



***Glamorgan Family
History Society***
*Cymdeithas Hanes
Teuluol Morgannwg*



Journal No 151

September 2023

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VIV' IN THE SOUTH WALES. BORDERERS . (C.1939.)
(4TH FROM RIGHT, BACK ROW)

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Centre Insert: Membership Renewal Form, Standing Order Form, Gift Aid Form

Society's Objectives

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As a registered charity the main objectives of the Glamorgan Family History Society are to: encourage and stimulate research into genealogy and allied subjects with particular reference to the historic county of Glamorgan: to assist members in their private research; encourage the transcription and preservation of records of family history and the deposit of original documents of value in approved repositories; publish papers of genealogical value and interests; establish, to mutual advantage, relations with other organisations interested in genealogy and allied subjects; maintain a library and regularly publish a journal. The journal is the official publication of the Glamorgan Family History Society. Articles appearing in the journal may not be reproduced without the written permission of the Editor. Views expressed in articles and letters are not necessarily those of the GFHS.

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Please only telephone for confirmation of meetings dates, venues and times - all other enquiries please write by email or snail mail

EDITORIAL

Croeso! Welcome to the late Summer/early Autumn edition of our Journal, and I can promise a roller-coaster of a ride reading through these articles. We asked for stories from the Services - in war or peace, in action or at home with families. What we received were some enthralling accounts of the adventures and misadventures, the heroism and resourcefulness of our members' families, in extraordinary circumstances.

If you think, as I did, that some of these would be worthy of a film, you will see that one of them, that of Glyndwr Michael, already has been made into a film starring Colin Firth, and yet another is rumoured to be 'in the pipeline'.

If you are inspired into looking up your own long-lost-in-the-war relatives, Fiona Caskey has outlined her recommendations for doing so.

We also include part 3 of Hugh Bevan's political life in Bridgend, and some research into the adventurous life of a Swansea sailor over 100 years ago.

At this point I should explain that some of these are slightly over our recommended word count, simply because it became impossible to cut back on these stories without damaging the flow of the accounts. In future though, to allow everyone to get their stories told, 1500-1800 words should be the maximum length to please bear in mind when submitting an article. I should also remind contributors that all photographs and images **MUST** be given an attribution and if necessary, permission to use. If they are family photographs, please state that. Extracts from published books and articles should also always be acknowledged by way of footnotes and references. Copyright laws are stringent and infringement can lead to heavy fines for both contributor and the Society.

Throughout the journal there is mention of the 50th anniversary of the Glamorgan Family History in March 2024, and also next year the National Eisteddfod is returning to Glamorgan, the location of the 'Maes' still be decided within Rhondda Cynon Taf at the time of writing. We have been promised an eisteddfod article for the March edition, but it would in addition be really good to hear from anyone who was around at the time of the inauguration of our Society in 1974, or from anyone who remembers stories and personalities from that time.

Before that we have December and Winter - no particular topic, and I would like to include some of the articles I have on hold as we have had good responses lately - there is still room for more though, so please have a look through your family archives and let us have your family adventures and your experiences of family research.

Hwyl Fawr!

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

We are having a wet and windy Summer here in South Wales, very different to the extreme temperatures being experienced in many parts of Europe so time to move indoors from the garden and do some family history, especially with birth and death certificates from the General Register Office now being made available to purchase online as digital images for £2.50 each – see notice on page 54 for the covering dates. Back in the early days of researching this usually meant a trip to St Catherine's House in London to check in very large tomes for the civil registration reference needed to purchase a certificate. When I started researching in the late 1970s only five census years (1841-1871) were available and these could only be accessed by visiting local county libraries that had microfilms available so for me that meant a trip to Bristol Central Library to spend a day scrolling through the films in the hope that I would find an entry – some days I did not find anything. There were very few indexes to the census at this time although family history societies and the Latter Day Saints were starting to provide indexes both to the census and some parish records.

The first meeting of the Society was held on 10 March 1974 and so to celebrate our 50th Anniversary next year we will be producing an additional publication and would like your memories of the early days when researching but also of how things have changed since the advent of the internet which was in its early days when the Society celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 1999. A copy of the 25th Anniversary publication is available to view in the members area of the website.

www.glamfhs.org.uk/25thanniversary

We are also currently discussing whether to hold a buffet lunch and a webinar as part of our celebrations so we therefore need volunteers to help to plan and organise these events. If you are able to help, either by providing material for the publication, or would be prepared to join our 50th Anniversary Planning Group contact me via the email below.

As indicated at the Annual General Meeting due to increased costs of running the Society we are having to increase our subscriptions for the first time in six years. As from 1 September 2023 annual subscriptions will be £20 for UK and £25 for overseas membership. Renewal and standing order forms are included in the centre insert. Standing order forms need to be **sent to your bank** as soon as possible in order for your standing order paid in January to be amended to the increased amount.

Sue Hamer, Chairman, 1 August 2023

chairman@glamfhs.org.uk

Images Front and Inside Cover: Front: Vivian Willson-Lloyd's medals placed on a map to show where he had seen action during the war. Inside: South Wales Borderers c1939 and telegrams received: Lt Willson-Lloyd reported as missing and a POW - see article on page 19).

CAPTAIN ARISTIDE CLOPET, HIS WIFE CHARLOTTE TOWERSON & THE SS SOUTHPORT #20770 FIONA CASKEY

Captain Aristide Marie Bernard CLOPET was a French merchant sea captain, born 21st August 1879, Ménilles, Eure, France; he married Charlotte TOWERSON, (my 1st Cousin twice removed), born 23rd November 1882, Berwick upon Tweed. They married on 13th September 1900 at the Newcastle on Tyne registry office. Aristide became naturalised British in 1910. They had 3 children, Isabelle Marie M, born 1900, Isle of Wight; Lilian Marie Catherine, born 1901, Berwick upon Tweed and Karl Victor, born 1903, Berwick upon Tweed.

From censuses Charlotte seemed to travel with her husband, leaving their 3 children with Charlotte's mother Eleanor Towerson.

I have not found an entry in the 1901 census for Aristide and Charlotte; but their eldest daughter, 3 months old, was with her grandmother in Berwick upon Tweed. In the 1911 Census Aristide and Charlotte were on the SS *Kildare* at New Dock, Port Talbot RG15/32618; their son Karl was with his grandmother in Berwick upon Tweed, while the daughters were at boarding school, St Mary's Convent, Berwick upon Tweed.

In 1913 Aristide took the role as Captain of the SS *Southport*. The SS *Southport* was a tramp steamer registered to Lewis Trading Co Ltd (T LEWIS), Cardiff. It sailed the oceans picking up cargo where it could.

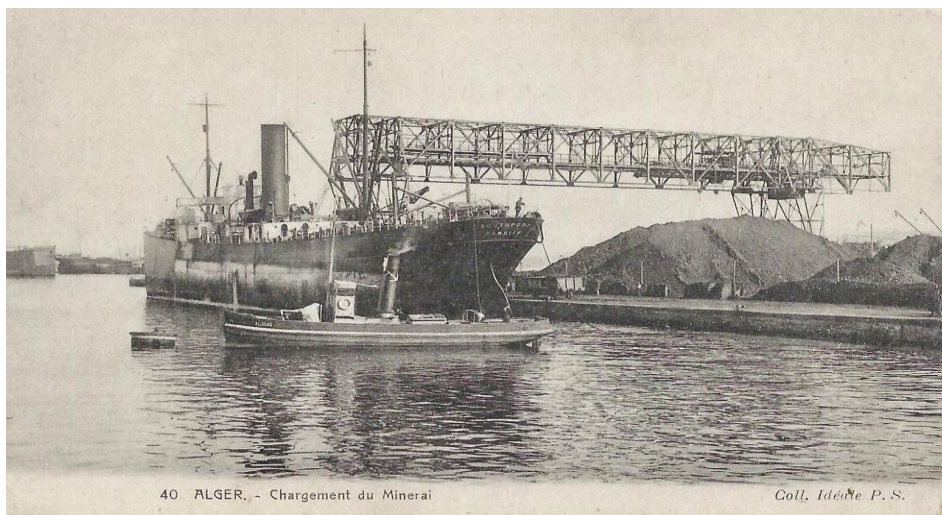


Figure 1 The SS Southport (Postcard in family possession)

The Agreement and Account of Crew for the SS *Southport* was signed 13th March 1913, for a voyage not exceeding 2 years. Not all the crew on the crew list were on the crew for the whole period. Charlotte had signed up as stewardess, leaving her 3 children with their grandmother.

The SS *Southport*, with Charlotte on board, left early 1914 for New York; where the ship took on a cargo of machinery and sailed round the Cape of Good Hope to Durban and onto Australia arriving in May. Early June, the SS *Southport* sailed to New Zealand carrying a cargo of coal. After sailing from Auckland to Wellington and then Dunedin, her next destination should have been north to Ocean Island in the Pacific for a load of phosphates to take to Rotterdam, but this stage of the journey was to change with consequences. When the SS *Southport* arrived at Ocean Island Aristide's orders were changed so the ship went to Nauru for a cargo of phosphates for Stettin. Owing to bad weather and congestion in the harbour at Nauru, the SS *Southport* was forced to return to Ocean Island and then island hop up the Gilbert Islands picking up cargoes. Aristide decided to make for Kusaie (German ruled) in the Caroline Islands, where the fast-mail ship *Germania* arrived bi-monthly, hoping for new orders, and allow him to replenish their supplies. The 4th August 1914 saw the SS *Southport* anchored in the bay at Kusaie, the day Britain declared war on Germany.

It has to be remembered that in those days communication was not what we expect today. The SS *Southport* was 14 years old and over three thousand tons, with a crew of twenty-three and electricity, but nothing as sophisticated as a radio so there was no way of knowing what was happening across the other side of the world.

Fresh water was obtained but no food was available owing to a cyclone earlier in the year. It was decided to wait for the *Germania*, but that ship never arrived, and instead, on 4th September, the *Geier*, a German cruiser arrived. The crew of the SS *Southport* were not concerned as they did not know what had happened in Europe. At the time the *Geier* arrived in Kusaie Aristide and Charlotte were ashore, so Chief Officer DODDS on board the SS *Southport* welcomed a cutter from the *Geier*. It was the officer of the boarding party who informed Chief Officer Dodds about Britain and Germany being at war.

Aristide returned to the SS *Southport* after which there were 'discussions' with the officer from *Geier* which ended in the British flag being hauled down and the German flag hoisted while the proclamation was made, stating that the SS *Southport* was being seized in the name of the Kaiser. A guard was placed on the SS *Southport* until the German merchant ship *Tsintau* of *Bremen* arrived. The *Tsintau* then took coal and kerosene oil from the SS *Southport*. In addition, three crew members who were German and a Norwegian crew member left the SS *Southport*. After which, a party from the

Geier went on board to disable the engines.

Before leaving Kusaie the officer of the *Geier* went aboard the *SS Southport* saying the ship would not be sunk but would have to remain at Kusaie until the end of the war. Aristide pointed out that they were short of provisions but the officer said they could live on coconuts from the island. Aristide said he would not be responsible for the actions of his men if they were starving. The officer of the *Geier* wrote out an order for King Sigrah to provide provisions, but as the island was short of provisions this was of little help. After the *Geier* sailed Aristide and Charlotte went ashore to visit King Sigrah to find food supplies. The King reluctantly provided provisions but all that could be provided were coconuts and roots of trees, which was all the King's people had to eat. These provisions were ferried to the *SS Southport*.

While Aristide was ashore the Chief Engineer Harold COX and the engine-room crew investigated the damage to the engines. On investigation, the chief engineer found the damage was not as bad as expected and that he could get the ship running. This was managed by working round the clock and using a lot of ingenuity. It took about 10 days to get up a poor head steam, the only problem was the engines would only take the ship ahead not astern.

Aristide believed he could manage, and it was better that than the other way around! The ship slipped out of harbour unnoticed on 18th September; taking 12 days to arrive in Brisbane, arriving 30th September. They had sailed via the Solomon Islands, which were partly in German hands, sailing at quarter power and quarter rations.

The *SS Southport* arrived at Cape Morton with only 2 days' fuel in the bunkers. They had used coconuts as fuel to stoke the boiler with, as their coal had been removed by the Germans in Kusaie. On arriving in Brisbane they received a 'heroes' welcome. The crew no doubt managed to have a few free nights out and drinks telling the story of their escape! The flag of the *SS Southport* was sold by public auction, and the proceeds given to the Patriotic Fund.

It took until December for the engines to be repaired. After which, the *SS Southport* continued on her interrupted journey, sailing to Ocean Island to pick up her cargo of phosphates and heading to Europe. Charlotte decided to continue on the voyage with her husband, not going back home on the fast passage from Australia that was offered to her.

The ship finally completed her voyage on 30th July 1915, with the agreement and account of crew document stamped 4th August 1915 Marseille, so from the commencement of the crew agreement on 14th March 1913 to 4 August

1915, Aristide, Charlotte and some of the crew had been away nearly 2 years and 5 months, with limited communication with family. We have to remember that the SS *Southport* would have been sailing back, probably unescorted, avoiding enemy ships and U-boats without the equipment we would expect today, not even a radio, so it would have been a perilous journey back to the UK but they made it back. There must have been some very relieved families when the crew arrived back in UK.

In recognition of their courage, resolution and skill affecting the escape of the SS *Southport* the Board of Trade presented Captain Clopet and the Chief Engineer Harold Cox with pieces of silver, but this brave act did not stop the Admiralty taking Aristide's next command away from him.

After returning to Britain Aristide received a new ship to command the SS *Rio Pirahy* but the British Government had a rule that the Admiralty's secret instructions were only to be issued to British subjects, whose parents were British subjects at the time of their birth; no person with non-British parents could be in charge of a British ship. This meant that even though Aristide was a hero, a British subject and his parents' nationality was that of an allied country, he was removed from command of the SS *Rio Pirahy* at Leghorn.

See family photograph of Captain Clopet on Rio Pirahy at end of article..

This matter was raised in The House of Commons by Mr Richard HOLT, whose Constituency was Hexham, on 8th March 1917, with Dr MACNAMARA of the Admiralty. After consideration, it was decided that there would be exceptions to the rule and the Admiralty stated they had no objections to Captain Clopet commanding a British merchant vessel, whether on Government service or not.

The story of Aristide and Charlotte being 'war heroes' does not end in WW1. After WW1, the family lived in Penarth at 130 Westbourne Road, according to the 1921 census. They did not fill the form in correctly, but the error allows us to know that the family spoke both English and French. In the household were:

Name	Relation-ship	Age Yrs	mths	Place of Birth	School/ Education	Occupation	Employment	Place of work	Language
Ary Bernard Clopet	Head	44	8	Eure France (Naturalised British Subject)		Shipmaster, Shipbroker	Own account	113 Bute St Cardiff	English, French
Charlotte Clopet	Wife	38	7	Berwick upon Tweed		None		At home	English, French
Mare Clopet	Daughter	20	6	Cowes (I of W)	Whole time, University	Student			English, French
Liliane Clopet	Daughter	19	6	Berwick upon Tweed	Whole time, University	Student			English, French
Emilie Grosseau	Servant	14	5	France (Vendie)		General domestic	Private	130 Westbourne Rd, Penarth	French

Their son Karl Victor was not present in the house at the time.

Aristide stayed in the Penarth for a number of years opening several

companies:

- 1919, Registration of the Enterprise Shipping Co Ltd, relating to the Ship *Slikkerveer*;
- 1925, Aristide registered a new company Cardiff Timber Import Company (Ltd) for the business of importing wood and the processing of wood. The subscribers were AB Clopet, 130 Westbourne Road, Penarth and W STEPHENS LYNWOOD, Merthyr Road, Whitchurch.

The 1931 French census had Aristide and Charlotte living in Colombes, Hauts-de-Seine.

At the outbreak of WW2, they were in Paris, and both involved in the French Resistance. The Germans thought they were too old to be part of the French Resistance as Aristide was in his mid-60s, nonetheless they had a Resistance Radio in their flat. Aristide was arrested by the Gestapo in Paris in 1942/1943, and was tortured for having embarrassed the Germans during WW1, with the escape of the *SS Southport*. After being severely tortured, he was thrown into the notorious Fresnes prison, where he was lucky to survive. The French Resistance managed to get Aristide out of the prison with a daring escape. He made his way down the Resistance escape route, through the Pyrenees to Gibraltar and ended up working for the Merchant Navy. Sadly, in September 1943, Charlotte was killed in an American Air raid on Paris; Aristide only learned of her death at the end of WW2. After WW2 Aristide returned to Paris and died in the 1960s.

The *SS Southport* was renamed the *TITHIS* in 1923 and was sailing until 1933, when it was broken up in Italy.

What of Astride and Charlotte's children, who were left with their grandmother, while their parents travelled the world for months if not years at a time, with only limited ability to communicate with each other?

Isabelle Marie M Clopet married, moving away from Penarth and later looking after her grandmother, Charlotte's mother, Eleanor TOWERSON, who lived to the age of 105, dying in 1957. Eleanor outlived all of her four children and her husband, who had died in 1885.

Lilian Marie Catherine Clopet qualified in medicine about 1929 with an MB BCh in 1930 from University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire. She was also a writer and lived in Neath.

Karl Victor Clopet followed in his father's footsteps into the Merchant Navy. He went to live in Morocco, working for Aristide's brother's shipping business there and in charge of all the ports in Morocco. He married Frances

Shelia Mary (Molly) AVON, a family from Penarth. Molly Avon was a sister of Ivanhoe Avon, who was one of the few survivors from the Cardiff Pals (over 500 of the men died, in the Somme and Gallipoli).

During WW2 Karl worked undercover for General EISENHOWER, and was instrumental in setting up Operation Torch. After the Germans invaded Morocco, Karl managed to get his wife and son, Victor Bernard, repatriated, via Gibraltar, to Penarth.

Acknowledgments are due to Caroline Clopet – Great-Granddaughter of Aristide and Charlotte Clopet, who provided details for writing this article.

Further references:

BT99/3114/68 – Registry of Shipping and Seamen: Agreements and Crew Lists, Series II.

French 1931 census – Archives des Hautes-de-Seine.

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1917/mar/08/british-merchant-vessels-captain-clopet>.

Evening Despatch (Birmingham, West Midlands, England) May 21 1915 page 6 (*silver presentation*).

The Daily Standard (Brisbane) Saturday, December 4, 1914 (departure of SS Southport).

The Daily Standard (Brisbane) Thursday, 1 October 1914 (arrival of SS Southport Brisbane).

The Leader (Melbourne, Victoria) Saturday 3rd October 1914, page 44.



GLYNDWR MICHAEL - THE MAN WHO WAS

#1801 Clive Davies

Operation Mincemeat was a plan of disinformation that successfully deceived the German high command. In 1953 a book on this operation "*The Man Who Never Was*" was published. The author, Ewen MONTAGU, was the Royal Navy intelligence officer who was instrumental in planning this 1943 ruse. A film with that title appeared three years later. The summation of the film's plot:

Lieutenant Commander Ewen Montagu and cohorts fool the Nazis by locating a suitable corpse, establishing an identity for it as an intelligence officer called Martin, and having the body float in the water just off the coast of Spain, with military identification and letters that describe a forthcoming invasion of Greece and Sardinia by the Allied forces, not Sicily as anticipated by the Germans.

Montagu refused to identify the individual and only described him as "a bit of a ne'er-do-well, and that the only worthwhile thing that he ever did was after his death". It was only In 1996 that, Roger MORGAN, an amateur historian from London, uncovered evidence at the Public Record Office that the body was identified as that of Glyndwr MICHAEL.

My curiosity was aroused when I heard in the local press that he had lived in my birthplace, Trealaw. His mother in the article was named as Sarah Ann CHADWICK, a familiar name to me. My great-grandfather, James Rees DAVIES (1849-1898), wed for the second time in 1885 in Porth, Rhondda to Mary Ann Chadwick 1865-1931, whose father William Chadwick 1834-1887 was the older brother of Charles Chadwick b.1840 at Merthyr Tydfil. This Charles was the father of Sarah Ann Chadwick and grandfather of Glyndwr Michael.

Sarah Ann Chadwick was born on 24th November 1870 in Long Row, Blaenllechau, Ferndale, Rhondda and had married George COTTRELL (b. Hereford 1865) in 1888. She had nine children (two died as infants) by him in Dinas and Penygraig, Rhondda. In the mid 1890s George Cottrell deserted his family and on 6th February 1912 at Gelligaer Parish Church, George Cottrell bigamously wed Ann WILLIAMS, nee WOOSNAM, born in 1865 at Llandinam, Montgomeryshire. Both described themselves as widowed with Bargoed given as their place of residence. Their further whereabouts or deaths could not be found.

Shortly after her husband's desertion from his large family, Sarah Ann began a liaison with Thomas John MICHAEL. Tommy/Thomas John Michael, sometimes Thomas Cottrell, was born in March 1874 at Merthyr Tydfil. His family had settled in Dinas, Rhondda shortly after his birth. He had lost his

father, Robert Michael (1847-1879), to tuberculosis as a child and his mother remarried.

Thomas Michael married Elizabeth Mary DANIELS (1877-1903) in 1900 and fathered three sons with her. After Elizabeth's death, the sons were cared for by family members. One son, also Thomas John Michael (1902-1953), was adopted by his father's sister, Elizabeth Eleanor Michael (1877-1949) who had married Thomas QUENT/QUANT (1862-1951) in 1890. He was the brother of Henry (Harry) Quant (1859-1931), the grandfather of Mary Quant, the recently deceased fashion designer. Her father, John (Jack) Henry Quant (1897-1968), was born in Tonypanydy.

Glyndwr was born on 4th January 1909 at 135 Commercial Road, Aberbargoed, Monmouthshire, second child of Sarah Ann and Thomas Michael. He had two full sisters, Gladys b.1907 and Doris b.1911. The family moved frequently as their children's birthplaces testify.

At the **1911** census the family was at 6 Alfred Terrace, Taffs Well but had assumed the Cottrell surname:

Thomas Cottrell, Head, 31, Coal Haulier (underground), born Glam, Dinas. Spoke English & Welsh

Sarah Ann Cottrell, Wife, 38, Married 14 years, 11 children, 4 dead, born Glam, Ferndale

Gladys Cottrell, daughter, 4, born Glam, Blaencwm

Glyndwr Cottrell, Son, 2, born Mon, Bargoed.

Other records:

26th March **1913** - Pontypridd Workhouse Register. The family was resident for 1 night

Sarah Ann Cotterell (sic), Deserted Wife, 42, Methodist, Rhondda resident.

Husband named as George Cotterell – No known address.

Children: Gladys 6y 10m, Glyndwr 4y 5m & Doris Cotterell 1y 6m. All declared as illegitimate.

1921 census – 28 Cornwall Road, Williamstown, Rhondda

Tommy Michael, Marr, 47, Dealer at Llwynypia Colliery, born Merthyr

Sarah A Michael, Marr, 47, born Ferndale & children:

Gladys Michael, 13, born Blaencwm, Glyn Michael, 13, born Bargoed, Doris Michael, 10, born Taffs Well

1939 Register – 135b Trealaw Road, Trealaw (a basement flat adjacent to Miskin Hotel)

Sarah A Cottrall (sic) born November 1871, Unpaid Domestic Duties.

Dennis J Michael, born 14/2/1926, Schoolboy*

**The illegitimate child of Sarah Ann's daughter, Gladys.*

The birthdates are incorrect. Their birth certificates show Sarah was born 24/11/1870 and Dennis 19/3/1927. This is not surprising as Sarah was to die a year later suffering 'Senile Decay'.

The 2010 book, *Operation Mincemeat* by Ben Macintyre, has Glyndwr Michael with his mother in 1939 with no mention of Dennis Michael, a surprising omission. Glyndwr was not found on the 1939 Register. This omission is even stranger as the book has obviously been well researched and has many details that would not normally be accessible because of privacy regulations. These details include the family's receiving charity from the Pontypridd Union in the 1920s, Glyndwr's application to join the armed forces, and he and his father's medical records.

Thomas Michael's record noted that he was suffering from syphilis, confused and very depressed, rapidly losing weight and having a racking, rattling cough. In his final years Thomas became increasingly unstable. He stabbed himself in the throat in late 1924 and he died at Bridgend County Asylum on 13th March 1925. His son Glyndwr signed the interment document for his father's burial. Thomas John and Sarah Ann Michael's grave lies close to that of my grandparents in Trealaw Cemetery.

Glyndwr found that even menial work as a gardener and labourer was hard to find in Depression-hit Rhondda and sought employment in London. On the 1937 electoral registers he was lodging at 39 Belton Road, Willesden, a short distance from his sister, Doris WORSLEY (1911-1985) at 6 Hawthorne Road in that London suburb. Doris and her husband, Arthur Evan Worsley, had one son, also Glyndwr (1929-2012). It is the family's belief that these siblings were very close.

In early 1943 Glyndwr Michael was discovered in a derelict warehouse at Kings Cross close to death. He had ingested rat poison and died at St Pancras Hospital on 28th January 1943 aged 34. He is portrayed as a Welsh tramp, unmarried, illegitimate and barely literate, without money, friends or family, who had died unloved and unlamented, but not unnoticed. As soon as the body of Glyndwr Michael reached St Pancras morgue, the coroner, Bentley PURCHASE, informed his friend, Ewen MONTAGU that an ideal candidate for his planned project had arrived in his jurisdiction and would be "kept in suitable cold storage until we were ready for it".

Poison was often smeared on stale bread to curtail the rat numbers in a blitzed London. "*Battles Vermin Killer*", the rat poison in common use was made from white phosphorus. He may have killed himself intentionally, but it is also possible that he ate bread laced with rat poison simply because he was hungry. The coroner later explained that Glyndwr Michael had taken "a minimal dose" of rat poison. This dose was not sufficient to kill him outright, and its only effect was to impair the functioning of the liver and he had died a "little time afterwards". The coroner stated that there were few clues as to

the cause of death.

After three months in the mortuary, Glyndwr Michael's identity was transformed. He became Captain (acting Major) William "Bill" MARTIN of the Royal Marines and carried papers showing a hometown of Cardiff with a rank and regiment. To substantiate this deception the corpse was appropriately attired, carried letters from his bank manager and solicitor and also a love letter and photograph from his adoring girlfriend, Pam.

There was much deliberating on how to transport a corpse from London to Spain, and then drop it in the sea, without being spotted, in such a way that it would appear to be the victim of an air crash. A submarine was deemed the best method despite the technical difficulties in keeping the body fresh during the passage. The body was placed in a capsule packed with dry ice and swiftly transported to Scotland. There the capsule was loaded aboard a submarine, *HMS Seraph*.

On the moonless night of 30th April 1943 the body of a "Major Martin" was slipped into the sea off the coast of Huelva, Spain where a German agent was known to be active. Chained to his wrist was a briefcase containing documents naming Sardinia and Greece as the target for a major Allied offensive in the Mediterranean.

These documents reached the chief of German military intelligence and were accepted as genuine. Hitler informed Mussolini that Greece and Sardinia must be defended "at all costs", and that German troops would be best placed to do the job. He ordered that the experienced 1st Panzer Division be transferred from France to Salonika, Greece. The order was intercepted by British intelligence on 21 May. By the end of June, German troop strength on Sardinia had been doubled to 10,000, with fighter aircraft also based there as support. Seven German divisions transferred to Greece, raising the number present to eight, and ten were posted to the Balkans. The redeployments are said to have saved thousands of lives.

These events were immortalized in the 1956 film 'The Man Who Never Was' and more recently in the 2022 film '*Operation Mincemeat*', starring Colin FIRTH, based on the book by Ben MACINTYRE. In the books and films of this detailed and masterful ruse there is never a mention of Gladys May Michael, the sister of Glyndwr, a vitally important omission. She was born in Blaencwm, Rhondda on 3rd May 1907 and after the birth of an illegitimate son, Dennis John Michael (1927-2014) at 26 Crawshay Road, Penygraig, Rhondda, she left for London. Her child was abandoned in the Rhondda with her impoverished, widowed mother with little further contact or support from Gladys. She was remembered by the family as cold and uncaring.

On 20th April 1929 at St Pancras Registry Office in 1929, she married an actor, Edmund FOX, and had three children by him. Edmund Fox was born

in 1903 into a very wealthy Jewish family of ostrich feather traders as Edmund Myer Fox SALAMAN. In the late 1940s, Gladys left Edmund and their three children and began a relationship with a neighbour, Walter William THOMPSON, with whom she bore a son. She died in 2001 at a nursing home in Hove, Sussex claiming to be an actor.

Ewen Edwin Samuel Montagu 1901-1985, the mastermind of Operation Mincemeat, was born in London, the second son of Baron Swaythling, a banker of dazzling wealth. After an education at Westminster School, Harvard and Cambridge where he was accompanied by a valet, he took up the Law. It was a profession ready-made for his forensically sharp mind. He became a Kings Counsel (KC) in 1939 following an impressive career as a barrister. He joined Naval Intelligence shortly after the outbreak of the War.

The Salaman and Montagu families were known to each other:

- On the 1911 census the families were living in mansions on either side of Hyde Park. The Montagu family employed ten servants whereas the Salamans had a mere six;
- Ewen and Edmund's aunts, Lily Montagu and Nina Salaman, were prominent members of the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage;
- Nina Salaman's portrait was painted by Ewen Montagu's father-in-law, Solomon SOLOMON, a renowned artist;
- Ewen's brother, Ivor Montagu (1904-1984), was a prominent London filmmaker and would have likely known Edmund Fox and his son Gerald, both actors.

In 1939 Edmund and Gladys Fox were living at 9 Oval Road, St Pancras, a short walk to where a dying Glyndwr was found at Kings Cross in January 1943. Ewen Montagu, the master of intrigue and deception was an old friend of the coroner, Bentley Purchase. He was also well acquainted with the now disgraced pathologist, Sir Bernard SPILSBURY.

There is conjecture that Ewen Montagu connived with the coroner and pathologist to falsify the circumstances surrounding the death of Glyndwr Michael. The existence of his sister, Gladys, a London resident since the late 1920s with that well connected husband has been erased. The relationship between Edmund Fox and Montagu would have raised too many questions. Perhaps, the ill-kempt Glyndwr's importune visits to Gladys were intolerable, a reminder of her shameful past. She would have been eager to be rid of him.

Operation Mincemeat has been acclaimed for its meticulous planning, yet, the details of Glyndwr Michael's background are at best, misleading. There is much more to this narrative of a homeless, friendless Welsh tramp whose body supposedly fitted their requirements. Surely there were suitable corpses more befitting an officer than that of the emaciated Glyndwr.

He was never the forgotten man. His family retains his memory.

There is a tombstone in Cementerio de la Soledad on the outskirts of Huelva bearing the name 'William Martin', beneath which rests the body of a man that helped save the lives of thousands and turned the tides of war.

A single carnation was laid on this grave for many years – the resting place of a man whose identity for over half a century remained a mystery.

Image: © Clive Davies



Transcription: Telegrams inside front cover

- *Regret to inform you of notification received from Middle East that 2/Lieu VW Lloyd the South Wales Borderers was reported missing 21st June 42 Letter follows shortly.*
- *Official information received that Lieut VW Lloyd South Wales Borderers previously reported as missing is a Prisoner of War Letter follows shortly.*

VIVIAN WILLSON-LLOYD – His War Story

#1574 Angela Benger

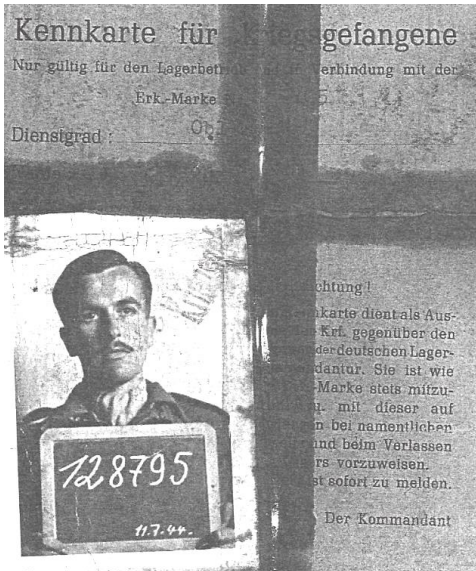
Vivian WILLSON-LLOYD, my uncle, was born on 19th April 1917 at 5 Dogo Street, Cardiff. He was the second child and first son of David Willson-Lloyd and Olive (nee POWELL). Vivian was educated at Llandaff Cathedral School and then won a scholarship to Ellesmere College in Shropshire. He was there for three years, leaving in the summer of 1934.

On 20th August 1934, Vivian joined Barclays Bank, and this was the start of a long career with them. His first branch was in Hay-on-Wye. He retired in December 1975 after 11 years as manager of the Tenbury Wells Branch in Worcestershire.

There was a break in his banking career when he joined the 1st Battalion South Wales Borderers on 15th February 1940 (at age of 22) and, after an initial spell of training at Dering Lines Brecon, he was sent to the OCTU (Officer Cadet Training Unit) at Dunbar Scotland. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and eventually posted to the 1st Battalion of South Wales Borderers at Cawnpore, India.

Vivian was taken as a Prisoner of War during the war, an experience which

haunted and affected him for the rest of his life. He never spoke about this time, so the family could only imagine the terror of his capture and the life he lived during those years. We thought he had taken this part of his life story with him when he passed away in 1993, but amongst his paperwork was a description of his capture and life as a prisoner. It is harrowing reading, but we (the family) feel that people should understand what he suffered and his bravery during this period.



Prisoner of War Identity card

The following are his words, and they are followed by extracts from letters written to his mother from a friend who also escaped with Vivian. These give a little more detail of what happened.

I joined the army on 15th February 1940 (at age of 22) and, after an initial spell of training at Dering Lines Brecon, I was sent to the OCTU at Dunbar Scotland. I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and eventually posted to the 1st Battalion of South Wales Borderers at Cawnpore, India. From there my Battalion was posted to North Africa and I travelled with them as 3rd Mortar Officer. We saw some action near Salun but were eventually overrun by the German Panzer Divisions and I was captured on June 6th 1942. We were flown to Italy to a camp at Chieti and eventually to Modena.

When the Italians packed in, we thought there would be an opportunity to escape, but the Italian Guards continued to confine us to the camp and very soon handed the entire camp over to the Germans. My friend, Major Frank ROBERTS, and I were not too keen on the turn of events and decided to hide up in two bedside cupboards since the Germans were evacuating all POWs to Modena station to be transferred to Germany. Unfortunately, we were found in the Camp and sentenced to be shot. We were marched to the Camp Gaol to await our fate. Fortunately, several more POWs were recaptured, and we were all transported to the station and pushed onto a cattle truck with German Sentries covering the line, riding on open flats every three trucks to deter any attempt at escape. My friend, Major Frank Roberts and I did not like the thought of going to Germany and eventually managed to slip the main wagon door catch and, on the night of 12/13th September 1942, whilst the train was travelling at 30 mph on its way to Germany, we bailed out. Despite signal wire posts every 50 yards we were successful and escaped unobserved. We scrounged food and clothing and, after walking about 600 miles down central Italy were eventually recaptured near Casino.

*We were duly transported via several camps to a camp in Austria and finally to a prison camp at Rotenburg. We were at this camp for approximately 15 months until one day the sound of heavy artillery could be heard coming from the west. It turned out to be the advancing US army and we were immediately assembled and began our forced march eastwards towards the Russians. We eventually stopped, after 15 days and several hundred kilometres, at a State Farm at Wimmelburg near Eisleben. We were soon overtaken by *'Iron Mike's Men' the 4th American Armoured division, I believe. We were soon on the journey to freedom and back to the UK.*

Ironically Vivian went into action and was captured on the 6th June 1942, the day his sister Josephine was married to David HUGHES at Llandaff Cathedral. (The ceremony took place in the Lady Chapel as the Cathedral had suffered intensive damage from bombing during the Cardiff Blitz in January 1941.)

We learn more about Vivian's time as a prisoner of war from the following letters.

From Major YOUNG, Epsom, Surrey 19th March 1944

Dear Mr and Mrs Willson-Lloyd,

I have just arrived home from Italy after escaping from a POW camp in that country and I'm very glad to be able to give you some definite news of your son Vivian, who, it was my very good fortune to meet during my escape. Firstly, when I last saw him at the end of January, he was very fit, well clothed, and well fed.

The brief story of his adventures is as follows: - he was in Chieti Camp which was seized by the Germans and Vivian with another officer made a very brave and gallant escape from the train taking them to Germany. He then travelled over the mountain on foot till his boots were completely worn out and he took refuge in the same village as I was hiding in, not far from the front line. Whilst we were there, Italians looked after us very well. Vivian had Jaundice, but he made a very good recovery and, at all times, was cheerful and bright. By the middle of January, we were a party of 6 officers, all living in a little hut in the mountains and then came the landing at Anzio and we decided to go there at once and try to get through to the Allies. Vivian went off the day before me with a party of three other officers - one from New Zealand, one from S Africa and one who lives in Cheshire. The other officer and I left the next day with three Italians going on a slightly different route. When I eventually got through, I was told that Vivian had not yet been reported in, so I can only assume that they met difficulties and have gone into hiding again. I have the very highest opinion of Vivian's courage and fortitude and I know full well that he would not do anything silly or allow impatience to ruin his final chances of getting through.

I know from my own parents' experience the trial you have to suffer, but I do honestly believe that in these circumstances 'no news is good news'. Vivian was well clothed and very fit when he started and the officers he was with, were all excellent friends.

Do let me know when you have news of his safe arrival, which I pray will be very, very soon.

Yours v sincerely, LC YOUNG (Major)

From (A/Major) Capt F ROBERTS, Bristol, 9th July 1944

Dear Mr and Mrs Willson-Lloyd,

I have just arrived back in England after nine months behind the German lines. I can give you information of my friend Vivian, but I'm afraid it is not up-to-date information. However, whatever I can tell you up to the time we parted I will now tell you.

When I say that Vivian made a couple of very brave and gallant attempts at escape with me, I hope you will not consider this a 'backhanded compliment'. Our final escape, which was a jump from a fast-moving train during the night, was a success. Together we went from Verona down towards the lines; at Corvaro we had to rest up owing to weakness, fatigue and badly blistered feet. When we were fit again, I decided to move on again, to meet with what was then a party of 6 officers and tell them I had a plan of escape, and, after outlining the plan, I asked them one by one if they would care to come with me. Three of them said they would come, Vivian and the others stayed there. The last I saw of Vivian was on Dec 27th, 1943, when he was in good health and spirits, well clothed and booted and with arrangements made by me at the village of Corvaro for continued supplies of food to be sent up to the mountains for him.

What has happened to Vivian since is quite unknown to me. If you should have received later news of Vivian, I would be grateful to hear it. (Major Young has already told me a little).

I do sincerely regret that Vivian did not see fit to continue the journey with me as the whole of our party got through safely.

I hope with all my heart that your son is now safe and that you have now heard from him.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Roberts (Major RA)

**From Captain F H WEBB, 6th Royal Battalion,
13th Frontier Force RiflesCMF 12th April 1945:**

Dear Mrs Willson-Lloyd,

Recently my Battalion captured an Italian Farmhouse and when we moved in a peasant girl told me that that two British Officers who had escaped from the Germans had been hiding there, and gave me two letters, one of which I am enclosing, the other letter dealt with enemy movements and has been dispatched to higher authority. The girl also had a photograph of your son on which he had written, asking British troops to give the civilians every help as

they had been very kind to him. I have already informed the AMG people about this.

I have with me the address of the civilians, but I cannot give it to you at the moment because of security, but if you are interested, I could send it to you later.

Finally, I sincerely hope that your son reached safety, or that you have had encouraging news of him - we, of this battalion consider, having read his notes re the enemy, that he more than fulfilled his duty as an officer.

*Yours sincerely,
Frank H Webb*

This is the letter referred to above. It is written in pencil and is quite difficult to decipher.

c/o Antonio Morianso, Lugo de Romagna, Ravenna, Italia. 27:9:43

My Darling Mother,

This is a very difficult letter to write, so it is going to be short. In brief: - on 9th Sept last, The Germans took over all POW camps in Italy and on 12th Sept moved all POWs to Germany. A friend and I escaped on the night of the 12/13th Sept and have so far remained free. We travelled on foot for a week as Italian peasants and the last week we have spent at this farm from which I am writing. Tomorrow we are on the move again since Jerry is looking for British Officers being hid by Italians in this district. Tonight, there can be only one end – British Officers in civilian clothes behind the enemy lines wouldn't be worth tuppence! However, I have done my best and since we have collected a lot of important information on our travels which will be in British hands at the same time as this. I consider we have done our duty. If the above should be the case, I want to thank you and father for all you have done for an unappreciative son. Also get it confirmed by the Red Cross before taking it as definite. I may be lucky and merely sent to Germany.

*Lots of love to Dad, Jo, and Michael
Your devoted son Vivian.*

In some ways, Vivian was 'lucky'. As the end of his story describes, he was eventually recaptured near Casino and transported to a camp in Austria and then to Rotenburg for approximately 15 months. This was an Oflag camp which means it was a camp for officers.



Jacob Grimm School at Rotenburg, Germany, which housed German prisoner of war camp Oflag 9A/Z, during World War II, photograph was taken from Manuscripts and Pictorial Collections of the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand - copy's use permitted.

The camp was housing 568 British Officers. Most of those had been veterans of France captured in Dunkirk in 1940, but many other campaigns were represented: Greece, Crete, Dieppe, St Nazaire and the North African campaign. The American contingent arrived at Rotenburg on March, 15th, 1943. It was a rather small camp, containing one three-story building with a small courtyard, which had formerly been a girl's school (Jakob-Grimm-Schule, founded in 1924, www.jgs-rof.de).

Vivian refers, in his story, to their liberation by 'Iron Mike' and his men* **"Iron" Mike Mervosh (1923-2017)** was a career Marine and veteran of the Battle of Iwo Jima. His heroics in World War II will never be forgotten. One cannot begin to imagine the feelings experienced by Vivian and his fellow

prisoners when they realised that they were on the road to freedom and their return to the UK.



LEFT: Vivian's family home in Pencisely Road, Llandaff, Cardiff, decorated to welcome him home.

Vivian never claimed his medals, but his sons decided that the family should have them and applied for them in 2012, to go with all his other wartime documentation.



Vivian was demobbed in August 1946 and returned to civilian life, he continued to work for Barclays Bank until his retirement in December 1975. He married in 1951 and had two sons.

Vivian after promotion to Captain 4th August 1945, and later in civilian life

During his time both during his working life

and after retirement he was very active in local life. Particularly in Tenbury Wells, his final posting, and took many honorary and voluntary roles within the town.



He passed away on 4th October 1993, and is survived by his two sons, his wife having predeceased him.

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OCTOBER 1915 – A FATEFUL MONTH FOR TWO BROTHERS FROM MOUNTAIN ASH

#20718 Martin Ashford



For Morgan (1889-1943) left, and his younger brother Edwin (1896-1977), October 1915 was a fateful month but for very different reasons.

They were two of 12 children born to John and Jane ASHFORD, and both worked at Nixon's Navigation Colliery in Mountain Ash, as did their father. John was a shot fireman and pumpsman, and his sons were hewers and hauliers. John was also the caretaker at Ffrwd Chapel in Duffryn Road, and for many years lived in the adjoining house, Rhydonen.

John and Jane emigrated to Pennsylvania, USA, in 1882 returning ten years later. It was there in the USA that Morgan was born on 6 November 1889.

Morgan (or Mog as he was more commonly known) became a fine rugby player at centre-three-quarter, representing Mountain Ash Juniors and then playing with the Old Firm Premier Fifteen in 1907.

He joined the 2nd Welsh Regiment in 1913, but deserted within a few months. Mog and another soldier from the same regiment, Hugh ROBERTS, gave themselves up at Penrhawceiber Police Station late one evening at 11pm on Tuesday 1 April 1913, as reported in the *Aberdare Leader*. They were remanded in custody to await an escort back to barracks.



After serving his punishment, at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Mog landed at Le Havre on 12 August with the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Brigade in the 1st Division for service on the Western Front as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).

The Battle of Mons was the first major action of the BEF, and the Aberdare Leader reported that Mog “did some gruelling work” in this and other engagements, notably in the Marne and the Aisne. He fought in the first two Battles of Ypres, but was captured by the Germans at the latter on 31 October 1915.

Mog now found himself interred as a Prisoner of War at Güstrow in Germany, a wooden barracks holding 25,000 men, and situated in pine forests three miles outside the town. Later he was moved to Schneidemühl Camp, north of Posen in Germany, a much larger camp of some 40-50,000 POWs. (Schneidemühl is now called Pila in the Polish Silesian Voivodeship).

During his time as a POW there he received regular food parcels from the people of Mountain Ash. Undoubtedly this kept his spirits up at this camp where conditions were notoriously harsh. Many did not survive their internship, and almost 3,000 were buried in the camp’s graveyard.

Mog eventually returned home on 12 December 1918, one month after the guns fell silent on the Western Front. The Merthyr Express reported his homecoming in some detail, noting that *‘he was treated in a shameful manner at Schneidemühl Camp by the Huns’*.

‘Pte Mog Ashford said, “Four years and six weeks’ work on a farm with the treatment we received is something to be remembered. We worked 16 hours a day at 2¹/₂d a day. In the cold and snowy weather we were barefooted, very little clothing, and the food was too awful for words. Black bread, swedes, water, horse beans, chestnuts, potato peelings - Fine samples, are they not?”, remarked the gallant hero’.

“On several occasions we were knocked about with the butt-end of the rifle, on one occasion two of my teeth were hit out. Words fail to express how grateful we were to the kind friends for their parcels, which saved us from starvation. I am more than thankful to be home”.

Before returning to the Welsh Regimental home at Maindy Barracks in Cardiff, Mog’s service and bravery was recognised later that month at the Napier’s Welcome Concert on 26 December when Lieut Frank STANTON presented him with a ring.

Just three days before Mog was captured, his younger brother Edwin found himself fighting for his life off the coast of Scotland when his ship, HMS Argyll, struck the Inchcape Rock 12 miles from the coastline of Arbroath. This 2,000 foot ledge of sandstone lying off the Firth of Forth, and also known as the Bell Rock, was a veritable graveyard for ships and a place of terror for seamen.

Edwin joined the Royal Navy on 21 August 1913 and worked as an Engine Attendant on several ships, including HMS Vivid, Exmouth and Leander, and was in two battles in the North Sea under Admiral Beatty. It was to be his time on *HMS Argyll*, one of the Navy's largest battle cruisers, that was to be his most dramatic time in service though.

The Bell Rock lighthouse, built in 1811, was manned during the war but not lit. It was thought that the lighthouse, if lit up, could assist German submarines in navigating the coastal waters of eastern Scotland, and several British lighthouses had already been shelled by German ships. The Bell Rock keepers could only be contacted by boat or by visual signals.

Argyll was re-joining her squadron at Rosyth, routing around the most northerly tip of Scotland to avoid enemy submarines. A young midshipman on board said later, "*That night was one of the worst I can remember in long years at sea - storm-force winds, mountainous seas, thick fog and heavy rain; as unpleasant a combination as any seaman could face.*"

The navigation officer plotted a route to pass the Bell Rock by some eight miles, a margin considered to be perfectly adequate. A small motor torpedo boat was despatched with all haste to the lighthouse to inform the Bell Rock keepers, but was confronted by a wall of seething white water and was forced to turn back.

Argyll continued on, pounding through huge waves at 16 knots in pitch blackness, with visibility reduced to nothing by torrential rain and the foaming spray that was lashed by a howling gale.

Then, in the early hours, as a particularly heavy squall suddenly lifted like a curtain, a look-out called: "Sailing ship ahead" - mistaking the huge granite pillar of the Bell Rock lighthouse for a large spread of sail. Too late the mistake was realised and the engines put 'Full Astern', but nothing could stop the oncoming tragedy. With waves crashing over her, *Argyll* gave two great lurches and wedged her 450 foot keel firmly among the rocks, just two lengths short of the lighthouse.

Departmental assessments revealed extensive damage. Her hull was pierced and oil fuel leaking from her damaged tanks had started a serious fire. The Captain realised at once that the situation was hopeless. The crew was brought up on deck to prepare to abandon ship.

Meanwhile, the Bell Rock keepers were totally oblivious to the British warship stranded on their doorstep with heavy seas pouring over her and into her. When dawn finally broke, the keepers faced an awesome sight. The *Argyll* was less than one hundred yards from the Bell Rock lighthouse.

Herculean efforts were made by the keepers to get a line to the ship, finally managing to secure a hawser. The ship received a signal informing her that the Arbroath, Broughty Ferry and St Andrews lifeboats had been launched and forced back, but two destroyers of the dark night patrol were on their way.

HMS Hornet and HMS Jackal appeared out of the gloom and made every effort to get close to the stricken Argyll, seen here stranded (photograph in family records).

After several attempts, Hornet managed to get her stern close to Argyll's, where 500 of her crew had been assembled for abandoning ship. The rest of the crew took to the lifeboats and rowed clear of their ship.

On mountainous waves, the stern of Hornet rose and fell like an express lift against Argyll. At times the two ships clashed violently, buckling Hornet's stern plates. There was a real danger of men being crushed between them, but each time the sterns passed, men made the jump to Hornet's deck until there were none left aboard Argyll.



HMS Jackal succeeded in getting the lifeboats in her lee and picked up the remaining survivors. By 12.30, the entire crew of Argyll numbering 655 men was safely at Rosyth, each man recounting his story as he changed into dry clothes. By somewhat of a miracle, every crewman was saved without injury, apart from one sprained ankle.

The Merthyr Express reported the incident on 20 November 1915 – 'A Mountain Ash sailor, Edwin Ashford, son of Mr and Mrs John Ashford, 2 Graig Street, Mountain Ash had a remarkable escape from the cruiser *Argyll* which was wrecked off the coast of Scotland a few weeks ago. He has written home an interesting account of the wreck.

The letter is as follows:- *"I was sleeping when our ship was wrecked. With the force of the collision and the grunting when she broke I was heaved right out of my hammock on to the deck. I was dreaming when it occurred. We all*

put on our life-belts..... I worked for two solid hours with half my clothes on, getting the boats out. It was dark and misty and cold.

“Our captain said to us, ‘I am afraid, men, you will have to swim for it.’ There were many secret prayers sent up to heaven at that point. If we had to go and swim for it I don’t think I would be writing this letter to you now. But when we saw a little destroyer coming to our help we all gave a hearty good cheer. I was in a boat for five and a half hours. So you can picture how we were when they picked us up. Every one of us was saved, but I did not think so at the time. I said to myself, “Well, if I have got to swim for it, I am going to have a good swim.” But, here I am, at the Sailors’ Home, Dundee, being well looked after, only sorry I cannot be with you”.

Returning home on leave in 1917, the Aberdare Leader reported on 21 April: *‘The weekly smoker at the Jeffreys Arms Hotel was to honour AB Seaman Edwin Ashford, of HMS Leander. Mr W Jenkins (Eos Pennar) presided, and Mr Mog Morgans, on behalf of the Welcome Fund, presented the gallant sailor with a treasury note. Replying, he spoke in high terms of the boys at home who were getting up these functions. He was deeply grateful, as it showed that they were not forgotten by their pals.’*

Both Mog and Edwin survived the Great War, living until 1943 and 1977 respectively. They remained eternally grateful for the support of their community in Mountain Ash, often speaking of how the letters and parcels from home, and recognition of their service at welcome concerts, kept them going through the difficult times that they endured.

Executive Committee Vacancies

We currently have vacancies for the following to serve on our Executive Committee for 2023/2024:

Society Treasurer
Vice Chairman
One Executive Committee Member/Trustee

From March 2024 we will also have vacancies for:
Chairman
Secretary

For further information contact: chairman@glamfhs.org.uk

SOME WW2 RECORDS BEING INDEXED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT KEW (TNA) #20770 FIONA CASKEY

The National Archives at Kew (TNA) are undertaking the indexing of some of the WW2 records it holds. This article explains about two of the collections being indexed. The collections are WO 208 Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, and Directorate of Military Intelligence; Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Staff and WO 416 German Prisoner of War (POW). It should be understood that TNA are indexing **not** digitising the records, and to view the actual records you will need to go to TNA. In addition, the 100 years rule is in place so some records will not be available until 100 years of the birth of the person, if the birth has been provided.

The TNA Discovery system will contain the indexes so this system should be used to search for someone.

The records being indexed are:

WO 208 - War Office: Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence, and Directorate of Military Intelligence; Ministry of Defence, Defence Intelligence Staff

The series consists of records of the Directorate of Military Intelligence as established in 1939. It also includes some records inherited from the former Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence. Not all the records in the series are currently being indexed; below is a list of the ones which are:

- WO 208 – Records of the Royal Patriotic School
- WO 208 – Awards for Helpers of the Allies.
- WO 208 – Liberation reports, including details on capture and escape attempts

In some of the records 'other' people have been mentioned and they will have been included in the index.

The indexing of the WO 208 series is an on-going project, so if people are interested in these records, they should periodically check TNA catalogue.

WO 208 – Records of the Royal Patriotic School

Records of the Royal Patriotic School. These are interrogation reports on mainly foreign civilians who entered the UK from Europe during World War 2. They also include some military personnel from Belgian, French and Polish forces. The records can be searched by name, occupation, birth details, or where they left from. The records may give an insight into the areas, or towns where the people left, including details of German forces in the area.

They are in some cases duplicated. The information in files can be very varied from just a name to a file containing photographs, maps of places, detailed description of the persons activities.

WO 208 – Awards for Helpers of the Allies

This series provides details of British and foreigners who were given an award; some of these awards are posthumous, for assistance provided to the Allies. TNA is indexing the names of those who helped Allied personnel, and the awards they received from the British Government. The records can be searched using name, place, date of birth, award or honour, eg OBE.

WO 208 – Liberation reports, including details on capture and escape attempts

These are interviews with those allied military personnel either who escaped, evaded or were liberated. These reports were made by officers and men of the allied armed forces and merchant navy. The information varies depending on what the person provided but is usually: service details; when and where captured; home address and civilian occupation. If the person had been a POW it may contain details of camp conditions. These reports mostly relate to the European, Mediterranean or North African theatres of war.

For Royal Air Force personnel details can include: where based, type of aircraft, when, where and how the aircraft was lost, and the presumed fate of the other aircrew. Report should include a narrative, of variable length, which describes an individual's experiences as an escaper, evader or prisoner of war, but sometimes sections have not been completed. In addition, many reports include appendices which can provide the names and addresses of civilian helpers, nature of help given, and relevant dates; details of the escape method and fellow POWs who assisted in an escape; the usefulness of officially provided escape aids, which ones were used, and suggested improvements and/or additions. These records also included records of those who either made their way north to Switzerland, or south to the Allied lines, following the Italian Armistice during August 1943.

The records can be searched using name, service number, place captured, date of capture. These complement the indexing of the German POW cards in WO 416

WO 416 - War Office: German Record Cards of British and Commonwealth Prisoners of War and some Civilian Internees, Second World War

This series consists of about 200,000 records of individuals captured in German occupied territories during WWII, mainly Allied service men

(including Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and South Africans), British and Allied civilians and a few nurses.

Additionally, the series contains several thousand records relating to deceased airmen, whose bodies were found in German occupied territory. These people were never prisoners of war as such so these records act as a record of death.

The index can be searched by name or service number.

Additional information: If a record is found in WO 416 or the person was a POW in the Far East there could be a record in WO 344 (War Office: Directorate of Military Intelligence: Liberated Prisoner of War Interrogation Questionnaires). The WO 344 series consists of about 140,000 Liberation Questionnaires completed mainly by British and Commonwealth Prisoners of War of all ranks and services, there are also records for other Allied nationals and Merchant Seamen. Not every POW was interviewed but the records do represent a large percentage of people still in captivity in 1945. The WO 344 series has not been indexed but if a person was a POW of the Germans or in the Far East it may be worth looking at this collection.

Note: The list of items which has been provided for searching is not exhaustive and the reader may find they can search using other terms.

Author's Note: *This is an ongoing project likely to take some time, and if new information and helpful hints for research appear, I will pass them on to readers of the Journal.*

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CAPTAIN ANCELL CLEMENT GREGORY
from **SOUTH WALES** to **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**
#8289 Janet Neilson

Several years ago I was given a photograph by friends who had visited their daughter in Western Australia. The photograph showed the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF
CAPTAIN ANCELL CLEMENT GREGORY
BORN 1 JULY 1878 SWANSEA, WALES – DIED 23 DEC 1942
PERTH, WA
SAILOR, LT CDR ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE, MARINE CAPTAIN,
MASTER PEARLER

Intriguing? Born in Swansea, died in Australia and his daughter's married name was NIELSEN. Not the same spelling as my surname, and I knew she was not a relative, but it made me want to find out more about Ancell GREGORY. It seemed that he had had an interesting career in Broome, Australia, even though he was only 64 when he died.

My first "port of call" was the 1881 UK census. His forename ANCELL was quite unusual, I thought, but my first search for ANCELL GREGORY drew a blank. So I tried ANCELL. He was listed as ANCELL LANGDON, grandson of Amy LANGDON (born 1822, Cowbridge), who was listed as a hotel keeper of Caswell Bay, Bishopston. The other members of the household were:

LANGDON	John	Born 1844	Dunster	No occupation
LANGDON	Bessie	Born 1855	Dunster	No occupation
LANGDON	Fanny	Born 1857	Dunster	No occupation
LANGDON	Ancell	Born 1878	Bishopston, Swansea	

The hotel staff were:

BERRINGTON	George	1857	Stoke Bishop	Gardener/ servant
BROWN	Lucy	1861	Pembroke	Waiter/ domestic servant
ROPANT	Mary	1861	Pembroke	Cook/ domestic servant
SIMS	Gwen	1859	"Mouster"? Wales	Waiter/ domestic servant
JONES	Gwen	1853	Brecon	Barmaid/ domestic servant

In the 1891 census, the family was still living at the Caswell Bay Hotel, Murton Road, Bishopston. The members of the household and staff were:

LANGDON	Amelia	1822 widow	Bonvilston	Hotel proprietress
LANGDON	John A	1845	Dunster	Son of hotel proprietress
DUNST? (sic)	Elizabeth Jane	1847	Dunster	Daughter of proprietress
LANGDON	Fanny Amelia	1852?		Ditto
HENSON	William	1855	Old Cleeve	Son-in- law/master mariner
HENSON	Sarah	1854	Dunster	Daughter/Hotel manageress
HENSON	Hilda	1888	Bishopston	Grand-daughter
GREGORY	Ancell	1879	Bishopston	Scholar/grandson
GREGORY	Clement	1881	ditto	Ditto
HENSON	Trevor	1890	ditto	Ditto
HOPE	Lizzie	1862	Sothampton	Barmaid
TURNER	Agnes	1871	Sherston Pinkey (Wilts)	Waitress/ domestic
BARRINGTON	Jane	1874	Pennard	Nurse/domestic
ROGERS	Alice	1873	Penar(?) Pembs	General servant

I could not find Ancell Gregory on the 1901 census, who, by this time, was 22 years of age. But the census proved interesting in regard to the rest of the family. William HENSON was manager of the MERMAID HOTEL, The Parade, Oystermouth.

HENSON	William	1856	Old Cleeve	Hotel manager (pub)
HENSON	Sarah	1856	Dunster	Hotel manageress
HENSON	Hilda	1888	Bishopston	
HENSON	Trevor	1890	Bishopston	
HENSON	Elsie	1894	Bishopston	
RICHARDS	Caroline	1882	Clydach	Worker
MASLYN	Annie	1867	Cwmamman	Worker
SUTTON	Margaret	1878	Mumbles	worker
LEWIS	Fanny	1874	Fforestfach	Worker
STEEDS	Alfred P	1846	Trowbridge	Visitor/no occupation
WILLIAMS	James L H	1867	Narberth	Visitor/wine & spirit merchant
POTTER	Sarah	1879	Coleford, Gloucs	Worker

By 1911, William Henson was the licensed victualler of the George Hotel, Mumbles. His wife, Sarah, is described as an assistant in the business as was their daughter Elsie. Francis Langdon re-appears as an assistant. All the staff were bi-lingual – Elizabeth ISAACS (b 1888, Carmarthen, barmaid); Catherine MORGAN (b 1888, Treboeth, waitress); Annie WATKINS (b 1892, Morryston, kitchen maid).

What was the family doing before Ancell Gregory was born?
In 1871 they were at the Caswell Bay Hotel, Bishopston –

LANGDON	Amelia	1823	Dunster	Hotel keeper
LANGDON	John	1845	Dunster	Saddler – out of employment
LANGDON	E J	1850	Dunster	Waitress
LANGDON	S A	1855	Dunster	Waitress
LANGDON	F A	1853	Dunster	Waitress
SAINSBURY	Selina	1843	Kimpton, Hants	Nurse/domestic servant
HENSON	William	1855	Blue Anchor, Somerset	Visitor/railway clerk

HUME	Menella	1806	Pinner, Middx	Visitor/ independent means
NICHOLL	Cecil H	1859	Canterbury, Kent	Visitor/scholar
NICHOLL	Charlotte M	1864	Usk, Mon	Visitor/scholar
NICHOLL	Capel H	1865	Usk	Visitor/scholar
NICHOLL	Allan H	1866	Usk	Visitor/scholar
MORGAN	Elizabeth	1853	Oystermouth	Gen dom servant

In 1861, John Langdon (junior) is at The Shop, Mary St, Nether Stowey (Somerset). He is a saddler's apprentice to William LONG. In 1861, the rest of the Langdon family was living at 6, Montpelier Terrace, NEATH:

LANGDON	John	1825	Dunster	Saddler
LANGDON	Amelia	1828	Ash Hill, Baldenstone (sic) Glam	
LANGDON	Elizabeth Jane	1848	Dunster	Scholar
LANGDON	Fanny Amelia	1851	Dunster	Scholar
LANGDON	Sarah A J	1853	Dunster	

In 1849 John Langton (sic) had married Amelia ADAMS in Uxbridge, Middx. I was unable to find the family in 1851 and 1841.

That's the SWANSEA connection. Did William Henson, who married Sarah Langdon, and was a master mariner, influence Ancell in his choice of career? I have been unable to ascertain who Ancell's parents were! Was this his reason for leaving Swansea? Was it his sense of adventure? Had he heard tales of exotic destinations from his uncle? Was there money to be made in far-away lands?

ANCELL GREGORY, seen right in a photograph from 1910, began his life at sea by serving aboard trading ships, and was a lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve during the Boxer Rebellion in China (1898-1901). He arrived in Broome, Western Australia, in 1904, as second officer on the SS Charon. He left the navy to take up pearl



fishing, and within two years was manager of CN MURPHY's fleet of twenty eight vessels. In April 1908, he nearly lost his life, when a cyclone wrecked the lugger on which he was sailing.

In 1909, with his younger brother, Fleming (Dick) Clement Gregory (died WW1 29/11/1917, Gaza), he founded Gregory & Co. In the same year he also became Broome's Harbour Master, Marine Surveyor and Shipping Inspector (1909-1918).

Prior to this, in the 1890s, Captain Gregory was involved in the successful pearling industry in Broome. This industry was important to the economy of Western Australia and the development of the Kimberley region. In 1900, Broome's first bank, the Union Bank, was opened.

In 1915, Capt Gregory had a house built when he married Kate VILLIERS. By this time he was prominent and successful in the pearling industry. He was president of the Pearlery Association (1917-1923) and Chairman of the Road Board (1925-1929). He was well known for his friendship with the local Japanese community, in a town segregated by race.

One of his closest friends was YASUKICHI MURAKAMI, a Japanese trader. This friendship was frowned upon by other Europeans, but such was Gregory's influence, that he was able to get away with flouting the town's social barriers. Gregory employed Japanese divers and Asian crews, and he ensured that they were well looked after.

The house which Gregory had built was constructed by a Japanese carpenter, HORI GOROKITICHI, using traditional Japanese carpentry techniques. It was a large white bungalow. French doors opened onto wide verandahs and the garden was grass with mango and palm trees.

In 1921, Ancell and Kate's daughter, Audrey Pamela Villiers Langdon Clement was born.

As well as being a businessman, Gregory was also involved in community affairs, being responsible for bringing electric lighting to Broome. He enjoyed tennis, cricket and racing and also entertained lavishly. He was also Mayor of Broome, a JP for twenty-five years and the agent for Lloyds in NW Australia.

Gregory continued to develop his pearling fleet and had fourteen luggers constructed over twenty years: however, during the 1930s depression, many pearlery moved away from Western Australia.

By 1935, when Gregory had divorced his wife, he concentrated his pearl business in Darwin, though he retained his interests in Broome.

In the 1940s, he was accused of collaborating with the Japanese, and he died in Perth on 23rd December, 1942.

His large estate passed to his daughter, Pamela, who by this time was married and living in the USA. She retained ownership of her father's house until 1968.

In the early 1980s, the Broome Preservation Society was starting to preserve and restore some of the town's heritage. The house was relocated in 1985. It is good to know that a house built for a Swansea man has great social significance for Broome and is a cultural and social venue in its capacity as an art gallery and cafe.

ANCELL GREGORY'S obituary in the "Sunday Times" (WA) included these words, *"He was a vigorous, powerful man, keenly interested in everything connected with the development of the North West and the state in general and had crammed into his life many exciting experiences, a large proportion of them in some activity in the service of the nation. The Sunday Times joins in the widespread regret at the loss of such a fine citizen"* (27/12/1942).



A fine tribute to a man born in Swansea who made a new life for himself on the other side of the world, but it still leaves the thought in my mind, why did he leave Swansea?

50th Anniversary Publication 2024

Let us have your memories of the Society from the early days. Do you have any photos of past events? Would you like to join a 50th Anniversary Publication group meeting online via Zoom?

Contact: chairman@glamfhs.org.uk or editor@glamfhs.org.uk

HUGH BEVAN, BRIDGEND MERCHANT AND
PHILANTHROPIST (1821-1898)

PART 3

#20252 Guy Bevan

The story of a boy from Merthyr Tydfil who made his way through life in the Victorian Age, earned his fortune in Bridgend and almost built a railway and dock on the River Ogmore.

In part 2 Hugh was building his reputation in Bridgend's commercial and religious life; it is now 1883 and he is promoting the railway and entering politics.

Chairman of the Board

On **12th April 1883** the South Wales Daily News records Hugh BEVAN chairing a meeting to promote the proposed formation of the Ogmore Dock and Llynfi Railway. Hugh speaks in favour of the scheme "*with force*".

This railway project was approved by Parliament in 1883. In his book "*Bridgend – The story of a Market Town*" by HJ RANDALL (published in 1955) the author records: "*Perhaps I may here insert a childhood memory (Randall was born in 1877). My father, William Richard Randall, was the moving force behind the project, and on 12th July, 1883, when the Bill finally passed through Committee, he returned home from London by the evening express. He was met at the station by a large crowd, the horses were removed from our carriage, and it was dragged down as far as his office, amid great cheering and making of speeches. I was then five years old.*"

WR Randall was the solicitor to the company promoters, and his rapturous reception above is confirmed by the newspapers of the time. The same page of Randall's book also lists the main promoters of this railway project including:

"Hugh Bevan, (who) carried on one of the largest grocery businesses in the town in partnership with Daniel Herbert LLOYD as Bevan and Lloyd. Their shop was the premises.....at the junction of Nolton and Caroline Streets. The firm is now extinct."

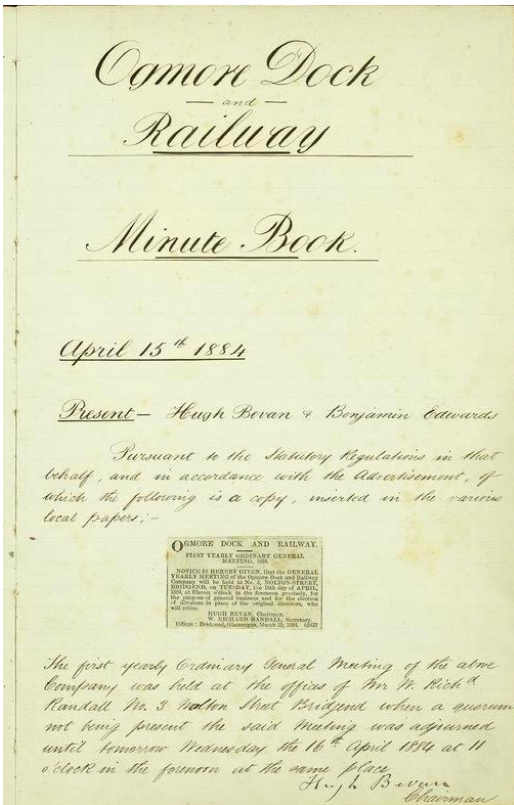
The Ogmore Dock Railway Act was passed on **20th August 1883** and envisaged a line from the Llynfi and Ogmore section of the GWR line above Bridgend Station to a new dock which was to be built at the mouth of the Ogmore River. The start of the railway above Bridgend would have been a stone's throw from Hugh's home at Tyrisha.

The proposed dock, about 160 yards long and with a lock onto the River Ogmore, was to be supplemented by two piers stretching out into the Bristol Channel, and an aqueduct. The Act allowed for the company to have powers including diverting water into the dock and aqueduct, to dredge the dock, to construct navigation lights, and set limits on the amount of railway tolls, for example:

“For all cotton and other wools, drugs, manufactured goods, and all other wares, merchandise, fish articles, matters or things per ton per mile not exceeding three pence, and if conveyed in carriages belonging to the Company, an additional sum per ton per mile not exceeding one penny;”

According to a feasibility report dated 16th June 1882 the original scheme covered a line of 7¾ miles at an estimated cost of £10,000 per mile or £77,000 in total. The docks, covering 18 acres, and diversion of the River Ogmore were a further £252,000. Income was estimated at a conservative £1,000 per mile per annum (at a time when, the report notes, national estimates were £4,200 per mile per year) and should yield 5% on the investor’s capital.

A separate estimate of the legal costs of getting the necessary Parliamentary Act in place was £1,733, although this is certainly an underestimate to judge from later correspondence. The records clearly show that Hugh is one of the foremost of the twenty-two promoters of the scheme listed at a meeting on 27th April 1883.



The 1883 Parliamentary Act includes Hugh as one of the subscribers and future proprietors of the company.

On **28th March 1884** Hugh Bevan is recorded in the South Wales Daily News as Chairman of the Ogmore Dock and Railway Company of Bridgend at its first Annual General Meeting.

As stated in the Company Minute Book, signed by Hugh (above), he was Chairman of the Ogmore Dock and Railway Company from its first meeting on 15th April 1884 until at least 7th August 1886 when the Minute Book ends.

The original Ogmore Dock and Railway Act was amended in 1887 (again listing Hugh Bevan as one of two of the bill's promoters) to extend the bill's implementation timescale. An article in the Bridgend Chronicle, Cowbridge, Llantrisant and Maesteg Advertiser of 23rd November 1888 comments that when the initial 1883 Act passed "*Mr Hugh Bevan was very active and assiduous in his efforts for the success of the bill*" despite which (it records) the initial enthusiasm died and the scheme fell into "*obscurity*". Certainly, the press interest in the company fell from 127 articles in 1883 to just 7 in 1886. They rise again in 1888, but then die away.

The scheme was reinvigorated for a short time in 1888 and Lord DUNRAVEN became the Company President. However, after much planning the financial backing ultimately failed. The scheme seems to have been abandoned by 1889 and the Ogmore Dock and Railway Act was formally repealed in May 1891. According to the London Gazette of 11th April 1891, following the repeal, the company had £6,220 to compensate any outstanding claims. How much Hugh lost on his investment in the scheme is not clear.

Liberal Causes

The **11th January 1886** edition of the South Wales Echo records Hugh Bevan as Vice Chairman of the South Glamorgan Liberal Association. Eighteen months later Hugh is recorded at a meeting in Cardiff of the South Wales and Monmouth Liberal Association, confirming his support for the cause of Charles PARNELL and Irish Home Rule as recorded in the **1st Sept 1888** edition of the Cardiff Times.

"The Parnell Defence Fund. Mr Hugh Bevan moved a resolution to the effect that it is desirable to form a Parnell Defence Fund for South Wales and Monmouthshire to assist Mr Parnell and his colleagues in a full investigation of the charges made against them by the Times newspaper..."

The meeting also proposed amalgamating the North and South Wales Liberal Movements with the aim of creating a single Welsh Liberal voice in the House of Commons, and also that the existing Welsh National Council should become "*a reflection of truly Welsh National and Liberal thinking.*" A draft constitution reflecting those aims was voted on and agreed. The

detailed constitution and related correspondence quoted in the article make plain that a “*Welsh Parliamentary Party*” was the likely and desired goal.

The charges in the Times newspaper against Charles Parnell which Hugh refers to in the above article are the PIGOTT Forgeries. In early 1887 the Times published accusations that Parnell and his movement had supported the murders in 1882 of both Lord Frederick CAVENDISH, Chief Secretary for Ireland and his Permanent Under Secretary Thomas BURKE, in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

The accusations were primarily backed by letters, allegedly by Parnell, which the Times published. It was not until the findings of a Commission of Enquiry published two years later in 1889 that the letters were revealed to be written by a rogue anti-Parnell journalist named Pigott. Pigott cracked under questioning, escaped to Spain and then committed suicide. Parnell was vindicated.

Just over two weeks after the above article, on **18th Sept 1888**, Hugh is recorded in the South Wales Daily News personally endorsing wide-ranging political reform in Wales as part of a “*Great Liberal Meeting at Porthcawl*”. The meeting was organised by both the Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan Liberal Associations and took place on a “*beautifully fine day*” in an “*open field near the railway station*”, after a march through the town led by both the Tondu Brass Band and the Gilfach Goch Brass Band. Hugh was one of several speakers on a range of political subjects, including, inevitably, Irish Home Rule, but also political issues more directly relevant to Wales. It is worth recording Hugh’s speech (or at least what the newspaper records of it) in full:

“Mr HUGH BEVAN, Tirisha, Bridgend, proposed the second resolution as follows:

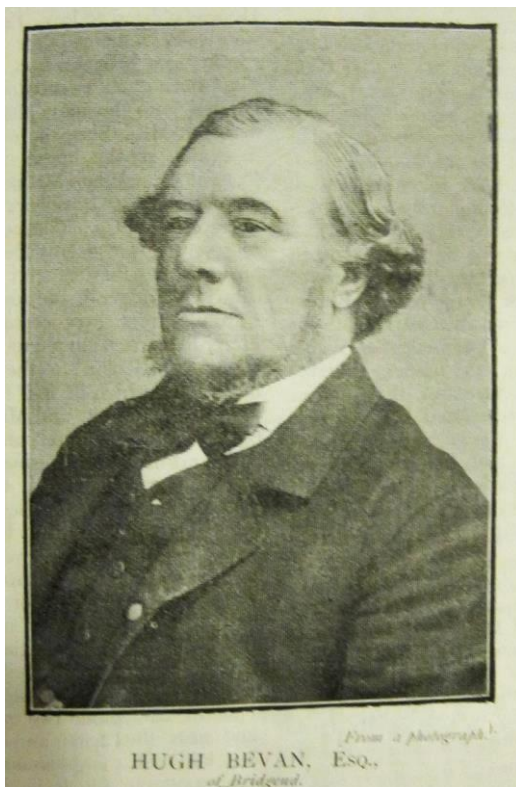
That in the opinion of this meeting the claims of Wales to have the Church of England in Wales disestablished and disendowed, to a complete reform of the Land Laws, including the fair taxation of ground rents and royalties, to a thorough system of intermediate education, and to the other reforms, which it has so long vainly demanded, are entitled to the immediate consideration of the Liberal Party, and that this end can best be secured by the formation of a Welsh party, so that these claims may be effectually pressed upon the attention of Parliament.

He strongly urged the formation of a national Welsh party, a subject which had been earnestly taken up by the Welsh Liberal Federation at their recent meeting in Cardiff. (Applause)”

That September was a busy month for Hugh. A week later the South Wales Echo of **24th September 1888** records that Hugh Bevan “*chairman of the*

local board” was presented by Lady Dunraven to Her Royal Highness Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck (a grand-daughter of the late King George III, wife of the future King George V and a great-grandmother of Queen Elizabeth II) on Bridgend station platform. She arrived by the Great Western Railway on a visit to meet the Earl and Countess of Dunraven, at Dunraven Castle near Bridgend. “*Thousands lined the barriers*”

Hugh was now 67 and these events in September 1888 were his swansong in Bridgend. The South Wales Daily News of **5th November 1888** marks his intention to retire from his numerous public roles and move home up the Welsh coast to Tenby.



After a brief stay in Tenby (at Penrhyn House, according to a report of a Swansea Methodist meeting in the South Wales Daily News of **16th May 1889**), Hugh moved to Narberth in Pembrokeshire, although he and Louisa would only stay there for a couple of years.

As noted earlier, on **11th October 1889** the Brecon County Times ran a very extensive article on the life and good works of Hugh Bevan. The article has been quoted extensively above and shows that Hugh was respected and prominent in both local politics and Methodist circles in South Wales. The article drew heavily on two earlier profiles, including one from “the Crusader - the Carmarthen Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Magazine”,

which contains the only photo of Hugh which I am aware of.

Photo Guy Bevan from *The Crusader* of February 1889, held in the British Library. That article was entitled: “*Methodist Worthies in South Wales – Hugh Bevan Esq, Bridgend*”.

A few months after the 1889 profile Hugh Bevan finally announced his retirement from business and the dissolution of his grocery and provisions

partnership in Bridgend with Daniel Herbert Lloyd, “trading as Bevan and Lloyd”. This was reported in the Liverpool Mercury on **17th March 1890** (and presumably many other papers), reprinted from the London Gazette.

In the **1891** census Hugh Bevan, now a retired provision dealer, was living with his wife Louisa at Greenway House, Narberth in Pembrokeshire, having moved from Tenby after only a short stay there. With them in the house is a cook and a general servant. The Welsh Census of 1891 asked whether people spoke Welsh, English, or both. Hugh stated that he spoke both. Presumably, his parents and siblings, Thomas the younger and his sister Maria, were also bilingual.

Although now retired, Hugh still serves on the Cardiff and Swansea District Financial Synod, a Wesleyan group. He was also still active in his new community, serving on his local School Board in Narberth, Pembrokeshire according to South Wales Daily News **15th March 1892**:

“NARBERTH. A meeting of the gentlemen nominated for the School Board was held on Saturday evening to try to form a Board without a contest. This object was accomplished, those selected for the new Board being Mr Hugh Bevan, Mr JG CASTLES, Mr JR LEWIS, Mr James OWEN, and Mr R WARD”.

Somerset Years

For reasons which are unclear, despite his involvement in the community, Welsh Liberal politics and the Wesleyan church in Wales, Hugh Bevan and his wife, Louisa, then decided to move away from their retirement home in Narberth, according to the South Wales Daily News on **16th September 1892**. The paper records that the couple plan to leave Wales and relocate to South Petherton in Somerset (although in fact the couple move to the nearby village of Langport in Somerset). To judge from the remarks quoted in the article Hugh had been a highly regarded member of the South Wales Methodist community. Hugh was now 71 years old. But you can't keep a good man down and Hugh wasted no time in his new Somerset home.

Hugh's life in Somerset will be related in Part 4, the final part of his biography, in the next edition of the Journal.

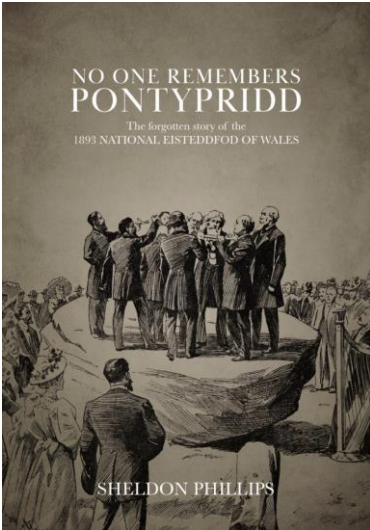
Don't miss the 'Cut-Off Dates'

Material for possible publication should reach the Editor before the following dates:

March Issue	20 January	June Issue	20 April
Sept issue	20 July	Dec Issue	20 October

BOOK REVIEWS

NO-ONE REMEMBERS PONTYPRIDD, the forgotten story of the 1893 National Eisteddfod that was held in Pontypridd, 130 years ago. #20441 SHELDON PHILLIPS



The title of this book is an intriguing one, as OF COURSE everyone knows and remembers Pontypridd, but it is the very last chapter that tells the reader the origin of this title, and then all becomes clear.

Before then the reader is taken through the events that led to the Eisteddfod's coming to Pontypridd, and as the author says, if you think that today's bribery and corruption regarding the placement of sporting and artistic events is questionable, then what went on regarding the bidding for the Eisteddfod in the years leading up to 1893 could have surely been a template.

Three of Sheldon Phillips' great-uncles were all involved with this Eisteddfod's organisation, and each has a brief biography along with a family tree showing all the connections within the Phillips family, so the reader has a picture of a large family with a great deal of history.

The book has nine chapters, taking us through the competitive bidding process, the preparations once Pontypridd had been decided upon, and an account of the actual Eisteddfod itself. The appendices cover the entrants, the prizes, the winners and lists of the competitions entered. It also includes the balance sheet, showing how it had made a large loss, attributed mostly to the cost of the vast pavilion that was erected. The author suggests that the bad weather of the time could have put a stop to many visitors, but there were still enormous crowds, and he lists the figures attending.

The Eisteddfod's early medieval history is outlined as far as records allow, from 1100 onwards, through the druidic machinations of Iolo Morgannwg (Edward Williams) to the present day. Of particular interest may be the chapter on the attempts of Chicago, USA, to host the 1893 Eisteddfod, and the author gives the background to the bid, emphasizing how many Welsh immigrants who were in or around Chicago at that time, around 3000. Many

of these were playing leading roles in the development of the city and the State of Illinois, and were keen to show their Welsh heritage at the same time as the US was celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus's voyage of 1492.

What I found most enlightening about this book was its setting: the phenomenal economic and cultural growth of Pontypridd and its surroundings in this period, set alongside the very harsh realities of the conditions many people lived with. Not surprisingly, an eisteddfod would be one of very welcome distractions from their difficult lives.

I thoroughly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in our cultural heritage.

Large paperback, 142 pages, £12.99 plus £2.50 postage, Sheldon Phillips, 2023. Published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch. www.carreg-gwalch.cymru, ISBN no.9781-3999-2852-6

Jean Fowlds



A FEW FORGOTTEN WOMEN PROJECT

This project is an initiative by Dr Janet Few and several others to research/document the lives of women whose lives otherwise would go unnoticed.

The current aim is to focus on the lives of women and girls at two locations/organisations. Those who attended **The Mount School in York** which was found in 1785

and Voluntary Aid Detachment Personnel. Those who served in the VAD can be found on the Red Cross website: <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/search>

Cardiff Branch volunteer, Jenni Phillips, who sent us this information has been researching a pair of sisters who lived in Penarth/Dinas Powys and attended the Mount School. If anyone is interested in taking part, instructions are on the website

[https://afewforgottenwomen.wixsite.com/affw/copy-of-a-few-forgotten-women-fridays.](https://afewforgottenwomen.wixsite.com/affw/copy-of-a-few-forgotten-women-fridays)

LETTERS/EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

I am pleased to report that as a result of some of your recent articles this year I have received several letters and emails from readers who have found a connection with their own families and projects when reading of the personalities featured, and we have been able to put people in touch with each other so that they are able to expand their family trees.

Therefore, please keep writing as you never know who you will meet.

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE REPORT

Since the last journal we have entertained visitors from Texas, USA, South Africa, County Durham and Carmarthenshire, as well as some more local regulars. Several of these visitors have become Society members, which is very positive. The reorganisation of the publications along with a comprehensive index has proved very useful with visitors and has made the process of locating booklets much easier. The visitors were asked to write a piece for the Journal, which will prove a valuable record of our overseas connections.

The indexing of the donated books is almost complete, and the next task will be to sort through them to remove any double copies and to select books which are better suited as part of a resource to be sold at fairs, once they restart. There are some very useful books in the donations covering a wide range of interest, including local history across South Wales and into the English border counties. It is planned to do a short review of some of the books for the Journal so that members have an idea of what is available.

Volunteers are beginning to sort out the family card indexes ready for them to be digitised. Two volunteers have been working on the map index which will enable members to make greater use of this valuable resource. A number of people have sent in research requests. Some of these will be visiting the ARC in person while the details of others have been forwarded to volunteers for further investigation.

The ARC continues to be open for research sessions on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. Anyone wishing to make a booking should contact the team on arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

Penny Williams, arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY BRANCH

Meetings are going well. I am pleased to report there has been a steady increase in attendance levels.

May: We had a change in our advertised programme as the guest speaker was unable to attend; therefore we had a research session and booked a speaker for June instead.

June: Our guest speaker was Carol Scott. We welcomed Carol as a new speaker with years of research experience and were not disappointed. Carol gave us a very explanative talk on how to research your family history sharing hints and tips which she has found useful and the best websites to research.

July: Local historian Brian Davies gave us an excellent talk on Dr Richard Griffiths who built the first transport links into the Rhondda Valley. Brian is a regular visitor to our branch and never fails to entertain us.

A steady flow of enquiries are continuing to come into the branch for assistance on family research related to the Aberdare area, we are pleased to continue to help these members where possible.

We will shortly be launching an ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY Branch Facebook page with the intention of helping members with local research enquiries. Research will be limited to Aberdare/Cynon Valley only.

Transcribing of the Aberdare leader Obituaries is still ongoing if anyone is interested in becoming involved with this or other transcribing please contact me for further information.

Pat Rees, aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk



BRIDGEND BRANCH

At our April meeting one of our Bridgend members, Joanna Keen, spoke on 'Hints and Tips' to give people some alternative resources and avenues to pursue. This proved both interesting and useful for the members, giving them next steps in their research.

The May meeting was a research evening with volunteers available to offer help and suggestions for the ever present 'brick walls'.

The June meeting was a talk given by Anna Rankin, the Reference and Local Studies Assistant from Y Llynfi in Maesteg. The collection has undergone a

number of moves over the last few years and it was interesting to see how things are developing before the planned transfer back to the old Town Hall in the centre of town. The extensive collection covers many aspects of local history and is a valuable resource to family historians. This meeting was very well attended, with 20 members enjoying the evening. People wishing to visit Y Llynfi need to make an appointment as space is currently limited and some resources might need to be brought out of storage. They can be contacted on 01656 754810 or ylyynfi.library@awen-wales.com

Zoom facilities continue to be available for the meetings, although no-one is currently using this, and the details will be shared with other Groups to draw a wider audience.

The library research sessions in Aberkenfig and Pyle are continuing over the next few months. We are not doing sessions in Bridgend currently. The sessions have to be booked in advance, rather than being drop-in sessions to ensure volunteers are available. The numbers continue to be low but there has been a very positive response from the people who have attended. The library staff continue to be very helpful and welcoming. Some people are making regular visits, and we are encouraging these to take out a membership to gain the full benefit of the Society's resources. It might become policy that we limit the number of times someone can take advantage of these free sessions rather than the sessions in the ARC which cost £5.

A small group of volunteers is being organised to find ways of promoting the Society and draw on social media as a way of increasing the membership, raising numbers at events and finding more volunteers willing to take on roles in the Branch, and beyond. If you would like to get involved please contact us.

Penny Williams, bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk



CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH REPORT

The Cardiff branch meeting in June at Glamorgan Archives focused on Poor Law records. Thanks to Nick Davey for providing an overview of Poor Law legislation that affected our ancestors.

Below is a list of the Poor Law Documents viewed at Glamorgan Archives during this meeting:

Old Poor Law:

- Merthyr Tydfil, vestry minute book, 1799- (P4/2)
- Cardiff St Mary, overseer's account book, 1739-1760 (CL/MS/5/113)
- Llangynwyd Parish, settlement certificates, 1737 (P82/29/42)
- Wick Parish, settlement depositions, 1781-1830 (P102CW/9-12)

- QS removal order, Cardiff, 1759 (Q/S/R/1759/D/15)
- Leckwith Parish, bastardy bond, 1794 (P40/3-4)

New Poor Law (*ie following the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834*)

- Bridgend Poor Law Union, Minutes of the Board of Guardians, 1861-1863 (UB/1/9)
- Pontypridd Workhouse, admission/discharge register, 1912-1914 (UPP/60/1)
- Merthyr Tydfil Workhouse, creed register, 1894-1896 (UM/29/6)
- Lists of paupers, 1877-1880 (UC/45/4)
- Cardiff Poor Law Union, year book, 1893-1898 (UC/47/1)
- Aberdare Cottage Homes/Industrial School, photographs (UM/90/3-5)
- Merthyr Tydfil Workhouse, ingredients table, Merthyr Workhouse (UM/60/5)
- Merthyr Tydfil Workhouse, bathing regulations, c.1900-1910, Merthyr Workhouse (UM/60/7)
- Merthyr Tydfil Workhouse, daily timetable, c.1900-1910 (UM/60/9)
- Pontypridd Cottage Homes, admission/discharge register, 1900-1901 (UPP/75/4)
- Cardiff Union, cholera returns, Sep 1866 (UC/54)
- Parish rate book, Cogan, 1895-1896 (UC/72/1)

Thanks to Karen Prior for organising a visit to the Family Search Centre in Rhiwbina on Wednesday 5th July, which was attended by 14 branch members (see images back cover). We were given an overview of Family Search and services available at the Centre. Several members indicated that they plan to attend the Centre to undertake research in the future. We look forward to hearing about any progress made with their family history as a result of these visits.

The committee are currently planning for next year with both afternoon archive sessions and evening talks at Cathays Cemetery Chapels in Cardiff. The first evening talk takes place in September.

To ensure the continuation of branch activities in future, we need more members to join the committee. This does not necessarily require extensive family history research experience. We would particularly welcome involvement from members who can contribute administrative, secretarial and/or organisational skills. Volunteers are also needed at the evening meetings at Cathays Cemetery Chapels. For more details please contact the branch.

The Branch AGM will again be held online via Zoom a link will be posted on the website and in the September Newsletter.

Jenni Phillips, cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH REPORT

It has been a quiet time since the last report.

We have continued to do an 'historic' walk with a guide around the town in May, a practice we started during the 'Covid period'. However, we will probably revert to visiting an archive office next year as nearby Powys Archives is now in a new building which we have not yet seen. As June is the time that the Merthyr Rising is celebrated in the town, we had an excellent talk that month on Merthyr Tydfil in 1830s with Viv Pugh, Chairman of the Dic Penderyn Society. Six members of our branch assisted with the day conference on the theme of 'Chartism' held by the Dic Penderyn Society in the Merthyr Tydfil Labour Club in June. It was an interesting day with some excellent speakers, such as David Miles of the Gelligaer Historical Society and Des James, an expert on Chartism. In July we were fortunate in having Mary Owen talking about the shop keepers and middle-class of old Merthyr Tydfil.

All Meetings are in Soar, Pontmorlais at 2pm on the second Tuesday of each the month but we do not have a meeting in August.

Carolyn Jacob, merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk



SWANSEA BRANCH REPORT

Since everything is beginning to "wake up" after Covid, the Swansea Branch has gone in a different direction.

Because numbers attending meetings had been declining for some time, some branch members who meet in the West Glamorgan Archives to transcribe records, which will eventually be available online, the archivist suggested that the branch could meet at the archives every month.

The branch was delighted to accept this offer, especially as one of the archivists would give a talk on the records available. This would be followed by time for personal research or to help anyone who has "hit a brick wall" or needs help to start research.

Since these meetings started we have looked at BMD records, the Health Map of Swansea and Land Tax records to name a few.

The numbers attending have varied, but in July we had six new members, which makes everything very rewarding. We also welcomed back Cherry King, who has been unwell recently.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 5th September at 2pm - 4pm in the Civic Centre, Swansea. Car parking charges are payable but they are cheaper if you are a resident of Swansea. For this you need to register online.

Janet Neilson, swansea@glamfhs.org.uk



ONLINE BRANCH REPORT

The Online Branch continues to have good attendance to its twice monthly Thursday evening events, a formal talk followed by a less formal 'Coffee and Chat' session. A programme for the rest of 2023 is now in place with preparations also underway for a possible whole day Webinar as part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations. Volunteers are being trained to undertake the administration needed for each session, eg checking attendees. Anyone interested in helping with the Webinar or monthly sessions please contact:

Sue Hamer, arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

General Register Office – Birth and Death Certificates

www.gro.gov.uk

In case anyone has missed the announcements copies of the entries from the GRO registers for birth and deaths between the following dates:

Births: 1837 – 1920

Deaths: 1837 – 1887

are now available to download as digital images for £2.50 each.

Of the ones I have ordered there have been a few errors such as incorrect alignment of images during scanning and also missing entries. The GRO provided a refund very quickly although the alternative suggested was to buy a pdf copy at £7.00. However overall this now provides a relatively cheap way of answering a few questions you may have. At only £2.50 it is very tempting to get carried away – so make sure you do the usual checking before you buy that you have the right individual – check against the alternative indexes on www.freebmd.org.uk and any baptism and burial records that you may have.

Sue Hamer

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please contact the Branches for up to date information about all meetings.

ABERDARE BRANCH

aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

2 pm Second Thursday in the month at Cynon Valley Museum
14 Sept – research session
12 Oct – AGM and Guest speaker TBC
9 Nov - Guest Speaker Jennifer George
14 Dec - Christmas lunch TBC

BRIDGEND BRANCH

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

Len Evans Hall (next to the ARC) at 7.30 pm third Monday each month
21 August
18 September – AGM followed by speaker TBC9
16 October
20 November
December – No Meeting – Nadolig Llawen
See website for details.

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH

cardiffandvale@glamfhs.org.uk

First Tuesday times vary

Cathays Cemetery Chapel Meetings (doors open 6.45 pm)

7 pm 5 Sep: Women in Welsh Coal Mining – Noreen Shapland

7 pm 7 Nov: Roath Virtual War Memorial – Ted Richards

Online

7 pm 3 Oct: AGM plus Talk TBC – Book via Eventbrite

Glamorgan Archives

2 pm Tuesday 5 Dec – Topic TBA

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the
2nd Tuesday of each month

12 Sept: D Day to VE Day: 53rd Welsh Division – Edwyn Parry

10 Oct: AGM & Talk: A new topic TBC – Steve Brewer

14 Nov: Crimes and misdemeanours, a family tale – Barrie Jones

12 Dec: Merthyr Tydfil Shops - Carl Llewellyn

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk

Third Tuesday 7 pm at Pontypridd Museum
19 Sept TBA

17 Oct AGM plus Film of old Photos of Rhondda
21 Nov TBA

December – No Meeting - Nadolig Llawen
For further information contact the Branch

SWANSEA BRANCH

swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

2pm at West Glamorgan Archives

Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN

Tuesday 5th Sept - meeting at the Swansea Archives for a talk by one of the archivists, followed by help with research.

Monday 16th October- AGM on Zoom at 7pm (speaker to be arranged)

Tuesday 14th November at the Swansea Archives for a talk by one of the archivists - followed by help with research.

December – No Meeting – Nadolig Llawen

ONLINE BRANCH (Ar Lein)

arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

14 Sept at 7.30 pm: Posted in the past –

Stories behind early 20th Century postcards – Helen Baggott

21 Sept at 7 pm: Coffee & Chat –

London Branch – What we found at the National Library of Wales

12 Oct at 7.30 pm: Bridging the Gap –

Tracing forwards from 1921 – Jackie Depelle

26 Oct at 7 pm: Coffee & Chat - More Facebook Groups than you thought –
finding things, local area pages – Diane Brook

9 Nov at 7.30 pm: They also served –

Women in Britain's Armed Forces during WW2 - Richard Marks

23 Nov at 7 pm: Coffee & Chat:

Tip of the Iceberg – examples of research material not online

14 Dec at 7.30 pm: Title TBC: Dr Gethin Matthews

For more information and register for our online talks on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/online/glamorgan-family-history-society>

Further updates on Branch Meetings and Events
are posted on our website
www.glamfhs.org.uk/events
and on Social Media



Cardiff Branch Visit to Family Search Centre, Rhiwbina, Cardiff



If undelivered please return to:

63 Clos Pwll Clai, Tondy, Bridgend, CF32 9BZ