



TOWNS by Nidian

DOUG BAILEY is a man of many parts. He is known to thousands of people as the engineer to Neath Borough Council. Others know him as a talented amateur actor and producer. There are several Continental towns which know him as the secretary of the Neath Borough International Youth Exchange Committee.

Doug Bailey arrived home in August, 1942, took time out to get married in November of that year (his bride, Miss Edna Thorber, came from his native Colne, in Lancashire) and spent the rest of the war as an engineer with the Air Ministry Works Directorate.

He left the Air Ministry in March, 1946, and from then on was to spend his life in local government.

Working in local government was not new to him, for that was where he had started his career when he was articled to the borough engineer of home town Colne in 1934-38.

DEPUTY

When he returned to the local government field it was as senior engineering assistant at Nelson, also in Lancashire, staying there for six months. From late 1946 to 1948 he was deputy borough engineer at Buxton, in Derbyshire.

He came to Neath in September, 1948, as deputy engineer to Neath Borough Council under Mr. Ernest Rees and a short while afterwards, in January, 1949, he was appointed borough engineer on Mr. Rees's retirement.

In the 22 years that Doug Bailey has been a "Neath man" he has put his roots deep — indeed, deep enough for many people to be surprised that he has decided to leave the area.

For instance, he joined Neath Little Theatre immediately he came here, and, both as actor and producer, has made some notable contributions to its work. He has acted in or produced literally dozens of plays since 1948.

He used to play tennis, but has long given that up. But what he leaves behind is the annual Neath Borough Lawn Tennis Tournaments, which he founded in 1952 and of which he is an ex-chairman.

MALAYA

Another great interest has been the Neath Borough International Youth Exchange Committee, which has done good work in fostering understanding between the youths of various countries. He has been its secretary since its inception in 1939 and has made a number of trips to Continental towns on behalf of the committee and, of course, been responsible locally for the visits made here by parties of Continental youths.

But few know him as an author. For years he wrote a fascinating book which he titled "We built and destroyed."

In 1940 he joined H.M. Colonial Service and that

year went to Malaya as an assistant engineer to the Public Works Service.

When war broke out in the Far East in December, 1941, Doug Bailey was drafted into the Straits Settlements Volunteer Engineers, with the rank of lieutenant. He took part in the retreat, escaped from Singapore via Java and Sumatra and ended up in Australia.

THRILLING

He stayed there three months, working for the Government as a resident engineer at the Mingsford Smith Airport, in Sydney.

One day he decided to write a book about his life in Malaya, where he had helped to build and then helped to destroy what he had built, and about the retreat and escape.

It is a thrilling narrative. He has been a Rotarian since 1962 and in 1969-70 was President of the Rotary Club of Neath.

One organisation that will miss him very much is Neath Rugby Club. He is their honorary architect and he has helped them many times with designs, and so on, for improvements at the Gnoll Rugby Ground.

The club's secretary, Mr. W. Arthur Griffiths, said this week: "Mr. Bailey has been a tremendous asset to us. He has given us wonderful service and we will certainly miss him."

HOUSES

Mr. Bailey is a Fellow of the Institution of Municipal Engineers, and represents South Wales on its national council; a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers; an Associate member of the Institution of Highway Engineers and a Member of the Timber Industry Committee of the British Standards Institution.

His period as borough engineer of Neath has seen over 2,000 houses built by Neath Borough Council, and, among many other things, it has seen the building of Dyfed Road Swimming Baths and the laying-out of playing fields — for when he came here the borough did not have a single playing field.

Mrs. Bailey is as keen as her husband on amateur theatricals and, like him, is a member of Neath Little Theatre. But she goes one better by also being a member of Neath Amateur Operatic Society.

Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, who live at Briton Ferry, have a son, aged 19, who was born in Neath, and a daughter, who is 25.

Mr. Bailey, who is 54, starts his new job at Barry on January 1 next.

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