

ST. HILARY

PRESS CUTTINGS

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

COVERING:	1958	2nd place
	1959	1st place
	1960	3rd (not eligible - winner previous year)
	1961	3rd place
	1962	1st place

Special thanks to Miss Giles
for providing the information.

West Country Villages No. 1

ST. HILARY

THE Vale of Glamorgan, lying along the South Wales coast to the west of Cardiff and between Barry and Bridgend, is as rich in pasture as it is in history and beauty and unique in its setting on the fringe of the large industrial areas.

In an effort to preserve the rural character of the Vale against destructive encroachment and industrial and urban spreading, and to encourage the individual villagers to take a pride in their great traditions the "Best Kept Village" competition came into being in 1953. In that year, to mark the Coronation, a well-known Vale family offered for competition a handsome four hundred guineas silver gilt trophy.

A committee of management was set up, a panel of judges formed and a number of organisations enthusiastically gave their support. The rules and system of judging were carefully and simply formulated so that even the smallest and most unpretentious village stands equal chance of recognition, as does a village which may be noted for architectural features or its setting and beauty.

Marks are discounted for a variety of faults and penalties are incurred for such

Even the modern intruders who have crept into the scene in the form of modern semi-detached buildings cannot detract from the rural beauty of St. Hilary.

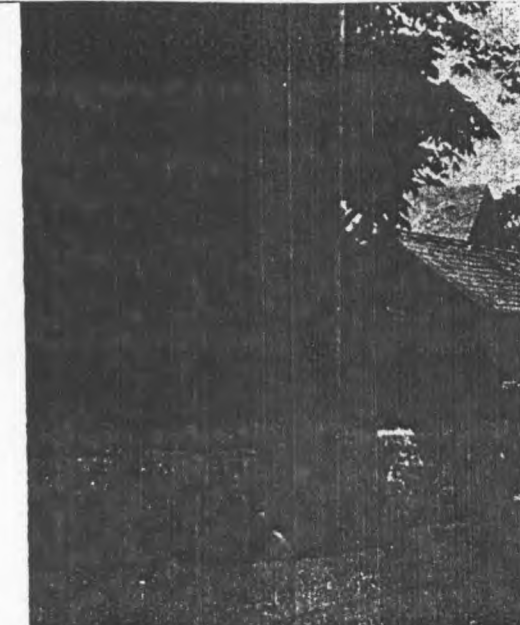
discordant features as untidy, ill-kept war memorials, village greens, unsightly advertisement hoardings, badly kept ditches, hedges and so on.

The judging takes place in July of each year and the trophy is presented to the representative of the winning village at the civic luncheon of the Borough of Barry Horse and Agricultural Society Show. The winning village is precluded from entering the competition only in the year following its award and this does not seem an unreasonable penalty.

The Cup and the competition may provide incentive but the lasting joy in working to beautify and restore the villages remains with the villagers themselves.

Apart from the D. C. Jones trophy, there are two other awards. One is in the form of a commemorative plaque which the committee give to the winning village and which is fitted in a suitable position in the village. The other takes the form of the presentation of flowering or ornamental trees to villages adjudged runners-up.

In both these ceremonies the village invite a large gathering of visitors and the



Well away from the main road from Cardiff to the West, St. Hilary has no traffic problems and a quiet country walk goes undisturbed by the noise and smell of mechanical transport.

representatives of civic bodies to join them in their celebrations.

The pioneer of this form of competition was Viscount Bledisloe who, in 1937, set up a scheme for the lovely Cotswold villages on similar lines. Glamorgan was first to revive the competition after the War and since then 39 other counties throughout Britain have established similar contests.

There are some 54 parishes in the Vale of Glamorgan eligible to enter villages in this competition and in each year there is an entry of 25 or more villages.

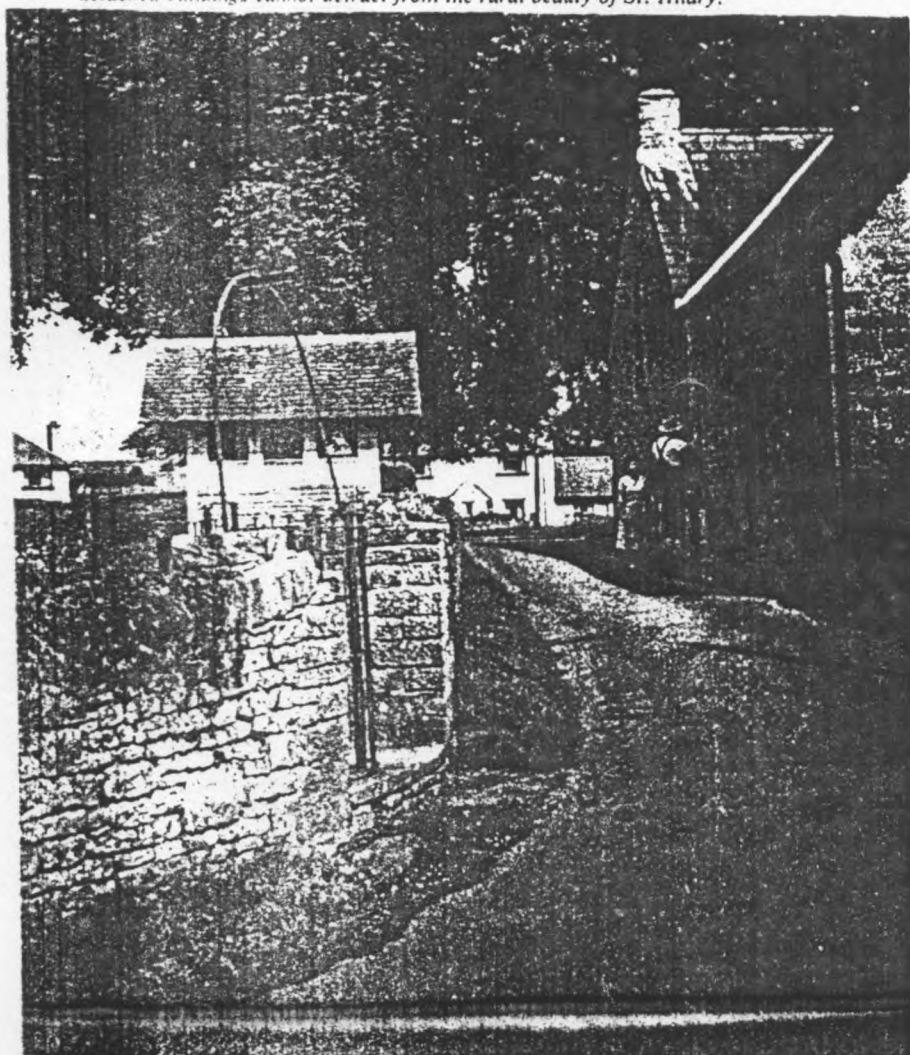
"We who organise this competition will always welcome the help of those willing to assist in strengthening this scheme and ensuring that villages within one's parish make their contribution," commented the organising secretary, Mr. Peter S. Gabe.

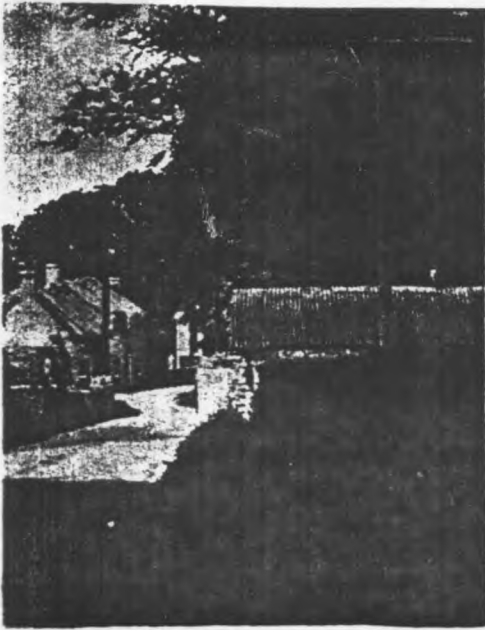
"The villagers, like the villages, have distinctive personalities and the support given this competition from outside in a determination to preserve the Vale is matched only by the enthusiasm of the villagers themselves to gain recognition of their own villages."

Such is the case with last year's winners—St. Hilary. After narrowly missing the coveted trophy in 1958, the villagers made an all out effort in the following year to take first place with 96 marks out of 100.

St. Hilary is a compact parish of 1,267 acres in the hundred of Cowbridge. Ideally situated on rising ground two miles south west of Cowbridge, it commands a magnificent view of the Vale of Glamorgan and on a fine day the Bristol Channel and the opposite coast of Somerset beyond are plainly visible to the south.

Thatched cottages with old world gardens cluster around the Norman church which is dedicated to St. Hilary who was a Bishop of Poitiers in the fourth century. The living is a vicarage in the





gift of the Dean and Chapter of Llandaff and the church itself has a number of interesting features. The chancel has a Norman arch and contains a window illustrating the life of Christ. The reredos in stone and marble, bears a carving of the Last Supper.

There are two well known effigies in the church—one in loose robes in the style of Edward II and the other in plate armour and dated 1423. Among many memorials are several to the Bassett family, the last male heir of which is buried outside the east end of the church.

The family seat, Beaupre Castle, is located about a mile away and the ruins, preserved and maintained by the Ministry of Works, can be reached by climbing a stile near the bridge over the River Thaw.

Despite the fact that historians say there was no Bassett in the locality prior to the 13th century, some local people still stick to the belief that Magna Carta was compiled in this castle because a justiciary named Philip Bassett was a contemporary of King John. Prior to the Bassetts the manor of Beaupre was in the possession of the de Kaerdiff family.

There is also a local tradition concerning the remarkably fine entrance porch to the castle. It is said that the builder was one of two stonemasons who were partners until they both fell in love with the same damsel. So deadly a feud arose between them they ceased to be on speaking terms.

When the damsel heard about it she would have nothing to do with either and one left his home and went abroad for 25 years. During that time he acquired a complete knowledge of Italian architecture and on his return he was engaged by the then head of the house of Bassett to build the porch.

From the village, with its leafy lanes, its ancient lych gate and its centuries old thatched Bush Inn nestling comfortably amongst modern dwellings, an old path-way leads to St. Hilary Down. From here

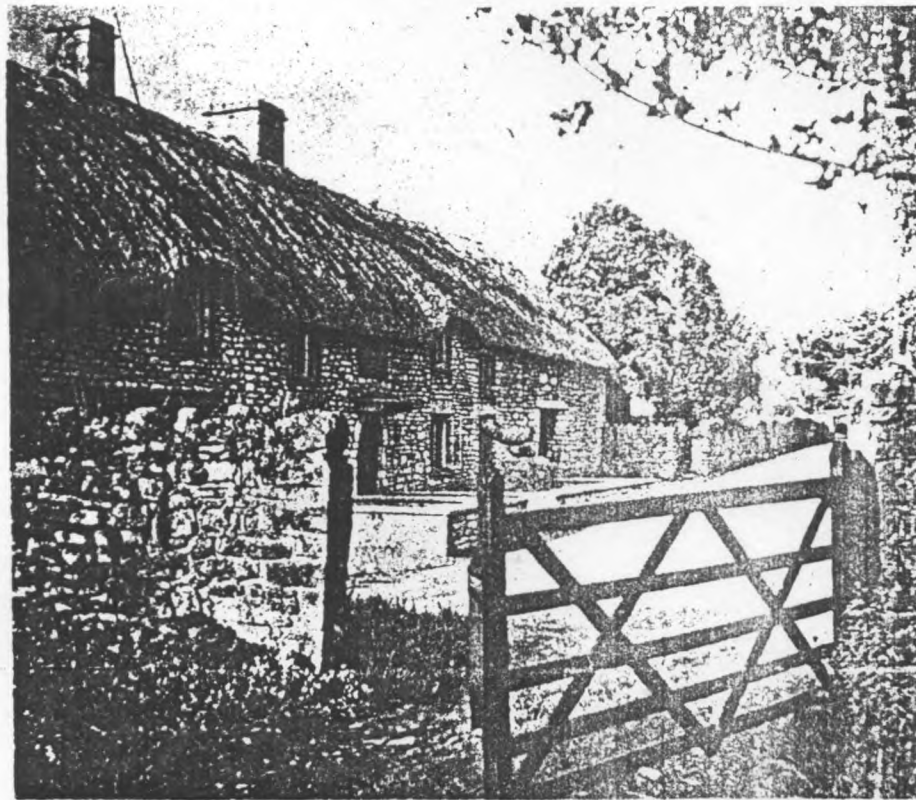
the view is little short of breathtaking on a fine day.

A prominent landmark for thirty years has been the stone memorial to the men of the Glamorganshire Yeomanry who fell in the first World War. A more recent and even more prominent landmark is the television mast from which TWW programmes are radiated.

Despite these modern intrusions the

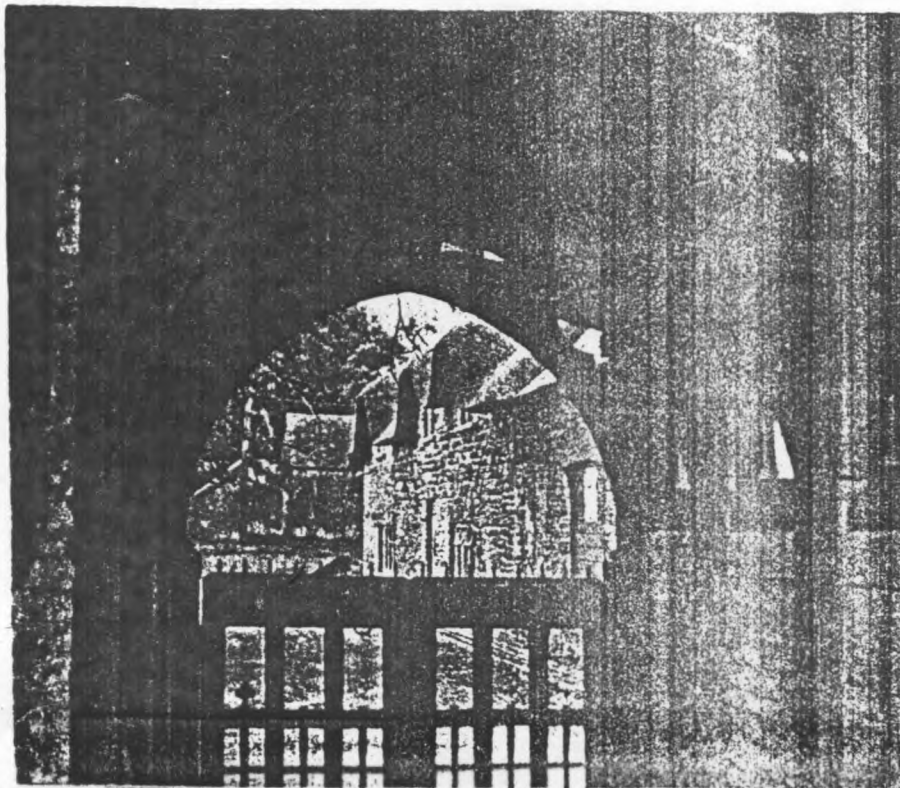
folk of St. Hilary, who number fewer than 200, are steeped in the traditions of the past and they are justly proud of their achievement in winning the D. C. Jones trophy.

In their report, the judges, Mr. J. A. Stirling and Mr. John Morgan commented "It was only after the closest scrutiny that we could find any faults with St. Hilary."



The centuries old Bush Inn, snug beneath its crown of thatch, extends a warm welcome to villager and visitor alike seeking good ale and companionship.

Framed in the old Lych Gate is one of the thatched cottages which cluster round the Norman Church at St. Hilary.



'WILLING WORKERS' OF BEST KEPT VILLAGE CELEBRATE

A toast — to themselves

Villagers of Pendoylan gathered at the Red Lion tonight to drink a toast to themselves from a guinea cup.

They will be celebrating victory today at Barry Horse and Agricultural Show Sir Godfrey Wyn announced that Pendoylan had come first out of 15 competitors in the Best Kept Village competition.

Mr. Westby said that the village of St. Hilary came second and St. Fagans third.

First success

At the presentation the chairman of Pendoylan Parish, Mr. Major E. A. C. Westby, was chosen to head the village competition committee. "We have entered this year since it started and it was our first success."

At the Festival of Wales and there were so many villages around for the Games decided the village should be the best. Then, we decided to put everything we had into the competition."

Mr. Westby said that everyone in the competition committee worked in the small village which has a population of only 520—co-operated fully.

"We have never been in the first before," said Major Westby. "Some of the men spent every evening a week tidying up the garden."

"Old people, in particular, did wonders with their lawns and even the surrounding farmers trimmed their lawns."

Little to fault

Mr. Westby said the difficulty was finding a safe place for the competition trophy—it could be kept and also

nothing was certain—"We'll drink it in the Red Lion tonight to everyone who has worked hard to have a drink."

Mr. Gabe, organising secretary of the Barry Show committee, said that when looking at Pendoylan the judges, Lord

Stirling and Mr. J. A. Stirling, Swansea, found little which they could fault it.

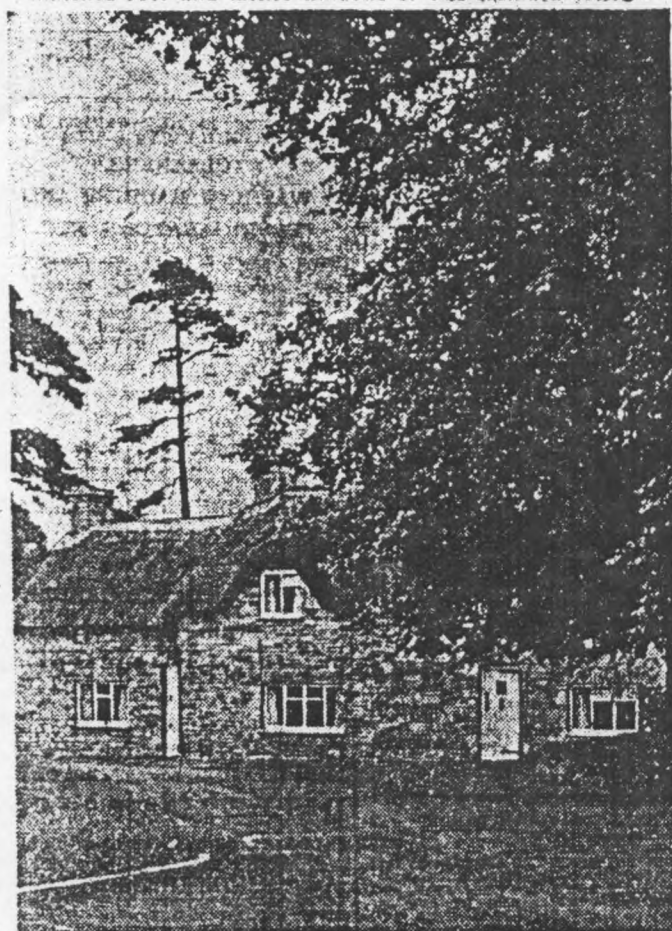
The judges found the general appearance of all the finalists to be of a high standard and an improvement on last year.

Mr. Westby said the Barry Show committee was first to organise a best-kept village competition after World War II. Now, there were 20 villages throughout the country.

"The competition began in 1947 and there has been a great improvement in the appearance of villages in the Vale of Glamorgan," said Mr. Gabe.



ABOVE: The winners, Pendoylan. This neatly laid out council housing estate is a modern part of the village. BELOW: The runners-up, St. Hilary. There is an old-world charm in the thatched roof and lattice windows of this secluded cottage.

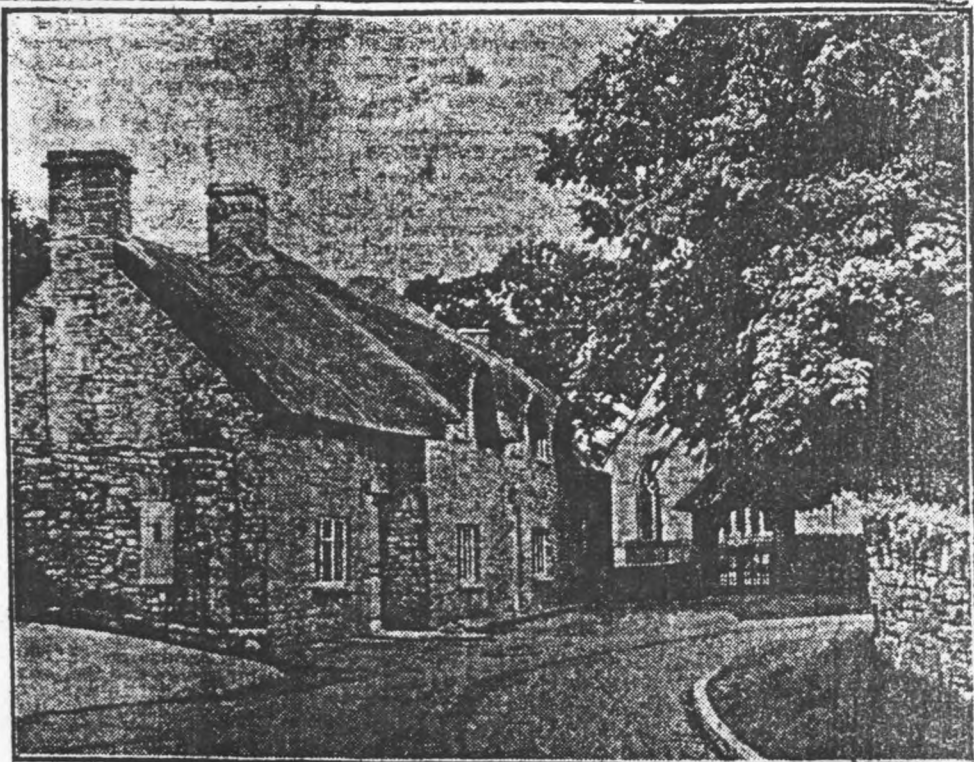


1958

1st
PENDOYLAN (95)

2nd
ST HILARY (90)

3rd
ST. FAGANS (80)



Vale's Prettiest And Best Kept Village

ST. HILARY'S DOUBLE DISTINCTION

ST. HILARY, often acclaimed the prettiest village in the Vale of Glamorgan, has won the distinction of being the best kept village in the Vale.

At the Barry Horse Show last week Miss Dorothy Ackland Allen, J.P., received on its behalf the magnificent 400-guinea D. C. Jones Challenge Cup, presented annually to the best kept village.

Presenting the cup, the Bishop of Llandaf (Dr. Glyn Simons) stated that everyone must feel it was a magnificent

gesture to give the cup, because Wales was not a land of villages, and it was important that the villages which it did possess should be maintained in an attractive manner.

PROUD

Responding, Miss Ackland Allen stated that this was a proud day for St. Hilary. The village had entered for the competition last year, and were

then runners-up, losing to Pendoylan by five marks.

This year the villagers of St. Hilary had worked like blacks for over two months to clean up the village, and she thought that a tribute should be paid to all those who had helped to win the cup. The wonderful team-work the village had put in this summer was responsible for the village's success.

She thanked the judges for awarding St. Hilary the cup, and she hoped that the village would win it again in 1961.

The judges this year were Mr J. A. Stirling and Mr John Morgan.



- T :-
- Mr. M. POWER.
 - CHURCH COTTAGE
 - Mr ANIERUN DAVID
 - MYRTLE COTTAGE
 - Miss ACKLAND-ALLEN
 - THE MANOR.
 - Mr MYE DAVID.
 - Mr MAUD TENKINS
 - 2. MANOR COTTAGES
 - Miss L. HUMPHREYS
 - THE MANOR



A group of guests who attended the celebrations at St. Hilary when the sign announcing that it was the best kept village in the Vale was unveiled.

Boasted The Village in Champagne

Prize, Pride Of The Vale

The little village of St. Hilary was crowded on the evening when the unveiling took place of the sign which claims to the world the fact that St. Hilary is the best kept village in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Miss D. Ackland Allen, Lord of the Manor and chairman of the Parish Council, presided, by Mr P. Thomas, vice-chairman of the Parish Council, who presented the distinction

of honour stood for 400 guinea gold annually to the village in the Vale.

Mr P. Thomas, chairman

man of the D. C. Jones' Cup really took a great deal of interest in the village, but last year and this year, due to the parishioners' efforts, they had attained their goal, and she thought that all of them realised what a beautiful village they had to live in. I hope all our guests will go away with very happy memories," she concluded.

EXAMPLE FOR TOWNS

The Lord Lieutenant of Glamorgan, Major C. G. Traherne, who was accompanied by

Committee, told the gathering that rumours were circulating in the Vale that the cup committee wished to have a new and different winner each year. "I would like to say that this is not so. The award is in the hands of two independent judges and they have never received any directions from us, other than to choose the best village. St. Hilary was really superb this year," he declared.

Mr Fred Williams said that it gave him great pleasure to hand the sign over to St. Hilary, for it was a neighbouring parish and one which he knew well. He apologised for the absence through illness of the chairman of the parish Council (Sir Ivor Thomas). "This village of St. Hilary has been knocking at the door for a long time. The residents have worked hard," he concluded.

GREAT HONOUR

Receiving the sign, Miss Ackland Allen commented that it was a great honour for St. Hilary to receive the sign into its safe keeping from Pendoylan. She was sure that she was speaking on behalf of all parishioners of St. Hilary when she said that it was a very proud day for them, and it was by their own hard work during the past two or three months that they had won the cup and sign.

Miss Ackland Allen extended a warm welcome to all present and stated that she hoped that they would take away with them memories of the beautiful village of St. Hilary.

The competition made parishioners appreciate their village. Two or three years ago she did not think that anyone

his wife, stated that he was pleased to be present to congratulate the village on winning the cup. "I am vice-chairman of the St. Georges' Parish Council, and I can remember how proud we were when we won it," he said.

Reminding the visitors that Miss Ackland Allen was the Lord of the Manor, he said that he did not know what the duties of the Lord of the Manor were, but recently they had included picking up pieces of paper and tidying up odd corners!

Mr Arthur Pearson, M.P., added his congratulations, and said that he was wholeheartedly in favour of the idea of the competition, which attracted villagers to keep their villages up to the standard which made it a delight for themselves and for visitors. He stated that he hoped the idea of competition would spread to the urban districts.

THRILLED

Coun. Mrs C. R. Reed, J.P., chairman of the Cowbridge Rural Council, told the assembly that she was thrilled by the fact that the cup had been won by a village in the Cowbridge rural area during her year of office. Coun. E. J. Smith, who represents St. Hilary on the Cowbridge Rural Council, added his congratulations and said that he was proud to represent the village on the council.

A vote of thanks to St. Hilary was accorded by Mrs Gerald Morgan. At the conclusion of the ceremony the guests were entertained to tea by the villagers, and the 400 guinea cup filled twice with champagne by Mr J. C. Clay.

Among others present were The High Sheriff of Glamorgan (Mr John Cory); Ald Percy Smith (the vice-chairman of the Glamorgan County Council); The Mayor and Mayoress of Cowbridge (Coun. and Mrs Kenneth Hutchings) chairman of the Cowbridge Rural Council (Mrs C. R. Reed); chairman of Cardiff Rural Council (Major W. S. Trigg); County Coun. D. I. Morgan; Coun. and Mrs E. J. Smith; Capt. and Mrs H. C. R. Homfray; Mr Hubert Thomas; Mr and Mrs J. Stirling; Mr Thomas Thomas, chairman of the cup committee; Mr Peter Gabe, secretary; Mr Herbert R. Thomas; Mr and Mrs J. C. Clay and Mr Owen George.



Villagers watch Mr J. C. Clay ladle out glasses of champagne from the D. C. Jones Challenge Cup, which St. Hilary has won for being the best kept village in the Vale.

It was only after the closest scrutiny that faults could be found, such as a few nettles alongside a path to the West of the Churchyard. Points raised in last years judging had evidently been closely studied and we were particularly impressed by the care taken to make presentable three small patches of "no mans land" such patches too often mar the effect of prodigies of work elsewhere. Special praise is due to those who made their gardens so bright.

Here was a truly tidy village, the whole presenting almost a "manicured" appearance.



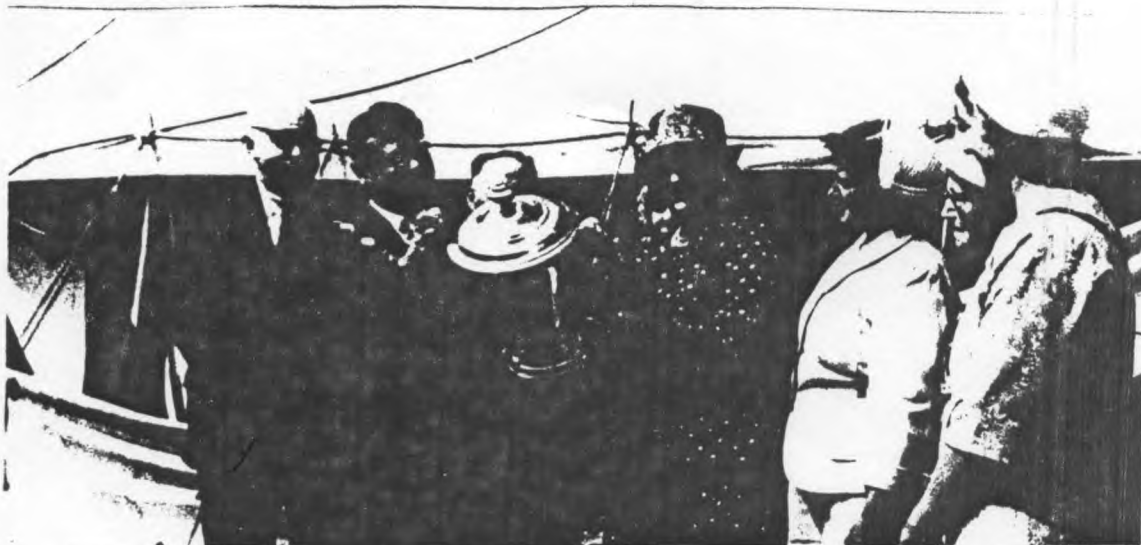
1959

1st. ST. HILARY

2nd. ST. NICHOLA ST. FAGAN

3rd. LLANCAFF

MAYOR OF COWBRIDGE. CLR. HUTCHINGS MR. NYE DAVID MYRTLE COTTAGE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF DR. GLYN SYMONS Miss D. ACKLAND-ALLEN MRS MAUDE JENKINS MAHOR COTTAGES MRS WIFE



The chairman of the St. Hilary Parish meeting, Miss Dorothy Ackland-Allen, J.P., proudly shows the Mayor of Cowbridge (Coun. Kenneth Hutchings, J.P.) the 400 guinea gold cup won by St. Hilary for being the best kept village in the Vale of Glamorgan this year. Admiring the cup, too, are the Mayoress of Cowbridge (Mrs Hutchings) and a group of villagers who included: Mr and Mrs A. David, Mrs E. Jenkins, Miss L. Humphreys and Mr M. Power.

Marks Awarded. Not marked
for final Judging.
Grant awarded.

asing to note the excellent condition of the Churchyard, neat and trim
sly the result of constant maintenance over many months,

e of inspection the village, in the main, showed a very good standard of
e, all verges, hedges and greenswards had been cut and mainly cleared,
tion had been given to the clearing of weed and grass growth at the foot
djoining the roadways, the exception to this generalisation was the
vacant "Pendoylan Cottage" whereat the garden and hedges had not been cut
ime, additionally, the verges extending westward from the "Bush Inn"
he side road had not been treated in the same manner as the rest of the

is doing much to maintain the reputation of the community in this
n.



MORGAN

MISS ACKLAND ALLEN

1960

1ST ST. NICHOLAS (82)

2ND PENDOYLAN (78)

3RD ST. HILARY (GRANT)
Ineligible for marks as
winner previous year.

BEST-KEPT VILLAGE HANDLED OVER

DESPITE high winds and torrential rain a group of brave people gathered at the Village Green, St. Nicholas, on Saturday to see the sign proclaiming that the village is the best kept in the Vale of Glamorgan being handed over by the representatives of St. Hilary, the village which won the competition last year.

The handing-over ceremony was adjourned to the Village Hall, where Miss D. Ackland Allen, chairman of the St. Hilary Parish meeting, handed over the sign to Mrs J. T. Morgan, vice-chairman of the St. Nicholas Parish Council.

Congratulating St. Nicholas on winning the cup for the second time, Miss Ackland Allen said she knew the work entailed in getting the village to such a high standard.

Mrs G. Wynne Jones, the village's representative on the Glamorgan County Council and Mr Ivor Llewellyn, chairman of the Cowbridge R.D. Council, also spoke.

The chairman was Mr Thomas Thomas chairman of

the D. C. Jones Challenge Cup committee, who are responsible for the organisation of the competition for the best kept village in the Vale.

In our picture are Mrs L. Morgan (left), Miss D. Ackland-Allen, Mr T. Thomas, Mr Peter Gabe and Mr Ivor Llewellyn.

1961

1961 Awards

First St. Brides-Super-Ely.

Second Wenvoe.

Third St. Hilary.

Judging Comments 1961.

Final Award

THIRD 91 Marks

Grant & Bonus.

ST. HILARY

An excellent entry.

Difficult to find a fault, and we have only two minor criticisms:-

- 1) A little roadside litter (paper & cardboard etc.) on the 'No through road' leading to Paddock's and which is rather outside the village centre.
- 2) Grass on Village green rather long, though it had evidently been cut fairly recently.

Since 100 per cent indicates absolute perfection, we do not think that the absolute standard has been quite achieved, but it was not very far short!

Much hard work by many people would appear to have been done.

Pretty St. Hilary Wins The Prize

ST. HILARY, long acclaimed as the prettiest village in the area, has won the title, 'Best Kept Village in the Vale of Glamorgan,' and is only the second village in the history of the competition to have won the award twice.

It was three years ago, in 1959, when the village won the competition for the first time, and was presented with the D. G. Jones Challenge Cup, a magnificent gold trophy valued at 400 guineas, and the oak-leaf-type sign which proclaimed, to the world that St. Hilary had won.

This year the presentation is to be made at the village on Saturday, August 18, when Miss Donaldson-Allen, chairman of the prizes meeting, will receive the awards on behalf of the village.

Miss Anjland-Allen told a staff reporter that she did not know who was going to present the cup, but she knew that the sign would be presented by a representative of St. Bride's super-Ely, the winning village last year.

WORKED HARD

She added that the majority of the villagers had worked extremely hard to put the village in order, for these days the standard of the villages had improved so greatly that everything had to be perfect; otherwise they would not stand a chance.

It was on Monday that the three visiting judges toured the Vale, visiting the short list of five villages chosen for them by the committee out of the 22 villages which had entered. The committee had previously inspected the villages and had picked those which they considered to be the best.

On Monday night the judges—Mr. Guy Sixsmith, the Cardiff Specially Magistrate; Mr. Alex Gordon, the Cardiff architect; and Mr. P. R. H. S. Holborn, the County Planning Officer for Breconshire—held a Press conference at the Bear Hotel, where they were being entertained to dinner by the committee.

They announced that St. Hilary had won the competition with 71 points out of 100, and the runners-up were 2

Peterston super-Ely, 69; 3, St. Fagans, 55; 4, Pendoylan, 53; and 5, Llanmaes 52.

HIGH STANDARD

The judges commented on the difficulty of judging the competition, as each village had different characteristics. Some were compact and others were widespread. It was like judging the best animal in a show, where the judge had to compare a cow, horse, sheep and pig, each of which was the best in its class.

The general standard was high and obviously a great deal of work had been put in by the villagers.

Mr Sixsmith, the only judge who had judged the competition last year, said he had noticed a tremendous improvement in the villages; the standard of tidiness was far higher than last year.

The Postmaster General had not been very kind to the villages regarding the question of painting the boxes and telephone kiosks. Walls were another problem, for many were now reaching the end of their life and to replace them would be very expensive indeed.

DERELICT CARS

A sign of the times was the number of derelict cars around the villages, for at least two of the villages they had visited that day had seemingly derelict cars parked in them. The judges posed a question: 'Are derelict cars litter?'

One point which all three judges emphasised was the fact that the directional signs in the villages were out of keeping with the rural nature of the communities. The villagers could do nothing about such signs, but their severity did tend to spoil the looks of the village and it was felt that something should be done to produce signs which, although still functional, were more in keeping with the rural nature

of the Vale.

While on the subject of signs, there were one or two placed in the villages by other authorities which tended to spoil them.

The judges mentioned that they had seen a pretty children's playground which was spoilt by a large red sign which proclaimed—Penalty £10.

Churchyards were very difficult to keep tidy, but some were far better than others.

Tribute was paid to the secretary, Mr Peter Gabe, J.P., and the committee who organised the contest.



Mr Aneurin David (left) and Mr Glyn Clay filling the challenge cup presented which was adjudged the best kept village in the Vale of Glamorgan. Mrs waits for her tray to be filled before handing the drinks out. Report of

1962

ST

ST HILARY (71)

J

ETERSTON -
SUPER-ELY

RJ

ST FAGANS



62 Competition

St. Hilary

1st Place

Final Judging

71 Marks

On behalf of the residents of St. Hilary, best-kept village in the Vale of Glamorgan, Mr. John Rees, the oldest inhabitant, accepts the D. C. Jones Cup from Mrs. C. G. Traherne, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Glamorgan, on Saturday. Also in the picture are the High Sheriff of Glamorgan, the Hon. Anthony Berry, Miss D. Ackland Allen, the Mayor of Cowbridge, Mrs. C. Tilley (hidden); and the Mayoress, Mrs. D. Tilley.

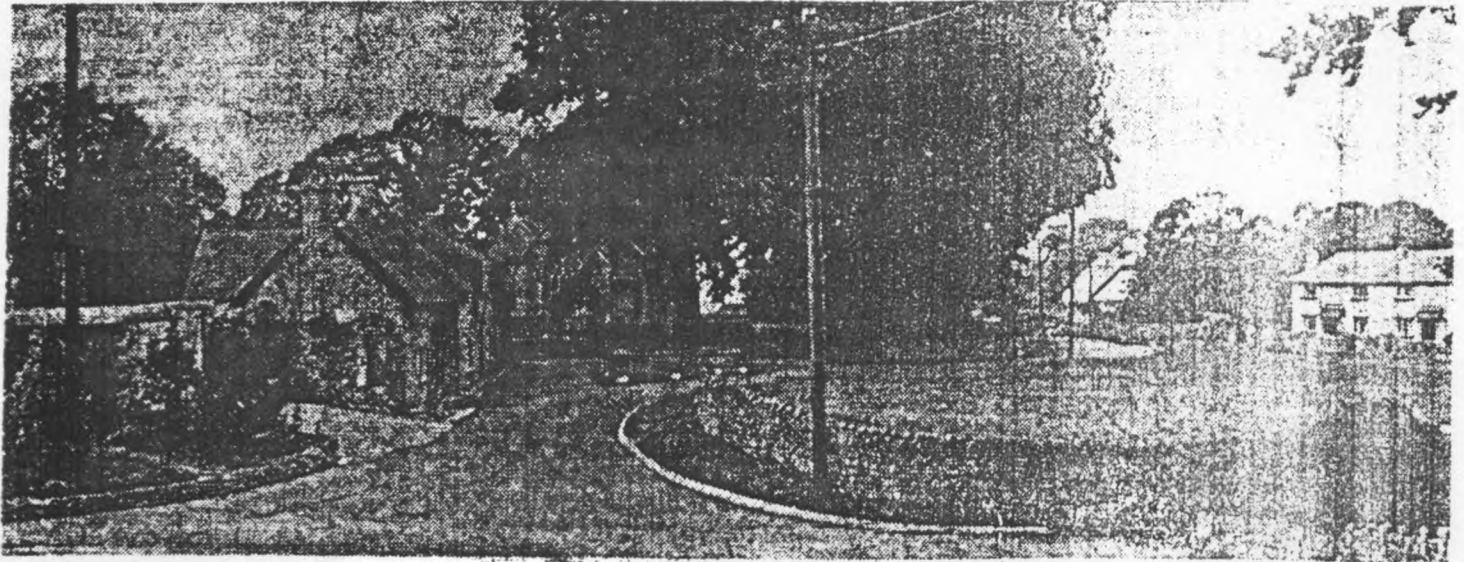
Churchyard good. Inn quite good. A lot of Green sward to be maintained and it was maintained.

There were no unsightly features (except possibly one Garage) and very much that was attractive.

Very few advertisements, some good some were bad.

A most attractive appearance to the whole and only from prodigious efforts all round.

ST. HILARY — PROUDEST VILLAGE IN THE VALE



Today's peaceful scene in St. Hilary.

Tea for all again?

THE village of St. Hilary, near Cowbridge — known to many as the site of the TWW television mast — now has a prouder claim to fame. For the second time in four years it has been judged the best-kept village in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Twenty-two villages entered the competition this year and a short list of five was drawn up yesterday. The judges, Mr. Guy Sixsmith, Cardiff Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. Alex Gordon, a Cardiff architect, and Mr. P. R. H. Holbourn,

county planning officer for Breconshire, eventually placed St. Hilary first, Peterston-super-Ely second and St. Fagans third. Mr. Sixsmith said he and his fellow judges had noticed a definite rise in the standard and a great improvement, particularly in villages well off the main highways.

Extra keen

Today, villagers were already planning the day some time next month when they will receive the 400-guinea D. J. Jones Challenge Cup. Said Miss Ackland Allen, chairman of the Parish Meeting today: "When the village won the trophy in 1959 we had a huge tea on the green to which absolutely everyone came. I expect we shall do the same this year — especially as I understand the trophy will be presented here in the village.

"It's impossible to single any names out. Everyone in the village helps to keep it immaculate all through the year. There's a bit of extra keenness — especially among the pensioners — just before the competition of course."

Probably the proudest of the pensioners is the village's oldest inhabitant, 69-year-old Mr. John Rees, who said he was thrilled by the news. "It makes all the hard work worthwhile," he said.

Celebration pints

A generation younger, Mrs. M. Jenkins has lived in a cottage in the village all her life, "and I can think we can honestly say the place is kept like this all the year," she said.

"It's such a beautiful, quiet little spot, anyway, but I think the way everyone works to keep it tidy makes it quite perfect. I would never live anywhere else."

The village publican, Mr. Gwyn Evans, of The Bush, has lived there for 25 years. "There's a lively motor trade here in

locals in the bar have been regular as clockwork for years," he said.

"They had a few quiet pints to celebrate last night. It's true that the village is kept immaculate, but, in a way, it's a natural. It's a beautiful little spot and there's only one pavement — the rest is all grass verge. But that has to be kept trim of course!

"We all keep our own bit tidy. I've got a big garden at the back and I keep the frontage of the inn and grounds neat." Today the village was silent — and immaculate.

VILLAGE GETS CUP

20 AUG. 1962
Western Mail Reporter

NOT a blade of grass was out of place in the Glamorgan village of St. Hilary on Saturday when the oldest inhabitant, Mr. John Rees, accepted on behalf of the village the cup for the best-kept village this year in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Mr. Rees has lived in St. Hilary for nearly 70 years — all his life except for war service and a short period after his marriage.

This is the second time St. Hilary has won the cup. The last time was 1959 and St. Hilary is the second village to have won the cup twice since it was first awarded in 1953.

The cup was presented by the wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Glamorgan, Mrs. C. G. Traherne, before a crowd of 200 local people and guests, including the High Sheriff of Glamorgan, the Hon. Anthony Berry, and Mr. Arthur Pearson, M.P.

Old folk praised

The freshly varnished "Best kept village of the year" signpost which travels around the Vale with the cup, was unveiled by Mr. John Cory, who was representing last year's winning village, St. Brides-super-Ely.

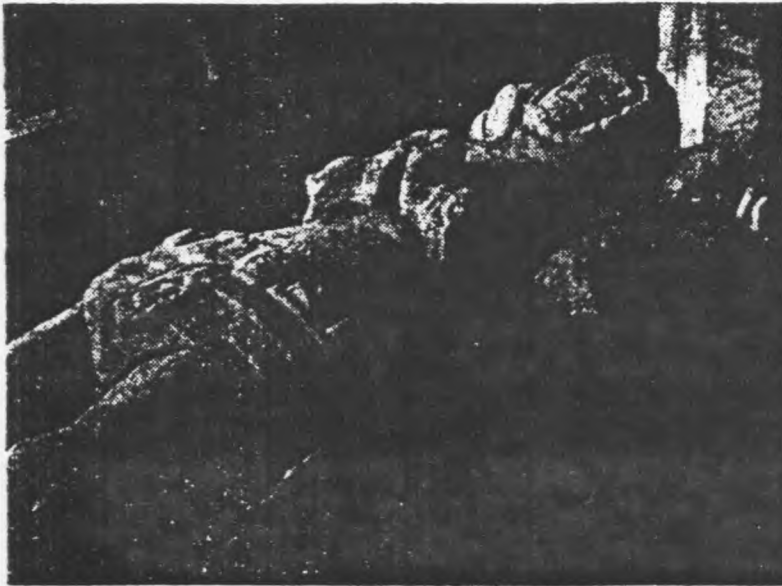
The two trophies are fiercely contested each year by more than 20 villages of the Vale. Standards have steadily risen since they were first awarded.

Colonel H. Morrey Salmon, chairman of the organising committee told me: "The village which first won the cup, and the signpost would not win them now."

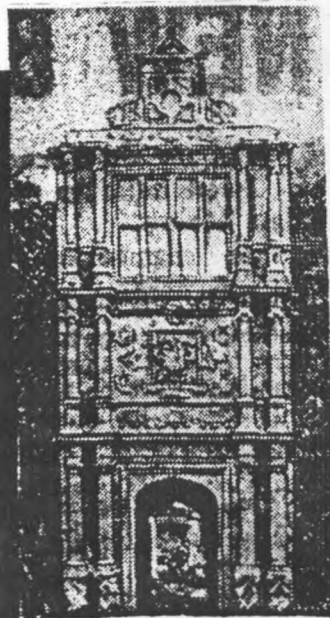
The Lady of the Manor and Head of St. Hilary Village, Miss D. Ackland Lewis, paid special tribute to the old age pensioners and the work they had done to keep St. Hilary in perfect condition.

Mr. Arthur Pearson, M.P., congratulated the villagers and said: "I would like the villagers to think they are contributing to the pleasure of others, and that they are teaching a lesson or two in tidiness to the people

COUNTRY CALL: ST. HILARY



THE EFFIGY OF THOMAS BASSET, KNIGHT.



The 40-foot high Elizabethan inner porch of Old Beaupre Castle—as renovated by the Ministry of Works.

of Beaupre," who died in 1849. The iron railings surrounding his grave are rusty and the house of Beaupre itself (Bewper to the locals) was falling down until the Ministry of Works took it under its wing.

I went along to this old country seat of the Bassets, which is about a mile from the village and known as Old Beaupre Castle. The ruins, however, are those of an Elizabethan mansion. The outer porch bears the date 1586, the inner porch, 1600. Standing 40 feet high in three tiers, this inner porch was badly overgrown until the Ministry's skilled masons took over.

Now, the rather menacing faces carved upon it are plain for all to see.

There's nothing to stop you looking, either. Though the ruins are attached to a farmhouse (which is older than the mansion), Mr. Trevor Llewellyn, the farmer, cheerfully gives people permission to view.

LOST LOVE

The porchways are said to be the work of a Bridgend mason called William Twrch and his brother Richard—and one romantic story has it that one of them learned his craftsmanship in Italy, where he went after seeing the woman he loved marry his brother.

It is likely, however, that this tale has as little truth as the one declaring that Magna Carta was drafted at Beaupre—a legend stemming from the fact that a Philip Basset was judiciary at the time of King John.

Old Beaupre must be one of the least-visited ancient monuments in Glamorgan, since it is at the end of a rough track leading off the road to St. Mary Church.

A few years ago a M.P. wanted a road fit for coaches put there, but the Minister of Works said it would be too expensive.

Back in St. Hilary I found one of the most out-of-the-way village stores imaginable. It is at the top of a garden—and there is even an arrow pointing out exactly where the shop door is.

"They all manage to find me," smiled Mrs. Gwen Davies behind the counter.

A PEACOCK

From Mrs. Mabel David, in Myrtle Cottage—a splash of bright beauty with its rambling roses—I bought a jar of honey. And at the Bush Inn, I found a peacock.

But this one never flaunts its feathers. It's a bush carefully trimmed into the shape of a peacock and carefully maintained by Mr. Gwyn Evans, landlord of this thatched pub, which is 500-600 years old and has stout oak beams.

Mr. Evans pointed out St. Hilary's most prominent landmark, after the TV mast—a clump of trees behind the inn, visible for many miles.

He also told me something I would never guess. People have managed to get lost in St. Hilary.

"It's hard to find your way around here at night," he said. "There are no street lights."

would never associate the gun-totin' att Earp with a serene village of d roofs and roses round the door—il you go to St. Hilary, at any rate.

here on the sky-line is the slim finger of mast, inescapable that Wyatt other Channel have a stake in tory.

some people t. Hilary only with But the village was before a Scots- Baird first con- sidering image on a The church is of igin and there is a ing nearby Beaupre John.

y—which has just ale of Glamorgan village award for i time—is half a of the main Car- dge road, which a few hundred of the ITV mast, captivating place, tracking in from ons, which surely at it's a point ashes to reach.

I can understand, miss St. Hilary, lished one of the spots in the Vale organ.

u are more than above sea level—in look at the ships annel and at the ntry beyond, with work colours of its med by distance.

N STACKS

point near a noble at the churchyard better still, from a gate a short dis- nch the road to St. rch) you can scan ing Vale below.

ur miles away in a are the twin stacks ver station at the ither west are the ings of St. Athan

By HERBERT WILLIAMS

And, much nearer, you might spot the church tower at St. Mary nosing above the trees on a hill to your right.

But St. Hilary isn't to be used only as a vantage point. There is pleasure enough in wandering along its network of narrow roads, past gardens carefully cultivated and rich with the vivid blooms of summer.

Like many another village, St. Hilary has lately had a face-lift from the affluent. A few years ago there were six old cottages near the church.

In their place, there now stand two smart country houses—one of them handsomely thatched.

Other pleasant features are of longer standing. There is the shady walk behind the church, and the lime tree on a little island in the road by the lych gate.

Inevitably, some distinctive items of old St. Hilary have disappeared, including the smithy with its tablet bear-

ing a verse reputed to be by Iolo Morganwg.

All that remains of the smithy is a jumble of stones at the edge of the village green, and there is no trace of the tablet. Not that there was much left of it in the end.

NO TRACE

"When we were boys we used to throw stones at it," confessed 69-year-old Mr. John Rees.

In the church an effigy of a knight in armour has also suffered fairly savage attentions. His hands are piously clasped, but they look rather deficient without arms.

The initials scratched on his midriff further detract from his dignity.

"The finest bit of sharpenin' stone in all Glamorgan," as Bernard Miles might say.

This much-abused gentleman is Thomas Basset, of Beaupre, who died in 1423. And under an arch in the north wall of the nave is the effigy of a long-haired youth holding a pair of gloves—one of the de Cardiff family of the 12th century, so it is believed.

Near the simple Norman



MRS. GWEN DAVID—the postmistress.

arch of the chancel* is a memorial to Daniel Jones, of Beaupre, who founded Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

OIL LAMPS

If you like poking around old churches there is plenty to interest you here—the steps to the rood-loft remain—but a less historic oddity that caught my eye was the fact that apart from electric lights, the church still has oil lamps and candles stuck in chandeliers.

Beyond the east end of the church is a large tombstone declaring, "Here lies Richard Basset, the last male heir of the ancient family of Basset