



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



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**Journal No 153**

**March 2024**

# GLAMORGAN FAMILIES INDEX PROJECT

St Andrew's Major James JENKIN  
Elizabeth

Elizabeth, dsu., bsp 19 Sep 1744  
(? John JENKIN qv)

(\*10 Sep 1764, p 151 - James JENKIN deceased,  
sexton of St Andrew's after Wm. GEORGE, about 1740)

(\*1 May 1770, p 480 - Betty JENKIN, dsu. of James  
JENKIN of Dinas Powis mar. in Berry to Richard  
JENKIN)

(\*1 Jan 1791, p 1158 - Betty RICHARD alias JENKIN  
his wife, dsu. of old Francis RICHARD)

(\*28 Mar 1765, p 200 - James JENKIN of Dinas Powis,  
son of old Catherine ~~GEARY~~ widow and John JENKIN  
of Begon <sup>GEORGE</sup>)

JENKIN

Llancarfan Jane Jenkin

Mary supposed d of William Howell bapt Oct 30 1768  
buried Jan 6 1768 (1769?)

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## Society's Objectives

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

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# EDITORIAL

Croeso! Welcome, to the first journal of 2024. This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society's existence, and to mark it our first article is by Diane Brook, a founder member from March 1974, who wrote in 1984 about those early years, and we reprint it now for new members' information, and for older members a reminder. Following that is an article by Martyn Griffiths, amending an earlier article of his, from 1983, which has only recently been found to contain some misleading information which he is glad to correct.

Also reprinted are two articles from early journals relating to the topic of patronymics and Welsh surnames following a recent online talk when the question was raised about why there were so very few Welsh first names that became surnames.

We hope to reprint an early article in each of this year's journals, but we would also like to hear from you about your early experiences in family research from those times - pre-internet, pre-DNA tests, pre-most social media. These will build into a commemorative booklet that we will be publishing in due course, so please raid your family files and photograph albums, and your own memories of course!

Other articles in this journal make good reading: included are burgesses and port reeves of old Neath, life in Ystalyfera for the Caswill family, politics in the coalpits of Aberdare and Mountain Ash, a poet and bard in Merthyr Tydfil, and an Irishman lost and injured in the Rhondda Tunnel (a remarkable story of endurance).

As March is the month of our patron saint, we must make reference to St David, and we are printing an extract from the US Congressional records of February 1971 when a Californian Congressman, ahead of St David's day on March 1<sup>st</sup>, urges America to acknowledge the vast debt owed by America to Welshmen for all aspects of American life.

In connection with that, our next topic to concentrate on would be Welsh emigrants - people who left Wales in hopes of a better life. Over the years we have received various articles but know that there are many more out there. They don't have to reflect great fame or achievements in the public eye, just family members who have left, for whatever reason, to start elsewhere, and what they found, what was good, what was not so good.

We have interesting and exciting times ahead, and I wish you all a good 2024. Hwyl Fawr!

*Jean Fowlds, [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By the time you receive this journal Spring should have arrived and in fact the day I am writing this is 1 February which in days past would have been the festival of Imbolc or the first day of Spring marking the beginning of lambing and half way between the darkest day and the Spring solstice.

As you know this is a special year for us as the Society celebrates 50 years since it was started in March 1974. How things have changed from those early days in the researching of family history, but of course the basics are still the same. Although we have more records readily available than in the past the hunt goes on for those elusive ancestors who did not make the official records or records that have not survived so alternative steps need to be taken to hunt them down. Sometimes it will only be from researching their family and their locality that we get a glimpse of their lives.

On the inside front cover we have included examples of index cards from a collection of about 6000 that are stored at the Resource Centre at Aberkenfig. These were created many years ago and contain information about 18<sup>th</sup> century family groups collected from various sources and cross referenced to entries in William Thomas's diary. Volunteers are currently scanning these invaluable resources prior to uploading them to the website. If anyone is interested in helping with this project please contact us.

To mark our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary we will be having a few additional events, together with a commemorative publication later in the year. Further details will be made available as soon as possible. If you have memories of the past 50 years, photographs etc that you are able to share please send them in.

We shall also be out and about attending a few face to face events this year, the first in Malvern in March as well as the National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd in August so do come and say hello if you are attending these events – see a list of forthcoming events at the end of this journal. Volunteers to help out on these stands are also needed, even if it is just to give others a break for an hour or so.

Our Annual General Meeting will have taken place on Saturday 17 February by the time you receive this journal and there will be a new Committee in place. Reports are available on the website. We are lucky to have a few new faces joining the Executive Committee this year and so I will continue as Chairman for this year in order to facilitate and ease the transfer of roles. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Jane Jones our Society Secretary who is stepping down this year after many years in the role – see reports next page.

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

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 17 February 2024

The following were elected to the Executive Committee:

**Chairman:** Sue Hamer  
**Vice Chairman:** Nancy Thomas  
**Treasurer:** Guy Bevan  
**Secretary:** Penny Williams

**Executive Committee:**

Ian Black  
Jean Fowlds  
Meic Jones  
Billie McNamara  
Anouska Osborne

Branch Trustees were also confirmed: Aberdare & Cynon Valley: Pat Rees,  
Bridgend: Sue Tiller, Cardiff & Vale: Vacant, Merthyr: Carolyn Jacob,  
Pontypridd & Rhondda: Jane Jones, Swansea: Janet Neison

Thank You – Diolch yn Fawr iawn!!  
to Hon Secretary – Janes Jones

Jane has been our Society Secretary since 2008 and together with husband Meic has also run the Pontypridd Branch for many years. They have also been the driving force and organisers of our Merthyr Fair up until the pandemic called a halt to our annual event. So it is time for Jane to step back and enjoy some well earned rest. Thank you Jane for all your hard work for the Society.

Here is Jane's report to the AGM:

What I would like to say that I have enjoyed being secretary (for a lot of years!) but as my health has got worse and of course my age is against me I think its time a younger, fitter person takes over. What I have most liked is meeting so many people, especially at the Fairs, where we met people from different societies, family history and other organisations. So many nice people and I have missed that since Covid raised its cruel head and we had to stop. But time is more or less ours now and hopefully we can get back to as it was before. So many thanks to everyone who has supported me over the years.

*Jane Jones, rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk*

# A BRIEF ACCOUNT of the SOCIETY

#2 Diane Brook

Reprinted from Glamorgan FHS Journal #4 August 1984

Our Society has now existed for ten years, albeit under a variety of different titles. The first meeting to organise a family history society in Wales was held in Cardiff on 29th March 1974, with seven people attending, including myself; we called the society, 'The Heraldic and Genealogical Society of Wales'. Grand ideas and little concept of the problems of organisation were the order of the day. In November 1976, we dropped the title of Heraldic and Genealogical Society of Wales and became the South Wales Family History Society, acknowledging our inability to cope with north Wales.

The first five years or so of our Society were really a struggle to survive with a varying programme of lectures, a fluctuating membership, an overly small, if dedicated committee, and an occasional journal. Good work was done but there were no organised projects and no branches outside Cardiff. Eventually, family history societies started up in other parts of Wales, Clwyd FHS in May 1980, Gwynedd FHS in October 1980 and Powys FHS in December 1980. Further developments took place in South Wales with Gwent FHS being set up in April 1981 and Dyfed FHS being set up in April 1982 .

In January 1983 we changed our title to that of the Glamorgan Family History Society and in March and September of that year we set up respectively the Bridgend and Swansea Branches.

In 1980, I entered the first slips in the Glamorgan Marriage Index and soon after, Ken CHAPMAN began organised work on recording and indexing monumental inscriptions. I handed over a rudimentary society pedigree index to David LEWIS who has greatly expanded and improved it. Mrs (Dot) ACKHURST has indexed the Roath 1861 census and does searches for the Society's benefit. The haphazard organisation of early days has given way to a carefully organised group, with a good-sized committee, projects, local branches and an informative and well printed journal.

In retrospect, I wish we had started off as the Glamorgan FHS and learned to deal with local problems at an early date, but we have arrived in the end at a good working group with much to offer local enthusiasts and also our postal and overseas members. The usual few stalwart committee members do much to make the group the success it is, but we do get help in projects from members both near and far. As the only remaining founder member, I suggest the two main elements for success are the sharing of committee work among as many members as possible, and retaining the freshness to listen to every new member with interest, ready to help them enjoy the hobby with all the benefits the Society can give.



# AN AMENDMENT FORTY YEARS LATER

#169 Martyn J Griffiths

In 1983 I wrote an article which was published in the GFHS Journal No 1. It was about my policeman great-grandfather, and now it is time to adjust the story slightly.

I had taken up family history as a hobby about ten years previously. It was a time when computers, family history centres and local archives were very much a pipe-dream. The nearest archives to me in Neath were in Cardiff, about forty miles away. I recall that letters and telephone directories were the main tools used by me to further my enquiries. The other staple of my research was the gathering of information from whatever relatives I could find. Being more-or-less a tail-end Charlie in the family, my parents and most of the previous generation had passed on before I took up this new hobby, but I managed to gather a few snippets which were noted down and stored for future reference.

My great-grandfather, William HODGSON, was a Lincolnshire farmer's son and he arrived in Merthyr at the back-end of 1851 via a short period in the Metropolitan Police. In my article, I repeated one of those little anecdotes that had been retrieved from either my late mother or from her sister. The story was that their grandfather, the Merthyr Hodgson, was promoted to Inspector in Pontardawe following his arrest of a villain named BROOKS who he had pursued over the mountains at Mountain Ash following the robbery and murder of an old lady. Well, I couldn't find anything to prove that story in 1982 and still can't in 2023.

Since that time genealogical research has of course been made a lot simpler and one of the major boons is the on-line access to newspaper archives. When the Glamorgan Police were gathering data for their Police Museum in Police Headquarters, Bridgend, back in the late 1960s, a Policewoman Sergeant who was on 'light duties' was sent around the county to gather any information she could about the early police from local libraries that held old newspapers. It kept her gainfully employed for a couple of years, but I often wonder what she would have thought about the on-line facilities we have today.

This tale of Hodgson's arrest and resulting promotion appeared to have been a fabrication. It seems that a garbled version of events, handed down from father to daughter to granddaughter lost a little bit in the telling and, like King Arthur or Robin Hood stories, resulted in a blurring of the facts. Today, I believe that there were two stories involved which became merged into the tale of the murderer Brooks.

The chase over the mountain was not part of Hodgson's history but was, I

believe, taken from a chapter in the life of his brother-in-law. John HOWLETT arrived in Merthyr from Norfolk about a year after Hodgson. Possibly they shared single-men's accommodation for a few years and became friends. (The practice of single-men being housed together at a Police Station was still in being in the 1950s.) William Hodgson got married and, when his sister came to stay from far-off Lincolnshire, a romance developed between her and her brother's friend John Howlett. They married in 1860.

Howlett was much more active than his brother-in-law and was rapidly promoted from Constable to Sergeant to Inspector. Eventually he made the rank of Superintendent in charge of the western part of the county which excluded the boroughs of Swansea and Neath – they had their own police forces. In 1868 he was very much involved in the capture of Fenians who had a cell in the Merthyr area. They had been meeting secretly and drilling on the mountains behind Merthyr. Howlett and others armed themselves with swords and firearms as well as their usual staffs and made a number of arrests which eventually resulted in convictions at the assize court in Swansea.

The murder part of the Brooks story may have formed a part of Hodgson's police career. Robert COE was eighteen years old, born in the Midlands but working in Wales as a striker at a blacksmith's at Powell Dyffryn works. On September 2nd 1865 he murdered his friend and workmate, John DAVIES in Graig Dyffryn wood in Mountain Ash. It was Sergeant William Hodgson who made the arrest. At the time of his arrest and trial Coe denied the murder but before his execution he confessed saying: "I tied his legs with rope yarn and took money from his pocket which amounted to 33 shillings (£1.65). I had no other motive whatever for killing him but a desire for obtaining his money". The murder and execution were particularly notable as Coe was the last person to be hanged publicly at Swansea prison.

A crowd of 15,000 gathered before the prison to witness Coe's date with the hangman which was on 12th April 1866. From a newspaper at the time:

"By the Wednesday evening it gave the appearance of some public rejoicing or festive sport taking place instead of the solemnity which should characterise the proceedings. A considerable number of them who arrived in our town to witness the sad sight were women with infants in their arms, fathers leading young boys, even cripples who could scarcely walk."

Not many policemen arrest murderers – unless you include Vera, Jack Frost et al... - so this arrest on his CV must have greatly enhanced Hodgson's prospects. He was finally promoted to Inspector in about 1872.

The moral of this tale is, do not dismiss anything. All stories might have some modicum of truth and, if you hold onto them long enough, you might be

fortunate to find out what exactly happened. I have another branch of my family where there is a story about someone going into a coma for twenty years. I'm still working on that one!!

**Editor's Note:** Martyn's original article and those following can be found on our website under the Journal Archive, in Journal no 1 of the GFHS of 40 years ago: [www.glamfhs.org.uk/journal-archive](http://www.glamfhs.org.uk/journal-archive) - see also Journal Index: <https://www.glamfhs.org.uk/resources/journal-index>



## THE PATRONYMIC NAMING SYSTEM AND ITS EFFECT ON GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

By Alan A Powell – *Abridged for full article see Glamorgan FHS Journal No 8, Dec 1985. Original article Gwent FHS Journal No 11, 1985*

There is common acceptance that most surnames can be classified according to their derivation. Those derived from locality, occupations, or nicknames, are comparatively rare in Wales. By far the most dominant group is that which consists of surnames derived from the father's christian name, otherwise known as patronymic surnames.

In earlier times, a Welshman might refer to himself as Llewellyn son of Owen, or Rhys son of Howell. In the Welsh tongue these names would translate to Llewellyn ab Owen and Rhys ap Howell respectively. A man may well have made use of a string of such names, each one denoting an earlier generation of his agnatic line. Thus Rhys ap Morgan ap Howell ap Dafydd should immediately be reminded of his great grandfather Dafydd. This readily available reference to previous generations of a man's family meant that oral transmission of pedigrees was easily facilitated. The high degree of accuracy in early generations of Welsh pedigrees otherwise lacking dates and places associated with people mentioned, can, in part, be explained by the patronymic naming system.

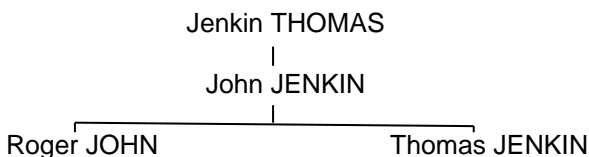
In many Welsh records, the early 'ap' form of patronymic continued well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For example, the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen Probate Indexes include:

1604 John ap Owen Lloyd, Llougher  
1605 John ap John, Llangevelach

The 'ap' form continued to be used by some families until much later times, but the tendency was to drop the 'ap' altogether. Thus we have in the same probate index:

1605 Jenkin John Lloyd, Lougher  
1614 Hopkin Lewellin, Llangevelach.

These will undoubtedly refer to Jenkin son of John Lloyd and Hopkin son of Lewelin respectively. It was my no means a rule that the son took the father's christian name as his second name. There are many cases where the paternal grandfather's christian name was adopted. The following pedigree then becomes entirely possible:



Here we have two brothers with completely different second names! The implications for extracting instances of wills, and even parish register entries, for a family are obvious.

During the transition period between the 'ap' and non 'ap' form of surname (better described as a second name until the hereditary nature of the second name became established after several generations) it is important to take into account the speech process known as agglutination. Here names such as John ab Owen become John BOWEN and Evan ap Rhydderch becomes Evan Prydderch. It is possible to miss related wills or parish register entries if this process is not understood.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the patronymic form of naming had all but died out in Wales. At some point, most families would have used the second (paternal) element in the name as the equivalent of the English surname. This element would then become hereditary and indistinguishable from established surnames derived from locality names, nicknames or occupations. The stabilisation of a surname tended to take place earlier in the more anglicised areas of Wales, but there are some surprising survivals of the old patronymic system.

The administration of the goods of one Meredith John Lewis of Talgarth, Breconshire, was given in 1739 to his son, John Meredith, who died leaving the father's estate unsettled. The administration was then granted to the grandson, Meredith John. Here is a three generation example of patronymic survival extending certainly into the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

A more recent example is that of David John, yeoman of Glyder Farm in Welsh has little respect for Archdeaconry boundaries in matters of probate as a future article by the author will demonstrate). In his will, David John mentions sons, John DAVID, Timothy DAVID and David DAVID. A descendant of one of these

sons marries as 'Thomas JONES of Glyder' in 1810. However, he signs the register as Thomas JOHN. The baptism of a son of this marriage in 1812 reads: 'Timothy, son of Thomas JOHN of Glyder by Gwen his wife baptised'. A later baptism of a child of the same father is recorded with the father's name as JONES, and the father's will is recorded in 1851 under the name JONES. Here, almost certainly, is a family in the process of changing from the patronymic naming system to the adoption of the proper, hereditary surname JONES.

Perhaps the most surprising survival of patronymics was brought to my attention recently. The 1851 census for Llanybydder, Carmarthenshire, reveals the family of Evan DAVIES of Pantgwyn. Evan had a daughter Elizabeth aged 11, a son William Davies aged 11 and a younger son, Evan EVANS aged 2! There may be even later survivals of patronymic naming, and it would be interesting to chart the areas where they occur<sup>1</sup>.

Before concluding this account of Welsh patronymical naming, it is important to realise that women were also subject to a similar naming system. The use of 'Verch' denoted 'daughter of' as in Gwenllian verch Morgan, meaning Gwenllian daughter of Morgan. In the same way as the 'ap' is dropped by males, so, eventually 'verch' was dropped in the case of females. Thus we have, again for the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen Probate Index:

1607 Elizabeth John of Llangevelach and  
1618 Alice David Lloyd of Lougher, showing the patronymic form of female names.

The most significant fact concerning females, certainly in the Gower/Carmarthen region of South Wales, is the retention of their maiden names after marriage. This is illustrated in the Penrice (Gower) parish records where the following entry occurs:

'Edarus Harry filius Georgii Harry et ux eius Margretta Landeck baptizatus erat XV die mensis Septembris 1649'

In a will proved in 1615 at Carmarthen, one Joan LANDEG of Lougher bequeaths items to her son David GRIFFITH and daughter Katherin GRIFFITH.

This almost certainly indicates that females were once known throughout their lives by their maiden names. Even as late as 1675, in the nuncupative will of one John Landegg of Langevelach, the witnesses mention the deceased wife

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<sup>1</sup> See John and Sheila Rowlands (2013) *The Surnames of Wales*, p56 map illustrating the wide variations in the dates when settled surnames were adopted in different parts of Wales to 10% of population. Ranges from 1600 in Pembrokeshire (Englishry) to 1850 in parts of Gwynedd and Anglesey.

as Denis THOMAS.

What then are the effects of the Welsh patronymic system of naming on genealogical research technique?

- (1) When extracting instances of a Welsh surname, formed via the process of agglutination, it is important to note the earlier 'ap' form of the name, eg on researching the name Bevan one must be aware that at some stage in the past the variation 'ab Evan' will have to be considered.
- (2) Because of the uncertainty in the way in which a patronymical name might have been formed, it is necessary to search under both elements in a person's name for the generation immediately before. Thus an Evan Jenkin could have a father called John JENKIN or Jenkin THOMAS! This makes will and parish register searches much more complex.
- (3) Most genealogists will recognise the sometimes extraordinary detail given in female wills. It would be foolish to overlook the contribution of such wills to sorting out more distant relationships and to adding further details to the bare bones of a traditional pedigree.

However, in the case of Welsh female wills, many will not be recognised as being related to the family being researched since the probate (or parish register entry) may well be based on the female's maiden name. It would be advisable, therefore, to extract all female wills for an area using the female's christian name as an eliminating factor.



## ON THE ORIGINS OF JENKINS, HOPKINS, WATKINS, PERKINS AND HAWKINS AS SURNAMES

Abridged - for full article see Glamorgan FHS Journal no 2 October 1983  
by #63 Barry Davies

Why does the South East Wales telephone Directory have 26 columns of Jenkins and not much more than as many lines of Hawkins?

'Kyn is a diminutive or pet name applied to a number of Christian names in the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is of English or, possibly, Flemish, origin, I will happily settle for Flemish in the case of Jenkins, Jenkin or Jankin is 'little John'; Peterkin, which has become Perkin, is 'little Peter'; Wilkin is 'little Billy' and Hawkin, I suppose, is 'little Harry'. There are lots of examples but the interesting question is why did Jenkins, Hopkins and Watkins become indisputable (but not exclusive) Welsh surnames while Perkins, Wilkins and... Hawkins, did not?

One clue lies in the fact that virtually all the examples we have of Perkins and Wilkins families in Wales are in areas of early Norman conquest, ie areas of

English and Flemish settlement. The English settlement in Gower and South Pembrokeshire was permanent. That in the Vale of Glamorgan was reversed by Welsh re-settlement from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century on, but reinforced for all that, throughout the period by powerful trading links across the channel and by the fact that Bristol was the dominant commercial capital. Thus at least one Perkins family survived, having married a Mathew heiress in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to become 'Perkins of St y Nill'. But in contrast, Jenkins, Hopkins and Watkins are found widely distributed throughout Wales with heavy concentrations in the Welshries.

In the classic definition of English surname origin: personal names, nicknames, place of origin and trade or occupation names, the 'kyn' names are, I suppose a cross of the first two. In England, where surnames were well established and almost universal by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, all these names occur, from early on, as surnames (Perkin Warbeck is a good late example of Christian name use). Where we find Perkins, Wilkins and Hawkins in Wales, as noted above, in the Vale of Glamorgan or south Pembrokeshire, it is invariably as a surname – never as a Christian name, and that is precisely where Jenkins, Hopkins and Watkins differ.

By the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Welsh, open to outside interests during their 300 year war with first Norman, then English invaders, were frequently adopting foreign Christian names while resolutely refusing to adopt foreign surname usage. And for some reason, now lost I daresay, Jenkin in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century became an extremely popular, ie fashionable, Christian name amongst the Welsh. Familiarity with Flemish settlers in the southern March might have been a cause – I cannot say. Hopkin was particularly common in Western Glamorgan (Welsh Gower) where it gave rise to one of our patronymic ap derived surnames in the family of Popkin of Fforest near Pontardawe. The Christian name Hopkin remained in use in this family long after their (early) adoption of the surname giving rise to generations of alternative Hopkin Popkins. In the north no doubt the popularity of Watkin was much spread by its use in the William Wynn family, one of the greatest of the northern landowners who produced a Sir Watcyn Williams Wynn in every generation for up to 300 years.

Why these Christian names became popular in Wales at the time – and other 'kyn' names did not is anyone's guess – but the fact that they did was a guarantee, in a nation deriving 90% of its surnames from Christian names, most of them non-Welsh, that they would be common surnames sooner or later.

Thus Welsh families called Perkins or Wilkins, might be of recent immigrant origin or Welsh by descent from English or Flemish settlers brought into Wales as villein labour anytime before the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Jenkinses, on the other hand may well be indistinguishable from the Jones and the Williamses in their origin.

# Saint David's Day, 1<sup>st</sup> March

For our Spring journal it wouldn't be right to omit an acknowledgement of our patron saint, so below is printed an extract from the USA Congressional Records dated February 1971 concerning the contribution Welsh people have made to American history and society. This was sent to me anonymously, but these records are freely available online.

	<h1>Congressional Record</h1>
United States of America	PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 92 <sup>d</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION
Vol. 117	WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1971 No. 17
<h2>House of Representatives</h2> <h3>THE WELSH IN AMERICA</h3>	
<p><b>HON. THOMAS M. REES</b> <i>of California</i> IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES <i>Wednesday, February 17, 1971</i></p> <p>Mr. REES: Mr. Speaker, the birth of St. David, the Welsh Patron Saint, will be commemorated on March 1 by Welsh Americans throughout America – nothing like the St. Patrick gatherings, though St. Patrick was born in Wales, and grew up speaking Welsh, not Latin.</p> <p>Very little has been written of what the Welsh have contributed in all walks of life in shaping American history. Twenty percent of the Pilgrim Fathers were Welsh, as was the captain of the Mayflower.</p> <p>How many know that almost 50 percent of the signers of the American Declaration of Independence were Welsh or of Welsh descent – as were nine of the presidents of the United States – and that many of the universities and colleges such as Yale, Princeton, Brown, William and Mary, Virginia, John Hopkins, and <u>Andover</u> were founded by Welshmen.</p> <p>The man who financed the War of Independence was Robert Morris, Pennsylvania</p>	<p>was founded by William Penn, and Rhode Island by Roger Williams – all were Welsh. It is strange indeed that in such a small country as Wales, – so many people are hardly aware of it's existence – has contributed so much more in proportion to it's size than any other nation, and stranger still that so little has been written of it. Oh yes, the next time you are in the Capital, and feel like climbing the Washington Monument stairway, about halfway up there is a stone inscribed: "FY IAITH. FY NGWLAD. FY NGHENEDL WALES – CYMRU AM BYTH"</p> <p>Thomas Jefferson would have placed it where more people would see it, for he was very proud of his Welsh origin.</p> <p>It would take many pages to name the great Welsh Americans since the Founding Fathers, who have helped build America – in government, industry, labor, finance, law, architecture, music, religion, literature.</p> <p>Yes, the Welsh in America can be very proud of their heritage. And it is to be hoped that as each St. David Day comes around more people will remember how much good has come from so small a country, where the greatest honor each year is to be crowned "Poet of the Year."</p>



# HENRY and JANE CASWILL (CASWELL), YSTALYFERA 21010 Chris Caswill

Henry CASWILL was born in 1844 and baptised in Cannington, Somerset on 25 August. He may have been named after his grandfather, Henry Caswill, who was a baker and brought his family down from Aisholt in the Quantock Hills in the 1820s. They settled in Stockland Bristol, a North Somerset village close to Combwich, a port on the River Parrett. Henry had three sons – Henry, John and William – all of whom were given Pinn as a second forename in recognition of Henry's mother, Jane PINN, who had married John Caswill in Aisholt in 1767.

The youngest Henry was the sixth of seven children of Henry Pinn Caswill (1807-1871) and his wife Sarah (nee WINTER, 1811-1876). Henry Pinn was an itinerant agricultural labourer for much of his early working life. His brother, John Pinn, was a cooper in Stockland and my great-great grandfather, so the young Henry was a first cousin of John Pinn's son, my great-grandfather William Caswill, and hence my first cousin three times removed.

Henry was presumably born in nearby Cannington rather than Stockland because his father would have been contracted in 1844 for a year's work on a farm there. By 1851 Henry Pinn had moved with Henry and the rest of his family to Coaltings Villa farm in Fiddington, also only a few miles away. By 1861 the young Henry had struck out on his own and was working for Samuel DYER in Clayland Corner in another local village, Stogursey, as a 17 years old live-in labourer.

It must have seemed at that time that Henry was destined to follow his father as an itinerant farm worker, often a precarious living. However in the late 1850s Henry's other uncle, William Pinn Caswill, migrated with his wife and young child across the Bristol Channel to the bright lights of South Wales.<sup>1</sup> This would surely have led to family gossip about the attractions – or otherwise - of the South Wales coal and iron fields, and been food for thought for young men hoping for improvement. Therefore it was not surprising that Henry Caswill had followed his uncle to South Wales by 1871<sup>2</sup>. In his case he went to Ystalyfera

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<sup>1</sup> Reputedly he was 'sent for' from Somerset by John ROWE, the manager of the Stormy lime works, close by the mining village of Cefn Cribwr, where those Caswills went to live. In turn about 5 miles from Bridgend. *1985 letter to Chris Caswill from Neville Granville, author of Cefn Cribwr, Chronicle of a Village (1980), Stewart Williams*

<sup>2</sup> It seems there was no direct ferry from Somerset or North Devon to Swansea at that time so Henry most likely travelled by ferry from Highbridge or Bristol to Cardiff, and on from there by train.

in the valley north of Swansea, where JP BUDD had established an advanced and large-scale iron and tin works<sup>3</sup>. Henry's older brother, Edwin, also went across at about the same time, but Cardiff was his chosen destination.

Initially Henry became a policeman in Ystalyfera<sup>4</sup>, and in 1871 he was a 26 year-old Police Officer lodging in Wern Fawr<sup>5</sup> houses in the Llanguick<sup>6</sup> household of John POYNTZ, the local Police Sergeant. His surname can be read on that census return as either Caswill or Caswell<sup>7</sup>.



In 1873 he married Jane MORGAN in St Peter's Church Llanguick (right). Their surname is Caswill in the official records. My notes say that Jane was the daughter of Rees and Sarah Morgan but her birth cannot now be reliably traced, owing to the frequency of the Morgan surname.

It seems very likely that Henry went to Wales to get work in the JP Budd factory and took the job as a policeman to get established locally, so it's not surprising that the April 3rd 1881 census recorded him as a tin boxer and a policeman. By then he was 35, wrongly listed as born in Bridgwater, living at 4 Morgans Row, Llanguick, Pontardawe with his wife Jane. She was 36, working as a dressmaker, born in Ystalyfera. Two year-old Rees Williams was also there, an 'adopted child', also born in Ystalyfera<sup>8</sup>. The couple had come up in the world,

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<sup>3</sup> James Palmer Budd arrived in Ystalyfera in around 1838 and developed the iron furnaces and tinsplate industry in the area. Tin was mined in Cornwall, where Budd came from. He developed innovative methods of recycling furnace gases in the hot blasting process, which greatly reduced the need for coal. By 1866 the iron and tin works were sometimes described as the largest in the world. In his later years steel began to replace iron and his factories struggled, and closed in 1885-6. He himself died at the end of 1883. Though the production of tinsplate continued the village fell on hard times then and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

<https://www.themeister.co.uk/hindley/ystalyfera.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Not a sought after job in those days, not least for an Englishman in the valleys, but it provided Henry with a start in the local community.

<sup>5</sup> Literally Big Alder Tree

<sup>6</sup> Various spellings at the time, part of the Pontardawe parish and close by Ystalyfera

<sup>7</sup> As the enumerator didn't often dot his 'i's.

<sup>8</sup> Later events suggest he was the natural son of Jane's sister, Margaret Williams.

as by then they had a live in servant, Emily JONES, 16, born in Ystalyfera. By now their surname had clearly transited to Caswell.

By 1891 Henry and Jane had moved to 3 Wern Row, (seen below in 2017 with the large bay window), now officially part of Languick. Age 46, Henry had given up the police and was only employed as a tin boxer.

Jane was 47 and this time gave her birthplace as Crynant, a small village a few miles east of Ystalyfera.

Jane's widowed sister, Margaret WILLIAMS<sup>9</sup>, had moved in with them. Other Williams residents were Rees J (12), an office boy (no longer adopted by Jane), Mary C (10), Annie J (8), Henry (6) and John R (4), all at school. All five young people were listed as Jane's nephews and nieces, so presumably were Margaret's children. All except Jane were recorded as born in Ystalyfera.



Interestingly, the 1891 Census records the language(s) spoken and all except Henry spoke Welsh and he only English. If so, family communications would have been difficult at that time – more likely the respondents had only given their primary language.

Sadly Henry died soon after. Henry Caswell's death (sic) is officially recorded as occurring on 5 August 1893 in Bank House, Languick. It seems certain that this was Jane's husband, age only 49, so he died away from home, of aortic heart failure<sup>10</sup>, suggesting it was sudden and unexpected. An Isaac THOMAS – rather than Jane - was present at his death. This was probably the Isaac who was their next-door neighbour at 2 Wern Road in 1891, a 'traveller', with a wife and 5 children<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Margaret's husband was John Williams. From the dates of their children's births, he died between 1886 and 1891

<sup>10</sup> *Morbus Cordis (aortic)* on the death certificate. Terminology for an unspecified heart condition. Sometimes recorded when the doctor had not identified a more specific cause.

<sup>11</sup> One of them, John, 16, working in a soda water works, evidence of other employment in the village

Superintendent Registrar's District		<i>Pontardawe</i>							
Registrar's Sub-District		<i>Pontardawe</i>							
18 <i>73</i> . DEATHS in the Sub-District of <i>Pontardawe</i> in the County of <i>Glamorgan and Swansea</i>									
No.	When and Where Died	Name and Surname	Sex	Age	Rank or Profession	Cause of Death	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When registered	Signature of Registrar
<i>536</i>	<i>5th August 1893 Swansea House Ystalyfera Glamorgan</i>	<i>Henry Caswell</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>49 years</i>	<i>a Tin Plate Dress Maker</i>	<i>Melms death (Cerebr) Certified by David Thomas</i>	<i>Isaac Thomas Sawd at the death New Ystalyfera Glamorgan</i>	<i>5th August 1893</i>	<i>Thomas Rees Registrar</i>

This must have been a heavy blow for Henry's widow Jane, but she survived him for several years. She moved the relatively short distance to 16 Alltygrug Road (below) by 1901, when she was 57, described as a retired dressmaker. Her younger sister, Margaret Williams (47), was still keeping her company, as the housekeeper, along with three of her children, Annie J (18), elementary school teacher, Harry (16), coal miner underground, and John R (14), draper's apprentice. Both Jane and Margaret were living 'on their own account'. All were this time recorded as born in Ystalyfera, and as speaking both English and Welsh.

On 15 October 1904, Jane Caswell made a will with a firm of Swansea solicitors, witnessed by Lewis J POPKIN MORGAN<sup>12</sup> and his clerk. From her own Census entries she was 60 or 61 at that time. She was living at Somerset House<sup>13</sup> in Alltygrug Road, perhaps still No 16. Over the years the Caswills/Caswells had accumulated property and Jane was able to nominate 'the house in which I live' and 'my 'two shops and premises situate adjoining the Ystalyfera Hotel'<sup>14</sup>, along with her furniture, goods and chattels and money.



On the 2 April 1911 Census, Jane and Margaret were living in the six rooms of Somerset House. She was a 67 year-old widow. She reverted to recording her birthplace as Crynant.

Her sister Margaret was 57 and a

<sup>12</sup> Possibly a relative of hers

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps No 16, renamed in recognition of Henry's birthplace

<sup>14</sup> Located on Wesley Terrace in 1901, between Nos 2 and 3, and not far from 2 and 3 Wern Row. John Jenkins, 33, was the hotel keeper. Neither Benjamin Phillips nor Sarah Jones were nearby in 1901. In 1921 the hotel was part of Commercial Street, and Mary Gould (51) was the hotel keeper.

'boarder' with her single 30 year-old daughter Mary Ellen. There was another boarder, William Ernest REES, who was 27 and a teacher at the local County Secondary School. Apart from Jane all were born in Ystalyfera. Unusually, this 1911 form is not signed by Jane as the head of household (as was normal in that year), but by William Rees (who may well have been her nephew).

Jane died on 29th March 1912, age about 68. Her sister Margaret and niece Mary Ellen were her executors. There were no alterations to her 1904 Will. Her estate was eventually valued at £702-3s-6d or £102,588 today. Jane and Henry had prospered in their years in Ystalyfera, not least by comparison with his early years as a Somerset labourer. Jane left her two shops 'now in the respective occupations of Benjamin PHILLIPS and Mrs Sarah JONES' to 'my nephew John Richard Williams'. She gave 'the House in which I now live' to her niece, Mary Ellen Williams, and then all her remaining estate to be divided equally between 'all the children of my Two sisters Margaret Williams and Sarah Rees in equal shares'. Nothing for her sister, Margaret, but perhaps she was already well provided for. Neither Jane's final resting place nor that of her husband, Henry, has yet been identified.

Putting Henry's time in Ystalyfera in his family context, his father had died in Cambridge in 1871 and his mother in 1876, but it is doubtful that he was still in touch with them. He perhaps had some contact with his uncle, William Pinn Caswill, who was still alive in Cefn Cribwr near Bridgend in 1893, age 70, and was working as a labourer in 1891. He died in 1899. Closer to Ystalyfera, Henry's brother Edwin was living in Cardiff in 1893, age 51. In 1891 he had been working as a coal tipper. He died in 1902, and left 5 children, and descendants who are alive today, but there was no Caswill or Caswell footprint left in Ystalyfera after Jane died.

There is one sad Ystalyfera footnote to this account. The World War came soon after Jane died. One of Margaret's sons – and Jane's nephews - Henry (sometimes Harry) Williams enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps and died on 4 May 1917 when the troopship HMT Transylvania was torpedoed in the Gulf of Genoa, with the loss of 417 lives<sup>15</sup>. He is commemorated on the Savona Memorial in Italy<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/world-war-i-articles/the-loss-of-the-hmt-transylvania-4-may-1917/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://ww1.wales/other-counties/breconshire-memorials/ystalyfera-war-memorial/>

# JAMES HURLEY

#1801 Clive Davies

James HURLEY was baptized on 20th June 1879 at Rath, Coroflin, County Clare. He was the seventh of the nine children born to John Hurley, a butcher, and Jane BRASSILL.

On the 1901 census James Hurley was at 30 Napier Street, Mountain Ash, aged 22, a coal miner, born in Ireland. There were three other young Irishmen at the house headed by Denis SHEA, aged 25.

On 29th April 1907 James Hurley, 27, wed my grandfather's sister, Emma DAVIES, 21, (actually 18) at the Pontypridd Register Office. Both gave their addresses as Concrete Houses, Dinas. This marriage could well have been short-lived as this article in the Rhondda Leader of 31st August 1907 illustrates:

"Irish Navvy's terrible experiences:  
lost on a mountain, 4 days with broken leg



*James Hurley, a sturdy Irishman, who has been engaged for some time on the tunnel which is being driven through a portion of Carn Moesau Mountain, above Treherbert, in connection with the water scheme of the Rhondda District Council, had a terrible experience last week on the mountain. He set out on Saturday night from the tunnel in the direction of his home in Blaenrhondda, between eight and nine o'clock. It was fast getting dark, and being unacquainted with the district, he missed his path, slipping over a cliff a distance of about 30 feet. Here he lay unconscious during the night. On recovering consciousness in the early morning, he found his leg was broken over the right ankle. He crawled to a rock, where he lay in agony from Sunday morning till Tuesday afternoon. Owing to his weakened condition he was unable to eat the little dry food he possessed, and there was no water to quench his thirst.*

*Regaining a little of his strength on the afternoon of Tuesday, he got down and tried to crawl along the mountain back to the tunnel, managing to get along for a couple of hundred yards. On Wednesday, he saw some men on the side of the mountain, but they were too far away for him to attract their attention by shouting, but hope again reviving, he resumed his endeavours to crawl back to the place where he had been working, and after almost superhuman effort*

reached the spot on Wednesday night where he met his comrades.

*They attended at once to his injuries, took him to a hut, and provided him with restoratives, and when sufficiently recovered for removal, after being medically attended, he was taken to Pontypridd Workhouse Infirmary to undergo treatment for his injured limb. His robust constitution is enabling him to make good progress towards complete recovery”.*

The 1911 census shows that James and his family were at at 54 Stanley Street, Senghenydd:

James Hurley, Head, 30	Coal Hewer	born County Clare, Ireland
Emma Hurley, Wife, 24		born Glamorgan, Dinas
William J(James) Hurley, Son, 3		born Glamorgan, Dinas

A younger son, David George Hurley, had died in March 1911 aged 9 months.

Two years later, on 14th October 1913, 439 miners perished at the Senghenydd Universal Colliery, the worst mining accident in the United Kingdom. Good fortune favoured the Hurley family as they had returned to the Rhondda Valley. Their youngest son, Thomas John, was born in Dinas in December 1911.

On the 1939 Register James and Emma were still at Concrete Houses in Dinas although his year of birth was shown as 1875. His occupation was Coal Hewer – Heavy Worker. Emma died in 1960 but James lived a further decade to the age of 91, sturdy to the last.

The family photograph shows Emma 1888-1960, and James, 1879-1970.

**Editor’s note:** The Rhondda Tunnel Society was formed in 2014 to re-open the tunnel connection between the Rhondda and Afan Valleys. Once accomplished, the route will become the longest tunnel for cycling and walking in Europe, and the second-longest in the world.

For more information, see their website, or ring 01443 776665 for membership.

### **Don’t miss the ‘Cut-Off Dates’**

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

March	20 January	June	20 April
September	20 July	December	20 October



# DAVID ASHFORD (1856 TO 1941) A TALE OF FIGHTING THE SLIDING-SCALE COMMITTEE, INSOLVENCY, AND REDEMPTION #20718 Martin Ashford

My great-grand-uncle, David ASHFORD, was born to Thomas Ashford and his wife, Margaret (née GREGORY), on 16 October 1856 at their home in Duffryn Road, Mountain Ash. At the age of 10 he started work as a door boy in Lower Duffryn Colliery.

He married Margaret RUDGE on 24 June 1878, and moved to 10 Rock Street, Mountain Ash, where his first two children, Margaret and David William, were born. Neither were to survive more than three years though.

At the age of 27 years he was to enter into what became a huge conflict, initially centred around the Sliding-Scale Committee, which decreed that all coal mining wages were to be based on the price of coal. It was to lead to his leaving the mines just a few years later, and working as an agent for the Prudential Assurance Company.



However, in the 1939 England and Wales Register, he is recorded as 'Coal Hewer (retired)'. My assumption was that although he only spent that short time in the mines, that is where his heart lay, hence why he still saw himself as a mining man. This mystery was solved with the release of the 1921 Census.

David Ashford's battle with the Sliding-Scale Committee was fought out against the background of an increasingly-vitriolic exchange in the newspapers of the South Wales Daily News and the Merthyr Express. Bitter feelings were all too apparent, and the brutal words written much like what we see on the social media of today!

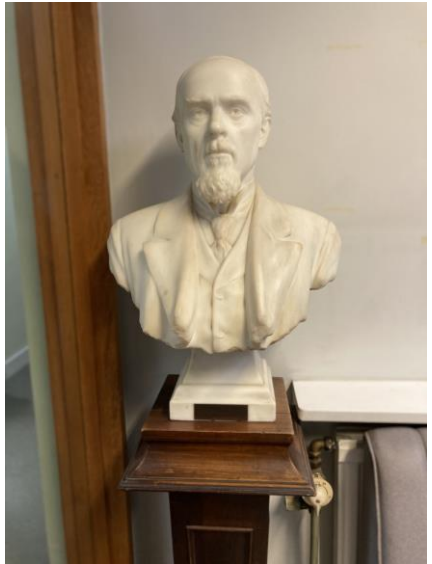
It all started at the tail end of 1883 when David Ashford wrote to the South Wales Daily News about the nomination of members for the Sliding-Scale Committee, taking exception to the nomination of William MAGOR as it was "done quietly" by the committees of Cwmpennar, Deep Duffryn and Navigation



Collieries, “without the consent of the workmen”. His view was that they wanted to remove David MORGAN, (see bust, right), “one of y Nant’s bitterest enemies”, from the Sliding-Scale.

Ashford saw Magor as being an “incomparable man” to Morgan, and proclaimed the nomination of he and another man, William BOWDEN, as “illegal”, as there should have been a public meeting to discuss the matter.

Magor responded to Ashford’s letter, stating that he was legally nominated and that Ashford was present at the mass meeting when the resolution for his nomination was passed. He asserted that the nomination of Bowden was “a hoax got up by Mr Ashford and his adherents to cause confusion and a split in the votes”.



Magor went on to say, “I trust Mr. Ashford will have the moral courage to attend the public meeting... where if he has anything to say, he will have to speak for himself, being too well known to appear on the platform in disguise”.

The public meeting was held by 50 colliers of Cwmpennar and those of Mr Nixon’s collieries at the Allen Arms, Mountain Ash, on 19 December 1883, “prolonged to a late hour”, where Magor’s candidature was supported. “There was but one dissenting voice”, but Ashford was reported to have “shirked none of the points raised” and provided all the information asked for.

Three days later, 200 men from Cwmpennar Colliery attended a mass meeting, and “with perfect unanimity” they carried that Morgan, “the tried and trusty friend of the Aberdare workmen”, not Magor (who was not present), was their candidate.

The battle lines were now well and truly drawn!

On 27 December, Ashford wrote again to the South Wales Daily News, commencing a series of letters claiming vote-rigging, financial malpractice and nepotism, and threatening legal action. Letters started to appear anonymously from “A collier from Mountain Ash”, refuting such claims, and accusing Ashford of physical attacks against a member of the committee. Accusations fly back and fore, but it was seemingly Ashford’s own actions which brought about his dismissal, as reported in the press:

“The following was the cause of Ashford’s dismissal from his employment: He was working his month’s notice: during that time he thought to get revenge on one of the members of the committee. He left his work one morning for that purpose, went to the directing manager, who was then a stranger to us all, and told that the said person had drawn down the roof of his stall. The manager to whom the complaint was made went to Ashford’s place to see if it were true, and found that Ashford had told a deliberate and mischievous falsehood, for which offence he was immediately dismissed from his work.”

This was to bring an end to David Ashford’s employment in the mines; or so I had believed.

What struck me reading the 16 lengthy letters that appeared in these newspapers was the remarkable eloquence of David Ashford, a man who had just five years education, who quoted freely from literature, religious testament and numerous other sources. Many people today would struggle to write with such power and clarity.

In 1890 Ashford moved to 24 Dean Street, Aberdare, along with his three-year old son, David James, and was now working as a Commission Agent for the Prudential Assurance Company, who he had joined in 1886.

Perhaps it was reflecting upon the hard experience of past years, but by 1895 he was very involved with the Love and Unity Lodge of UTAS (Universal Total Abstinence Society), leading discussion on the use of alcoholic wine as a sacrament on the communion table. It was reported that only a few churches in the Aberdare District continued to use fermented wine, but it was unanimously resolved that all the churches be requested to use unfermented wine in future. Ashford was said to have given many “thrilling” and “stirring” speeches on temperance.

He was also active in the Aberdare Liberal Club, Calfaria Church, the Carmel Improvement Society and Beulah Sunday School. His daughters, Margaret Florence (later to become headmistress at Penywaun School), Annie May and Nellie, were also frequently mentioned in these contexts.

Times were very hard though, and he moved to 25 Jenkin Street, Aberdare in 1899, and then to 36 North Street, Mountain Ash in 1901, before moving back to Aberdare in 1904 to live at 8 Llanddewi Street.

That year brought another low point in his life when the Aberdare Leader reported an insolvency meeting of his creditors where he was found to have liabilities of £95 19s 7d (£12,800 in today’s money) with assets, mainly furniture, at £1 10s. “He attributed his failure to a decrease of 20s to 22s per week on an average in his income owing to the assurance company, by whom he was employed, reducing him about two years ago from the post of assistant

superintendent to that of an agent, ill-health of himself and family, giving pecuniary assistance to relatives, and travelling expenses and bank charges, and rents paid by him being so heavy”.

Ashford said he had been in the insurance line since 1894, when he had to give up working underground through being “victimised” at Cwmpennar on the ground “that he spoke too much at the colliers’ meetings”.

They later moved to their last home, 22 Violet Street, Aberaman, in 1909, remaining there for the rest of their days.

In 1914, Ashford attended a Prudential Agents Meeting and when speaking mentioned that he worked for the Prudential for over 27 years. It was always believed that he had remained with them until his retirement. However, the release of the 1921 Census revealed that he was then working as a Repair Man at Werfa Dare Colliery, Aberdare, so at some point during the previous seven years he had returned to the mines. This answered why he referred to himself as ‘Coal Hewer (retired)’ in the 1939 England and Wales Register.

In 1938 he and Margaret celebrated their Diamond Wedding at the ages of 82 and 79 respectively, a happy day to mark their 60 years of marriage. The Western Mail reported the event, noting that “Mr Ashford has been a teacher at Ynysllwyd Baptist Sunday School, Aberdare, for more than 50 years”.

Just five months later, on 28 November 1938, Margaret passed away, and on 13 December 1941, David also died, and was interred alongside his wife in Aberdare Cemetery. Their deaths were both recorded by the Western Mail, David’s epitaph saying, “Mr David Ashford, Violet-street, Aberaman, who died on Saturday, aged 84, was actively associated with Ynysllwyd Baptist Church, Aberaman, of which he was the oldest member. Three daughters and one son survive.”

And so an extraordinary life came to an end.

Photographs are my own, the top showing David walking along the Aberystwyth seafront in, I believe, the 1930s, and the bust of David Morgan in Aberdare library, at the top of the stairs on the first floor. Based on a report in the Aberdare Leader, it must have been placed there in 1904-5.

#### ADDENDUM:

An interesting sub-story to this text is that I steward at music festivals for Oxfam, and by sheer coincidence bumped into another Martin Ashford (also stewarding) who, it turned out, comes from Aberdare. Given that my family hail from Mountain Ash, I was convinced we must be related, and we were ... Third Cousins!

Martin and his dad (now 93) had never seen the photos of David Ashford that I had, so I was able to show them photos of their great-grandfather and grandfather respectively. What made all this even better was that family lore has it that David Ashford worked closely with Keir Hardie at the time the Labour Party was founded, which my namesake cousin and his father knew nothing about, and Martin has just been elected Labour Councillor for Pontyclun!

It was only in 2019 that we found each other, and now we see each other several times each year at festivals.

Before I found my namesake, another third cousin I found (Lesley) said to me, "You were at Aunt Nellie's 70th birthday party in Aberdare in 1968, weren't you?", to which I replied, "No, and who's Aunt Nellie?"

It was, of course, not me but the other Martin Ashford!

What made the story even better was that Lesley told me she was pleased it wasn't me as Aunt Nellie had said, "That Martin was such a bad influence on the other children; he ruined my day!"

Martin asked his dad about this and it transpired he had wanted an apple from Aunt Nellie's orchard, and when she said 'no' he got every other child at her party to go up to her one by one and ask the same question ... Little mischief!

**Editor's note:** In his original article Martin has written a more detailed account of the correspondence between David Ashford and the Collier from Mountain Ash (could he have been William Magor?) and the full version can be obtained by contacting the editor: [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk)



A PROBLEM FOR THE CENSUS TAKER??  
ALLEGED OVERCROWDING IN 1910, as reported in the Glamorgan Gazette

*Dr Thomas reported that at No 6 David Street, Blaengarw, he found a serious case of over-crowding. Seven people sleeping in the one bedroom, two lodgers in another, three in another, one in the front room downstairs, (which was the living-room by day of four people.) Thirteen people in all occupied the house. He inspected several other properties at Wood Street, Pontycymmer, and found that though they were originally built as one house, they were now converted into two. The second, or back part consisted of a small kitchen and one small bedroom, but now they were being let as 'apartments' by the people living in the front part of the house. Dr Thomas considered them too small to be occupied by families unless they had the free run of the front part of the house.*

*Editor: On the 1911 Census there are still eleven people living there: a family of seven, plus four lodgers.*

# THOMAS JACOB THOMAS (Sarnicol)

#8653 Barrie Jones

Wales has provided a number of prominent twentieth-century poets with the surname Thomas, for example: Dylan THOMAS (1914-1953), RS THOMAS (1913-2000), and Edward THOMAS (1878-1917)<sup>1</sup>. However, all three poets wrote solely in the English language. A prominent Welsh poet who wrote in both Welsh and English was Thomas Jacob THOMAS (1873-1945). Born 13<sup>th</sup> April 1873 near Rhos-yr-Hafod, Capel Cynon, Cardiganshire, he was the fourth of the five children of David THOMAS (1841-1922) and Mary nee JACOB (1837-1919). David THOMAS was an agricultural labourer and the family lived in Sarnicol farm cottage<sup>2</sup>.

After an early education attending Capel Cynon board school and later Talgarreg School, owing to his frail health it was advised that he attend New Quay Grammar School. Here, he stayed for four years taking Department of Science and Art examinations. In 1891 he won a £20 scholarship for the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, reading for the University of London BSc degree<sup>3</sup>.

At that time, it was normal for most well-educated working-class men and women to pursue teaching careers. So it was with Thomas, who halting his degree course, accepted a teaching post in mathematics at the Hartley Institution in Southampton in 1894. Returning to Wales in 1896 he obtained a post as science master at Abergele Intermediate School, Denbighshire. Here, he completed his final BSc examination. The following year he moved to teach science at schools in South Wales, Merthyr Tydfil County School, (1897-1901), and Abertillery Secondary School (1901-1913). In September 1913 he accepted the post as assistant master at the newly established Cyfarthfa Castle Municipal Secondary School, Merthyr Tydfil, teaching chemistry and Welsh. In his final year at Cyfarthfa he took an external BA degree of the University of London. In 1922 he was appointed headmaster of the newly established Quakers Yard Grammar School, Treharris.

What is unique is that Thomas was associated with the early years of Merthyr Tydfil's three grammar schools: 'The County,' 'Cyfarthfa Castle,' and 'Quaker's Yard.' In 1931, at the age of fifty-eight, owing to ill health he took early retirement and moved with his wife 'Katie' to live in 'Llywel', Laura Place, Aberystwyth, 'where he found kindred spirits interested in literature and

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<sup>1</sup> Although not born in Wales, Percy Edward Thomas was of Welsh parents.

<sup>2</sup> Evan David Jones, 'Thomas Jacob Thomas (Sarnicol),' Dictionary of Welsh Biography, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, Sarnicol, DWB.

etymology with whom he could discuss the subjects which despite, his science training, were nearest to his heart<sup>4</sup>.

Throughout his adult life Thomas wrote prose and verse contributing to numerous publications such as *Ymofynydd*, *Cymru*, *Y Geninen*, the *Western Mail*, the *London Kelt*, *Y Lienor*, *Y Ford Gron*, *Y Beirniad*, and *Y Cymro*. He also edited a Welsh column for the *Merthyr Express* newspaper for a number of years. His chief publications of collections of his poems were *Ar Lan y Mor a Chaneuon Eraill* (1898), *Odlau Mor a Mynydd* (1912), *Blodau Drain Duon* (1935), *Storiau ar Gan* (1936), *Catiau Cwta* (1940), and *Chwedlau Cefn Gwlad* (1944). Ready for publication at the time of his death in 1945 was *Odlau'r Aelwyd*, which he considered to be his best poems. The manuscript is currently held at the National Library of Wales.

Thomas entered his odes (awdlau) to numerous National Eisteddfodau; London (1909), Colwyn (1910), Wrexham (1912), Abergavenny (1913), Birkenhead (1917), and Bangor (1931). At the Abergavenny Eisteddfod he was chaired Bard for his ode (awdl), '*Aelwyd y Cymro*,' (The Welshman's Home) using the bardic title 'Sarnicol,' after the name of the cottage where he was born. He also judged the awdl at Llanelli, (1930), and Bangor, (1943). In addition to his odes, Thomas entered translations of verse to the National Eisteddfodau at home and in the United States of America. These covered Welsh into English, English into Welsh, and even French into Welsh. In 1915 he won a forty-dollar prize for a translation of verse from English into Welsh at the San Francisco Eisteddfod, California<sup>5</sup>. In July 1901 Thomas passed the National Eisteddfod examination for the Gorsedd degree as a bard<sup>6</sup>.

His bardic achievement at Abergavenny in 1913 meant that he was much in demand to give addresses to groups and societies throughout Wales. His favourite topic at that time was the *Welshman and Humour* (*Y Cymru yn y Cywair Llon*), drawing upon examples from Welsh literature both ancient and modern. 'The suggestion that the Welshman was a sad, morose individual, devoid of all sense of humour, was contrary to facts, as revealed Welsh literature and life'<sup>7</sup>.

Following the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Thomas demonstrated that he could be carried along with the war fervour that gripped Britain at that time. In typical jingoistic fashion in November 1914, he wrote the lyrics of '*Men of Cambria*' to the tune of '*Men of Harlech*', the song finishing with

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<sup>4</sup> Jones, Sarnicol, DWB.

<sup>5</sup> Cambrian News, 21<sup>st</sup> September 1917, p.5.

<sup>6</sup> 'Gorsedd Degrees,' Evening Express, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1901, p.4.

<sup>7</sup> 'Wales and Humour,' The Amman Valley Chronicle, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1914, p.5.

the following lines<sup>8</sup>:

*Face the Teuton's fire and thunder,  
Rend the Kaiser's hosts asunder;  
Strike again the World with wonder,  
Show that right is might!*

His penchant for writing verse to popular tunes was most notable. While teaching at Cyfarthfa Castle Grammar School; he wrote the lyrics to the school song *Cân y Castell* (*Song of the Castle*)<sup>9</sup>, to the tune of *Captain Morgan's March*<sup>10</sup>:

The song was sung regularly at school assemblies up until the 1970s and surely is well remembered by many ex-pupils of the 'Castle' school, although I for one found learning the words so difficult in my first year at Cyfarthfa.

#### *Cân y Castell*

*lenctyd y Castell, caer I ddysg a hedd,  
Gloewn ein harfau l'r gad ddi-gledd;  
Byddwn yn deilwng blant I enwog lu,  
Dewrion wyr Morgannwg y dyddiau fu:  
Byddwn yn deilwng blant I enwog lu,  
Dewrion wyr Morgannwg y dyddiau fu.*

*lenctyd y Castell, awn ymlaen o hyd,  
Galw am ein gorau mae'r eangfyd;  
Gorau gyda chwarae, gorau gyda Gwaith  
Gluda glod ein Castell drwy'r ddaear  
faith;  
Gorau gyda chwarae, gorau gyda  
Gwaith,  
Gluda glod ein Castell drwy'r ddaear  
faith.*

#### Song of the Castle

*Youth of the Castle, fortress of learning  
and peace  
We burnish our weapons for the  
swordless battle  
As children we'll be loyal to a host of  
famous people  
The heroes of Glamorgan in days past  
We'll be loyal children to the famous  
hosts  
The heroes of Glamorgan in days past.*

*Youth of the castle going forward at all  
times  
The wide world is calling for our best  
Best at play and best at work  
Carry the renown of our castle throughout  
the earth  
Best at play and best at work  
Carry the renown of our castle throughout  
the earth.*

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<sup>8</sup> 'Men of Cambria,' *Aberdare Leader*, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1914, p.6.

<sup>9</sup> Mansell Richards, *A farewell to Cyfarthfa Castle School*, Merthyr Tydfil Library Service, 2014, ps. 16 & 72.

<sup>10</sup> A traditional Welsh tune by an unknown composer, most probably written in the late eighteenth century.

In April 1914 Thomas married Catherine Elizabeth THOMAS (1876) (ARAM), at Frederick Street Presbyterian Chapel, Cardiff. 'Katie' was the daughter of Edwin THOMAS (1853-1918) and Sarah Ann OWEN (b 1857). Edwin THOMAS was headmaster of Aberfan Boy's School, and Thomas and Katie lived at Katie's parents' house; 'Llywelfa', Aberfan Road, Aberfan<sup>1</sup>. Katie and Thomas knew each other from their time teaching at Merthyr Tydfil County School, both joining in 1897, barely a year after the County School had been established<sup>2</sup>. Thomas died 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1945, and following his death Katie returned to live in Merthyr Tydfil. Katie died 8<sup>th</sup> July 1960, and both are buried at Bwlch-y-Groes (Congregational) chapel cemetery, Llandysul, Cardiganshire, the place where Thomas's parents are also buried.

### **Front Cover Image: Neath Abbey and Canal**

*Neath Abbey: According to the Tudor historian John Leland, when he visited in the late 1530s, it was "the fairest abbey of all Wales". It was a Savignac monastery, founded by a hermit from Savigny in Normandy in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, but later by 1150 became incorporated into the Cistercian order, along with all the other Savignac abbeys.*

*The abbey was dissolved in 1539, with the abbot and seven other monks each receiving pensions, and the site was purchased by the Tudor magnate Sir Richard Williams who built a splendid mansion in its grounds.*

*By 1731 some of the buildings were in use for copper smelting, with further industrial developments to follow, such as furnaces being built in the west range and accommodation for workers built into the back of the mansion.*

*It is now in the care of Cadw as a historic monument, and provides a backdrop for the article on Fortesque Broadber, in this issue.*

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<sup>1</sup> Cambria Daily Leader, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1914, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Merthyr County School,' Merthyr Times, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1897, p.8.



# FORTESQUE BROADBER

## A Man with a Name

#169 Martyn J Griffiths

(Part 1)

BROADBER (or Brodber as it often appears) is a very unusual surname, especially in Wales, and Fortesque as a forename is even rarer. It would therefore be a fair assumption that any persons bearing this name must be linked somewhere on the family tree. In Neath three Fortesque Broadbers have been identified whilst other local families bearing the first name Fortesque were probably linked by marriage ie Fortesque HUTTON, Fortesque JONES and Fortesque PINKNEY. (The name is often spelt with a 'c' instead of a 'q').

Neath in 1700 was a busy market town and river port. The coal seams in the area lie near to the surface and close to the town, making exploitation and transportation relatively easy.

In the mid 17th century coal production had ground to a halt. Burgesses had a right to dig for their own coal on the Gnoll estate which overlooked the town, but the deeper they went the more problems they had with flooding, ventilation and actually getting the coal out. Furthermore, the many bell pits they dug were collapsing into one another. The pits were closed and the town went into an economic decline.

All this changed at the end of the century when Sir Humphrey Mackworth of Derbyshire married the Gnoll heiress, Mary EVANS. He wanted to develop a copper works and in order to do that needed a ready supply of coal. His many innovations transformed the coal industry. Experienced miners from Derbyshire and Shropshire were brought in, gins introduced to solve the flooding and extraction difficulties, waggonways were erected both above and below ground in order to get the coal quickly to his wharves. These and other measures made him tremendously successful and the envy of all his neighbours. In fact, they were so jealous that disruptions for several years have been dubbed 'the coal wars' and a Broadber was right in the middle of it.

## FAMILY ORIGINS

Broadber is obviously not a Welsh name and the theory is that the name was taken from a Devon village which disappeared when land was cleared to make way for sheep pastures at the height of the wool trade in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The first person bearing that name found in Wales was a William Brodbeere who is named on the Oystermouth Court Roll in 1615 as being the party to whom land was surrendered. He was then living in Neath. He died in 1637

leaving sons John and Lyson, and grandchildren from a third son, Joseph. William had the occupation of smith and he left some of his equipment including several pairs of 'tongues' and a hammer, to his grandson as long as he took up the profession of smith. Lyson Brodber, who inherited his father's forge, "engines, instruments and tooles", turns up on the Glamorgan pedigrees list marrying into a Baglan family. His 'musket and armes' were left to John and one wonders if these were put to use in the civil wars of the next decade.

The next reference is found in D Rhys PHILLIPS' tome, 'A History of the Vale of Neath', and it records John Brodber marrying Mary WILLIAMS of Duffryn, which was an estate of about 1200 acres to the west of Neath. Phillips writes that the clerk put Brodber's name down as Broadbent but I have failed to find any marriage record and in the original Glamorgan pedigree the name is shown as Broadben.

In the Penrice and Margam Estate record at NLW, mention is made of this Mary Brodber née Williams. Reference is made to a note related to an iron works being delivered to Phillip Williams (of Duffryn), who would have been Mary's nephew. By this time, she must have been a good age. It is dated 1687/8 and the catalogue says that, "Mary Brodber was a dominant woman, judging by the master strokes of her writing". The note was written on the back of a pamphlet which certainly underlines her political leanings. The text of the pamphlet is a poem which is of a time of much change with the Glorious Revolution taking place in 1688:

"O by my shoul it is a Talbott  
And he will cut all the English throat  
Now the hereticks all goe down  
By Christ and St Patricke the nation's our own  
There's an old prophesy found in a bog  
That Ireland shall be governed by an ass  
And now the prophesy is come to pass  
Talbot's the dog Tirconnell's the ass.

In the town of Neath itself a Fortesque Broadber appears in a Valuation of Neath Borough dated 1665 which shows him living in a dwelling house in Wind Street. He died less than two years later and his burial is noted in the lay register kept by Morgan EVAN (on sale with GFHS). The author notes Fortesque Broadber as 'cousin' to himself and, when Phillip Williams of Duffryn was buried, Morgan Evan notes that gentleman as 'uncle', thus confirming the relationship already alluded to. We know from the Hearth Tax of 1670 that the house in Neath where his widow, Mary, was still living, had four hearths, not a huge house but certainly larger than the majority in the town.

## WILLIAM BROADBER

There are very few parish records for the Broadber family up to this point in time. In fact, none have been traced before 1692. It is likely however that William Broadber who was very active in the town, was a son of Fortesque and Mary.

When his son was buried at St Thomas' church in 1699 he was noted as 'alderman'. The town was run by a corporation which consisted of a portreeve, up to 12 aldermen, and common councilmen. It was the aldermen that formed the ruling body. A few decades later the town was ruled by the Mackworth family of the Gnoll as they appointed their family and their representatives to the aldermanic bench. However, at this time, the corporation was more or less independent. Aldermen were elected for life and once a year, from amongst their number, a portreeve was chosen to lead the corporation for that year.

William's occupation is variously shown as ironmonger and smith which suggests that, apart from running a shop to supply local needs, he also had his own forge whereby he could manufacture goods. From a 1726 entry in the court leet record, we know that this blacksmith's forge stood next to the Broadber house in Wind Street.

The family had a lot of connections to iron manufacture and there is mention of a Thomas Broadber being in partnership with Thomas POPKIN of Forest when taking over the Forest forge in Llansamlet in the early 18th century. Possibly he was also involved when Popkin expanded his industrial concerns to take over forges in Neath Abbey and Melincourt. There is also mention of 'Brodber's Iron' in 1702, which might infer some special kind of processing peculiar to the family.

William Broadber from 1701 held a lease on "Rheeding and Elyros" together with a water grist mill. This was the small Rhyddings estate in Cadoxton which he leased from the Seys family.

William was obviously one of the leaders on the town's corporation. As such it is not difficult to understand what happened next.

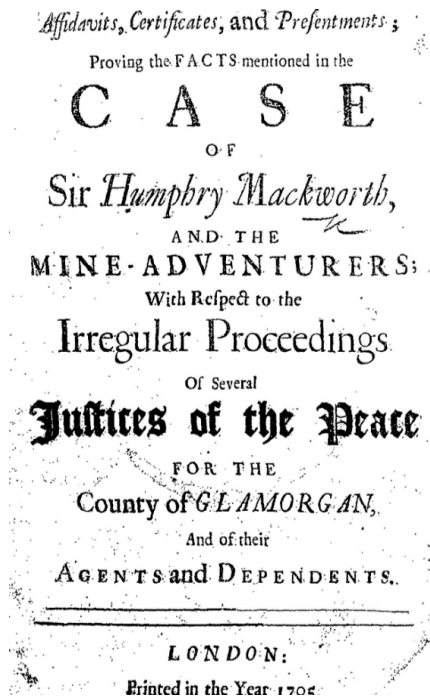
The Gnoll estate owned a large proportion of the town but there were many properties owned by various other gentry and, no doubt, the people renting those properties supported their landlords when town business was discussed.

Sir Humphrey MACKWORTH was an incomer. His roots were firmly in England but all the other landowners – the LLEWELLYNS of Ynysygerwn, WILLIAMS of Duffryn, MANSELLS of Briton Ferry and Margam, EVANS of Eaglesbush etc... could trace their ancestry back into the mists of time in Wales. One can understand therefore why there should be some resentment when Mackworth

re-opened the mines on the Gnoll estate and introduced new processes which meant that his coal production was far more successful than any of theirs.

Sir Edward Mansell of Margam, Thomas Mansell of Briton Ferry, Thomas Popkin of Forrest and others set about to undermine the Gnoll coal production and for several years these 'coal wars' raged. William Broadber was one of their primary agents. Mackworth had to go to court to defend himself and a pamphlet describes the various actions taken by his rivals.

In the pamphlet Broadber is described as a "*Creature of the said Justices*", ie the Mansells and Popkin. Amongst the various allegations against Broadber was one that he with others allegedly assaulted Mackworth's chief agent, Thomas HAWKINS. Another assault was alleged against Maud PARKER "*by taking hold of her by the Shoulders, shaking her thereby, and endeavouring to throw her into the Brook.*"



A Pamphlet describing the 'Coal Wars'

He is also named as part of a gang who broke "*with Force and Arms the said Gate and Stone-Wall upon the Freehold Lands of Sir Humphrey Mackworth.*" This was with the intention of obtaining a regular supply of cheap coal for

Thomas Mansell who had right to it as a burgess of the town. Mansell is said to have kept every one of the fires burning night and day in his big house and sent a cart every day to get his free coal.

To say that things got a bit heated would be putting it mildly. The coal wars finally went into more of a truce when in 1706 both the Mansells died, Thomas Mansell in January and Sir Edward on 14th November.

William Broadber died in 1722 and in his will he named two sons: John (died 1733) to whom he left an annuity, and Fortesque who had everything else.

There seems to have been another Fortesque Broadber in Neath at this time who may well have been a brother of the alderman. This Fortesque was the father of Mary Broadber wife of George Hutton, gent, of Neath, and they all appear in a marriage settlement dated 1722.

Part 2 in the next edition of the Journal will look at William Broadber's oldest son Fortesque and the family's Jamaican connections.



## New Society Downloads

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- N0203 Bridgend Nolton - St Mary - £5.00
- N0205 Bridgend Penyfai - Smyrna Baptist - £5.00
- B0804 Bridgend Newcastle Hill - Unitarian - £5.00

# CINEMA'S GOLDEN DAYS IN MID-RHONDDA

Oliver Davies

I spent my boyhood in Trealaw, which is midway between Porth and Tonypanydy. I had a choice of eight cinemas, four in Porth and four in Tonypanydy: in Porth there was the *Pictromium* in North Road; it was a wooden building that became a popular dance hall after its cinema days. Then there was the *Lewis Merthyr Workman's Hall* on the square and the *Grand* in Pontypridd Road. On the corner of Hannah Street there was the *Central* built by Solomon Andrews of Cardiff. It was on the site of *The Old Palace* where I had seen the old plays such as "The Maid from Cefn Ydfa", "The Murder in the Red Barn", "The Silver King", "The Face at the Window", "Lucky Durham" and many more. On the front of the Palace were two shops, one a "Penny Bazaar".

In Tonypanydy we had the "Picturedrome" on the square near the site of the old Hippodrome, where I remember seeing Bostock and Wombells' Menagerie and Circus. It was a round wooden building later bought by Will Stone, who built the "New Hippodrome" at the bottom of Dunraven Street. There was the "Royal Cinema" astride the brook that divided Tonypanydy from Llwynypia. This had a good organ. The organist would play a "human voice" on it if requested. The manager was a stout man who smoked cigars and wore a wide-brimmed hat.

The "Empire" deserves a mention as it had an upper circle or gallery. We called this "The Gods" because of its height above the stage, and also "The Chicken Run" because of its front railing to prevent one falling into the Grand Circle. This circle protruded beyond the line of the gallery. We used to drop toffee papers, etc, on to the fronts of the circle. Complaints would bring Mr Lewis, the manager, to attend to the unpleasant matter.

At the back of "The Gods" were two exits in case of fire. These led to very long stairs to the ground floor. At the bottom of the stairs were doors that could be easily opened from the inside. Occasionally one of our group would pay to go in to the show. He would then come down and open the outside doors and let us in. On one occasion Mr Lewis was waiting for us at the top of the stairs and quickly got us out on the street.

Will Stone's New Hippodrome was very popular. He had an orchestra there at one time. It was led by a Mr Burgess who later conducted a band on the sea-front at Weston-super-Mare. I found that Mr Burgess had retired to Kidderminster and I wrote to him about what I remembered of those days. He mentioned in his reply how good were Mr and Mrs Stone to everyone. I remember them giving food parcels to their patrons in the hard times we saw in the Mid-Rhondda.

**Editor's Note:** Oliver Davies, born 1904, was persuaded in the 1980s by his son Clive to write about his youth in the Rhondda Valley. This extract is taken from his "*Rhondda Remembered*", and more of these memories will be printed in future editions of the Journal.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**David England** has written to say he has found two striking photographs, seen below, in a book recently purchased in a charity shop. The young man on the left has a blazer badge embroidered 'Youth England 1955-56' (possibly football?), seeming to represent a youth team against England, and in the writing on the back, hard to read, 'Cefn Forest, Pengam' can be deciphered. The second photo, of the cub scouts, has no identification at all. David is willing to pass these on to anyone who recognizes and has an interest in these subjects, or who can provide any further information, so please contact the editor if you can help.



**Barbara Gold** has asked if we can provide more information about life in Treharris, either from our own records or from any residents who could write an article about their families there. We are looking into our files, but can anyone help meanwhile?

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

## BOOK REVIEWS

Women in Welsh Coalmining  
Norena Shopland

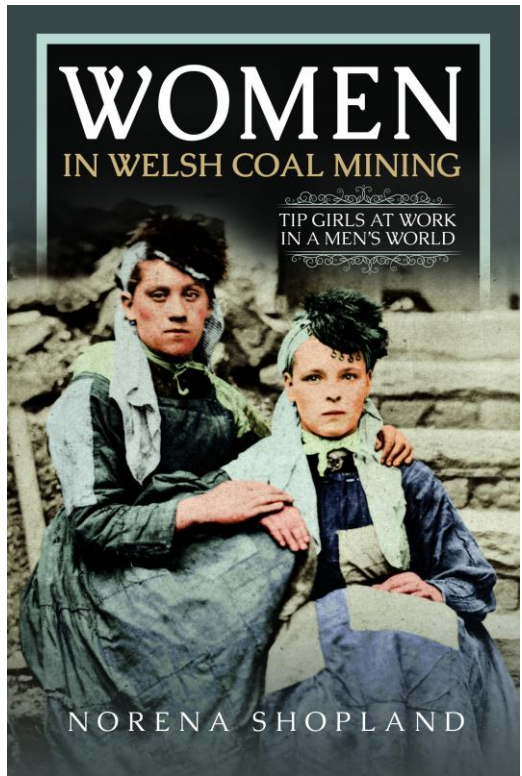
Some of you will have met the author Norena Shopland when she gave her talk on women in coalmining to several groups around the county including the GFHS at Aberkenfig (see December's Journal).

This book would come as an eye-opener even to those who had coalmining in their families for generations, as I have: the thought of women in these most arduous of working conditions is anathema to us now, even in these days of equality in the workplace. Most histories of the coalfields have ignored the fact that women were not only keeping their men-folk clean and fed above ground, but they could

and did work underground if that was the only way they could support their families. Their numbers were small in comparison with the men (3.5% of the UK colliery workforce in 1841, falling to around 1% after 1861), and not every colliery would employ them.

"Women in Welsh Coal Mining" is the first major study of Welsh female colliery workers, providing invaluable material for students of the coal industry as well as its focus on women in Wales. Its 16 chapters cover all aspects of mining from a female viewpoint, and it is astonishing what is revealed by the author's extensive research. For example women frequently worked wearing only basic underwear, or worked semi-naked, as the voluminous skirts fashionable at the time would have proved very hazardous if caught up in machinery, (health and safety??) and these women would then be seen as 'easy game' by the very men who employed them.

Famous names such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel and the Crawshay family in Merthyr pass through its pages alongside actual accounts from some of the working women themselves. The rise of the women's movement and emancipation, the census returns and their descriptions of these women, all





make relevant backgrounds to the narrative. There is also the 'moral' question raised by outraged Victorians as to whether women should be employed in the industry at all, and the various movements to abolish the practice, as well as the ways often used to get round the employment rules of the time - women, after all, were cheaper to employ.

There are numerous photographs, in black and white of course, some hardly credible in today's eyes, although that judgement could equally apply to those of the men and boys as well.

I would urge anyone with an interest in the coal industry and its workers to read this book

*Jean Fowlds*

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# NEWS FROM GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES: OCTOBER- DECEMBER 2023

## Staff

- We have been joined by a new Administrative Officer, Phoebe Marsden, who started with us in November.

## Access and Community Engagement

- Our events programme continued during the autumn with talks from Dr David Coates of the University of Warwick on 'Recovering Britain's Amateur Theatrical Past 1789-1914: A Glamorgan Perspective' and Dr John R Kenyon on 'Llandaff Cathedral: History, Art and Architecture'.
- In October we launched 'From May to Etta with Love', a series of six short audio dramas inspired by photographs from the collection showing Cardiff's Docklands community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and taken by photographer Fred Petersen of Bute Street. The plays can be accessed from our website:  
<https://glamarchives.gov.uk/events/from-may-to-etta-with-love-2/>.
- Our events programme for 2024 begins on 23 January at 6.30pm with an online talk from the Wales Women's Peace Petition team on volunteering to transcribe the petition. This will be followed on 20 February by a talk on the Norwegian Church and the Norwegian community in South Wales by Thomas Husøy-Ciaccia. Places can be booked on our website <https://glamarchives.gov.uk/our-events>.
- Our Ask the Experts family history sessions continue with support from members of the GFHS Cardiff Branch.
- Several school classes visited during the autumn term, three from Llansannor and Llanharry Church in Wales Primary, two from Mount Stuart Primary, Cardiff and one class from Kitchener Road Primary, Cardiff.
- A number of university student groups have visited for tours, including masters students from the Welsh School of Architecture and Cardiff University's School of Welsh, and from the creative writing programme at Cardiff Met.
- Group visits to the Archives have included the Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel's Kumbukumbu Project, the Innovate Trust's Secret Garden Project, The Wallich's Invisible Cardiff initiative, the Welsh Muslim Cultural Foundation, the Jewish History Association of South Wales, Rhiwbina WI, Cwmaman History Society, and the South Wales Baptist Union.
- We're also pleased to continue to welcome members of the Cardiff Branch of GFHS to the Archives. The December visit focussed on our coal collections.

## **Conservation**

- Funding has been secured to progress with the second stage of conservation work on William Burgess' drawings and plans of Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch.

## **Collections**

- A successful collections week was held in November. Work on cataloguing the records of our current local authorities was progressed and four outstanding accessions from the past six months completed. The Records Assistants continued with the stocktake of the boxes in the strongrooms.

- Notable accessions received recently include:

### **South Wales Baptist Association Records (D1689)**

The South Wales Baptist Association exists to encourage the building and development of healthy churches and to enable them to assist each other in mission in their communities. Records of several churches including Beulah Baptist Church, Dowlais, Bethel, Treharris and Zion, Maesteg have been donated by the Association.

### **St John's Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Number 36, Cardiff, Records (D1964)**

St John's Chapter, Cardiff, held its first meeting on the 30 January 1856. Records covering the years 1855-2011 have been received and include minutes, ledgers, cash books, attendance books, returns to Grand Chapter and Provincial Chapter, and register of members.

### **Pontyclun Football Club Records (D1966)**

Pontyclun Football Club has been part of the South Wales football scene for over a century having been founded in 1896. In the early years, the Club was a member of the Bridgend and District League but immediately after the First World War joined the Cardiff and District League. In 1922 the Club was admitted to the Football Association of Wales, and in 1968 was admitted to the Welsh Football League. Records include match report forms featuring team line-ups and results, and match programmes.

### **Probus Club of Cardiff, Records (D1978)**

The inaugural meeting of the Probus Club of Cardiff was held at the Park Hotel on 26 January 1976. Over the subsequent years the Club has organised a programme of speakers and numerous social events. Records received include minutes, Secretaries' files, attendance register and photographs for the period 1976-2015.

### **Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, Records (D1983)**

The first of a series of deposits has been received from Chapter Arts Centre, Canton. Founded in 1971, the centre hosts films, plays, performance art and live music. The deposit reflects these activities and includes programmes, flyers, press cuttings and magazines.

### **UWC Atlantic, St Donat's Castle, Llantwit Major, Records (D1986)**

UWC Atlantic is a college for students aged 16-19 years of age, based at St Donat's Castle. Students travel from over 150 countries to live, study and learn together pursuing the International Baccalaureate and an outdoor-orientated experiential education over two years. Established in 1962, it is the founding college of the UWC Movement. Items deposited include minutes, administrative files, annual reports and correspondence.

### **Welsh Football League Records (D1987)**

The Welsh Football League was the senior association football league in south Wales for over a century. Records including minutes, financial records, and handbooks, for the period 1919-2020 have been donated by the last Secretary of the League and member of the Council of the Football Association of Wales.

*Rhian Diggins, 4 January 2024*



## 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Projects

We have some exciting projects coming this year –

- Glamorgan Families Index Project
  - Places of Worship

WATCH THIS SPACE

# SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

## **Aberkenfig Resource Centre (ARC) Report – Penny Williams**

The ARC Team continues to meet bi-monthly to manage both the ARC and Society wide projects/issues. The regular Wednesday openings are continuing twice a month. Numbers are low but it does give the volunteers the opportunity to catch up on jobs.

The cataloguing of the map drawers is continuing and will provide easier access to a very useful resource, especially for visitors who do not know the geography of the local area. The storage cupboards are being re-organised to provide more storage space, and as the first step in cataloguing to find what is available more accurately. The donated books are being sorted so we can take some items to upcoming fairs and to eliminate any double copies or books that are too out of date to be of any use.

The Society-wide project of recording Glamorgan chapels is continuing and all branches are encouraged to get involved. More information is available from [arc2@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:arc2@glamfhs.org.uk).

## **Aberdare & Cynon Valley Report – Pat Rees**

2023 turned out to be a very busy year for our branch, introducing extra monthly meetings, a branch Facebook page, and outings to places relating to family history research.

Our bi-monthly research/guest speaker meetings in Cynon Valley Museum have gone well, however attendance seems to be better when we have a guest speaker.

It was decided to re-start our research sessions in the Aberdare library on a trial basis, and they were going well until Dec/Jan where no-one other than the research volunteers turned up; we have put this down to the time of year being December and very busy for members, and the weather was particularly cold for our January meeting.

We decided to start branch outings, the first being to our Resource Centre in Aberkenfig. A few members went along and they thoroughly enjoyed their visit. Our next outing will be in February to the Glamorgan Archives.

In October we had our AGM and a new Committee was voted in for the next twelve months. After the AGM we were treated to an excellent talk on a historic walk through Old Trecynon by Rob Jones, who is becoming a popular regular speaker to our branch.

In November we had Jennifer George as our guest speaker and her talk was on "What's in a name". Jennifer is another regular speaker to our branch. She is very experienced in engaging members to interact and a lively discussion followed.

December we did not have a meeting, and a number of members went out for Christmas lunch instead; a very good time was had by all present.

In January our guest speaker was Izzy Parker from Gene Park Wales and we had an excellent turn out for a very informative talk on DNA and how it works in relation to linking DNA to family history research and ancestry.

## **Projects**

Work on Aberdare Obituaries 1951-1960 is progressing slowly; we are grateful to the members who give up their time to make these resources available for future researchers.

A Branch Facebook page was set up, limiting the research to Aberdare/Cynon Valley area only.

Aberdare-Cynon Valley Family History:  
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/267516402738315>

## **Bridgend Branch Report – Penny Williams**

Since the last meeting, the Branch has met three times; a successful AGM with a talk by Gwerfyl Gardner speaking about 'Welsh drovers and deliverers' in October, a research meeting in November and a research/social event in January. Numbers at the meetings have continued to be quite small – probably due to the weather and it being the winter period. Speakers are being organised for the upcoming months and hopefully publicising these events as extensively as possible will result in more people attending. We will make a decision about booking the larger hall if it becomes necessary but at the moment the ARC is a perfect venue.

Once the weather warms up, we are hoping to continue with our visits programme. A trip to one of the Records Offices seems a popular option. Any suggestions for venues would be very welcome.

## **Cardiff & Vale Branch Report – Jenni Phillips**

In November, branch members enjoyed a talk from Ted Richards about Roath Virtual War Memorial. There is no physical war memorial for the parish of Roath, so Ted has undertaken a project to commemorate those who lost their

lives on a website. There is an alphabetical index by surname if you wish to search for a particular person/family, and an interactive map which can be used to identify people who lived in a particular street or neighbourhood. The website can be found here: <https://roathlocalhistorysociety.org/local-history/war-memorials/roath-virtual-war-memorial/>.

Our December meeting at Glamorgan Archives focused on records relating to the coal mining industry in Glamorgan. Archivist Rhian Diggins gave a talk, which was followed by an opportunity to look at some of the records. We were pleased to have a new member attending this meeting. It is well worth looking at records held at the archives if you have an ancestor who worked in the coal mining industry. Further information about what is available can be found here: <https://glamarchives.gov.uk/blood/>

We are still without a branch trustee, and need more committee members if we are to continue delivering a comprehensive programme of events in future. Please do consider volunteering if you can spare any time. You do not necessarily need to be an experienced family historian to join the committee. We would also like to hear from any branch members who have ideas about what we could offer that might increase attendance and participation in branch events, as numbers attending have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

### **Merthyr Tydfil Branch Report – Carolyn Jacob**

We are fortunate in having members who can deliver a wonderful talk to the group about their own research and in November we had one of our members, Barrie Jones, speaking about his own ancestors, 'Crimes and misdemeanours, a family tale'.

Carl again closed the year in December delivering a popular presentation about the old shops of Merthyr Tydfil at the special request of a former Merthyr shop assistant who was in the audience, Marjorie, who will soon be 97 years, also imparted some of her own memories of working in the shops as a 16 year old in the 1940s.

2024 started well with an excellent talk by Merthyr's premier local historian, Huw Williams, on unusual facts about the Crawshay family of Cyfarthfa Castle. He lacked a family tree and we were able to find one for him.

For many years Michael Donovan has been assisting visiting family history researchers in Merthyr Tydfil Central Library and also helping to answer emails and correspondence. The Merthyr Library has been gradually more and more short staffed with family history, local history and local studies being of low priority. Anyone intending to visit Merthyr Tydfil to look at local history or family

history material would be well advised to phone up in advance of a visit to avoid disappointment.

### **Swansea Branch Report – Janet Neilson**

Sadly, Patricia Jenkins, one of the stalwart team of transcribers died just before Christmas. Five members of the branch attended her funeral at St Mary's Church, Swansea.

We had our first talk of 2024 in the West Glamorgan Archives, Andrew Dulley, started a series of talks which will introduce us to estate records. The first talk was about estate maps. For example some of the Gower villages are/were part of the Penrice Estate, so if you had ancestors living in Reynoldston it is the Penrice Estate Records that you would need to look through. Margam estate wages/payments books are also in Swansea, eg what work your ancestor did and how much they were paid. There were six people at the meeting, but others had sent their apologies.

### **Online Branch Report**

Online sessions have been well attended, although numbers did drop in the run up to Christmas. However the January talk from Gill Roberts on Researching Welsh Ancestors (Intermediate) had 75 attendees. The session in December on 'The Welsh Community in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, circa 1860-1914' presented by Dr Gethin Matthews, attracted a wide audience including a number of participants from family and local history organizations in British Columbia.

Jane Graves is having to step back from Chairing and administering the online branch events which she has done for three years, since the Society events went online during the Covid epidemic for which we give a huge vote of thanks. Without her organisation, enthusiasm and commitment the Society would be in a very different position today as we have benefited both financially, as regards membership numbers, and from the input of non-local members and non-members via these online sessions.



## **Website Report – Billie McNamara**

At the present time, things with the website are reasonably stable. The hosting maintenance contract with Andy Gardner remains in place.

Billie McNamara has begun working on technical matters Andy Gardner previously handled, and she will continue to do so. This will eliminate the need to pay for necessary services outside the scope of our maintenance contract.

Debra Ricks, a member from Australia with website experience, has joined our volunteer team. Anouska Osborne has also volunteered to take on some responsibilities for development. Several members continue to manage specific aspects, such as adding events to the calendar and uploading the exchange journals.

We have several plans for this year, but we don't want to begin any changes until after June when the traffic on the site reduces.

The website's availability as a communication source, and its membership renewal/management platform, require us to take precautions to ensure the site remains live. Unfortunately, our global membership and user locations mean some visitors may experience periods of downtime. We will attempt to minimize downtime during peak UK visitor hours.

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2024-2025**

Please note increase to membership fees, from September 2023 are £20 for UK and £25 for Overseas membership, so standing orders will need to be adjusted if you are paying by that method. Other ways to pay are by cheque, Genfair or preferably online via our website. Renewal forms are included in the centre pages.

### **Update – Please Note**

Many of our members have not updated their standing orders to the new rates. Members expiry dates have therefore been adjusted to 9 months membership as a result. Alternatively the additional amount of £5 can be sent to the Membership Team via the usual methods or there is an Additional Payment available via the website.

Standing Order forms have been included in the Centre Insert:

*membership@glamfhs.org.uk*

# HOW TO RENEW VIA OUR WEBSITE

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

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

## **Still unable to log in?**

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

*website@glamfhs.org.uk*

# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## ARC OPENING DATES

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month  
10 am - 2 pm

2024

### **BLYWDDYN NEWYDD DDA**

March: 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

April: 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

May: 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>

June: 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

July: 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

August: 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>

September: 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>

October: 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>

November: 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

December: 11<sup>th</sup>

### **CLOSED 25<sup>th</sup> NADOLIG LLAWEN**

For further information and to book contact:

[arc2@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:arc2@glamfhs.org.uk)

## ABERDARE BRANCH

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

2 pm Second Thursday in the month at Cynon Valley Museum

14 March: Guest Speaker

11 April: Research/Project Session

9 May: Guest speaker TBC

13 June: Research/Project Session

### Aberdare Library Research Sessions

Tuesday 12 March 2-4

9 April

14 May

11 Jun

## BRIDGEND BRANCH

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

7 pm third Monday each month at Aberkenfig Resource Centre

18 March

15 April

20 May

For further information contact the Branch

## CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH

[cardiffandvale@glamf.org.uk](mailto:cardiffandvale@glamf.org.uk)

First Tuesday in the month, times vary

Cathays Cemetery Chapel Meetings (doors open 6.45pm)

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 7pm** – Cathays Cemetery Chapel –

Talk: Jenni Phillips – *The Rule brothers: three Cardiff sea captains*

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 2pm** – Glamorgan Archives –

House, Land and Building research

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 7pm** – Cathays Cemetery chapel –

Talk: Professor Martin Johnes – *Welsh Not: The place and treatment of the Welsh language in Victorian schools*

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 2pm** – Glamorgan Archives –

new projects and recent acquisitions

***Please note: meetings at the archives are held in a room that is accessed via the reading room. As such, normal archive protocols must be observed – ie coats, bags, pens, etc must be placed in lockers and cannot be taken into the meetings.***

## MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

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

2 pm Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the 2nd Tuesday of each month  
Members gather in Soar for a chat at 1pm.

12<sup>th</sup> March: Janet Karn, former Tredegar librarian - **Local Studies**

9<sup>th</sup> April: Mary Owen- **The Merthyr Tydfil Middle Class**

May: Trip to the Powys Archives - Date to be arranged

11th June: Edwyn Parry - **Gareth Jones and the Holodomor**

9th July: Lisa Powell - **Mother Shepherd and the Salvation Army**

For further information contact the Branch

## PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

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

Third Tuesday 7 pm at Pontypridd Museum

19 March

16 April

21 May

18 June

For further information contact the Branch

## SWANSEA BRANCH

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

2 pm at West Glamorgan Archives for a talk by one of the Archivists  
followed by time for research

Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN

Tuesday 12 March

9 April

14 May

11 June

One of the archivists will give a talk about records that are available for the public to access which many people may not know about. The talk will be followed by anyone who needs help with their own research.

For further information contact the Branch.

## ONLINE BRANCH (Ar Lein)

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

**Thursdays at 7.00 pm**

7 March: Our Humble and Obedient Servant - Letters of Applications to Emigrate to the Cape of Good Hope in 1819 – Sue MacKay

**\*\*Saturday 27 April: Online Projects: Website Team Time TBC\*\***

23 May: Welsh Emigrants to the United States after 1790 – Darris G Williams

13 June: Photo Restoration – Stephen Gill

11 July: Coffee & Chat – Topic TBC

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

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

Further updates on Branch meetings and events are posted on our website and on social media. <https://www.glamfhs.org.uk/events>

## OUT AND ABOUT IN 2024

Glamorgan Family History Society  
volunteers will be at the following events

### **The Family History Show**

Saturday 16 March 10-4

Severn Hall, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, WR13 6NW

<https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/midlands/>

<https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/midlands/how-to-find-us/>

### **The National Eisteddfod**

3-10 August

Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd

*Where was my  
family living in 1911?*

*I don't seem to be able to  
trace the ancestors I am  
looking for anywhere*

*Why can't I find my Grannie's  
birth certificate?*

Hit a bit of a brick wall with your research?  
Then why not...

## *~Ask the Experts~*

Hour-long sessions are available  
to book at Glamorgan Archives on the



**3rd Tuesday of each month**

*£5 per  
session*

*10.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.*

Contact us to book your place

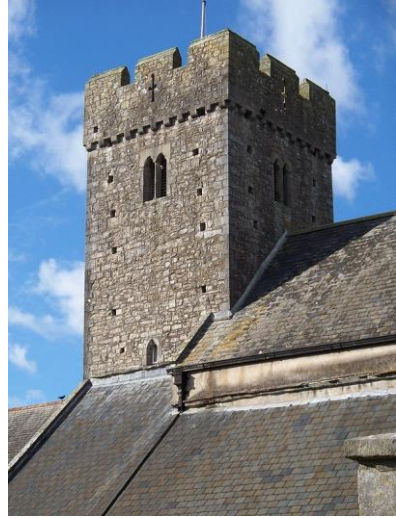
Email: [Glamro@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:Glamro@cardiff.gov.uk)

Tel.: 029 2087 2299

[www.glamarchives.gov.uk](http://www.glamarchives.gov.uk)

Glamorgan Archives, Clos Parc Morgannwg, Leckwith, Cardiff, CF11 8AW

*Delivered in partnership with Glamorgan Family History Society*



Coming Soon - Places of Worship Project



If undelivered please return to:

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