

***A talk given to the Liverpool History Society on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2017  
by Dr Graham Jones, an LHS member. © LHS***



*Owain Glyndŵr*

Yesterday was the 16<sup>th</sup> September, and on that day, in the year 1400, Owain Glyndŵr was proclaimed Prince of Wales by a Welsh parliament. His war of liberation against Henry IV's English army would be aflame for nearly 15 years. Glyndŵr was born in the little town of Corwen on the banks of the River Dee, and it took no less than six English invasions to finally overcome his forces. It was to be the last major attempt at Welsh independence, and he was the last true Prince of Wales. In 2007 his statue was erected at Corwen, and the 16<sup>th</sup> September each year is now celebrated in Wales as Glyndŵr day.

Tomorrow, the 18<sup>th</sup> September, Plaid Cymru will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day upon which the people of Wales voted for the creation of a National Assembly.

And so to the talk itself.....



Fig 1: Gwynfor Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, Y Lolfa Cyf., 2000, p 82; ISBN 0-86243-515-3

Fig 2: Sculpture by Colin Spofforth, 2007. Author's photo, June 2017





The photographer says “*smile for the camera*” and the children obediently respond. However, the teacher – Mrs Martha Jane Roberts – finds it all too distressing to comply, for that day in 1963 was a particularly sad one for her.

Over 40 years later, the Liverpool City Council voted unanimously in favour of a motion to apologise for the “*insensitivity by our predecessor council*” concerning the actions it had taken. The following day, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2005, the Liverpool Daily Post reported the statement which had been read out, of which the following is a part:-

*“The council acknowledges its debt to the many thousands of Welsh people who have made their homes in the city. They have in so many ways enriched its life. We realise the hurt of 40 years ago when the Tryweryn Valley was transformed into a reservoir to help meet the water needs of Liverpool.”*

*It would be like us agreeing to the flooding of the Dingle area of Liverpool to provide water for Birmingham. For any insensitivity by our predecessor council at the time, we apologise and hope that the historic and sound relationship between Liverpool and Wales can be completely restored. It is not gesturing, but a recognition of the mistakes of the past.”*

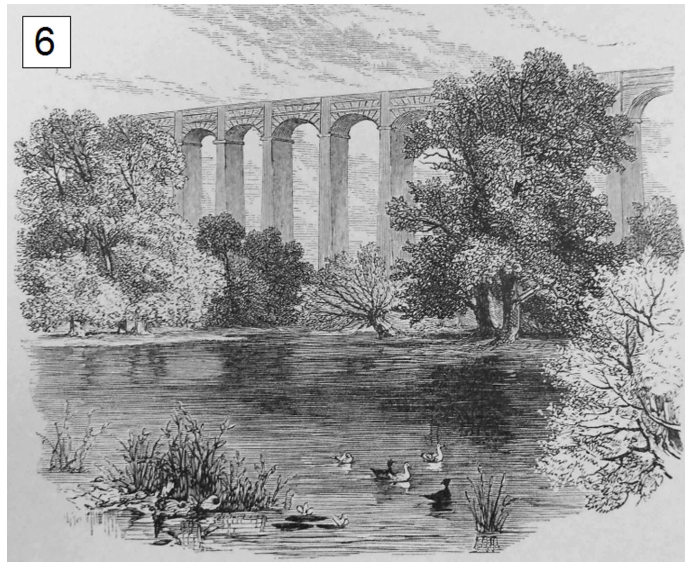
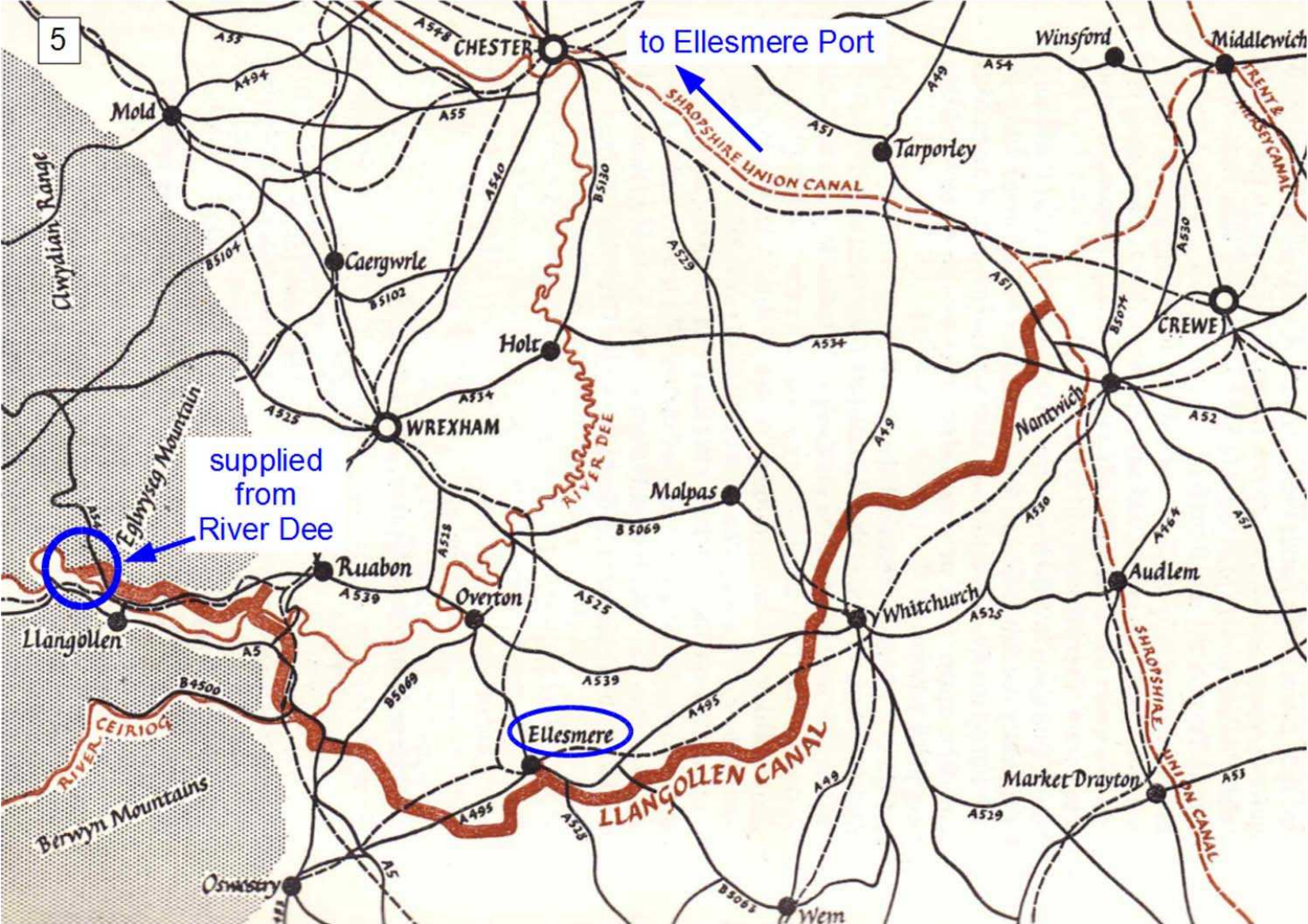
The leader writer of the same edition of the Daily Post was suitably unimpressed by the apology and, prefacing an account of the Council statement, the paper noted that:-

*‘It is also believed Liverpool's Eisteddfod bid may have been a factor in the timing of the apology.’*

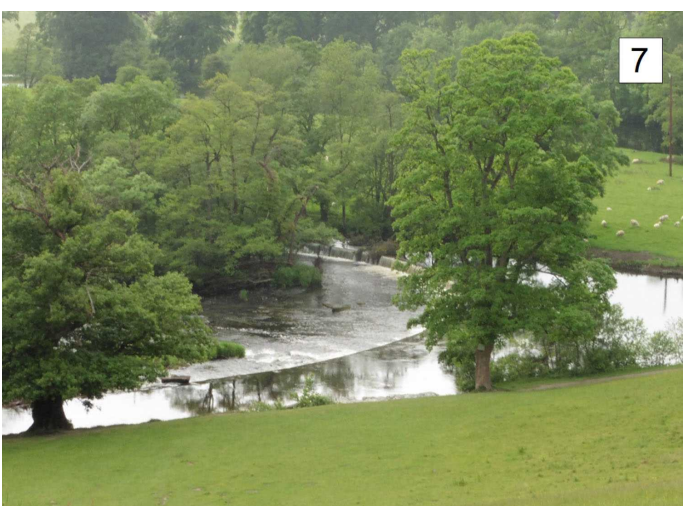
Fig 3: Einion Thomas, *Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction*, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, p 83; ISBN 978-1-900437-92-9

Fig 4: Postcard, J Arthur Dixon, N. Wales 7053, *Sunset on Llyn Celyn*, overlaid with text from the *Liverpool Daily Post*, 20-10-2005





But let's travel back in time over 200 years to the boom year for canal promotion when, in 1793, an Act was passed to permit the Ellesmere Canal Company to construct a system of canals radiating from Ellesmere, and linking the River Severn to the River Dee and to the River Mersey at Netherpool (subsequently renamed Ellesmere Port). The proprietors engaged the services of a young engineer by the name of Thomas Telford, then on the threshold of his career. Although the vast system centred upon Ellesmere as originally proposed never materialised, the Llangollen Canal was the principal survivor of those earlier plans. Telford designed this 46 mile canal and supplied it with water from the river Dee at Llantysilio, two miles to the west of Llangollen. In 1805 he completed the Pontcysyllte aqueduct four miles to the east of the town, and in 1830 he constructed the Horseshoe Falls at Llantysilio to increase the flow into the canal.



Telford also constructed sluices at the outlet of Bala Lake, to control the seasonal flow of the River Dee, a principle known as 'low-flow regulation'.

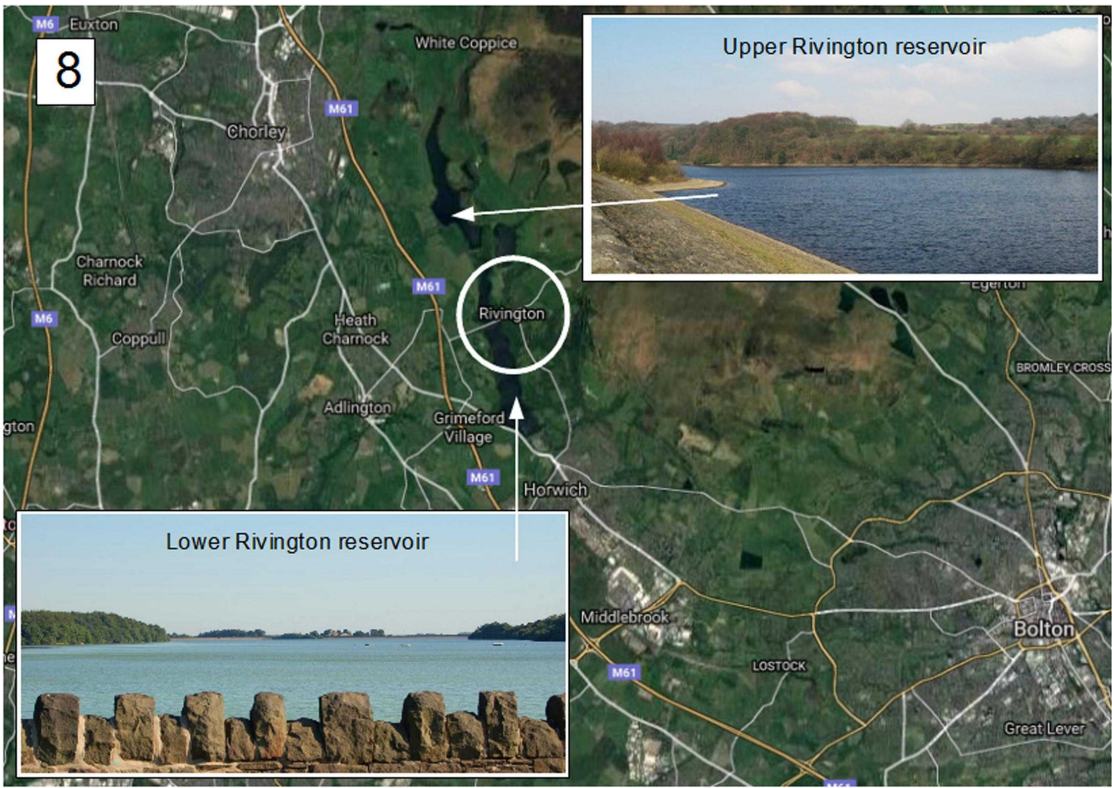
With the water from Bala Lake being relatively pure, in a separate undertaking the Chester Waterworks Company was formed in 1826 to abstract from the Dee.

Fig 5: *A Short History of the Llangollen Canal*, British Waterways, 1960, p 8  
 Fig 6: J S Howson, *The River Dee*, Virtue, Spalding & Co, 1875, p 110  
 Fig 7: Horseshoe Falls. Author's photo, June 2017



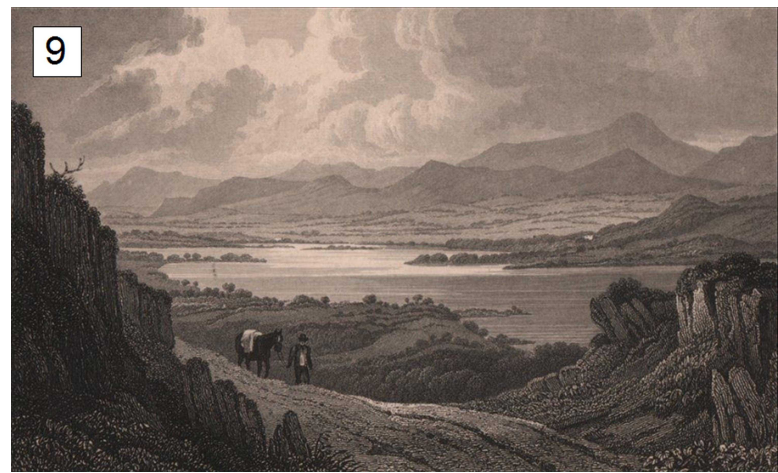
With Liverpool's water supply from the wells within its boundary having become inadequate to provide for the town's rapidly increasing population, the 1846 Liverpool Sanitary Act had prompted the Town Council to engage several engineers to investigate and report upon schemes for obtaining supplies of water from further afield.

And in 1847, Robert Rawlinson, better known in Liverpool as the engineer who solved the problem of constructing the brick-arched ceiling for St George's Hall, devised a scheme to supply Liverpool with water from Bala Lake via the River Dee, following the precedents set by the Ellesmere Canal Company and the Chester Waterworks Company. But it was Rivington Pike, between Bolton and Chorley in Lancashire, that became the chosen site for the 1847 Water Act.



Liverpool obtained the necessary Parliamentary powers to clear the farms, to demolish property in the western end of Rivington, and to dam and flood the valley. And despite disputes between rival factions – the so-called 'Pikists' and 'anti-Pikists' – which delayed construction, in 1857 water began to flow through the 17 mile pipeline to Prescott.

However, less than a decade later, a severe drought in 1865 so alarmed the Corporation that it instructed Thomas Duncan, Liverpool's Borough Engineer, to investigate the best means of obtaining an increased supply.



The dean of Chester, J S Howson, in his 1875 book about the river Dee, included a prophetic comment about the use of Bala lake:

*'...the need of giving an adequate water-supply to our great and growing towns in Cheshire and Lancashire has turned the attention of engineers to this lake, and its associated river: and, with this end in view, they were surveyed in the year 1866... and by "impounding" the tributary called the Tryweryn, which enters the Dee just below Bala Lake... it has been calculated that both Liverpool and Manchester might receive a steady supply of water... from the Merionethshire hills.'*

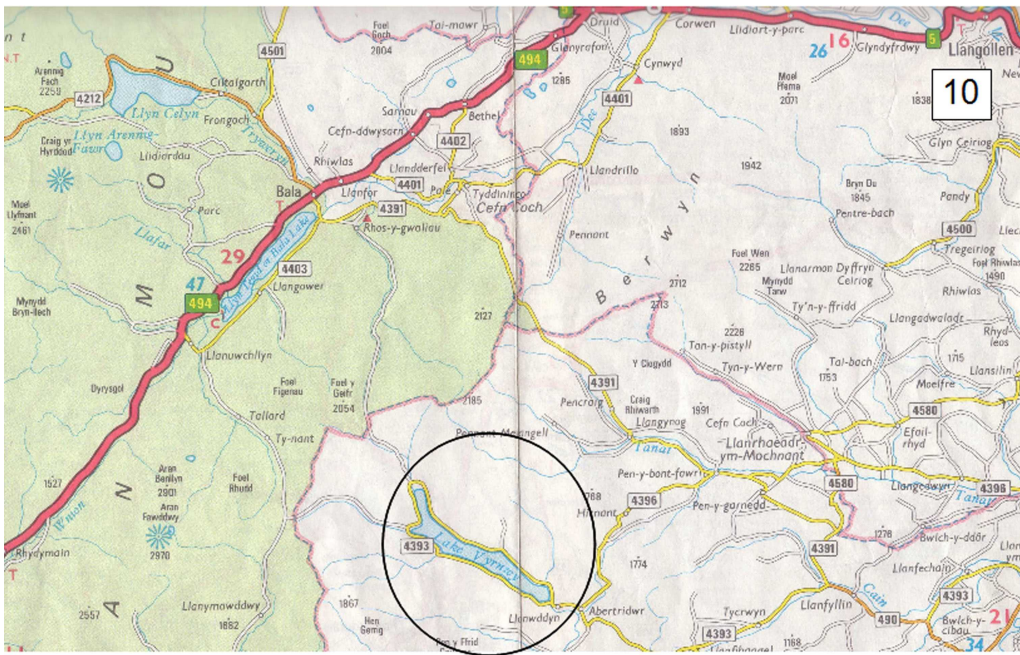
Following the 1866 survey, Thomas Duncan again recommended Rawlinson's proposal, but the decision was made for an additional reservoir at Rivington. The Bala Lake proposal, however, lived on, quietly sitting in the Liverpool Water Board's files, and would return with a vengeance many years later.

Fig 8: Google map overlaid with Upper Rivington Reservoir and Lower Rivington Reservoir, both Wikipedia, retrieved 28-01-2017

Fig 9: From North Wales Illustrated, 1835



By 1880, even with the additional capacity of the Rivington reservoirs, the Corporation found it necessary to apply to Parliament again. Liverpool was given the Royal Assent to an Act to construct a dam and create a lake in a Welsh valley, thereby drowning the village of Llanwddyn, involving the loss of two chapels, three pubs, 10 farms and 37 houses, and the displacement of its community to a new Llanwddyn.



That the construction of the Vyrnwy reservoir throughout the 1880s did not apparently cause a national outcry in Wales can perhaps be measured by the fact that Liverpool was accepted as host not only to the 1884 Eisteddfod, but also to a further two, each of which took place a matter of a few yards from here, on the opposite side of Shaw Street. You can still see remnants of the druid circle, and you may indeed have read about them in Brian Woodbridge's article in the Society's 2015 Journal.

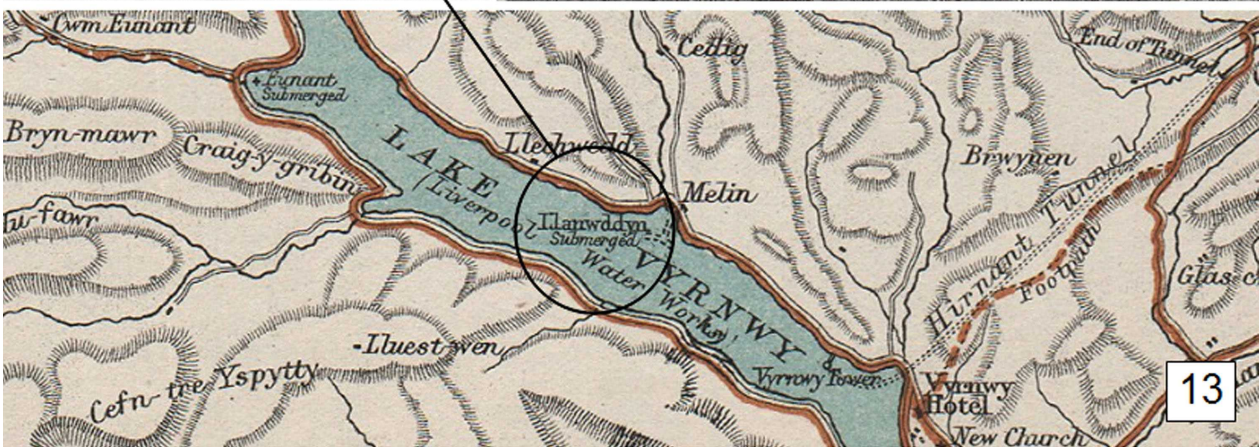
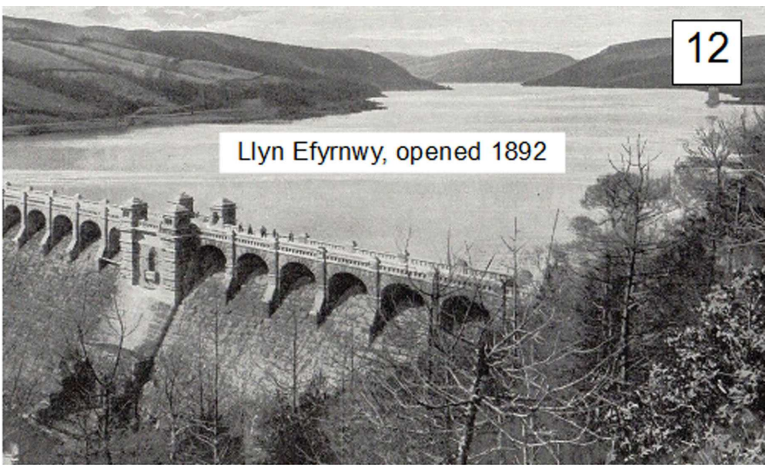
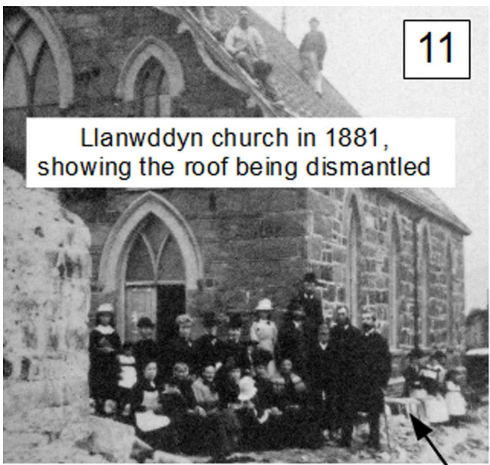


Fig 10: 1975 Shell Road Map

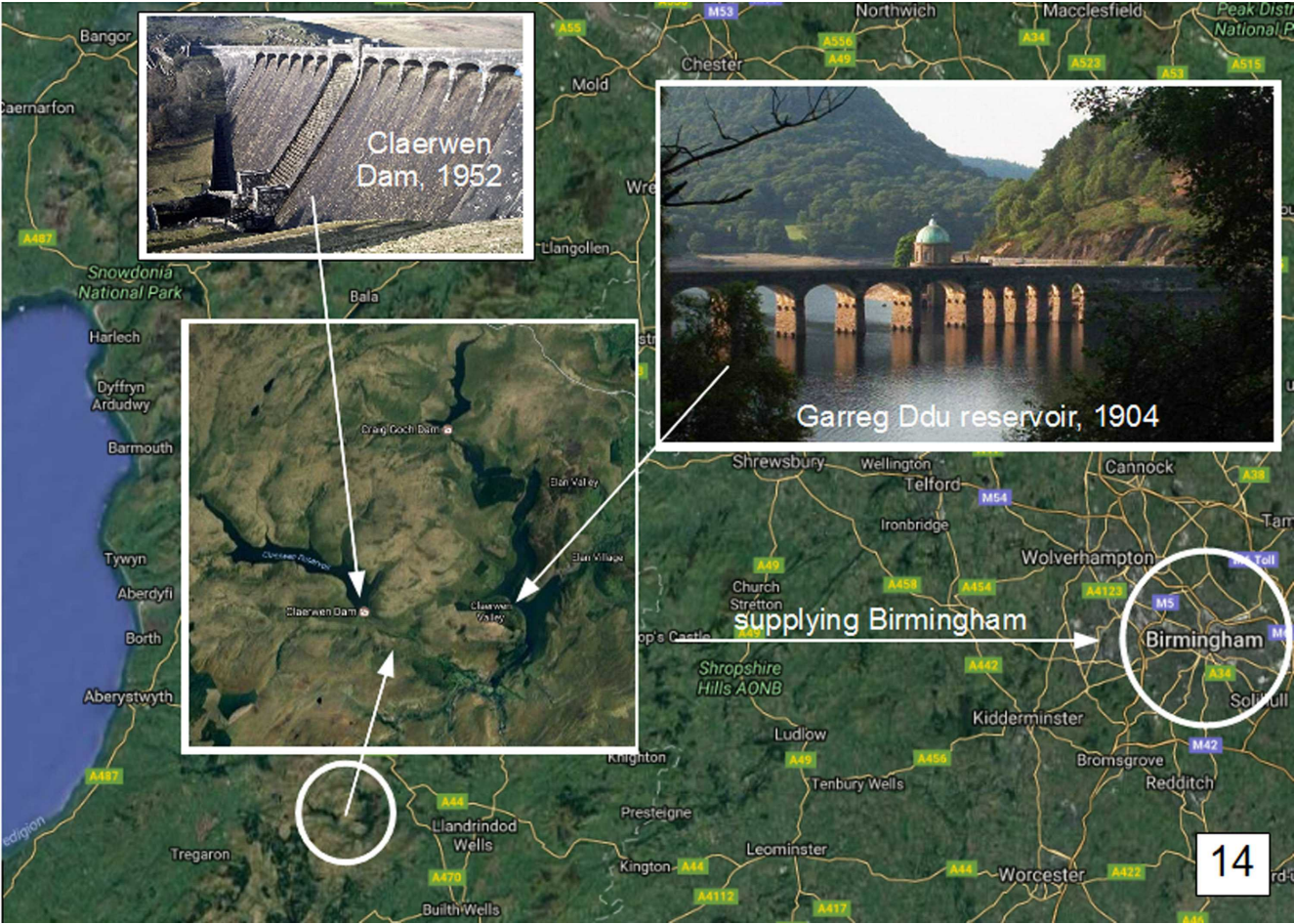
Fig 11: private collection

Fig 12: Lake Vyrnwy, North Wales, *The Queen's Empire Vol. II*, 1897, p 183

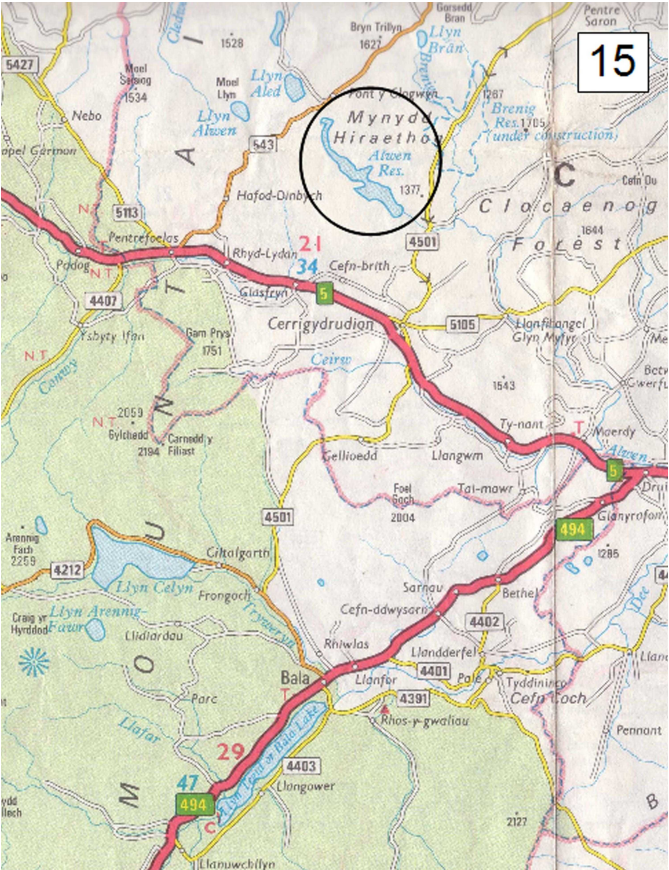
Fig 13: John Bartholomew & Co, *Lake Vyrnwy and Environs*, contained in Baddeley & Ward, *North Wales (Part II)*, Dulau & Co, 1887



No sooner had the Vyrnwy reservoir and its 67 mile long aqueduct been completed, than the Birmingham Corporation Water Act of 1892 allowed the construction of a series of reservoirs in the Elan Valley in West Wales.



Although no entire village was flooded, a church, a chapel and 20 cottages and farmhouses were submerged. Flooding began in 1896 and the aqueduct to Birmingham was completed in 1906. Many years later, Birmingham was given powers to double its capacity in the Elan Valley by the construction of the Clarewen reservoir, completed in 1952.



Whilst Birmingham had been constructing the original Elan Valley reservoirs, Birkenhead had been seeking advice for increasing its water supply. The outcome of the Birkenhead Corporation Act of 1907 was the Alwen reservoir and its 42 mile aqueduct. Begun in 1911 and interrupted by the first world war, the opening ceremony took place in Hamilton Square in August 1921.

The design and construction was reported in an extensive account in the journal *The Engineer* which noted the formidable challenge of tunnelling through wet sand under the river Dee.



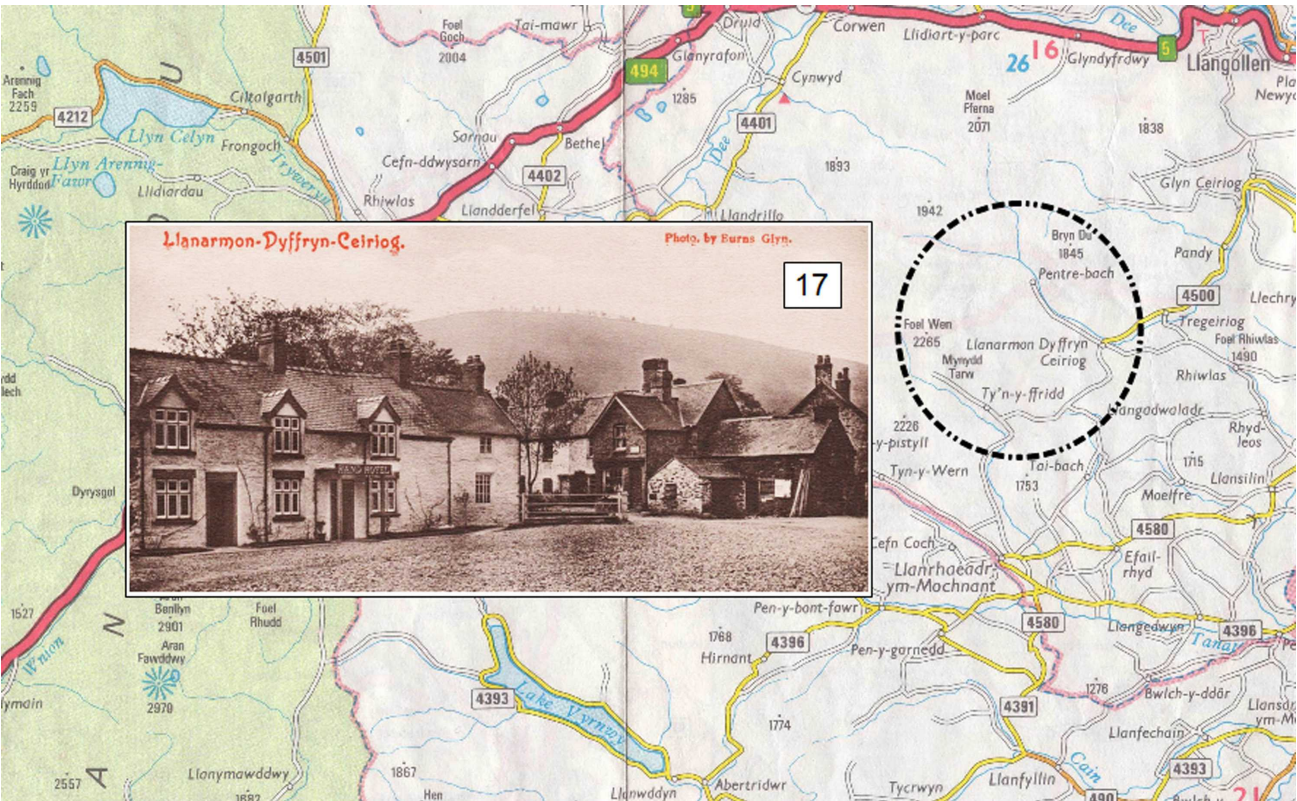
Fig 14: Google map overlaid with *Elan Valley Reservoirs*, Wikipedia, retrieved 17-10-2016 and 28-01-2017

Fig 15: 1975 Shell Road Map

Fig 16: *Alwen Reservoir*, Wikipedia, retrieved 29-12-2016



Joining in the enthusiasm for flooding Welsh valleys, the Warrington Corporation Bill of 1923 was the next to come before Parliament. Lake Vyrnwy had drowned 1100 acres, and the Alwen reservoir had submerged 370 of largely abandoned farm land. Warrington, however, wanted to acquire, by compulsory purchase, over 13 thousand acres of the Ceiriog Valley in order to construct two large reservoirs.



It included three villages, one church, five chapels, three burial grounds, two schools, two post offices, two inns, six shops, 82 houses, and a farming population of 400. The Bill was vigorously contested by the Welsh MPs and was successfully defeated. And it can only be imagined how Warrington Corporation felt when two reservoirs, which had also drowned Welsh villages, came into operation just a few years later to supply Merthyr Tydfil.

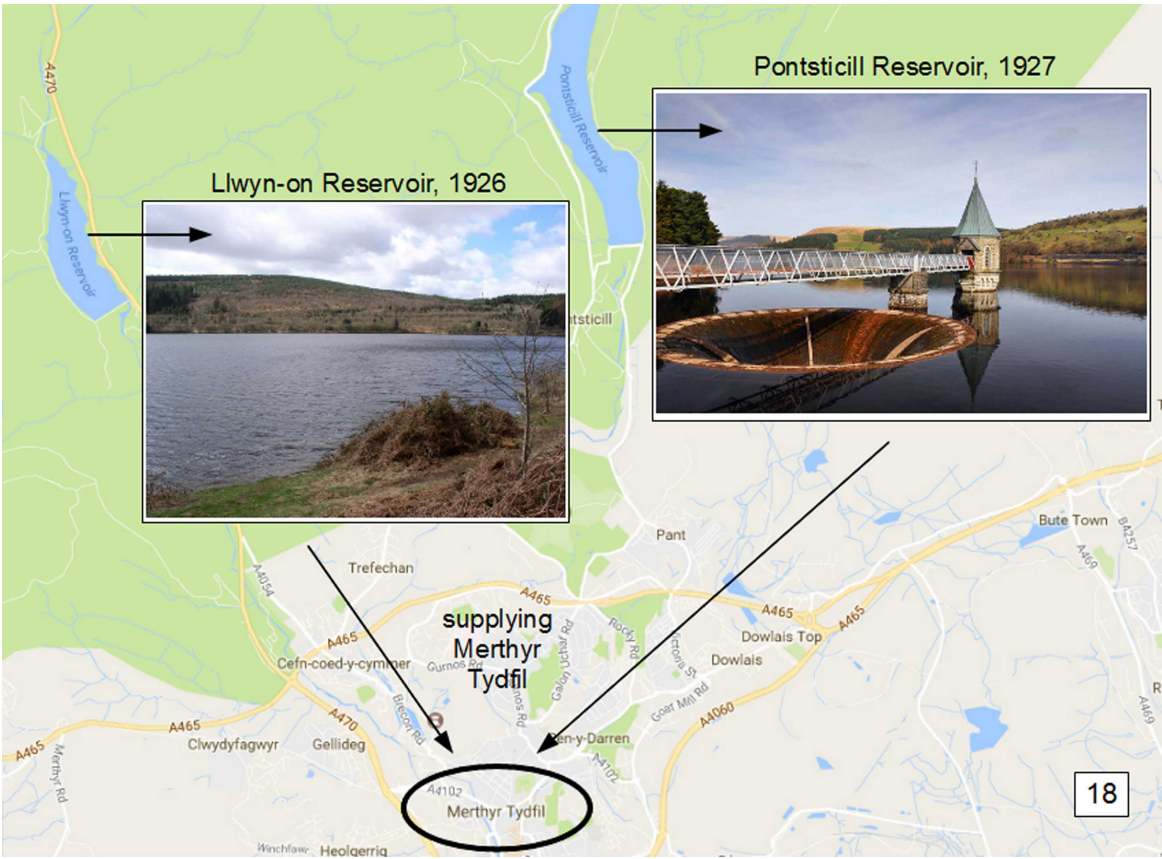


Fig 17: Picture postcard, private collection, date unknown

Fig 18: Google map superimposed with *Llwyn-on Reservoir*, Wikipedia, and *Pontsticill Reservoir*, Wikipedia, both retrieved 04-02-2017





Everything points to

# LIVERPOOL

for industrial development

The three great Liverpool Corporation industrial estates provide manufacturers with ideal conditions for efficient production. The Liverpool civic authority is eager to co-operate and is companionably allergic to red tape.

Adequate labour supply.

All public services.

Sites on main lines and trunk roads.

Near the docks for exports.

Adjoining workers' houses.

Mortgage facilities readily available for factory building or purchase of sites.

Write for illustrated brochure to THE CITY ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR, LIVERPOOL 2



One of the most satisfactory features of siting plants on a Liverpool industrial estate is the large labour force available, particularly of young men keen to train as skilled technicians.

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# NEW INDUSTRY POLICY FOR MERSEYSIDE

By our Political Correspondent

AFTER two deputations had called at the House of Commons yesterday to express concern over the level of unemployment on Merseyside, a statement issued by the Ministry of Labour said the Ministry were determined to press on with their policy of steering new industry into the area as far as lay within their power.

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For industrial development



everything points to

# LIVERPOOL

LAND The three great Liverpool trading estates at Speke, Fazakerley and Kirby offer manufacturers ideal conditions for industrial development.

LABOUR A great advantage of siting plants on a Liverpool industrial estate is the large labour force available, particularly of young men keen to train as skilled technicians. New housing schemes for workers, with full community amenities, are related to the requirements of developing industry.

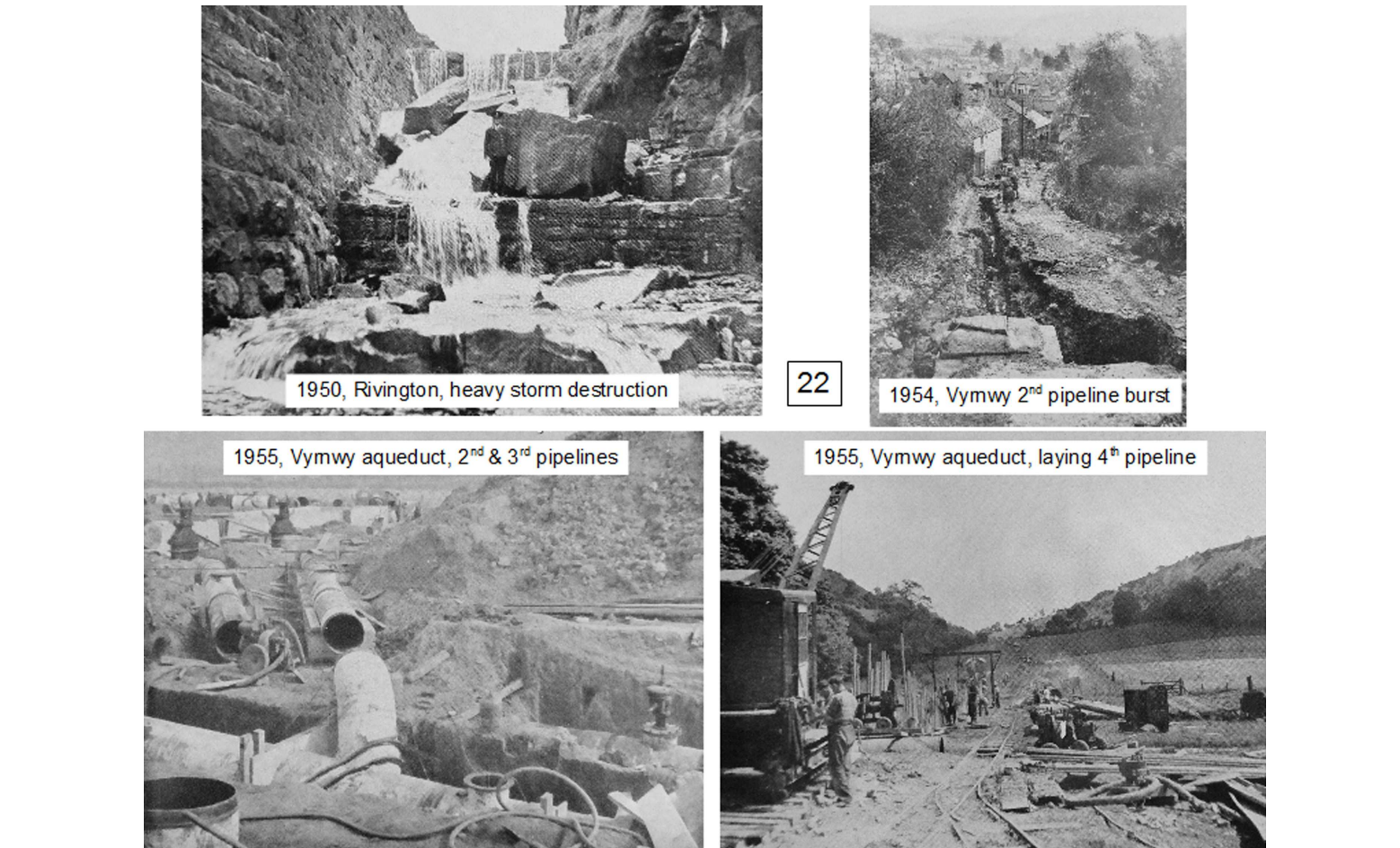
SERVICES The estates are well equipped with public services and are adjacent to main roads. Easy access to docks, airport and railways.

FINANCE Mortgage facilities are available for the purchase of factory sites and the building of new factories.

**LIVERPOOL INFORMATION**  
Write for illustrated brochure to the City Engineer and Surveyor, Liverpool Corporation, Dale Street, Liverpool, 2.

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So with all those reservoirs in Wales as background – not to mention umpteen more in England which had also drowned communities – let's now move forwards 30 years, to the aftermath of the second world war and the devastation caused to Merseyside by the bombing. Liverpool found itself attempting to recover, to rebuild its economy, and to reduce unemployment. And an important part of that recovery involved the attraction of industries to Merseyside. A crucial factor in attracting those new industries was the expansion of its infrastructure – new industrial estates, new transport links, additional electricity, additional gas – and a lot more water.



The Annual Reports of the City's Water Engineer provide glimpses of the constant battle to keep the existing supplies in good repair against storms and bursts, and of the need to renew and upgrade the 67 miles of pipework from Vyrnwy. By the 1950s those supplies had become dangerously close to being insufficient to meet the rising demand, particularly during years of drought. And so, in 1955, the Liverpool Corporation Water Committee hired consultants to advise on a new source of water.

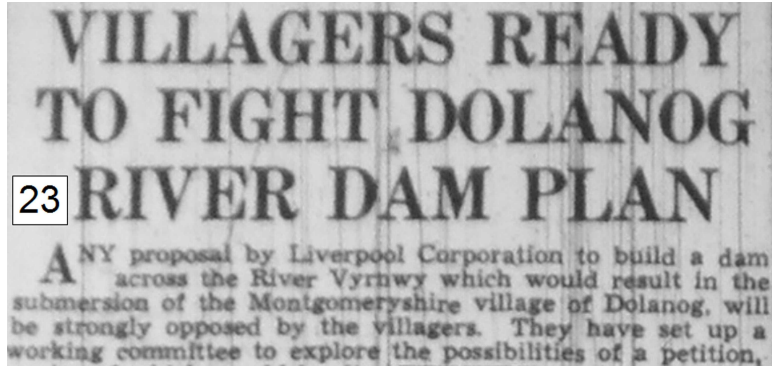
Fig 19: *Liverpool Daily Post*, 12-03-1953

Figs 20 & 21: Advertisements, *Punch*, 1954 and 1955

Fig 22: Four photographs from the *Report of the Water Engineer, Liverpool*, 1939-55. Liverpool Record Office [LRO] ref. H 352 6 WAT



The consultants considered valleys in the Lake District, but Manchester had already established reservoirs there, and was also unable to share the supplies. The upper Mersey was examined, but cleaning it up was judged to be too expensive.



The villagers immediately formed an opposition committee. The Welsh newspaper, *The Welshman*, published a leading article entitled, *The Last Days of Dolanog*.

And a few days later Plaid Cymru, at their annual national rally at Llanuwchllyn [south of Bala Lake: see fig 15], offered support to the village.

Their president, Gwynfor Evans – about whom we will hear more later – announced amid applause that:

“Any intention which Liverpool Corporation might have to drown Dolanog in Montgomeryshire, the birthplace of Ann Griffiths, the Welsh hymnologist, or any other part of Wales, will be strenuously opposed...

...the fate of each part of Wales is of importance to the whole, and we do not recognise the right of any English authority to acquire and use any Welsh neighbourhood for a purpose not in the interest of Wales, and, should a municipality insist on trying to take any part for such a purpose whether it be at Dolanog, Frongoch or anywhere else, we will oppose it.”

Raising the height of the Vyrnwy dam was considered, but the additional volume to be gained was insufficient to justify the cost. And so, ten other possible sites in Wales were examined.

By September 1955 word had begun to spread in Wales that the writing was on the wall for the village of Dolanog.

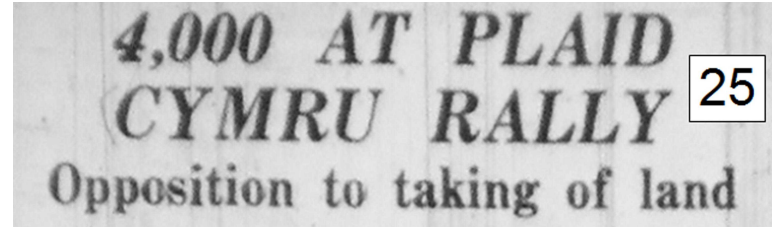


Fig 23: Liverpool Daily Post, 07-09-1955

Fig 24: Y Cymro (The Welshman), 22-09-1955, sourced via Einion Thomas, Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, p 15

Fig 25: Liverpool Daily Post, 26-09-1955



Lake Vyrnwy dam

Llanwddyn

Abertridwr

Llwydiarth

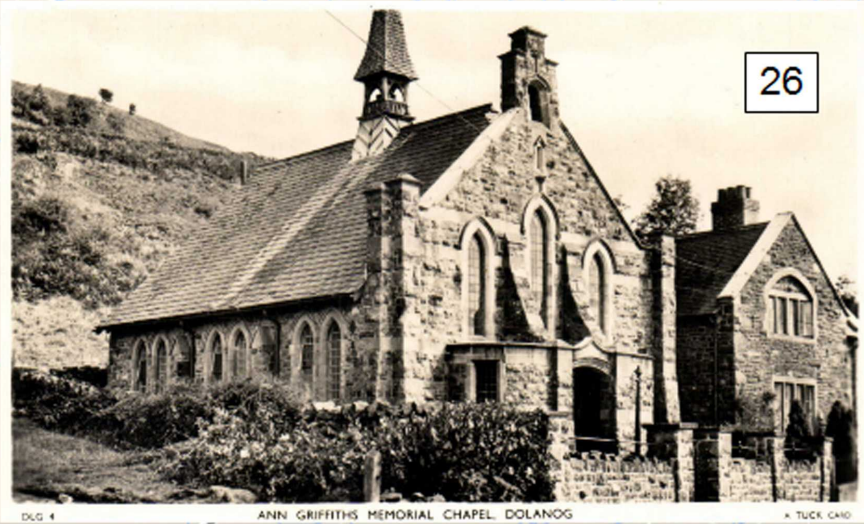
River Vyrnwy

Dolanog Bridge,  
in early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Dolanog

Ann Griffiths  
memorial chapel,  
built 1903

26



## CITY ALDERMAN'S PLEA :

**Keep politics out  
of hunt for water  
source in Wales**

28 BY OUR MUNICIPAL CORRESPONDENT

MEMBERS of Liverpool Corporation feel it a pity that their present search for additional sources of water supply should have been attacked by the Welsh Nationalists.

*"We don't deserve to be dragged into the sphere of politics. The issue of Welsh nationalism has nothing whatever to do with us. Our water supply is simply a matter of practical business, and we want to work on the friendliest of terms with Wales."*

*In any event, all the bother seems premature. At the moment there is no proposal whatever before the Water Committee to drown Dolanog. There might eventually be such a proposal, or there might not.*

*We are not confined to Wales... However, for reasons of geography and distance Wales, quite frankly, would offer better economic prospects."*

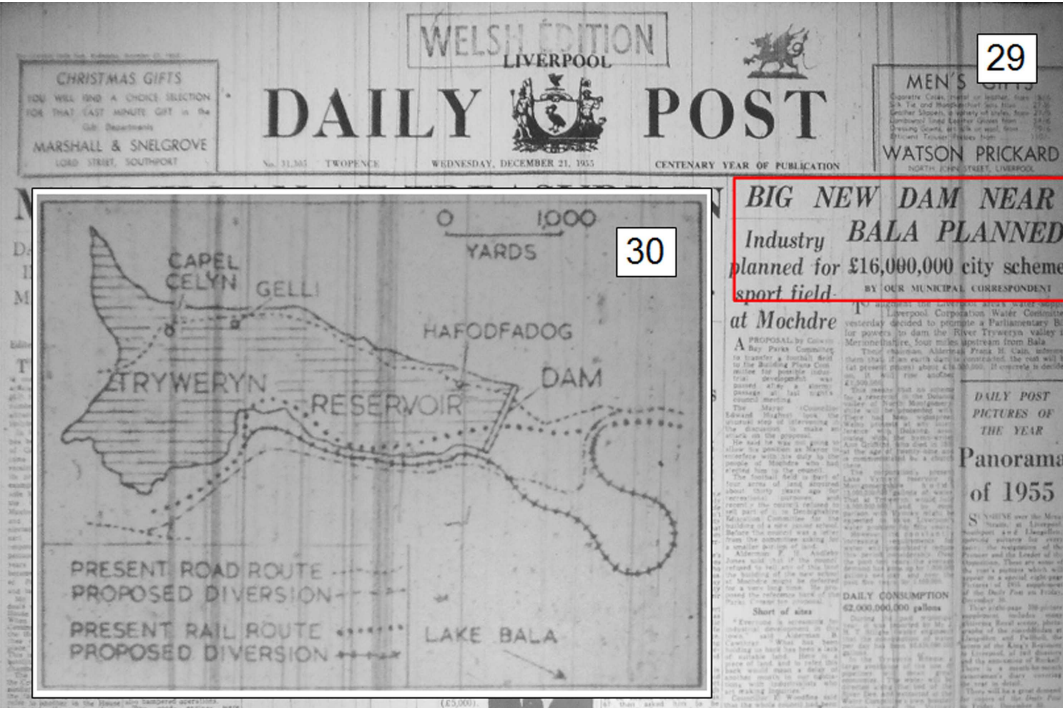
So, not much about morality then. Merely better economic prospects. If Birmingham had decided to drown the Dingle area of Liverpool, then that would presumably have been equally acceptable to Alderman Cain. Simply economics.

Overlaying the Google map: fig 26: picture postcard, private collection, ca. 1955

Overlaying the Google map: fig 27: Edward Pugh, *Cambrian Depicta*, 1816, via Wikipedia, retrieved 28-12-2016

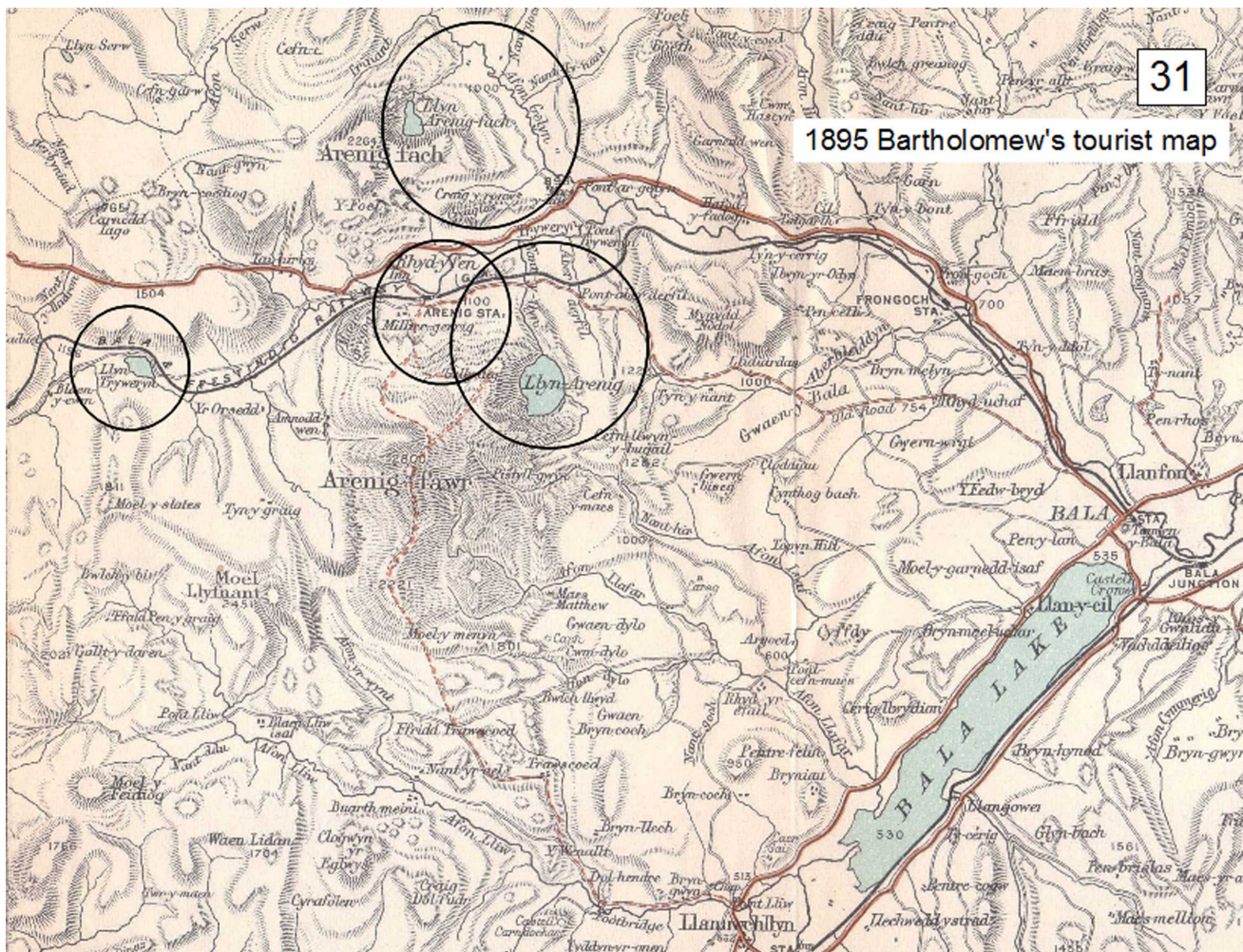
Fig 28: *Liverpool Daily Post*, 28-09-1955





Then, three months later, and four days before Christmas in 1955, the Daily Post announced Liverpool Corporation's plan for their 16 million pound reservoir. The story began, 'To augment the Liverpool area's water supply, Liverpool Corporation Water Committee yesterday decided to promote a Parliamentary Bill for powers to dam the River Tryweryn valley in Merionethshire, four miles upstream from Bala. This means that no scheme for a reservoir in the Dolanog valley will be proceeded with.'

So let us now turn to look at Cwm Tryweryn, the Tryweryn Valley.



An indication of the area surrounding the Tryweryn Valley at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is provided in an 1895 guide book containing this Bartholomew's map. The commentary mentions that: 'The opening of the G.W. branch from Bala to Ffestiniog in 1882 greatly improved the accessibility of these mountains [which] now lend their name to the little "Arenig" station, situated in the valley between them... The ascent of Arenig-fawr may with advantage be made the beginning of a delightful walk of 9 miles to Llanuwchllyn... [and] begins by a rough path on the near side of Milltergerrig Farm... The view from the summit is a very wide one...'

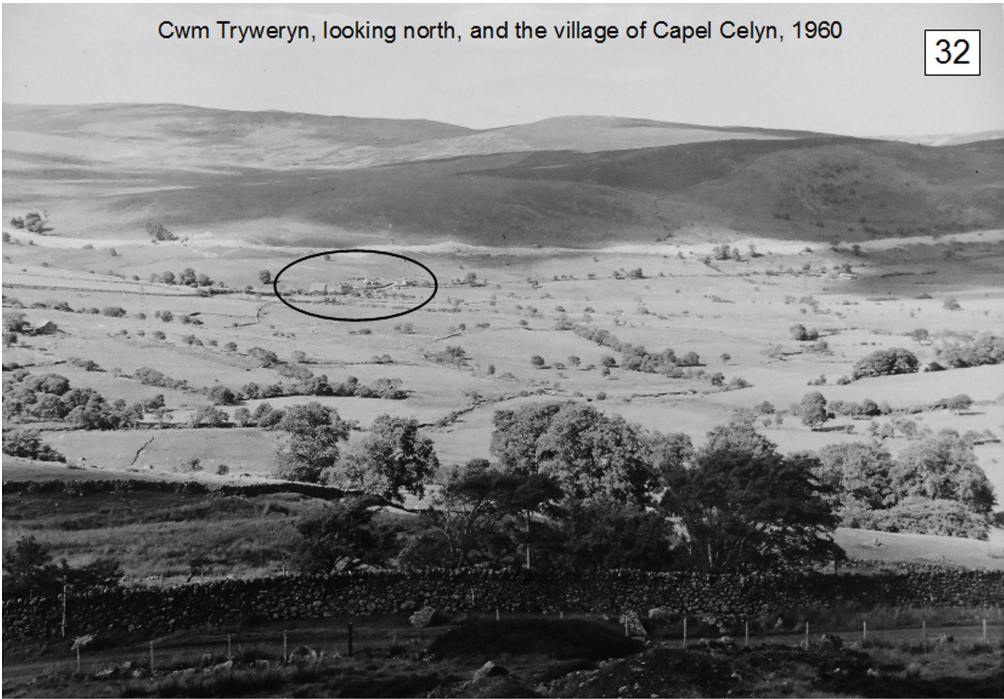
Fig 29: Liverpool Daily Post, Welsh Edition, 21-12-1955

Fig 30: Liverpool Daily Post, Merseyside Edition, page 5 (map not included in the Welsh Edition), 21-12-1955

Fig 31: Thorough Guide Series 'North Wales', C S Ward, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1895, section map 7A, text p 182



This view, looking north across the Tryweryn valley, was photographed in 1960 by the Liverpool City Engineer's Department, taken from the hillside on the old road from Bala. Almost unnoticed is the village of Capel Celyn.



*Afon Tryweryn*, the River Tryweryn, was fed from three main sources (see the three lakes circled in fig 31). *Llyn Arenig Fach* (Little Lake Arenig) supplied the *Afon Gelyn* which travelled south to meet the *Afon Tryweryn*, *Llyn Arenig Fawr* (Great Lake Arenig) fed a stream which meandered north, whilst further west was *Llyn Tryweryn*, the source of the *Afon Tryweryn*. The river then travelled east and then south east for about 5 miles, to join the River Dee beyond Telford's sluices on the exit to Bala Lake.

So let's look at where the main road crossed the river Gelyn at *Pont-ar-Gelyn*, the Gelyn bridge. The focus of this tiny village was the post office and the school on the north side of the river, with the Calvinist Methodist chapel, built in 1892, and Tynybont farm to the south. The school had been opened in 1881 to serve this remote, scattered, Welsh speaking area which had proud traditions of musical and literary culture. The teaching of English presented difficulties as the pupils heard little, if any, English outside school.

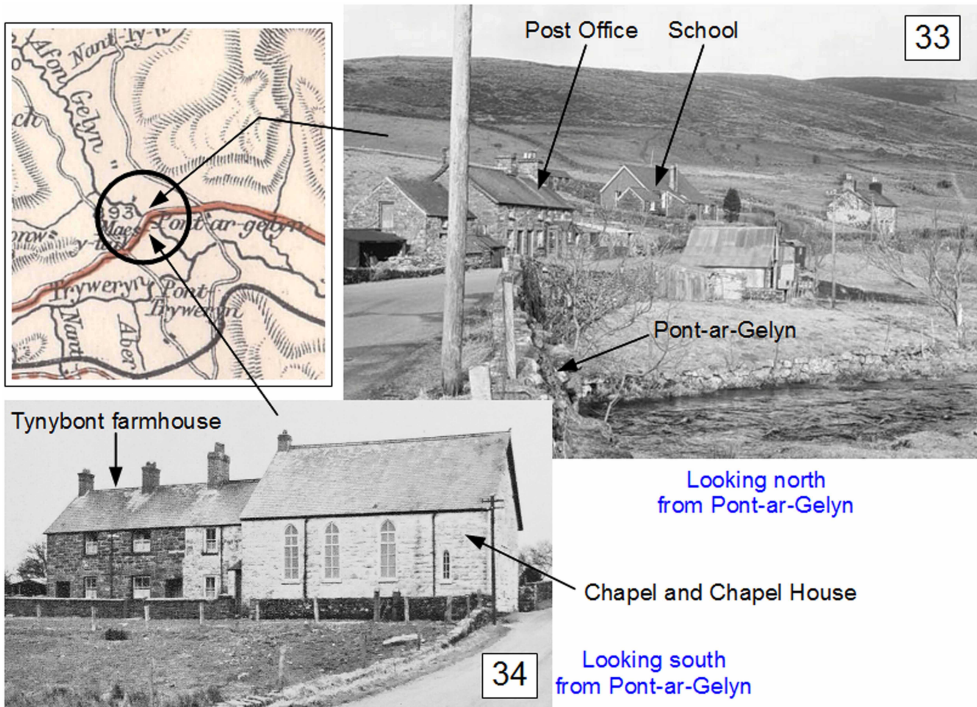
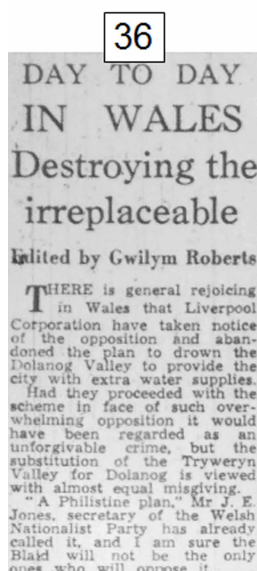


Fig 32: Liverpool Record Office (LRO), *Photographs & Small Prints, Water Supplies: Reservoirs, Tryweryn Valley*, 29-06-1960

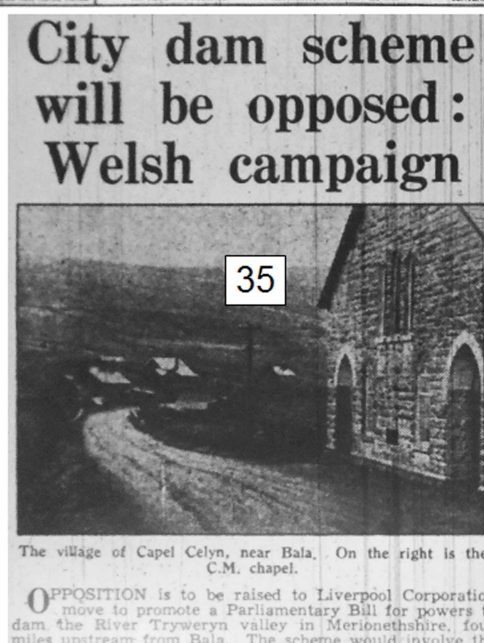
Fig 33: Independent, website article, *The village drowned to give another nation water*, 16-10-2010

Fig 34: Publicity brochure, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY, 21-10-1965; photo dated 14-03-1957





"A Philistine plan"



City dam scheme will be opposed: Welsh campaign

"...resolved unanimously to resist any attempt to deprive them of their homes and livelihood."

The village of Capel Celyn, near Bala. On the right is the C.M. chapel.

OPPOSITION is to be raised to Liverpool Corporation move to promote a Parliamentary Bill for powers to dam the River Tryweryn valley in Merionethshire, four miles upstream from Bala. The scheme would involve the

Following the announcement in the Daily Post on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1955 (fig 29), a day later the paper reported the comments of the secretary of the Merionethshire Farmers Union that, *"Liverpool Corporation have rightly bowed to the memory of Ann Griffiths. They will, however, be assured of even firmer opposition from Capel Celyn, for the Tryweryn Valley is not a shrine, but the home of a living force in Welsh cultural life."* Elwyn Thomas, the secretary, had attended a meeting of the local branch of the Farmers Union at Capel Celyn the previous month when it had been... *"resolved unanimously to resist any attempt to deprive them of their homes and livelihood"*, and that a Defence Committee was being set up to organise opposition to the scheme at both a local and national level.

This 1953 Ordnance Survey marks the 17 farms and other properties in the Tryweryn community which would either be submerged by the reservoir or would lose some or all of their farm land because, although the reservoir's area was to cover 880 acres of land, the compulsory purchase was for 2,500 acres.

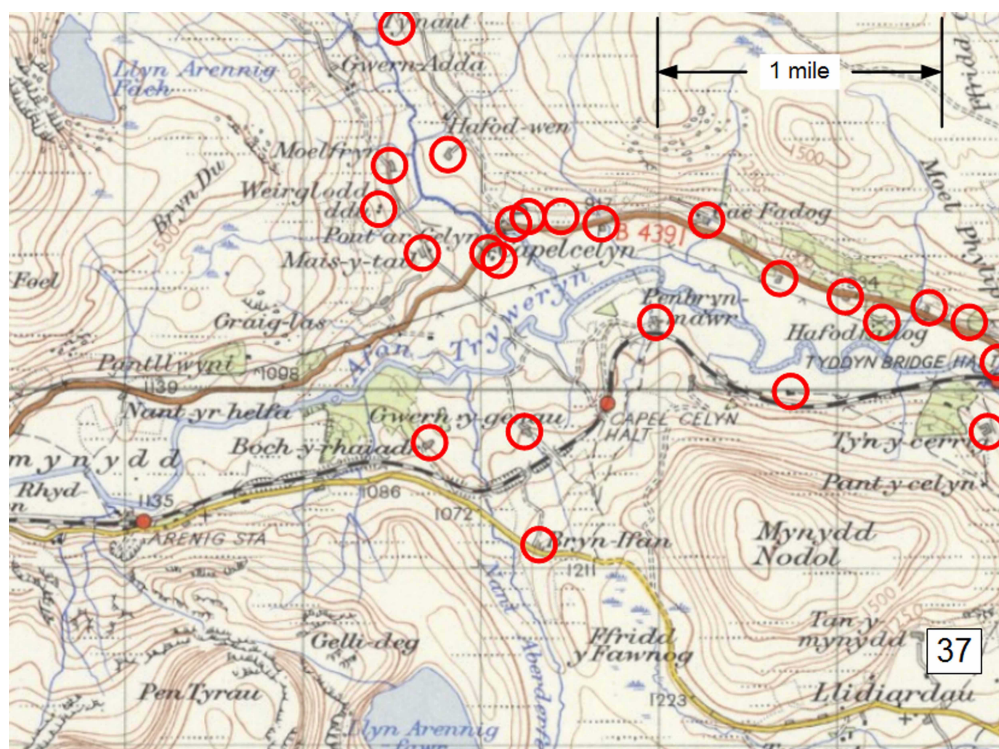
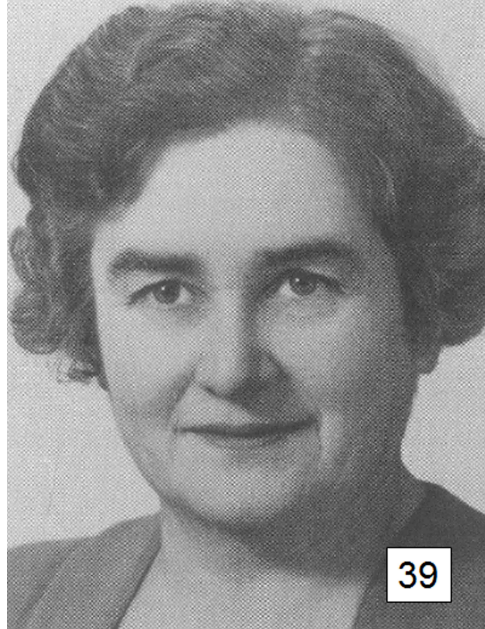


Fig 35: *Liverpool Daily Post*, Welsh Edition, front page, 22-12-1955

Fig 36: *Liverpool Daily Post*, Welsh Edition, front page, 23-12-1955

Fig 37: 1953 Ordnance Survey, 1" sheet 116, *Dolgelley*





In March 1956 the Capel Celyn Defence Committee elected Dafydd Roberts (fig 38) as their chairman. As a farmer, postman, councillor and deacon, he was the natural choice to lead the campaign. Elizabeth Watkin Jones (fig 39), a teacher brought up in the valley, was elected as secretary. Over the coming months and years she would find herself writing hundreds of letters to organisations and individuals, encouraging them to oppose the drowning, and letters to Liverpool asking them to reconsider their decision.

*Mae digon o seiliau dros gredu na fu buriad gwirioneddol i foddi Dolanog o gwbl, ac nad oedd dewis Capel Celyn fel ail le ond rhan o'r twyll tuag at wanhau unrhyw wrthwynebiad a ddisguyliid o Gum Tryweryn.*

41

Llyfr Cofnodion Pwyllgor Amddiffyn Capel Celyn – Mawrth 1956

The Minute book of the Capel Celyn Defence Committee for the month of March 1956 (fig 41) reads:-  
*'There are sufficient grounds for believing that there never was any intention to drown Dolanog at all, and that choosing Capel Celyn as a second choice was only part of the deception to weaken any opposition expected from Cwm Tryweryn.'*



During 1956, as news spread throughout Wales, over one thousand public bodies expressed their opposition to the proposed reservoir. And later that year Plaid Cymru arranged a large rally at Bala. Gwynfor Evans (fig 40), who held the post of chairman of the Party of Wales for 36 years, was a solicitor, an alderman, a committed Christian and pacifist, and was the last to address the rally.

*'Liverpool's scheme was a barbarous depredation'*

*rose to their feet and applauded him for several minutes,' and the report recorded from Gwynfor Evans' speech that, 'As long as English law permitted it, and as long as an English Government sanctioned it, any violation of Wales by an alien body was fully legal and constitutional. If Wales had a political existence, actions of this kind would be unthinkable.'*

Figs 38 - 41: Einion Thomas, *Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction*, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, pp. 36, 37, 41 and 16

Fig 42: *Liverpool Daily Post*, Merseyside edition, 01-10-1956. Fig 43: *Liverpool Daily Post*, Welsh Edition, front page, 01-10-1956

Fig 44: Geoff Charles Collection, from <https://www.peoplescollection.wales> (reproduced in [www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zt4hycw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zt4hycw))





With the Liverpool Council several times having rejected requests to meet a deputation from the Defence Committee, Rev. Tudur Jones, Gwynfor Evans and Dafydd Roberts, having discovered that the Tryweryn reservoir was on the agenda, attended a meeting of the City Council on 7<sup>th</sup> November. This is Gwynfor Evans' memory of that meeting:- *'We sat in the front row of public seats behind the back row of councillors. Immediately in front of us was the solid figure of Mrs Bessie Braddock. When the Tryweryn matter was reached I got up and addressed the chair. No sooner had I started to speak than Mrs Braddock shouted at the top of her voice and banged the lid of her desk up and down. Most other councillors seemed to follow her lead as I continued to try to speak. My voice and that of the chairman were lost in the uproar which continued until the police were called to take us out.'*



The following day, and placed immediately below the Daily Post report of the ejection of the Capel Celyn delegation, came an article about a protest march that had occurred the same day. This was at the height of the Suez Crisis, and this delegation had been received by the Lord Mayor in order to protest at the presence of British troops in Egypt. The Capel Celyn delegation then wrote to the Lord Mayor to explain their action, and of the depth of the opposition throughout Wales to the reservoir scheme. *'Last night' [13<sup>th</sup> November 1956], wrote the reporter, 'the Lord Mayor told the Daily Post that he did not intend to reply.'* So the residents of Capel Celyn decided that, having been rebuffed yet again, perhaps their own protest march was needed. And two weeks later Liverpool would have quaked with fear, for, apparently, an invasion was indeed taking place, although not by angry Egyptians.



Fig 45: Eion Thomas, *Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction*, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, p 51

Figs 46a & b: *Liverpool Daily Post*, 08-11-1956. Figs 47a & b: *Liverpool Daily Post*, Welsh Edition, 21-11-1956





Eurgain Prysor Jones  
age 3

And what a formidable sight they must have presented to the city's anxious residents. One of the 'invaders', Eurgain Prysor Jones, was just three years old. The experience must have been distressing and confusing: interviewed 60 years later, it was clear that she'd never forgotten the occasion. *"The reception we had was awful. People spitting at us and throwing rotten tomatoes at us. It was an awful disappointment."*

49



Having parked their coaches in Lord Street, which was still a ruin from wartime bombing, they began their march along Castle Street, led by Gwynfor Evans.

Figs 48a & b: Geoff Charles Collection, from <https://www.peoplescollection.wales>

Fig 49: Einion Thomas,, *Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction*, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, p 59



They circled the Town Hall, and then stood outside and sang their hearts out. Their national anthem, *'The Old Land of My Fathers'*, so successfully penetrated the Council chamber that a grumpy Alderman John Braddock allowed Gwynfor Evans 15 minutes to address the Council who were there to authorise the submission of the Tryweryn Parliamentary Bill.

Many years later, in the memoirs of a Liverpool History Society member, Lyndon Harris wrote: *'I remember the Deputy Town Clerk telling me that Gwynfor Evans' address was so eloquent and persuasive that he almost swayed the councillors to support him. Stanley Holmes said it was one of the most emotional speeches he had ever heard.'*

In contrast, Alderman Braddock suggested that the opposition to the scheme had been *'inspired and fanned by the Welsh Party for political and propaganda purposes.'* And so, despite a vigorous debate, including pleas from some councillors to delay the decision, the vote to promote the Bill was carried, with 95 in favour, one against and two abstentions.

By this stage, the Daily Post was carrying reports on the Tryweryn scheme on a regular basis, including the serious questions and objections that were being raised in Parliament about the manner of Liverpool Council's action and the morality of what it was proposing. It was clear that the main reason that Liverpool wanted the new reservoir was not to provide for increased consumption by its residents, but in order to provide for new Merseyside industries. And to sell it – at a profit – to several dozen other local Authorities. The Council became aware of the growing unease of some of its own citizens and, when it came to giving its ratepayers a vote in a meeting at St George's Hall on 17th December 1956, certain officials had apparently taken steps to ensure the required outcome.

Gwynfor Evans wrote of the scene in the Concert Hall. *'The second meeting that Liverpool Council were required to arrange [was] to show that the citizens supported the reservoir scheme. Without their support it could not present a parliamentary bill. But when the time came to open the meeting, at two o'clock, the chairman, Alderman John Braddock, was shocked to realise that the opposing Welsh were in a majority. He had to delay the meeting and seek the presence of the Council's employees. A quarter of an hour later they began to flood in, many of them were in the Water Board's uniforms. When asked why there were so many council workers present, John Braddock answered: "I am not responsible for the intelligent interest that the Council's employees take in the affairs of their city." The town clock had struck a quarter to three before the chairman was certain of a majority.'*

In fact the Daily Post report of the event the following day suggests something even more underhand: that large numbers of Council employees had been given the afternoon off work so that they might attend and ensure that the vote went in favour of the reservoir scheme.

Following the vote, and having already incensed the Welsh with his comments about their homeland, John Braddock just couldn't resist a final go. The Daily Post reporter was clearly shocked by Braddock's attack:

*'When winding up the debate he launched upon a tirade against the Welsh community, many of whom have played a prominent part in the growth and development of Liverpool, that seemed to come out of the blue.'*

**ALD. BRADDOCK'S ATTACK ON WELSH**

## City electors approve the Tryweryn scheme

# by 262 - 161

**51**

BY 262 votes to 161 a meeting of Liverpool electors, after some two hours discussion during which there were several heated interludes, yesterday decided to approve Liverpool Corporation's Bill to proceed with the Tryweryn Valley water scheme, estimated to cost at least £20,000,000.

Just before the voting on the resolution to proceed with the Bill was taken, Alderman John Braddock (Socialist, leader of Liverpool City Council) who dealt with the main points of the Bill and the reasons for its necessity, roused the ire of the Welsh element.

### Biased meeting alleged

By Our Municipal Correspondent

ALLEGATIONS made at

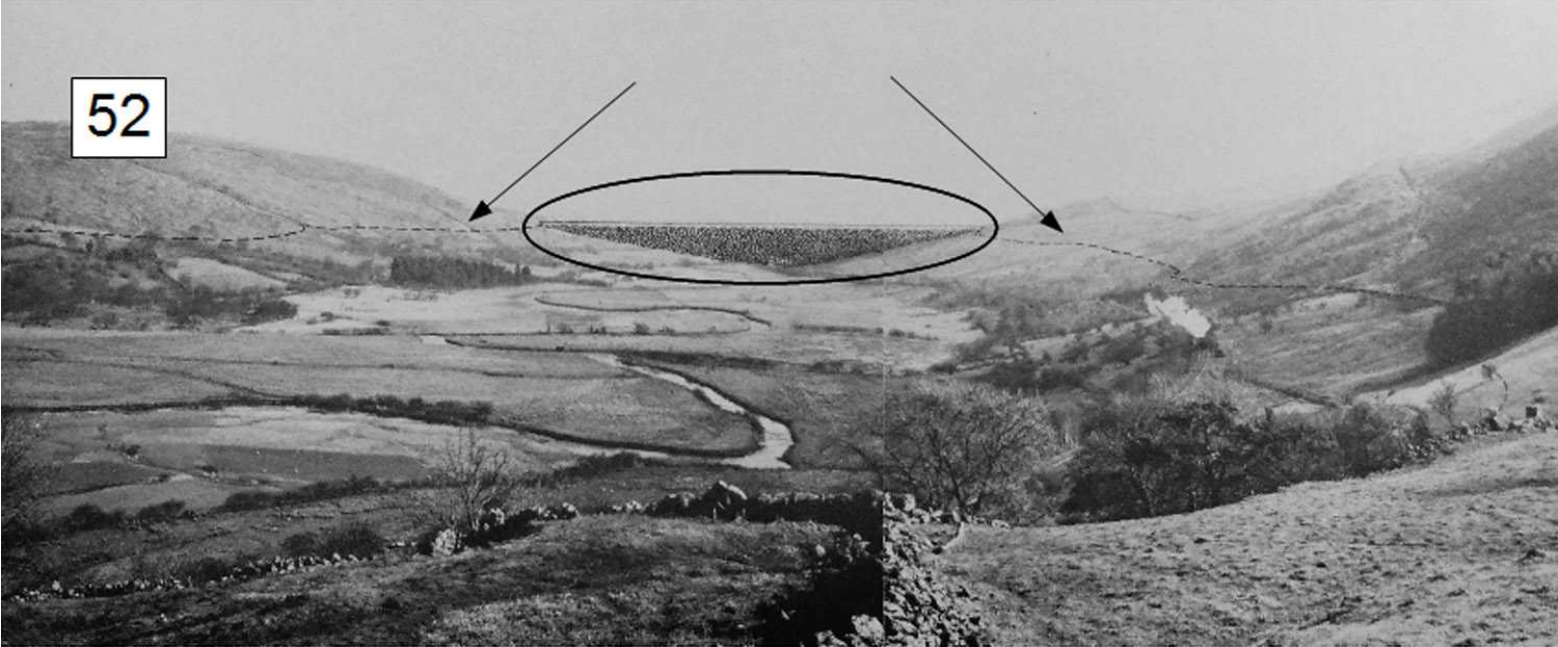
Fig 50: Geoff Charles Collection, from <https://www.peoplescollection.wales>

Fig 51: *Liverpool Daily Post*, 18-12-1956



And so, during 1957, the Bill struggled its way through the various Parliamentary procedures, with Welsh MPs, the Capel Celyn Defence Committee, Plaid Cymru and various Welsh authorities and public utilities all fighting against it. Liverpool therefore modified the Bill countless times to persuade as many authorities as possible to remove their objections. There were even radical and hurried changes following the second reading in the Lords in order to justify the volume of the reservoir, where one a third of the size proposed would have been sufficient.

Whilst the Bill was making its way through Parliament, the Corporation continued to develop its Tryweryn plans. On 14<sup>th</sup> March two photographs were taken of the valley by the City Engineers Department, and carefully joined together so that the position of the dam, and the height of the reservoir along the banks of the valley could be marked on the result.



Although there were only four trains a day which ran from Bala to Ffestiniog, the photographer had waited patiently for one to appear in order to make sure that the position of the railway line – below the level of the intended lake – was clearly identified.

And rumours began to spread that the Corporation might be spared the one million pound cost of rebuilding the line elsewhere. The rumours were of course denied.....

# NO SECRET PACT TO CLOSE BALA RAILWAY

53

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

**T**HERE will be no secret agreement between Liverpool Corporation and the British Transport Commission to bring about the close-down of the Bala Junction and Blaenau Ffestiniog railway.

Not even to save Liverpool £1,000,000. This is the bill the corporation will have to foot under their Tryweryn scheme to build a three-and-a-half mile diversion to the railway.



The debate for the second reading in the Commons on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1957 concluded with a speech from Bessie Braddock which included comments which would not be forgotten – or forgiven – in later years:

*“Some disturbance of the inhabitants is, of course, inevitable. Everyone deplores the fact that in the interests of progress some people must suffer, but that is progress..... Rehousing people at a new site in the valley cannot destroy Welsh culture. Let us remember the happy atmosphere at Lake Vyrnwy..... One has only to visit the place and to talk to the people in the area to appreciate that.”*

Fig 52: City of Liverpool, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, 21-10-1965 (LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY) (photo 14-03-1957)

Fig 53: *Liverpool Daily Post*, 04-05-1957



# Moves to 54 avoid Tryweryn debate

By our Political  
Correspondent

**I**NTENSIVE efforts were being made in the Commons last night to avoid any debate on Liverpool Corporation's Tryweryn Reservoir Bill when it comes before the House to-night for report and third reading.

The Bill passed successfully through its second reading, and then, for questionable tactical reasons, on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1957, the opposition MPs accepted a "gentlemen's agreement" for the third reading to take place without a debate. It thus passed into law with a sizeable majority.

And, despite subsequent attempts to persuade Liverpool to build its reservoir elsewhere, the Corporation stuck firmly to its decision to drown Capel Celyn.

# Third reading majority of 96 ROYAL ASSENT FOR TRYWERYN BILL TO-DAY? 55

BY OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**L**IVERPOOL Corporation's Tryweryn Reservoir Bill was given a third reading in the Commons last night by 175 votes to seventy-nine, a majority of ninety-six. This compared with a majority of forty-nine on the second reading on July 3 when the voting was 166 votes in favour and 117 against.

The Bill is now expected to receive the Royal Assent and become law this evening.

For those in Wales who had been following developments, there was never really a hope in hell that Liverpool would do otherwise than submerge the valley. Work on the River Dee that had been going on quietly since early 1953 (fig 56) had been completed (fig 57) soon after the announcement of the Tryweryn reservoir scheme in December 1955 (fig 29).

# £500,000 DEE PLAN TO PREVENT FLOODS ALMOST COMPLETE

BY A "DAILY POST" REPORTER

**S**O much controversy has been caused by Liverpool Corporation's £16,500,000 plan to impound the River Tryweryn and create a storage reservoir at Capel Celyn that another scheme on the same river has progressed almost unnoticed, although it will affect every riverside farmer between Bala and Chester, and will touch the lives of



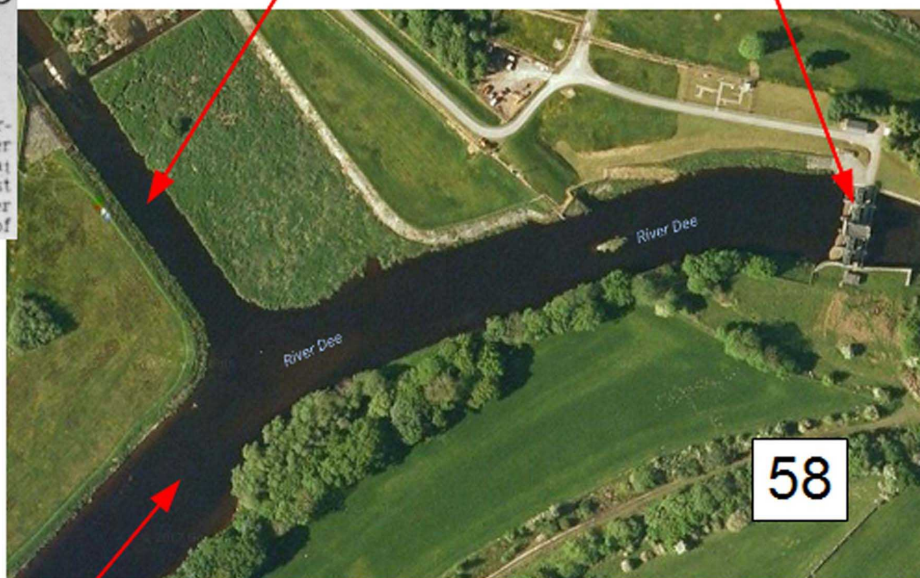
57

The new channel of the Dee emerging from Bala Lake in the extreme distance, and showing on right the junction of the new Tryweryn channel. Below the River Tryweryn comes tumbling over one of the new concrete weirs in the new channel.



Diverted Afon Tryweryn

New sluices



58

River Dee  
from Bala Lake  
(Telford's sluices removed)

On the 30<sup>th</sup> December of that year the Daily Post article had begun, 'So much controversy has been caused by the plan to impound the River Tryweryn...that another scheme on the same river has progressed almost unnoticed.'

# A plan for 56 the Dee

Edited by Gwilym Roberts

**I**T is a long way from Birkenhead to Bala and from Liverpool to Llandudno, writes my colleague Charles Quant. Yet into the lives of the people in all four places there enters one important factor, the River Dee.

Fig 54: Liverpool Daily Post, 31-07-1957. Fig 55: Liverpool Daily Post, 01-08-1957

Fig 56: Liverpool Daily Post, Welsh Edition, 16-03-1953. Fig 57: Liverpool Daily Post, Welsh Edition, 30-12-1955

Fig 58: Satellite image from Google Maps



That work had involved diverting the course of the Afon Tryweryn, removing Thomas Telford's sluices on the outlet of Bala Lake, and constructing new sluices downstream, in order that flood water from the Tryweryn could be controlled and used to top up Bala Lake in the winter time for providing a regulated discharge in the summer months. As a consequence, water for Liverpool could travel for free all the way along the River Dee to Huntington, near Chester, before entering a short aqueduct to link up, at Halton near Runcorn, with the aqueduct from Lake Vyrnwy.

As far as the community of Cwm Tryweryn was concerned, its fate had been sealed by that preparatory work on the River Dee. In their eyes, Dolanog had never been the first choice for a reservoir: merely part of Liverpool's deception (fig 41). Robert Rawlinson's proposal for Bala Lake from over a century ago was finally to come to fruition.



And so to the construction of the dam and reservoir and, incidentally, the origin of the title of this talk (fig 59).

It took two years for the detailed design work to be completed and for contractors to be selected. During the drought of 1959, parts of the Vyrnwy and Rivington reservoirs ran dry, and so it would have been a relief to Liverpool's Water Committee when work finally began in November 1959.

In order that the old road could be closed to through traffic at the site of what would become the dam, and in advance of impounding the Afon Gelyn to the west, a four and a half mile diversion was constructed and opened to traffic in March 1961.

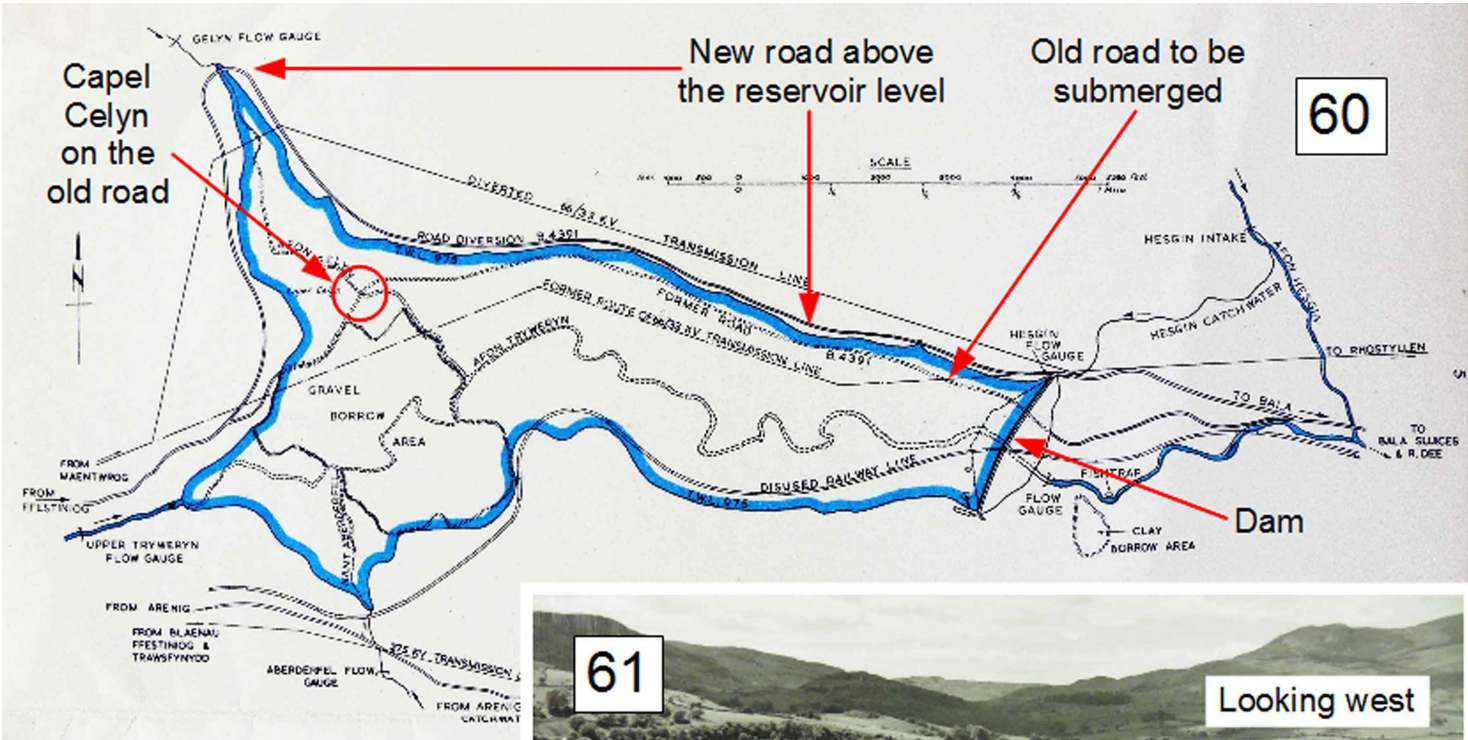
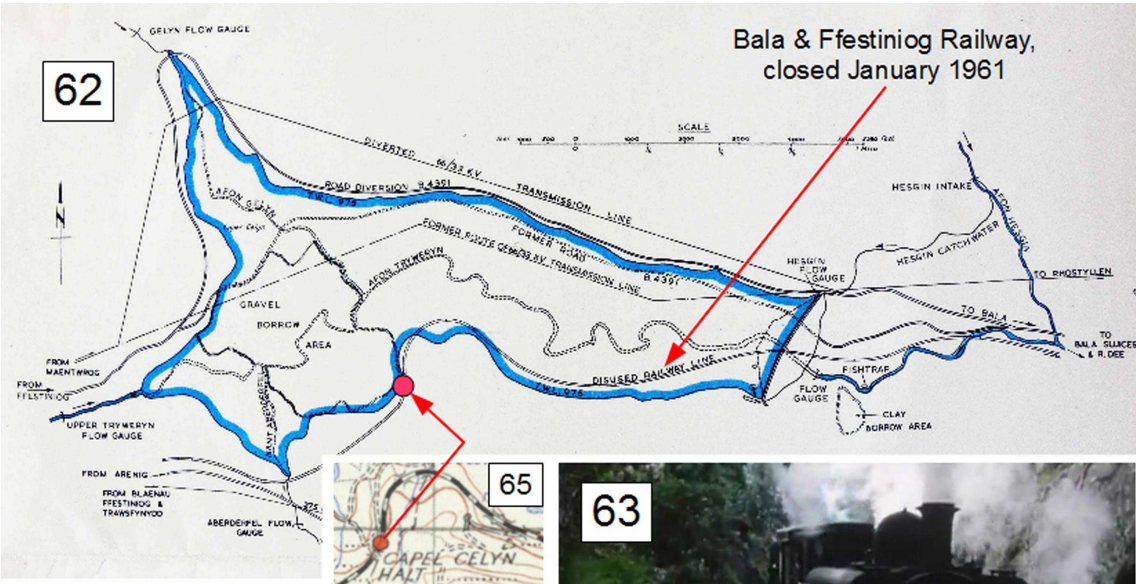


Fig 59: Geoff Charles Collection, from <https://www.peoplescollection.wales> (reproduced in [www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zt4hycw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zt4hycw))

Figs 60 & 61: City of Liverpool, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, 21-10-1965 (LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY)



And whilst preparations began on the dam and clearing the valley, the British Transport Commission conveniently closed the railway, thus saving Liverpool a considerable amount of money in not having to pay for the diversion. In retrospect it could, of course, be argued that Dr Beeching's plan, just two years later, would have axed the line anyway.



Halt closed January 1960



Whilst the new road was being completed, a coffer dam was constructed and work on the dam itself commenced. Two tunnels were driven, one of which was in order to carry the Afon Tryweryn under the site for the dam, from where it could then resume its course to Bala. The other was for receiving overflow water from the spillway.

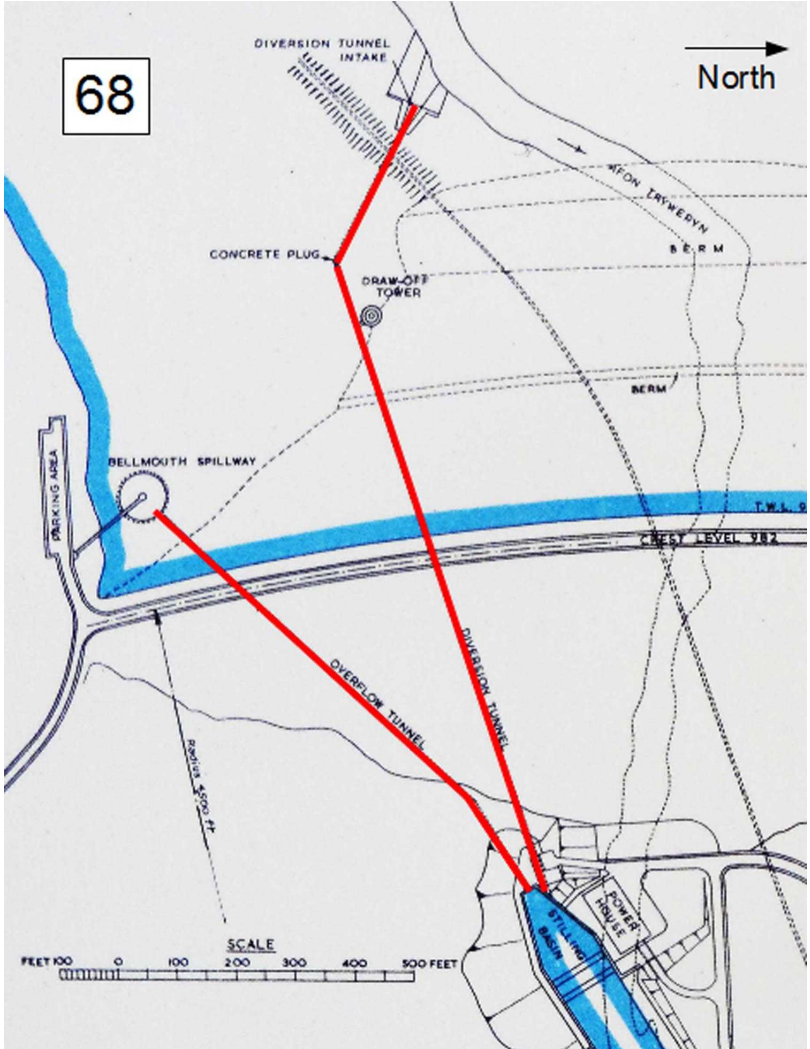
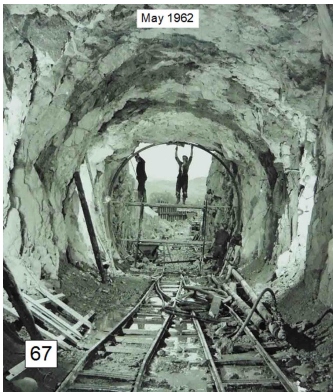


Fig 62: City of Liverpool, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, op. cit.

Fig 63: Peter Finnemore, *Water knows no frontiers; Tryweryn, story of a valley* ( <https://vimeo.com/28151998> )

Fig 64: Geoff Charles Collection, from <https://www.peoplescollection.wales>

Fig 65: 1953 Ordnance Survey, sheet 116

Fig 66: *Liverpool Echo*, 21-03-1961

Fig 67: LRO, *Photographs & Small Prints, Water Supply: Reservoirs: Tryweryn Valley*

Fig 68: City of Liverpool, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, 21-10-1965 (LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY)



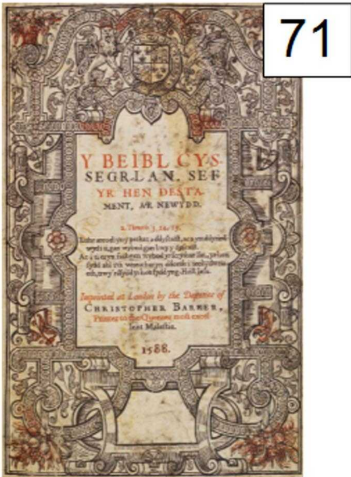
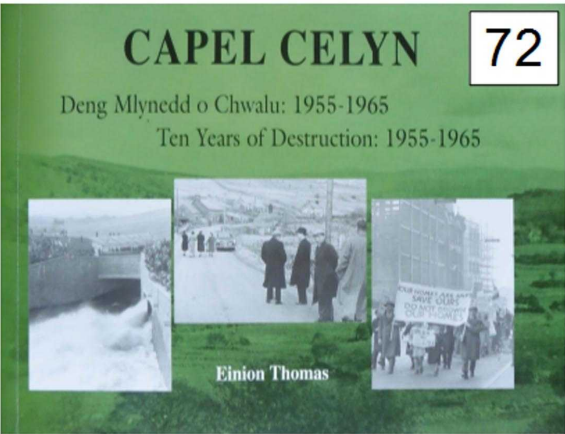
By 1963, with trees and vegetation cleared away, and replaced with craters as a result of the excavation of gravel and clay, the valley had taken on the appearance of a lunar landscape. With the incessant passing backwards and forwards of lorries through the village, throwing up clouds of dust in dry weather and mud in the wet, it was finally time to say goodbye at both school and chapel.

Endings and farewells

25<sup>th</sup> July 1963.  
The last day of school  
for Martha Jane Roberts  
and her 14 pupils



28<sup>th</sup> September 1963.  
The Chapel dissolution service



Removing the Bible

The 1588 Welsh Bible

In the words of the 1536 Act, passed by an English parliament, Wales was '*for ever henceforth incorporated...and...annexed*', and the nation was swallowed up into the '*Realm of England*'.

The speaking of Welsh was suppressed, and Wales the nation would have disappeared if the language had been lost, and Gwynfor Evans wrote that,

*'It is not too much to say that the Welsh Bible, published in 1588, was the salvation of the Welsh language.'*

The chapel was the centre of a rich social and cultural life. And so, for this entirely Welsh speaking village of Capel Celyn and the surrounding Tryweryn valley, removing the Bible from the Chapel as the final act of dissolution – forced upon this powerless community by what they regarded as an English bully – would have had immense significance.

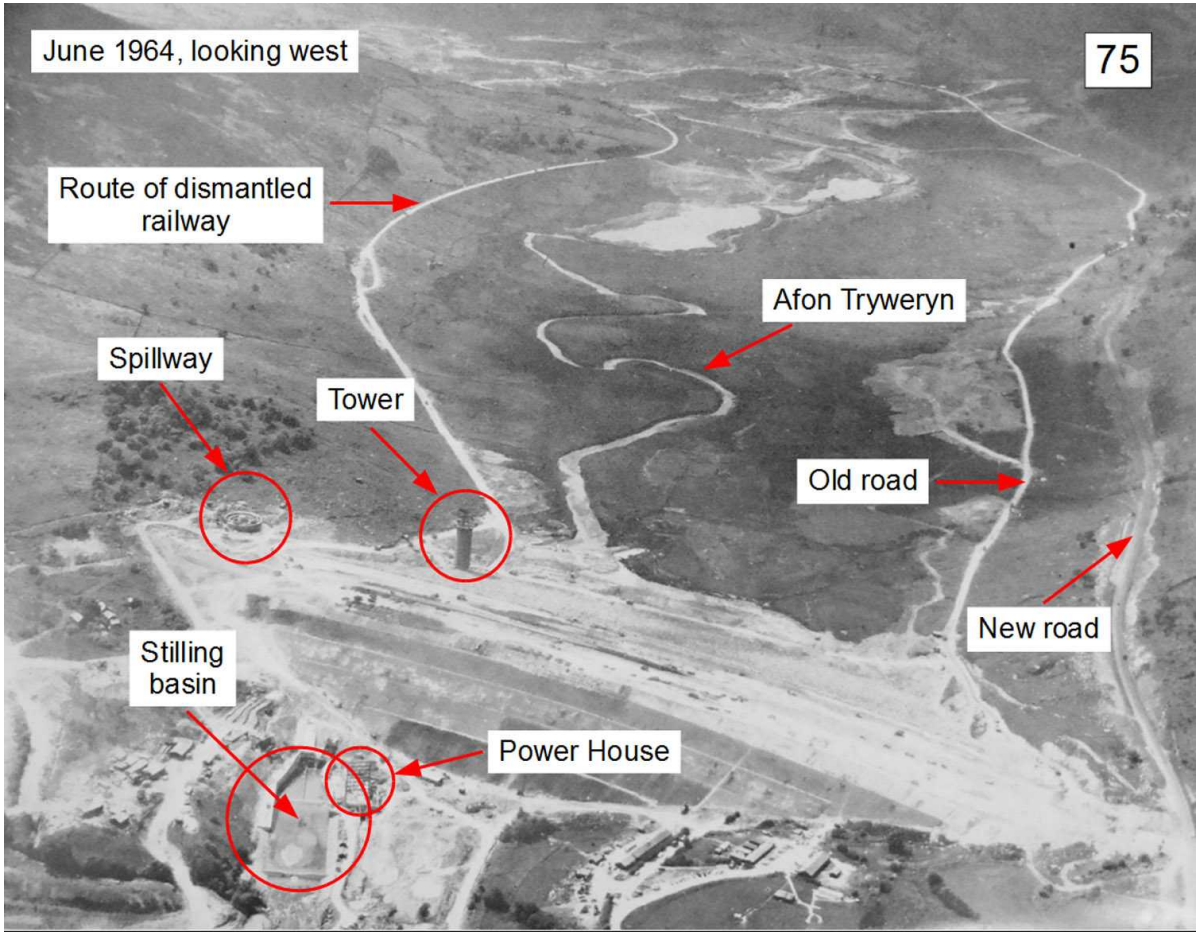
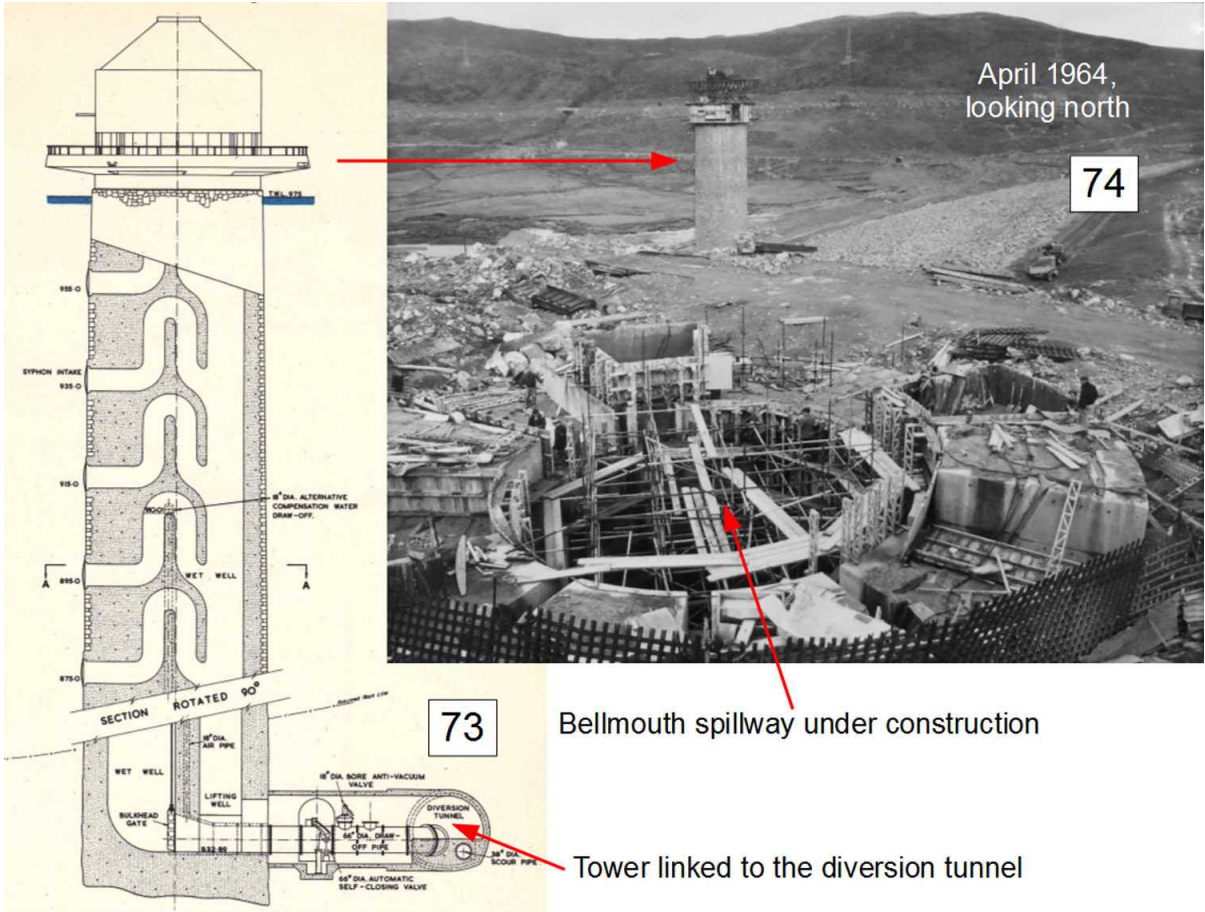
You can read more about the life of the community that was sacrificed in a very moving account by Einion Thomas, '*Capel Celyn: Ten Years of Destruction: 1955-1965*', which provides the text in both Welsh and English.

Figs 69 & 70: Einion Thomas, *Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction: 1955-1965*, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, pp 88, 89 (book cover: fig 72)

Fig 71: *Welsh Language*, Wikipedia, retrieved 18-11-2016



By April 1964, construction of both the tower and the spillway was well advanced. The tower was located immediately next to – and would eventually be connected to – the diversion tunnel. The syphons were designed for drawing off water at five different levels without the need for large diameter valves.



On 1<sup>st</sup> September, the diversion tunnel was plugged upstream of the tower, and the process of impounding began.

Adjacent to the stilling basin, work continued on constructing the power house which would generate electricity for Merseyside and North Wales.

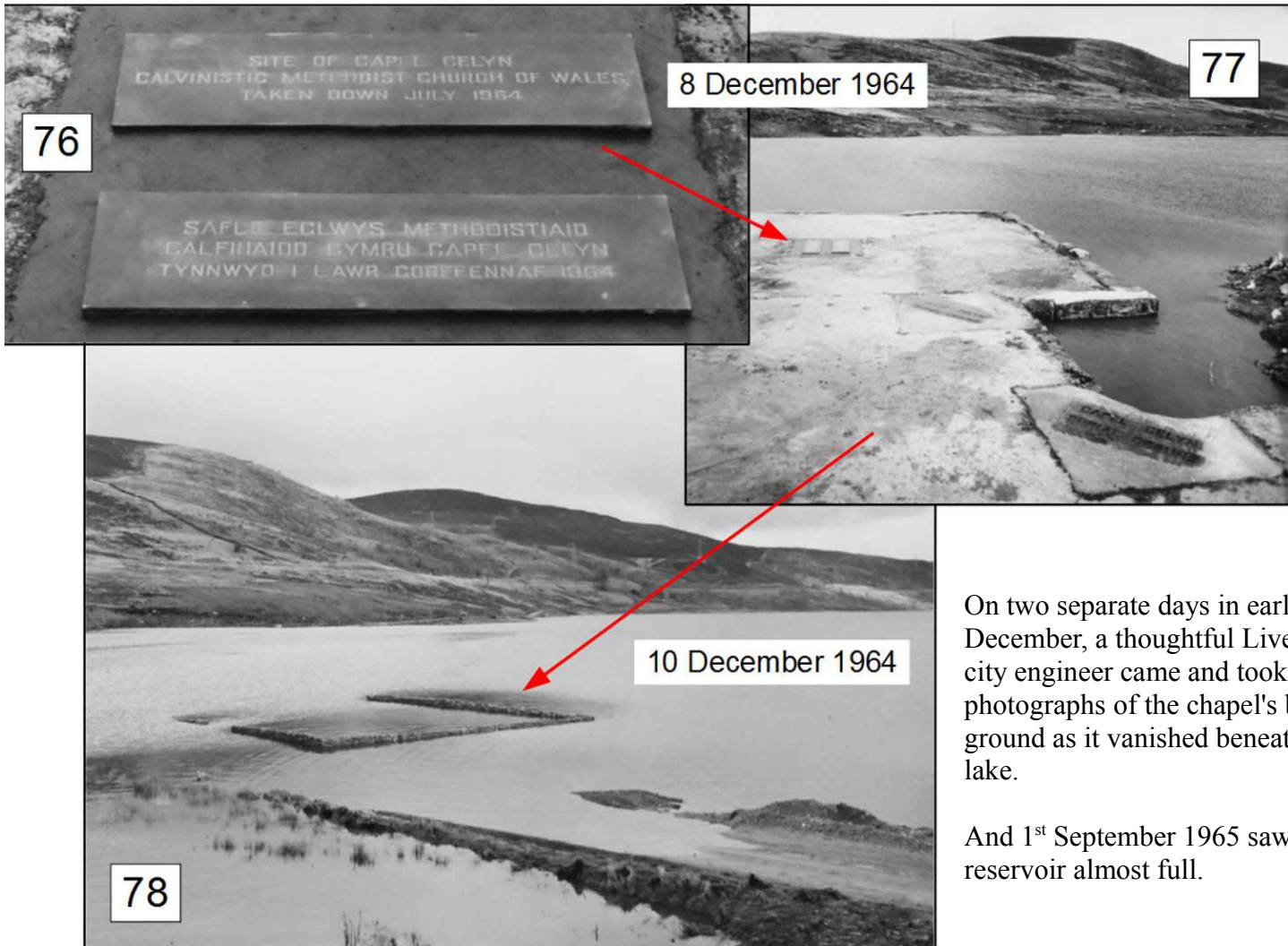
It would take a year for the reservoir to fill and submerge the old road, the track of the dismantled railway, the remnants of the village of Capel Celyn, and the chapel cemetery.

Fig 73: Liverpool Corporation Water Works, River Dee Scheme, Works in the Tryweryn Valley, July 1964; author's copy

Fig 74: LRO, Photographs & Small Prints, Water Supply, Reservoirs: Tryweryn Valley

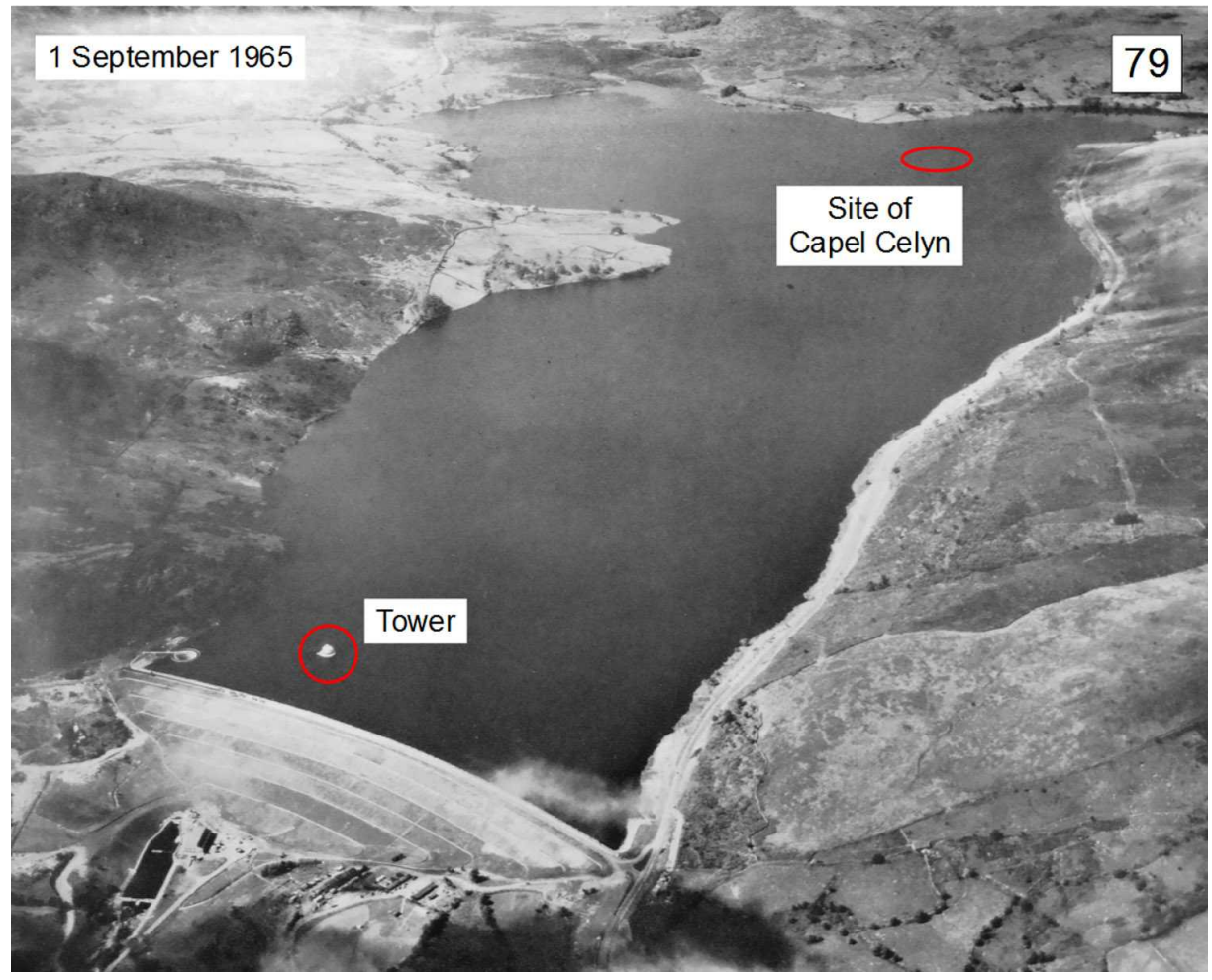
Fig 75: City of Liverpool, The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn, 21-10-1965 (LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY)





On two separate days in early December, a thoughtful Liverpool city engineer came and took final photographs of the chapel's burial ground as it vanished beneath the lake.

And 1<sup>st</sup> September 1965 saw the reservoir almost full.



Figs 76 – 78: LRO, *Photographs & Small Prints, Water Supply, Reservoirs: Tryweryn Valley*

Fig 79: City of Liverpool, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, 21-10-1965 (LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY)



# LIVERPOOL CORPORATION WATER WORKS

80

## TRYWERYN RESERVOIR (Llyn Tryweryn Mawr)

### 1. GENERAL

The Tryweryn reservoir was authorised by the Liverpool Corporation Act 1957 and will impound the water of the Afon Tryweryn at a point 5 miles upstream of its confluence with the River Dee at Bala. All water from the reservoir will be discharged into the Tryweryn and will thence flow down the Dee. At Huntington, about 2 miles upstream of Chester Weir and about 70 miles downstream of the reservoir, the Corporation may abstract from the Dee up to 65 m.g.d.

The Corporation will regulate the discharge from the reservoir and the Dee and Clwyd River Board will operate the Bala Lake works and control sluices, (both in accordance with general directions to be issued from time to time by the River Board and made by that Board with the assistance of a consultative Committee), so as to maintain in the River Dee the prescribed flow of 150 m.g.d. at the Board's Erbistock gauging station but having regard also to the other purposes specified in the Act.

The Act requires the Corporation to discharge compensation water into the Tryweryn at the foot of the dam at the rate of 7 m.g.d. during October to March and 14 m.g.d. during April to September.

A road diversion, about 4½ miles long, has been constructed by the Corporation along the north side of the reservoir to replace a length of the Bala-Ffestiniog Road (B.4391) which will be submerged by the reservoir.

The branch railway line between Bala and Trawsfynydd has been closed to traffic by the B.T.C. and the track has been taken up. The Corporation, having thus been relieved of the need to divert a length of it at the dam, has been authorised to contribute to the cost of (a) a link line between the two railway stations at Blaenau Ffestiniog so that Trawsfynydd may be connected by rail to the coast and (b) road improvements in the Tryweryn Valley and in Cwm Prysor.

### 2. CATCHMENT

The catchment of the reservoir rises to 2,800 ft. above sea level at Arenig Fawr and is mainly moorland: the Corporation is not acquiring the catchment. Run off from the subsidiary catchment of the Afon Hesgin will be led into the reservoir by a 42 inch piped catchwater 5,020ft. long. Later another catchwater will be constructed round the eastern and southern slopes of Arenig Fawr to divert into the Nant Aberderfel leading to the reservoir the headwaters of the Afon Erwent, Afon Dylo, Afon Llafar and Nant-hir which flow at present into Bala Lake.

The average annual rainfall over the whole area is about 77 ins: on Arenig Fawr it is over 90 ins. and at the dam 60 ins.

The Water Committee had originally decided to call the reservoir, 'Llyn Tryweryn Mawr', the Great Tryweryn Lake, but was eventually persuaded by the local council and Plaid Cymru to name it Llyn Celyn in lasting memory of the community that had been sacrificed.



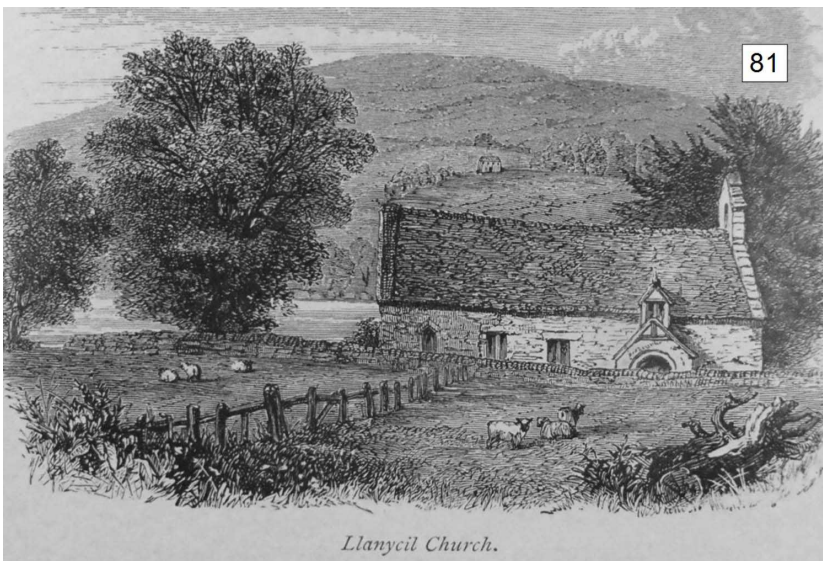
38

With the reservoir almost full, a date was fixed for the inauguration ceremony: the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1965.

Dafydd Roberts, chairman of the Capel Celyn Defence Committee, perhaps thankfully, did not survive to witness the event. Just six days before the inauguration, and at the age of 73, he was buried in the peaceful churchyard at Llanycil on the northern shore of Bala Lake. His beloved wife would wait a further 23 years before being able to join him.



82



81

Llanycil Church.

Fig 80: Liverpool Corporation Water Works, River Dee Scheme, Works in the Tryweryn Valley, July 1964; author's copy

Fig 81: J S Howson, *The River Dee*, Virtue, Spalding & Co, 1875, p 24

Fig 82: Gravestone of Dafydd Roberts and Ellen Ann Roberts. Author's photo, June 2017





83



84

Earlier – in July of that year – as the reservoir was filling, the excited Water Board Committee had considered inviting someone of importance to carry out the official opening ceremony. The Duke of Edinburgh – who also carried the title Earl of Merioneth – was the first choice, but had the good sense not to be available. Wisely, the Prime Minister was also unavailable, as was the Minister of State for Wales. And so the job fell into the lap of the chairman of the Water Committee, Alderman Frank Cain...

Then, two days before the inauguration, a Liverpool councillor said that the city was showing a lack of sensitivity, and that the event might be regarded as *"an affront to many of those who live in the country in which the ceremony is to take place."* And the Daily Post's leader writer concurred. But Alderman Cain, apparently oblivious to the bitter end, with 500 invitations having been sent out, was damn well going to have his bloody ceremony. And it very nearly was.



85



86



Fig 83: Liverpool Daily Post, 12-07-1965

Fig 84: Liverpool Echo, 19-10-1965

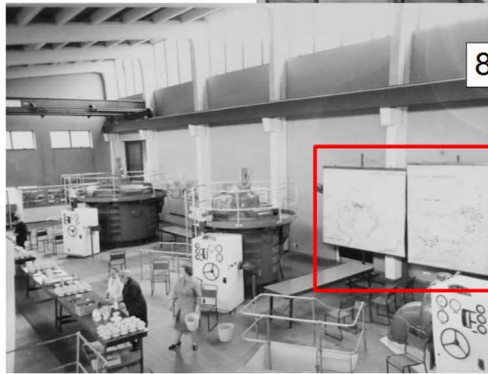
Fig 85: Liverpool Daily Post, 19-10-1965

Fig 86: Liverpool Daily Post 20-10-1965





And so, the following day, the cups and saucers and nibbles were laid out in the power house, together with more cups and saucers in an overflow room, and some splendid wall charts were on display to show what had been drowned.



87



88



90

It would therefore have been something of a surprise for Alderman Cain when the event turned out to be slightly different to what had been intended.

CITY OFFICIALS IN STORMY  
SCENES AT LLYN CELYN  
**Welshmen  
jeer as  
dam opens**  
BY "DAILY POST" REPORTERS

92



91



89

For, as the Alderman and his party arrived, the Welsh gathered to wave their friendly welcome banners and to delay the smooth progress of the cavalcade of cars..

Surrounded by the noise outside, but having reached the comparative safety of the power house, the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress and principal guests clutched copies of the inauguration brochure, and posed nervously for a commemorative photograph.



93

Figs 87 – 89 & 93: LRO, *Photographs & Small Prints, Water Supply, Reservoirs: Tryweryn Valley*

Figs 90 & 91: Video stills from *iWonder: Tryweryn: The drowning of a village*, BBC ( [www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zt4hycw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zt4hycw) )

Fig 92: *Liverpool Daily Post*, 22-10-1965





94

After the guests had entered the power house, the crowd surged down the reservoir bank and gathered above the stilling basin. And, finding that the microphone wires had been cut, an apprehensive inauguration trio – the Chairman of the Water Committee, the Water Engineer and the Lord Mayor – decided to abandon their speeches and to complete the ceremony in a hasty 3 minutes.



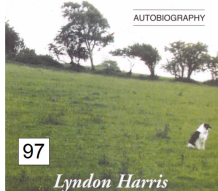
95

In 1965, Lyndon Harris had just become the city's first public relations officer, and therefore accompanied the Lord Mayor at the ceremony. Writing in his memoirs many years later he commented:

*'The police were there in large numbers and as the situation began to deteriorate, the Lord Mayor was advised to return to Liverpool while the going was good. I kept a very low profile and was mightily relieved when it was all over.'*

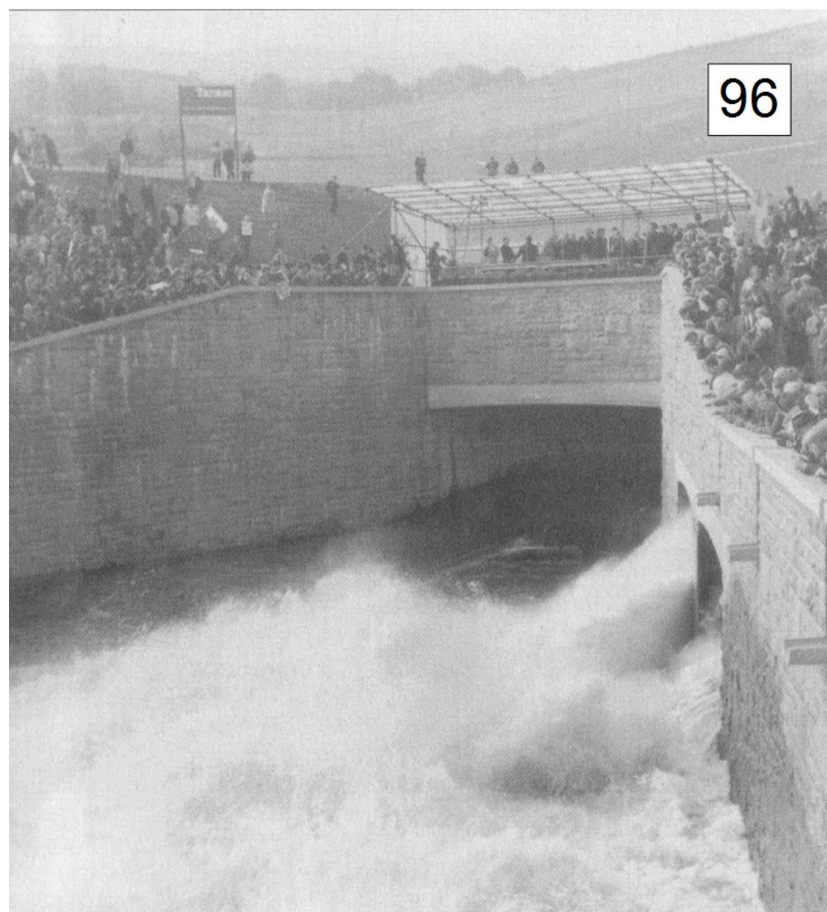
**MY PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS**

AUTOBIOGRAPHY



97

Lyndon Harris



96

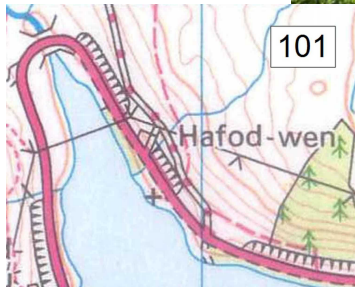
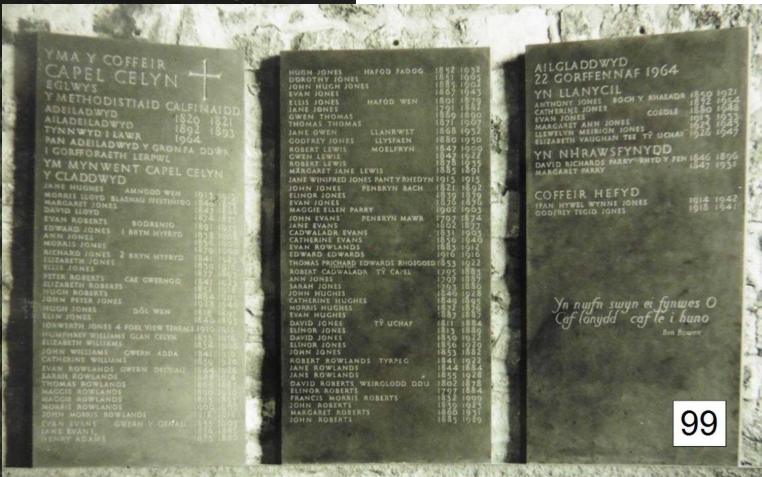
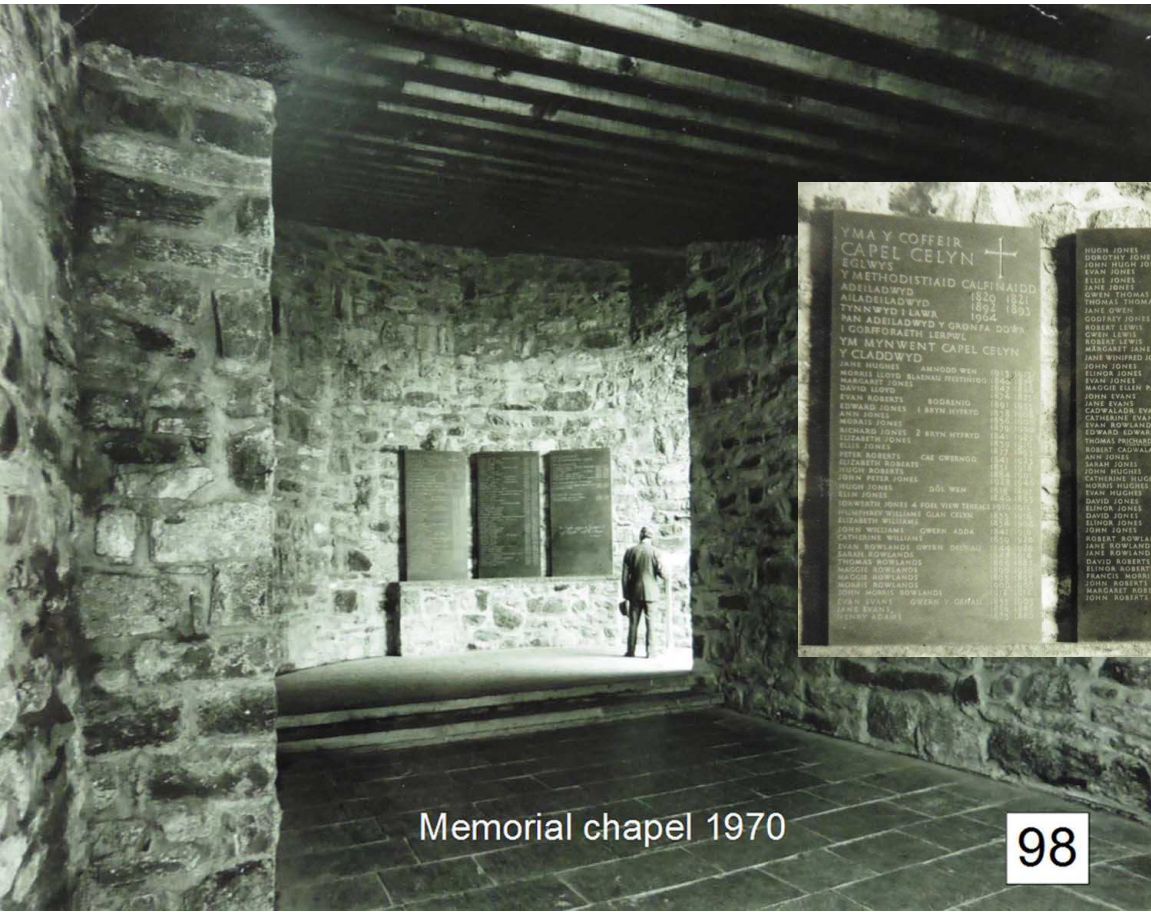
Figs 94 – 96: Einion Thomas, *Capel Celyn. Ten Years of Destruction: 1955-1965*, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas and Gwynedd Council, 2007, pp 123 – 125

Fig 97: Lyndon Harris, *My Public Relationships*, Marylyn Publishers, Llandeilo, 2008; ISBN 978-0-9560836-0-9 (copy in the LHS library)



A few years after the reservoir had been opened, a Memorial Chapel, designed by a Welsh architect and paid for by Liverpool Corporation, was completed at the edge of the lake. Relatives of those that had been buried at Capel Celyn had been given the choice of having the remains left undisturbed beneath the reservoir, protected by a concrete covering, or being moved to other churchyards, and the plaques indicate the choices that had been made.

Sadly, as a result of vandalism in recent years, the chapel is now locked and remains in a neglected state.



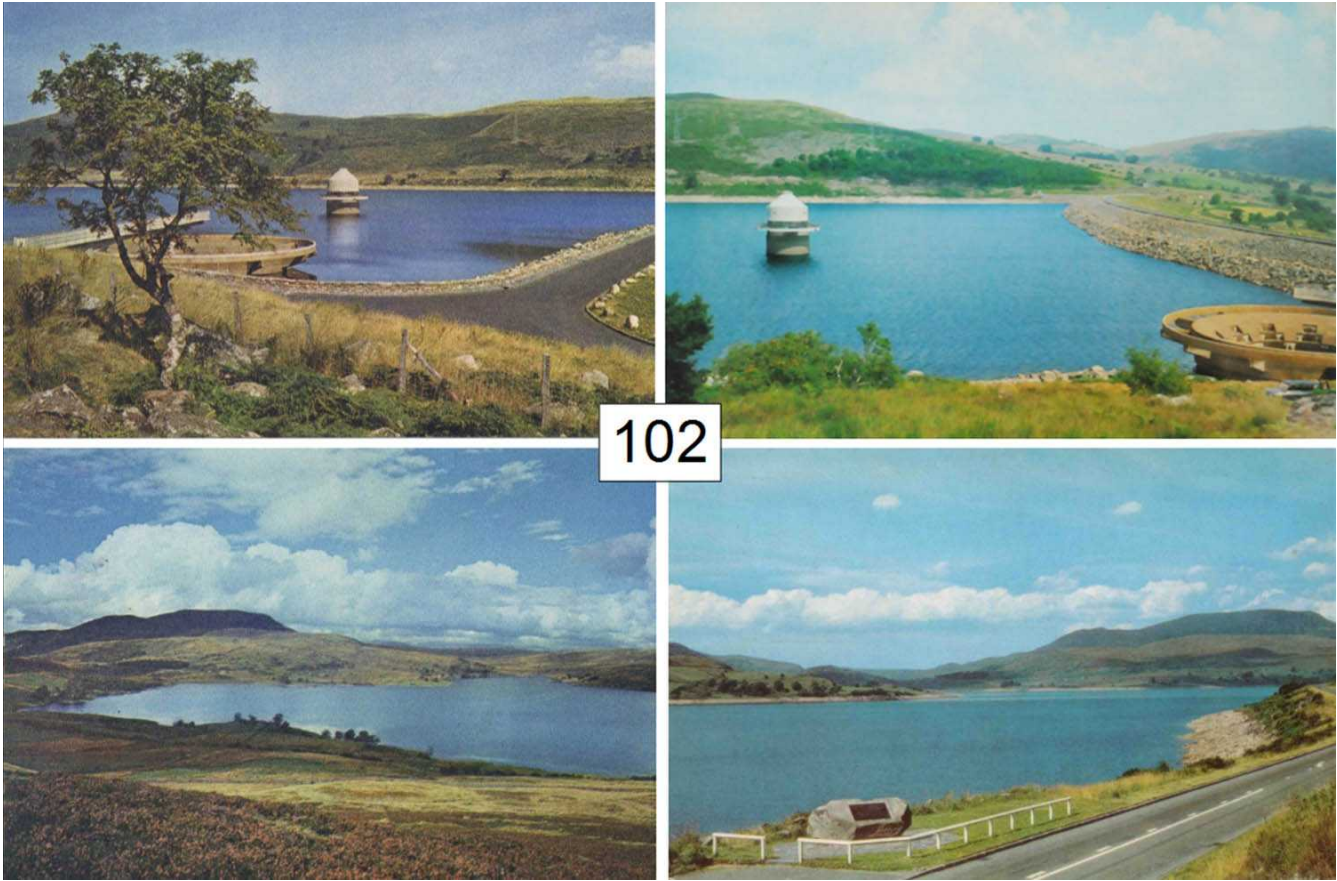
The chapel (facing the reservoir where once the Afon Gelyn flowed) with the entrance to the graveyard to the right

Figs 98 & 99: LRO, *Photographs & Small Prints, Water Supply, Reservoirs: Tryweryn Valley* (City Engineer's Dept., 02-10-1970)

Fig 100: The chapel (at the side of the A4212, marked with a cross on the 2009 OS Landranger sheet 125: fig 101). Author's photo, June 2017



With a parking area having been provided adjacent to the bellmouth spillway (see fig 68), the reservoir soon became a tourist attraction and a subject for a variety of picture postcards:-



However, except for the Quaker stone (bottom right postcard), there is no official reference at the dam or around Llyn Celyn to record the village and valley that existed before the drowning, or to acknowledge Liverpool's involvement. Only the tourist car park (to the left of the bellmouth spillway, top left postcard) – long since abandoned and now only accessible on foot – reminds visitors in handwritten white paint on the ground that *'Liverpool must suffer for Tryweryn'*.

Clywedog Reservoir (1963-67): water for Birmingham and the English Midlands

Not to be outdone by Liverpool, whilst the dam for Llyn Celyn was still being constructed, and in order to flood yet another Welsh valley, Birmingham began work on damming the *Afon Clywedog*, a tributary of the River Severn, some 15 miles north of its earlier reservoirs.

It was viewed by many in Wales as yet another example of English oppression.



Fig 102: Clockwise from top left: J A Dixon, NWales7051; Bamforth, WT804; Cotman, KNWBA111; J A Dixon, NWales6168

Fig 103: *Clywedog Reservoir*, Wikipedia, retrieved 27-01-2017



In July 1966, less than a year after the Llyn Celyn reservoir had opened, and whilst the Clywedog dam was still under construction, a by-election was called in the parliamentary seat of Carmarthen following the death of the Labour MP. Gwynfor Evans stood on behalf of Plaid Cymru, and – as a direct consequence of the reaction in Wales to what Liverpool and Birmingham had done – in a stunning victory, he won the seat. It was the first that Plaid Cymru had ever won, and the victory became celebrated by a ballad which mentions Tryweryn, Clywedog, and the Tywi (a river which flows through Carmarthen and into Carmarthen Bay).

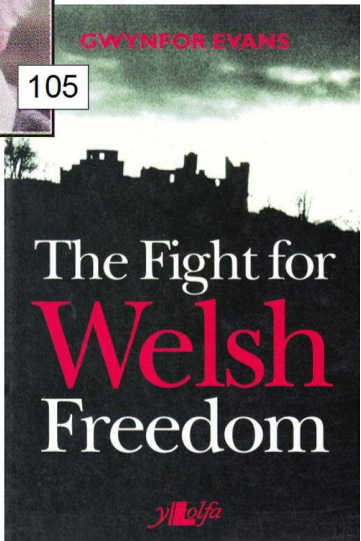
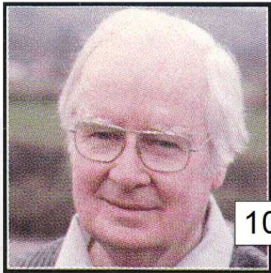
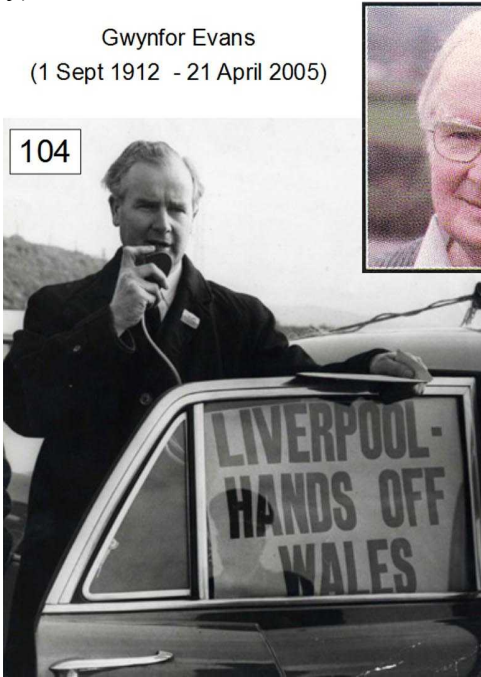
These are three of its verses (reproduced from Gwynfor Evans' book):

*When Gwynfor got in for Carmarthen  
Old Merlin was roused by our roar  
And we sang the National Anthem  
As it's never been sung before.*

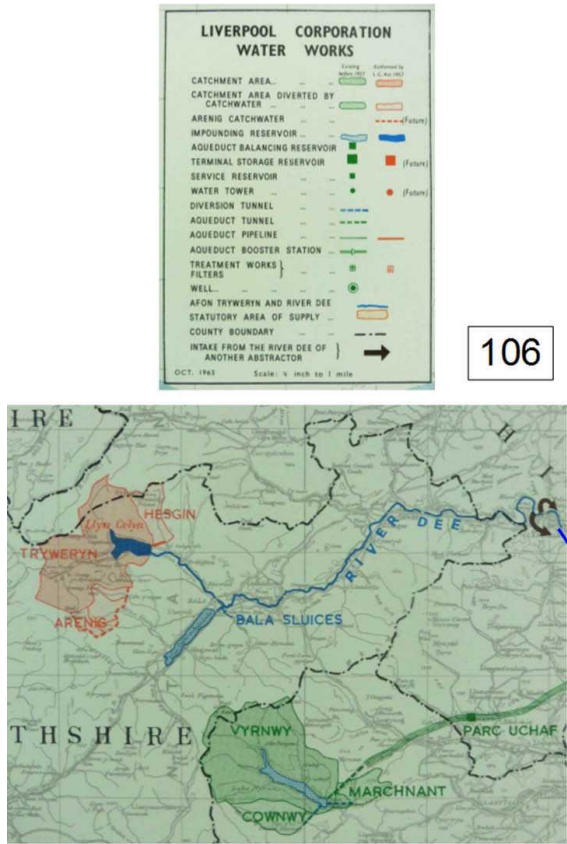
*The Tryweryn flowed into the Tywi  
And the Clywedog flood came down  
To burst the dams of betrayal  
That night in Carmarthen town.*

*When Gwynfor got in for Carmarthen  
The summer night was sweet  
The breeze blew in from the hayfields  
And the people danced in the street.*

Gwynfor Evans  
(1 Sept 1912 - 21 April 2005)



The drownings by Liverpool and Birmingham of Welsh valleys, and the by-election victory, are thought by a number of historians as marking an awakening of the Welsh nation's memory. Many other events would follow, including the creation of the National Assembly for Wales in which Plaid Cymru now plays a major part, and Parliamentary Acts making Welsh an officially recognised language within Wales.



Gwynfor Evans was a pacifist and had always urged for demonstrations to be peaceful.

For many Welsh people, he was a modern day Owain Glyndŵr, using the power of eloquence to fight his battles. He died in April 2005, and therefore never heard Liverpool's belated apology a few months later.

So as we drink our tea and coffee, we might perhaps reflect upon the fact that some of that water has passed over the lost villages of Llanwddyn and Capel Celyn – both submerged to provide Merseyside with a secure supply.

Fig 104: From Abandoned Communities.....Reservoirs of Wales ( [www.abandonedcommunities.co.uk](http://www.abandonedcommunities.co.uk) ); original source not identified

Fig 105: Gwynfor Evans, *The Fight for Welsh Freedom*, Y Lolfa Cyf., 2000; ISBN 0-86243-515-3 (Gwynfor's photo by Marian Delyth)

Fig 106: City of Liverpool, *The Inauguration of Llyn Celyn*, 21-10-1965 (LRO ref. H 628.1q LLY)



## Postscript: the Memorial Chapel in 2017

The grass in the chapel cemetery and along the short track from the A4212 is clearly regularly cut, but the chapel itself shows various signs of the vandalism that has caused it to be locked, and the building seems to have become neglected. Although Liverpool City Council may not be obliged to contribute towards the chapel's protection and maintenance, perhaps, as a sign of the genuineness of its 2005 apology, it should do so.

Author's photos, June 2017

