**Dr. Ifor David Monger**

**January 7th 1908 – May 29th 1972.**

Dr. Ifor David Monger was born at 71 Cardiff Road, Taff’s Well, where his father Ivor Monger had a thriving General Store. Famous for being the first shop to import particular teas from India to Wales, the house became known as ‘Assam House’.

His father’s side of the family had roots in Briton Ferry where several Mongers had been involved in copper and steel smelting. On his mother’s side Ifor was the grandson of the renowned ‘hwyl preacher’, David Davies of Lisvane. The family had strong ties to the Tabernacle Baptist Chapel in Garth Street, Taff’s Well, now demolished.

Ifor attended Monkton House preparatory school in Cardiff, then Taunton School in Somerset, and finally studied medicine at Charing Cross Hospital, London, achieving his MD, LRCP and FRCS. (Doctor of Medicine, Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, and Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons) in 1931.

While studying in Taunton and London, he changed to using his middle name, David, as so many English people found ‘Ifor’ hard to pronounce.

He retuned to Wales, practicing medicine in Cwmfelinfach. He married Eileen Paul and they had a son, John David Monger in 1934. Later, John attended St. Thomas Hospital, also qualifying as a doctor.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, David volunteered, answering the call for doctors. He spent the war as ship’s doctor on H.M.S. Devonshire, and running a hospital in Poona, India (now Pakistan) with the rank of Captain in charge of a unit of Gurkhas. It was during this time that he started to write plays and short stories.

He returned after the war to a broken marriage and met his second wife, Zena Evans (formerly Zena Dare)in Cwmfelinfach. Zena, who had trained as a nurse in Hampstead, London, had been widowed early in the war when her husband Frank Evans, and father of her two daughters, Kay and Diane, went down with his submarine, HMS Thistle, off Norway.

David and Zena left Cmwfelinfach, living for a short time in Radyr. In the late 1940’s, after the death of his parents, they settled into his childhood home in Taff’s Well. (His father’s shop became ‘Hargests’.)

Together Dr. and Mrs. Monger had three more children, Jennifer (now known as Deirdre), Christopher and Antony.

Kay and Diane also followed into medicine, studying at Charing Cross Hospital, London. Kay became Sister on the Renal Dialysis Unit at Cardiff Royal Infirmary, and Diane worked as a midwife, rising to superintendent of Midwives throughout the Pontypridd area.

After the war, even while working as a single-handed GP in both Cwmfelinfach and Taffs Well, David Monger poured out a number of plays, articles and stories. He further made time to work as a freelance drama critic for the Western Mail and Echo.

His plays were performed throughout South Wales, and in Liverpool, and London’s West End, one of them taking second place at The Festival of Britain. He was President of the Guild of Welsh Playwrights and many of his works were translated into Welsh and broadcast on BBC Radio.

In 1960 he suffered a devastating, and almost fatal heart attack but was back at work within six weeks. He wrote about his experience in his autobiography ‘Goodbye, Doctor, Goodbye’ which was published under the pseudonym Peter Manngian, by Abelard-Schuman, in 1963. His short stories were published in numerous magazines and periodicals, and his ‘The Man Who Lost His Boswell’ was included in the Oxford University Press ‘Classic Welsh Short Stories’ (selected by Gwyn Jones and Islwyn Ffowc Elis, 1971, reprinted 1992.)

In his fifties – having been warned that because of a heart condition, he should give up golf - he instead took up climbing in the Brecon Beacons, and caving in the Lesser Garth where he became fascinated by the huge abandoned iron ore and yellow ochre mines. He campaigned for the mine pitts to be saved and opened to the public, writing many letters and appearing on TV to talk about them. A keen photographer and filmmaker, he illustrated his talks with the stunning images he had taken underground.

But he is most remembered as a caring doctor who was available seven days a week, twenty four hours a day; opened his home for consultations twice a day; and in between made dozens of house calls – even checking on the elderly who hadn’t asked to see him. He was praised for heroism in one Coroner’s report after he crawled to comfort a dying miner in a cave-in.

In his medical practice, and in most all of his various endeavours, he was helped by his wife Zena, who, as a trained nurse, was his partner. They were both keen painters, and the waiting room was decorated with their work.

David died in 1972, in his early Sixties, way before his time.  Zena survived him by another thirty seven years, living to the age of 95, a much loved matriarch and great grandmother.