

Awyrenwyr Americanaidd Ordnans 111

8 May 1945 marked not only the beginning of peacetime in Wales but for many it marked the end of a long period of uncertainty, loss and sacrifice.

Whilst many prepare to mark 70 years on from the rejoicing that echoed around the country on VE Day, communities across Wales continue to commemorate events throughout the conflict and the huge impact they had on people, families and communities in all parts of the country.

Like so many other towns and villages, St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire has felt the far-reaching and long-lasting effects of the war and have embraced this part of their history. Working with the local community, the Hanes Llandoch group has been working to track down evacuees, American GIs and Italian prisoners of war that lived in the village during the conflict. Members of the 111th Ordnance American Airmen were stationed at Albro Castle in St. Dogmaels during the war, there to prepare for the D Day landings whilst trains full of children from Hythe, Kent arrived in St Dogmaels in 1940 ready to be sent to their host families.

This week, over a dozen of the evacuees made the same trip back to Wales to mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day and to be part of a 'Welcome Home' event to share their personal stories and memories. Heather Thomas has been collecting the living memories of those who were there, noting that reminders of the war can be seen in all parts of village life: “One lady went back to Hove after the war but returned to St Dogmaels, got married here and her family still live here today; her son and granddaughter are with us this week to mark this important day.” This enduring connection

between Hythe and St Dogmaels was this week cemented with the presentation of a plaque to the village by the Mayor of Hythe.

Memories, photos and memorabilia discovered through this project are now on display at the Coach House in St Dogmaels, ensuring that the World War II's legacy in this West Wales village remains in the memory long after 8th May.

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