



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

*Dydd Gwyl Dewi Sant – Cyntaf Mis Mawrth*



*St David's Day – 7<sup>th</sup> March*

**Journal No 145**

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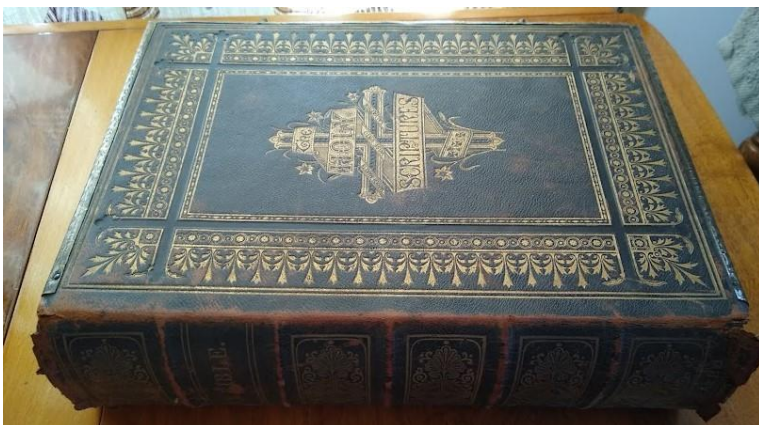
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How do we preserve family documents and Artefacts?

Some of our members' items discussed at the recent Coffee & Chat session online with Lydia Stirling, Conservator, Glamorgan Archives



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Centre Insert: AGM Notice & Postal Voting Form, Renewal & Gift Aid Forms

## Society's Objectives

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As a registered charity the main objectives of the Glamorgan Family History Society are to: encourage and stimulate research into genealogy and allied subjects with particular reference to the historic county of Glamorgan: to assist members in their private research; encourage the transcription and preservation of records of family history and the deposit of original documents of value in approved repositories; publish papers of genealogical value and interests; establish, to mutual advantage, relations with other organisations interested in genealogy and allied subjects; maintain a library and regularly publish a journal.

The journal is the official publication of the Glamorgan Family History Society. Articles appearing in the journal may not be reproduced without the written permission of the Editor. Views expressed in articles and letters are not necessarily those of the GFHS.

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

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to Spring 2022! Let us hope it will be truly welcome after two years of this dreadful pandemic and its restrictions, and the signs are hopeful.

This edition was laid open to all topics so there is a good medley to follow.

Most importantly for the family historian is the welcome news of the release of the 1921 census, long awaited, and Sue Hamer has written about it with notes on where and how to make the best use of what can be found there. Tied in with that would be the article by Neil Merchant who refers to previous censuses which 'found' all he was looking for, but which in turn provided as many questions as answers.

There are many more genealogical tips for research from David Harris, so a mine of information for the researcher to be getting on with in these.

In contrast there is a story of an ancestress of one of our members, a woman she has described as 'just a wife and mother' but who was obviously so much more.

Two more accounts of extraordinary characters follow - one from the musical life of Aberdare 150 years ago, and one on Sir Alun Talfan Davies who became prominent in several fields such as the law, politics and the arts.

Not forgetting that March is the month of our patron saint, David, we have an article about the celebration of St David's Day by a lonely guardsman in London in 1915.

For our next edition a suggestion has come in that we have some mining stories - there cannot be a shortage of those, so please let us have your family reminiscences - they need not be all disastrous - tell us about the comradeship, the societies and clubs and choirs as well as the harsh realities. It doesn't have to be coal mining; perhaps there are stories on tin or lead or even opals and gold!

Whatever you can tell us will be received with great interest, so do let us have them.

Meanwhile at Glamorgan Family History we wish you a prosperous Spring in the garden; new shoots will be seen already in all our surrounding!

*Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk*

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## **Annual General Meeting – Saturday 26 March at 2 pm - Online Via Zoom**

Due to the continuing lockdown restrictions our Annual General Meeting will again be held online via Zoom.

Nominations have been received for the following Society Officers and Trustees:

Chairman:	Sue Hamer
Vice Chairman:	Nancy Thomas
Secretary:	Jane Jones
Executive Committee Members:	Ian Black, Jean Fowlds, Meic Jones and Steve Reis

Members not able to attend the AGM online on 26 March can vote for the above by returning the postal voting form included in the centre insert of this journal to Hon Secretary, Jane Jones by **8 March 2022**. AGM documents will be available to download from the Society website by 15 March.

**Our Society Officers can only serve for a maximum of five consecutive years and so we need new volunteers to come forward as soon as possible to start to learn some of these vital Society roles. Steve Reis is currently learning the Treasurer role but we will soon also need volunteers to learn the other Society Officer positions. We currently have a vacancy for a Trustee on the Executive Committee but anyone can attend our Committee Meetings to start to learn about the Society administration and the responsibilities of each role.**

As the days start to lengthen we think of Spring and getting out and about in the garden. Covid restrictions were tightened after Xmas here in Wales, due to the high number of cases, but have now been eased again. Some of our Branches are organising face to face meetings, others who meet in smaller or more constricted premises are continuing with online meetings see page 53/54 for details. Cardiff & Vale Branch, who organise our online meetings, currently have a programme planned until July 2022. Up to date information and handouts from past talks are available on [www.glamfhs.org.uk/online-events](http://www.glamfhs.org.uk/online-events).

We have had many requests from our overseas and non-local members to continue our online programme after all branches return to face to face meetings and so we are considering setting up an online Branch. Anyone interested in becoming a member of this branch and especially to help to organise online events please let us know.

*Meic Jones, Chairman, 1 February 2021*  
[chairman@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@glamfhs.org.uk)

# OBITUARY

## #2471 Alun Jones (1939-2021)

Many thanks to everybody from GFHS for all the lovely flowers, cards and messages on the sudden death of Alun. Alun became Editor of the GFHS Journal taking over from Karen Wozencroft with Journal 43 in 1996, and retired at Journal 100. He also worked on Publications, taking them from the paper copies and fiche, then to them being produced on CDs, and then on the internet. He also went to many of the Open Days, meeting many other editors. Alun also came with me when we went to record some of the old graveyards in Merthyr Tydfil, but after a few visits, Alun then brought his camera with him which made recording the headstones a lot easier. We liked going to the Jewish Cemetery and sitting on the edge of Hiram Evans's gravestone eating our lunch in the sunshine. We always wished them 'Good Morning' and told them about the weather!

*Jean Jones*



*From Merthyr Branch:* When Alun Jones wanted a jar of blackberry jam from Bev, whose jams are sold at Merthyr Tydfil Branch meetings to raise money for Ty Hafan, the word got round that if there was only one jar then Alun deserved to have it. For over twenty years Alun and Jean frequently visited the Merthyr Tydfil Branch; they never came empty handed but always brought with them useful gifts such as CDs, indexes and magazines. Their very presence was of great value as Alun gave us support, practical advice, sensible suggestions and also much needed assistance with computers. It was

simply always a great joy to see them. Alun and Jean supported the Branch in the Ynysfach Engine House and joined us for a number of talks and events there. In Summer 2021, when we were able to resume afternoon meetings in Soar, we were especially delighted to welcome our old friends and see Alun again. The September meeting was a talk given by Carl Llewellyn and, with Alun sitting in the audience, it seemed that all must be well in the world again. There were many of the 'old faces' and it was such a happy event. We will remember Alun as he was that afternoon, in a very jolly mood and pleasantly chatting away to everyone.

*Carolyn Jacob*

Alun was also our first Webmaster. He was one of the first to start using email back in 1998 and hosted our first website from 1999. He wrote an 'Internet Page' in the journal where he listed the new resources becoming available online as the internet became accessible to more people. As the technology changed he continued to develop the website and, with Rosemary Smith, added a shop to sell our publications. He continued in this role supporting me as I took over until our new website was developed in 2017 always ready to provide help and advice from his vast knowledge and experience.

Jean and Alun were also long term members of the Executive Committee representing Merthyr Branch for which and their other services to the Society they were given Honorary Life Membership.

Alun's other love of course was Jazz. He was a founder member of the Adamant Jazz Band a traditional/New Orleans walking jazz band and helped form the Cardiff Jazz Preservation Society for which he was also Webmaster. The Adamant Jazz Band walked in front of his funeral cortege which was a very moving tribute. Further information about Alun's connection to the above can be viewed on his website: [www.pjscardiff.co.uk](http://www.pjscardiff.co.uk).

He will be sadly missed by all. We send out condolences to Jean and family.  
*Sue Hamer*



## THE LEWIS LINE #20477 Neil Merchant

### Introduction

This section describes the history of the maternal line of Mary Doreen ROCKEY, my mother. Unlike the other major lines of the family with fairly uncommon surnames (MERCHANTS, SOLOMONS, HOLLINSHEADS), my mother's maternal line consists of LEWISES, JONESES and JOHNS (which are "top ten" surnames in South Wales) where they lived firmly rooted in the coal and iron economy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Combining that with the similar frequency of common given names and the poor quality, availability and detail of records in the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in this area, poses a substantial challenge to reliably determine whether a particular record applies to the same person as appears in another.

According to the censuses William Lewis, my great-grandfather, was an oil and grease manufacturer and/or dealer for most of his working life. This is not a topic on which much information is readily available. I had always thought that grease was simply thick oil, but in fact it is oil thickened in various ways, often



involving a soap. For example, this is from Wikipedia “*In the middle of the 19th century, soaps were intentionally added as thickeners to oils*”.

**John William Lewis**, my great-grandfather was born around 1819/20, from his age given in later censuses, and age on his 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage certificate. I can find no birth or baptism record, or first marriage, nor is he in the 1841 and 1851 censuses, so far as I can confidently tell.

His first reliable appearance in the records, then, is in 1860, when he married, aged 40. At the time he was a widower, working in the iron trade (iron founder) and was living in Twynrodyn (in Merthyr Tydfil). He married Jennet John, 29, widow, also of Twynrodyn, on 22 May that year. Twynrodyn is near the church where they wed, Ebenezer Baptist Chapel, Plymouth St, Merthyr Tydfil: an intimidating building, at least when pictured in 1965:



*Photograph from Alan George's 'Old Merthyr' website.*

On the marriage certificate, John's father was named as William Lewis (agent), deceased, Jennet's as William Jones (coal miner), also deceased. Jennet was apparently illiterate, signing with a mark. Witnesses were William Thomas MORGAN and Mary REES, both also apparently illiterate<sup>1</sup>.

Further research showed that Jennet Jones had previously married a Thomas JOHN in Merthyr Tydfil, specifically the Dowlais area, in 1851<sup>2</sup>. Thomas is described as a labourer. No fewer than seven Thomas Johns died in the town between Jan 1853 and March 1860, so I have been unable to learn anymore

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<sup>1</sup> Marriage certificate,

<sup>2</sup> Marriage certificate

about him. Nor can I find records for any children, though the 1861 census entry for the new couple gives some clues.

As above, I have no indication of John Lewis's first marriage, or his wife's name, although Rachel is a possibility, given the eldest daughter's given name. I followed up on a couple of Rachel Lewis deaths in the area and at the right time, but they proved to be red herrings (one was 12 years old, the other 88!).

It seems likely, then than John and Jennet suddenly found themselves widowed parents, perhaps meeting through using the same chapel, and both in urgent need of a spouse to share the burdens.

The 1861 Census provides a lot of information, and raises questions.

1. Their address is given as "15 Shortcut St ("Beer House"), Heolwermood, Merthyr Tydfil
2. John's age is 41, Jennet's 28.
3. John gives Merthyr Tydfil as his place of birth, Jennet Resolven.
4. They have children as follows. In the list TJ means Thomas John, JJ Jennet Jones/John, JWL John Lewis, and Rachel L, the putative first wife. The question marks give my best guess as to parentage.

Children	YoB	Father	Mother	Notes
Lewis J	1847	TJ?	JJ?	Born Merthyr Tydfil. Does the J represent "John"?
Rachel	1852	JWL?	Rachel L?	Born Merthyr Tydfil
John J	1854	TJ?	JJ?	Born Merthyr Tydfil. Does the J represent "John"?
Gwenllian	1854	TJ	JJ?	Born in Merthyr Tydfil. "stepdaughter"
Alice	1855	JWL?	Rachel L?	Born in Cardiff
David	1860	JWL	Rachel L?	First wife died in childbirth?
Luther	1861	JWL	JJ	

The census suggests that John William was born around 1820 and gives his birthplace as Merthyr Tydfil. Jennet's birth is confirmed as around 1833, birthplace Resolven, which is further west towards Neath. Gwenllian's description as stepdaughter confirms Jennet's first marriage. Gwenllian and John J were both born around 1854, from their 1861 census ages of 7. Was John J John W's son, or Gwenllian's twin? There are no matching birth records to support their being twins (or otherwise for that matter). I'm surmising that the "J" after Lewis and John's names means they were children of Jennet's first marriage, and is short for Jones.

Luther looks like the first child of the second marriage, and John's first wife must have died quite close to the second marriage date to have borne David. Also note Alice is listed as being born in Cardiff, not Merthyr Tydfil like all the other children.

The "Hamlet" given on the 1861 census record page is Heolwermood. I found it on a website called 'Vision of Britain'<sup>3</sup>, and it describes it as being between Penydarren and Dowlais, both places with large ironworks. Adjacent census sheets cover High St, and there is a High St still in between what are now the two suburbs of Merthyr Tydfil. John is described in the census as "Publican and iron founder, employing two men, a moulder and xxx". This is the first indication of his enterprise, which progresses over the years.

The census lists several inns, eating houses and beer houses in the immediate vicinity, and the 'Vision of Britain' entry paints a picture of Merthyr as hell on earth, with extremely squalid, cramped housing, filthy streets and high mortality to match. So small were the homes, apparently, that it seems likely - for want of cooking space - that all cooked food would have been bought.

**1871 Census:** By this time John and Jennet (given as Janet in this and later censuses) have more children and have moved to Pontypridd, in the parish of Llantwit Fardre, about 15 miles south of Merthyr, towards Cardiff. Their address is simply given as "near locomotive station". John William is described as "Grease manufacturer and oil dealer - xxxxx, employing two men".

They are now a household of eleven, as shown in the table below, Lewis and Rachel have presumably moved on and out:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/place/26098>

Children	Age	Approx YoB	Notes
John John	18	1853	b Cardiff. Grease manufacturer
Gwenllian John	18	1853	b Merthyr Tydfil "wife's daughter, domestic servant at home"
Alice	17	1854	b Cardiff. "Domestic servant at home"
David	11	1860	b Merthyr Tydfil Scholar
Luther	9	1862	b Merthyr Tydfil Scholar
Margaret	8	1863	b Merthyr Tydfil Scholar
Owen	5	1866	b Radyr (the 1881 census says Radyr. The two are close by). Scholar
Mary	3	1868	b Roath
Ann*	2	1869	b Llandaff

\*My future grandmother.

The places of birth of the children given are puzzling. It seems unlikely that the family moved around that much, though it's possible. Radyr and Llandaff are both outlying villages/suburbs to the north of Cardiff, and both all on the Glamorganshire Canal and the Taff Vale Railway, but did John William's job as a grease manufacturer/oil merchant require such moves, or is there some underlying family reason that's lost to sight? There were large iron and tinplate works at Mellingrifieth and Pentyrch which were both between Radyr and Llandaff, so John may have spent time working at or with one or the other.

**1881 Census:** For this census they are still in Pontypridd, now at 61 Rickards St, not far from the station, so whether they have moved, or it's just that the enumerator was more accurate than in 1861 it's hard to tell.

John William is now 61, Jennet ("Janet") 49. It's worth tabulating the children again, as it – again – looks complicated.

Children	Age	Approx YoB	Notes
Alice	27	1854	Dressmaker
David	22	1859	Colliery clerk
Owen Glyndwr	15	1866	General labourer, b Pentyrch
Mary	14	1867	Scholar b Roath, Cardiff
Ann	12	1869	b Canton, Cardiff
Hannah Janet	9	1872	b Pontypridd
William Jones	7	1874	b Pontypridd
Lily	1	1880	G'daughter. b Glyntaf (outside Pontpridd), Eglwysilan

A few things to note:

- John and Gwenllian have moved out, as have Luther and Margaret.
- Owen is now named as Owen Glyndwr, and has a slightly different birthplace, though Radyr and Pentyrch are not far apart.

Is Lily a grandchild of one of the other, older children no longer living at home? David doesn't seem to have a wife, nor Alice a husband.

It looks like John and Jennet had 13 children over both their marriages and over 27 years (1847-1874), which is quite an achievement (especially for Jennet), and most if not all appear to have survived childhood, which is an even greater achievement in the time and circumstances.

**1891 Census:** By the time of the 1891 census John and Janet have moved to 56 Burnaby Street, a small terraced house in Cardiff. Various other Merchant relatives are living nearby.

John William is now 71, and describes himself as "Oil merchant and superintendent of stores". Janet is 60, and the only child now at home is William Jones, 16 and working as an "Engineer and machinery fitter". In this census, answering a question asked for the first time, they describe themselves as bilingual. Which stores is John the superintendent of? Is he still actually working? I shall have to do some street directory trawling to find out, I think.

I can't find Annie in the census anywhere. I expect she's in service somewhere and not recorded for some reason.

A little over two years later, 18<sup>th</sup> January 1893, now living at 101 Broadway, Cardiff (not that far from Burnaby St), John dies at the age of 73. His cause of death is given as “Asthma, chronic albuminuria and dropsy”, all possible consequences of working with toxic chemicals all his life.

**1901 and 1911 Censuses:** I can't find Janet in the 1901 or 1911 census, which is odd. She lived on until 1920, when she died, aged 89, at 19 Llanishen St, Cardiff. Another terrace of small but decent-looking houses off Allensbank Rd, near Cathays Cemetery. Her death was reported by Annie (by now Rockey), my grandmother<sup>4</sup>. The 1901 census, 1911 census and 1939 Register give no help as to who else may have been living there at the time.

### Conclusion

This has been a frustrating branch of the family tree to research, because of the apparent paucity of records from the earlier part of their lives and the ubiquity of the families' given and surnames. Their early life is summarised by the details in the 1861 census, and their movements and progress can be followed in the subsequent ones. As ever, though, apart from these snapshots, and their death records, there's little to show. I can find no press reports, announcements or advertisements that might add a little more flesh to the bones.

Their lives must have been incredibly tough, and I still have no clear picture as to how successful John William was in his trade, or of their station in life. Given their addresses in working class areas, and the fact that John left no will that I can find, I suspect they were never well off.



## THE 1921 CENSUS

#180 Sue Hamer

The digitized 1921 Census launched by Find My Past on 6 January 2022 will, owing to the 100 year rule, be the last England and Wales census to be released until the 1951 census in 2052. The 1931 Census was destroyed by fire in 1942 and no census was taken in 1941 during WW2. The 1921 Census for Scotland will be released on Scotland's People later in 2022. The 1931 Census for Scotland stored in Edinburgh was not affected. The census was not taken in Ireland during 1921 so anyone with Irish ancestors will need to wait until the release of their census in 1926.

Find My Past and the National Archives are providing a number of free events online about the 1921 Census, its background and how to use it. There are also guidelines both on Find My Past and the National Archives websites.

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<sup>4</sup> Death certificate

Reports in the newspapers during 1921 provide further information about the administration of the census and its initial findings. It was the first census where punched cards were used to process the information.

Western Mail 4 June 1921

TO TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY JUNE 19

*For the census, which will be taken on Sunday, June 19, there will be 38,000 men and women engaged as enumerators. All schedules will be delivered to householders between June 11 and June 18, and will be collected on Monday, June 20.*

*The census was to have been taken on April 24, but was cancelled because of the threat by the Triple Alliance of a general strike. The forms and schedules printed for use then will be used with the necessary alterations in the dates.*

*An official of the Registrar General's Department told a press representative: "Our preparations are now complete. It is certain that the census will take place on June 19. There is nothing in the industrial situation to upset the registering of the census".*

*At Lambeth Workhouse, Kennington, SE, enumerating machines, almost human in their perfection have been installed. One of them deals with cards at the rate of 25,000 to 40,000 an hour.*

There was a complaint about the back of the census form having an advertisement for a Sunday newspaper.

Western Mail 30 June 1921

CENSUS ADVERTISEMENT

PROTEST BY WELSH CALVINISTIC METHODISTS

*The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists of Anglesey have decided to forward to the Prime Minister a resolution of protest against the advertisement of a new Sunday paper being placed on the back of the census form, characterising this as a gross insult to the religious feelings of the Welsh people.*

Western Mail Aug 4 1921

*Striking Facts of the Census*

*Population Increase Lowest on Record*

*A Legacy of the War Females two millions in excess of Males*

*Cardiff Highest Percentage increase among large towns*

*Some striking comparisons between the present population of Great Britain and that of ten years ago are contained in the preliminary report of the census taken in July last, which was issued on Tuesday night. A direct*

*legacy of the war is the enhanced preponderance of females over males. The former are now in excess by nearly two million. The present total population – 42,767,530 – is the largest ever recorded in this country, but the increase over 1911 is only about one half of the increase in the preceding intercensal period, and is less than any corresponding figure since 1911. The big fall in the birth rate during the war years 1915-1918 was heavier than any previously experienced, and has not been counterbalanced by increases which have occurred since.*

*Cardiff takes its place for the first time in the cities and towns with a population over 200,000. Rhondda gives confirmation of the statement in the report that the female population is apparently the smallest in mining and rural areas. Seaside resorts showed a remarkable increase in population, but this is attributed to the abnormally fine weather when the census was taken, many of the inhabitants at that time being visitors who were on holidays.*

*Taking the towns with a population of over 50,000, the following increases in South Wales are interesting: Cardiff percentage increase 9.9; Rhondda 6.5; Swansea 9.4; Newport 10.4; Aberdare 8.2.*

Here are some tips when searching the 1921 Census:

- **Change of Date:** The 1921 Census was taken on 19 June 1921. Census Day had originally been planned for 24<sup>th</sup> April but due to industrial unrest it was decided to move the date to June. However the forms that were filled in by householders still had the original date printed on them. *Did this affect what people wrote on the form? Were any people who were born or died between the two dates included by householders or left out?*
- **Free Search:** You can search the Census for free only paying to open the digital copies of the original householder form or a transcription.
- **Check household:** If you hover over the household results a list of those within the household will be revealed to help you decide if you have the correct household before purchasing the document. Do a number of searches for different people to make sure you have the correct household, especially if you have a common surname.
- **Check Birth dates:** Check each member of the household against their birth date.
- **Surname variations/transcription errors:** Search for alternative versions of the surname/first names to avoid missing entries due to transcription errors.
- **Wildcards:** Use Wildcards \*, eg Canning\* for Canning and Cannings, rather than selecting FMP surname variations.



- **Search Engines:** You can search by name or address – using different search engines on the website. Use if you have a common surname to narrow down the number of possible results.
- **Address:** The address is not included on the Household Form this time but needs to be accessed via the 'Additional Materials' after purchase.
- **Holiday:** Some household members may be on holiday – or staying with relatives not in their usual household. Statistics gathered after the census show that some places, eg seaside resorts had an increase in the size of their normal population on Census Day. If you cannot find your ancestor at home look wider afield to see if they were on holiday. *My grandmother is not with her husband in the family home in Barry but back on her parents' farm in Carmarthenshire where she is shown visiting with her 7 month old daughter.*
- **Industrial Action:** During WW1 the mines had been nationalised but the date for the return of ownership to the mine owners was 31 March 1921. Nationalisation had provided some protection for wages as well as support for less economic pits but these safeguards were lost when ownership was returned to the mine owners which resulted in industrial action. This had a knock on effect on other industries that relied on coal.
- **Original form:** Although more expensive, the original householder form should be purchased to ensure you are accessing the information completed by a householder rather than a transcription which might contain errors. *Golden rule when researching: always access the original when possible.*
- Once paid for you can return to the document at any time in the future in your searches.

### **New questions on the 1921 Census:**

- **Employer's name and address:** A new feature of the 1921 Census is the inclusion of the name of employer and their address. *My grandmother who is visiting the family farm in Carmarthenshire gives an address in Barry as her employer which was a complete surprise especially as she has a seven month old child. The name of the factory or mine where an ancestor lived may provide further research opportunities as well as enabling the identification of work colleagues.*
- **Out of work:** This was a new category to be completed in this census. The instruction also was that if 'out of work' or on strike the name of the previous employer be included. South Wales was of course affected by the industrial action but it also highlights types of employment that was temporary, eg dock workers 'out of work' between ships.

- **Married, Divorce, Deserted(?):** Marital status has been extended to include divorce: *For persons over 15 write Single, Married, Widowed or for Marriage Dissolved by Divorce write 'D'. One or our great uncles has put the comment 'Wife deserted' not one of the options listed and a previously hidden part of our family history.*
- **Orphan children:** *For children under 15 write 'Both Alive', 'Father Dead', 'Mother Dead' or 'Both Dead'.*

### Questions not included in 1921 Census:

- **Fertility question,** ie How long married and how many children are there of this marriage.
- **Disability question.**

There have been complaints on Social Media about the cost of accessing the digital copies and transcriptions of the 1921 Census: £3.50 for each original page and £2.50 for a transcription – however the process of digitizing and indexing the census was a mammoth task with over 38 million individuals and 8.5 million households. The cost is still cheaper than a civil registration document and you do not need a subscription to Find My Past to access the material, which is available via Pay Per View the same as Scotland's People's records. Anyone with a Find My Past subscription has a 10% discount on purchases of the 1921 census. The 1921 Census is currently free to view at three locations: The National Archives at Kew, Manchester Central Library and the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. Find My Past has exclusive rights for a few years before other subscription websites such as Ancestry can also provide the material.



# NEWS FROM GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES

October-December 2021

We were pleased to receive confirmation in December that our status as an Accredited Archive Service has been renewed.

## **Volunteers**

- Our volunteers returned to onsite working in November but, due to the introduction of new Covid19 restrictions, the programme was suspended again in late-December.

## **Access and Community Engagement**

- Plans are in place to expand the number of seats available in the searchroom, including the reintroduction of PC access, but these are now on hold due to the introduction of new Covid19 restrictions in late-December.
- The Glamorgan Archives online events programme continues, with the final event of 2021 held on Friday 12 November when volunteers from the Living Levels Partnership discussed 'Sea Walls: Battles of Defence and Responsibility'. The first event of 2022 will be held on Thursday 27 January at 6pm when David Allen will be discussing 'Cardiff Arms Park: The Early Years'. Please see our website for a link to book a free place.
- Glamorgan Quarter Sessions Calendars of Prisoners, 1850-1920, have been published on Ancestry.
- Cardiff People First visited the Archives to undertake filming as part of the Taking Over the New Normal project, which aims to ensure heritage organisations remain accessible to all in spite of changes brought about by the Covid19 pandemic. The resulting films can be viewed on Cardiff People First's YouTube channel.
- Although we're currently unable to welcome school visits to the Archives, several schools have contacted us and we have provided advice and resources as appropriate, with our digital education resources available on our website, on People's Collection Wales, and through the Hwb. Virtual sessions have been held for one secondary school and a number of University student groups.

## **Conservation**

- Our Project Conservator, Helen Pedder, came to the end of her time with us at the Archives in November. Helen was working on our project to conserve the Plymouth Estate Surveys, funded by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust. Despite many interruptions as the result of Covid19 lockdowns, Helen managed to complete the vast majority of the work. The remainder will be completed by the Glamorgan Archives conservation team with support from Cardiff University conservation students.

## Collections

- Work is in progress to move our catalogue to a new system. This will include a new online catalogue, which will be launched on our website during the first part of 2022.
- We continue to receive new accessions. Notable accessions include:
- Bella Brown, Lord Mayor of Cardiff and Chairman of South Glamorgan, Papers (D1619)
- Deeds and photographs relating to Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil (D1818)
- West Park (Porthcawl) Limited, Glynbridge Homes, Architect's Drawings (D1820)
- Penarth Civic Society (D1824)
- Peniel Congregational Chapel, Llanharry Records (D1825)
- Bryn Seion Chapel, Ystrad Mynach, Records (D1834)

For up to date news and events <https://glamarchives.gov.uk/news/>

*Rhian Diggins*

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# DAFYDD JOHN (1822-1894)

## *The Pioneer of Music in Aberdare*

### #20704 Thomas Preece

Victorian Aberdare was considered a centre of Welsh culture, and music in particular. It was the home town of Griffith Rhys Jones (Caradog), leader of the “Côr Mawr”, and hosted the first National Eisteddfod in 1861. So for Dafydd John to be described as “the pioneer of music in Aberdare” by several local newspapers in his obituary<sup>1</sup> is high praise indeed. Dafydd - my 3rd great grandfather - was known originally to me by his English name of David John, which appears on the census and all of his official records, but it seems that in public life he was almost exclusively known by his Welsh name, and so that is the name I will use for him throughout.

Dafydd John’s musical career began in the 1840s, not in Aberdare but in Merthyr Tydfil, where he was a member of the Zoar Chapel. With up to nine hundred members at its peak, Zoar was one of the largest and most influential nonconformist churches in South Wales, and had a fine musical leader in its precentor, Rosser BEYNON. An iron miner by trade, Beynon also taught music both in church and privately, and in 1845 published a new collection of hymns in the Welsh language under the title *Telyn Seion* (“The Harp of Zion”). Beynon’s students were involved in the distribution of the hymn books, and in 1849 this brought Dafydd John to the Ebenezer Chapel in Trecynon, Aberdare<sup>2</sup>.

The minister of Ebenezer at that time was Rev W EDWARDS, who evidently saw much potential in Dafydd John as a musician, and invited him to become the chapel’s choir conductor. He gladly accepted, and moved to Aberdare that same year, initially taking on responsibility for the choir, and soon after became the sole director of music at Ebenezer<sup>3</sup>.

Dafydd soon set to work reforming and modernizing the small choir. The first change he implemented was in the assignment of parts to the various voices: SATB singing was already established by then, but with an unusual approach of the tenors singing the melody and the sopranos singing the tenor part, perhaps based on the theological idea that the leaders, and thus the melody

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<sup>1</sup> Evening Express, 6 Jan 1894, Page 1; Merthyr Express, 13 Jan 1894, Page 8; and Y Tyst, 19 Jan 1894, Page 7

<sup>2</sup> Cymru, Vol 6 Page 176-179

<sup>3</sup> Treharne, Jacob (Tiberog): Hanes Eglwys Annibynol Ebenezer, Aberdar, Page 66-69. Unless stated otherwise, all biographical information comes from this book.

singers, should be male. But Dafydd was successful in arguing that the music should be sung as the composer intended, and within a short time the soprano and tenor parts were assigned to the correct voices. This was not without controversy - indeed, the older members were very angry about this change to their traditions, and much hard work was needed to finally reach an agreement.

A further dispute was related to the choir's first concert, at Christmas of the same year. The young people proposed to hold a "chapel tea" in the afternoon before the concert - a communal tea party in which the visitors would pay a donation to the chapel's funds. Once again the older members were opposed to this, and argued that the Chapel would likely go into debt through it. But the minister, Rev Edwards, was on the side of the young people and the event went ahead, making a total profit of over twenty pounds - about £2500 in today's money.

In 1851 the chapel organised its first Eisteddfod - on a small scale at first, but following its success, a much grander one followed the next year. Dafydd John's choir were awarded the first prize, and many more victories followed, including one particularly memorable moment in 1862 when the choir competed in three separate pieces at the same Eisteddfod, and won all three. However, this eventually came to an end, when "an alleged gross act of injustice on the part of an Eisteddfod adjudicator so disgusted [Dafydd John] that he never afterwards competed at an Eisteddfod"<sup>4</sup>.

The "gross act of injustice" was, quite simply, when the Ebenezer choir failed to win a prize, for the first time in their fifteen years of existence. They were beaten at the 1864 Eisteddfod at Siloa, Aberdare, by the choir from the Bethania chapel. Both Dafydd and his choir believed that they had been unfairly misjudged and disgraced, and never competed again.

Dafydd, along with several members of his choir and his family, also participated in Caradog's "Côr Mawr". The "big choir" was an entirely appropriate name, as it consisted of some 460 voices from all over South Wales. The choir participated in a national competition at London's Crystal Palace in 1872 and 1873, both times winning the first prize. The giant cup, more than one metre in height, is on display at the St Fagan's Museum in Cardiff.

Dafydd was also a great supporter of music in other chapels throughout the Valleys, and on numerous occasions hiked with his choir over the mountains to

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<sup>4</sup> Merthyr Express, 29 Jan 1910, Page 4

a chapel in the next valley to perform a concert, returning the same way through the night.

On more than one occasion, Dafydd was formally honoured by the Ebenezer congregation for his efforts. In 1860, he was presented with a good sum of money and a harmonium, believed to be the first ever in the Cynon valley. In 1875, he received a further testimonial, along with a piano for his home, for his “wholesome influence and his unwavering energy in the sanctuary and for music in general”<sup>5</sup>.

By trade Dafydd John was a shoemaker, and by all accounts a very fine one. It is said that after he moved to Aberdare, many of his Merthyr customers would make the journey to see him whenever they needed new shoes. As early as 1851 he was able to employ two assistants, and by 1871 business was thriving to the extent that he had three men working for him. But even with such success, relatively few details of his professional career were ever recorded - his musical life was always considered much more important to anyone who wrote on the subject of Dafydd John.

One of Dafydd John’s last public acts was to formally open a library at the Ebenezer Chapel in November 1893. Dafydd had dreamed of a library for many years, but it was the work of William THOMAS, his successor as choirmaster, that eventually allowed the project to come to fruition<sup>6</sup>. He lived just long enough to see his vision become reality, and passed away on 5th January 1894 at the age of 71<sup>7</sup>.

Dafydd John was buried at Aberdare Cemetery. A huge number of mourners attended the funeral, which was conducted not only by Rev J Grawys JONES, pastor of Ebenezer, but also more than half a dozen other clergymen from various chapels in the district. Naturally the choir was in full force under its new director, singing a dozen hymns and anthems throughout the service and procession<sup>8</sup>.

In the months after Dafydd’s death, a competition was held to compose a Memorial Anthem to him. Words were written by the Chapel, and 23 entries of a musical setting were received. The winner was Mr W T REES (Alaw Ddu) of Llanelli, who was awarded the prize of £2, and the anthem was published and

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<sup>5</sup> Y Tyst, 19 Jan 1894, Page 7

<sup>6</sup> Hanes Eglwys Ebenezer, Page 52

<sup>7</sup> Evening Express, 6 Jan 1894, Page 1; Tarian Y Gweithiwr, 11 Jan 1894, Page 4; Merthyr Times, 12 Jan 1894, Page 7; Merthyr Express, 13 Jan 1894, Page 8

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

first performed at Ebenezer Chapel<sup>9</sup>. I would very much like to find a copy of this anthem, assuming it survives somewhere - but I haven't had any luck as of yet and would welcome any ideas or suggestions of where to look!

He was survived by his second wife, Sarah (his first wife Mary having died in childbirth shortly after moving to Aberdare) and by four grown children: Tom, John William, Mary and Margaret. All four were highly successful school teachers; Tom in particular rose to become President of the National Union of Teachers in 1905, alongside being the editor of the *Glamorgan Free Press* and later the first editor of the *Rhondda Leader*.

Finding Dafydd John's parents proved to be a much trickier task, however. Coming from a nonconformist family, he wasn't baptised in the Established Church, and so we have to rely on secondary sources to find out about his birthplace and parents. One journal article from after his death notes that "there was a dispute about the place of his birth, until we found the safest authority, in the evidence of one of the children, that he was born in Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire. When a young man his parents moved to Merthyr"<sup>10</sup>.

Any good genealogist will immediately raise a red flag at the idea of what his children thought being "the safest authority" - and with good reason, for on every census record he states that his place of birth was Merthyr Tydfil. And yet almost every article written about him says that he was born in Cilgerran - with the exception of an obituary from *Y Tyst*, which notes that he was born in Merthyr and that his parents, William and Margaret John, were both natives of Cilgerran but married after coming to Merthyr<sup>11</sup>.

Fortunately, pre-1837 marriages of nonconformists are much easier to track down than baptisms, due to the requirement that all marriages had to be solemnized in the Established Church, with the only exceptions being for Jews and Quakers. It seems therefore that his parents were William John and Margaret EVANS, married 18 April 1820 at St Tydfil's in Merthyr<sup>12</sup>.

Dafydd's siblings included William, Ann and Margaret, and while his obituaries suggest the names of other siblings and brothers-in-law, I haven't been able to find out anything much further about them. As I haven't been able to find

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<sup>9</sup> Tarian Y Gweithiwr, 2 Aug 1894, Page 1; 27 Sep 1894, Page 3; 11 Oct 1894, Page 2

<sup>10</sup> Cymru, Vol 30, Page 288-291

<sup>11</sup> Y Tyst, 19 Jan 1894, Page 7

<sup>12</sup> Parish Registers, Merthyr Tydfil. Welsh Archive Services / Gwasanaethau Archifau Cymru, via FindMyPast



Dafydd on the 1841 Census, it seems likely that he was living in the part of Merthyr Tydfil for which the census records are missing, and it seems plausible to imagine that his parents were also living in that same area - and so it seems like this brick wall will stand for a long time yet!

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank David Evans, secretary of Ebenezer Chapel, Aberdare, for his help and for providing access to documents from the Chapel's archives, and Heather EASON for her help in translating the many newspaper and journal articles from Welsh.

## NEW - ONLINE BRANCH - NEW

Any member interested in joining a new Online Branch to continue the talks and meetings once face to face meetings restart in all Branches is asked to get in touch.

As well as ideas for talks and meetings we need volunteers to run the online branch to include:

- Contacting and booking speakers,
- Setting up Eventbrite for each meeting;
- Advertising the events in the Newsletter, Journal, Website and Social Media
- Writing reports for the Journal, etc.

If you are able to help with any of the above please contact:

[chairman@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@glamfhs.org.uk)

## Volunteers Needed

To help with a range of Society Administration and Projects. If you are interested in finding out more about our projects or helping to run the Society please contact the following direct.

Membership: [membership@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@glamfhs.org.uk)

Finance: [finance@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:finance@glamfhs.org.uk)

Website: [website@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:website@glamfhs.org.uk)

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Aberkenfig Resource Centre: [arc@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:arc@glamfhs.org.uk)

# GENEALOGY TIPS

#146 David J Harris

I have done genealogy/family history for over 60 years, following in the old Welsh fashion, both male and female descent (ref Harris of Bryncoch & Rhydding GFHS 1987 vol 12 pp 6-7). My ancestry is mostly South and North Wales with some links to nearby English counties(ref personal DNA profile). The Welsh valued personal links to a greater degree of separation than was common amongst the English.

If you are just starting out try to interview your elderly family whilst they are still healthy enough to provide useful information. I seemed to have an affinity for the elderly and as a geriatric psychiatrist, in recent years it was a shock to start seeing patients younger than myself! I am now fully retired, ie more time for history!

I used to travel with a good camera and was able to photograph houses and copy ancestral photographs which I would otherwise never have had. More than once I have been frozen in wet Welsh graveyards digging up my ancestors as it were! My initial work was pre-computers, pre-Ancestry and pre-DNA etc and of course with the 100 year rule the 1861 Census and later was not accessible at that time.

You may find transcription errors in the Census eg HUNTERS were at one time in Llanbadarn Trefeglwys, Cardiganshire not Cambridgeshire. DNA beyond second cousins is not that useful unless you already know some of the history. If you are lucky enough to have a Family Bible with genealogical references so much the better. Small scraps of paper may be of value - I have a note c1890 from a man who had left his specs behind and refers to the little elecutionist (presumably my Grandma), signed "yr affectionate cousin" - for a while it was the only proof that I had of that cousin link.

In Victorian times the Welsh preachers were the pop stars of their time. Many chapel histories are in Welsh (which to my regret I do not speak ) but knowledge of English will suffice for most research, depending on which line you are following. My 3<sup>rd</sup> great Grandpa, David ROBERTS, b Llanuwchllyn, Merionethshire 1791, ordained Llangynidr 1816, d Trosnant 1872, was a fiery preacher (known by his titles Yr Utgorn 'Arian-the Silver Trumpet' and Hen Father Sir Fon 'Old Father of Anglesey'). I wrote around all his chapels and a minister in Gwynedd discovered his close friend was also a descendant of DR. I corresponded for years with that friend, the Rev GD Jones. One great grandchild was my Grandma, Winnie Roberts, BA UCNW Bangor, 1882-1965. She was Headmistress of the old Ystradgynlais County School; she was described in the Maesydderwen YCS History as a kid-gloved

disciplinarian. Also there was Sir Tudor THOMAS, FRCS (pioneer of corneal grafting); who told my mother she had taught him the only French he knew! Married women were not allowed to teach (unless widowed) so she was forced to resign on her marriage in 1910 to John HARRIS, PhC, MPS c1874-1964 of Ystradgynlais ex Seven Sisters. My Grandpa was educated at Watcyn Wyn School, Ammanford (in Welsh) and Wilsons School London (in English with his Hunter cousins). He trained in Pharmacy with his cousin John JONES (son of Anne HARRIS b 1823) of Merton.

My great uncle, ie Winnie's brother, Rev D P Roberts, MA Oxon, BA UCNW Bangor BD 1884-1966 was Professor of New Testament Greek at the Presbyterian College in Carmarthen, founded in 1791, as originally non-Anglicans were barred from Oxbridge. He was Best Man for Rev DE DAVIES, b Aberdare, at his wedding - my wife, Ceridwen JAMES, maternal grandfather! In the dark days of the Depression DPR was revered by his flock in Burry Port for his work (not unlike Tutu).

My mother's ancestor was John GILL, b 1759, Parish Clerk of Llandysilio, Montgomery. That is literally on Offa's Dyke as far east as you can go and still claim Welsh birth! You had to be able to read and write to assist the Vicar in his work. When he died in 1841 he was described by the Vicar in the Deaths Register in most glowing terms for his devout life. The family migrated south via Leominster and eventually to the then mining boomtown of Abertillery seeking work. My Grandpa, Herbert Gill, 1887-1975 eventually became a Monmouthshire County Councillor. His brother, Captain Ted Gill, MC Mametz Wood 1879-1923, ex Ruskin College Oxford was one of the rescuers at Senghenydd in 1913 when 439 miners and one rescuer died. He died just before the 1923 Election when Ramsay MacDonald came to power - widely tipped as cabinet material. His son John Gill 1923-2007, the Welsh character actor, was Mr Oak in Dr Who and was in Under Milk Wood on the West End stage in 1923.

You need to have some local geographical knowledge and understanding of history to interpret what you are finding. Remote hill farms (or now non-existent farms!) with poor signage can be very difficult to identify and locate. The reason why Wales became a nation of small hill farmers is that under gavelkind estates were divided amongst all the children; in many ways primogeniture was a better system maintaining a more economically-sized unit for the first-born, and younger sons might have to go off into trade or a profession.

The British OS maps post 1800s are much more detailed than their US equivalent which are mainly road maps. Tithe maps c1830s are also useful ref local archives (*Ed now available online on the National Library of Wales website*).

For many reasons many Welsh became prominent in the professions, notably teaching, law, engineering and medicine.

In Wills married women may be identified by their married surname or even maiden names! Because of the paucity of patronymic names people were often identified by their farm or trade or profession eg John Harris (b 1802) the Rhydding (of Cadoxton juxta Neath), John Harris (b 1874 ) the Chemist, David Roberts "Trosnant" and wives, eg my Grandma, Mrs Harris The Chemist, and my mother Mrs Doctor Harris. My mother, before her marriage, was Nurse Gill (SRN QN b 1916).

David Lloyd GEORGE is on his birth certificate David George. The chosen adoption of a middle name (usually maternal) was not an affectation but useful to identify individuals.

I have read and researched on many topics and of course, whilst the more prominent individuals are of interest in themselves through letters and the like they take one from one branch of the tree to another, everyone's lives reflect local, national and even World history. What is striking is how many whatever their circumstances became leaders in their respective fields.

My interests have included BRUNEL and the Vale of Neath Railway ref John Harris b 1802, Inspector of Masonry m Jane Hopkin of Cilhendre; David Thomas of Catasauqua "Father of the American Anthracite Iron Industry" b1792 m Anne Hopkin of Cilhendre; The Australian Gold Rush ref David Harris b 1831; the Dambusters ref AJ Harris my uncle was one of the Boffins: Dunkirk ref Brig LJ Harris (Cartographer) CBE b 1910; the poet Carnhaunawc friend of Parry family of Tretower Court who "took Aunt Bessie under the mistletoe at Mr Dry's wedding" ie 1841: the poet Islwyn ref Thomas of Llantwitffardre: the poet Ceiriog claimed unproven link via Roberts; the 18c medical families of Myddfai via Phillips of Cilycwm; history of medicine incl psychiatry and pharmacy incl geriatric care ; The plight of Jewish Refugees at Camp Kitchener ref Judge Trevor Hunter (son of Jemima Harris b1836) Chancellor of Diocese of Swansea and Brecon ref The Times 1 Nov 1939. The Belsen Trial ref CR Phillips MC via my gt gt grandpa Rev Morgan Phillips of Aberdare ex Cilycwm: My daughter Sian 4<sup>th</sup> gt grand dau of Gwenllian Prosser nee Parry 1798-1858 of Tretower Court was married there in a Civil ceremony in 2011 .

History has given me great pleasure. Outside of medicine it has been my main interest, especially genealogy and archaeology. Yet history is the one subject in which I have never done an exam!

ELIZABETH NUGENT,  
*Just a Wife and Mother?*  
#8872 Kathleen Rees

On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1872 a baby girl, named Elizabeth BEYNON, was born in Brunant, Cyffig, Carmarthenshire. In November 1948 this little girl now a grandmother and known as Elizabeth NUGENT, aged 76, died in Llandow, a small village in the Vale of Glamorgan.

So how did a child born in rural Carmarthenshire end up living in a small village in Glamorganshire?

As a child Elizabeth would have had to move wherever her father's occupation took him. When her parents, William and Eleanor, married in 1871. William was a gamekeeper in Cyffig, Carmarthenshire.

By the time she was nine years old age Elizabeth had moved twice, once to Llandysson where her brother, William James BEYNON and sister Mary were born and then to Monmouthshire when her father was appointed as gamekeeper for the KEMYS-TINTE family living at Cefn Mably, Llanvedw. This move, a long way from home in West Wales apparently followed a disagreement within her father's family.

In Monmouthshire the family lived in 'Greenmeadow' the Dower House on the Cefn Mably Estate. This was a very isolated spot as I knew only too well when visiting with my parents! After leaving the car at the local farm it was a very long walk across fields to reach the house.

From chats to my aunt I discovered that Elizabeth's father, William, 'ruled with a rod of iron'. The strictness he instilled in his children was still evident many years later. During our visits Elizabeth's brother and sister, William and Mary, insisted on good behaviour particularly at mealtimes: we were not allowed to leave the table until we showed we had finished our meal. Placing our knives and forks correctly by the side of the plates did this!

The three children attended Michaelston-y-Fedw School where they all completed 'Samplers'. Elizabeth's Sampler, which I have in my possession, was completed in 1884 when she was twelve years old.

During their childhood Elizabeth and Mary would help their mother, Eleanor, with the household chores and both became accomplished in butter and cheese making.

But where was Elizabeth, aged 19 in 1891? A trawl of the census has proved futile but certainly by 1901 I know she was working as a dairymaid at Clemenstone House, a large estate between Llandow and Wick in the Vale of Glamorgan, a long way from home. It was not unusual for children of workers on one large estate to be given employment on another large estate.

It was at Clemenstone that she met her future husband, Ernest Nugent, born in Llysworney in 1881, son of Frederick and Elizabeth. On 5 August 1907 Elizabeth and Ernest married at the church in Michaelston-y-Fedw with a reception at Greenmeadow. By this time Ernest was a platelayer working on the railway while living with his sister Mary in Barry.

Following their marriage Elizabeth and Ernest set up home at Grove Road, Llandow. Ernest continued to work on the railway, eventually becoming a signalman in Llandow. Elizabeth stayed at home to look after their three children, William Campbell, Ernest Rees and Eleanor Margaret (Peggy). However it appears that Elizabeth was not content with just being a wife and mother. From 1908 until 1921 while her husband, Ernest, was working on the railway, Elizabeth ran a shop in Grove Road, Llandow. Supplies for the shop were brought from Llantwit Major or Bridgend by horse and cart.

Fortunately for me, notes were kept by Elizabeth's daughter, Peggy, and give an insight into the important role that this shop played in village life. In addition to providing her customers with groceries Elizabeth would also give advice to those who sought help for health and household problems.

For example:

**Recipe for a cough** - *Boil a good handful of nettles in a quart of water, down to one and a half pints. Add half a pound of honey and take a wineglassful every morning!*

**Cleaning furniture** - *3oz beeswax, 1oz white soap, 10oz turpentine and 1 pint of water. Melt the wax and turpentine over a very slow fire. Then melt the soap in the water and add to the wax!*

In 1921 the family moved to a farm called 'The Grove' originally known as 'The Cot', on the outskirts of the village. This move was instigated by Elizabeth who was keen to put into practice butter and cheese making skills, learned from her mother, while living at Greenmeadow. Her daughter, Peggy, remembers turning the handle of the churn and was told '*If you heard it flip, flop, the butter was made*'. Elizabeth would say '*The better the weather the quicker the butter was ready*'.

Every Saturday, using a horse and dray with the produce perched on a plank across the middle of the dray, Elizabeth would travel to Bridgend and sell her wares at the market there. As well as butter and cheese she also sold dressed chickens and eggs. Elizabeth obviously relished this life on the farm where the three children were given specific tasks, eg taking care of sick chicks, ducklings and goslings if needed. *'If the chicks had their beaks open it was a sign of flu!'*

However after a few years Elizabeth was not content with this small farm and in 1927 when The Mill, Llandow, came up for sale she persuaded Ernest to buy it. In order to do this they needed a mortgage. Unfortunately this huge debt had an adverse effect on Ernest's health and he suffered a breakdown.

At about the same time he was badly injured after being hit by a car while riding home from work on his motorbike. Part of his ear was ripped off, and his life was only saved because a passing motorist happened to be a doctor. Ernest suffered with ill health from then on and in 1947 he decided to retire, and he and Elizabeth moved to 1 Railway Cottages, Llandow, that Ernest had bought a few years previously.

It was in that year that my family moved to The Mill in order for my father to run the farm, which meant I saw more of Elizabeth and became very fond of her. However she suffered a stroke in 1948 and died shortly afterwards. Apparently I was so upset I would not eat.

Although Elizabeth followed the 'usual' route of getting married, having children and looking after her husband she wanted or needed more.

How much is a woman influenced by what happens in the home when she is growing up? Is she determined not to follow in her mother's footsteps? When William became a gamekeeper in Monmouthshire her mother Eleanor had moved far away from her family in West Wales, bringing up her three children in a very remote location without any family close by for support. As far as I know Eleanor's role was purely being a housewife and mother, which in those days was a full-time job anyway.

Although I never knew either of her parents, I have been told that Elizabeth's father, William, was very much 'in charge', a very strict disciplinarian! Apparently he was so strong that he used a breast plough to cultivate the large garden!

Elizabeth's father drank a lot of beer, always having some for breakfast. Did all this beer drinking make him abusive and difficult to live with? I say this

because, apparently, at Elizabeth's insistence, all through his life, Ernest never drank alcohol and never went into a public house.

More and more there seems to be evidence that Elizabeth was in control in this marriage. Was this because she was stronger by the life she had led or perhaps Ernest, being the youngest boy of a family of 11, was used to being guided by his older siblings.

Why am I so interested in Elizabeth's life? Is it because I have an affinity with her, with Elizabeth being my second name, or is it that I admire her for abiding by the old adage that 'a woman's place is in the home' but showing how women could be so much more than wives and mothers.

"In some cultures the spirit of a grandparent is thought to be reborn in a descendant with the same name, a direct link into the world of the ancestors", (P Laslett, *The Character of Familial History, its limitations and the conditions for its proper pursuit*, in Hareven, T and Plakans - Family History at the Crossroads).

This is my Family History as told by my aunt, their daughter and recorded by my cousin, Richard Nugent, with references from Ancestry.com. Certificates and Census Returns.

*Ed: If a family works on the 'Estate' of a family such as Kemys-Tinte it is worth checking the landholdings of that family as it may well be the reason for the move to another county may be to work on another manor/property owned by that family.*



## JOURNAL THEMES

June 2022  
Mining & Miners

Deadline 20 April



# ST DAVID'S DAY 1915, BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Lucinda Matthews-Jones

*Lucinda Matthews-Jones is a lecturer based at Liverpool John Moores University. She is currently writing a book on the British university settlement movement. During her research she discovered and read letters sent from a group of Splott soldiers to Edward and Amy Lewis, held at Glamorgan Archives. This article emerges from this research.*

In March 1915, Guardsman David 'Dai' LUKER sent a letter to Edward and Amy LEWIS, a married couple who at the time were working tirelessly at Cardiff University Settlement. Written on YMCA stationery, Luker began by sending his 'thanks for [the] letter which I received this morning'. In a chirpy and lively tone, he went on to inform the Lewises that he had just moved regiments. He told them what he had got up to on St. David's Day and about life in the Army more generally. He closed in a formal tone, 'I remain Dai Luker', and added a postscript: 'Remember me to all of the Club members'. Why did Luker write to the Lewises? The postscript offers us the vital clues. Luker had attended the Lads' Club at Cardiff University Settlement.

The university settlement movement was founded in the 1880s to reconnect rich university graduates with the urban poor. In Cardiff, there was a desire for the University of Wales to turn its attention to the needs of East Moors, an area recently transformed by rapid urbanisation and industrialisation and with a high density of poor residents. The relative success of Cardiff University Settlement rested not only with University of Wales graduates, but also with ordinary middle-class Cardiffians prepared to give up their time to work for the settlement's various social and educational endeavours.

Edward and Amy Lewis both played an instrumental role at Cardiff University Settlement. Edward was the settlement's arithmetic tutor and summer camp worker. Amy was the leader of the Girls' and the Lads' Clubs. Edward was a Cardiff solicitor in his thirties and had moved to Splott when he married Amy (née HUGHES) in 1913. It is likely that they met and fell in love at the settlement. Luker's envelope shows that as a married couple, the Lewises chose to reside with their baby daughter Amelia not only in Splott, but at 2 University Place, a stone's throw from Settlement Hall which backed onto this cul-de-sac.



Patron of National Council of Y.M.C.A.'s:  
HIS MAJESTY THE KING.  
Patron Military Camp Department:  
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.

HEADQUARTERS:  
"GEORGE WILLIAMS HOUSE,"  
13, RUSSELL SQUARE,  
LONDON, W. G.

From 16th Luker 1915  
1st Batt. Welsh Regt. Guards Coy. 2  
 Address reply to White City  
Shepherd's Bush  
London W.

Dear Mr and Mrs Lewis many thanks  
 for letter which I received this morning was  
 glad to hear from you I have left the old  
 Regt and joined the Welsh Guards I was  
 one of the first Kings Guard at Buckingham  
 Palace on Saint Davids Day for the new Regt  
 We mounted Guard in grand style there were  
 thousands of people there most of them wore  
 the Lark they were taking our photos all  
 the time Lloyd George was there the King  
 watched us mount though the warden  
 we had a nice dinner sent to us and a  
 nice tea we are here for the time but we  
 shall not go out of London the Guards are  
 always in London there are a few Cardiff  
 boys joined and the Prince of Wales has  
 come with<sup>us</sup> from the 44 all those who mounted

Luker, a working-class Sploft lad, initially enlisted in the King's Guards, but subsequently transferred to the Welsh Guards when it was formed at the end of February 1915. He would spend the rest of the war in this regiment, eventually winning a military medal. At the time Luker wrote the aforementioned letter to the Lewises, he had yet to experience active combat in France. Earlier correspondence suggests that he was enjoying military life, boasting to the Lewises that he had won his swimming badge, was keeping himself clean, and that he was about to take his rifle certificate. In

his March 1915 letter he reported to the Lewises that *'We are getting looked after alright here[.] plenty of food (but) I don't know how long it will last, its just like a new sweeping brush'*. He also reported to the Lewises that he had recently returned back from a visit to Hastings with two fellow former Cardiff Settlement Lads' Club members.

The real excitement of the March 1915 letter, however, lies in his first-hand account of St David's Day. Written almost 100 years to the day, it described to the Lewises his experience of being on parade for his new regiment. After niceties, Luker quickly reported that *'I was one of the first Kings Guards at Buckingham Palace on Saint David's Day for the new Reg'*. By referring to 1<sup>st</sup> March as 'Saint David's Day', Luker acknowledged the relationship he had with his readers. The Cardiff University Settlement appears to have celebrated St David's Day not so much as an exclusively Welsh festival but as one that incorporated Wales into a four nations vision. St David's Day celebrations included Welsh and English songs. There was also Morris dancing. Ronald Burrows, the Scottish Settlement warden and Cardiff College Professor of Greek, would give a speech that sought to incorporate the Welshman, Englishman, Scotsman and Irishman together.

Celebrating St David's Day clearly helped Luker to feel at home in London. He wrote: *'their was Thousands of people their most of them wore the Leek they were taking our Photos all the time[.] Lloyd George was their the King watched us mount through the window[.] we had a nice dinner sent to us and a nice tea.....all those who mounted guard on Saint David's Day are to belong to the Prince of Wales Company'*.

It was not unusual for Luker to write without full stops. But in neat handwriting, he conveyed the centrality of his St David's Day experience to the transition he was making between Settlement House life and army life. He was proud that the parade was watched by the King and that Lloyd George joined them in marking the foundation of the Welsh Guard. This pride was evidently shared by the crowd, who wore St David's personal symbol, the leek. Alternatively, the crowd could have been expressing its support for the new Prince of Wales's company. Sadly, Luker's letter does not mention if his nice dinner or tea consisted of eating a raw leek. In nodding to the leek in his letter, though, he revealed how St David's Day was not confined to Wales in 1915, but was also to be found behind the gilded railings and gates of Buckingham Palace.

# SIR ALUN TALFAN DAVIES

(Part 1)

#11208 JP Lethbridge

## Introduction

My previous two articles in this journal looked at the 1943 University of Wales by election; and Evan Davies who came fourth out of the five candidates. Here I look at Alun Talfan Davies who came third. The victor Professor Gruffydd and the runner up Saunders Lewis are well known historic figures. Little information survives about Neville Lawrence Evans, who came last.

## Family Background

Alun Talfan Davies was born on 22 July 1913 at Berwyn, Gorseinon, near Swansea. He was the son of William Thomas (Talfan) Davies, a Calvinistic Methodist Minister, and Alys Davies nee Jones.

William Thomas Davies was born on 20 November 1873 at Yspty Ystwyth in the Gwnnws sub registration district of Cardiganshire. He was one of the five children of David Davies a woollen miller and Elizabeth Davies nee Thomas. At an unknown date William Thomas Davies changed his middle name from Thomas to Talfan. Talfan means tall beacon in Welsh.

William Talfan Davies was ordained in 1904 and appointed minister of Closygraig chapel near Newcastle Emlyn. In 1906 he married Alys Jones, twenty seven, the daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Jones. Benjamin Jones a farmer and woollen miller had in 1881 employed twenty men and three boys on 18½ acres. William Talfan and Alys Davies produced four sons in the next seven years Alun being the youngest.

The Reverend Davies was later appointed minister of the Libanus Chapel at Gorseinon; was Moderator of the West Glamorgan Calvinistic Methodist Presbytery; sat on many committees; and was a governor of Gorseinon General Hospital. He died on 5 October 1938 aged sixty four.

## Early Life

Alun Talfan Davies studied at Gowerton Grammar School near Swansea. It was founded in 1896 and went comprehensive in 1973. Many distinguished names feature among its former staff and pupils especially MPs and rugby players. He then studied at the University of Wales Aberystwyth, and Gonville and Caius College at Cambridge, getting a law degree.

In 1971 Alun Talfan Davies was made an Honorary Professorial Fellow of Aberystwyth. On Wednesday 27 April 1973 the Duke of Edinburgh the

Chancellor of the University of Wales made Davies an honorary doctor of law of that university; and gave ten other Welsh VIPs honorary degrees.

Edmund Gonville, the rector of Terrington St Clement, in Norfolk, founded Gonville and Caius College in 1348 making it Cambridge's fourth oldest surviving college. It was re-founded by the physician John Caius in 1558. Seven of its students have won Nobel Prizes and many other alumni feature in the Dictionary of National Biography.

On Thursday 26 January 1939 Alun Talfan Davies was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn aged twenty five. A picture of him in the Western Mail the next day shows him wearing spectacles. Poor eyesight probably explains why I have found no record of his military service in the Second World War; or of him having been a conscientious objector.

The first trial Alun Talfan Davies took part in I have found was on Saturday 30 November 1940 at Brecon and Radnor Assizes. He defended James Henry Cutter aged forty a Clyro farm labourer and sheep stealer. By arrangement Cutter, who had a previous conviction for this offence, pleaded guilty and got nine months imprisonment.

### **Marriage and Family**

On Saturday 25 July 1942 Alun Talfan Davies, twenty eight, married Eiluned Christopher Williams twenty seven, at the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in Charing Cross, London. His best man was his bank clerk older brother Elfyn Talfan Davies. The Reverend Ebenezer Gwyn Evans conducted the service. Those present included another of the groom's brothers the Reverend Goronwy Talfan Davies, the Anglican curate of King's Norton, Birmingham; and the Reverend Ieuan Iorwerth Phillips, the Calvinistic Methodist Minister of Trinity Chapel Swansea.

The bride's father Humphrey Richard Williams of East Finchley was born in Llanaber in 1883 and married Elizabeth Gwenllian Christopher at Crickhowell in 1912 being called a draper on his marriage certificate. He was called a company director in the 1939 Register and on his daughter's marriage certificate. He died of a heart attack at Stanmore Golf Club Clubhouse near Harrow on 19 August 1961 aged seventy eight. His death certificate called him a department store director. The bride was attended by a sister in law.

Alun Talfan Davies and his wife produced a son and three daughters.

### **Legal Career**

Alun Talfan Davies was made a QC in 1961, a Bencher of Grays Inn in 1969 and knighted in 1976. Much of his legal work was for the National Union of Mineworkers (the NUM) and was not heavily publicised. One of his cases was

when in October 1958 the National Coal Board (the NCB) sued seven miners of Nantgarw Colliery near Pontypridd, for alleged breach of contract.

A Team Captain and his six men had disobeyed an over-man's orders to work a particular coal face or put their coats on and go home. The miners claimed that the coal face was unsafe and they counter sued for lost pay.

Judge Rowe Harding heard the case at Pontypridd County Court. The NCB counsel was David Edward Thornton Pennant. Alun Talfan Davies represented the NUM. The court sat for many days, heard masses of evidence and was repeatedly adjourned. The judge delivered his verdict on 2 June 1959. The NCB was awarded £37 16s 4d damages for loss of production caused by the men's disobedience (about £2,000 by our standards).

Alun Talfan Davies represented the Light Railway Transport League when it protested against the closure of the Mumbles Railway at Swansea. This was the world's oldest passenger railway having been built for horse drawn trains. On 11 September 1959 the South Wales Traffic Commission (the SWTC) agreed that the South Wales Transport Company could close it. In November 1959 he appeared again before the SWTC. He represented forty three South Welsh councils protesting at the Western Welsh Omnibus Company's plans to raise fares especially in rural areas. In 1961 he represented them again before this tribunal on the same issue.

Nigeria became independent from Britain in 1960. A Nigerian politician Chief Anthony Eromosele Enahoro was accused of treason in 1962 by the Nigerian regime. He escaped to Britain but was extradited to Nigeria. He wanted Dingle Mackintosh Foot QC to defend him but the Nigerian regime would not let Foot enter Nigeria. Alun Talfan Davies defended Enahoro at his 1963 treason trial. Chief Enahoro was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. The political situation changed and he was released in 1966. He died in 2010 aged eighty seven.

The Free Wales Army was a noisy alleged terrorist group. In 1968 Alun Talfan Davies helped to prosecute some of its members who were accused of possessing explosives. They claimed that they wanted them for salmon poaching.

In 1971 Alun Talfan Davies helped defend a married couple accused of a family related Port Talbot double murder. They were found guilty and got life imprisonment. In May 1973 at Chester Crown Court he was the prosecution counsel and obtained the conviction for manslaughter of a seventeen year old man who had allegedly killed a fourteen year old girl. The youth got life imprisonment, but the judge said that this did not usually mean what it said.

Alun Talfan Davies was the prosecution or defence counsel in at least five other homicide trials. Three involved wives accused of killing their husbands in domestic quarrels, and one a man accused of killing the man's mother who was dying of cancer. The judge conditionally discharged him but warned that mercy killing was still murder.

The last recorded case Sir Alun Talfan Davies QC was involved in was when in April 1982, a Nelson, Glamorgan, miner aged eighty six, was tried for killing his wife of nearly sixty years. Alun Talfan Davies for the defence proved that the man was insane and the man was admitted to a psycho-geriatric hospital.

In 1977 Sir Alun Talfan Davies QC had obtained the acquittal of Thomas David Melvin *Mel/ John* of Cwmafan a West Glamorgan Labour County and Port Talbot Borough Councillor who had been Mayor of Port Talbot in 1971-1972. He had allegedly double claimed expenses. He returned to public life and was Mayor of Port Talbot again in 1997-1998. He died in 2009 aged seventy seven.

Alun Talfan Davies was Recorder of Merthyr Tydfil from 1963 to 1968. In 1969 he was appointed Recorder of Swansea and later that year was appointed Recorder of Cardiff. In 1972 he was appointed Honorary Recorder of Cardiff and a Recorder of the Crown Court posts he held until 1983 when he was seventy. He took his oath in London in English and Welsh in January 1972. He was Deputy Chairman of Cardiganshire Quarter Sessions from 1963 to 1971; sat on the Court of Appeal for Jersey and Guernsey from 1969 to 1983; and on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board from 1976 to 1985.

## **Thanks and Acknowledgements**

Many people helped me with my research. I must thank Cathays Heritage Library in Cardiff; the South Wales Miners Museum; HSBC Group Archives; Newtown Library; the Farmers' Union of Wales and its Cardiganshire Branch; Carmarthen Archives; Peter Davies; Ceredigion Archives; Peter Jones; Elin Jones MS; Glamorgan Archives; the Guildhall Library; the British Library; the Drapers' Company of London; Stanmore Golf Club; the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the Welsh National Woollen Museum.

## **Part 2 Political Career and Aberfan – June 2022**

Glamorgan Family History Society  
Cymdeithas Hanes Teuluol Morgannwg

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 March at 2 pm

Followed by Talk at 3 pm

“History and Work of the  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission”

Register for the AGM & Talk on Eventbrite  
[www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)





# EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

A group of volunteers in Germany is appealing for help in tracing the family of a Barry-born soldier killed there shortly before the end of the second world war.

In the last days of WW2, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1945, fourteen British soldiers died in Kutenholz, Germany when their tank was blown up by a remote controlled mine. One of them was Trooper James Henry WOODFIELD, who was born in Barry. He was 25 when he died.

An anonymous donor has paid for the men's names to be inscribed on four stone slabs that have been erected in tribute to the men who died. (See images on back cover). A group of German citizens has been working hard to identify the soldiers and to find any descendants, to let them know what happened, and that their relatives have been honoured with memorials at the place where they died.

The campaign has been led by amateur researcher Debbie Buelau, who uncovered previously unknown details of the soldiers' deaths. Debbie explained: *"They had come into our area to liberate us. It is sad as many of them were really young. It is important to let families know what happened to their loved ones when they died here — and that there is now a memorial to them."*

It is known that James WOODFIELD was born in Barry, and that in 1921 he was living at 38 Merthyr St with his parents, Charles Henry Woodfield, who was a boot and shoe repairer employed at 23 Holton Road, and his mother Ethel GREENWOOD. By 1939 his father had died and his mother and two sisters, Jessie (b 1918) and Olive (b 1922) were living in Skipton, Yorkshire and were all textile workers. James' father, Charles, had a lot of siblings born in Barry, they include: Albert, Violet, Harriet, Lillian and Alfred Woodfield. Before James was born his father had lived at Foster Street and Holmes St, Cadoxton. It is likely that descendants of James' uncles and aunts are still living in the Barry area. Anyone connected to the family of James Woodfield is encouraged to contact Debbie Buelau at [debbie.buelau@t-online.de](mailto:debbie.buelau@t-online.de) or Sue Bowyer of GFHS who has been helping Debbie in her research – [skbowyer@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:skbowyer@yahoo.co.uk)

#9820 Sue Bowyer

Dear Editor

With reference to your article on Blaengarw's lost young men in the Glamorgan Family History Society, Journal No 144, December 2021 I was very interested to see Alfred Jones aged 25, Private in the Middlesex Regiment, killed in action in Hong Kong 25 December 1941. Why? Because my grandfather was also killed in Hong Kong whilst serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Middlesex Regiment. So I checked the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website and amazingly the records show they are both recorded with the notation MR 572940 Pill Box 14 Deep Water Bay Brick Hill and are buried in the Sai Wan War Cemetery in Plot 3 A 6 (Murphy) and Plot 3 A 11 (Jones) along with the other members of Pill Box 14.

Even more of a coincidence, my grandfather James Michael MURPHY was born in Victoria Street, Pontycymmer in 1913. He joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Middlesex Regiment in 1929 and served until 1936, when he left the Army and moved to Oxford. However, he re-enlisted with the Middlesex Regiment in May 1940 being posted to Hong Kong in May 1941. My Great Grandfather, James Vincent Murphy, DCM, also served with the Middlesex Regiment in the 2nd Boer War and through World War One. He was then heavily involved with the Royal British Legion, Garw Valley Branch, until he moved also to Oxford in 1936.

Would you know Alfred's parents' names? I ask because one of my Grandfather's sisters (one of my Great Aunts) married a Jones and I wondered if there is any further family connection.

Also do you know if there are any members of Alfred Jones' family still in the area? I can recommend some books about the Battle for Hong Kong. These have some details about Pill Box 14, although neither Private Murphy or Private Jones are mentioned specifically by name. If they were interested of course.

There are also a couple of other names in your article which are of interest from my family history perspective, but I may be able to trace those connections.

*#20555 David Murphy*

*Can anyone help with David's enquiries?*

# 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.**

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](http://www.glamfhs.org.uk)

1. On Home Page – *Click on 'Member Log In'.*
2. Log in using your Username: *Your email address.*
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- If you have too many attempts at your password your account will be blocked.
- 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.

*website@glamfhs.org.uk*

# SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

## ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY BRANCH

Building on our successful return to face to face meetings, November's meeting was based on members' research and project work. Members present decided which projects they wanted to be involved with and work was allocated accordingly.

We have the following projects currently being undertaken:

- Aberdare leader – Obituaries from 1951;
- Transcribing of funeral books for undertaker AJ Jones of Hirwaun starting from 1910;
- 1930 Aberdare Register of Electors covering the Parliamentary Borough of Merthyr Tydfil including the Parish of Aberdare.

Anyone interested in becoming involved in project work please contact me on the e-mail address below. We are very grateful to the commitment shown by our branch volunteers who gave up their time to transcribe these records for us.

The December meeting saw a last minute change to our scheduled guest speaker, we were grateful to Ann Watts for stepping in at the last minute. Ann is a familiar speaker to our branch and has given several talks to the branch over the years. As usual Ann's talk on "Royal Scandals" came up trumps we were treated to a very informative and humorous talk.

In January after an update on projects and research support, there was a lot of excitement around the release of the 1921 Census. A talk was given by Pat Rees on what to expect from the 1921 census. A general discussion followed on what new information members had discovered, and any problems they had encountered, although not all members present had yet accessed the Census some deciding to wait until the information become freely available.

We regret to record the passing of two Branch members: John Lewis who died on 14<sup>th</sup> November and Jerry Moran who died on 30<sup>th</sup> December 30<sup>th</sup>. They had been active branch members and involved in transcribing census records and Aberdare leader Obituaries for the branch. Sadly both had suffered ill-health in their last years.

*Pat Rees, [aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE

The Resource Centre remains closed at the time of writing. 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](mailto:arc@glamfhs.org.uk) & [research@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:research@glamfhs.org.uk).

Since the publication of the last journal, we continue to expand our number of publications via the method of Downloads and they are proving popular. We are now starting on the MIs, so watch this space and check our shop pages at Genfair: [www.genfair.co.uk](http://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 Tree documents for the next journal.



## BRIDGEND BRANCH

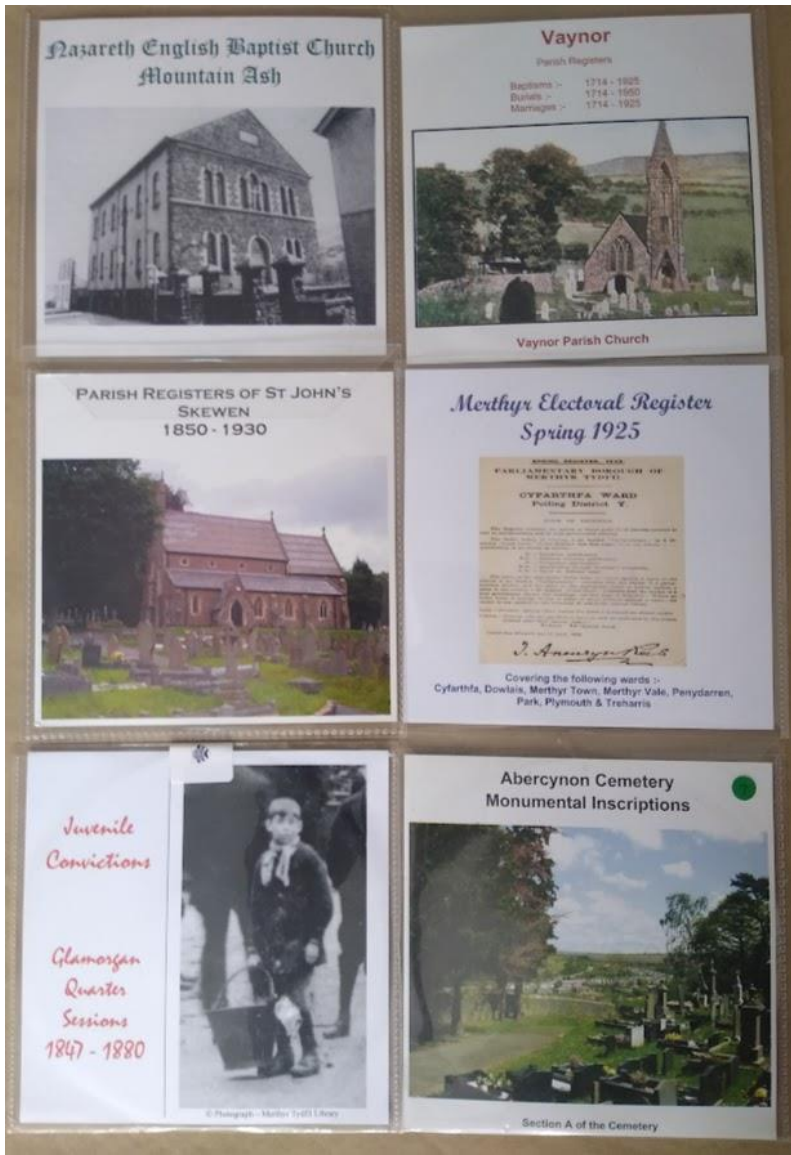
The Bridgend Branch continues to keep members informed on events via newsletter but have no immediate plans to recommence face to face meetings. If you are a local member but do not receive the monthly newsletter via email and would like to know when we plan to re-start meetings give us a call and we can add you to a list of members to be contacted directly when things change. For contact details see inside front cover of the journal.

Members of the committee are trialling offering monthly research help in two local libraries in Bridgend. Initially we are offering our services in Pyle and Aberkenfig libraries between 10-12 on a Saturday morning. We would love to see you, even if only for a chat. See details inside back cover of the next two Saturday sessions.

Members of the committee are available to answer questions and research queries via email.

*Nancy Thomas, [bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk)*

Some New Download Titles



Also available as Downloads are a number of our Memorial Inscription Booklets – see Genfair for details. [www.genfair.co.uk](http://www.genfair.co.uk)

## CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH REPORT

Cardiff & Vale Branch will continue to organise online meetings for the Society via Zoom whilst a return to Insole Court is not practicable. A programme has been planned until July 2022. Reports from recent meetings are provided below.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> November, Rhian Diggins from Glamorgan Archives discussed their project on the coal records for South Wales: 'Glamorgan's Blood'. Rhian delivered a fascinating and wide-ranging talk which explored the pay books and worker living conditions, alongside reports of accidents and illness in the mines. It opened up many possibilities for future research and was one of the branch's best attended lectures.

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November former GFHS chairman Nick Davey gave a fascinating and moving presentation: "My Ancestor was a WW2 Pilot". He discussed the work he had undertaken into the military career his late uncle, who was killed in action in 1945. There was a lively and interesting discussion following the lecture as attendees explained their own research and Nick provided lots of useful hints.

"What happened to Lucy", "Researching South African Genealogy" and "Migration and Wales" were all our recent talks packed with information and resources delivered online to help with furthering our family history research.

In December, Ian Waller's presentation, "What happened to Lucy?", described ways of breaking through a brick wall to find a child lost from a family tree. Before 1927 there was no legal adoption and we learnt about child adopters, baby farmers, child sales through newspaper adverts, being taken in by extended family, orphanages, ragged schools and foundling hospitals. We heard about the subsequent changes in the law and child emigration societies and where useful records could be found. There are still significant challenges today in finding someone but there is a process in place to apply for information from the General Register Office and of course DNA can be used to find a biological family.

If you want to know anything about your South African genealogy Sue MacKay, one of our members, is the person to ask, with her deep knowledge and experience of researching records there. Sue gave an excellent PowerPoint demonstration to an appreciative audience which was clear and practical taking us step-by-step into the national archives of South Africa, the EGGSA website, and the unindexed records of Family Search. She described the three waves of emigration to South Africa from the UK and inspired us with her dedication in transcribing the 1820s applications to emigrate there which are held at the National Archives at Kew, some of which were refused. Sue has also

transcribed many BMD from South African newspapers as well. At this point, our host, Jane Graves, reminded everyone how valuable are such volunteers for our research and that there are always opportunities for transcribing records for Glamorgan Family History Society – Just name your interest!

In January another fascinating talk was given by professional genealogist, Gill Thomas on Migration and Wales. This covered the period from pre-industrial revolution times up to 1911 when Wales had a greater level of immigration than any of the other home nations. We learned about the drovers' routes, the constant steamship traffic around the Welsh coast, and the Welsh communities in London and Liverpool as well as in America, Australia and Patagonia. A useful handout was distributed to the attendees.

Mention must be made of the “Mulled Wine and Chat” evening in December which had the feel of an informal Christmas party(online of course!) Members wore Christmas jumpers, hats and with some snowy backdrops put us in the festive mood. We were encouraged to reflect on our memories of our childhood Christmases and then the present day gifts of genealogy books and DNA tests. We discussed the possible pitfalls and sensitivities required and then followed a lovely revelation from a member of the joy of finding her ‘new’ family through DNA recently. We ended with Anouska setting us the challenge of deciding what our goals in family history research would be in 2022.

The Coffee and Chat in January had Lydia Stirling, conservator from Glamorgan Archives as our guest. Photographs of objects had been sent to her in advance for her to advise on ways and equipment to preserve them. There was a snakeskin handbag from the fifties with a packet of cigarettes in it, a beaded pincushion, a Family Bible, a wooden table, medals, maps, photographs, scrapbooks and delicate documents. Lydia described what was needed in each case and explained when and how to get specialised conservation advice. The Archive staff are able to give advice by appointment and have some archival material available at cost price. For many of the items Lydia suggested labelled custom made archive boxes which can be ordered from the Archives where there is a box making machine. A very practical and helpful evening for all those with precious items to keep and pass on.

*Jeremy Konsbruck, Karen Prior & Jane Graves, [cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk)*

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You can also follow us on **[@GlamorganFHS](https://www.twitter.com)** or **[@Cardiff\\_GFHS](https://www.twitter.com)**



## MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

We are trying to 'navigate' through these strange and difficult times and continue to have afternoon meetings in Soar as these are proving to be popular. Our speaker for the November meeting was to have been Clive Thomas, a well known local historian and the expert on the coal industry, but he was not able to give his talk due to a short term health problem and the loss of his voice. In these circumstances we are usually fortunate in having Carl Llewellyn, who has a number of well prepared talks and is always willing to help. However, on this occasion we resorted to our collection of old films of Merthyr Tydfil, which were very well received.

The December meeting was a social event with home-made mince pies kindly provided by Bev Robins and Viv Pugh gave an excellent light-hearted but highly informative talk on the cinema of 1940. Although we have had no problems so far in having our meetings in Soar, which have been well attended, we decided to postpone our January 2022 meeting due to tightening Covid 19 restrictions, with numbers now being limited again in Soar.

The Merthyr Tydfil Branch is trying to assist Alexandra Cransac, a French School librarian who is writing a dissertation about the links between Welsh Ironworks and those in France and the British (mainly Welsh) workers who went over to France (Decazeville and other towns) to set up the Ironworks in the 1820s/1830s. She has a few families which she is unable to trace and doesn't know if they returned to Wales or not. She is also preparing an online database with all the names and the information gathered in France and UK records.

If any member of the GFHS has ancestors who worked in France in the early nineteenth century. I would be grateful if they would get in touch and share information for this worthwhile project.

*Carolyn Jacob, [merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk)*



## PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

We still have no idea of how soon our branch can restart our meetings. We had hoped to restart in February as we were advised by Pontypridd Museum that there was going to be a 'Grand Re-Opening' on 21<sup>st</sup> January, but then due to the increased restrictions it has had to be postponed. So unfortunately we are still in the dark but hope to have better news by the next journal..

*Meic Jones, [rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## SWANSEA BRANCH

Since March 2019, due to the imposed Covid restrictions we have been unable to hold branch meetings either in the Discovery Room at Central Library, Swansea or speaker's meetings in the Civic Centre. Both locations are still unavailable to us. Limited facilities at present in West Glamorgan Archives have also meant the suspension of transcription activities.

Our first Zoom meeting was held in September. This was the first Zoom experience for many of us and not without a few hitches. Nine members took part. After discussion it was decided that for the immediate future meetings would be held online. Advice for members who may wish to take part in future Zoom meetings is available on the GFHS website and on the following page.

Our AGM was held via Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> October. Fourteen members took part. We were delighted that we were able to elect a new chairperson. Janet Neilson was persuaded to fill the post left vacant on the resignation of our previous chairman, Jeff Coleman. We are thankful for Jeff's long standing contribution to Swansea branch and are pleased that he will continue to support us in future. He will remain as our representative on the Executive Committee. We also welcomed Julie Edmunds who agreed to become our new treasurer. Our thanks to Michael Coz for his term in office. After the AGM we were joined by 13 non-members for a talk by Jeff Coleman on 'Thinking outside the box'. He gave us some useful suggestions which might help in solving some of the brick walls we all encounter.

In November Sue Hamer guided us through using Newspapers in our research. Her talk was entitled 'Well I didn't know that'. She reminded us that searching newspaper reports can reveal things about our family history that were previously unknown to us.

Our next Zoom talk will be given by Janet Neilson on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb at 7.00pm. The title of her talk is 'Celebrating Judaism with the Swansea Hebrew Congregation'.

In the spring and summer we are proposing to hold several walks of historical interest. It is likely that these will take place in the afternoon. This will be a new initiative for our branch. We hope that some of our members who are reluctant to attend meetings in the evenings will feel able to join us. We promise that they won't be too strenuous. Further details will follow.

*Cherry King & Jeff Coleman, [swansea@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto: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 instructions explaining how to book a free ticket and download Zoom.**

## **How to Book a Free Ticket:**

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

**You cannot access the event 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](http://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 event. 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 event 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](mailto:onlineevents@glamfhs.org.uk)

# JOURNAL GUIDELINES

When submitting material for inclusion in the journal please follow the following guidelines when possible. Here are some simple formatting suggestions that can save our Editor considerable time when assembling the journal.

1. Use Word.doc when possible or its equivalent.
2. Use Arial font and single spacing for the main body of the text.
3. Do not set heading or subtitle formats as these need to be changed to the Journal format.
4. Use Open Punctuation, ie no full stops after abbreviations such as Dr. or Y.M.C.A., as these additional punctuation marks add to the size of the file and have to be removed.
5. Dates do not need to be written - the 20<sup>th</sup> of October – remove the ‘the’ and ‘of’.

Please quote the sources used so that other members can benefit from your research findings.

Articles should be approximately 1000-1500 words in length. We will ask you to serialize the articles into more than one part and resubmit if they are over 1500 words in length.

Contributors must ensure, if submitting images and documents, that they have obtained the permission of the copyright holder(s).

The copyright holder of digital images used on websites will be different to the original copyright holder and their permission is also needed to enable us to reproduce the digital image in the journal. The Editor reserves the right to remove any images from articles where permission to use has not been obtained.

Articles for inclusion in the journal should be sent via email to [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk) before the published deadlines.

## **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

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## Aberdare Branch Meetings

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month,  
2pm at Cynon Valley Museum, Gadlys, Aberdare CF44 8DL

10 Feb	Industrial South Wales in Art – Brian Davies (rescheduled from December)
10 Mar	Research & Projects update
14 Apr	The Hier Family, Workhouse & WW1 – Rob Jones
12 May	Research & Projects update
9 June	Guest Speaker – TBC

## Cardiff Branch Meetings

Online Via Zoom  
Tuesday evening – 7.30 pm  
Thursday evening Coffee and Chat – 7 pm

17 Feb	Coffee & Chat: Researching in Cardiff and the Vale – Nick Davey
22 Feb	Using DNA for Family History – Michelle Leonard
1 Mar	Birth & Death – The Hidden Secrets of Registration – Anthony Marr
17 Mar	Coffee & Chat – DNA, Gedmatch etc
5 Apr	Was Your Ancestor a Criminal? An examination of 18 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Crime - Dr Colin Chapman
21 Apr	Brickwall Session – Send in your Queries to <a href="mailto:cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk">cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk</a>
10 May	The Workhouses of Wales – Peter Higginbotham
19 May	Coffee & Chat – Researching the 1921 Census
7 Jun	An introduction to Irish family history research – Natalie Brodie
16 Jun	Coffee & Chat – Researching Irish Ancestors
5 Jul	Divorced, Bigamist, Bereaved – second and subsequent marriages – Rebecca Probert
21 Jul	Coffee & Chat – Gill Thomas, AGRA TBA

**Register for our online talks on Eventbrite:**

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

## Merthyr Branch Meetings

Soar Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais, CF47 8UB  
on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 2 pm

8 Mar	Discussion on 1921 census and bring along your problems. We will also show an old film of Merthyr Tydfil
12 Apr	How to Trace Minorities – Daryl Leeworthy (rescheduled)
10 May	The Black Death – Barrie Jones
14 Jun	Guided Walk around an Historical Area of Merthyr Tydfil

## Swansea Branch Meetings

Monday, February 14 at 7 pm – Zoom Talk by Janet Neilson, 'Celebrating Judaism with the Swansea Hebrew Congregation'.

**Register on Eventbrite**

Monday April 25<sup>th</sup> - Walk led by Janet Neilson on items of historical interest. To include a Blue Plaque at Swansea Civic Centre, to the Cenotaph. Meet at 2 pm at Civic Centre.

Monday June 13<sup>th</sup> – Walk led by Janet Neilson on 'Old Sketty'. Meet 2 pm at Uniting Church, Dillwyn Rd, Sketty and finishing at Bethel Graveyard.

## OTHER ONLINE EVENTS

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/>

Online Events from the National Archives (Kew)

2 pm Tuesday 15 March, Researching your Family History –  
Military Sources

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



Ymddiriedolaeth  
Ddiwyllannol  
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!**

10-12md: 19<sup>th</sup> February  
Aberkenfig & Pencoed Libraries

10-12md: 19<sup>th</sup> March  
Pye & Bridgend 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](mailto:bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk)





WW2 Memorials - Kutenholz, Germany  
Emails to the Editor, page 41

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