themselves.

As my two boys grew up and started to play rugby, I supported the local club and of course the Scarlets. Quite often I would travel to Cardiff to watch the internationals.

I transferred to the NCB as a collier in 1981, but was soon sent to Ammanford College by the Colliery Manager where I passed out as a Fireman. As one Inspector of Mines put it 'the poacher had become a gamekeeper'. I was diagnosed as suffering from Pneumoconiosis and was put to work at Cynheidre 3 and 4 shafts. In 1988 I finished work owing to my ill health. I can honestly say that I regard myself more as a Welshman than a German. The only time I feel like a German is when their football team is playing; otherwise I am a firm supporter of our rugby side. These fifty-two years in Wales have sometimes been hard, but most of the time they have been happy years and I would not wish to have missed those years.

Arno Wolff, Llangennech



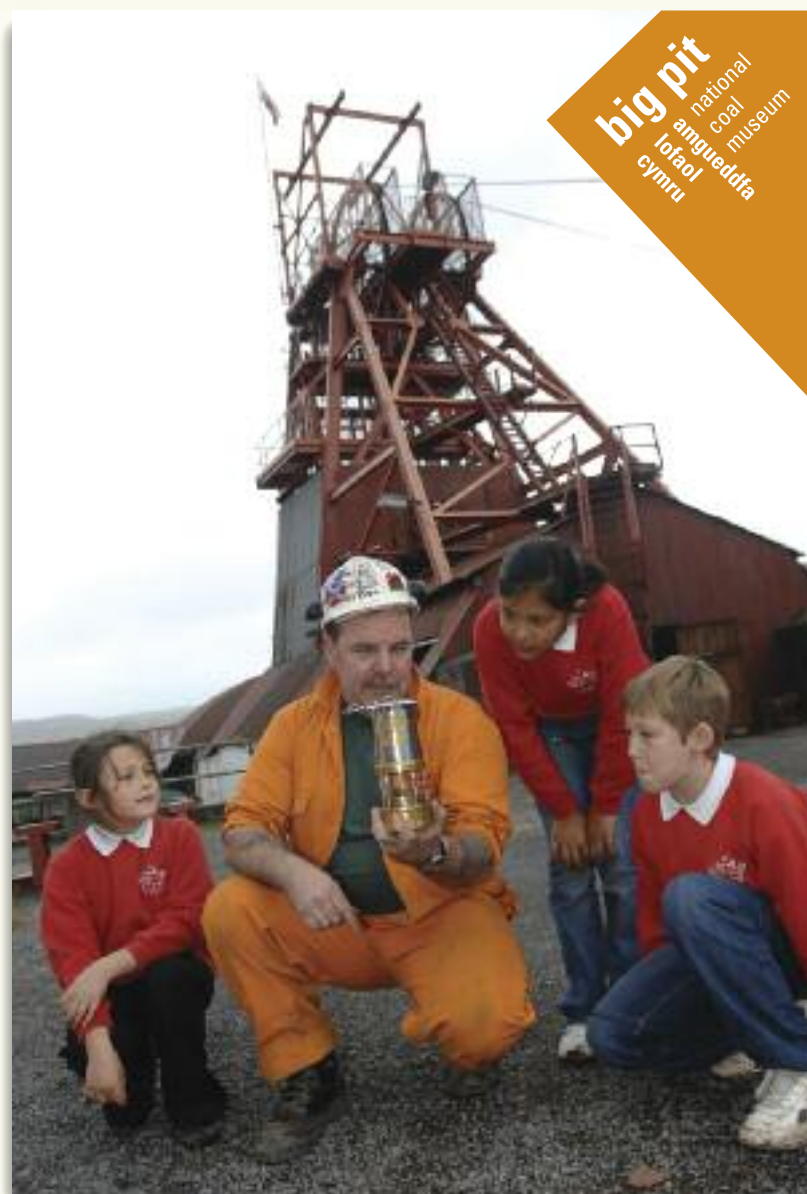
UCHOD: 'ARNO BACH', 2005

ABOVE: 'ARNO BACH', 2005



CLERC CYFLOGI: 'NA ... DOES YNA DDIM FFENESTRI MEWN PYLLAU GLO.'
CYN-FILWR PWYLAIDD: 'FE ARHOSA'I FELLY... MAE DIGON O AMSER!
FE DDECHREUA'I WEITHIO AR ÔL IDDYN NHW OSOD FFENESTRI!'

EMPLOYMENT CLERK: 'NO ... THERE ARE NO WINDOWS IN COAL MINES.'
DEMOBBED POLISH SOLDIER: 'THEN I'LL WAIT ... I HAVE TIME!
I'LL START WORKING WHEN THEY PUT IN WINDOWS!'



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