

# Cafn Dŵr Tal y Coed Water Trough

## Sir Joseph Alfred Bradney 1859 – 1933

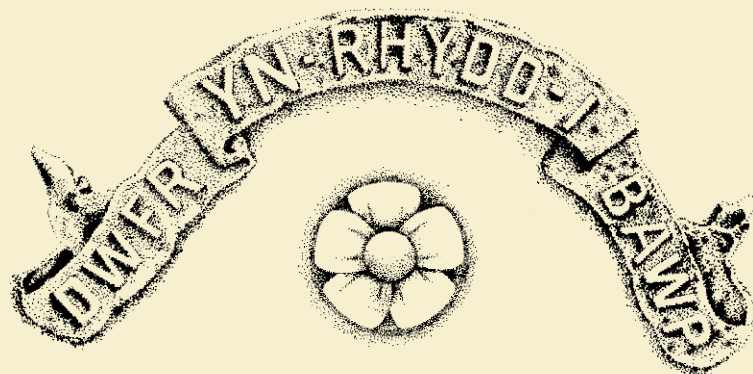
**The water trough was built about 1883 by Joseph Bradney who commissioned the architect F. R. Kempson to design and build a new mansion, associated buildings, the gate piers and walls and this trough. The trough provided drinking water for animals and formed an ornate feature opposite the entrance gates to the mansion.**

In Victorian times, a movement to provide clean public drinking water began in London in reaction to the polluted river Thames. Wealthy people contributed funds and by 1870, 140 drinking fountains and 153 cattle troughs were erected across the country; over the following decades rich landlords also provided drinking troughs for horses.



Tal y Coed water trough is carved from a single block of sandstone, probably quarried in the Forest of Dean. It is ornamented with gadrooning on three sides and decorated with rose motifs. The roses and rosettes are believed to be in honour of Joseph Bradney's first wife, Rosa. The colloquially

written inscription reads: DWFR YN RHYDD I BAWP meaning Free Water for All. It has a lower drinking trough for dogs. A small number of water troughs survive from this period in Monmouthshire. A similar trough, built by the Rolls family estate, The Hendre, Monmouth, can be seen 3.5 miles east along this road. Tal y Coed Trough was Listed in 2000 as being of special architectural and historical significance.



Over the decades, ivy colonised the stone damaging its surface and undermining the structure. The trough and backing wall were conserved in 2018 by the *Village Alive Trust* and the trough's owners with grants from Country Houses Foundation and Community Green Energy.



**Joseph Alfred Bradney was the only son of Joseph C Bradney, rector of Greete in Shropshire. He was a descendant of the Hopkins family of Ty-Isha, in the parish of Llanfihangel ystern Llewern (in English: the church of St. Michael and the burning of the Will o'the Wisp). After being educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, Joseph Bradney settled here, buying Tal y Coed Court estate from Crawshay Bailey Junior, son of the ironmaster, in 1880. He demolished the existing house and built an impressive residence on the site.**



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The young Bradney entered the army, serving as captain in the *Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia)* from 1882 to 1892 and as Lieutenant Colonel commanded the *2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment* from 1892 to 1912. In 1911, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of The Bath. During the Great War (1914-18) he served both at home and in France and Flanders.

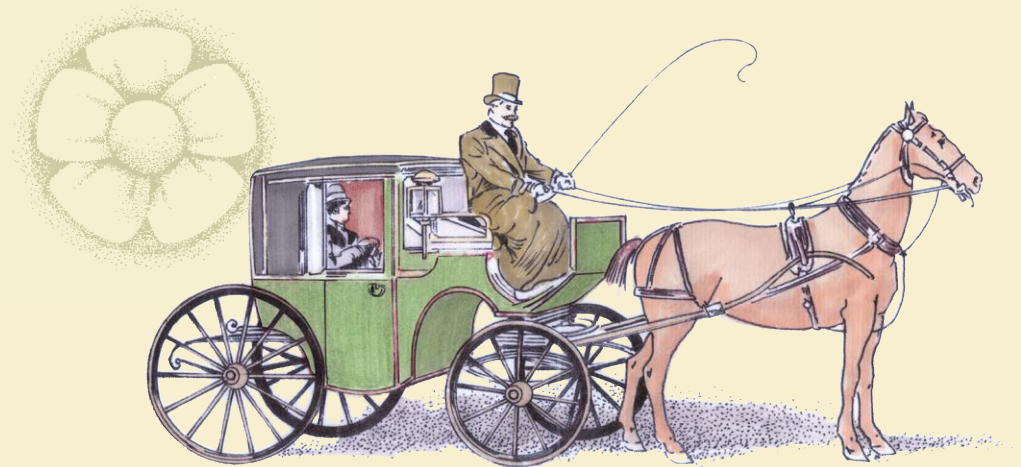
Bradney served his county in many other capacities. He became Monmouthshire High Sheriff in 1889, a county councillor from 1898–1924, an alderman from 1924–1928, and a Justice of the Peace. He was awarded a D.Litt by the University of Wales in 1923, and was knighted in 1924.

He knew the Welsh language, wrote letters in Latin and was a prominent member of the Court and Council of the National Library of Wales, the National Museum and the University of Wales. He was also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a member of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW).

Bradney is best remembered today as a genealogist, historian and writer. He published his monumental *History of Monmouthshire* in 12 volumes (1904-1932), giving detailed descriptions of churches, greater houses and family lineages. Bradney's "History" set the template for recording and recognising the significance of this county's vernacular architecture and heritage conservation.

## Turnpike Roads

Tal y Coed is approximately midway between Monmouth and Abergavenny, on what is now the B4233, a road that was at one time a 'Turnpike' road. Roads had criss-crossed the British Isles for millennia, even pre-dating the Roman Invasion, but by the mid 17th century, many roads were in a poor condition. During the Civil War (1649-1660) heavy gun carriages moved around the country, and an increasing number of stage coaches from 1640, as well as livestock driven to market. From 1663, *Turnpike Trusts* were formed to maintain the roads by collecting tolls. In Monmouthshire, turnpike trusts did not take effect until after 1757 when, as well as linking the main county towns, these roads created connections with Hereford, Gloucester, mid and south Wales. However, it could still take a week to get to London by coach.



Turnpike Trust directors were often local gentry and squire farmers, so although narrow and winding sections of road were improved and new bridges built, many of the changes served only to move traffic further away from someone's house, or to bring a decent road to the end of a driveway. Road building was generally undertaken by local men, usually unpaid, although some trusts hired local labourers and paid good wages. Despite these efforts, carriage and coach traffic was often unable to move in adverse weather conditions.

By the early 1840s, resentment about high road tolls led to the *Rebecca Riots* which resulted in major changes in the organization of turnpikes in south Wales. In 1862, the Government introduced the Highways Act which placed responsibility for roads in the hands of newly established highway boards. Under the Local Government Act of 1888 control of the county's main roads was given to the newly created Monmouthshire County Council.