**BRUTUS 1795 - 1866**

Christmas Day 1795 saw the usual communion service at Llanpumsaint church, made livelier that year by the Sexton’s son being christened. In that age the 25th of December was an uneventful occasion, not even a holiday. The bustle of Santa Claus, trees, cards and presents lay a good half century away in the 1840’s. In 1795 all the fun and excitement happened at New Year. Yet today was special for Joseph Owen the shoemaker and Rachel his wife, as friends were invited back home to Penybontfach for cakes and newly brewed ale. Their home lay a few hundred yards away in the then tiny village, (opposite where Gwili Terrace would one day be built), near the flowing Gwili. As they savored the little celebration that Christmas day, little did anyone imagine that the admired babe in arms, christened David Owen, would one day grow into a literary giant. By the mid 19th century the whole of Wales would know that Llanpumsaint was the birthplace of Brutus renowned author, critic biographer and most of all editor of the famous church magazine Yr Haul (The Sun)

The old shoemaker sexton made sure that his young lad received an extensive and classical education, way beyond the basics meted out in the class at the back of the Church. David Owen never realized his ambition to become a doctor, so he hailed forth as a Unitarian preacher in North Wales. Then having fallen out and got into trouble with the Baptists he rejoined the Church. He tried his hand at various magazines before becoming editor of the church magazine Yr Haul (The Sun), a post he held for the rest of his life. Now known to all as Brutus (having once written a vitriolic article under that pseudonym), he became the great champion of the established church. His violent and persistent attacks on Nonconformity, as he poured scorn and satire on what he termed their Quack preachers, made Yr Haul as controversial as its modern day namesake The Sun. There lay another side to his character. Brutus was the author of many serious works and biographies (of nonconformist preachers too). His collected works were published as Brutusiana. He died 150 years ago, and gravestone can be seen at Llywel in Breconshire, where he’d settled to bring up a family. Despite all his voluble support, strangely enough the church never ordained him; too much of a hot potato perhaps! Descended from Martha Llwyd’s sister, both he through his writings and she through her hymns, made sure that the name Llanpumsaint reverberated loudly throughout Wales during the first half of the 19th century and beyond *Arwyn 2016*.