

“Reminiscences of Wales 1924 - 1942” should prove to be of interest to families who live outside of Wales, especially to those who may not know as much as they would like about their Welsh heritage. It is an excellent source of information for those who are sufficiently interested in making certain that their families (particularly children and grandchildren) have a readable and interesting description of what children and young people did in Wales in the late 20s, the 30s and the early 40s. This of course is only a small segment of interesting information about Wales.

Many families who may have not been back to Wales since they moved to their current country of residence are now beginning to realize that they are lacking knowledge of their Welsh heritage since it has been forgotten during the years they have lived away from Wales. Senior members of each family in this category are encouraged to purchase the book so that they can, in turn motivate other members of their families and friends to have a greater awareness of an important aspect of their lives - their Welsh heritage

Some people who are not familiar with Wales will learn much from the 17 chapters of the book which are:

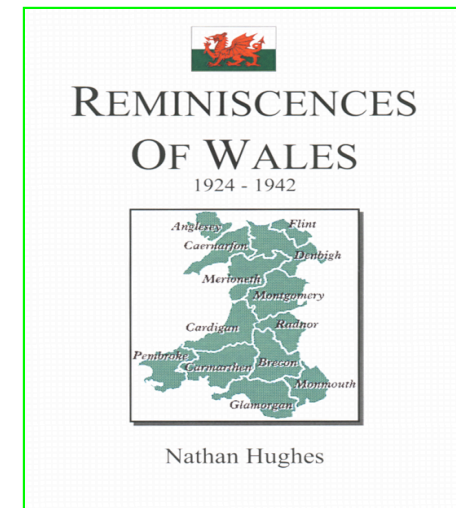
- * Dim Memories
- * The Gate
- * Troed-y-rhiw
- * Penygroes Council School
- * Life on a Smallholding
- * The Hughes and Rees families
- * Early Visits to Penygroes
- * Games and Sports
- * Births, Marriages and Deaths
- * Chapels and Churches
- * Travel and Trips
- * Llandeilo County School - Peacetime
- * Penygroes -Life in a Larger Village


- * The Emlyn Colliery
- * Llandeilo County School - Wartime
- * Mischief, Mirth and Morals
- * Waiting for my Call up.

People who were born in Wales may have fond memories renewed when they recall their life as children particularly as it related to school, the family, trips, the chapel etc., and also the life of coalminers, if they lived in a coal mining village

After its initial publication in the USA in 1998, the book was next published in the UK in 2000. A reprint of the book was completed in the USA in 2002 and a second reprint in the USA in 2004. The current price of the most recent reprinted books has now been reduced. Cost benefits over the previous book price (\$20 per book) are available with a reduced unit cost including shipping and handling to US customers. When customers in Canada, Europe, the Far East and other parts of the world purchase four or more they benefit because of a special mailing service by the United States Postal Service. Even greater savings come into effect when a group purchases ten or more books.

The book is only available in retail stores in the UK but it can be purchased on-line from the web site. It is an ideal wedding, birthday, anniversary, graduation or Christmas gift. Much more information, including prices are listed in the new web page. Payments can be made by credit card





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A review of "Reminiscences of Wales 1924 - 1942" by Jill Forwood

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The light bulb above my desk is 150 watts and I mention it only because I wonder what Nathan Hughes's family might have thought of it. When Nathan was a boy, a 40-watt light was considered extremely extravagant. Most people had 25 watt lights in their living rooms and 15 watts was thought enough for a bedroom. Like me, you may wonder if electric light at this weak wattage was any real improvement on what people had before. Yes, says Nathan. In his house, the kitchen was the living room and centre of all activities. It had one oil lamp. Every time someone needed something from the pantry in the corridor, they took the lamp, leaving the rest of the family in darkness except for the firelight.

Nathan was born in 1924 in Castell-y-Rhingyll, better known as Y Gât or The Gate, not far from Cross Hands. His father died five months before he was born and his heartbroken mother died when he was four months old. His legal guardian was his 50-year-old grandmother - his Mama - whose only income was 10s (50p) a week widow's pension and 7s 6d (37p) orphans' allowance. She supplemented this by taking in lodgers, selling milk, growing vegetables on her small holding and reselling butter, eggs and cheese from Llandeilo market to people in nearby villages.

Nathan rose from these humble beginnings to become a television pioneer. After graduating from Swansea University College he became a Marconi Planning and Installation Engineer involved in the start of television services all

over Europe. In 1954 he supervised the first Eurovision transmission from the Vatican. He moved on to the new commercial television companies - one of his top jobs was Chief Engineer of Television Wales and West (TWW), then General Manager of Teledu Cymru (Wales Television) - went into international marketing and ended up in America where he is a leading figure in national Welsh American organisations.

Modern dynamic Dallas is a world away from pre-war Welsh rural poverty, but Nathan didn't forget a thing about his roots. The meals he ate, the friends he made, the outings he enjoyed - everything lodged in his memory. And when Americans of Welsh ancestry started asking about Welsh Wales, Nathan got to work. The result is "Reminiscence of Wales 1924-1942", a self-published work of incredible recall.

This is a megawatt searchlight on the dim and distant past, revealing all the minutiae of daily lives in a typical, close, Welsh-speaking community. Tasks undertaken, games played, lessons learned, sweets eaten, radio programmes heard, bikes ridden, bus routes taken, prices paid - it's all there for memory-jogging enjoyment.

Any youngster who wanders into this Way We Were territory might feel a slight shock. As soon as he was able, Nathan was expected to make himself useful, fetching coal and water, helping with the washing, ironing and gardening, and making pele, a fuel mixture of coal, limestone and clay. At the age of four Nathan went to Penygroes Council School, walking a mile there and a mile back in all weathers. At five he was moving cows from field to field and delivering milk by the pitcher on the way to classes. After school he delivered more milk, sometimes making three journeys lasting four hours. Saturday was even busier. This was the day Mama went to market and came out with

four big baskets full of eggs, butter, chickens and geese for her customers.

She sorted out the baskets on the bus home and various relatives, including Nathan, were recruited to take part in a complicated delivery system. By the time he was seven, Nathan was able to carry a laden basket with pride. Mama later went upmarket. She and Nathan moved to the larger village of Penygroes where she took over a shop. The highlight of this establishment was a visit by Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia. Members of his entourage found they were running low on cigarettes and descended on the shop. It was the talk of the village for months.

Nathan's reminiscences end in 1942 with his call-up to the Navy. He went to see the big, wide world, but never forgot the little world he left behind.

Jill also wrote two other accounts of Nathan's book. One was titled **Shameful treatment of mums** where in the book reference is made to the time that unmarried mothers were subject to cruel humiliation, when their membership in the chapel, which was the center of village life was revoked" Without going into more detail (which are described in the book), this is one of many interesting aspect of village life in the 1930s.

Jill's third topic is **Mourners left exhausted by lengthy funeral march**. She starts with "There were no nursing homes so, with few exceptions people died at home. Drawn curtains were not only a sign of respect - they signalled the news of a death to the rest of the village... As many as 100 people would stand in the road while the service was conducted in the house. As homes were invariably small, coffins were eased out of the front windows on to a waiting bier."