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RED ROSES – Days of Yore:

The Community Association established its recent Newsletter to provide news about regular activities at the hall and planned events, together with a curious story or two, a short rhyme and a few brain teasers. To date things are going well but the Association would be glad of further enquiries from anyone who would like to receive the Newsletter by e-mail. E.C.A's Facebook page is also doing well, serving to provide sundry amounts of information. Occasionally, info surfaces that is rather too long to include in the Newsletter (except for the use of a second page at notable extra expense for the printed run-off) but which will be of interest to some readers on the Facebook page instead. We hope you like this run through memory lane. (Those who are not keen on reading at some length – time to 'change the telly channel').

Many years ago, at the time of the first world war, a Home Office camp was established in Red Roses. The camp was created in an attempt to remove from prison the conscientious objectors to the 1914-1918 war, placing them in camps instead to carry out farming work.

“O happy band of Pilgrims  
From prison we did tread;  
To the HO camp at the Roses,  
To do national work instead.  
Here is my name for all to see,  
A man who has no LSD.  
His country pays him 4/8,  
For walking through a prison gate.  
Although invited out to dine,  
He must be back by half past nine.  
Remembrance is all I ask,  
But. If remembrance proves a task -  
Forget!

L Linscott. Newton Abbot, Devon.

These days it's rather amazing to think of a man from Devon coming to Red Roses from an erstwhile temporary prison for objecting to joining the armed forces. We have been free of such a concept for a very

long time so it is difficult for today's generation to understand it. Similarly difficult is the task of pinning down the exact location of where such a place actually sprung up. In this case, the HO camp was situated just inside the entrance to Coomb Farm – an occurrence and a location that have long been forgotten. It is said that newly transported camp-mates were given leaflets on 'how to grow potatoes.' Many of them (from cities) were surprised to learn that potatoes had eyes, prompting one man to retort – 'if potatoes have eyes, surely THEY should be issued with the leaflet to learn how to grow themselves.' (Today we might add the qualification – lol).

Many years ago, only eight cottages existed in Red Roses, along with the village pub and the farm known as Avola, tucked behind the Sporting Chance. Adjacent to the Chance (once known as the Llwyngwair Arms) the three terraced cottages were once four, the two most easterly being converted into one property. At the other end of the terrace lived a wizard woodworker called John James who was known for his carpentry excellence, his ability to make anything out of wood. John's carpentry shop was actually located in the cottage garden and was a real hive of activity. At the same time, the village boasted the presence of a butcher – Mr Ossie Owen, who, apart from running his shop owned a slaughter house a short distance from the carpenter's shop. Ossie would sell villagers a joint of meat from his shop but also from his mobile butcher's van, making the short but poorly sprung journey to Tavernspite to sell his prime cuts. Even more than that, Ossie had a stall in Pembroke Dock market where he would be accompanied by a Mr Jenkins who lived and worked at Yetwen Farm where he grew the vegetables to sell at the market. (No sign in those days of the sophisticated water canals seen today to gently float apples to the packing stage).

Before the construction of the council bungalows, a cottage stood in the same location, long since demolished. Another was located beyond the fields behind the council bungalows in Moorlands, where Mr William James carried out his trade as a stonemason. William was known as a very skilled craftsman whose skills were constantly in demand in the locality. Another cottage stood alongside the old Calvinistic chapel before the chapel was demolished and replaced by the village hall. Although this cottage did not form part of the chapel grounds, it was always known as 'Chapel House.'

The late Narberth born farmer, Bryant Rees had an uncle who carried out farming but was also a wheelwright and blacksmith. Bryant once wrote how he remembered his uncle building the hub of the wheel before adding the wooden spokes and rim. Then, in the blacksmiths shop which formed part of Avola farm, he would apply the outer steel tire to the wooden rim. The vice, the steel bending plate and the horse securing ring was retained by Mr Rees for many years and might still be stored on the farm, even today. In addition to the Smithy there was a shop selling general groceries, and across the road there was a petrol pump operated by Bryant's aunt and uncle. They once sold petrol for 1/6 a gallon. King Salman of Saudi Arabia (he who oversees sales of crude oil of ten million barrels a day) – take note. We'd like some gas in Red Roses for one and sixpence a gallon please.

Avola farm itself had an interesting beginning. Many years ago, Pendine sands was witness to a terrible wrecking of the ship, THE AVOLA which was carrying a large cargo of timber at the time. Considerable quantities of wood washed up onto Pendine Beach and much of the timber was used to construct a number of the farm buildings – hence the name, 'Avola Farm.'

In such days of yore, the ten shillings per week farm rental monies was paid annually to the Llwyngwair Estate, owned at the time by sisters, Miss Davies (never married) and Mrs Ebsworth. The harvest in, and business done, rents were taken to the Estate in September whereupon Miss Davies would furnish the youthful Bryant with a box of apples that he might consume them at his pleasure. Well fed, the budding new farmer would at other times trot on horseback to collect weekly supplies from Whitland, taking the shortest route along Picking Gate Lane through to White Lion and then on down the lane to Whitland. Sufficient provisions were always supplied by the industrious Caleb Rees, and partners Thomas and Morris.

In the old chapel cemetery (now the Community Memorial Garden) there is said to be thirteen people laid to rest, the last being Mr James Protheroe on the 19th January, 1971. Such matters reach the attention of people far and wide, as only quite recently enquiries have been received from a genealogist resident in Durham who seeks the names engraved on the gravestones still seen today in the peaceful memorial garden. Every effort will be made to provide this gentleman with the information he wants, which will help clarify family links with a researcher who now lives a considerable distance away from the village.

Since, as it were, the beginning of time, there had never been an established meeting place in the village of Red Roses where villagers could get together for both formal and informal purposes. Until 1985, Council meetings were held in a room in Avola House, as were parliamentary and local elections. Today, following the sterling efforts of those who raised the necessary funds, the village has the popular community hall which now fulfils all those original functions and a great deal more. The grand memorial stone that once stood alongside the busy A477 trunk road, now rises proudly from the turves of the peaceful garden surrounding it, displaying the names of the brave who fought and died for our future all those years ago. A little while ago, the present sons and daughters who even now ‘walk through the valley of the shadow of death’ met at the memorial stone to pay tribute to those who served their country. We are urged to never forget – not even the simple history cited here.

“There was a time that time has passed.  
When I was in bloom like thee.  
There is a time which will come,  
When thou will fade like me.”

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A very interesting read - thank you.

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