



# FACTsheet 4

Alice Thomas Ellis

Anna Margaret Haycraft (1932-2005), known to her readers as Alice Thomas Ellis, was a journalist, novelist, painter, Catholic polemicist, cookery book writer, fiction editor, mother of seven and a member of the very influential Gloucester Crescent literary milieu in London. In the 1980s and 90s, she was considered one of Britain's finest novelists and her book *The 27th Kingdom* (1982) was short-listed for the Mann Booker Prize.



Anna was born in Liverpool in 1932 but moved with her parents to Penmaenmawr soon afterwards, living in various houses in the town before settling in a quarryman's cottage high up on Graiglwyd Road. In her autobiographical novel, *A Welsh Childhood* (Penguin Press, 1990) she vividly describes her childhood here, spending time with friends exploring the hills, meadows and seashore, which left her with a lifelong love of North Wales and a longing (hiraeth) to return.

When her husband, a prominent publisher and literary editor with whom she shared a hectic social life, died in 1994, that hiraeth led her to leave London to live out her remaining days in a remote cottage near Bala. There she created what could be likened to her own artists' colony where she had a constant stream of visitors including writers, artists and others bohemians as well as her large family.

Anna died in London in 2005 and leaves a legacy of work including *The 27th Kingdom*, *Home Life*, *The Summerhouse Trilogy* (and many more). Her novel 'A Welsh Childhood', is often available on ebay and Amazon.

