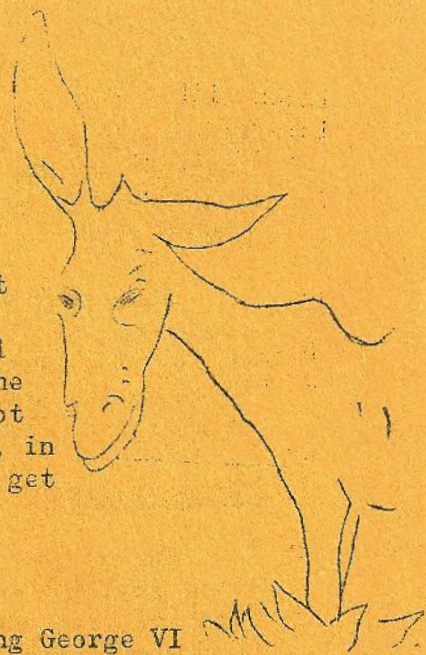


## MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE



When I returned to Capel-y-ffin during the first two weeks of July 1961, the weather was beautifully hot. I had climbed the narrow lane from Llanvihangel Crucorney to the Youth Hostel sheltered halfway up the mountainside, and toiled up the steep gradient on foot up to the hostel, as I thought that the 1935 Hillman, in which I had driven from London, would not be able to get up the slope.

### Converted farmhouse

The Capel-y-ffin Youth Hostel, a memorial to King George VI was the finest I have ever stayed at. Once the property of Marlborough College, now - a pleasantly converted farmhouse with its own water reservoir, and a diesel electric generator which, with its staccato exhaust note, guides the benighted traveller to this luxury hostel.

The Warden, Jack Evans, was a cheerful kindly man, ex-Cavalry, and what he did not know about horses and ponies was not worth knowing.

### Mustachioed Welshman

Our guide was a mustachioed Welshman with a wonderful sense of humour and an endless assortment of local legends of the places that we visited; his name - Dai Griffiths - and he was introduced to us on Sunday morning.

The novice pony trekkers, who form about half the group, were shown how to saddle up, and to put the bridle and bit on the pony that they have been allocated by the guide. The rest of the morning was spent in a neighbouring field in getting accustomed to the movement of the pony.

The pony is well aware when an inexperienced rider is astride and has to be shown who is master, i.e. with the heels, or for the first day only, with a stick. The following day, a tap with the heels on his lower ribs will produce all the response that most people will desire.

### Short ride

On Sunday afternoon Dai Griffiths took the whole party, consisting of a dozen riders, out for a short ride over the mountains until about five o'clock.

Monday and Tuesday were spent on longer rides, taking a packed