



# ROBERT LLOYDcolumn

In YourArea.co.uk

Robert Lloyd is the print content editor for the South Wales Evening Post

## It's been a long time coming!

IN a 'career' spanning more than 40 years (and including no less than five separate stints at this great newspaper), it is only now that I have reached the tender age of sixty-something that I've been let off the leash with 'a column'.

Everything comes to he who waits, they say...

In the 'waiting room' for budding columnists, I have, of course 'dabbled' with the format before.

When I first started at 'The Post' one of the paper's daily features was a column called 'Postman's Diary', which occasionally featured a sketch drawing of a writer purposely conjured up to look just a little like Dylan Thomas (a celebrated Evening Post journalist who went on to do better things, I suspect).

The column was written anonymously.

Journalists were picked to do that day's Postman's Diary on a stringent selection process, usually based on whoever happened to be the 'fourth or fifth reporter' to show up for work at Adelaide Street on any particular day.

Postman's Diary usually filled a slot at the bottom of 'The Leader Page' or the 'Op-Ed' page (Op-Ed standing for opposite the editorial, in case you hadn't worked it out).

In those heady days of hot

metal type (heady because the smell of steaming hot molten lead could send you a bit barmy), it was considered 'clever' and 'almost trendy' that the end of the column carried a sign-off line at the bottom, with the word 'Postman' in a 24pt italic script font.

The column itself contained a rag-bag selection of usually four random items (if pushing the envelope, it would sometimes be daring and carry a photo!).

These went through a strict selection process.

Our news editors in those days were Frank Gold, Alan Watts and Paul Chambert (all now sadly departed to the Great Newsroom In The Sky).

Their policy was simple - if it didn't look quite good enough to make it into the Post as a story, and if there was a 'consequence' (for example, a feisty member of the local community bound to ring up to complain about their story 'not' appearing in print), then it was tailor-made for The Postman's Diary treatment.

If that approach sounds bizarre, then sit back and relax; there's plenty more bizarre things to tell from 40-odd years of working at the Post...

Keep on buying the paper and I'll tell you more!

You can follow Robert Lloyd on Twitter @rlloydpr or email - robert.lloyd01@walesonline.co.uk

## Keeping the memory bank in tune

THANK goodness some people have good memories.

For example, Swansea travel photographer Nick Smith catapulted me back to the late 1980s with just one sentence.

"Are you the same Robert Lloyd of The Post that used to review bands at The Coach House back in the 1980s? If you are, you reviewed the first gig my band - No Flags Etc - played. It was during the Swansea Fringe, way back in the last century!"

He wrote in after I featured his new book of photos, called To The Light-house: Lockdown Swansea by Smartphone and Bike.

Nick is a Swansea-based freelance writer and photographer whose work has appeared in hundreds of magazines, books and newspapers over the past three decades.

Formerly editor of monthly magazines BBC Focus and Geographical, he has won a dozen journalism awards, including Magazine Editor of the Year. Educated at Olchfa Comprehensive School, Swansea, and Balliol College Oxford, he is also a fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society in London and the Explorers Club in New York.

His adventures have taken him to more than 100 countries, as well as the North Pole and Antarctica. Nick's interests include playing the guitar and 'in a previous well-documented life' he was a founder member of Swansea's legendary 1980s pop band No Flags Etc. The Coach House was a legendary Swansea music venue, with a sweaty basement masquerading as our version of Liverpool's The Cavern. It is now The Pitcher and Piano in Wind Street.

Nick Smith's memory jolt was like an electric shock to the brain.

Yes, of course I remembered... lead singer Donna Beynon worked for the Post, as did guitarist Rob Thomas, I think. Rob was also a tidy Swansea league cricketer for Ffynone. And I'm sure I recall that our photographer, John Corbett, also did regular sessions on the drums with No Flags Etc.

Happy days! Happy memories!



Swansea band No Flags Etc and below, a cutting from 1987 featuring a review of the group.



★★★★★  
'Inspiring, heartbreaking and heartwarming'

★★★★★  
'A story of hope'

★★★★★  
'A must-read.'

★★★★★  
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