



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

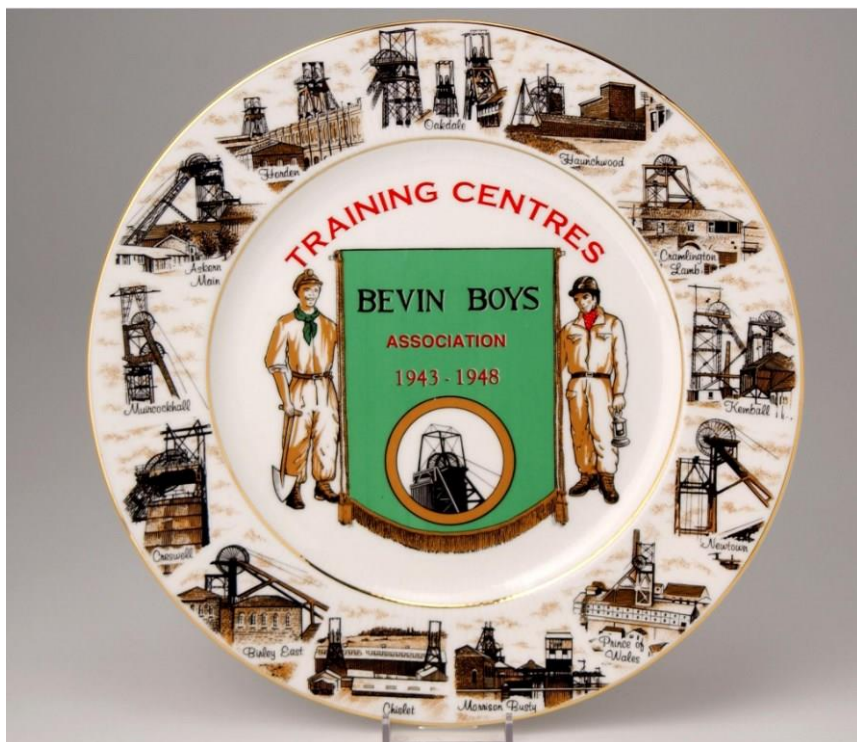


Image courtesy of Garw Valley Heritage Society

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Wood carving in Parc Slip Nature Reserve, as a memorial to the men, boys and horses who lost their lives in the disaster of 1892, adjacent to the monument below



Monument in Parc Slip Nature Reserve, built with 112 stones, one for each life that was lost in the disaster.

Photographs of monuments, lamp and carving are editor's own



CONTENTS

Title	Author	Page
Society Officers & Committee Members		4
Editorial	Jean Fowlds	5
Chairman's Message	Sue Hamer	6
The South Wales Coalfield: A Geologist's View	Ian Black	7
My Family Tragedy during the General Strike	David JK Jones	9
Parc Slip – A Terrible Explosion	Jean Fowlds	12
Miners' Safety Lamps	Jean Fowlds	13
Foul Air Disaster	Gerald Jarvis	14
A Miner's Wedding Day	David Rees	16
The Bevin Boys		17
Starting your Coalfield Family Research	Glamorgan Archives	18
Transport Rules for Horse Haulage		19
A Mining Ghost Story	Dai Willoway	21
William John Maull, Tower Colliery	Pat Rees	22
Aberfan Recollections	Various	24
The Aberfan Tribunal & Alan Talfan Davie	JP Lethbridge	26
Morgan Watkins	Angela Hughes	27
Washing Line	Anon	29
Local History Books as a Resource	Gareth Hicks	30
Links between Wales and Ukraine		31
Sir Alan Talfan Davies (Part 2)	JP Lethbridge	32
Zooming Has Far Reaching Results!	Sue Mackay	38
Letters to the Editor, Book Review	Jean Fowlds	39-40
Society News & Reports/Forthcoming Meetings		41-51

Society's Objectives © Glamorgan Family History Society

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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EDITORIAL

Croeso! Welcome - to Summer 2022!

We wanted some mining stories for this one, after all, South Wales was at one time the producer of one-third of the world's coal, and a hundred years ago nearly 233,000 men in South Wales were involved in the mining industry, so it is likely that many of our members will be able to trace someone in their families with mining connections. I did not want to have solely a catalogue of mining accidents and disasters, but inevitably those are the stories most meaningful to those who have lost a relative, so there are a few, but we also have some references to aspects of mining not in the spotlight. The women's roles (constant washing), the horses who only saw the light of day for 2 weeks in the summer, the reluctant Bevin Boys, and in case you thought that nothing further could be said about the terrible tragedy of Aberfan, we have an account of Alun Talfan Davies' involvement with the tribunal held after the disaster, and his chairmanship of the Trustees of the Aberfan Fund. Some reflections by passers-by at the time are also included.

A miner's wedding day and a ghost underground are some of the other items. Therefore I hope you enjoy this edition, or at the least find it interesting; these can only be a fraction of the accounts of lives that belong in the recent past, but should never be forgotten.

For the next edition, due out in September, the mining theme has triggered thoughts for a related topic: so many have grandparents and great-grandparents that came to South Wales in search of the 'Black Gold', not all to work underground but to be employed in all the supporting industries - the butchers, bakers, tailors, shops of all kinds, pub owners, entertainment businesses, all there because of coal. Therefore please write in about your family if they left their places of birth to come here - the pull and push of IMMIGRATION/EMIGRATION! My own grandfather and his brother came from Somerset to the Rhondda to work down the pit, but like many children, I did not ask enough about their motivation to make the move, or the circumstances that made them do it. Hopefully some of you have a much better account of similar life-choices.

Please submit by 20th July for inclusion in the September issue.

Meanwhile, with the threat of Covid hopefully receding, have a good Summer!

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Thank you to those members that attended our AGM on Saturday 26 March, which was held for the second year online via Zoom. A decision will need to be made about next year's AGM shortly whether to return to a face to face AGM or continue online. Details of the Society Officers and Executive Committee for 2022/2023 can be seen on page 4. Society Trustees/Committee members are elected to serve for one year at a time with a maximum of five years consecutive service in a particular role. Anyone interested in joining the EC can attend the quarterly meetings (July, October, January and April) as a guest in order to learn how the Society is organised.

Many Society roles are supported by an administration team to cover for holidays etc. We always need additional volunteer support particularly at busy periods during the year. During the quieter Summer period (June to August) it is possible to carry out training sessions for particular roles. **We currently need to appoint a Membership Secretary/Data Manager to be in place by 1 September.** Anyone interested in this role please contact membership@glamfhs.org.uk for further details.

As the Covid-19 restrictions are further eased here in Wales many branches are now also planning to return to face to face meetings. Some branches are also providing historic walks and visits during the Summer months where they are not planning to return to face to face meetings until the Autumn. **Have a look at the wide range of events being offered this Summer (Pages 49 and 50). This must be the most extensive we have ever offered for a long time! Our thanks to our Branches for organising such an interesting programme.**

The first committee meeting of our new Online Branch was held in April and plans for online talks September to December are now being finalized.

Our Resource Centre at Aberkenfig will also be reopening to the public in June starting with 'bookings only' appointments. We have just had a large collection of books donated to the Society by Gareth Hicks. Gareth is known to many as 'Mr Genuki'. Over the years he has maintained many Welsh pages on genuki providing family historians researching their Welsh ancestry with a wonderful free resource. The books he has donated are now being added to the catalogue at Aberkenfig. For more information on how local history books can help with family history research see article by Gareth on page 30.

Our monthly MailChimp Newsletter provides up to date information about all our events, new resources etc. If you do not receive a copy via email you can 'opt in' by using the form on the website. <https://www.glamfhs.org.uk/newsletter-opt-in-form>

Sue Hamer, Chairman, 1 May 2022
chairman@glamfhs.org.uk

THE SOUTH WALES COALFIELD, A GEOLOGIST'S VIEW

#10631 Ian Black

The South Wales Coalfield extends across Pembrokeshire in the west to Torfaen in the east. The coal seams are located in upper carboniferous rocks which were formed about 318 million years ago, when the climate was warm with high perennial rain, which produced swamp conditions where various plants grew up to 30 metres high. These coastal swamps were then invaded by the sea causing the organic plant life to die and fall into the waters below it. Mud and sand were then deposited until the vegetation in the swamps grew again, and the organic material that was buried in the swamps compacted to form coal. Underneath the coal seams, soil which has rootlets in it, is represented by underclay or seat earth. This cycle of marine and then non-marine deposits was repeated over a period of about 19 million years producing many coal seams. Some were only a centimetre thick; others were two metres thick.

Early coal mining consisted mostly of levels being driven into coal seams from where they outcropped on valley sides, but from 1850 South Wales mining proceeded very actively as the demand for coal was becoming much higher, and the richest deposits were found in the South Wales Valleys.



A typical Valleys village, with coalmine in the centre and hills behind

Numerous coal mines were opened. Some were drift mines where you could walk down the mine to the coal seams, but most were deep pits where shafts

were constructed so that men and coal trams could be sent to the bottom of the pit and brought back up in a cage connected to winding gear. Nantgarw Colliery at 782 metres deep was the deepest pit in South Wales in 1915.

In 1913 Barry was the largest coal exporting port in the world and Cardiff was the second largest. At this time the coalfield was producing 56 million tonnes of coal and employing 232,800 men. Coal deposits are not exhaustible, as seams were mined and other seams had to be found that the miners could work. There was also the fact that after the coal bearing rocks were formed earth movements distorted the rocks, causing them to be folded, or faults occurred causing rocks to move, making mining very difficult. Tunnels had to be driven off the main shaft to find other seams that would keep mines working; the men had to walk a mile or more to some mining areas. Later small underground trains and trams were used to take the miners to their working areas. Some mines were eventually joined up underground, and in some cases you could walk underground from a pit in one valley to a pit in the next valley.

As the demand for coal slowly fell the number of pits also declined. There were bitter disputes between the government and the miners' union about pit closures over a period of time until in 1984 the miners went on strike for a year, but they lost their battle. When they went back to work in 1985 many pits were closed, leaving mass unemployment in the valleys, as much of the supporting infrastructure, such as shops and businesses, also went into decline. Today it is still possible to see small outcrops of coal when walking in the hills surrounding most of the valleys.

For map of the South Wales Coalfield see: <https://glamarchives.gov.uk/blood/>



IN MEMORY OF DAVID JK JONES

It is with sadness we record the death of David JK Jones last October. David was a keen supporter of Glamorgan Family History Society and wrote many articles about his extensive family ancestors, many now spread across the world, as well as tales of Glamorgan life. Several of his articles have been printed in the Journals, and we are proud to have been given a collection of his work by his wife Linda, and in due course more of his articles will be printed.

Meanwhile, in recognition of his mining background and in line with this edition's theme, we are printing his article about his grandfather and great-uncle who tragically died in a mining accident during the General Strike in 1926.

David will be much missed.

MY FAMILY TRAGEDY DURING THE GENERAL STRIKE

David JK Jones

During the General Strike of 1926 the people in many of the South Wales Valleys had very little, virtually nothing. Soup kitchens sprang up in the communities in order that they, especially the children, would have at least one nutritious meal a day.

In the Garw Valley the soup kitchens were sustained from coal being extracted by striking miners from the many disused old coal levels that were commonplace on the hillsides. One such level was the old 'Gasworks Level' situated behind the municipal open air swimming pool in the Fforch Las Valley, better known as 'Pantygog Baths'. This level had provided coal which in turn provided gas for the Garw & Ogmores Gas Company near the old Co-op yard that provided the street and house lighting for the valley. It had ceased to be used upon the introduction of electrical street lighting and was standing idle having been just flimsily boarded up.

On 18th May 1926 a designation of nine striking miners, all volunteers, were sent to this level in order to extract the remaining coal. They worked in teams of three at a depth of 120 yards below the surface. One such team was the Jones boys, all related, whose coal had been designated by the Strike Committee to go to the Children's Soup Kitchen on Blaengarw Square, the building which eventually became the Garw 33 Boys Club.

These three were brothers Bert (26 and my grandfather) and his younger brother Cyril (19, my great-uncle) and their first cousin Arthur Jones (30). Bert lived with his wife, Sally, and baby son Terry (my father) in Arthur's house at nearby 30 Pant Street while Cyril still lived at home with his parents around the corner at 8 Cuckoo Street.

The respective teams of colliers toiled away picking at the coal seams, and one by one, each team had finished work, having got the sufficient amount of coal required by their respective recipients. All the miners apart from the Jones team had finished their work by 2 pm. The Jones boys remained, perhaps because they lived so close by, or perhaps they wanted to get that little bit more - we will never know, but when Arthur had decided he had done enough he announced his decision to go home. Bert and Cyril said they wouldn't be too long, and they parted in good spirits, all looking forward to their well-earned dinner.

Arthur returned home and was concerned when his cousins had still not returned by 2.30 pm so he went back to the Fforch Las valley and entered the old Gas Works level where he noticed that there had been a huge fall of "roof rock" where the brothers had been working. Arthur searched other parts of the mine but Bert and Cyril were nowhere to be seen. He immediately raised the alarm and soon hundreds of would-be rescuers arrived at the scene. An area of roof rock some 21 feet by 12 feet and 2 feet six inches thick had fallen and it was in the middle of this ninety tons of huge rock chunks that the brothers' crushed bodies were found.

After a magnificent effort from what seemed the entire valley and its various businesses the body of Bert was brought to the surface at 4.15 pm, but it was not until 7 pm that the body of Cyril was found. The bodies were wrapped in canvas tarpaulins and carried on shoulders amid hundreds of people through the streets to the men's respective homes, which were just yards from each other.

The brothers were laid to rest together at Pontycymer cemetery and the Glamorgan Gazette of the time reported that the funeral was hugely attended and had a cortege of over half-a-mile long. A Minister of every religious denomination in the valley attended.

Afterwards the valley community rallied yet again to provide Bert's widow, Sally, and baby son, Terry, with financial assistance, and a fund was set up by the Co-op Bank. Concerts and fund-raising events were held by every nearby village and some as far away as Aberkenfig and Kenfig Hill.

Bert's son Terry also became a miner and fate almost repeated itself on one occasion in the late 1960s when he survived a pit fall, sustaining serious back

injuries. He retired from the mine in 1984 and died in 1993. Bert and Cyril's cousin, Arthur Jones, died at 30 Pant Street in 1969, aged 73.

The Relief Fund for the Families affected

On Friday June 2nd the Glamorgan Gazette published details of the fund that was raised for the families of the young men who had died.

It reported a long list of donors, starting with the £8 10s 1d received from a concert at Blaengarw, and the list following seems endless, with teachers, businesses, pubs, social clubs, hotels, miners' agents, whist drives and individuals contributing to a total of £68 18s 10d.

It went on to state:

“At a Committee meeting held on May 29th a resolution was passed to elect two trustees to bank the money and to pay the sum of £12 to the parents, all bills incurred by the widow to be paid out of cash in hand. The two trustees chosen were Messrs R Norton, 27 Pant Street, Pant-y-Gog, and DJ Hawkins of 124 Oxford Street, Pontycymer. They have placed money jointly in the Co-operative Bank, and will pay Mrs S Jones 30 shillings weekly until her widow's pension comes through, when they will pay her 15 shillings weekly as long as the fund lasts. The total paid out up until the 25th May is £36 0 8d leaving a balance in hand of £24 17 2d. There is 1 shilling for receipt book and postage stamps paid to the secretary. The secretary received the Kenfig Hill Friends' subscription on Thursday last; and he is prepared to answer any questions or show all receipts to any interested person. The hall at Kenfig Hill was loaned free by Mr Thomas, Prince of Wales Inn, scoring cards by the Labour Party, refreshments by Mrs Hughes of Ton Kenfig, and the prizes were all collected; also the Public Hall Pontycymer, and all the staff assistance were given gratis. The family wish to thank all kind friends for their support and sympathy in their trouble.”

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

It is useful if you can quote the sources used so that other members can benefit from your research findings. Articles should be approximately 1000-1500 words in length. We reserve the right to serialise articles which are over a certain length. Contributors should ensure, if submitting images and documents, that they have obtained the permission of the copyright holder(s).

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PARC SLIP – “A TERRIBLE EXPLOSION”

#10573 Jean Fowlds

It was the day of the Annual St Mary Hill Fair, August 26th 1892, a fine day, and the miners of Parc Slip colliery, near to Aberkenfig and Tondy, close to Bridgend, were looking forward to the end of the shift when they could partake in some merriment. The night shift had gone home, and the day shift of 144 men had just started, when a terrible explosion was heard for miles around. Everyone knew what this meant. That day 112 men and boys out of the 144 that were underground at the time were killed, and all 16 horses. It would be another 18 hours before the remaining miners were brought out, some of them dying later of their injuries.

The disaster widowed 60 women and left 153 children fatherless.

The Parc Slip colliery began in 1864 by John Brogden & Sons, and in 1872 it merged with the Llynfi Coal & Iron Co Ltd, to make the Llynfi, Tondy and Ogmere Coal & Iron Co, producing house coal. In 1889 North's Navigation Co took over the company, and by early the following year there were fewer than 200 men and boys producing 300 tons of coal a day.

The geology for the working of this mine at the coalfield's southern outcrop was difficult: two slants were driven at 15 yards apart, one for the hauling of men, coal and materials, the other for pumping water out of the mine and for the return airway. Horizontal headings were driven into the seam every 150 yards and then at shorter lengths until the whole of the coalface was opened. By the time of the explosion there were 8 of these horizontal headings. The seams were not all considered gaseous, although locked safety lamps were still considered necessary (see item on safety lamps below).

There had been several fatalities since 1880 - accidents involving machinery and haulage trams, and an explosion killing two men and injuring seventeen others in 1884, but nothing on this scale.

There had been noted indiscipline at the colliery in previous years; just a year before the disaster a miner was jailed for 14 days for having an unlocked lamp below ground. It could never be proved that an incident such as this was the cause of the disaster, but the official enquiry gave 'a faulty safety lamp' as the likely cause, allowing a flame to escape.

The mine was closed in 1904, the land left neglected. In the 1960s the British Coal Opencast Company began to remove the old coal tips and to mine the remaining coal reserves. In 1980 restoration of the land began, and today it is a nature reserve that is much visited by students and wildlife enthusiasts for its variety of flora and fauna.

In 1992 a Memorial Committee was formed to mark the centenary of the disaster and every year since then a service takes place at 8.15 am on August 26th to remember those who were lost, with the descendants of those who died gathering to reflect.

Ed: A list of those killed and the survivors was included in Journal 104 (Dec 2012) pages 34-36 and can be downloaded from our website:

www.glamfhs.org.uk/journal-archive



MINERS' SAFETY LAMPS

#10573 Jean Fowlds

These lamps are often called Davy lamps, named after Sir Humphry Davy, who invented them in 1815 for use in flammable atmospheres. The original design consisted of a wick lamp with flame which was enclosed inside a fine metal mesh screen, the theory being that in the event of an escape of the flame, the metal surrounding it would hold the heat and curtail the force of the flame before it could combust with the flammable gases known as fire damp and cause an explosion.



Not all miners appreciated them, often preferring to carry on with the more traditional form of lighting, the tallow candle, which they could fasten to the front of their hard hats, or use the candle lamps which could be fastened to either the helmets or to belts, leaving hands free. As mining the coal was paid by the amount brought to the surface, it was quicker and therefore more productive to have the use of both hands instead of bothering about lamp carrying and placement.

Many colliers also felt that they were brought into use solely for the employers' benefit: management could now ask the men to go deeper into the shafts now they had better lighting, whereas the men would argue that better working conditions and more attention to safety in the mine was the way to

better production.

Great importance was given to making sure these new lamps were kept locked at all times, with keys needed to open them. They had to be kept fastened and every man was threatened with fines and worse if he was found to have flouted the rules by giving a fellow worker a light for his pipe from the open lamp, for example. (The Parc Slip disaster written about above was

rumoured to have been caused by one such incident, although it could not be proven). The lamps were the personal property of the individual until the report into the Parc Slip colliery disaster recommended that the Mines Regulation Act be amended to state that all lamps become the property of the employer, who could store them on site and supervise their allocation from the lamp room.

There have been several modifications since and the one illustrated has glass shielding and was made in Aberdare, one of the places that still manufactures them. They have become an iconic symbol of the mining age, remaining in the families of miners as mementoes of a past way of life, and of course eagerly sought after in antique shows and on eBay by collectors who often have no idea of their perilous history.



FOUL AIR DISASTER.

Gerald Jarvis

Over a hundred years ago a tragic set of events unfolded at the Duchy Colliery, Blaengarw.

It started on March 2nd 1917, with what was to be a quarterly training exercise for the men of the Duchy Colliery Mines Rescue Team. At the colliery a request had been made to the colliery manager, Mr PUGH, to make available some of the old workings at about 500 feet from the mouth of the drift; these workings had been last used in the early 1880s.

There were 6 men in the Duchy Rescue team: (Captain) James MORGAN; John EVANS; Bert CHURCHILL; David John WILLIAMS; Thomas WILLIAMS; and William James BEER. Instructor Edward THORNE, from the Brynmenyn Mines Rescue Station, was in attendance to supervise the operation.

At about 3.30 pm they entered the disused workings and commenced the work. At 5 pm the alarm was raised, as word came that some members of the team were in trouble. It was thought at first that John Evans had got into a pocket of 'foul air' and had been overcome. Instructor Thorne had gone immediately to Evans' aid and in doing so had got into difficulties himself. Despite several desperate attempts by the others to rescue them, both men were now dead.

The manager of the Glenavon/Garw Colliery was nearby and was informed, and it was he who drove down to Brynmenyn Mines Rescue Station to fetch more gas helmets. Equipped with these, further efforts were made to reach the two men. Two members of the Ffaldau Rescue Team, Robert ROBERTS and Herbert JONES, were on hand by now, and with the help of Mr DRYBOROUGH had already succeeded in bringing out the body of Edward

Thorne into the colliery roadway, whereupon Dr PENNANT pronounced him dead.

Other rescue teams arrived on the scene from Maesteg and Brynmenyn to assist, and rescue operations carried on throughout the night to retrieve the body of John Evans. Extra police from Bridgend and Maesteg were drafted in to keep back crowds of people who were gathering around the mine entrance.

At the inquest on 2nd April sensational evidence was given by Dr John SCOTT HALDANE of Oxford, who had been hired by the Home Office to investigate this case. His evidence showed that the standard 'Draeger' breathing apparatus was used by both of the deceased men.

He had tested this apparatus on himself, and found that if he stood still or walked very slowly he was perfectly safe, but when he walked at a rate of over 3 mph he quickly became breathless. This apparatus did not supply sufficient pure air when the wearer exerted himself, and therefore was highly dangerous.

He had also paid a visit to the workings at the Duchy, and, in his opinion both men had not been killed by the 'foul air' of the mine, but by the breathing in the carbon dioxide contents of their apparatus re-breathing bags.

Summation: Both men had died of asphyxiation due to faulty breathing equipment, but there must now be an official enquiry into the Draeger equipment, which was the standard equipment throughout the mining industry.

Coroners verdict: Accidental Death.

John Evans was a haulier, a married man with 4 children, two of whom were already working at the Duchy Colliery.

Edward Thorne was also married but without children. He had been in the job of Inspector at Brynmenyn for the previous 18 months, and also had two brothers who were in charge of the Mines Rescue station at Dinas, Porth (*Ed: See Photograph of No 3 Rescue Team, Ynysfaio Colliery, Back Cover Journal 108, Dec 2012*).

Mrs Thorne was given an oak framed certificate of bravery and 12s a week for one year, (subject to examination on a yearly basis).

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

A MINER'S WEDDING DAY

David Rees

On 1st March 1977, I was due to get married, but the night before I was working on the night shift at the Ffaldau Colliery, Pontycymmer. I was working in the gate stable of the M4 district alongside Bernard Anderson and Steve Casey.

Earlier, I had had a quiet word with Ivor (Wompit) PARRY, the District Overman, about me finishing early because of the wedding. He agreed only if the team all went down the pit early and took the gunpowder-carriers with us, so the boys and I went down and got into the M4 district stables, and started to bore coal, ready for the Shotsman. I can't remember now who the Deputy was, but we all pitched in to help get the powder rammed and packed with stemming gel sticks, the Deputy following behind us connecting the shot-wires.

All done, and we were ready to fire the stable, lights out, and test for gas. All clear! I was placed as a sentry up the face, and got to a safe distance, and signalled back to the Deputy with my lamp, all was ready. Sat cwtched in the dark between two chocks waiting for the explosion, and the following smoke and dust, but when it did come, the smoke smelt different, and when it eventually cleared I went back towards the stable.

When I got there, I could not believe my eyes! The coal was on fire! My immediate reaction was to grab the infusion rod, more commonly known as a 'bulls prick', to try and extinguish the flames, but the fine mist of water from it only served to create more airborne dust and seemed to intensify the flames. By now the rest of the team were returning. I shouted "Boys! We've got a fire, fetch extinguishers!"

The fire was soon brought under control and put out, but not before the word got round via the DAC intercom system, and self-rescuers were donned and everyone else except us left the district to the main intake and then up the pit.

Now, we had the job of clearing the coal and salvaging the remains of the unexploded gunpowder so that it could be analysed. We were the last up the pit, and when we did finally get to the surface, I have never seen so many cars parked at the Canteen and Lamp room, there wasn't even room to park a bicycle.

So much for my 'early note.' Never mind, that was mining for you.

Oh, yes, I still got married that morning 40 years ago.

THE BEVIN BOYS, 1943-1948

When war was declared in 1939 thousands of experienced miners raced to join the armed services or transferred to the higher-paid 'War Industries'. By mid-1943 over 36,000 men had left the coal industry, and the British Government realised that it urgently needed 40,000 men to take their places.

In December 1943, Ernest Bevin, the wartime Minister of Labour and National Service, devised a scheme whereby a ballot took place to put a proportion of conscripted men into the collieries rather than the armed services. Every month 10 numbers were placed in a hat and 2 were drawn out; those whose National Service registration number ended with those numbers were directed to the mining industry.

Alongside these 'ballotees' were the 'optants', men who had volunteered for service in the coalmines rather than the armed services. Between 1943 and 1948, 48,000 young men were conscripted for National Service Employment in British coal mines. (Contrary to common belief at that time, only 41 Bevin Boys were conscientious objectors).

Conscripts who refused to go into the collieries were heavily fined or even threatened with imprisonment. After being 'selected' the conscript was sent to 1 of 13 training colleges for a month's basic training before being sent to a colliery (See image front cover). They would live in either lodgings or hostels.

Unlike ordinary miners who wore their own clothes, Bevin Boys were issued with overalls, safety helmets and working boots, but they still had to pay for their own tools and equipment, which gave rise to many complaints that soldiers were not expected to pay for their rifles so why did they have to pay for picks and shovels!

Only a small proportion of Bevin Boys were employed at cutting coal at the coal face; the vast majority worked on the maintenance of haulage roads, and attaching and detaching drams or tubs of coal underground.

In 1943, 1 out of every 4 mineworkers was killed or injured, as being employed in the transport of coal or supplies was almost as dangerous as working on the coal face. The continuous handling movement of drams caused many injuries to hands and fingers, and more seriously could result in death from being crushed under swiftly-moving trucks.

Most Bevin Boys proved to be reluctant miners; they had little interest in the work and were regarded as a nuisance by the miners. They also suffered resentment within the local communities who had seen their sons drafted into the armed services only to be replaced by these 'outsiders'. In addition there

was a certain amount of misplaced abuse from the general public, who called them deserters, army dodgers etc. A very small number stayed in mining after the war, but most could not wait to leave.

The last Bevin Boys were demobbed in 1948 but unlike other conscripts received no service medals or demob suits, or even a letter of thanks. Because the Bevin Boys' official records were destroyed in the 1950s, former 'ballotees' cannot prove their years of service unless they had kept their personal documents.

The very first official Bevin Boys' reunion was held at the Chatterley, Whitfield Mining Museum, in 1989, and has continued to be held at many other venues since then. However it was not until 1995 that the UK Government finally recognised their service to the war effort, and former Bevin Boys are now permitted to march at the Remembrance Day service at Whitehall.



STARTING YOUR COALFIELD FAMILY RESEARCH

Glamorgan Archives

Glamorgan Archives has a wealth of Colliery Records and information for family historians, and the website is a fine starting point as it contains a Research Guide to the 'Coalfields Collection'.

This includes a summary of the collieries for which Glamorgan Archives hold records of individuals, although **few colliery employment records have survived**, as they were often destroyed when no longer needed.

Nevertheless other types of records such as accident and compensation registers, rental books, estate accounts, relief payment registers and explosion reports can all provide valuable information on family members and their mining ancestors. 180,000 people, over 1 in 3 of the working male population in Glamorgan, were employed in the coal industry in the early 1920s, so sooner or later you will come across someone in your family with a connection to coal.

<https://glamarchives.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/COLLIERY-RECORDS-FOR-FAMILY-HISTORIANS-final-version-English.pdf>

See also: Glamorgan's Blood, Dark Arteries, Old Veins for photographs and further information on the coal industry and communities of Glamorgan

<https://glamarchives.gov.uk/blood/>

TRANSPORT RULES FOR HORSE HAULAGE, SURFACE OR UNDERGROUND



*Pit ponies in stalls underground, waiting for duty.
Photographs courtesy of Garw Valley Heritage Society*

1. Persons in charge of a horse or pony shall see that it is properly harnessed and fitted up with a leading rein.
2. No person should have charge of more than one horse at a time.
3. He shall fetch the horse from the stable at the commencement of the shift and return it there at the end of the shift.
4. The person in charge of the horse or pony shall be held responsible for its safe working and conduct.
5. No horse is allowed to move or work in a part of the mine where it has insufficient height or width, so that no part of the horse or its harness touches when in normal travel.
6. Without the manager's permission, no person shall be allowed to ride on a horse, or on the 'gun', or any vehicle drawn by a horse.
7. Unless specified in these transport rules, and the system is such, the hauling of more than one tram at a time is forbidden.

These transport rules (and more), for horse haulage in the mines are taken from the Mines and Quarries Act of 1954 (Section 37).

There is no indication of what the horse might have thought of all this.

Axe the pit pony, who went on to become famous, winning many prizes.



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email: info@genealogyprinters.com

A MINING GHOST STORY

Dai Willoway



In 1972, in a leafy lane somewhere around Cefn Cribbwr, at an entrance to the Opencast site, I was on picket duty during the miners' strike with four or five others, huddled around a 45 gallon oil drum trying to get some warmth from its contents, which consisted of a smouldering half-pallet and some assorted shrubbery gathered from the nearby hedges, all of which were giving off puffs of smoke. It was dusk, so the smoke added to the general gloom whilst we were waiting to be relieved by the next shift.

To while away the time, I recounted this story that I heard of many years ago, about the drifts and levels existing in the South Wales coalfields, some never recorded and others lost to memory, and when deep mining was the way to get coal, old workings were often uncovered by accident when following the seam.

During the early 1900s a new roadway was being driven in the Dowlais area, and at one point there was a breakthrough into one of these 'forgotten' workings. This was a very dangerous thing to do because of the possible threat of gas that had accumulated in the old workings, or flood water, which was only being held back by air pressure. In this case the colliers working there were lucky; there was no sign of the presence of gas or water, and eventually two of the colliers were able to peer into the gap they had made, and into the workings beyond. With the light of their lamps they could only see a short way so they enlarged the hole and climbed through to investigate further.

A short way in they could see the figure of a man seated by the side of a

roadway ahead, and at first they thought that he was asleep. They called out and got no response. One of the colliers reached out to shake the sleeping man awake, and the figure crumbled into a pile of dust and bones in front of their eyes.

Both men ran back to the hole they had made and left the pit. It was revealed later on that the body must have been that of a miner entombed by a massive fall of rock which decompressed the space he was in, killing him without any sign of injury.

Picture above: David Willoway of Betws was a maker of miniature mining tools which he crafted out of bits of scrap and wire and sold for 'beer money', and a collector of mining memorabilia. The display case shows some of his work set into the middle of his collection of lamp checks.

WILLIAM JOHN MAULL, TOWER COLLIERY EXPLOSION 12TH APRIL 1962 #20100 Pat Rees



My grandfather, affectionately known to his grandchildren as Pappi, was one of 9 men who lost his life on that fateful day in the Tower colliery explosion in 1962.

Over the years the price of coal has been high for families who have lost their loved ones. Nine people died that day, and a further nine were injured. Thirteen days later another man died as a result of injuries sustained on that fateful day.

I was only 6 when our Pappi left us but clearly remember the day the men came to tell my father that his father had been killed in the explosion. It had a devastating effect on all the family, especially his wife and his two very young children. My father himself had worked down the mines but vowed never to go underground again.

The inquest report showed that the accident was caused through a fire damp explosion which was traced to a short circuit within a newly installed electrical cable. An auxiliary 'gen' had been turned off for 90 mins, there was a build-up of gas, and the igniting source was arching from a short circuit to earth in the newly installed cable.

Men working the mines have paid the price in many ways over the years whether by losing their lives or by the devastating affect it had on their health, see the report from C Leigh, Divisional Inspector of Mines and Quarries.

Ironically my Pappi should not have been working that day but he swapped shifts to accommodate a colleague who wanted to celebrate a birthday.

Years later my cousin, Michael, was on a camping holiday in Axminster in Devon, and was having trouble with the glow plugs in his car, when a gentleman asked if he could help in any way. Michael responded by saying that he could repair the car but did not have any tools with him; the gentleman pointed to a van and said he'd got plenty of tools in there.

The next morning Michael was thanking the gentleman for the use of his tools, and recognising his accent Michael asked him where he was from. It turned out he was from Hirwaun, and during the course of further conversation it turned out that this gentleman's father was the one who our Pappi had swapped shifts with on that fateful day. Quite ironic how two families' paths had crossed again 40 years later in a different part of the country to again help each other out.



The body on the stretcher was William John Maull, known as Jack, aged 61. He was married to Isabel with a son Alun aged 7 and a daughter Susan aged 3, and living in Maescynon, Hirwaun.

Photograph from South Wales Echo and Pat Rees's family records.

ABERFAN RECOLLECTIONS.

Gerald Jarvis

My first memory of Aberfan was on the 21st October 1966. I was 18, and working at Method Centre Line, a light engineering company on the Bridgend Trading Estate. We had stopped work for the tea break, and were all standing in a queue for our toast, bantering away as usual. I'd started to tell a joke and was about halfway through and a 'Shush!' rang out. The news had just come on the radio, and we all listened in stunned silence.

Afterwards, we discussed where exactly Aberfan was, and more importantly we talked about HOW? How could a tip just slide down a mountain? Most of us lived in valley towns dominated by coal tips, so what had just happened to Aberfan could potentially happen to us! We stopped every time a news bulletin came in, rushed home to see the devastation for our own uncomprehending eyes. This was not just another mining disaster, we, in Wales were all too used to them; this was another kind of disaster. What happened that morning at Aberfan, sent a shiver through the collective psyche of a nation. For days, weeks and months afterwards, all conversations seemed to start with "Did you hear about Aberfan? I was when I heard", as if providing an alibi for ourselves.

The next time I came across Aberfan was 18 years later, after becoming a retained Fire Fighter with the Garw Fire Brigade. In the summer of 1977 we were in the middle of a heatwave and the Fire Services were desperately fighting forestry and heath fires all across Wales. We were called to the Pontycymmer Fire Station at about 10:30 pm, and on arrival we were told that we were going to be sent to Troedyrhiw, to relieve firefighters who were trying to control a huge fire on the mountainside. We set out from the Garw in pitch darkness, and in due course with us sleeping in the back we arrived at our destination.

We were given our instructions, and detailed off. Mine were to get a two-man pump down to the river (the Taff) in the valley bottom, create a dam, and then use the pump hoses to fill fire tenders higher up on the main road (A4050), which were deployed in relays to supply the firefighters on the mountain. We were busy all through that night working by torchlight, maintaining the flow of water and refuelling our pump; the only other source of light was the cherry-red glow of the pump's exhaust. By dawn we could see very little because a mist had settled during the night, and as this mist burned off with the morning sunlight it revealed a series of playing fields with rugby and football pitches across the river.

My first thought on seeing these was that they could do with having the grass cut because it was about knee high. By now the mist was rising quickly and the lower slopes of the opposite side of the valley were becoming visible. Along the river bank there came an old man and a dog. I shouted out above

the noise of the pump “Morning mate! Where are we?”. He did not speak, but raised his stick and pointed back across the valley. I followed his direction and then I could see for the first time the stark white arches of the Aberfan Memorial on Mynydd Merthyr, only now being revealed by the morning mist. I turned back to talk to the old gentleman but he had carried on walking. We were eventually relieved later that morning; some of the Pontycymmer crew had been working on the fireground, others were on traffic control, and were full of stories about their night’s work. I wearily listened in and thought about the unmown playing fields, unmown because there were no children to use them now?



A DAY I SHALL NOT FORGET

RJ Harry

It was 21st October 1966 and I had just finished a week’s work in Brecon supervising a gang laying a telephone cable..

I drove back down to Cardiff in a works car, and as I drove along the A470 past Merthyr Tydfil I noticed people standing on the pavements outside their terraced houses, many were miners, their faces still covered in coal dust.

A TWW van (Television, Wales and the West) screamed past heading north. There was no radio in the car - it was a GPO vehicle - so I had no idea what was happening. It was only when I reached home to Cardiff and switched on the radio did I discover the colliery spoil disaster at Aberfan.

VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

Membership Secretary/Data Manager

This role does not necessarily need to be based in South Wales. There is already a Membership Team of four other volunteers that undertake parts of this vital Society administration. The Data Manager maintains the Society ‘Membership Database’ on Access, the ability to use Microsoft Access and Excel are essential requirements.

Training will be undertaken during June to August –
to commence in role by 1 September 2022

For further information please contact: membership@glamfhs.org.uk

THE ABERFAN TRIBUNAL and ALUN TALFAN DAVIES #11208 JP Lethbridge

Aberfan is one of my earliest memories. On 21 October 1966, when I was six, a colliery spoil tip near Aberfan collapsed due to heavy rain. The resultant landslide engulfed Pantglas Junior School and a row of houses. 116 children and twenty eight adults were killed.

From 1967 to 1990 Alun Talfan Davies chaired the Trustees of the Aberfan Fund which controlled the spending of the £1.75 million raised by charitable donations. He had to deal with insensitive interference from the Charity Commission and make some tough decisions.

The Aberfan villagers wanted the six remaining spoil tips removed. The NCB claimed that they were safe. Under political pressure the NCB agreed to do so but demanded that the relief fund pay £300,000 of the cost. By a compromise the relief fund paid £150,000 for this purpose. Any further delay could have cost lives.

Alun Talfan Davies represented Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council at the Aberfan Tribunal of Inquiry. It sat for seventy-six days from 2 November 1966 to 28 April 1967 and was presided over by Lord Justice Herbert Edmund DAVIES, an Appeal Court Judge. He was the son of a Mountain Ash Colliery surface worker and had studied at Mountain Ash Grammar School. The other members were Harold John Boyer HARDING, a civil engineer who was a leading expert on tunnelling, and Vernon LAWRENCE the former Monmouthshire County Clerk. Eighteen barristers questioned 136 witnesses.

Alun Talfan Davies was present on thirty-three days of the inquiry and questioned forty-one witnesses, some more than once. One of the other barristers, Richard Edward Geoffrey Howe, ie Geoffrey HOWE, represented the British Association of Colliery Management and the National Association of Colliery Managers. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Foreign Secretary under Margaret Thatcher.

The inquiry report strongly criticised the NCB which had ignored warnings and broken its own rules about tips. Nine of its employees were specifically blamed. There was no follow up and no one was prosecuted for what had happened.

See article below on Alun Talfan Davies's political achievements.

MORGAN WATKINS (1882-1896)

#8431 Angela Hughes

Morgan was the son of my great grandmother, Ann EVANS (1853-1898). Ann was married twice. She had two children by her first husband, William MORGANS (1850-1877), a son Morgan (1872-1881) and a daughter, my great grandmother, Margaret Ann Morgans (1875-1905). Following the death of her husband, William, in 1877, Ann and the children moved from Dowlais to Ystrad, Rhondda where her father and sisters were already living. There she met and married her second husband, Thomas WATKINS, in 1878 at St John the Baptist Church, Ton Pentre in the parish of Ystradyfodwg. Together, according to the family Bible, and confirmed by census returns and birth, marriage and death certificates, they had seven children. Their second child and eldest son, Morgan, was born 12 September 1882 in Porth, Rhondda, a year to the day after his half-brother and namesake, Morgan Morgans, died of scarlatina (scarlet fever).

By the time of Morgan's birth in 1882 the family were living at West Taff Street, Porth. Thomas was employed as a coal miner. In June 1887, when Morgan was 4 years old, Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee. The local press report that celebration teas were held for children to commemorate the Jubilee. When old enough Morgan attended the local elementary school in Porth where he would have learnt the 'three Rs', reading writing and arithmetic, with some history and geography. Morgan's education was affected by major changes in the law. The Elementary Education Act 1880 required all children under 10 years of age to attend school but free elementary education for all did not become a reality until 1891. Morgan may also have been affected by the Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act 1893 which raised the school leaving age from 10 to 11 years of age. As soon as he was old enough Morgan left school and began work to contribute to the family's income. Like many boys of his age in late Victorian Rhondda he went to work in a colliery. At the age of 10 years old he was legally old enough to be employed underground in a coal mine.

Thomas Watkins, Morgan's father had a variety of different jobs mainly in quarries and collieries over the years including being employed as a haulier. As a haulier he would have led a pit pony which pulled full trams (also called drams in the Rhondda) of coal on rails from the coal face to the pit bottom from where the trams would be raised up the shaft to the surface. Thomas and his pony would then return empty trams to the miners at the coal face. The journeys were not always straightforward. Delays were caused by the necessity to open and close the heavy wooden doors which controlled the flow of air through the coal mine. Ventilation was of vital importance to ensure the miners had reasonable quality air to breathe, to get rid of stale air, and to prevent the build-up of methane gas and fine coal dust, also known as

firedamp, which might explode, as well as being toxic to the miners if breathed in. Fresh air was pushed down a ventilation shaft by huge fans where it circulated underground through the workings before being drawn up another shaft. Young boys operated the doors to allow the hauliers through with their ponies and trams. It was as a doorboy, also called a trapper, that Morgan found work in the Coedcae Pit, part of Lewis Merthyr Colliery, Trehafod, now the Rhondda Heritage Park Museum.

Morgan was killed in an accident at work on Tuesday 31 March 1896 aged 13 years old. For whatever reason, maybe because his father had been a haulier, or he was doing a favour for a haulier he knew, Morgan apparently attempted to lead a horse and loaded trams in the absence of the haulier. The Evening Express newspaper 1 April 1896, available online on the NLW website, contains an account of Morgan's accident. It describes Morgan as standing behind a train of coal when the hitching hook got loose, and the train ran over him. One of the wheels ran over his head killing him instantly. It describes Morgan being carried home by several of his fellow workers and the coroner informed. His mother, Ann, was probably alone at home with her two youngest children when she received news of the accident and was warned that Morgan's body was being brought home. The neighbours would have stepped in to help; perhaps fetching Thomas or looking after the younger children and helping Ann in any way they could. The coroner for Glamorgan issued a death certificate describing Morgan's death as 'accidental,' the result of being crushed under a coal tram. Cemetery records show that Morgan was buried in Trealaw Cemetery, near Porth, on Saturday 4 April 1896. The formal inquest was held by the coroner on 7 April 1896. As with all fatalities in a coal mine Morgan's death was investigated by the Inspector of Mines. In his report, published the following year (1897), the Inspector of Mines noted that Morgan was found dead under a loaded tram which he appeared to have started in the temporary absence of the haulier. Because Morgan should not have attempted to move the tram, he was held to be responsible for his accident.

Morgan was the third of Thomas and Ann's children to die. They had lost an 8 month-old baby, Mary, to whooping cough in 1891. Sadly, Morgan's death was not the only tragedy the family faced in 1896. On 19 November 1896, his youngest sister Ann died of bronchitis just 6 days before her second birthday. Trealaw cemetery records show Ann was laid to rest with her brother Morgan. Both their parents were later buried in the same grave, their mother, Ann, only 2 years later in 1898. Following the deaths of Morgan and Ann the family moved from Taff Street to America Place, Porth. I cannot help wondering how much the deaths of Morgan, Ann and Mary influenced the decision to move.



THE WASHING LINE

Anon

A clothesline was a news broadcast,
to neighbours passing by.
There were no secrets you could
keep,
when your clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link,
for your neighbours always knew,
if company had dropped by,
to spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the fancy sheets
and towels on the line;
you'd see the best of tablecloths,
with intricate design.

The line announced a baby's birth,
to folks who lived outside,
as brand-new infant clothes
were hung so carefully with pride.

The ages of the children,
could so readily be known
by watching how the sizes changed,
you'd know how much they've
grown.

It also told when illness struck,
as extra sheets were hung;
then night-clothes, and a bath-robe
too,
haphazardly were strung.

It tells 'Gone on holiday now,'
when the line is limp and bare.
It told when back when full lines
sagged,
with not an inch to spare.

New folks in town were scorned
upon,
if their washing was dingy grey,
as neighbours raised their brows,
and looked disgustedly away.

But clothes lines now are a thing of
the past,
for dryers make work less;
now what goes on inside a home,
is anybody's guess.

I really miss that way of life;
it was a friendly sign,
of when neighbours knew each
other best,
by what was on the line.

LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS AS A RESOURCE

Gareth Hicks

I'd like to illustrate, by reference to my own family history, just how valuable a resource local history books can be for researchers. Below I detail several books that I found had mentions of my own ancestors (alleged) - and my people were mostly ag labs turned coal miners - just like yours perhaps.

The History of Pontardawe by John E Morgan, 1911.

References to my gg grandfather John (Shon) Hicks, Blaennant farm

Old Characters of Gellinudd [Pontardawe] by John E Morgan, 1908

References to;

My gg grandfather, John (Shon) Hicks, Blaennant farm.

My ggg grandfather, William Jones, Blaennant farm.

Annibynwyr Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen by L C Huws, 1942.

References to;

My g grandparents, John and Margaret Davies, Cwmgors

My g grandfather, Richard Hicks, Gwauncaegurwen.

My g grandfather, David Rees, Pencaedu.

The History of Pontardawe and District by John Henry Davies, 1967

Reference to my uncle, Wil (Sgili) Davies (rugby international), Cwmgors

Monks to Millennium, the Story of the Village of Cilffriw, Blaenhondda by the Cilffriw Millennium Book Group, 2000.

References to my Rees ancestors of Gellimarch farm, Cilffriw.

History of Llansawel by Fred S Price, 1898

Reference to my gggg grandfather, David Davies (a shepherd known as Dafydd Lanwen).

Myddfai: Its Land and Peoples by David B James, 1992

References to my ggg grandfather Morgan Jones, a photograph of a cottage he lived in, and a linked Walters family

Partly encouraged by my own experience I started a book indexing project in 1999 with the assistance of subscribers from the Dyfed and Glamorgan Mailing Lists. This ran for several years and across all Wales, Glamorgan and Dyfed in total some 120 books were indexed. The completed indexes can be viewed on the relevant county/parish pages of Genuki where they now form a permanent resource for researchers to consult: www.genuki.org.uk.

The original concept also involved the Lookup Exchanges, now defunct, where people with the actual books were prepared to look up and provide

extracts when approached by researchers finding mentions of their own ancestors in the indexes. Of course, such enquiries can still be attempted via the respective mailing lists.

As an aside, in my quest for books to index, I ended up with quite a large collection - which I have now donated to the Glamorgan Family History Society and these will be merged as appropriate into the Society's existing and extensive catalogue available to members at the Research Centre at Aberkenfig.

Gareth Hicks, Devon

References

Books indexed: <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/GHP/hicks1a>

Books donated: <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/GHP#Booksowned>

LINK BETWEEN WALES AND DONETSK (FORMERLY HUGHESOVSKA) UKRAINE

At a recent meeting we were reminded about the close links between South Wales and the Donetsk (formerly Hughesovska) area of Ukraine, named after John Hughes, an Engineer from Merthyr Tydfil, who, in the 1870s, migrated to what was then Imperial Russia, to set up an ironworks. Donetsk is in the eastern part of the Ukraine in the area currently in the midst of the fighting and destruction caused by the Russian invasion. For further information about the British/Welsh community in Hughesovska see article in Journal 128 (Dec 2017) which can be downloaded from the website and the Hughesovka Collection in Glamorgan Archives. www.glamfhs.org.uk/journal-archive



© Glamorgan Archives DX694/12/1: *Photograph of the wedding of Elizabeth Mary JAMES and Charles Henry PERRY, in Odessa, 1894. The bride was born in Hughesovka to Welsh parents, and the bridegroom came to Russia as child with his family. Elizabeth and Charles went on to have 10 children, all born in the Ukraine.*

SIR ALUN TALFAN DAVIES

(Part 2)

#11208 JP Lethbridge

In Part 1 I wrote about Alun Talfan Davies' early life, his family and legal career (his involvement with the Aberfan Tribunal is included separately above). This part tells of his political, cultural and business interests.

Political Career

The 25-29 January 1943 University of Wales by election. Alun Talfan Davies, a former Plaid Cymru member, stood as an independent. He wanted there to be eventual devolution for Wales but opposed Welsh independence and supported the British war effort. He came third with 755 votes (12.8%) of the total and saved his deposit; he wanted to spoil the Plaid Cymru and pacifist candidate Saunders LEWIS's chances.

The victorious Liberal Professor GRUFFYDD got 3,098 votes (52.3%). Saunders Lewis got 1,330 (22.5%) the best result a Plaid Cymru candidate had got up to then. The two independent Labour candidates lost their deposits.

The July 1945 General Election. Before it Alun Talfan Davies tried to get the Liberal nomination for Cardiganshire but they stood Evan Roderic BOWEN (1913-2001) instead, a barrister who had been a British Army Staff Captain in the Second World War. The Welsh language campaigner Ifan ab Owen EDWARDS was rejected.

Roderic Bowen got 18,912 votes, won Cardiganshire at this election and held it for the Liberals until 1966. The Labour candidate Iwan James MORGAN got 10,718 votes. He was the tutor in charge of the Extramural Department of the University of Wales at Cardiff until his death in 1966 aged sixty two. At this General Election Labour won 393 seats, the Conservatives 208 and the Liberals 12. The result was the first Labour majority government.

The 8 October 1959 General Election. In April 1958 the Carmarthenshire Liberals selected Alun Talfan Davies as their candidate at the next General Election. The sitting Labour MP David Lloyd George's daughter Lady Megan Arfon LLOYD GEORGE, a former Liberal, had won the seat at a February 1957 by-election when the sitting Carmarthenshire Liberal MP Sir Rhys Hopkins MORRIS had died in November 1956. Lady Megan Lloyd George retained the seat, and the Liberals were reduced to five seats, their lowest ever total.

Alun Talfan Davies claimed to stand for the traditional Liberal policies of peace, retrenchment (spending cuts) and reform. At the September 1958 Torquay Liberal Conference he presented a motion calling for devolution for

Wales. It was passed without discussion. In September 1959 Alun Talfan Davies's pamphlet *The Casualties of Industry – A Plea for Justice for Justice* was published. It described the dangerous conditions in coal mines despite nationalisation, and called for better safety laws and industrial injury compensation for miners. It strongly criticised the NCB (see previous). Carmarthenshire still had coal mines.

The 1959 Liberal manifesto called for a third way between the Conservatives and Labour. It wanted co-operation not conflict between employers and unions; supported NATO but opposed Britain having nuclear weapons; wanted honest politics, lower prices and more spending on education, health, roads and old age pensions; called for proportional representation; and supported Scottish and Welsh devolution. The Liberals knew they could not win and could promise anything.

At the 8 October 1959 General Election Lady Megan Lloyd George held Carmarthenshire with 23,399 votes (47.9%). Alun Talfan Davies came second with 16,766 votes (34.3%). The Conservative John Benjamin EVANS (1905-1989) a former Farmers' Union of Wales General Secretary, usually known as Mr JB Evans, came third with 6,147 votes, (12.6%). The Plaid Cymru candidate Hywel Heulyn ROBERTS got 2,545 votes (5.2%). The Conservatives won 365 seats, Labour 258, and the Liberals 6. Harold Macmillan the Conservative Prime Minister remained in office.

The 13 October 1964 General Election. The Carmarthen Liberals stood Alun Talfan Davies again. On 2 September 1964 he spoke for the Liberals in a TV Party Political Broadcast. He called for a third way in politics; opposed more nationalisations, and supported Scottish and Welsh devolution. The Liberal manifesto called for lower taxes and military spending; and more spending on public services.

The Labour candidate Lady Megan Lloyd George got 21,424 votes (45.5%). Alun Talfan Davies got 15,216 votes (32.3%). Gwynfor Richard Evans for Plaid Cymru got 5,945 votes (11.7%). Mrs Hilda Edith PROTHEROE-BEYNON nee GODFREY-VAUGHAN for the Conservatives got 4,996 votes (10.6%).

Nationally Labour won 317 seats; the Conservatives 304; and the Liberals 9. Harold Wilson the Labour leader became Prime Minister. There was not another general election that year or in 1965 because the big three-party organizations were exhausted and their supporters wanted a rest so they could attend to their own affairs.

The 31 March 1966 General Election. Alun Talfan Davies was Chairman of the Welsh Liberal Party from 1963 to 1966. On 3 March 1966 the *North Wales Weekly News* announced that he had been selected the Liberal candidate for Denbigh. He ran a vigorous campaign addressing meetings at

schools across the constituency. It culminated with him addressing seven hundred people at the Colwyn Bay Pier Pavilion at 7.45 pm on Tuesday 29 March 1966.

Other prominent Liberals supported this campaign including the party leader Joseph (Jo) Grimond who addressed meetings across Britain including in Denbigh. Again Alun Talfan Davies called for bosses and workers to co-operate rather than fight each other. Again the Liberal Manifesto called for lower taxes and military spending; and more spending on public services.

The sitting Conservative Denbigh MP William Geraint Oliver MORGAN, a barrister, got 17,382 votes (39.4%) and held the seat. Alun Talfan Davies got 12,725 (28.9%). Labour's Edward GRIFFITHS, an industrial chemist, got 11,305 (25.6%). Plaid Cymru's Gwilym Morgan EDWARDS got 2,695 (6.1%). Nationally Labour won 364 seats, the Conservatives 253 and the Liberals twelve. Harold Wilson became Prime Minister again. The Liberals had doubled their number of seats in seven years.

Other Political interests

Sir Alun Talfan Davies QC was one of the sixteen members of the Royal Commission on the Constitution which sat from 1969 to 1973. It was chaired by Geoffrey CROWTHER i.e. Lord Crowther, a journalist and businessman. After his death on 5 February 1972 an Appeal Court judge Charles James DALRYMPLE SHAW, i.e. Lord Kilbrandon, replaced him.

The commission report proposed Scottish and Welsh devolution; Northern Ireland to have seventeen instead of twelve Westminster MPs; regional government in England with Cornwall to be officially called the Duchy of Cornwall; and more consultation between London and the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man over foreign policy. Alun Talfan Davies supported it. Two other members made a minority report wanting more regional government and reform of the House of Commons.

From 1985 to 1992 Alun Talfan Davies was on the board of the Welsh Centre for International Affairs. It is a Cardiff based Welsh international affairs and strategy think tank set up in 1968 to exchange ideas, build international partnerships, link Wales and the rest of the world, and encourage Welsh organisations and communities to think globally.

The Welshman

On 30 June 1943 the Western Mail reported Alun Talfan Davies's appointment as Vice Chairman of the 1944 Eisteddfod Executive Committee. On 9 August 1944 the Guardian reported that he had presided over the 3,000 audience at its open-air Arts and Crafts Exhibition held in the grounds of Llandybie Central School.

On 9 August 1974 the Guardian reported that Dr Alun Talfan Davies had been President for the Day at the Carmarthen National Eisteddfod. He had spoken in favour of Welsh devolution and claimed that *every movement and organisation of note in Wales, was in favour of an elected body.*

From 1977 to 1980 Alun Talfan Davies was President of the Court of the National Eisteddfod. He helped lead it through difficult times because of falling attendances and financial problems.

One of Alun Talfan Davies's older brothers was Aneurin Talfan Davies aka Aneurin ap Talfan (1909-1980) a Swansea pharmacist whose shop was destroyed in a German air raid in 1941. He got a job with the BBC in 1942 and rose to be Head of Programmes for Wales in 1965.

Aneurin and Alun Talfan Davies founded Llyfrau'r Dryw a Welsh language publishing house in 1940. It published many books in Welsh aimed at ordinary readers. In 1958 they published the first edition of Y Geiriadur Mawr, a Welsh-English dictionary, and in 1962 they founded Barn, a Welsh Language current affairs magazine whose first editor was Emlyn Evans, an electrical engineer.

The Welsh National Opera was founded in 1946. Until 2004 when it moved into the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff it had no permanent home. Alun Talfan Davies was on its board from 1978 to 1980. These were stormy times. The Welsh National Opera had combined with the Welsh Drama Company but in 1979 the Welsh Drama Company lost its Arts Council grant and closed, so ending the partnership.

From 1969 to 1988 when he was seventy-five Alun Talfan Davies was a Member of the Court of the University of Wales. He was also a member of the Courts and Councils of its Swansea and Aberystwyth Colleges.

Alun Talfan Davies strongly supported the Welsh Sculpture Portrait Trust. It was founded in 1980 by the Oswestry, Shropshire-born, sculptor Ivor ROBERTS-JONES, who carved sculptures of Welsh VIPs. It was dissolved in 1996 when Ivor Roberts-Jones died aged eighty three.

Many of these sculptures and others by famous sculptors were displayed for some years beginning in 1985 in the Welsh Sculpture Park in Margam Country Park. This sculpture park eventually closed due to security issues and the sculptures went to various South Wales museums, including the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff.

The future of Dinefwr (Dynevor) Castle and Park in Carmarthenshire was threatened in the 1960s and there was a campaign to save them. Alun Talfan Davies and thirteen other Welsh VIPs had a letter published in the Times on Friday 25 July 1969 calling for the castle and park to be saved for the nation.

They are today jointly owned by the National Trust, CADW and the South and West Wales Wildlife Trust, but plans for Dinefwr to be a centre for the professional level teaching of music, theatre and film making fell through.

In 1969 the Labour government announced plans to move a gunnery range from Shoeburyness in Essex to near Pembrey in Carmarthenshire. There was a storm of protest in Wales and an inquiry was set up chaired by Alun Talfan Davies. In 1971 it reported against the plans and the then Conservative government abandoned the plans.

The Businessman

Sir Julian Stephen Alfred HODGE founded the Commercial Bank of Wales in 1971. He wanted to call it the Bank of Wales but the Registrar of Companies and the Bank of England objected because it would make it seem that it had an official status like the Bank of England. The Commercial Bank of Wales was allowed to call itself the Bank of Wales in 1986 when the Bank of Scotland took it over. It is now a trading name of the Bank of Scotland which is a subsidiary of Lloyd's Bank.

Sir Alun Talfan Davies QC was a director of the Commercial Bank of Wales/Bank of Wales from 1971 to 1996; Deputy Chairman from 1973 to 1991; and Chairman from 1991 to 1996 when he was eighty three. Not everybody approved of Hodge's business methods; but Hodge gave generously to Welsh good causes such as the Ty Hafan children's hospice in Barry, the Welsh Heritage Schools, the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology, and Cardiff Business School. Sir Julian Hodge died in 2004 aged ninety-nine.

In 1989 Sir Alun Talfan Davies was briefly in charge of Harrison Cowley a Cardiff PR and business consultancy. He was a director of the Cardiff World Trade Centre from 1985 to 1997. This was and is part of an international network of such centres.

Harlech Television that became HTV obtained the franchise for independent, ie advertising funded broadcasting in Wales and the West Country in 1967. The previous franchise holder TWW (Television Wales and the West) had been set up in 1958 and its Chairman had been Edward John STANLEY the 18th Earl of Derby.

No official reason was given why TWW lost the franchise but its Corporate Headquarters were in London. Harlech Television was Cardiff and Bristol based. Another possibility is that one of TWW's major shareholders, the News of the World, had carried a series of articles critical of Harold Wilson the Labour Prime Minister. The changeover between stations happened in March 1968 and was acrimonious, to put it mildly.

Harlech Television was named after its first Chair William David ORMSBY-GORE the 5th Lord Harlech. Alun Talfan Davies was a director from 1967 to

1983; and was Vice-Chair and Chair of its Welsh Board from 1978 to 1983 when he was seventy. Its successor is ITV Cymru and Wales.

The other Harlech Television founding directors were Wynford VAUGHAN-THOMAS, the programming director, the actors Stanley BAKER and Richard BURTON, Walter HAWKINS, the Bristol Evening Post Chair and Managing Director, John MORGAN, a TV commentator, Eric THOMAS, an Oswestry newspaper proprietor, William POETON, the Chair and Managing Director of an engineering group, who founded Bristol Arts Centre, Martin CADBURY, a printing firm Chair and Managing Director, and Alun Llewellyn WILLIAMS, a journalist, broadcaster, poet and director of extra-mural studies at the University of Wales, Bangor.

Sir Alun Talfan Davies's 'Who Was Who' entry did not record him as having any hobbies though he was a member of the Cardiff and County Club. He died in a Penarth nursing home on Saturday 11 November 2000 aged eighty seven after a short illness. He was survived by his wife Lady Davies who died in 2003 aged eighty eight; and their four children.

Sir Alun Talfan Davies had given a collection of his papers and correspondence, mainly from 1963 to 1986, to the National Library of Wales (NLW) in 1994. Some of his earlier letters are preserved in the H FRANCIS JONES papers in the NLW. Henry Francis Jones, a journalist, adult education lecturer and Plaid Cymru official, died in 1949. His daughter Gwerfyl Wynne Jones died in 1976 and her father's papers were given to the NLW.

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.

I could not use all the information I collected. I intend to look at Alun Talfan Davies's three brothers in another article.

For up to date news and links to useful online resources -
don't forget to join our **Facebook** group.

www.facebook.com/groups/glamorganfhs.

You can also follow us on **www.twitter.com** –
@GlamorganFHS or **@Cardiff_GFHS**

ZOOMING HAS FAR-REACHING RESULTS!

#1231 Sue Mackay

A lady in Bolton, Jane MILNE, asked Jane GRAVES to be put in touch with me as she had been unable to attend my Zoom talk last December on 'Researching in South Africa', and she wanted to ask my advice. She had taken possession of two old diaries written in the 1870s by a relative, John Thomas Davis HARCOURT (born 1851 in Birmingham), who went out to the Cape to join the Frontier Police. The diaries were acquired from a cousin in South Africa who no longer wished to be responsible for them, and they found their way to Jane in the UK, as she was known to be "the family historian". With them were several WW1 diaries written by the son, William Douglas Harcourt, and these have drawn the interest of the Imperial War Museum, but Jane was keen that the two older diaries should also have a wider audience. I suggested that the diaries themselves might be offered to the National Archives, but Jane was willing for them to be photographed and published on eGSSA (the website of the e-branch of the Genealogical Society of South Africa), so that historians at the Cape could access them.

I offered to transcribe the diaries, as I have experience of reading old handwriting following my transcriptions of the 1820 settler correspondence, and I enlisted the help of Geoff CHEW in London, a retired South African academic, who has a greater knowledge than I have of South African history, and who was also familiar with most of the places mentioned in the diary. It soon became apparent that Harcourt was present at many important meetings with tribal chiefs and that the diaries were very interesting historical documents, so thanks are due to Jane Milne for ensuring that they were not lost. The diaries (and my transcription) can be found at <https://www.eggssa.org/jcollection/The-Harcourt-Diaries/>

There are two diaries, both very fragile. The red one is longer and covers his voyage to Cape Town on board the Asiatic, leaving Southampton on 15th June 1874. He then goes on to detail his various forays with the Frontier Armed Mounted Police and meetings with the tribal chiefs, but there are several humorous moments as well. It is also interesting to read what the pay and rations were like and the long hours they had to be in the saddle. At the end of the diary he lists local customs and demonstrates his willingness to learn Xhosa by making a glossary for himself. The black diary is shorter and seems to contain notes for what would later be a report to his superior officer.

So, although not directly related to Glamorgan, this shows just what can arise out of the various Zoom talks the GFHS has arranged during the pandemic, and thanks to Jane Graves for acting as a very useful go-between!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Has anyone researched the life of Francis Crawshay, of the Merthyr Tydfil Crawshay family, after his retirement to Sevenoaks, Kent, from 1867 to his death in 1878?

Known as the reluctant industrialist, he is most well known for his humanitarian treatment of his workers, becoming friends with many of them, and commissioning their portraits. In spite of his vast wealth he lived simply in a worker's cottage, and retired to Sevenoaks where he was known for walking his land dressed in a sailor's costume.

Is there any more information to be had?

Lynne Marsh

Dear Editor

I'm currently working on a project focused on the history and men of the 1st Welsh (Howitzer) Brigade, The Brigade was based in Swansea, Neath, Briton Ferry and Morriston.

My aim is to build a website that tells the story of the Brigade from its formation up to the end of the First World War and to also recreate the roll of men who served and find as much information about each of them as possible.

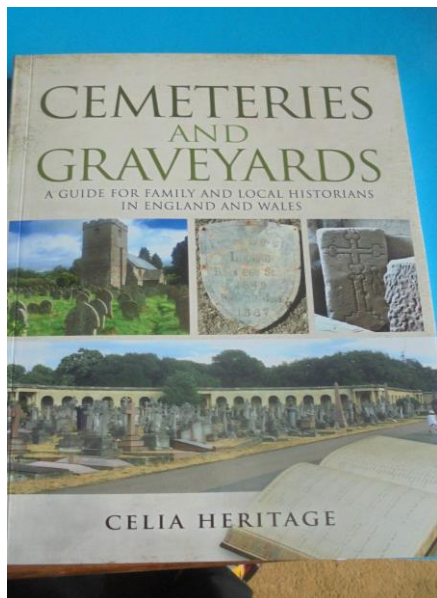
The site is already up and running, but it is still work in progress. Thus far, I've told the history up to 1916 and found 928 men who served as well as uploaded my great uncle's photo album from that period. It's at [1st Welsh Howitzers - Glamorgans Territorial Artillery \(1st-welsh-hwtzrs.co.uk\)](http://1st-welsh-hwtzrs.co.uk)

My question is that - given your membership - would it be possible to put out a request asking whether descendants of members of the Brigade have any information (photos, documents, memories etc) that they would like to share that would help in either telling the story of individuals or the Brigade?

John Lambert, Cambridge

BOOK REVIEWS

CEMETERIES AND GRAVEYARDS, Celia Heritage



The title of this book hardly entices the everyday reader to make it a desert island choice, but for the family historian it could be a real boon.

The aptly-named author is Celia Heritage, a history graduate of Kings College London, and a professional genealogist who has lectured on family history both in the UK and abroad.

Her book is divided into 7 chapters, starting with a brief history of Death and Burial, using archaeology from prehistoric times to the present day to show how customs have changed over the centuries: burial, cremation, 'double burials', where bodies are left to decompose before the bones being collected for burial by their families, all

are explored together with the philosophy of the various cultures.

For many of our researchers, the most useful chapters will cover the more recent centuries, where topics such as gravestones and memorials, the materials used, how durable those materials, and the important information she gives about the ex-parochial graveyards. There are numerous types of burial grounds that do not fall under the umbrella of the Church of England, or indeed the Church in Wales; some were profit-making enterprises run by individuals, others were non-conformist denominational burial grounds, others belonged to institutions such as hospitals, asylums, and prisons. These are often overlooked by the researcher. Chapter 6 covers the records and where and how to access them, and chapter 7 gives valuable information about online records, locating burials, and the pitfalls and challenges, followed by research advice. There are also listings of useful websites, some case studies, and a 'Further reading' section, so a valuable addition to the Family Historian's library.

Paperback, 236 pages, ISBN 1526702371, £15.99 plus postage,
from Pen & Sword Books, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, Tel: 01266 734222
Postal address: 47 Church Street, Barnsley, Yorks S702AS.

Jean Fowlds

SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY BRANCH

Face to Face meetings are continuing to go well, it is nice to see our attendance numbers are slowly increasing welcoming new members. Whilst Covid restrictions have been relaxed there are still a lot of concerns and we are encouraging members to keep wearing face coverings to meetings.

February we were treated to a talk and slide show by Brian Davies, on "Industrial South Wales in Art". Brian has a very extensive slide show, and was very knowledgeable on the subject matter, it was a very interesting and entertaining talk.

March meeting: after having an up-date on the Aberdare Leader Obituary Project we supported members with family research. Once enquires were completed we had a powerpoint presentation on what is available to members at our Aberkenfig Resource Centre (ARC). Members found this very interesting and it was decided that a branch visit to the ARC would be arranged once numbers permitted.

April 14th: We have guest speaker Robert Jones. His talk will be on the Hier family, Workhouse and WW1.

Upcoming meetings

May will be a research and project up-date session with a talk on ensuses and how it helps with family history re-search.

June we will be having Peter C Jones as a guest speaker his talk will be on "Fingerprints"

July will be a Project and research session

August, no meeting

Pat Rees, aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

ONLINE EVENTS – HANDOUTS

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

www.glamfhs.org.uk/online-events

ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE

Following the ARC meeting this week it is good to say the ARC will re-open by appointment only from June this year. There are a number of preparation issues to be ironed out prior to this but it is hoped to offer a flexible booking system that will encourage visitors to make better use of the ARC facilities. Bookings will be via the ARC email: arc2@glamfhs.org.uk and will require a minimum of two volunteers present when visitors are in the ARC.

Downloads: preparation of these is going well and the number of publications being jointly offered as either hard/CD and download copies continues to expand.

Donations: We have received a considerable collection of books from Gareth Hicks in Devon that has been added to the ARC library. Gareth has indexed many of the books. A list of these books is being added to the ARC catalogue and can be viewed on www.genuki.org.uk, some are in Welsh, some have translations. With our thanks to Gareth for the donation - our members and visitors will find these invaluable as a resource.

The details of the collection of just over 200 books can be viewed here:

<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/GHP#Booksowned>

*(Ed – See also Gareth’s article on page 30 on
Using Local History Books as a Resource).*



BRIDGEND BRANCH

The Bridgend Branch are planning to reopen for meetings in May of this year. Initially there will be a members’ evening. Speakers will be booked from July onwards.

The Bridgend Branch continues to keep members informed on events via newsletters.

The monthly library sessions proved to be quite popular and the committee members who were involved enjoyed the experience. They have offered to help with research at the ARC.

Our Saturday morning ‘Help Sessions’ continue in local Bridgend libraries – see website and poster inside back cover for May to July dates and locations.

Nancy Thomas, bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH REPORT

Our Coffee and Chat in February brought family history research to our front doors with GHFS's own Nick Davey explaining the resources available for Cardiff and the Vale and where to find them. He started by defining Cardiff and the Vale geographically, and then moved beyond the familiar online sites to discuss locations for local records at County Archives in Glamorgan and Gwent, at libraries, both local and National and also usefully at the University of Cardiff, the National Museum and the Cardiff Story Museum. His excellent handout gives plenty of detail and is available on our website.

In February our online talk was given by Michelle Leonard, a professional genealogist on using DNA for family history. She described the three different types of DNA test available and compared the different companies offering the tests. She then emphasised the importance of building your family tree as "far, wide and deep as possible" and then went into great detail explaining how to get the most out of DNA matches. The depth of this subject was further explored in March's Coffee and Chat when we welcomed member Karen Hemmingham, the administrator of the Monmouthshire and Glamorgan Ancestry Project on Gedmatch, a private Facebook group. This was a highly practical session, well presented.

In March, Anthony Marr, gave us a fascinating talk based on his first hand knowledge of working in a register office. Entitled "The hidden secrets of registration" he explained what was meant by a "maiden name", why births can be registered more than once and in different years, and why people over 52 years have no surname! See his handout for the answers if you missed the talk.

In April Colin Chapman gave a PowerPoint presentation on 18th and 19th century crime. He had some examples of interesting flyers including those printed by associations, akin to our neighbourhood watch schemes, which alerted the public to stolen animals and so on. He gave a good description of the different types of offences that could be committed, how and where they were dealt with, and punishments received. He recommended the Police Gazette as a useful resource.

In May we are very excited to be hosting Peter Higginbotham, who will be examining the Workhouses of Wales.

At present, the committee have not made a decision as regards to a return to face-to-face meetings, which is planned for September 2022, or whether we will return to Insole Court or a new location. We will aim to update you in the next edition of the journal.

Thanks must go Jane Graves for organising such an entertaining and informative programme. Don't miss the next round coming up!

Historic Guided Walk: Tuesday 21 June 2022

Time: 6pm – 7:30pm

Meeting place: At the entrance to Cardiff Castle, Castle Street

To book your place: Email cardiffandvale@glamfhs.org.uk or ring 07952098181 (Jane Graves)

Plus ça change: traces of old Cardiff

Our Guide: Geraint Denison-Krug

Despite to best efforts of town planners in recent years to confine all traces of old Cardiff's faded gentility to the wastepaper basket, the town centre is littered with reminders of its long history since the time of the Romans. This gentle amble will trace some of the remnants of this rich and varied history, starting at the reconstructed West Gate of the borough by the castle. Broadly tracking the old town walls, as they were at the time of John Speed's map in 1610, different aspects from Cardiff's Viking, mediaeval, early modern, Georgian and Victorian past will be revealed and discussed. The walk will end outside the new Theatre Royal on Wood Street, in the looming shadow of new Broadcasting House's tawdry modernity.

Visit to Cardiff Reform Synagogue - Tuesday 12 July,

Time: 7-8.30 pm

Cardiff Reform Synagogue, Moira Terrace, Cardiff, CF24 0EJ

Our host, David Cohen will give a brief introduction to the synagogue, the Hebrew language, how Jewish children in Wales learn about Judaism, the Bar Mitzvah (coming of age) ceremony and the Sabbath. There will be the opportunity to view an open Torah scroll and ask lots of questions!

- Just ring the bell by the steel door to the right of the steps when you arrive
- There is no need for ladies to bring headscarves, although those who normally wear one are welcome to wear it in the synagogue.
- Men will have to wear a kippah (skull cap) which will be provided - or any other head covering if they prefer.
- At the time of writing this (April) they are still socially distancing in the synagogue and asking everyone to wear a face mask.

Book on Eventbrite or by contacting Jane Graves as above.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/visit-to-cardiff-reform-synagogue-tickets-325522686117>

Jeremy Konsbruck & Karen Prior cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

The Merthyr Tydfil Branch has continued to hold afternoon meetings in Soar, however it has proved to be difficult to keep to the intended programme. We decided to postpone our January 2022 meeting due to tightening Covid 19 restrictions, with numbers being limited again in Soar due to the appearance of the highly Infectious Omicron variant which was spreading Coronavirus very rapidly. By February the 'scare' seemed to have died down and everyone was anxious to resume meetings.

Our speaker for the November meeting was to have been Clive Thomas, a well thought of local historian and the expert on the coal industry, but he was not able to give his talk then due to the temporary loss of his voice. Clive was able to give his excellent talk in February and he discussed his own family and the reasons that they moved from areas of rural north Wales to work in the coal industry in the lower part of the Merthyr Tydfil Valley. In March Carl Llewellyn kindly gave a wonderful talk on the Italians of South Wales. It was an excellent afternoon with a well illustrated talk and the presence of members of the Italian community who had stories to tell made it all come alive. In April we were back again to our intended January meeting and Dr Daryl Leeworthy could at last deliver his highly interesting and informative talk on 'How to Research Minorities'. The audience was entertained and also learnt a great deal.

The Merthyr Tydfil Branch has been involved a number of interesting enquiries, as well as other family history projects. One person has evaded us, Angus LEWIS. Photographs taken by this gentleman featured in the excellent book, 'Six Railways to Merthyr: The Angus Lewis Photographs'. He must have been around Merthyr Tydfil in the early 1920s and taken photographs in 1922 but we cannot identify him, although the editor, John HODGE, has kindly told us all that he knows about him, which is surprisingly little, and he would also like to know more about him. It is thought that Angus Lewis was a young man in 1922 and worked in a solicitor's office or in the offices of a railway company. If anyone has any knowledge about this gentleman we would be grateful if they would get in touch.

Branch members have also been roped in to assist in a local history conference being held in the Labour Club, Merthyr Tydfil on Saturday the 21st May. It is a free event and all family history members will be cordially welcomed.

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

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

Obviously not a lot to report. We have not been able to meet since 2019. In January 2020 the basement of the Pontypridd Museum was flooded and although some of our items were destroyed, they were able to save our books, which have now been stored in the garages of two of our members, for which we are very grateful. Following that, Covid 19 appeared on the scene, further preventing us from meeting. This meant that it was a long time before the Museum were able to start having repairs carried out. However, on March 4th this year, the Museum held a Re-opening Day to which we, as Chairman and Secretary, were invited. Plans for restarting our meetings are now under way.

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

Pontypridd and Rhondda Branch Committee

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

Committee Members

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

Meic Jones & Jane Jones, rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk



SWANSEA BRANCH

We hope all our members had a pleasant Easter break.

Due to our usual meeting places at Central Library and the Civic Centre still being unavailable, we are having some difficulty finding alternative venues. We need to take into consideration the size of the venue, technical facilities and available parking.

The majority of our members who attend our meetings have expressed the view that they would prefer meetings to take place in the afternoon. This may be a consideration in future.

On Monday 13th June the GFHS Swansea Branch has a walk and talk around old Sketty. Please meet at 2pm at Uniting Church Sketty, Dillwyn Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9AS. The walk, of course, will depend on the weather. It will last about an hour and a half.

On Wednesday 22nd June members of the GFHS Swansea Branch are welcome to join another group for a guided tour of Penlleger Valley Woods at 2pm. There is a parking charge and there will be a charge for the group to contribute to the project, not a charge per person, but an amount which will be shared between the numbers who attend.

Please contact Janet Neilson if you are interested in attending either or these walks or if weather is doubtful: jmgrenson2014@gmail.com

*Janet Neilson & Cherry King,
swansea@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

Finance: finance@glamfhs.org.uk

Online Branch/Events: onlineevents@glamfhs.org.uk

Website: website@glamfhs.org.uk

Projects: projects@glamfhs.org.uk

Aberkenfig Resource Centre: arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

Your Society NEEDS You!

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.
2. Links to each individual event are provided on our website - 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

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

ABERDARE BRANCH

aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

Cynon Valley Museum at 2pm on the third Thursday each month

9 June Guest speaker - Peter C Jones "Fingerprints"

14 July Project and Research session

August, no meeting

BRIDGEND BRANCH

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

Len Evans Hall (next to the ARC) at 7.30 pm third Monday each month

Speakers/Topics TBC

20 June

18 July

15 August

See advert on inside back page for Library Help Sessions

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH

Online Via Zoom

Tuesday 7 June at 7.30 pm

[An introduction to Irish family history research - Natalie Brodie](#)

Thursday 16 June at 7 pm

[Coffee & Chat – Irish family history research](#)

Tuesday 5 July at 7.30 pm

[Divorced, bigamist, bereaved - second and subsequent marriages - Rebecca Probert](#)

Register for our online talks on Eventbrite:

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

Guided Walk

Plus ça change: traces of old Cardiff

Our Guide: Geraint Denison-Kurg

Tuesday 21 June 2022, 6pm – 7:30pm

Meeting place: At the entrance to Cardiff Castle, Castle Street

To book your place: Email cardiffandvale@glamfhs.org.uk or ring 07952098181 (Jane Graves)

For more information about this walk see page 45.

Visit to Cardiff Reform Synagogue - Tuesday 12 July, 7-8.30pm
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/visit-to-cardiff-reform-synagogue-tickets-325522686117>

MERTHYR BRANCH
merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk
Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the 2nd Tuesday of each month

Tuesday 12th July at 2pm
Lisa Powell, ' Social Unrest in Wales (1900 to 1912)'

Tuesday 9th August, Soar, 1pm to 3pm
No formal meeting but a general invitation to anyone interested in discussing family history and its problems to meet in the Soar café, for lunch or just coffee

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH
rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk
Meetings to recommence shortly at Pontypridd Museum

SWANSEA BRANCH
swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

Monday 13th June at 2 pm
A walk and talk around old Sketty.
Please meet at 2pm at Uniting Church Sketty, Dillwyn Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9AS. The walk, of course, will depend on the weather. It will last about an hour and a half.

Wednesday 22nd June at 2 pm
Members of the GFHS Swansea Branch are welcome to join another group for a **guided tour of Penlleger Valley Woods** at 2pm.
There is a parking charge and there will be a charge for the group to contribute to the project, not a charge per person, but an amount which will be shared between the numbers who attend.

Please contact Janet Neilson if you are interested in attending either event or if weather is doubtful –
jmgrenson2014@gmail.com



Ymddiriedolaeth
Ddiwylliannol
Cultural Trust



Family History Research Sessions

Interested in tracing your roots?

Want to know more about your ancestors?

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

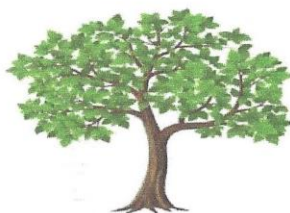
Already started but hit that brick wall?

HELP IS AVAILABLE!

10-12md: 21st May: - Aberkenfig & Pyle
10-12md: June 18th - Bridgend & Pencoed
10-12md: 16th July - Aberkenfig & Pyle

Email to book – bookings take priority, walk-ins will be accommodated if possible or offered an alternative booking

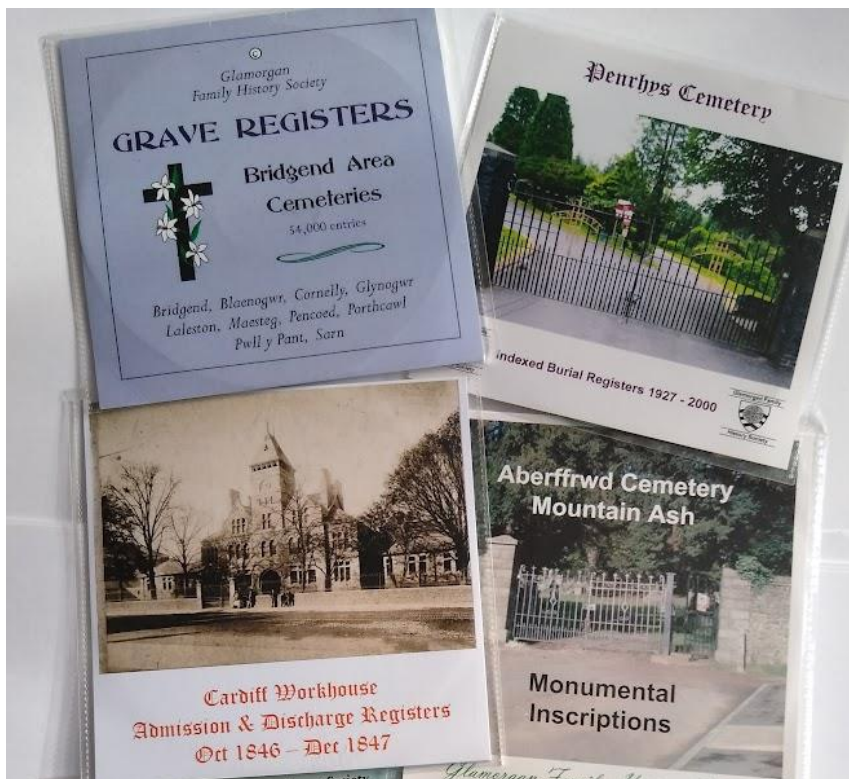
[Both venues on same date]



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

**Ask at your local library or
email**

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk



As well as CDs we now also have Memorial Inscription booklets available as downloads on www.genfair.co.uk:

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- M0302 Maesycwmmmer Tabor - £5.00
- M0502 Margam Abbey - £10.00
- M0902 Michaelston-y-Fedw St Michael - £5.00
- N0102 Neath St Thomas - £5.00
- P0502 Penmark St Mary - £5.00

If undelivered please return to:
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