



Home-made memorial on the side of road so we never forget Tryweryn

A FEW miles south of Aberystwyth on the A487 road, there's an old, crumbling wall painted with the words Cofiwch Dryweryn.

It's a home-made memorial to the flooding of the valley in the 1960s to create a reservoir that would supply Liverpool with water and the campaign against the project.

The slogan, which means Remember Tryweryn, was painted on many structures during the 1960s but this one at Llanrhystud is probably the best known.

It is the only lasting memorial to the ultimately unsuccessful protest to prevent the reservoir being built. A plan to build a memorial at Llyn Celyn has so far not raised the necessary funds.

Writer and critic Dr Meic Stephens said he painted the slogan at Llanrhystud.

He said: "I wrote it. I clearly remember the night.

"We wanted to remind the people of Wales of the treachery

and suffering, the anger, the agony and the disruption that took place when Liverpool Corporation were given the go-ahead - against public opinion in Wales - to drown Tryweryn, without paying a penny for it.

"We wanted to warn our fellow Welshmen to be vigilant and make sure that this would never happen again."

Over the years the wall at Llanrhystud had deteriorated to such an extent the falling stones had become a danger to the public and parts of the lettering of the

painted slogan were rapidly disappearing.

In April 2010 an attack on the historic painted message was condemned by members of the public. The wall was defaced by a graffiti artist which sparked a Facebook campaign calling for the vandal to be brought to justice.

Llanrhystud Community Council launched a fundraising campaign to safeguard the wall's future with a target of £80,000 to establish ownership, preserve and maintain the wall.

Cadw, the historic environment

division of the Assembly Government, contributed £30,000 to the fund.

Speaking at the time Dafydd Lewis of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, believes the wall holds great meaning in modern Welsh history.

He said: "Tryweryn was the catalyst really for the Welsh language movement in the '60s, it was a wake-up call for many and sparked the fight for justice and the future of the Welsh language.

"Many people have taken the mantle of painting the wall over the years - it is one of the few examples of nationalistic graffiti that we have and has essentially put Llanrhystud on the map."

Artist John Meirion Morris has designed a memorial for the reservoir. It is a striking bronze sculpture of a phoenix rising from the ashes and would be placed on a plinth on the banks of the reservoir near the dam.

Since the design was first revealed in 1999 fund-raisers have banked about £15,000 but need £300,000.



■ How sign is seen from the road (inset) and close up (main)

Music to fully put across pain of Capel Celyn

THE drowning of Capel Celyn to supply Liverpool with water has inspired a new piece of music.

Michael Stimpson's work 'The Drowning of Capel Celyn' is released on a new album alongside his acclaimed biographical song cycle based on the life and work of Dylan Thomas.

The harp solo began life as a commission for renowned classical harpist Sioned Williams. She approached Michael for a new piece to mark her 60th birthday.

Sioned's grandfather, Welsh Trade Union leader, politician and poet Huw T. Edwards, became the first President of the Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas Yr Iaith).

He was also chairman of the 'Save Tryweryn' campaign that fought hard to overturn the decision to flood the Tryweryn valley. Michael said: "It seemed the perfect opportunity to create a piece to honour the community of Capel Celyn and the harrowing story of the drowning of their village.

"I had known Sioned for many years and knew about her grandfather's tireless campaign against the flooding.

I had long been interested in that chapter of Welsh history, and this proved the perfect opportunity to create music inspired by it. What developed was a harp piece for Sioned's 60th birthday, in memory of her grandfather and all those of the Capel Celyn community who lived through that harrowing period."

Set in five movements, the work evokes Capel Celyn in first light, the marching of protesters and the violence of the flooding.

First performed last year the piece has now been recorded by Sioned.

She said: "Performing Capel Celyn is especially poignant for me. I sat as a young girl on the banks of Capel Celyn with my grandfather, listening to him explaining why Tryweryn was such a tragedy, and what he personally had tried to do to stop the reservoir being built."

Capel Celyn is accompanied on the album by a biographical song cycle celebrating the life and work of Wales' most famous poet, Dylan Thomas.

■ The album 'The Drowning of Capel Celyn' will be available on Stone Records in January 2016 and the publisher, Creighton's Collection of Cardiff will publish both works to coincide with the CD release.

■ Huw Edwards and Sioned Williams (inset)

