



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



From Top Left: Clockwise: A Young Soldier of WW2, D-Day Museum, Portsmouth,
WW2 Commonwealth War Graves, Merthyr Dyfan Cemetery, Barry,
CWGC Headstone, EK Miles, Intelligence Corps, Naval Memorial Portsmouth

Journal No 144

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Above: John George THOMAS and Joyce POPE
 married at Merthyr's parish church, St David's, on 22nd February 1947
See Article – Page 18
 Below: John George THOMAS - RAF Certificate of Service & Release

**ROYAL AIR FORCE
 CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE AND RELEASE**

Menthyr Tydfil, B.A.F. Form 2520/11
 Selwyn 6/48
 Vignor & Penderkin Ruel
 Food Control Committee
 S. Wa. 69.

SERVICE PARTICULARS

Service Number J 1614711 Rank CORPORAL

Air Crew Category and/or R.A.F. trade COOK

Air Crew Badges awarded (if any) NONE

Overseas Service 22-1-45 TO 29-6-46 INDIA

R.A.F. Character V.G. (see notes on back of certificate on opposite page)

Proficiency A SAT (" ")
 " B SAT (" ")

Decorations, Medals, Clasp, Mention in Despatches, Commendations, etc.
DEFENCE MEDAL

Educational and Vocational Training Courses and Results NONE

DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth 4-4-1921 Height 5'-10"

Marks and Scars CUT UNDER RIGHT EYE

Specimen Signature of Airman J.G. Thomas

Date 22/6/46 Signature of Officer Commanding

of J.G. THOMAS (Block Letters)

The above-named airman served in the R.A.F. V.R. on full-time service, from 11-9-1941 to 29-6-46. (Last day of service in unit before leaving for release and release leave).

Particulars of his Service are shown in the margin of this Certificate.

Brief statement of any special aptitudes or qualities or any special types of employment for which recommended: As per R.C.F. Trade of Cook, Sgt Thomas has been in charge of the cooking in a large Regiment West. He showed a lot of industry in his Mess was always light and cheery and always kept clean. Sgt Thomas is a man who easily adapts himself to a new job. No special aptitudes.

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<p>Society's Objectives</p> <p>© Glamorgan Family History Society</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		

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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

Here we are at the end of another frustrating, and for some, upsetting year, but the festive season is almost upon us, and we can only hope 2022 will be a much better one for many.

Our December journal should provide interesting reading; we asked members for family accounts and memories from those who served in WW2, and from those who stayed at home in their various roles, and we were not disappointed in the variety of circumstances that families and individuals found themselves.

We have accounts of service from home and abroad, and accounts too of the devastation that homes and schools had to suffer from the bombing - see the article on the Cardiff Blitz, and the effects of the war at home in 'Meirwen's Memories'. The number of casualties is truly staggering, as shown in the account of a small village and the number who went from there and did not come back, many dying in countries that they would hitherto have only seen on a map, emphasizing how it truly was a World War.

Away from the war, included is the second half of the story of Cardiff pharmacist John Daniel Jenkins, and another famous Cardiff-born citizen, Jimmy MESENE, the singer and songwriter who lit up the musical scene in London in the thirties with his partner AI BOWLLEY. There are articles on tracking down old documents, on tracing and linking names and occupations, and of how the Family History 'bug' is so compelling, so a wide spectrum of topics and personalities.

We hope some of this content, if not all, will provide 'a good read' for these long nights, and will encourage members to look at what is in their family history that would bring enjoyment and interest to others.

There is no specific theme for the next journal out in March, but if there is any area of exploration that you feel can be included then please do let us know.

Meanwhile, from all at Glamorgan Family History, enjoy the time ahead with friends and family, and let us all wish for better times in front of us.

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi gyd.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As we turn our clocks back and the Winter darkness is upon us we turn our thoughts towards Christmas and the New Year. With Covid-19 cases still high here in Wales, although some of our Branches have recommenced face to face meetings, others who meet in smaller or more constricted premises have continued with online meetings. Swansea Branch is the latest Branch to offer Zoom talks – see page 54 for details of all our events. Up to date information and handouts from past talks are available on www.glamfhs.org.uk/online-events.

ARC Review Survey: Thank you to those members who returned the questionnaire in last month's journal. Although the number responding was very small we have taken your comments on board in our forward planning for the Centre and a short report is included with the Society News.

1921 Census: 6 January 2021 is the eagerly awaited release date for the launch of the 1921 Census by Find My Past. Initially the Census is being offered at a premium rate with original images costing £3.50 and transcripts £2.50 to cover the cost of the digitization of the 18,235,242 records. A 10% discount is being offered to 12 month PRO subscribers. Access will be free at the National Archives at Kew.

Annual General Meeting – Change of Date: 26 March 2022

This will be again be on Zoom. Nomination forms for Society Officers and Executive Committee Members are included in the Centre Insert of the Journal These must be returned to our Hon Secretary Jane Jones by 1 January. All Officers and Committee Members are elected for one year. The Branch Trustees are elected at Branch AGMs and then confirmed at the Society AGM.

Membership Renewal

Our Membership Subscriptions commence four times a year on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October. Renewal forms for the main subscription year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 are included in the Centre Insert together with Gift Aid Forms. **If you have not updated your Gift Aid form recently please complete and return a new Gift Aid Form.** The date you submitted a Gift Aid Form is shown on your Journal envelope.

We hope the New Year allows more face to face meetings to be organised but we will still offer online sessions, which have been so popular during the lockdown period and have enabled members old and new to learn new skills, keep in touch and chat about their family history research.

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!

Meic Jones, Chairman, 1 November 2021

“A TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE TOOK PLACE LAST NIGHT” – Cardiff, 3 March 1941

Tony Peters, Glamorgan Archives

By March 1941 towns and villages in south Wales had been subject to regular and extensive rounds of bombing by the German Luftwaffe for over nine months. In many respects the night of Monday 3 March was no different as the air raid sirens called out their warning to the people of Cardiff to take shelter from an imminent attack. The following morning the German propaganda machine hailed yet another successful raid – *Strong forces of German bombers attacked important war objectives and supply depots in Cardiff last night with great success. The communique added, As weather conditions proved good the chosen targets were easily picked out by the pilots. With characteristic sangfroid the British Air Ministry countered with an announcement that, Last night's enemy activity was not on a large scale. Bombs were dropped on a town in South Wales where a number of fires were caused but all were extinguished in the early hours of the morning.*

The full story lay somewhere between the two announcements. Although not on the scale of the attack in the first week of January that had seen Llandaff Cathedral badly damaged, Cardiff had been subject to one of the biggest fire raids of the war. During the course of the night thousands of tons of flares, incendiaries and high explosive fell across the town, with the worst damage in many of the residential areas.

226, 228 & 230 Newport Road, Cardiff 31/3/41



The story of that night and its aftermath is told, in part, by the records kept by Head Teachers of schools across Cardiff. The records held at Glamorgan Archives are remarkable in the extent to which they are very “matter of fact”. The reality though was different. With buildings destroyed by high explosive and fires raging across large areas of Cardiff, it was a night many would never forget.

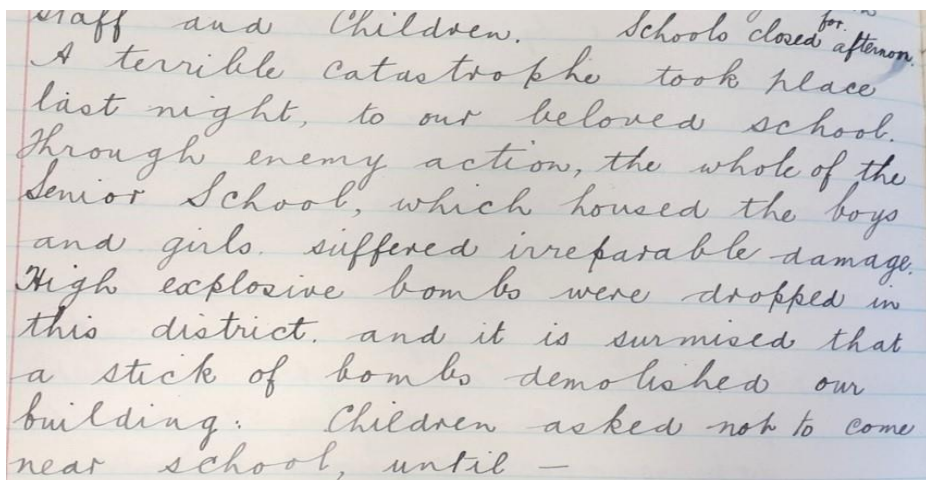
It is remarkable that next morning so many children turned up for school. For example, Radnor Road Infants recorded an attendance of 255 pupils. For most pupils though, there was no school that day as staff assessed the state of the buildings. Just about all schools had broken windows with glass strewn across playgrounds. The damage to windows and class room ceilings was so bad that the Tredegarville and Stacey Road schools had to close until repairs could be made.

In some cases incendiary bombs had landed on the roof of a school. Although the resulting fires had been successfully contained, Allensbank, Gladstone and Lansdowne all had damage to both the roof and upper floor classrooms as a result of the bombs and flares that had fallen during the night. The local heroes in many cases were the school caretakers who, with local firefighters, had battled the flames and limited the destruction.

Even where schools had come through the night relatively unscathed, many remained closed due to surrounding streets being blocked by rubble from buildings destroyed by the bombing and ongoing work to defuse unexploded bombs. In addition, schools, such as Llandaff, closed so that teachers, working alongside local volunteers, could provide food and shelter for the many families that had lost their homes during the night.

In several cases the damage reports were far more serious. On the previous Friday, the pupils at Marlborough Road had celebrated St David’s Day. They had been ushered to the school’s air raid shelter mid-morning as the sirens sounded. However, within half an hour the all clear was received and the festivities continued. Now, only four days later, on 4 March, Mary JENKINS, Head Mistress of Marlborough Road Girls’ School, reported in the school log:

A terrible catastrophe took place last night to our beloved school. Through enemy action the whole of the Senior School, which housed the Boys and Girls suffered irreparable damage. High explosive bombs were dropped in this district and it is surmised that a stick of bombs demolished our building.



Staff and Children. Schools closed ^{for} afternoon.
A terrible catastrophe took place last night, to our beloved school. Through enemy action, the whole of the Senior School, which housed the boys and girls, suffered irreparable damage. High explosive bombs were dropped in this district, and it is surmised that a stick of bombs demolished our building. Children asked not to come near school, until -

The infant school had survived with broken windows and damage to ceilings. However, the imposing red brick three storey main school building had been reduced to rubble. Over the following weeks staff set to work every day to salvage anything useable from the wreckage. In most cases the classrooms had been reduced to dust and broken bricks but, in some parts of the building, furniture and equipment could be salvaged. As Mary Jenkins noted:

Every member of staff has worked most earnestly and energetically to this purpose.

A great deal of stock from other classrooms as well as 3 sewing machines and the gramophone had been retrieved and is now in use.

Other schools, including Howard Gardens Boys' and St Illtyd's, had suffered the same fate, with much of the school destroyed by bombs and fire.

The Roath district of Cardiff had been badly hit, with landmarks such as Roath Road Wesleyan Church on the corner of City Road and Newport Road destroyed. The Cardiff Royal Infirmary had also been bombed. The hospital's Medical Superintendent praised the courage of the nursing staff that night - ... *scorning flying shrapnel and amid flames and sparks they coolly carried on as if they were doing an ordinary job of work.*

In all, 51 people were killed and 243 injured on a night when over 7000 incendiary bombs fell on Cardiff. It was reported that two German bombers were brought down by anti-aircraft fire.

Yet within two weeks the Marlborough Road School was up and running again with the children from the junior school working with their teachers in classrooms at the Roath Park and Albany Road Schools. It was testimony to the resilience of the local people that normality, of sorts, could be restored so quickly. Yet many more challenges lay ahead.

Marlborough Road school bomb site



Alun Jones

As we go to print we were very sad to hear of the sudden death of one of our past stalwarts, for many years Society Trustee, Journal Editor and Webmaster, who with his wife Jean was instrumental in the organisation and production of many of our publications. We send our condolences to Jean and family. A full obituary will be included in our next Journal.

MEIRWEN'S MEMORIES

#11124 Dave Gordon



My parents, Francis GORDON and Ceinwen EUSTIS both grew up in Swansea; Francis in Manselton and Ceinwen in Treboeth. They married in August 1935 at Mynyddbach Chapel Swansea and had a daughter Meirwen, born in August 1936. Living initially in Leeds then Worcester they finally moved to Derby when my father got a job with Rolls-Royce shortly before the outbreak of World War Two. It was thought that if war did break out that Rolls-Royce would be a major target for German bombers so Meirwen, then aged four, was sent to live with her maternal grandparents, Daniel and Mary Eustis, on Penlan Terrace, Treboeth. Shortly before my sister died in 2019, I persuaded her to write up her memories of the war for

inclusion in my Family History that I was writing. This is what she wrote: (text in brackets added by myself).

Photo above: My maternal grandparents, Daniel Eustis and Mary Phillips on their wedding day in 1901 at Mynyddbach.

I was three-and-a-quarter years old when the war began. My parents and I were in Swansea staying with my mother's parents and unmarried sister (Auntie Nellie) and her sister and brother-in-law (Auntie Annie and Uncle Joe) who lived next door.

I was in the back yard of my grandparents' house, later called the 'old house' after they moved into a new house next to 'Fanwyle' (Aunt's and Uncle's house). The back door was open and the radio was on. I heard the famous words announcing that we were now at war with Germany. I had heard the grown-ups talking about the Germans invading a country called Poland and expressing concern about the situation so I felt concerned too, though of course my understanding of the situation was minimal.

My parents thought that Swansea was probably safer than Derby, with Rolls-Royce (where Dad worked) designing (and manufacturing) aero-engines, so they decided to leave me there when they returned to Derby. They sneaked off when I wasn't around.

As it turned out, Swansea was bombed far more than Derby - I recall my grandmother (Mamgu in Welsh, the 'u' pronounced -ee-) bringing me down from bed to hide in the enclosed space under the stairs, and complaining about 'the wicked Germans'. After a little while Mum and Dad came down to take me back to Derby. I later heard that my grandfather ('Dadcu', pronounced 'Dadkee') helped put out a fire in someone's roof using his overcoat¹. It was possibly the first house in the Terrace, where Uncle Sam lived.

Following the above referenced raid, my parents brought Meirwen back to the safety of Derby. At this point I will insert my transcription of a letter from my Grandfather to my parents written after Meirwen had returned home; it was dated 9th March 1941 and headed Brynffrwd.

Dear Children

Thanks for your letters and the photo we are all delighted with it. Meirwen is getting a big girl, and she appears to be quite proud of her Welsh Costume, well so are we all.

We have had quite a busy time of it lately down here, especially a fortnight ago, with incendiaries and flares dropping all around us. But we have escaped them all, with the exception of the one Incendiary that fell on our roof, which penetrated the front half of the roof about six inches from the crest and about four feet from the south chimney. The first one near here dropped on Frank REES' field the next between our Glasshouse and the frame. We (Joe and myself) put it out without much trouble.

Then another bout started: the first dropped on Frank Rees' pavement, the next on Arthur COUSINS' roof (front half) and the third the one mentioned above. They seem to have concentrated their attention on big buildings such as churches chapels schools shops and dwelling houses both with incendiaries which started fires, then high explosives, which did so much damage, that burst the main water pipes in many places, hence the difficulty in coping with the fires.

The flares they used for lighting up the place, they appear to be like globes of bright light suspended to small balloons or parachutes which descended very slowly to the ground. When they are newly lit they give out a lot of light, in fact

¹ An incendiary bomb could not be extinguished using a coat. It is more likely that his coat was burnt while tackling the resultant fire.

it is like bright onrox-light [sic]. (Please excuse writing just now mother is pounding on the table preparing her pastries) There is no doubt that between Mynydd bach, Treboeth, Manselton Cwmbwrla, Town Hill, The Town, Kilvey Hill, Bon-y-maen, Llansamlet, Morriston and towards the oilworks (sic) and perhaps other places, there must have been thousands of them dropped² (incendiaries of course).

I am very pleased to say that places like works docks factories have not been damaged but particulars of anything is very hard to get, but I have heard that eleven or thirteen churches and the same number of Schools and about twenty or more public houses has been destroyed besides a large number of shops.

I called at 25 Manor Road (home of Charles GORDON - Meirwen's Grandfather) last Saturday week and found them not too well Auntie Lizzie and Amy and the little girls³ had had influenza, but Auntie and the little girls were coming round nicely. Father was in bed having been to work the night before. There was a great deal of damage done around there especially the road by the church opposite running down behind Dai's⁴ garden, a bomb dropped by the church, one about half way towards Manselton Hotel and one by the Hotel between the road and the bungalow.

Father is still suffering from sciatica in his leg. They had a letter from Donie (Franks brother Donald Gordon who was an Engineering Officer in the Merchant Navy) a few days ago, but it has been posted last November. He was alright then and that all was very quiet there, he was then in Egypt.

We have not been bothered much since the raid, we get an alert now and again. You will get the usual news in (Ceinwen's sister) Nellie's letter, so I will now draw to a close, trusting that you are recovering from your colds etc as we are here at the moment.

Father XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX For Meirwen From Dacu

We now continue with Meirwen's memories following her return to Derby.

The house (at 25 Melton Avenue) in Derby (where I was born in 1943) had french windows (glass door with a window each side) looking out on the back garden. One day, as I was standing there looking out, an aeroplane passed overhead. Mum happened to come into the room. "Come away from the window!" she said agitatedly, and moved me to the other side of the room. I gathered that it might have been a German plane and the pilot (who may have seen me) might drop a bomb. Later, Dad used thick wooden beams to build a 'wall' about ten feet high

² I have added the commas in this sentence to separate the places names.

³ Auntie Lizzie is Charles's sister and, Amy is his daughter. The little girls were Amy's daughters Shirley and Hazel.

⁴ I need to identify who he is.

in front of the French window and about two feet away. It remained throughout the war.

He also had an air-raid shelter built at the bottom of the garden. It was partly underground, with steps going down and a wooden door. A few times I was awoken in the night and taken down into the shelter. I don't recall what furniture etc was in there but there was a bed of some sort where I could sleep. I think there must have been some chairs. After the war ended we children used it to play in, particularly on rainy days, until eventually it was demolished and the garden was returned to its original state⁵.

There was a large air-raid shelter at the top of Melton Avenue⁶. I think I recall seeing the inside. There was another one in the grounds of the local Infant/Junior School in Gayton Avenue (continuing from Melton Ave)⁷. We 'practised' hurrying from the classroom but never had to do it in an actual invasion (sic). We also 'practised' going under our desks in an emergency.

We children had siren-suits consisting of a top and trousers all in one which, after the war we used for playing in. We also had gas-masks in case of an actual invasion (sic). They were regularly tested. I'm not sure whether the adults also had them.

I also recall a barrage balloon in the lane between Gayton Ave School and Sunnyhill Avenue. As far as I know it never came into action and was eventually removed after the war was over⁸.

There were two consequences of the war's end. After a while there was an end to rationing. We no longer had 'ration books', with coupons to be taken by the shopkeeper when certain things were bought. People also seemed to be getting quite excited at the thought of soon being able to buy certain things again, such as exotic-sounding fruits from foreign countries. Bananas were frequently mentioned. I was excited about my first banana but at my first bite - total disappointment! Nothing marvellous about it. Ironically, it is now virtually the only fruit I eat!

⁵ The demolition was probably in about 1946, otherwise I would remember it. During the war, much of the back garden was used to grow potatoes

⁶ The author does not remember this. He does remember the remains of a large wartime Government or MoD food store. When it was demolished there was in infestation of rats.

⁷ The author remembers that there were two or even three shelters, certainly more than one

⁸ I understand that barrage balloons were flown, barrels of tar were burnt to produce smoke and anti-aircraft guns were fired in anger on Blagreaves Lane near to Melton Avenue.

BLAENGARW'S LOST YOUNG MEN

#10573 Jean Fowlds

Blaengarw is a small village at the very top of the Garw Valley, nestling between the Llynfi Valley on its western side and the Ogmore Valley on its eastern side, all three connecting into Bridgend.

In 1939, at the start of World War 2, the population of this mining village was 3523, a decrease of 18% when compared to the 1911 census figure of 4301. According to Colin T Davies, who has researched population movements in the area, the decrease could be due to emigration between the wars, industrial rationalisation, or simply smaller families and rehousing.

Nevertheless, in Blaengarw Junior School today there is a Record Book, with photographs, of 36 of those who went from Blaengarw to serve in the Second World War, and who never came back. This is likely to be incomplete, as it only lists those who attended the Blaengarw schools, and quite often pupils could have been sent on to secondary schools further down the valley, or to Bridgend. There is no record of the numbers who did return, and from research it is very apparent that many who did return did not like talking about their experiences and only wished to melt back into their working and family lives, if their health and injuries allowed.

Blaengarw is not unique; there were many villages across the land who lost their young men in this war, and it is striking to note the number and variety of different places that these men served in, and then died in. A truly World war. Many of these listed below have families still living in the Valley, who may well have since visited the countries named through the convenience of modern travel, but at the time of getting the awful news of their loved ones these places must have seemed very remote and exotic to their parents and grandparents.

Some entries from the Record Book:

Douglas George WESTERN, 23, a Private in the Royal Engineers, died at **Ei Alamein** North Africa, 12/12/42.

Raymond Henry THOMAS, 30, a Gunner, killed in **Iraq** 27/4/43.

William Thomas REES, 23, Sergeant in the RAF, shot down over **Holland** on return from an air raid over Berlin 16/12/43.

Cyril HUNT, 34, a Steward in the Merchant Navy, died in **Singapore** in October 1945.

Arthur Albert AVEN, 23, Leading Stoker on HMS submarine 'Talisman', depth-charged north west of **Malta**, no survivors, 18/9/42.

Ronald John THOMAS, 34, RAF, died at Japanese hands in **Java**, 12/10/44.

Thomas John PARRY, 21, Leading Aircraftsman RAF, died in an aircraft crash in **Florida**, 14/1/44.

Alfred JONES, 25, Private in the Middlesex Regiment, killed in action in **Hong Kong** 25/12/41.

Raymond Edward TAYLOR, 21, Stoker in the Royal Navy, torpedoed whilst serving HMS Submarine 'Trooper' in the Dodecanes Islands, **Greece**, 17/10/43.

James Walter BERRY, 23, Private in the Welsh Guards, died in **Arras**, France.

Those reported as 'Missing', such as:

Clifford EVANS, 29, attached to the Grenadier Guards, and reported missing after **Dunkirk** in June 1940.

William George PICTON, 36, Petty Officer in the Royal Navy, presumed killed in the **North Atlantic** whilst on convoy duty.

Those who were killed in this country, such as:

Royston Ashley GREENSLADE, 23, who was killed in an air raid on **Margate** on 8/9/41, and

William John Vivian SAMUEL, 21, Leading Aircraftsman in the RAF, crashed in his aircraft in a snow blizzard in **Lincolnshire** 29/10/41.

David Brynmor MEREDITH, 33, a Chief Stoker on HMS Amaraopora, who was torpedoed off the **Pembrokeshire** coast 15/5/40, and gained a DSM.

Peter Thomas JONES, 34, Royal Artillery Gunner, killed at **Helensburgh**, Scotland, 4/12/42.

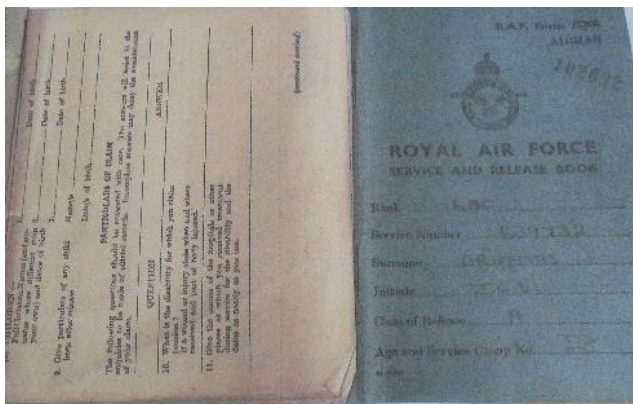
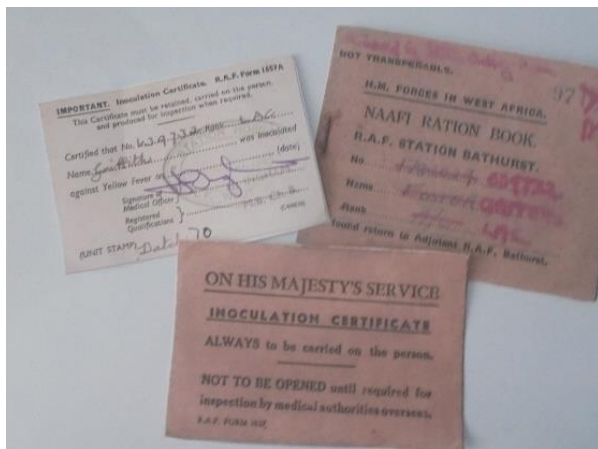
Billy WILLIAMS, 26, who was a Warrant Officer in the RAF and a Battle of Britain Fighter Pilot, but who was killed in a road accident in **Swansea** on 13/10/44.

All of these were pupils at Blaengarw Infants and Blaengarw Junior Schools, and it is with regret we cannot list all those who served and suffered, but their memories will live on in the Blaengarw Record Book, never to be forgotten.



The Welsh Guards who served in Arras, where Private James Berry died

A recent anonymous donation of papers to the local Heritage Society revealed the demob story of one Garw Airman who did come back, Joseph Charles Vernon GRIFFITHS. The documents below show that he served in the RAF from April 1939 to March 1946, some of that time in the Gambia, West Africa, as we have inoculation certificates and a NAAFI Ration Book for RAF Station Bathurst in his name. On his release his clearance documents, dated March 1946, show that he had a good character reference and was a 'willing and conscientious worker and superior tradesman'. It appears he needed medical treatment, but we don't know if that was connected with his application for a disability pension, and we do not know if he received this; in fact we know nothing further about him.



JOHN GEORGE THOMAS

His War in India
#8653 Barrie Jones

The Second World War (WW2) placed many men and women well out of their comfort zone, encountering places, cultures and events they would have never experienced before. So it was for my father-in-law, John George THOMAS (1921-1993), when aged twenty years, he was called up in September 1941.



Serving in the RAF Regiment as a cook, service no 1414711, the first three years of his wartime service was spent in airfields in eastern England. Not too far away from his home town of Merthyr Tydfil¹, but in wartime still not an easy place to get back to when on leave. On one occasion when trying to get home he only managed to get as far as Watford before nightfall, where he was kindly put up for the night in the local police station's cells.

Unfortunately, John's Service and Release Book does not contain any details of his enlistment nor his postings before January 1945. In that month John was to experience a change in posting that would have a much greater

impact upon him. His new posting was Group 227 RAF, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India; there he would serve out the remainder of his military service.²

The first stage of John's journey to Bhopal involved an over six week long passage on a troop ship to the port of Bombay, present day Mumbai. John mentioned that the voyage was overcrowded and the threat of U-boat attack was a constant concern. Paul WIGMORE³, who was also stationed at Bhopal around the same time as John, described his own experience of the outward journey: *Crossing the Indian Ocean, not many of the men could bear the stifling heat and close proximity of other humans below decks, sleeping in the almost*

¹ John was born at number 4 Sunnybank, Merthyr Tydfil on 4th April 1921.

² Royal Air Force Certificate of Service and Release, 27th June 1946, RAF Form 2520/11.

³ Another Innocent Abroad, WW2 Peoples War, BBC, article A2849484, 19 July 2004.

touching hammocks. As a result, the open decks at night were covered with sleeping bodies.

The overland rail journey from Bombay was even more uncomfortable: *Day and night, the corridor was crowded with sweating khaki-shirted men, everyone trying to find the coolest spot, windows down as far as they would go, arms pushed out through horizontal bars to catch the rush of oven-hot, dusty air.* At the end of the 480 mile rail journey was the vast, flat, dry, scrubby plains of Bhopal. The main airfield in Bhopal was the No 1 Air Gunnery Training School, for Liberator bombers and Mosquito fighter-bombers.

However, once at Bhopal, living was much more agreeable: *The RAF living quarters were sparse but comfortable. About ten mosquito netted beds stood along each side of the brick-built, cement floored hut. We shared a servant to sweep and wash the hut each day and his small son to clean our shoes, wake us in the morning, and bring us charwallah's sickly, heavenly, sweet tea.*

The group photographs taken when John was stationed in Bhopal clearly shows that the RAF was heavily dependent upon local labour in the kitchens. Presumably, the locals would have been used to the heat and humidity, while, for John and his fellow servicemen working in the kitchens must have been unbearable at times.

Despite Paul Wigmore's view of Bhopal as a flat, dry scrubby plain, Bhopal City⁴, was known as the 'City of Lakes', and was also the site of India's largest mosque, the Taj-Ul-Masajid. Leave permitting John was able to take in the sights of the city and surrounding area as the photograph of him with some of his colleagues at the Taj-Ul-Masajid mosque illustrates.



During John's time overseas the war with Germany was over in June 1945 and in September of that year Japan also surrendered. However, John's overseas'

⁴ Bhopal is now remembered from the chemical disaster on 3rd December 1984, when an explosion at a chemical works sent a cloud of toxic methyl isocyanate gas into the atmosphere killing between fifteen and twenty-thousand of the neighbourhoods inhabitants. Some half a million survivors suffered respiratory problems, eye irritation or blindness, and other maladies resulting in their exposure to the toxic gas.



John standing far right on the fifth row.



John sitting in the front row, third from right.

adventure on the Indian sub-continent would last for a while longer; his release from service was not until June the following year.

John's certificate of service and release includes a brief statement of any special aptitudes or qualities or any special type of employment for which he could be recommended.

His commanding officer wrote: *'In his RAF trade of cook, Cpl Thomas has been in charge of the cooking in a large sergeant's mess. The standard of cooking in this mess was always high and the kitchens always kept clean. Cpl. Thomas is a man who easily adapts himself to a new job. No special aptitudes'*⁵.

Strange that John's commanding officer didn't consider that cooking meals for nearly five years provided John with any special aptitude! Possibly, cooking as a profession didn't appeal to John but his skill as a cook never left him. On weekends and holidays he would cook for the family and his expertise as a pastry cook was second to none. He imbued in his children a taste for hot spices and curries. Also, pastries, especially his custard slices, were looked for with anticipation by friends and family alike, especially his grand-children.

Back home in Merthyr, John's first priority was to plan his marriage to his girlfriend of over five years, Joyce POPE (1927-2000). John and Joyce were married at Merthyr's parish church, St David's, on 22nd February 1947. For a few years following his demobilisation John was forced to take on casual jobs. However by 1948 he found permanent employment working as a lineman for the then newly formed South Wales Electricity Board (SWEB). Repairing and installing electricity lines at times required him to work at all hours and in all weathers, arduous tasks he seemed to enjoy and never tired of.

In later life John suffered from a weak heart and only enjoyed a short period following his retirement in 1985. He died quite suddenly from a pulmonary embolism on 13th October 1993, aged 72 years, at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil. In the 47 years following his return from India, John never travelled abroad again.

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
September issue	20 July	December Issue	20 October

⁵ *Royal Air Force Certificate of Service and Release, 27th June 1946, RAF Form 2520/11.*

TASKER WATKINS, MY PART IN HIS VC

Laurence Sheppard

On the 16/8/1944 I was a Lance Corporal in a Company of the Welch Regiment with orders to attack a railway depot at Balfour in the then still-occupied Northern France. We were crossing some open fields still full of crops awaiting harvest, but we were on the lookout for a far more deadly crop. These fields were full of booby-traps left behind by the retreating Wermacht to slow us up. The deadliest of these was the Schu-Mine. This little beast when stepped on threw a small explosive charge in the air, triggered to go off between knee and waist height! These were nicknamed 'de-bollockers' for obvious reasons. I remember it was late afternoon and still very light when we came under sustained fire ahead of us. To add insult to injury the Germans started to bombard us with shells from a 88mm cannon. We lost a few more good men and my Sergeant to that gun before it was taken out.

We had only one officer left by now, a small 25 year-old Lieutenant who placed himself at the head of what remained of the company and shouting at the top of his voice "Fix Bayonets", followed by "Come on the Welsh", and whilst all the time under a murderous fire from the enemy charging full tilt at the nearest MG post. All I know is that as I ran forward I just hoped that the liquid I could feel running down the backs of my legs was sweat! The Lieutenant jumped into the gun-pit and sprayed the occupants with bullets from his Sten gun. Not pausing for a moment he ran on to an up till now concealed Panzer Faust, anti-tank gun, and jumping into the pit he aimed his Sten at the Panzer-Grenadier! The Sten jammed and refused to fire, so he threw the useless weapon at the German to distract him, pulled out his Webley Service revolver and shot him dead. By now there were only about 30 men left in the whole company, when the German Infantry counter- attacked with a force of about 40-50 men.

By now it was dusk and our Lieutenant steadied us, and got us to pour rapid fire into the oncoming infantry. This had a demoralising effect on them and we followed it up with a bayonet charge which finished them off. We stayed in defensive positions waiting until the rest of our Battalion caught up with us and we were relieved. What we did not know was, because the radio had been damaged, we had missed orders for the Battalion to pull out, so we sat there in the gathering dusk totally surrounded for all we knew! The Lieutenant decided it would be best if we tried to rejoin our Battalion by trying to outflank the Germans, and in doing so we ran into yet another hidden enemy position. He was challenged by the occupants and immediately shouted the order to "Scatter" and charged full pelt straight at the bunker, this time with a Bren gun, killing all the soldiers in it. Our little Lieutenant then led us back to our lines. The Lieutenant was Tasker WATKINS, born in Nelson, Caerphilly. For this action he was promoted to Major and awarded the Victoria Cross.

He was demobbed in 1946 and went on to study law, becoming the Right Honourable Sir Tasker Watkins VC, and I for one was proud to be able to say "I was there when he won it".

Footnote: Many years after the War ended, I used to see Mr Tasker Watkins on a regular basis. I was a Council road sweeper, and he used to pass by me in his Rolls-Royce on his way to Judge the Assizes in Cardiff.

Editor's note: Sir Tasker Watkins also held the position of President of the Welsh Rugby Union between 1993 and 2004.



CHARLES STUART HUBBARD

July 1920 - March 1945

Pam Hayes

Stuart HUBBARD was born in Blaengarw and lived in the Alexandra Hotel, King Edward Street, with his parents, Gladys and Charles, and his maternal grandparents and aunt and uncle, who were GWYTHERS. Stuart and his



younger sister, Beryl, then moved with their parents to the little bakery house on the Richard Street hill, near to their paternal grandmother, Mam Hubbard, who lived around the corner in Oxford Street. From there they moved to 11 Richard Street where the family lived until 1979.

Whilst living in 'the little house on the hill' Stuart became one of the local heart throbs. Girls used to tap the window to try and get his attention, and they also used to waylay his sister Beryl to give him messages.

On leaving his secondary school Stuart took a job as a projectionist at the local cinema, known to all as 'The Hall', and stayed there until he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserves in 1939. He was based in St Athan and became a Leading Aircraftman, service number 983321.

Stuart married his long-term girlfriend, Florence Beryl WILLIAMS, daughter of the Williams of the Co-op from Ffaldau House, in All Saints Church in Pen-y-Fai in 1944.

In March 1945 Stuart was sent to the Azores, his first posting abroad. Three weeks later, on his way home, his Liberator aircraft crashed on take-off, killing all on board. He is buried in Lajes Commonwealth War Cemetery on the island of Terceira in the Azores. Friends from St Athan had a plaque made in remembrance of him, which his wife of three months had placed in the Congregational Chapel in Meadow Street, Pontycymer, where the family worshipped. He is also listed on the plaque of the Fallen of WW2 in the Hall of the Gammar School.

Stuart was a very likeable and pleasant man; he brought many friends from all over the country to his home in Richard Street, where all were made welcome by the family and neighbours, who shared all they had at the time with them. His sister Beryl and her son Andrew and his family went on to live in Leicestershire; where they often talked about him.

This article was previously published in the Garw Valley Heritage Society newsletter Summer 2018

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JOHN DANIEL JENKINS, part 2

#5596 John Crane

In part one of my grandfather's life story, which appeared in the September Journal no 143, I described his early life as a young chemist and a family man in the shop and flat above where he worked in Cardiff up to WW1 when John (Jack) was 50 years of age. (Below, 112 Crwys Road, about 1900).



The JENKINSES and REESES were all classed as bilingual in the 1901 and 1911 censuses, but were probably more comfortable in Welsh and this was the language in the home until Florence arrived, after which Jack changed it to English. Apart from one or two words, Florence never learned Welsh and so neither did their children. (see below, 112 Crwys Road, about 1900).

During the First World War, Jack was far too old to be called up, but he took on the duties of dispensing chemist for the Maindy army barracks up the road from his shop. He had always had a bulldog as a pet, but as the war ground on, he found it difficult to find enough meat to feed it, so asked the soldiers at the barracks if they would like it as a mascot. A military representative came down to 112 Crwys Road to look the animal over. The inspection took place in the shop and this was a noteworthy event as neither the dog – nor little Peggy, who was also present – was normally ever allowed in the shop. The dog passed muster and was often afterwards to be seen leading the troops marching down Crwys Road on their way to Cardiff Docks for embarkation.

On 18th February 1921, her 78th birthday, Jack's mother, Margaret, died. Sadly she never knew her only grandson who arrived three months afterwards. John Rhys Goronew JENKINS was born in the house on 11th May 1921. He must have been an eagerly awaited son. Tragically, though, young John took ill with osteomyelitis when nine years old and died on 3rd August 1930 after septicaemia set in some five days earlier. This must have been a terrible blow for Jack and Florence. He was now 66 and she 49: they would never have another son.

Joan and Peggy had been at a Catholic boarding school in Rhyl, north Wales, but Jack and Florence so missed young John being at home that Joan was now brought back to attend a local school. Peggy was about to matriculate that year and so was allowed to stay on until then. Jack had intended that Peggy should follow him into the pharmacy profession, while Joan should also enter the medical field as an ophthalmist. But, although they both started training in these fields, the Second World War intervened and neither completed her studies.

Jack was very active in his profession. He became a member of the Cardiff Pharmaceutical Committee in 1912, serving briefly as Secretary in 1916 and later becoming Chairman from 1927 to 1937, when deteriorating eyesight forced him to resign. During the latter part of his life in Cardiff he was also on the Pharmaceutical Service Sub-Committee, the Retail Pharmacists Union and the Prescriptions Committee. In 1928 he served as Chairman of the Cardiff Pharmacists Association, of which he was a founder member. In 1929 he was elected as Local Chairman of the British Pharmaceutical Conference, which was held in Cardiff in 1930, and it followed that Florence was Chairman of the Ladies' Conference Committee

Jack was present at the Chemical Research Department of the Cardiff Technical College on the evening of Friday 7th February 1930 when the Head of the Department, Dr ARNALL, was conducting an experiment for a paper he intended to present to the Conference in July. The Pharmaceutical Journal later reported that as Dr Arnall handled a piece of apparatus "it.... exploded with such a terrific force that most of the chemical glassware in the laboratory was shattered....". Dr Arnall, Jack and three others present were all badly cut, Arnall dying five hours later of internal bleeding. Jack, the Journal reported, "had a hairsbreadth escape. The splinters of glass projectiles just missed his eyes, but the right half of his face received many cuts and blows, several of the wounds had to be stitched, and a number of pieces of glass picked out of his skin." Not all the glass was found, though, and for the rest of his life he would find small shards of glass working their way out from under the skin of his right cheek and ear.

During his period of chairmanship, he organised a very successful district collection contribution scheme of the Pharmaceutical Benevolent Fund. After his death it was found necessary to appoint a manager to continue this work. He was founder and first President of the United Chemists of Wales (now apparently defunct). In addition at various times he found time to be a Vice-President of the Federation of Welsh Pharmaceutical Committees. He was also a good shot, winning the Maindy Miniature Rifle Club prize in 1918 and was awarded 'The Bell Medal' by 'The Society of Miniature Rifle Clubs' 1922. And he was, as are all good Welshmen, passionate about rugby and fond of his beer. Towards the end of his life, when his eyes were of little use to him, friends used to call of an evening to take him up the road to the pub, where they sometimes had to admonish him; "Come on now, Jack; you've had enough."

On the evening of Sunday, 19th December 1937, while sitting smoking his pipe in the downstairs living room behind the shop, with his family around him, he collapsed from a stroke. He lingered for a few days with his godson, Dick MOGG, son of an old friend and fellow chemist keeping vigil for four nights, but he died in his own bed at around midnight on 22nd/23rd December. (His death certificate gives the date as the 23rd) He was 73. The death announcement appeared in the South Wales Echo on Christmas Eve, with a request that in place of flowers donations should be made to the Pharmaceutical Benevolent Fund.

The funeral was held on 28th December and his cousin William REES, Vicar of Buckley, (the son of Uncle Bill) conducted the service. Jack was buried at Cathays Cemetery, a few hundred yards from the shop in Crwys Road, in the grave that already held his mother, Margaret, and his son, John. Notably, although the records confirm he is indeed buried there and the other two are mentioned on the handsome slab covering the grave, his own name is not recorded on it – even though there is obviously room left for it. The reason for this was probably financial as Florence found it necessary to take out a £500 bank loan shortly after his death.

An obituary in the Western Mail on 29th December 1937 described him as "one of the oldest practising pharmacists in Wales". The 'Chemist and Druggist' in its obituary on 1st January 1938 listed his various achievements and recorded that during his life he had raised nearly £1,200 for the Pharmaceutical Benevolent Fund and that the contributions in lieu of flowers at his funeral raised another £26. He left an estate of £1,724-17-5d, probate being granted at Llandaff to his widow, Florence, on 13th April, 1938.

In spite of his many excellent qualities, Jack appears to have been slightly unworldly in some respects. During his career, he produced a skin ointment of a new type, which he refused to patent (and thus gain royalties) as he wanted it to be as widely available as possible. Of course, somebody copied it, took out a patent and so reaped the benefits that should have gone to him. And then at the end of his life, when, being in his seventies, he should have given some thought to his family's welfare after his death, but his widow had to take out a bank loan while probate was being obtained. This last was really quite remarkable in view of his association with the Pharmaceutical Benevolent Fund.

His widow, Florence, died in Cardiff in 1962, his younger daughter, Joan, in Eastbourne in 1993 and his elder daughter, Peggy, in Cardiff in 2014, just two weeks short of her 100th birthday.

Articles for inclusion in the journal should be sent **via email** to editor@glamfhs.org.uk

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JIMMY MESENE, Cardiff-born Singer-Songwriter, Composer and Guitarist.

#20778 Heidi (Hytho) Vivan



I am Jimmy MESENE's Great Niece, renamed in my Greek Orthodox Baptism after his sister/my maternal Grandmother, Hytho. I presently reside in California, USA with my Italian-born husband, Dario VIVAN, and our three children, Antonio, Angelo and Eleni. I was gratefully introduced to the Glamorgan Family History Society by my precious friends in Cardiff, Dr Maurice VANSTONE and his wife, Jennie.

We met through David TAYLOR, the Founder of

my Uncle Jimmy Mesene's extensive fan website of which I've included a link below. He noticed in the Family Recollections that I had mentioned my Maternal Grandmother's Brother-in-Law, Uncle Tano FERENDINOS, who was yet another famous Cardiff-born Tenor. He lived just five doors away from Uncle Jimmy's Mother, Dorothea (Dolly), Step-Father, Thomas KILBY, and two Sisters, Penelope and Hytho, in Grangetown, Cardiff. Uncle Tano married Jimmy Mesene's Sister Penelope (Poppy). Dr Vanstone was researching Uncle Tano's life and eventually wrote a beautiful Memoir, now permanently nestled in the archives of the Grangetown History Society and the 2014 Publication of The Record Collector.

My Great Uncle Jimmy was born Demetris MESSINIS on March 6th 1908 in Cardiff. He changed his stage name to "Mesene" as his birth name (after his father dropped the "s" off his surname making it "Messini") which sounded too Italian during the war and he refused to be associated with Mussolini. His Irish Mother, Dorothea (Dolly) Vera GRIFFIN was born in Bristol and later adopted by British parents with a given name Dorothea Vera HUGHES. His Greek Father, Yiannis (John) Messinis, was born in Ithaca Greece but settled in Cardiff.

He was owner/ship's chandler of his ship named "Dolly, Ithakis" (as seen in the photograph below with the name written in Greek) which he named after his wife and after whom my late Aunt Dorothea (Dolly) VASIL was also named.

The photograph was sent to me by my cousin, Joanna GIARGIARI, soon after her mother, Aunt Dolly, passed away earlier this year. I clearly remember my Aunt Dolly cherished that photograph, through the years, as well as her cherished signed copy of Uncle Jimmy's photograph. Uncle Jimmy's father is one of the two shown seated in the centre of the first row, the one without the cat.



During the Great Depression my Great-Grandfather lost his ship and business, which had devastating financial and emotional consequences.

Uncle Jimmy's parents had married in 1906 and lived on Bute Street in Cardiff where they operated a Boarding House for Greek sailors as well as a store selling groceries, tobacco and spirits. His father had introduced Uncle Jimmy in his late teens to influential people in the music industry which helped propel him into his famous career in the UK. His father tragically died when he was only eighteen years old. His mother later remarried, Thomas KILBY, and she took his surname as Dorothea (Dolly) V Kilby. They lived in Grangetown during that period.

Uncle Jimmy's mother was classically musically trained and instilled the love of music and classical training in her children. They all played instruments by ear as well. His sister, Hytho, sang and played piano and guitar by ear and moved to Ithaca, Greece at sixteen years old when she also married my grandfather, Yiannis (John) GRIVAS. She became well known on the island for her musical

gifts. She blessed our whole family when we visited her during summers as well as many on the island all of her life. She always spoke so highly of her brother Jimmy to me as well as often passionately and tearfully playing his many famous songs. She instilled the love of music in all of our family and, today, I also sing, write and compose songs which I haven't yet published.

Jimmy MESENE's sister Hytho, my grandmother, was heard singing Ave Maria at only twelve years old in the Anglican church she attended with her family. Her mother was approached for permission to train her daughter and be launched to fame as she had an "angelic voice". However, her mother did not allow this and stated "her talent is for herself". My grandmother grieved that moment throughout her life, as much as she dearly loved her mother, who she often visited in Cardiff from Ithaca. Although she was still very young it may have had to do with girls not being given the same freedoms and independence as boys in those days, such as her brother, who was given that freedom and independence to pursue his musical dreams.

In 1919 Uncle Jimmy left Cardiff at eleven years old and travelled with his parents to Ithaca, to meet his Greek grandmother where he also developed his love of music. He stayed for schooling for three years on the island and returned to Cardiff. While he was in Ithaca I remember my mother, Coralia Grivas IOANNOU (who spent her high school years at a Catholic Boarding School in Cardiff), telling me that Uncle Jimmy was known as a Child Prodigy, especially on his Guitar. My Uncle/Godfather Dionysios (Dennis) GRIVAS told me that although he was very young he played with local musicians at traditional island functions late into the night.

Back in Cardiff, sometime after the tragic death of his father, he moved to London, England where he pursued his famous musical career, but he often travelled back to Cardiff to visit his family. He had written a song dedicated to his mother called "The Sweetest Sweetheart of All". *(On Amazon or Magpie Direct the 25-song CD compilation, thoughtfully created by the late Colin Powell can be purchased as well as on iTunes, etc. Many of his recordings can also be found on YouTube).*

While residing in England he married Emily GILBERT and for their 1934 wedding he chose his music partner Al BOWLLY to be his Best Man, and also later chose him to be my precious cousin, Jim's, Godfather. The marriage did not last, but they had a son they called Jim, who resides in Australia, and with whom I've kept very close contact after we connected through his late father's fan website. Jim MESSINI has two sons: Alan who lives near him in Australia, who has a son named Brodie, and Sandy who lives in Japan and has a daughter Stacey. It was Sandy who sent me the two photographs and caricature of Uncle Jimmy.



Besides his many years spent making memorable music with Al Bowlly, Uncle Jimmy also played in many bands such as Nat Gonella & His Georgians, Joe Loss & His Orchestra and more, which can all be read in his fan website along with a photo gallery. He also sang as "Masked Singer" with the Alan Small Orchestra the song "Isn't This a Night for Love" for the 1933 Melody Cruise.

Uncle Jimmy and Al Bowlly were named "The Radio Stars with Two Guitars" and they recorded their final song together just two weeks before Al Bowlly was tragically killed on April 17th 1941 during the London Blitz. A bomb detonated at about 3:00 am just outside his apartment. The song they

recorded was Irvin BERLIN's satirical song referring to Hitler, called "When that Man is Dead and Gone". A Jewish History teacher told me that names without due honour were, purposefully, never mentioned. Al Bowlly's first recording in 1927 happened to, also, be a song written by Irvin Berlin called "Blue Skies".

Uncle Jimmy and his second wife, Hilda, left the UK for the USA in 1947 in hopes of obtaining permanent residency there. While on Ellis Island, Frank SINATRA's Barton Music Co signed for Jimmy Mesene's song "Bella Mia", which was never published. He never successfully received his work visa to enter the United States and decided to leave with Hilda for Canada. He passed away at only sixty-one years of age in Montreal on August 28 1969.



I hope his fan website, voice, lyrics and music blesses you as much as it has all continued to bless me. It fills my heart with unspeakable joy to share his impressionable life with you and I long to visit Cardiff with my family, someday, for my first time.

Uncle Jimmy's very extensive fan website includes his Biography, Family, Friend and Fan Recollections, Discographies, Photo Gallery, etc. Please enjoy learning more about him via the following link:

<http://henrybebop.co.uk/mesene.htm>.

I want to thank all the people who have contributed to his website and welcome anybody else reading this to add any of their knowledge. A portal for adding information is included on the website by so deeply appreciated David Taylor, the Founder, and his so deeply appreciated daughter, Samantha Taylor, who has been more actively carrying on Jimmy Mesene's Musical Legacy.



THE FAMILY HISTORY BUG

#10891 David Barnard

I suppose that people often get interested in family history through a desire to understand who they are and where they've come from. Sometimes, however, they can become interested in family history itself, as a field of study, as a hobby with far wider boundaries than the limits of their own family. It is, perhaps, then that the borders betwixt family history, community history and local history start to get blurred. An example of this is a project to analyse the role of 'carters' in Victorian Aberdare. How many carters were there? What loads were carried? Did the carter use a horse, and if so, where would he have stabled it?

To establish how many carters there were, Find My Past is a useful tool. If we open up the 1881 census for searching and, leaving the name fields blank, enter Occupation as "carter" and set Parish to "Aberdare" we find that out of a parish population of 34,872 there were just six persons returned from the search: 1 Railway Carter, 1 Ship Chandlers Carter, and one Brewers Haulier (carter). The remaining three were all listed as Contractor's Haulier (carter). I also found two more "cart drivers" by using "cart".

These last three all came from the household of one Thomas WILLIAMS, a 49 year-old Haulage Contractor from Aberdare. The census tells us that he has a wife, Hannah, two years older, from Llanwynio, Carmarthenshire, three daughters and a son, Thomas. The son, together with two 'servants', are listed as Contractor's Haulier. However, pulling up the original image we can see that the enumerator's page has been annotated by crossing out 'haulier' and overwriting 'carter'. Why would he have done that?

However, returning to Find My Past and replacing "carter" with "haulier" we find that there were 472 hauliers. In coal mining areas such as Aberdare, "haulier" (pronounced "halier" in the Cynon Valley) is often used for a man working underground with a horse. It would be a miner who "drives" a horse to the coal-

face or stall with an empty tram and returns with a full tram¹. So it could be that the change from “haulier” to “carter” annotation on the census image was to distinguish them from underground hauliers.

In 1881, the household of Thomas Williams was located at No 1 Gwryd, Abernant. The census enumerator starts from Abernant station and after visiting Rosewenallt House (which, today, is a pub restaurant known as The Rhoswenallt) proceeds by way of Nos 1-3 Gwryd before heading up the mountain road by means of which one could reach the town of Merthyr Tydfil. The old OS map shows a large wooded area labelled Gwrhyd Plantation as well as a farm off the mountain road known as Gwrhyd, so it would seem that Thomas’ business was located close to Abernant station.

Abernant station, built in 1854, was on the Neath Valley Railway, a rather adventurous undertaking designed to transport Aberdare coal and Merthyr iron to the docks at Swansea in competition with the route down the valleys and on to Cardiff docks. The line came from Neath, up the Neath valley to Glyn-neath and then climbed to Hirwaun Common before heading down the valley of the Cynon. It hugs the side of the valley to Gelli Tarw junction from where Brunel built one of his wooden viaducts to cross the valley to Aberdare. From Gelli Tarw the other line continued to hug the northern flank of the valley with a station at Llwydcoed and continued to Abernant from where a tunnel (the third longest in Wales) carried the line through to Merthyr Tydfil².

The station served the Abernant Iron Works; the Iron Works had closed by 1875 but there were still an abundance of coal pits in the area including the ‘Cigarette Pits’ (so called as miners were allowed to smoke) located close to the Rhoswenallt³. Thus there would be ample work for carters.

At the 1871 census, Thomas was residing at the same location and described himself and son as “Haulier”. Similarly, at the 1861 census, Thomas, senior, is a Haulier. In 1851 Thomas was a 17 year-old Labourer. By 1881, when Thomas, senior, describes himself as ‘Haulage Contractor with three carters under him’ it sounds like a thriving business with several horses and carts.

In 1873 a serious accident was reported at the Abernant Iron Company when two horses and a cart were crossing the railway near the feeder at No 9 Furnace. An engine came up and struck the second horse and the cart, the first horse having passed over. The horse was killed, and the cart was broken into fragments. There is no indication that this was one of Thomas’s carters,

¹ *Cynon Valley History Society. Cynon Coal: History of a Mining Valley, Cynon Valley History Society, 2001, p. 254*

² Mear, J F. *Aberdare: The Railways and Tramroads*. John F Mear, 1999, ch 5

³ *Cynon Valley History Society, p. 208*

apart from there being few others, but it shows the dangers of an innocent sounding occupation⁴.

It is not until a news item of March 1900 that we get a confirmation that the Williamses business involved the transport of coal:- *"a coal cart owned by Mrs (Hannah) Williams, Gwrhyd Farm, had delivered a load of coal at the top of Monk Street. As soon as the load was tipped, the horse took fright and rushed down the street, which is the steepest in town, and on getting to Victoria Square, went straight through the window of the shop of Mr Jones, chemist. The horse was not injured"*⁵.

By the time of the 1891 census, Thomas's business has progressed so well that he has been able to take the tenancy of Gwrhyd farm and now describes himself as Farmer & Contractor. His household comprises fifteen persons with son Thomas's occupation entered as Farmer's Son, so now probably working on the farm rather than as a carter. Four of the household are hauliers but again annotated with Cart and Horse.

It seems that the farm was a suitable base for a carting business with stabling for the horses and storage for carts. Thomas only seems to have run the farm as such after about 1891. However, the trade directories list Thomas as farmer at Gwrhyd as early as 1875 so it is a little unclear as to whether Thomas and Hannah progressed from a farm cottage to the farm itself.

The family lifeline

Hannah and a daughter Elizabeth came from Carmarthenshire. I have not located a marriage but Thomas, Hannah and Elizabeth become a family unit living in one of the Gwrhyd houses somewhere between 1851 and 1861. During that time, Thomas and Hannah also had their first two children: Martha and Thomas. By 1871 Sarah Ann had been born followed by Mary Jane the last of their children.

The next family event is when Sarah Ann marries Alfred FOWLER on 10th May 1887. Alfred is a 22 year-old 'Coal Haulier'⁶. They have a son, Thomas William, born November 22nd but at the cost of Sarah's life.

In 1892, at the age of 35, Martha marries David DAVIES, a colliery hauling engineman and they set up home in Windsor Terrace, Abernant. Although Martha waited, it would seem that the couple had been close for some time. The marriage of Martha's younger sister, Sarah Ann, in 1887 was witnessed by Martha Williams and David Davies.

⁴ *South Wales Echo*, 25th January 1873

⁵ *South Wales Daily News*, 13th March 1900

⁶ *Marriage Certificate. Sarah Ann Williams & Alfred Fowler*

In 1894 the youngest daughter, Mary Jane, marries Ebenezer ELLIS, a fireman at a local colliery. On August 2nd 1898, Ebenezer is killed at Werfa Colliery whilst investigating a gas leak. This resulted in the first inquest in the Aberdare district affected by the Workmen's Compensation Act and Mary Jane benefitted to the extent of £300⁷ ⁸.

On September 29th 1898 Thomas Williams dies at the Tynewydd Farm⁹ leaving Hannah to run the farm until she too dies on November 17th 1901. After the death of Hannah, the farm continues in the family with Martha and David. At the 1911 census Martha has three house coal carters working for her.

Conclusion

This article shows how the family history bug will infiltrate other projects. In the Cynon Valley, a man who could work with a horse was more likely to be doing so underground than on the streets. Researching carters has uncovered the story of one Thomas Williams who developed a carting business to the point where he could call himself a Haulage Contractor employing (and housing) several carters under him. His wife, Hannah, continued in the business after his death continuing to employ farm hands and carters until she too died, whereupon the daughter Martha appears to have continued the farm for a time.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 26 March 2022

Please note CHANGE OF DATE to that previously advertised.

Nominations forms are included in the centre insert to be returned to
Hon Secretary, Jane Jones by 1 January 2022.

Nominations needed for:
Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary
Plus Five Executive Committee Members

Branch Trustees were elected at the recent Branch AGMs –
see Reports for further details.

⁷ *South Wales Daily News*, 6th Aug 1898

⁸ *Pontypridd Chronicle and Workman's News*, 30th Sept 1898

⁹ *South Wales Daily News*, 1st October 1898

'NEW' OLD DOCUMENTS FROM GLAMORGAN

#2 Dr Diane Brook

These days, when searching, we look first at digitised records on the main websites, Family Search, FreeReg, Ancestry, Find My Past, The Genealogist, or hunt around on Google for other digitised material. Then we might remember to search the online catalogues of the archives in the areas where our ancestors lived. Eventually when we are ready to travel again, we may even see original documents in the archives. Glamorgan Archives in Cardiff is currently open a few days a week by appointment, for example.

Have you thought about the items not deposited in archives or libraries or museums? Ebay sells documents every day, therefore, I check the website every day. Where the cost is not too high and especially if no one else is bidding, I buy documents for early Glamorgan. Once logged and photographed, I donate them to Glamorgan Archives or West Glamorgan Archives as appropriate.

I thought fellow researchers might be interested in a list of my recent donations to Glamorgan Archives. The original documents will be available for searching once conserved and catalogued. I have added information from the documents below.

There will be more turning up, no doubt. I have just purchased a 1790 lease for a farm in Llantrisant which will be donated in due course. I also have a St John's Swansea underlease which needs to go to West Glamorgan Archives.

I always ask sellers where the items came from, to add provenance to each purchase/donation. Almost all come from antiques auctions but occasionally from car boot sales. I wonder what else is waiting for us?

ITEMS:

Rhys MATHEW of Whitwell in Llancafarn, 1631, pledge to pay a debt to Mary TURBERVILLE of Bonvilston.

Mortgage, Rees HOPKIN 1685, Coychurch & St Brides Minor. Rees Hopkin, wife Alice, daughter Mary, holdings Tir y Wayne and Tir y Laithor in Coychurch and St Bride's Minor, to Thomas ROBERTS. Undertenant Thomas YORATH.

Land Tax, Ogmores Hundred 1759, tax assessors' and collectors' names only, 26 different names.

Land Tax, Cowbridge Hundred 1759, tax assessors' and collectors' names only, about 45 different names.

Window Tax, Cowbridge Hundred 1759-60, tax assessors' and collectors' names only, about 46 different names, mostly or all the same as the Land Tax.

Window Tax, Ogmore Hundred 1759, tax assessors' and collectors' names only, 33 different names, many the same as Land Tax.

Lease Merthyr Tydfil 1789, William THOMAS and Daniel THOMAS, brothers, grandsons of Daniel LEWIS of Gwaelod y Garth, Merthyr Tydfil, holding of Gwain Ffarren otherwise Gwain Varren, Lewis WILLIAM formerly undertenant, now or late held by John William EDWARD.

Land sale, Llantrisant 1860, seller Rev Thomas EDMONDES of Cowbridge, buyers, Earl of Shrewsbury, Henry Lewis TALBOT of Greenmeadow, Glamorgan, and Richard BASSETT of Bonvilston, refers to lands on a map not included with the document. Cover annotated 'GWR & Ely Valley Cos' so presumably land for railway.

Lease, Llantrisant 1876, William GRIFFITHS of Pontypridd, John THOMAS of Dinas, Llantrisant, and John THOMAS of Penygraig, part of Dinas Farm, map showing property and neighbours. A few other names mentioned.

Licence, Ynyshir Chapel (Bethany Baptist) 1886, five names of leaseholders from 1879 to 1886.

Trustees, Ynyshir Chapel 1887, 15 names.

Resolution to borrow, Ynyshir Chapel 1887, four names.

Indenture, Russell St, Cardiff July 1897, George Winter MORISCO and Charles James JACKSON, previous holders named as well.

Indenture, Russell St, Cardiff Sept 1897, John Stuart CORBETT and Louis BARNETT, previous holders named.

Indenture, Castle Road, Cardiff 1898, Charles James JACKSON, Morgan MORGAN, previous holders named as well, much detail of several properties including a map. Castle Road is the present City Road.

A large batch of items from one seller, several linked:

Inland Revenue legacy duty, Llantwit Major 1857, several pages about the holdings of the late John GARSED. Mentions Daniel JONES of Beaupre and that John Garsed had ten children (unnamed).

Land sale, Llantwit Major 1866, detailed documents about land sale by John GARSED (presumably heir of the John Garsed, died 1857) naming tenants, of seven lots in Llantwit Major, with map.

Mary Jane LLOYD of Newport, Monmouthshire 1881, widow of Charles Lloyd, letter refers to Women's Property Act, trustee to be William LLOYD of Great Frampton in Llantwit Major.

Land sale, printed, Llanblethian 1871, two lots both in the tenure of Thomas WITNEY.

House sales, printed, Orbit St & Tyndall St Cardiff 1900. Cardiff Council sales of 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 Orbit Street, and 24 and 25 Tyndall Street. Tenant of each house in Orbit Street named.

Land sale, printed map, Llangan undated, no names except neighbouring landowners.

Land sale, printed map with handwritten additions, Green Isha, Wick, undated, names of neighbouring landowners only.

Some New Online Resources

Launch of the 1921 Census on Find My Past
6 January 2022

For further information www.findmypast.co.uk/1921-census

See Also the The National Archives
Exhibition: We are 20s People

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20s-people

Follow #20sPeople on Twitter

Ancestry has added: Removal of Graves and Tombstones 1601-1980, which includes memorial inscriptions for several Glamorgan burial grounds. www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61802/

Also check out the digitization programme currently under way at www.familysearch.org

WERE THEY ILLITERATE? MAKE YOUR MARK X

Marriage Certificates:
Some tips from one of our Online Sessions
#180 Sue Hamer

At our online session, 'Researching in Merthyr Tydfil', Carolyn Jacob mentioned how a local Registrar had noticed over the years that many marriage certificates appeared to have been filled in with a space for bride and groom and witnesses to add their mark and the comment was made that it looks as though they were asked to 'make their mark' even if they could in fact have signed the certificate (perhaps to save time as the details would have been filled in beforehand).

An example of this is the original Llantwit Fadre marriage registers (now available on Find My Past and Ancestry). When the person officiating is Parish Curate, H James THOMAS for all but a very few marriages from 1838 onwards both bride and groom and witnesses have all 'made their mark' X. There are very few signatures. It would appear at first glance that the majority could not sign their names (apart from a few such as a Surgeon) but a closer look reveals how the marriage certificates are all set out in the same way with a space for a 'mark' (cross) to be made.

However for the occasional marriages where, perhaps due to the unavailability of H James THOMAS and there is a different person 'Officiating' then the majority sign the marriage certificate.

Now we have access to some of the original marriage registers it is therefore worth checking whether your ancestor was asked to 'make their mark' or whether they did have an option to sign the certificate by looking at a range of certificates and the practice of the officiating ministers/curates so that assumptions are not made that they were illiterate from them 'making their mark'.

ONLINE EVENTS – HANDOUTS

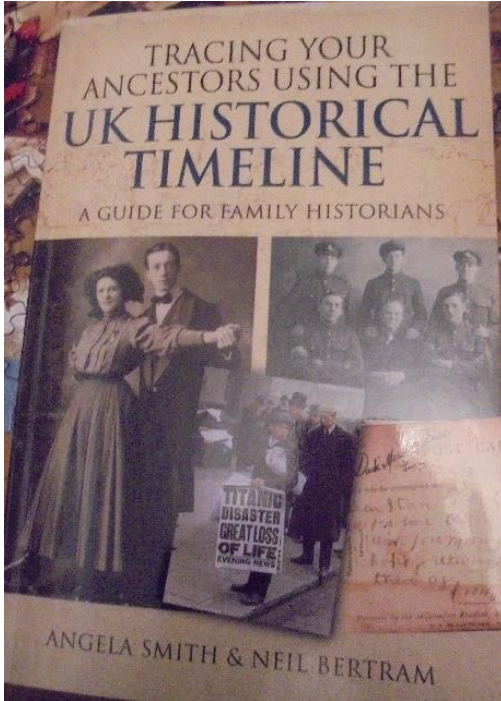
We have had some fascinating talks over the past year and where speakers have provided handouts these are uploaded to our website and can be accessed via the following link:

www.glamfhs.org.uk/online-events

BOOK REVIEWS

TRACING YOUR ANCESTORS USING THE UK HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Angela Smith and Neil Bertram



Those who research family history have to do so using family documents, census records, birth marriage and death records, family Bibles and whatever else they can find, and these records do not often show any reference to what was happening in the world outside. Many researchers might feel there is something missing, as the object of research is seen in isolation, when if set into an external context the events going on around him/her could often explain facts like occupations or movement from one part of the country to another.

This then is the book you need to set your ancestors in a time and place, using a historical timeline dating back to the time of the Norman Conquest and going

through to the 2000s. Each chapter is devoted to a century, so easy to look up what was happening at the time of your ancestor's life. Each page is divided into three columns, the first with the date, then the next heading 'Socio-Cultural Timeline', and the third 'Monarchy, State and Church'. To quote an example of how this is deployed, chapter 5, the 1500s, gives the year 1465, when under Edward IV during the Wars of the Roses, all Irishmen living near English settlements were made to take English surnames. Another: it was Thomas Cromwell in 1538 who charged all clergy in England and Wales to keep records of all baptisms, marriages and funerals at which they officiated. (Boyd's index, named after Percy Boyd who compiled all these records into one index 100 years ago, can be searched online).

Not many of us can trace families back this far, but going back only to the 1860s one can find huge world-wide events were taking place that affected the population: diamonds were discovered in South Africa, meaning many went from Britain to seek their fortune; transportation of convicts to Australia ends in 1868 so British 'migrants' on whatever side of the law had decisions to make: go or stay; the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 meant a strong British presence in Egypt, Sudan and East Africa, and in 1872 many children were sent to Canada by Barnardo, under the British Home Children Scheme - other schemes applied to children being sent to Australia.

On the domestic front, all the changes made regarding the registration of births, marriages, deaths are listed, set alongside huge social events such as the suffragette movement, the pit disasters such as Senghenydd, and the Tonypandy riots. I cannot recommend this book highly enough for broadening one's general knowledge of past events, and for the family researcher it weaves our forbearers into the great tapestry of our history.

Paperback, 154 pages, £12.99, ISBN 1399003321.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DIGITAL MAPPING: ST AUGUSTINE'S CHURCHYARD, PENARTH – FIRST IN WALES!

You may have seen recent press reports about Atlantic Geomatics being given the contract by the Church of England to map and record all burials in the churchyards throughout the country using the Burial Ground Management System (BGMS).

In Wales, St Augustine's Church has become the first to have the BGMS installed and to go live.

In 2016 the Diocese of Llandaff chose 4 parishes as pilot schemes for the BGMS and St Augustine's was fortunate to be one of those parishes. The Diocese paid for the initial survey of the churchyard and the scanning of the burial books. Volunteers Lindsay Cuddy, Linda Guilfoyle and Viv Liles then transcribed the details of more than 7,000 burials from the burial books onto the system.

Photographs of the memorials were taken and the burials matched to the memorials as far as possible, again by volunteers. Nearly 700 photographs of memorials have been linked to burials and work is continuing on some of the 90 remaining photographs. As a result members of the public are able to see a plan of the churchyard, to look up details of burials covering some 200 years and in many cases find the location of graves. To find the location of a burial you can click on a marked grave and, if it has been possible to link a photograph of the memorial to a burial, see who is buried there. To find details of burials it is necessary to click on the magnifying glass symbol in the top left hand corner and enter at least the family name of the person you are looking for.

Work is also being carried out by Viv Liles on two notebooks kept by the sextons in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We hope to be able to identify more burials including some unmarked graves when this is complete.

To get access to the system please go to:
www.friendsofstaugustines.org. Go to the 'Projects' tab, scroll down to Habitat and Heritage and you will find the link there, OR
www.parihofpenarthandllandough.co.uk/archives.html

This is part of the Habitat and Heritage churchyard project which is being carried out by The Friends of St Augustine's with the permission of the PCC. The Friends are grateful to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Allchurches Trust and the PCC for this project.

#772 Vivien Liles

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

For the majority of our members the 2021 Annual Membership lapses on 31 March 2022. Members joining part way through the membership year will have different renewal dates. Please check your journal envelope or your 'Membership Status' when you log in to the website for your expiry date.

The preferred way to renew is via the website as the payment is processed automatically and members can check and update their personal details, email address etc.

Alternatively you can pay by cheque (a renewal form is included in the centre insert of this journal), or by setting up a Standing Order or BACS payment. Please remember to check the current membership rates.

HOW TO RENEW VIA OUR WEBSITE

www.glamfhs.org.uk

1. On Home Page – *Click on 'Member Log In'.*
2. Log in using your Username: *Your email address.*
3. Password: *If you have forgotten your password follow the instructions to reset your password. You will be emailed a verification link. Click on the link in the email to reset your password.*
4. *Return to the Home Page and Click on 'How to Join'.*
5. Select the appropriate subscription. *If you are renewing the same subscription you will see a 'Renew' button.*
6. Click on 'Renew' and follow the instructions to pay by Debit or Credit Card. You do not need a Pay Pal account.
7. If you try to pay after the expiry date of your subscription your account will have lapsed. You will still be registered but you will not have membership access.

Still unable to log in?

- If you have too many attempts at your password your account will be locked.
- Are you using a new email? Contact us to update your registration.
- If your membership lapsed more than three months ago your account will have been deleted. Contact us to set up a new account.

membership@glamfhs.org.uk or website@glamfhs.org.uk

SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY BRANCH

I am pleased to say that our face to face meetings have resumed in the Cynon Valley Museum. It has been a long time since we have been able to get back together as a branch.

We have a new date and time of our Branch meetings, they are now held in the Parry Room on the 2nd Thursday of each month 2-4pm in the Cynon Valley Museum.

The format of our meetings has changed slightly, we will be having a guest speaker bi-monthly and during alternative meetings the time will be split between project work and research support.

We have quite a few different local projects we would like to complete, if you are interested and able to join us in making this local information available to family researchers that would be great. You do not necessarily need to attend a branch meeting to participate in project work. If you are interested please contact me by email for further information.

Our AGM was held on 14th October when the following branch members were elected unanimously as Branch Officers and Society Branch Trustee for the next twelve months:

Chairman – Mervyn Pugh

No nominations were made for vice chair

Secretary – Pat Rees

Treasurer – Martine Williams

Projects – Pat Rees

Meeting & Social – Haydn Williams

Librarian – Martine Williams

Membership – Pat Rees

Our Branch Representative on the Society Executive Committee – Pat Rees

After our meeting we were treated to a talk from Brenda Pugh. Brenda gave us a very interesting and amusing talk on one of her ancestors, John Haydn Davies, who was born in Penderyn and died in the Tonga.

Following the election of new branch officers it was proposed by Pat Rees and agreed unanimously to introduce a £2 monthly attendance fee for all branch meetings.

Pat Rees, aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE

The resource centre remains closed at the time of writing this report, however should the situation change, we will advise members via the website, Facebook and the Society newsletter. Initially we hope to re-open on an appointment only basis to limit the contact in such a small room.

In the meantime, enquiries and research help is still available by email: arc@glamfhs.org.uk & research@glamfhs.org.uk

Downloads: Since the publication of the last journal, we continue to expand the number of our publications available as Downloads and they are proving popular. Once we have completed changing the CDs we aim to progress on to the MIs, so watch this space and check our Genfair pages at: www.genfair.co.uk.

Reference Library: Plans are progressing to update the publications reference section in the ARC. All publications are being checked for compliance with Data Protection (GDPR) and the aim is to have all the publications on shelves for perusal along with the certificates and family trees. These are items that do not get much use but could hold a hidden gem for someone's research, we'll try to get a list of 'family trees' for the next journal.

Resources: Once again, we are focusing on our publications that are not widely requested but are little gems for the family historian. Do you have someone you've been searching for that could be hidden in one of these? All can be purchased via Genfair: www.genfair.co.uk

- Vale of Glamorgan Collection
- Unitarian Students – Presbyterian College Carmarthen
- They Came From Glamorgan
- South Wales Quakers, Bpt 1699-1925, Mar 1698-1925, Mem 1838-1924, Bur 1693-1963
- Somerset Trail Into Wales
- Barry WW2 Merchant Navy Roll of Honour
- Barry WW1 Merchant Navy Roll of Honour
- 1914-1918 GWR Roll of Honour
- Militaria Attestations 1873-1911
- Glamorgan Quarter Sessions Juvenile Convictions
- Glamorgan, Final Resting Places
- Glamorgan Register of Electors 1845-1846
- Glamorgan County Asylum, Femae Case Notes (4 Books)
- Glamorgan & Monmouthshire – Mining Accidents

Certificates:

We have recently had a few more certificates donated to us, once we have indexed them we will pass them on to the website team and you will be able to search for any that may be linked to your family tree.

ARC REVIEW SURVEY

Thirty members returned the questionnaire in the September journal the location of respondents being roughly 50/50 from areas of the UK and local members with postcode CF/SA.

The comments supported the vital function that the ARC plays for the Society, both for administration purposes and in providing individual help and guidance as well as expertise. However, there were comments, especially from newer members that they did not know what unique resources were at the ARC that would encourage them to visit. The Library was seen as an important resource but an improvement was suggested to the online catalogue to make it more searchable. Advertising the unique resources at the ARC was felt to be a priority for many responders.

Opening the Centre on alternative days to a Wednesday, in the evenings and on a Saturday was also suggested to enable those working full time to visit.

An ARC Review Team has been set up which will continue to review the location and purpose of the Resource Centre with a report being made to members at the Annual General Meeting each year.

Thank you to those members who returned the questionnaire.

Journal Themes 2022

March 'General' – deadline 20 January

June 'Mining' – deadline 20 April

BRIDGEND BRANCH

The Bridgend Branch continues to keep members informed on events via newsletters but have no immediate plans to recommence face to face meetings.

The Branch AGM was held online in October with the committee and one extra general committee member being elected for another year. It was good to see a few extra members joining us for the AGM and one from Essex was particularly welcome. So the following are your committee for 2021-2022 year:

Chair: Nancy Thomas

Secretary: Vicky Salmon

Treasurer Team: Nancy Thomas, Sue Tiller & Liz Krolzig

Programmes: Paul Jones

Library: Liz Krolzig

Membership: Sue Tiller

Committee Members: Marie Morgan & Penny Williams

Members of the committee are trialling offering monthly research help in two local Bridgend libraries. Should the level of interest be good this will continue into the new year. Initially we are offering our services in Pyle and Aberkenfig libraries between 10 and 12 on a Saturday morning, focusing on being at both libraries on the same mornings. We would love to see you, even if only for a chat. Contact the libraries or us for exact dates.

Members of the committee are available to answer questions and research queries via the email: bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk



CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH REPORT

With no meeting in August, we closed the 2020-2021 programme with a fabulous talk from Jenni Phillips on *What can we expect from the 1921 census*. Taken on 19th June 1921, the census consists of more than 28,000 bound volumes of original household returns containing detailed information on close to 38 million individuals. The census will provide a snapshot of our ancestors' lives in the aftermath of the First World War, at a time of economic uncertainty and industrial unrest. Jenni took us through the historical context of the census. With some new questions posed to our ancestors in this census what new facts will we be able to discover? She also addresses the question of how can we plan a research strategy for the census ahead of its release? The 1921 census will be launched on 6 January 2022 on Find My Past.

The October meeting was a busy evening, with our second online branch AGM where the following members were elected:

Chairman: Vacant

Vice Chairman: Vacant

Branch Trustee: Vacant

Treasurer: Stephen Fairhurst

Committee members: Diane Brook, Ann Konsbruck, Jeremy Konsbruck, Karen Prior and Sue Hamer

Programme Co-ordinators: Jane Graves, Sandra Robinson and Sian Stenner.

Thanks to Nick Davey (co-opted) for all of his contributions to the committee during the last year.

We will be looking for a new member to represent the branch as the Branch Trustee at the Executive Committee meetings.

Secondly at our October meeting, we had an excellent talk from Diane Brook on *Who would be King (or Queen?)*. It was a fascinating talk with some wonderful illustrations down a large number of family options. There were so many ways to become the monarch until the Act of Settlement 1701 with Empress Matilda having perhaps the most perilous path to take the crown. Diane introduced us to the term 'Gateway ancestor' which is when discover that one of your ancestors is descended from royalty, the aristocracy, or landed gentry. You just need to find the one that takes you back to Charlemagne! Diane very kindly supplied a handout, and you can find a copy in the members section on the Society website:

www.glamfhs.org.uk/online-events.

At our September 'Coffee & Chat' session we looked at researching family history in Scotland as we don't all have many Welsh ancestors. The October session saw us researching closer to home with resources available for Swansea and the surrounding area ancestors.

Carolyn Jacob led the September Saturday morning session with *Researching in Merthyr Tydfil and the surrounding area* while in October, Nick Davey shared details of available census substitutes in *Enumerated before 1841 or a new approach to TAX returns & militia lists*.

You do not need a Zoom account to attend our online sessions, but you do need to be able to 'Join' a meeting <https://zoom.us/join>. Registration is via Eventbrite and the booking links are posted on the Society website events page: <https://www.glamfhs.org.uk/events> and circulated via the Society's monthly newsletter. Places are limited, so if something catches your eye, please do book. We now have over 200 followers on Eventbrite and 500 on Twitter.

You can follow the branch via Twitter: @Cardiff_GFHS

Sully Group

Sully Group meetings have been replaced for the time being by the online Coffee and Chat sessions on the third Thursday each month since the rooms available at The Old School are too small to adequately socially distance and comply with the continuing Covid-19 restrictions.

Jane Graves & Sue Hamer, cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk



MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

Thankfully our members have been in good health. Optimistically we are continuing our meetings in Soar, the Welsh Centre, although, at first, we had to limit numbers. Since September other heritage groups have also returned to Soar, the Merthyr Tydfil Opera Appreciation Society and also the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society. So far there have been no problems. In 2021 the Merthyr Tydfil Branch has had some excellent and popular talks from our members and we would like to thank Huw Williams, Barrie Jones, Steve Brewer and Carl Llewellyn for their wonderful research and talks.

Our AGM was held on 12th October and did not involve any change of officers. In fact the decision was made just to continue as we are and to hold our meetings of the second Tuesday of each month at 2pm in Soar. We are continuing to work on the obituaries in the Merthyr Express and there are a number of possible future projects. As the 1841 census for Upper Merthyr Tydfil, Dowlais is missing, presumed destroyed, and the GFHS has only one of the invaluable Dowlais Lease Books indexed, Nick Davey has thoughtfully photographed the other volume for a new project. We have also been involved with researching the history of the Gurnos Farm as well as other family history projects .

Carolyn Jacob & Suzanne Doolan, merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk



PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

Not a lot to report again, unfortunately. There have been many delays with the repairs to the Pontypridd Museum this year. Apart from the repairs to the basement which were caused by the flooding, there were delays caused by the Covid lockdowns. Then when the repairs were being carried out, the ceiling collapsed, caused in no small part by the dampness! We were told more recently that, hopefully, we should be back by January 2022. Fingers crossed. Obviously precautions will still need to be observed, social distancing etc, but we don't know as yet to what extent.

Furthermore we have been told by the Pontypridd Council that they cannot offer us storage facilities any longer. Therefore, we have had to remove what was not destroyed by the floods. Our books have been very kindly stored in garages owned by two of our members, and the rest brought to our home. We will need to examine these items and decide whether they will need to be kept or not, as some are very old and probably beyond repair.

Members of our Committee have agreed to continue to be on the Committee. We have been unable to meet face to face but have corresponded by emails.

Pontypridd and Rhondda Branch Committee:

Chairman	Mike Jones
Vice Chair	David Shewring
Treasurer	Creighton Sims
Secretary	Jane Jones
Projects/Research	Deborah Cooke
Publicity	Neil Gazzard

Committee Members

Jan Johnson, Angela Hughes, Eira Morgan, John Phillips, Ryland Williams

Meic Jones, rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk



SWANSEA BRANCH

Swansea Branch AGM took place on Monday 11th October on Zoom. Fourteen members were present. The accounts were presented and approved. Janet Neilson was elected as Chairman. Jeff Coleman was re-elected as Branch representative on the EC. Julie Edmunds was elected to replace Michael Cox as Treasurer. Cherry King was re-elected as Secretary. There is a vacancy for Speakers' Secretary. Committee members: Michael Cox, Pauline Vaughan, Barbara Powell and Patricia Jenkins.

Current rules at West Glamorgan Archives mean that transcribing is paused. Several school admission registers are part-completed, and there are other projects requiring checking.

Meetings will continue online at present, with the committee seeking to find a way forward possibly involving daytime meetings and/or a change of day.

Jeff Coleman, swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

HOW TO BOOK AND LOG ON TO ONLINE ZOOM MEETINGS

If you have not yet joined one of our Zoom Online Sessions here are some instructions explaining how to book a free ticket and download Zoom.

How to Book a Free Ticket for one of the Online Talks:

1. Free Tickets for our Online Meetings are made available via the Eventbrite Website. www.eventbrite.com.
2. Links to each individual event are also provided on our website: www.glamfhs.org.uk/events AND in our monthly MailChimp Newsletters.
3. Click on the link on the website/newsletter to go to the event on Eventbrite.
4. On the Event Page click on the green 'Register' button and follow the instructions to book a free ticket.
5. You will be emailed a registration confirmation.
6. A few days before the event you will be emailed a 'reminder email' about the event.
7. A day or so before the event you will be emailed a Zoom link.

You cannot access the talk/meeting without this Zoom link so keep a look out for an email from Eventbrite in your inbox and spam folder.

The day of the meeting: Check you have received the Zoom link a few hours before the meeting as the meeting administrators are not usually able to resend Zoom links within 20-30 minutes of the meeting starting.

How to Download Zoom

www.zoom.us

1. **Download the Zoom program/App:** It is a good idea to download the Zoom program from the Zoom website before the day of the meeting.
2. **To Join the Meeting:** Click on the Zoom Link in your Eventbrite email.
3. **Check your camera and microphone:** You will be asked to check your microphone and camera are working.
4. **Waiting Room:** You will be placed in a Waiting Room until the Administrators are ready to start the talk/meeting. Some events have a large number of attendees so it may take a while to let everyone in.
5. **Turning off microphones/cameras:** We will ask you to mute your microphone once you have joined the meeting. Also turning off your camera once the talk starts can save bandwidth and help if you have an intermittent internet signal or are using Wifi.

We hope to see you at our Online Meetings - Enjoy!

Or if you have further questions contact: onlineevents@glamfhs.org.uk

OTHER ONLINE EVENTS

3-5 December The Genealogy Show – Winter Event
<https://thegenealogyshow.uk/>

Saturday 19 February 2022, 10-4.30
The Family History Show (Online)
<https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/online/>

3-5 March Roots Tech Connect
<https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021/>

Further events are listed on the www.genuki.org.uk website – see link -
<http://geneva.weald.org.uk/events@glamfhs.org.uk>

Volunteer Needed – Website Manager

We currently need a Website Manager to undertake, organise and/or coordinate the following website developments:

Members Interests Section & Resource Centre Library Catalogue

Both Currently pdfs Convert to searchable databases

Develop online resources section organised by parish.

Contact: website@glamfhs.org.uk for further information

*Nadolig Llawn a
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Aberdare Branch Meetings

2pm at Cynon Valley Museum

13 January: Projects and Research

10 February: Guest Speaker

10 March: Projects and Research



Cardiff Branch Meetings

Online Via Zoom

Tuesday evening – 7.30 pm

7 December: *What happened to Lucy* - Ian Waller FSG FGRA

Saturday morning sessions – 11-12

20 November: *My ancestor was a WWII pilot* – Nick Davey

11 December: *Researching South African Genealogy* - Sue Mackay

Thursday evening Coffee & Chat – 7 pm

18 November: *Researching in Aberdare*

16 December: *Mulled wine and chat - Christmas festivities and family traditions.*

Register for our online talks on Eventbrite:

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



Merthyr Branch Meetings

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

14 December: Viv Pugh, 'The 1940s Cinema'

11 January: Daryl Leeworthy, 'Researching Minorities'

8 February: Carl Llewellyn, 'An aspect of Merthyr's History'

8 March : Discussion on 1921 census and bring along your problems.

We will also show an old film of Merthyr Tydfil



Swansea Branch Meeting

Online via Zoom

Monday 10 January, 7 pm: Celebrating Judaism with the Swansea Hebrew Congregation – Janet Neilson



NEW - More CD Titles available as Downloads - NEW

www.genfair.co.uk



Ymddiriedolaeth
Ddiwylliannol
Cultural Trust



Family History Research Sessions

Interested in tracing your roots?

Want to know more about your ancestors?

Been inspired by “Who Do You Think You Are?”

Already started but hit that brick wall?

HELP IS AVAILABLE!

10-12: 20th November & 11th December

Pyle & Aberkenfig Libraries

[Both venues on same date]



*Monthly help sessions starting soon
in a library near you.*

Ask at your local library or
email

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

If undelivered please return to:

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