

Ray Milland, Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins

How three great Welsh actors, born within ten miles of each other, became Hollywood legends.

An illustrated lecture presented by Dulais Rhys, Ph.D

Ray Milland (1907-86), born Alfred Reginald Jones in Castell Nedd/Neath is nowadays mostly remembered for his leading roles in ‘The Lost Weekend’ (1945) and Alfred Hitchcock’s ‘Dial M for Murder’ (1954). Starting his acting career as an extra in London movies of the 1920s, after moving to Hollywood in 1930, he signed for MGM as a stock actor before moving to Paramount, where he played secondary roles – usually as an upper-crust Englishman(!). Leading roles eluded him until his move to Universal in the late 1930s. He also directed movies, such as ‘A Man Alone’ (1955), and made frequent appearances on television in the 1950s and 60s, followed by a return to the Broadway stage, starring in plays such as ‘Hostile Witness’.

Richard Burton (1925-84), born Richard Walter Jenkins in the village of Pontrhydyfen, was known for his unmistakable “meillifluous baritone voice’. His acting career began in the 1950s with a series of Shakespeare plays, such as his role as Hamlet that thrust Burton into the theatrical spotlight. Following his move to Hollywood in the early 1950s, he was nominated seven times for an Academy Award, such as for ‘The Robe’ (1953), ‘Becket’ (1964) and ‘Equus’ (1977). In the 1960s, Burton was one of the highest paid actors in the world, whose stellar career was marred by unreliability and moodiness, a reputation that was reinforced by twice marrying and divorcing the equally tempestuous Elizabeth Taylor.

Chameleon-like actor, director and producer Anthony Hopkins was born in 1937 in Port Talbot and during his half century on stage and screen is the recipient of multiple theatrical accolades. After graduating from Caerdydd/Cardiff’s Welsh College of Music and Drama then London’s Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, Hopkins’s acting talent was soon spotted in Shakespeare plays by renowned English actor, Laurence Olivier. Hopkins’s move to Hollywood in the early 1970s led to roles in acclaimed movies such as ‘The Elephant Man’ (1980) and his most (in)famous role as Hannibal Lecter in ‘The Silence of the Lambs’ (1991) for which he won an Academy Award for Best Actor. Ever the proud Welshman, Hopkins now divides his time between Los Angeles and his beloved *Cymru*, of which he says: “Welsh people have a talent for acting... The English lack heart.”

Though often called “a nation of preachers and teachers”, for a country the size of New Jersey, *Cymru* has also given the world an amazing wealth of creative people, such as actors Milland, Burton and Hopkins, singers Bryn Terfel, Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey, painter Kyffin Williams and poet Dylan Thomas. Is it something in the water? 😊

DURATION: c1 hour

FEE: \$295.00

EXPENSES: a contribution toward travel costs is appreciated.

Thank you for considering my proposal and please contact me for more information.

Sincerely,
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REFERENCES, RECOMMENDATIONS & REVIEWS

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