

Llanymynech Amateur Dramatic Society presents



In the Limelight

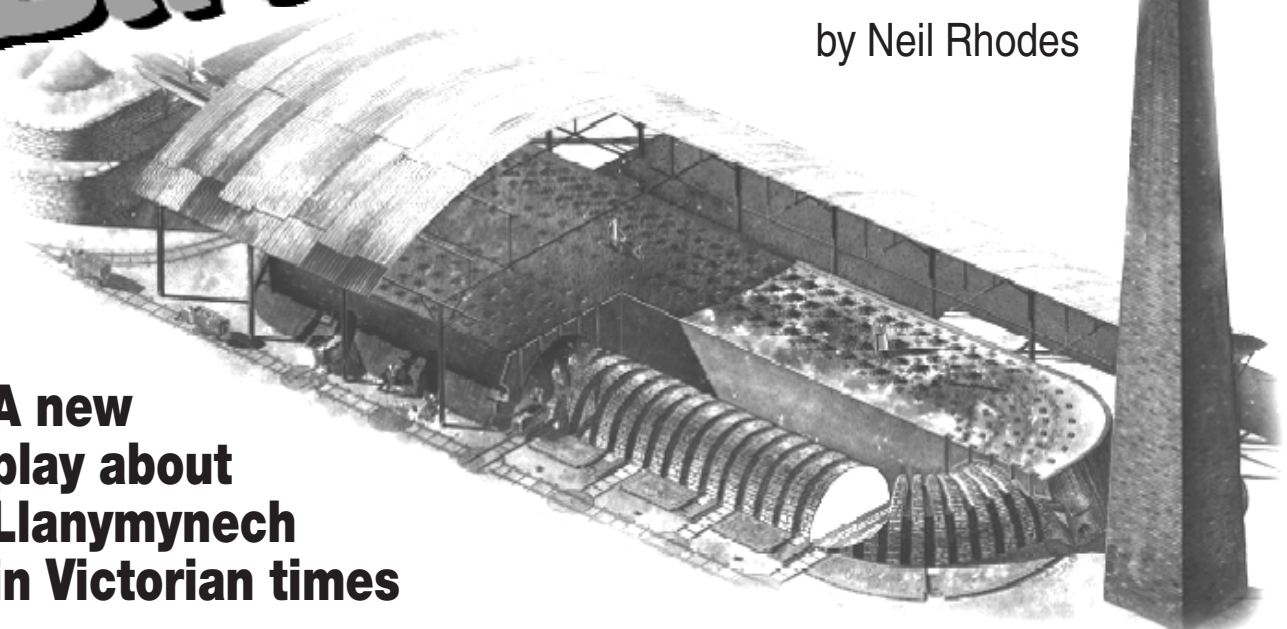
by Neil Rhodes

**A new
play about
Llanymynech
in Victorian times**

**An outdoor promenade
production of music, dancing,
history, magic and fireworks,
celebrating the completion of
the restoration project of
Llanymynech Limeworks**

**12-page souvenir
programme**

£1.50



*In the
Limelight*

Our journey through 70 dramatic years

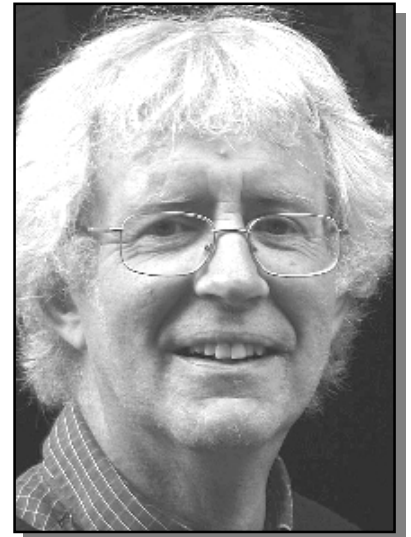
LLANYMYNECH Limeworks once rang with the noise of hammers and air compressors, as smoke billowed out of the kilns and dust blew, and wagons and locomotives clanged on the tracks.

Now it is a beautiful, quiet, wooded place with only the ghosts of the people who worked there.

This play is a journey from 1845 to 1914, a dramatic look at the Limeworks from early Victorian enterprise, through success and expansion with the railways, to decline and the Great War.

I hope no-one minds that it is a literal journey too, from the Stables up towards the Tally Hut, and down to the Hoffmann Kiln.

But this way we can see what is here now, and what used to be here, and try and raise some of those past ghosts.



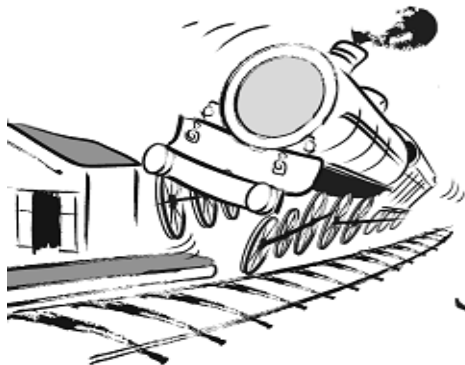
Neil Rhodes

Acknowledgements:

The Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project – and 'In the Limelight' could only have taken place with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, Shropshire County Council, Oswestry Borough Council, the European Union, British Waterways and Llanymynech and Pant Parish Council, the LADS, the Llanymynech Heritage Focus Group, the LLIMEYS, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the Montgomery Wildlife Trust, the Duchess Countess Trust, Shropshire Union Canal Society, the Friends of Montgomery Canal, Cambrian Railway Trust, Clwyd and Powys Archaeological Trust and Carreghofa Community Council, Llanymynech Village Hall, Llanymynech and Carreghofa WIs, Llanymynech Historical Society, Bryn Offa and Carreghofa CP Schools and many local individuals including Tony Beardsell, Paddy Martin, Glyn and Dilys Gaskill, Vivien Byrne, Martin Young, Joan Zorn, Steve and Irene Evison, Chris Backshall and Mike Worsfold.

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In the Limelight

In the
Limelight



THIS Llanymynech Amateur Dramatic Society (LADS) production of 'In the Limelight' is a spectacular off-shoot of the £900,000 Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project which has conserved, restored and interpreted this fascinating example of our industrial past.

Llanymynech's quarries and kilns once provided building materials, agricultural fertiliser and a key ingredient for iron and steel making for the whole of the Midlands.

The Limeworks Heritage Project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Shropshire County Council and others, has had a significant 'community' element. The Heritage Area is widely used and loved by local people and now attracts many visitors. It was important right from the start to maintain the level of community enthusiasm that had brought the project to fruition in the first place.

But community activities do not just happen, whether they are community archaeological excavations (there have been two!) or a community play. Peter Dunhill, the Llanymynech Limeworks Community Project Officer, commissioned local writer and animator Neil Rhodes as long ago as 2006 to explore the possibilities of a large-scale outdoor play in the same vein as the successful 'Views from the Hill' performed by the LADS a few years earlier.

It was not long before Neil confirmed that it was indeed possible. Two years on, with a Big Lottery Fund Awards for All grant, months of preparation, weeks of rehearsal and the participation of over 100 local people – many with two or even three roles – 'In the Limelight' is almost ready.

Almost? No play and certainly no performance is complete without an audience – so welcome to your role in bringing Llanymynech's rich industrial past and its people back to life. We begin at a fair in 1845...

A play for the community, by the community



LEFT: Peter Dunhill,
Llanymynech Limeworks
Community Project Officer



***'Welcome to your role in bringing
Llanymynech's rich industrial past
and its people back to life....'***

The Players:

Barker at a fair
Gentleman John Jimson,
Prize Fighter
Davy Owen, *quarry worker*
Will Howell, *quarry worker*
Alice
The girl who marries Davy
Sarah
The girl who marries Will
Drunk
Drunk's wife
Thomas Savin,
A draper's apprentice
Young Lad
Conjuror
First musician,
quarry worker
Second musician,
quarry worker
Ned Pugh, *quarry worker*

Wednesday & Friday

Elf 1 Megan Harmer
Elf 2 Henry Liston
Elf 3 Megan Jones
Elf 4 Luke Jones
Elf 5 Ester Humphries
Elf 6 Bethan Jones
Elf 7 Samuel Thomas
Elf 8 Eleanor Humphries
Queen Eleanor Humphries

Dame School mistress
Charlotte,
Will and Sarah's daughter
Catherine
Will and Sarah's daughter
Jane
Will and Sarah's daughter
Margaret
Davy and Alice's daughter
Joseph
Davy and Alice's son at 5
Fred
Peter
Eliza
Sam
Emma
Michael

Peter Dunhill
Malcolm Congreve
Ian Collings
Bob McGrath
Debra Collings
Anna Lingard
Suzannah Smith
Gwerfyl Davies
Clive Dean
James Morris
Alison Baseley
John Neilson
Vera van Heeringen
Dickon Faux-Nightingale
Thursday & Saturday
Derry Faux-Nightingale
Kerry Evison
James Chapman
James Morris
Rebecca Elliot
Samuel Chapman
Tonicha Evans
Gemma Elliot
Marg Kynaston
Alice Faux-Nightingale
Antonia Manna-Smith
Sarah Price
India Collings
Fleur Collings
Madelaine Forster
Arran Faux-Nightingale
Björk Heiskari
Felix Forster
Melodee Monroe
Sam Baseley

Mrs Dugdale,
An important person
Thomas Savin,
A railway contractor
David Davies,
A railway contractor
Elizabeth Savin,
Thomas Savin's wife
A footman
Earl of Powis
Earl of Bradford
Joseph
Davy & Alice's son at 13
Quarry manager
Coroner
Tinley, *Quarry worker*
Jones, *Quarry worker*
Powell, *Quarry worker*
Roberts, *Quarry worker*
Evans, *Quarry worker*
Mrs Lloyd, *A witness*
Limeworks Worker
Gamekeepers
June Garland
Richard Brazier
Mike Parry
Susan Morley
Tom Shotton
Pam Johnson
Alison Baseley
Tom Beard
Suzannah Smith
Alison Baseley
Gwerf Davies
Becky Smith
Jenny Smith
Marg Kynaston
Tom Shotton
Fiona James
Andrew Stone
Gwerf Davies
Tom Shotton
Marg Kynaston
Becky Smith
Jenny Smith
Suzannah Smith
Pam Johnson
Fiona James
Debbie Davies
Becky Smith
Jenny Smith
Alison Baseley
Tom Shotton
Benedict Rhodes
Sian Walter
Jenny Smith
Roy Davies
India Collings
Arran Faux-Nightingale
Fleur Collings
Becky Smith
Dani Box
Pam Johnson
Tom Shotton
Marg Kynaston
Demonstrators
Vicar
Quarry worker 1
Quarry worker 2
Solicitor
Young Quarry Worker
John Davy & Alice's grandson
Hannah,
Worker from the brickworks
Susan, *Hannah's friend*
George, *Limeworks worker*
Jack, *John & Hannah's son at 9*
Edward, *John & Hannah's son at 8*
Rebecca, *John & Hannah's daughter*
Jack *John & Hannah's son at 17*
Edward, *John & Hannah's son at 16*
First golfer
Second golfer
Sergeant Major

The Crew

In the
Limelight

Musicians:

Accordion	John Neilson
Fiddle and mandolin	Vera van Heeringen
Trumpet	John Proctor
Euphonium	Alister Talbot
Father song sung by	Alice Faux-Nightingale
Additional musicians:	Helen Chapman Trish Faux-Nightingale Dickon Faux-Nightingale
Interval music by Nostalgia:	Gwerfyl Davies Eirian Jones Marg Kynaston Suzannah Smith Kay Wood Bonita Zoltonos
Maypole dancers	Children from the cast
Victorian dancers (Fri & Sat)	Children from Roleplay
Music written and arranged by	John Neilson

Backstage:

Director	Neil Rhodes
Elf scenes directed by	Helen Chapman
Maypole Dancing and school scene directed by	Sam Forster
Stage management	Peter Dunhill & Anna Lingard
Costumes	Barbara Harris and Debbie Davies
Additional costumes	Trish Faux-Nightingale, Suzannah Smith, parents and cast members
Costume consultant	Sarah Thursfield
Lights	Ian and Marilyn Pollitt
Props	Neil Rhodes
Make Up	Suzannah Smith
Publicity	Jeremy Smith
Pyrotechnics	Gavin Lewery
Set	Alan Davies and Neil Rhodes
Thanks to	Awards for All England for generous funding; Powys Little Theatre & Llansanffraid Primary School for costume loan; Stonehouse Brewery; David Davies & Sons for loan of coffin

Music:

Up the Maypole	
Ffarwel Ned Puw VIII	
Wedding theme	All by John Neilson
The High Tea	Michéle Soinne
Shepherd's Hey	Traditional arranged by John Neilson
Marche funèbre from Piano Sonata no. 2	Frédéric Chopin
Hwre i'r Ceffyl Tân	words by J Evans, music by John Neilson
Savin song	words by John Neilson & Neil Rhodes music by John Neilson
Father song	words and music by John Neilson
Hymn 385	Mrs L M Willis
In the Bar Room	adapted from a traditional song by John Neilson
Hopping Down in Kent	Traditional arranged by John Neilson
Hunting the Hare	Traditional arranged by John Neilson

In the Limelight:

Part One
<i>At The Stables</i> 1845 May Fair
<i>At The Tally Hut</i> 1861 The Digging of the First Sod of the Llanfyllin Railway
1866 Bankruptcy
1868 The Great Blasting Powder Experiment
Part Two
1872 The Cooper's Rock Accident
<i>Going to the Hoffmann Kiln</i> 1878 The Traction Engines
1889 Savin's Funeral
<i>At The Hoffmann Kiln</i> 1891 Davy returns
1899 The Hoffmann Kiln
1910 Raising the Chimney
1914 The Great War

Thomas Savin: A man

NO history of the Llanymynech area would be complete without mention of the fascinating and enigmatic Thomas Savin. He is one of the principal characters in the play, a man of energy and vision who changed the face of the area.

Savin was born in 1826, at Llwynymaen, between Oswestry and Trefonen. He started out as an apprentice draper in his father's shop, later becoming a partner in Messrs Morris & Savin of Cross Street, Oswestry.

He branched out from draping to being a hop and seed merchant, and a grocer, and owning the Old British Colliery, Coedygoe, near Morda.

But the new thing in Britain was railway building, and he went into partnership with David Davies of Llandinam as a Railway Contractor.

The feeling is that while Davies had the greater knowledge and perseverance, Savin provided the energy and drive for what must have been a very difficult enterprise.

The list of railways Savin built, both with and without Davies, is impressive.

Oswestry would not have become the important railway town it was if Savin had not insisted that the locomotive works for the Cambrian Railways was built in Oswestry, and not Welshpool, as was suggested.

In 1863 he was appointed Oswestry Town Mayor, and around this time he began to build and buy his hotels on the Welsh coast, including the huge sandstone neo-Gothic building at Aberystwyth that is now known as the Old College. Also in that year he took over the lease of the Llanymynech quarries. Savin was already operating quar-

ries at Porth-y-waen.

His five years of railway building must have been exciting and extraordinarily busy, but in 1866 everything crashed spectacularly, and on February 5th 1866 he was forced to declare himself bankrupt.

It was discovered he owed over £2 million, a huge sum for those days, the equivalent of perhaps a billion pounds now. When Savin's finances were sorted out, he was allowed to keep four small companies: Porthywaen lime-works (which included Llanymynech quarries), Fenns Bank brickworks, Ynyslas brickworks at Borth, and

Coedygoe Colliery.

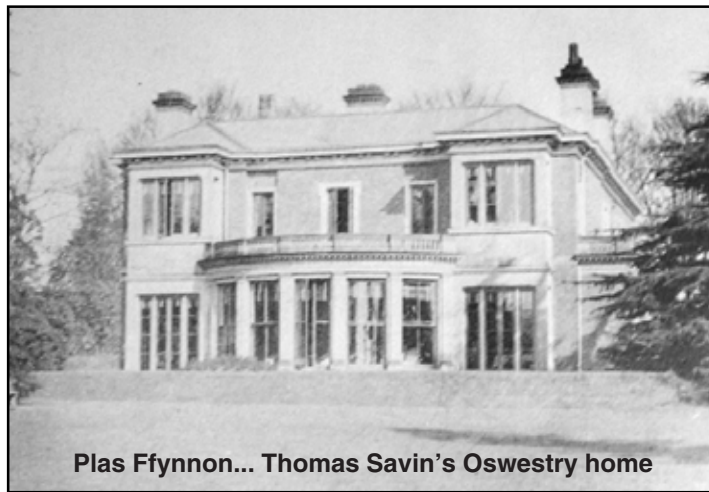
These companies were tiny in comparison to the ones he had partly owned before his crash, but he seems to have put all his energies into running them.

But from then until he died he always seemed to have money problems, either owing money or complaining that he was getting a bad deal!

For example, the Cambrian Railways,

would not let him have all the trucks he wanted. He complained to his old employees and colleagues that Llanymynech quarries could not shift enough lime and stone out of the area. They seemed to do him no favours, probably because the Cambrian Railways were always owed money by Savin & Co.

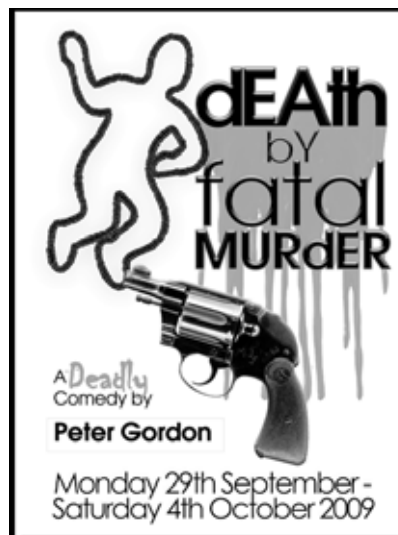
He obviously still yearned for greater things: he organised two demonstrations of gunpowder blasting at Llanymynech quarries, with local dignitaries invited to watch the explosion.



Plas Ffynnon... Thomas Savin's Oswestry home

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with a vision...

In the
Limelight

The first experiment took place on 17th September 1867, with one-and-a-half tons of gunpowder. An immense mass of rock was brought down, weighing about eight or nine thousand tons, and about half that amount was loosened. But this wasn't enough for Savin, and he wanted a bigger experiment, using electricity to set off the explosive, and 13,000 lbs (or six-and-a-half tons) of blasting powder.

Four years later there was a smaller explosion, but with deadly results. It happened at Cooper's Rock, which is on the west side of what is Llyncllys quarry, and shows the

'Savin was an interesting character, always trying new ideas, starting new projects, even if he overreached himself in a spectacular way...'

danger that quarrymen had to face, as six men and boys were killed.

As a result of the Cooper's Rock disaster Savin conducted some experiments at Llanymynech with dynamite, which was then a new explosive – and if it had been used at Cooper's Rock there would not have been such a devastating explosion.

In 1878 he became embroiled in the great Traction Engine Dispute. He had been unsuccessfully trying for several years to get a railway built along the Tanat Valley to Llangynog, where he owned quarries. Instead he used traction engines to take slate from his works and coal to them. But these heavy vehicles made deep ruts in the road, apart from being smoky and noisy. Several people complained, he was taken to court, and the fact that the Justice of the Peace was his old friend Sir Watkin Williams Wynn had nothing to do with the case being dismissed! A feast was held in his honour with songs in praise of him, as he was a major employer in the region.

His last 10 years were full of petty disputes, about the



traction engines, the leases for his quarries, his attempts to see the Tanat Valley Railway built, and always about bills he hadn't paid or paid late.

On the 20th July 1889 the Tanat Valley Railway was refused permission by Parliament (though it was built 16 years later as a light railway). Three days later – perhaps not coincidentally – he died. He is buried in Oswestry Cemetery.

He's largely forgotten now, among railway people, when others like David Davies continued to greater success. But he seems the more interesting character, always trying new ideas, starting new projects, even if he overreached himself in a spectacular way.

Without him it is hard to see that many of the railways in the area would have been built, and Llanymynech quarries would have stayed a much more minor feature

Llanymynech Amateur Dramatic Society

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**In the
Limelight**

Mr Savin's railway hits the headlines

CUTTING THE FIRST SOD OF THE LLANFYLLIN RAILWAY

The readers of the Oswestry Advertiser will not need any lengthened account of the rise and progress of the policy which has ended in the actual commencement of a line of railway at Llanfyllin; our columns have over and over again been devoted to the subject, so we shall now content ourselves with merely stating for the benefit of friends at a distance to whom this number of the paper may be sent, that the line so successfully inaugurated on Friday, will run from the Oswestry and Newtown line at Llanymynech through Llansaintffraid and Llanfechain, to the town of Llanfyllin, a distance of some nine miles along the valley, and that the works are so easy of construction that there is little doubt of a speedy and successful termination of the undertaking.

To commence record of Friday's proceedings at the point where the proposed line will branch off for the parent railway we may observe that all that Llanymynech was out for a holiday on the arrival of the trains from Oswestry and Welshpool, and vehicles of all descriptions, and some that

beggar description were put in requisition to convey visitors to Llanfyllin.

Llanfyllin strove to look as little like a town is possible, and was successful.

The procession then re-formed and marched through the town on the way to Llwyn. At the Wynnstay Arms, Messrs Savin and Ward, the contractors, joined it, the former bearing the silver spade wherewith the ceremony of the day was to be performed. A couple of model navvies accompanied them, bearing the wheelbarrow.

At Llwyn, Mr and Mrs Dugdale, with Colonel Bond, Mr and Mrs Bonnor Maurice, and other guests received the visitors, and Mr Savin presented the spade and barrow to Mrs Dugdale, the lady who had kindly consented to perform the ceremony of cutting the first sod. The spade bore the following inscription: 'This spade and barrow were presented to Mrs Dugdale, of Llwyn, on the occasion of her cutting the first sod of the Llanfyllin railway, by Mr Thomas Savin, on Friday, 20th of September, 1861.'

*From the Oswestry Advertiser,
25th September, 1861*

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Contact Peter Dunhill, Llanymynech Limeworks Community Project Officer at Swan Hill, Ellesmere, SY12 0DQ
01691 624448 email peter.dunhill@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Cave that echoes to the sound of a ghostly fiddler

A FAIRY'S CAVE (Nov. 20, 1878).—The Ogof Cave, upon the summit of Llanymynech Hill is the remains of an old Roman copper level, and its labyrinths extend about two hundred yards in several directions.

In bye-gone days it was looked upon by the inhabitants as a mysterious place, and always associated with fairies and such like. Its paths were said to lead to Fairyland.

The entrance is large, solitary, and dismal in appearance, and would naturally inspire with terror, some of the superstitious. It was allowed to have been the abode of the fairy, who became the wife of King Alaric, whose palace is said to lie at the bottom of Llynclys Pool.

As a proof that persons were afraid to explore the maze, until the middle of the last century, several human skeletons were then discov-

ered entire, with articles of the chase, battle-field, and the household, in addition to a number of coins. Even in the present day I have not known any old inhabitant, who in his youthful days has ventured far into the passages. It is now frequently explored.

Adjacent to its entrance is a hollow known as the 'Devil's Foot-step', so that in past times it was probably traditionally connected with his infernal majesty. As regards the hunting in its vicinity, it can easily be imagined that a fox might seek a retreat in its depth, and that the hounds would recoil from following it.

The main passage is said to extend beneath the village, passing near the Cross Keys Hotel cellar. An old blind fiddler is said to have penetrated thus far, and was heard from the cellar, performing upon the violin.

Llertwef

In the Limelight

Thomas Savin's Song (so everyone can join in the chorus)

Chorus:
Three cheers for Mr Savin
Who owned a draper's shop
Long life to Mr Savin
He's heading for the top

I started as a draper
The best in Oswestry
But draping is too fancy
So I changed to grocery
Chorus

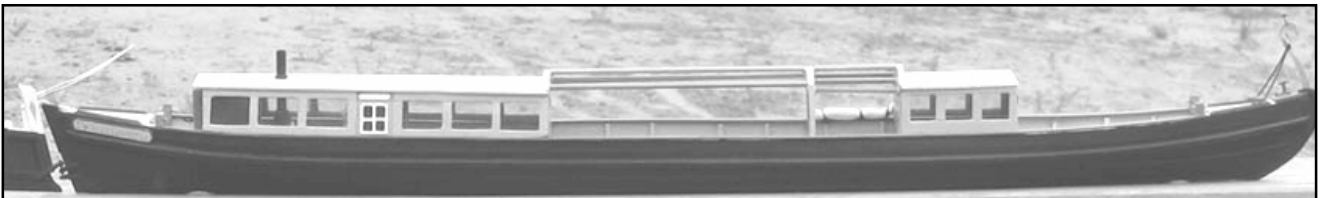
I dealt in milk and sugar
In coffee and in tea
But that was much too easy
So I bought a colliery
Chorus

The coal that came from Coedygo
Was burnt in every grate
But mining was too dirty
So I thought I'd quarry slate
Chorus

Then as a hop merchant
A new life I began
But I soon tired of hopping
And became a railway man
Chorus

Three cheers to Mr Savin
His praises we will sing
Long life to Mr Savin
Now he's the Railway King!

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Rehearsing for their big moment

Cast and crew caught by our cameraman during rehearsals



Dickon Faux-Nightingale is Ned Pugh



Some of the children watch with interest



Alister Talbot and his euphonium



Bob McGrath is Will Howell



Ian Collings is Davy Owen



ABOVE:
Susan Morley
is Elizabeth
Savin



RIGHT: Anna
Lingard is
Sarah Howell

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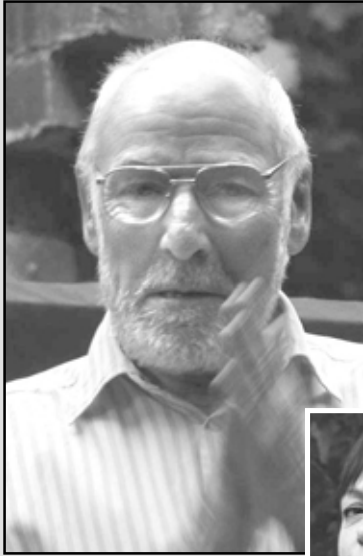
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...in the limelight!

Pictures by John Neilson



Richard Brazier is Thomas Savin



ABOVE: Fiddle player Vera van Heeringen



LEFT: Gwerfyl Davies is Tinley



Debra Collings is Alice Owen



Alison Baseley is the Earl of Bradford



Mike Parry is David Davies

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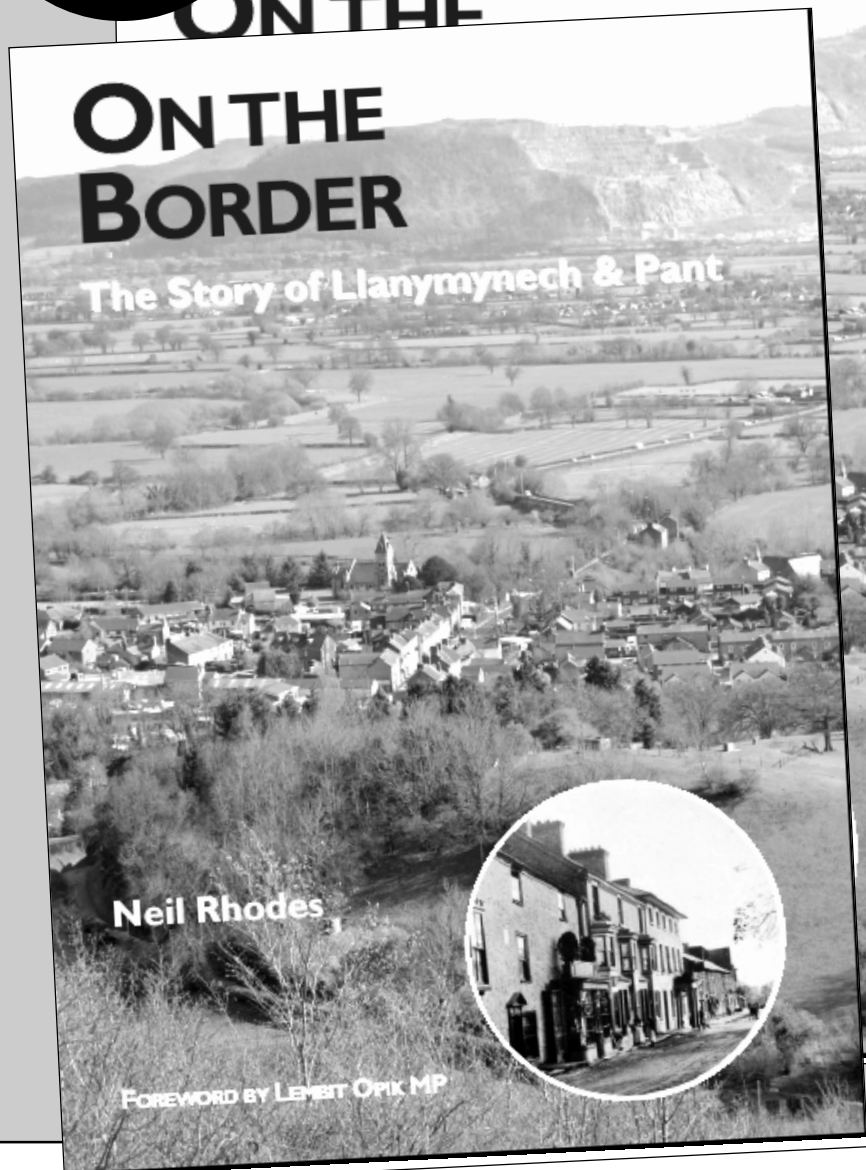
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