



*Glamorgan Family  
History Society  
Cymdeithas Ffanes Teuluol  
Morgannwg*



Pwllcam Terrace, Blaengarw,  
© Garw Valley Heritage Society

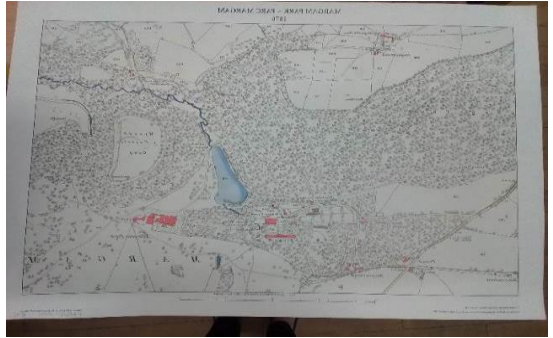
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*December 2024*

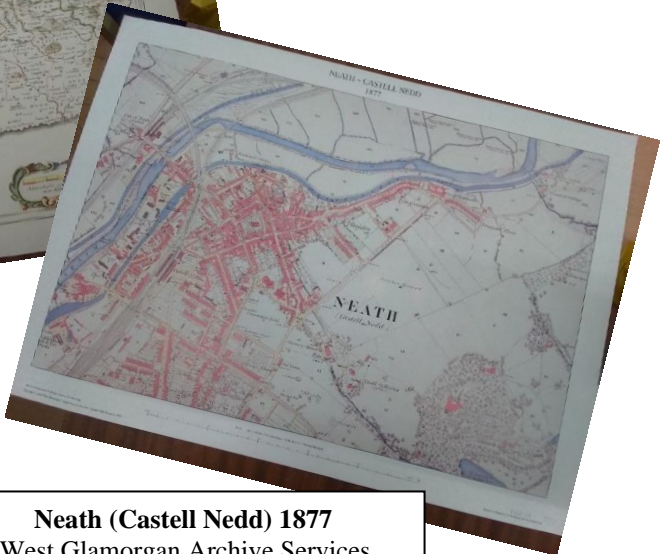
## Spotlight on ARC Resources:

For this journal we are highlighting the extensive map collection held at the ARC.

Our thanks go to two local volunteers who have done considerable work on this to organise and index the collection. If you have a particular area you are interested in contact us, we may have maps that you can add to your research.



Above : Colour map of Glamorgan 1645:  
Published by Glamorgan Archive Service



Below: Margam Park 1876, Neath (Castell Nedd) 1877  
Published by West Glamorgan Archive Services

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

# EDITORIAL

Croeso, Welcome to the final journal of the year 2024, the year that has marked the 50th anniversary of our Society. You will notice our logo has been redesigned for the front cover to mark this milestone, and we will also be producing a special edition of the Journal in the months ahead. We still need more articles on your family history experiences through the last 50 years - your own research and how it has changed with the advent of modern technology, the help and experiences you may have had from the Society and its branches, your views on the Journal, and ideas for going into the next 50 years!

Since being involved in producing the Journals for the Glamorgan Family History I have been constantly surprised and uplifted by the stories that keep coming from you about your families and friends. Just when I think I've heard everything now, something else turns up that interests and inspires, and this edition of the Journal is no exception.

We have Janet Neilson's account of Jewish families in Neath with their assimilation into local society and fighting for Britain in WW1, and she gives helpful insight into name-changes that occurred along the way, which would be useful for researchers of the future.

There is another war story about what a soldier's kitbag contained when he was posted to Iceland during WW2. Closer to home there is an account of Philip Newton Webb's family living in several houses in a street in Cardiff, now demolished, and father and daughter, David and Mary Lewis, in Aberdare. Politics of course are not missed out and John P Lethbridge writes of Elizabeth Williams, a remarkable woman ahead of her time.

More about Neath comes from Jill Morgan, but this time it's all about people leaving Neath, as opposed to those coming to settle, and these are truly adventurous souls heading off across the plains of America. Barrie Jones also writes of the Welsh in America, and so does Clive Davies when we include part 2 of his account of William Jenkins's epic journey to Salt Lake City.

As I have said, all inspirational! Please take a look at the Letters page to see if any help is available to those who have written in. Meanwhile, by the time you have received this we will be looking forward to Christmas, hopefully with our loved ones, so on behalf of all at the Glamorgan Family History Society I wish you a Happy Christmas and good times for all for the New Year.

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi gyd.

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

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Society AGM will be held on Saturday 1 March 2025 with a speaker from the Historic Place Names of Wales project at 2 pm.

<https://historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk/>

Nomination forms for Society Officers and Trustees for 2025/2026 are included in the Centre Insert. Please return to Penny Williams by 1 January 2025. Trustees elected at Branch AGMs will be confirmed at the AGM and are identified in each Branch's report.

As a follow up to our week at the Eisteddfod in Pontypridd in August and the Open Day at Glamorgan Archives in September we are offering a number of online Beginners' Sessions during the Autumn and Spring – check our website for details.

We often get asked whether our online talks are recorded and are available online. The cost of making a recording can be very prohibitive, both in terms of the amount charged by some speakers as well as the copyright and technical issues involved in the production of a recording. In preparation for our volunteers learning how to organise a Webinar we recorded and repeated a talk by Darris Williams in August, which raised further technical and administrative issues in the production of recordings – so for the time being we shall not be recording our online sessions due to the volunteer time and expense incurred. Most of our speakers provide handouts which are uploaded to our website.

Many branches are reporting low attendance at their meetings and a check on the number of meetings offered by other Societies shows that many Societies have either stopped offering face to face meetings or have reduced their frequency. Numbers attending the online sessions have also fallen since the pandemic, but this may be due to the large number of online sessions that are now available both free and paid. So the message is if you want your branch and online meetings to continue then please think about volunteering to help either with local projects or Society administration. All of our branches also need volunteers to help run the meetings if they are to continue on a monthly basis.

Our Resource Centre at Aberkenfig also needs volunteers to allow it to continue to open twice a month. Some new projects will be starting shortly so if you would prefer to help with one of those 'watch this space'.

The good news is that there are more face to face local fairs now being held than there were even before the pandemic so keep an eye out for us next year – we shall list those we are going to attend on our website and in the journal.

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

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (2025-2026)

2024 Annual Membership lapses on 31 March 2025 unless you joined part way through the membership year. Please check your journal envelope or your 'Membership Status' when you log in to the website for your expiry date.

**Membership fees for the year are £20 for UK and £25 for Overseas membership.**

You can pay by cheque, online via our website, via Genfair.com or by setting up a standing order. Paying via our website is automatic and requires less Society administration. Paying via cheque, standing order or Genfair at busy times may take up to 14 days to be processed. **Membership renewal forms** for cheque payments are included in the Centre Insert.

PLEASE NOTE MANY MEMBERS DID NOT UPDATE THEIR STANDING ORDERS WHEN WE INCREASED MEMBERSHIP FEES LAST YEAR. - PLEASE AMEND TO THE CORRECT AMOUNT OTHERWISE YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL LAPSE EARLY

Also see note next page.

## HOW TO RENEW VIA OUR WEBSITE

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

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

### **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.

*membership@glamfhs.org.uk*



# A Welsh Christmas Custom



**The Calennig:** This is a gift for New Year, given as a wish for peace and prosperity for the year to come. Tradition says It was originally given in the form of an olive branch (from where we get the saying) which the Romans obtained from the sacred groves of the goddess Strenia. When the Romans conquered Britain they brought the custom with them, and those areas occupied by them carried it on, the gift being given between Christmas and New Year.

Olive branches were not available, so an apple was used, with three twigs as legs; the apple was stuffed with split almonds and a small spray of evergreens were stuck into the top around the stalk. Children would carry these around singing their carols and getting a few small cakes or pennies for bringing the lucky calennig. Households would put them in their windows hoping they would last all year, as the luck would last as long as the apple did!

To make your own, pierce small slits in the flesh of an apple and insert split almonds to make it look spiky all over. Then insert the three twigs into the apple's base to enable it to stand. Place a small candle, a red one would be good and festive, into the top of the apple, and tie a piece of baby ribbon around the candle's base. Then insert three small sprigs of evergreen around the candle and ribbon.

There you have a Christmas decoration from 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman Britain.

.....and another

**Wassail:** Drinking from the Wassail bowl would have been part of any Welsh Christmas over many years, although the word itself is from Anglo-Saxon "Waes Hael", meaning to be or become healthy. The drink of hot mulled cider would be taken over the Christmas and New Year period to wish for a good harvest of cider apples in the year ahead.

## STANDING ORDERS

If you pay by Standing Order please check you are not using our old Account with **sort code 72-00-04** as your payment will no longer reach us as this account has been closed by SANTANDER as it relates to the old Alliance and Leicester A/c. Contact [membership@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@glamfhs.org.uk).



# PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES IN YOUR OLD KIT BAG AND SMILE

#283 Howard Llewellyn

The above was part of a song from the second world war but I don't think that my cousin Corporal David Lyn PRICE of Bridge House, 88 Merthyr Road, Whitchurch would have been smiling when he picked up his kit bag to serve



Corporal David Lyn Price

in the RAF. Initially Lyn completed a course as a wireless operator and received a letter on 10 June 1941 from the Commanding Officer, No 2 Wing, No 3 Signals School, Royal Air Force, Compton Bassett, Calne, Wilts granting him fourteen days leave after which Price was to report to No 1 Air Gunners School at Pembrey.

Later, Lyn Price was posted to an RAF base at Leynimir in Iceland where with others he was commended on his keenness and ability on doing exceptionally well on a Defence Training Course. Lyn left a number of documents about his service in the RAF during the war and one contained the menu for a Christmas dinner

in 1945 held at CTS Leynimir signed by all those attending (see below).

Other documents were his Pass Book for leave (his No being 1285219), berthing cards for sea transport to and from Iceland, and coupon cards for chocolate and sugar confectionary, cigarettes and tobacco; the cards were to be used in the NAFFI canteen. Also included with these documents was a group photo of those on the No 1 Cadre Course in Iceland. Of intriguing interest was the list Lyn made of the contents of his kit bag, which from its large and varied content must have been pretty heavy to carry and which would make someone more likely to groan under its weight than smile. It would seem that his helmet, great coat, rucksacks and haversacks might have been carried separately. One intriguing item was 'housewives'!

The contents of the kit bag:

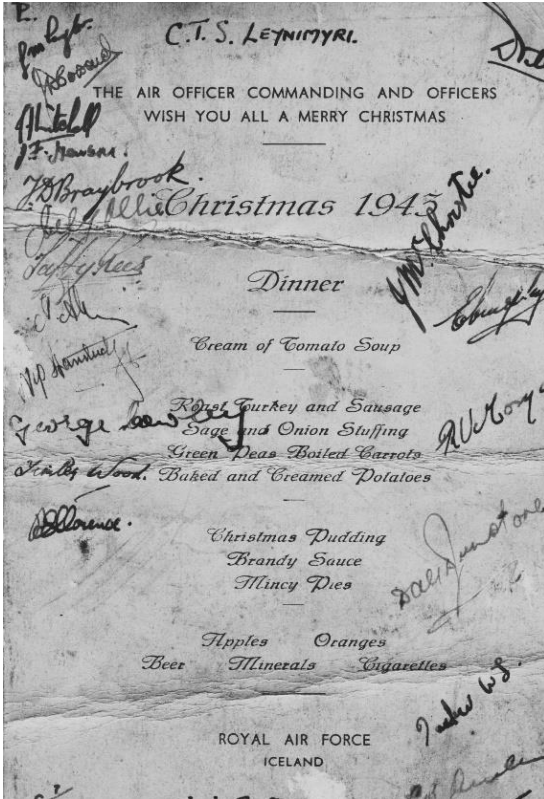
Items	Items	Items
Summer vest 2	Lanyard	Water bottle
Field dressings	Cotton shirts 2	Water bottle carrier
Braces	Socks 3pr	Attachments brace
Blacking brush	Button stick	Belts waist
Brass brush	Black tie	Braces left
Clothes brush	Hand towel	Braces right
Hair brush	Identity disc	Haversack
Polishing brush	PT kit 2 sets	Side pieces
Shaving brush	Ankle boots 2pr	Rucksack upper
Caps comforter	Laces fabric 1pr	Rucksack lower
Collars 4	Laces leather 1pr	Straps adjustment
Drawers 2	Canvas shoes 1pr	Straps supporting
Forks	Great coat 1	Mess tin
Gloves 1pr	Caps F/S	Mess tin strap
Holdalls	Jacket	Ointment
Housewives*	Trousers 2prs	Respirator
Jersey pullover	Badge cap	Cape
Clasp knife	Ration bag	Cap cover
Table knife	Steel helmet	Eyeshields

\*Ed Housewives was a sewing kit – see <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30016350>

After the war Lyn, having previously trained as an architect, took up a post with the Welsh Regional Hospital Board and was based at their office in Museum Place in Cardiff. Unfortunately, having suffered from ill health, Lyn had to take early retirement in the mid-1960s. Along with his RAF documents Lyn also left behind cards relating to his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in 1941, petrol coupons, a few letters and a 1931-37 list of Masters at Penarth County School for Boys. One undated letter refers to the night a blitz took place over Cardiff when his relatives had to move out of his home at Bridge House, and that bombing had also occurred in Gilfach Goch where the church and the doctor's surgery were hit. Another letter relates his arrival at 8pm at his billet

50 Palatine Road in Blackpool in the middle of an air raid and added that there were with him also four persons from Cardiff.

Lyn's family were keen members of Beulah Congregational Chapel in Rhiwbina, and Lyn was a member of the chapel's young people's guild and left behind several programme cards of events hosted by the guild. Lyn also



designed the extensions made to the chapel's Assembly rooms. Also amongst Lyn's papers were an architect's plan dated 1878 for two terrace houses to be built in Whitchurch. These houses were of the two-up and two-down sort with toilets in the back garden along with a cess pool and an ash pit, and also in the boundary in the garden between the two houses a shared water pump was indicated. The plan was prepared for my great-grandfather, John PHILLIPS of Gwauntreoda Court Farm in Whitchurch. The farm was opposite Ararat Chapel near the common but its land was developed in the early twentieth century for housing. As well as being a

Poor Law Guardian, John was treasurer of Beulah Chapel for many years and laid one of the foundation stones for the enlarged chapel which was built opposite the old chapel at the end of Beulah Road. He came into possession of Bridge House and his daughter married into the Price family. It is planned that the above papers will be given to the Glamorgan Archives in Cardiff.

**Don't miss the 'Cut-Off Dates'**

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

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

# A VISIT TO NEATH, WHICH LEADS TO A DIFFERENT AVENUE OF RESEARCH THAN EXPECTED #8289 Janet Neilson



St Thomas's Church, Neath (Church in Wales), I discovered, recently, is the church where my great grandmother Elizabeth Ann McKENZIE was christened on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1867.

Her parents were James and Margaret McKENZIE. (nee HANSON). Elizabeth was born in Gold Street (it no longer exists) which was near the ruins of Neath Castle. (see map below).

The church was closely connected with the nearby Norman castle from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was built conveniently close, so that the Norman Lords and retainers, as well as the increasing population around the castle, could worship inside the wooden walls of the town. The exact date of its build is uncertain, but early sources mention it in 1298, when it was dedicated to the martyr Thomas à Becket, who was murdered in

Canterbury in 1170. During the Reformation it was rededicated to Thomas the Apostle.

The tower dates from 1340. It was increased in height in 1691 and restored in 1874. Inside the church is the Llantwit Stone, an important reminder of the early days of Christianity. There are also arms to the notable Neath families: MACKWORTH, MIERS and GRANT. These monuments reflect the industry and growth of the town from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are also some interesting stained-glass windows in the church.

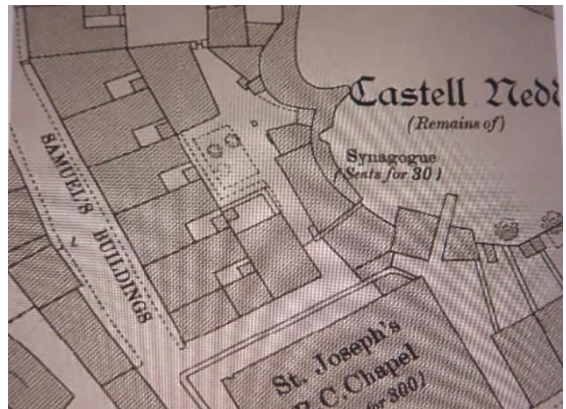
What caught my eye was a board at the west end of the church, commemorating the lives of those who had lost their lives in WW1.

This is not an unusual sight in most churches, but what intrigued me was that two of the men had the Star of David alongside their names: Hyman LEITZ and Maurice (Morris) ZEILER.

Obviously these men were highly regarded members of the community, and even though they were Jewish their names appeared alongside all the other townsmen.



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Neath had a small Jewish community. A synagogue was established in 1867, which possessed "all the appurtenances, insignia and paraphernalia of synagogues of larger dimension", with room for 30 people in 1875. It was a purpose-built synagogue, paid for by Mr Lazarus SAMUEL (pawnbroker). Neath did not have its own Jewish cemetery, so burials would have taken place in Swansea or Cardiff.





**Hyman LEITZ** was a Private (No 7173) of “C” Company, 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers. He died, aged 23, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1917. He is commemorated at Ypres, on the Menin Gate (Panel 6 and 8) and on the Roll of Honour at the Neath War Memorial in Gnoll Park. He was the son of Herman (1867–1956) and Golda LEITZ (28 Windsor Road; he had been born in Vilna, Lithuania and brought to Wales as a baby.



Herman Leitz set up a clothier and draper business in Windsor Road about 1902. Although most of the family moved to London, one branch remained in Neath, and his grandson John Windsor Hyman Leitz (1923–1995) was well known in the Scouting movement and was also a local Community Councillor.

**Maurice (Moses) ZEILER** was a Lance Corporal (No. 29566) of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He was killed in action on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1917, aged 22, during the Battle of Bullencourt, near the Hindberg Line, as part of the Somme offensive. His body was never found (or has not yet been found).



He is commemorated on the Arras memorial (Bay 6), France and also in the Cardiff Hebrew Congregation and in the British Jewry Book of Honour (1914–20).

Maurice attended Neath County School before going on to the University of Wales. He is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in Cardiff University at the memorial in Cathays Park and on the Neath War memorial at Gnoll Park.

On the 1911 census, the LEITZ family lived at 17 Eva Street, Neath. Herman (b 1867), Gilda (1869). Herman and Gilda were born in Vilnav (sic), Russia.

Philip	1868	Vilna (Vilnius) Lithuania	Waste trade merchant
Sarah	1871	Ditto	
Cecilia	1893	London	
Louis	1895	Neath	Retail clothier
David	1897	Neath	Ditto
Barnott (sic)	1900	Neath	Coal selling agent's clerk
Dorothy	1899	Ditto	Clerk in office of surveyor of taxes, A district
Hyman	1902	Ditto	Retail clothes assistant
Daniel	1904	Ditto	Chemist's apprentice (Boots)
Harry	1909	Ditto	Scholar
Samuel	1912	Ditto	Scholar
Raphael	1914	ditto	At home (incapacitated)

Herman/Hyman and GILDA were clothes dealers. Also living in the house were their children – Jacob (b 1898, Russia); Abram (1900, Russia); Phoebe (1903, Neath); Joe (1906, Neath); Ada (Edith) (1907, Neath); Rachel (1908, Neath); Reuben (1910, Neath). David, their youngest son was born in 1916 (Neath). Also living with them were David LEITZ, carpenter (1886, Vilnaw (sic) and Edith LEITZ (1886, Vilnaw (sic), both described as boarder

HERMAN and GILDA had been married for seventeen years. Ten children had been born to them, but one did not survive. In 1906, the family became British citizens. After the 1911 census there is little evidence that the LEITZ family remained in Neath. So, where did they go?

Trying to trace Jewish families who moved around can be doubly difficult if they Anglicised their forenames or surnames. The changing of their names by Jewish people to "fit into society" is a tricky one. There could be 4 stages for Maurice - Moishe (really Hebrew); Moses; Morris; Maurice. It may also depend on the registrar or enumerator spelling them the same way as the family spelled them, or, in the family's early days in Neath, when they probably didn't speak much English, they wouldn't have known which way to spell them.

In 1931, Herman and Gilda (name by then changed to Golda) were living in Stepney, together with Edith, Joseph and Phoebe.

Golda died in 1939. In the 1939 register, Herman had moved to Greatorex Street, Whitechapel. He is described as retired and a widower. Living with



him were Phoebe (name changed to Fay), Rachel and Reuben (driver of heavy goods vehicles).

Abraham married Leah EICHELMAN in 1929 (Stepney). Herman died in 1956, Phoebe (Fay) in 1979 (unmarried) and Rachel in 2003 (unmarried).

In 1939, Joseph was living in Dollis Hill, but he had changed his surname to LEE. He was a glass and china merchant. Reuben married Ethel HARRIS in 1944 (Stepney), still using the surname Leitz.

The Zeiler family, however, remained in Neath much longer.

Philip Zeiler's wife had been manageress of a Russian carpet company. He started his own business after borrowing £100 capital from her. He ran "Melyn Outfitters" on Briton Ferry Road. His son, Louis, took over the business. His slogan was "Tailors of Distinction". The shop is now a kebab and pizza shop.

In the 1901 census, they lived at 70 London Road (this house number no longer exists because the layout of the road has changed). Philip (1870-1928, Russia); Sarah (née GRUSENER) (1871, Russia); Selina (1893, London); Moses (1895, Neath); Lewis (1896, Neath); David (1897, Neath); Dorothy (1899, Neath); Bertie (Barnet) (1901, Neath, and buried on 23/1/1942 in the old Jewish Cemetery, Cardiff) and Samuel (1911, Neath, and buried 11/5/1962 in the old Jewish Cemetery, Cardiff.). These dates give us a good idea when they moved to Neath from London – 1893/4.

In the 1911 census, the Zeiler family lived at 66 Briton Ferry Road. Philip is described as a clothes and outfitter (shopkeeper). Interestingly we have some name changes in this family too. Living with their parents were Celia (1893, employed in the family business); Moses 1895, student); Louis (1896, employed in the family business); David (1897); Dorothy(1899); Bert (1901; Hyman (1904); Daniel (1906) and Harris (1909 – later changed to Harry).

In the above list there is an interesting mixture of what would be thought of as Hebrew forenames, or their British equivalents, and more obviously British forenames – Selina changes her name to Celia, Lewis to Louis, but Moses does not Anglicise his name.

For Jewish ceremonial occasions all the children would have Hebrew names eg David would use Dovid; Moses would use Moische.

In the 1920s, both families were members of the Aberavon Synagogue.

In the 1921 census the family lived at 66a Briton Ferry Road. In this census there is a great deal of information about the family's occupations and more definite birth places for the parents.



In the 1939 register, the family lived at 19 Victoria Gardens (below). Louis was head of the family (single, gents' tailor and outfitter); Harry (single, wholesale draper) and Raphael (b 1913, incapacitated). They had a housekeeper – Mary A EDWARDS (b 23/02/1881, widow). Philip Zeiler died in 1928, Sarah died in 1922; Hyman died in 1924 (Neath); Louis died in 1966; David in 1955

(Swansea); Raphael 1971 (East Glamorgan); Harris/Harry d 9/1/1952 and is buried in the old Jewish Cemetery, Highfield Road, Roath, as is Samuel (d 11/5/1962).

David, Hyman, Louis, Philip and Sarah are buried in Swansea's Jewish cemetery.

DAVID possibly married Muriel A FORD in 1941 (Swansea). Dorothy married firstly – Louis Zachariah LEVY (1928, Stepney), and secondly John FREEMAN (1961, Bournemouth). Bertie, Harry, Samuel and Raphael remained unmarried. Raphael was buried on 22/1/1971 in the new Jewish Cemetery, Greenfarm Road, Ely, Cardiff. Celia married Hyman SMOLENSKI in 1921 in Swansea. It does not appear that this couple had any children in the UK and I could not find deaths for either of them in the UK, which suggests they emigrated.



Who would have thought that a visit to a church in Neath, to see where my great-grandmother was christened, would lead me down an entirely different avenue?

Acknowledgments: Map of Neath from "The Jews of Neath" by Martyn J Griffiths (January 2022), Photographs – taken by author, Find a grave – [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) Additional information supplied by Mrs Norma Glass (Swansea Hebrew Congregation)

# HILLS TERRACE CARDIFF AND MY FAMILY

#10833 Philip Newton Webb

Hills (or Hill's) Terrace, St John's, Cardiff figures quite prominently in my paternal family with a variety of relatives and/or other "persons of interest" living there over the years. I am particularly interested in number 59, where my great-great-grandmother, Rhoda WEBB, and then her widowed daughter, Rhoda PARSONS, lived for about 50 years between 1886 and 1936.

This article summarises some of what I have found out about Hills Terrace and the life of Rhoda Senior and her family, and my hope is that someone reading it may possess, or know where to find, a photograph or plan of no 59 (or indeed any of the other properties mentioned).



Hills Terrace first appears in the 1851 census and was finally demolished in the 1970s. It can be seen on this 1875 map (just to the left of Frederick Street which is easier to read). It had 61 houses and currently nine of these have turned up in my family research, as well as addresses in Canal Street, just round the corner.

Hills Terrace mostly had buildings on just the eastern side with the western side being alongside the Glamorganshire Canal, but



there is a kink in the canal at the southern end of the terrace (shown in the map enlargement) where it is just possible to make out some buildings on the western side. To the north of the terrace the canal ran through a 115-yard tunnel from Queen Street and this section was closed in about 1942.

Consulting the local street directories showed the main part of the terrace ran north to south numbered from 1 to 54 and that those houses on the other side of the road ran south to north from 55 to 61.

Rhoda senior (my great-great grandmother) led a complicated life! She was born to a miner in Pucklechurch, northeast of Bristol, at the end of 1833 or early 1834 (baptised 26 January 1834), possibly one of twins, and lived around there (as far as we know) for 27 or so years.

She was still 18 when her first son, Edward, was born in October 1852 and I only discovered the father's name because she took him to court which ruled that Stephen SHEPPARD was the "putative father of the claimant's illegitimate child" and ordered him to pay maintenance. He may well have done so as he sounds like a decent man and he also happened to live in the same road as Rhoda's parents who looked after the boy. Edward sadly died of scrofulosis just three days before Christmas 1863 aged 11.

Three years earlier Rhoda had given birth to her second child, William, four days before Christmas 1860 (father unknown!), but seems to have given him up to her parents too as both boys were with them in 1861 whilst Rhoda herself had gone to Bristol and was employed as cook to the headmaster of the fee-paying school in Union Street.

Somewhere, sometime, in Bristol it seems Rhoda met a married man named Joseph SALISBURY and he was the father of her next three children starting with Rhoda junior born in Newport on 20 May 1863 and then Louisa who was born on 4 August 1864 at 5 Harvey Street, Canton, Cardiff.

Whether Joseph was with Rhoda and the girls over the next couple of years or went back to his wife in Bristol is not known but the next child (my great-grandfather Andrew Webb) was not born until February 1867 and it was only when I did a DNA test that I found out that his father was also Joseph Salisbury. He is the only child of Rhoda for whom no birth certificate has been found. However, it seems that around the time Andrew was born Joseph went back to his wife and family in Bristol as he was in court there in October 1867 charged with stealing lead! Shortly after, in around November 1867, Rhoda and her three young children went into the workhouse where they all remained for the next six years, though examining the six-monthly Poor Law returns in the Cathays Heritage Library showed that Rhoda must have been quite enterprising, or at least quite canny!

As the children became old enough, they moved on to the associated Industrial School and unlike many mothers it seems that Rhoda was not separated from her children. Not only that but in December 1871 Rhoda made the transition from mere inmate to paid employee and for nigh on two years was paid £1 5s each quarter.

It is not known if she ever knew that the children's father, Joseph Salisbury, had died on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1871 in Bristol aged 48. Newspaper reports indicate that he fell from the roof of a building where he was working, with the sympathetic coroner saying that it was his own silly fault for not taking enough care – or words to that effect.

Back to Rhoda and her journey to Hills Terrace. In mid-1873 she left her job in the workhouse and married John DURRANT, who became her only actual husband, and she proceeded to have her sixth and seventh children with him. Martha Ellen was born at 4 Canal Street – near Hills Terrace – on New Year's Eve 1873 just four months into the marriage but 3½ years later she died of measles when Rhoda was already six months pregnant with her final child, Elizabeth Ann, who was also born at 4 Canal Street on 10 September 1877. It may not surprise readers to hear that sometime in the next year or so Rhoda was deserted by John and spent the rest of her life (about 20 years) on Outdoor Relief. Because of this, the Poor Law returns enable her whereabouts every six months to be known, and these show that she went from 4 Canal Street to 49 Hills Terrace in about 1880 and was there for the 1881 census with daughter Elizabeth. She then returned to Canal Street (number 18) in 1882 before her final move to 59 Hills Terrace in 1886 where she remained until her death in 1900 aged 66.

In the meantime, her daughter Rhoda junior had married John PARSONS in 1888 with whom she had two children, Elizabeth May and Eleanor, and lived in Llanharry with him until his death in a mining accident in November 1891 in the Meiros Colliery in Llanharan.

Rhoda junior came back to Cardiff and lived in Canal Street for a while before she moved into 59 Hills Terrace at around the time of her mother's death. She lived there for the rest of her life, which amounted to 36 years as she died in 1936. The informant was her son-in-law, Mitchell HULIN, of whom more later.

One further notable event happened in 1923 when a Portsmouth newspaper announcement said that the funeral procession for navy man, William Henry WILLIAMS (WHW), would start from 59 Hills Terrace, Cardiff. This name had not come up in the previous twenty years of research but with all the available information it was fairly easy to track him down and discover that he was born in 1885 and was the illegitimate son of Rhoda junior's brother, Andrew (my great-grandfather). It seems that WHW's mother had been living at 4 Canal

Street in 1871 and then moved next door to no 2 by 1873, when Rhoda senior and family moved into no.4! Did Andrew first meet her then? There is a very interesting article about WHW in the Western Mail of 22 August 1923 under the heading "Wounded at Jutland".

**SPLASH IN THE CANAL  
AT CARDIFF.**

—◆—

**WOMAN'S LUCK WHICH  
MEANT DEATH.**

—

**FERNDALE MAN'S FATAL FOOLISH-  
NESS.**

At about one o'clock on Friday, as a steam barge was proceeding down the Glamorgan-shire Canal to the Bute Docks, a young lad, named **Michael Hulin**, who was on the canal bank opposite Hills-terrace, which is at the back of the Cardiff Fish Market, noticed the body of a woman in the water.

The man in charge of the barge at once stopped and recovered the body, and placed it on the bank.

Some of the residents of Hills-terrace state that at about nine o'clock on Thursday night they heard a splash, and this, it is presumed, was caused by the unhappy woman going to her death.

Although eight other houses in Hills Terrace have cropped up in the research, readers will no doubt understand why number 59 is the most intriguing and that I would really like to find a photo or plan of this house. Not least because it is one of the few houses on the western side and so might have backed directly onto the canal. Did it have windows at the back?

To conclude, here is another typical report found in a newspaper.

*Western Mail 14 September 1907*

"Michael" Hulin was actually called Mitchell (or Mitch) Hulin though it turns out that his birth name was Demetry

CONDUTHAKES and that he changed it sometime between 1901 and 1907. It is a complicated story for another time but suffice to say that his mother was related to the Hulin family who brought him up.

He became part of the author's family in 1918 when he married Eleanor (Nell) PARSONS who was the daughter of Rhoda junior and thus a granddaughter of Rhoda senior.

In 1897 various Hulin members were probably living at 8 Hills Terrace (based on a school register) and in 1901 they were definitely at 36 (as per the census).

The other numbers that feature somewhere in my extended family are 13, 28, 47, 50 and 53.

Email me via the editor: [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk) if you have, or know where to find, such a photo or plan?

# THE OTHER HALF: MRS ELIZABETH WILLIAMS #11028 John P Lethbridge

**Introduction.** My previous two articles looked at David WILLIAMS, the first Swansea East Labour MP. He held the seat from the 1922 General Election until he retired in 1940 because he was dying. Here I look at his wife Elizabeth Williams née COLWILL.

**Early Life.** Elizabeth Colwill was born on 25 November 1863, a non-identical twin. Their father George Colwill, aged twenty seven, worked at a copper mill, and lived at Lower Llansamlet. Their mother, Hannah Colwill nee Roberts, was twenty-six. George Colwill registered the birth on 25 December 1863, ie a holiday when he did not have to ask for unpaid leave. He made his mark rather than sign the register.

Elizabeth Colwill and her twin, George Henry Colwill, had an older sister, Mary Ann Colwill, who died in 1866 aged five; and four younger siblings. Hannah Colwill was born and died in 1866; Mary Ann Colwill was born in 1867 and died in 1908; David Colwill was born in 1869; and Annie Jane Colwill was born in 1875 and died in 1953.

Elizabeth Colwill studied at the Kilvey Copper Works School as did her future husband, and like him she left school early and became a servant at the GRENFELL family's Maesteg House. On their recommendation she then worked for the WEDGEWOOD family, of pottery fame, in Staffordshire. She later returned to Swansea to be the cook for the Vicar of Swansea at his Uplands House residence.

On 30 November 1889, aged twenty-six, Elizabeth Colwill married David Williams, aged twenty four, a coppersmith, at All Saints Church, Kilvey, in Llansamlet Parish. The service was conducted according to the rites and ceremonies of the established church, ie it was a Church of Wales Service. In 1920 it was disestablished and became the Church in Wales.

**Married Life.** The early years of David and Elizabeth Williams' married life were difficult. He faced unemployment and blacklisting because of his trade union and political activities. She raised five children in these conditions. Information about these years is sparse but Ivor Rees in his 2016 *Swansea History Review* article about them quotes the following story.

One of Elizabeth Williams's aunts had given her a guinea brooch, ie a brooch with a guinea attached. A guinea was a coin worth one pound and one shilling, about £200 in our terms. One night while her family slept upstairs she



filed off the pin so she could spend the guinea. The noise woke one of her sons who asked her what was up, but she did not tell him what she was doing.

As her children grew the financial and domestic burdens on Elizabeth Williams eased and she could support her husband's political activities. She was Founder President of the Co-operative Women's Guild's Swansea Branch; and was the Co-operative Women's Guild's National President in 1918.

Mrs Elizabeth Williams was elected to the Swansea School Board and helped administer Poor Law Relief. She belonged to the Women's Labour League which peacefully campaigned for women to have the vote. It merged with the Women's Labour Sections in 1918 after many women got the vote. She was not a natural speaker and her husband helped her prepare her speeches. She would stick them on the kitchen window so she could memorise them as she washed up.

Elizabeth Williams was appointed Swansea's first woman magistrate on 14 July 1920. Her husband was already one. Two days later Margaret Bransby Williams née BROCK joined them on the bench. She was the widow of the railway engineer and director, Morgan Bransby Williams of Killay House, Swansea. He had been a Liberal and she was very active in Liberal women's circles. She had given him six children (one died in infancy), and had raised his son by his first wife.

Most of Elizabeth Williams's work as a magistrate was with juveniles. This was not widely reported; but on Saturday 23 June 1923 the *Nottingham and Midland Catholic News* reported her views on the Conservative government's plans to save money by closing Juvenile Unemployment centres. She was called *Mrs David Williams JP, wife of the well-known Labour MP for Swansea*. She said that:

*The government would be lacking in its duty if it withheld the least support from local Juvenile Centres. Besides serving an educational purpose, these centres helped to remove that feeling of civic irresponsibility amongst young unemployed juveniles and especially among boys.*

On Tuesday 30 September 1924 the *Western Mail* reported that the West Wales Labour Women's Advisory Council, at a meeting the previous day, had elected *Mrs David Williams* as its President. Speaking to the meeting she had said that *they were out to rebuild a broken world and to settle international disputes by sound common sense instead of by war.*

The other speakers at this meeting included the Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MACDONALD's daughter Isabel Allan Macdonald. Miss Macdonald, aged twenty one, gave the meeting her father's best wishes and made a short

speech. Her mother had died in 1911 and as Ramsay Macdonald did not remarry Isabel became his official hostess.

**The Widow.** David Williams died on 22 January 1941, aged seventy-five, after a long illness. He and his wife had continued living at their 25 Windmill Terrace, Swansea, home and had been able to save. He left £911 16s, about £200,000 in our terms.

Elizabeth Williams donated a silver cup to the Welsh Labour Party to be given annually to the Welsh Women's Labour Section which made the best report of its activities. The first reference I have come across to it was in the Friday 12 June 1942 *South Wales Gazette*. It reported that Alderman (sic) Florence Rose Rees DAVIES of Aberdare had presented the *Elizabeth Williams Cup* to the Six Bells Women's Labour Party's representative *Mrs Owen Hale*, ie Mrs Mary Emma HALE née SHEPHARD.

On Monday 29 June 1942 the Six Bells Labour Women held a dinner at the Station Hotel, Abertillery, to celebrate the award of the cup. Mrs Elizabeth ANDREWS née SMITH JP, the Welsh National Labour Women's Organiser, gave a speech in which she said that Labour women should try to make the world a better place. There were many toasts.

**The End.** Elizabeth Williams, née Colwill, died at her Windmill Terrace home, on 2 May 1943, aged seventy nine, of diabetes and a heart attack. She left £733, 16s and 3 pence. The administration of her estate was granted to her son, Llewellyn Williams.

A short funeral service was held at Killvey Church, where the Church in Wales Reverend, Thomas Harold JONES, the Vicar of Kilvey officiated. He was a former miner. Elizabeth Williams's body was interred at Danygraig Cemetery.

The June 1943 edition of the journal, *The Labour Woman*, carried the following obituary for Elizabeth Williams:

*The passing of Mrs Elizabeth Williams JP, Swansea, wife of the late David Williams MP, has left a gap in the ranks of Labour and Co-operative women in South Wales. Hers was a great personality radiant with the undaunted spirit of the pioneers of our movement who had to remove mountains of obstacles in the early days. She was an active member of the Women's Labour League, and to the generation of women who pioneered the Women's Sections, when the Women's Labour League merged with them in 1918, she remained until the end, guide, philosopher and friend. She was the first President of our West Wales Advisory Council, and one of the first women magistrates in Wales. She served for many years in the Juvenile Court in Swansea, and did much fine work in other spheres of social service. We shall miss her and cherish her memory with affection. The beautiful Silver Cup which she*

*presented some years ago to the Advisory Councils, for Annual Competitions among the Sections throughout the area, will continue to commemorate a gallant and greatly loved comrade.*

**What happened to the Elizabeth Williams Cup?** For a generation the Elizabeth Williams Cup was presented annually to the Welsh Labour Women's Section that made the best report of its activities.

On Friday 1 August 1947 the *Glamorgan Gazette* reported that *Mrs CR Attlee*, ie Mrs Violet Helen ATTLEE, the wife of the Labour Prime Minister Clement Richard Attlee, had presented the Elizabeth Williams Cup to the Cefn Cribwr Section. Its representative Mrs A GRABHAM had accepted it on their behalf.

On 19 June 1948 the *Herald of Wales* reported that at the South Wales annual Labour Women's Conference the cup was awarded to the Baglan Labour Women's Section. On 12 June 1950 the *Western Mail* reported that it had been won again by the Cwmavon Labour women's section. Velindre Ward in Newport had come second and Alexandra Ward in Newport third.

On 19 June 1953 the *Neath Guardian* reported on the South Wales annual Labour Women's Conference, held at the Patti Pavilion in Victoria Park in Swansea. Mrs Freda CORBET née KUNZLEN, the Peckham, London, Labour MP, presented the Elizabeth Williams cup to the representative of Briton Ferry Labour Women's Section.

Briton Ferry Labour Women's Section won the Elizabeth Williams Cup again in 1956. Elaine BURTON the Coventry South Labour MP, and George Percival WRIGHT, the Labour Party Education Officer, presented it to the Briton Ferry representative at the Welsh Labour Women's Conference held at the Porthcawl Pavilion. The 19 June 1964 *Glamorgan Gazette* reported that Cwmavon Labour Women's Section had won this cup again.

The last reference I have found to the award of the Elizabeth Williams Cup is in the 4 July 1968 *Port Talbot Guardian*. Neath Abbey Labour Women's Section had won it. They had held a meeting at the Longford Memorial Hall where their Secretary had read out the many congratulatory letters they had received; and were going to hold a Coffee Evening to celebrate it. (Longford is near Neath Abbey).

I do not know when the Elizabeth Williams Cup was last presented. Neither the Manchester Museum of Labour History nor the Welsh Labour History Society had heard of it. In the late 1960s the Labour Party was at a low ebb and the rise of feminism made separate women's sections seem out-dated.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *If anyone knows more of the Cup's recent history, please let us know by contacting the editor: [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk)*

# WELSH AMERICANS

#8653 Barrie Jones

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another and the reasons for migration in the nineteenth century are no different from those over the centuries and of the modern day: economic, ethnic, political, religious, war, and occasionally for adventure. It is not unusual for people to move more than once, over both short and long distances. This is especially true of William BLAMEY, (1836-1900) born in Gwennap, Cornwall, the son of Thomas BLAMEY (1804-1868) and Mary Ann, née BROWN (1805-1856).

Gwennap and the surrounding area was notable, not only for its tin deposits, but also for copper. From 1819 to 1840, Gwennap was the “Copper Kingdom”, at that time the richest known mineralised area in the world, and it is probable that William’s father was employed in the copper mines. Both tin and copper mining were heavily reliant on steam engines to pump water from the mines, winding the ‘mine’ to the surface and then, ‘stamp’ (crush) the mine to extract the ore. The rising cost of coal and geological problems brought about Gwennap’s decline in mining from 1840 and it is possible that Thomas was facing either lay-off from work or a reduction in his wage. Thus, together with Mary and his six children: Thomas junior (1827-1877), Mary Anne (1830), John (1831), Johanna (1835), William (1836-1900), and Elizabeth (1840), he moved to South Wales, settling at first in 1841 in Cwmdu, Maesteg, Glamorgan.

At Cwmdu Thomas worked for the Cambrian Iron Works, most probably mining iron ore, although his eldest son, Thomas junior, then fifteen years old, described his occupation as a collier. Life there must have been settled as soon after moving a daughter, Rebecca (1841), was born and then later another daughter, Catherine (1845), completed the family group. At this time, the iron industry in South Wales was already in decline; the boom years were past as the higher cost of ‘importing’ better quality iron ore together with competition from larger, more efficient iron works elsewhere, was either closing works or forcing down costs, especially reducing workers’ wages. Thus, we find that sometime in the late 1840s William and his family moved once more, this time to Gethin, near Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Tydfil, working for the Cyfarthfa Iron Works.

By 1851, Thomas’s three older children had moved on, and Thomas senior was now mining coal. Johanna, aged sixteen years, was working above ground unloading coal, whilst William, aged fifteen years, was working underground. At this time iron companies had found that mining coal for sale helped reduce their operating costs and this in turn helped increase the demand for colliers, who could on occasions receive good wages and settled employment. Following Mary Anne’s death in April 1856 Thomas had moved

into the household of his eldest son, Thomas junior, in Yew Street, Troedyrhiw, but continued working as a collier until his death in 1866, aged sixty-two years.

The BLAMEY household had inevitably split up following Mary Anne's death and soon in the June of that year (1856), William married Sarah (Sally) JONES (1839-1890). It is fitting that William and Sally named their first child, a daughter, Mary (1857). Sally was the daughter of John Evan JONES (1814-1893) and Ann (1815-1890), John Evan and Ann were living in Duffryn, Pentrebach, and John was also a collier working for the Plymouth Ironworks, which was located two miles north of Troedyrhiw. For the next decade William and Sally seem settled in Troedyrhiw with their growing family: Mary (1856-1906), William junior (1859-1933), John (1861-1862), Elizabeth (1863-1929), and Ann (1864-1907).

In March 1866 William, Sally, and their four children made the momentous move of their lives, migrating to the USA. The ending of the Civil War in 1865 had triggered a surge in Welshmen migrating to the USA<sup>1</sup>. What prompted such a move? Was it for economic reasons, was his wage insufficient to support his young and growing family, and was he emboldened by the experience, aged five years old, moving with his parents from Cornwall to South Wales? Or was it for adventure? His brother-in-law, William JONES (1837-1893), Sally's older brother, had travelled to the California goldfields in the mid-1850s and then on to the goldfields of Melbourne, Australia. Returning home sometime in the early 1870s with a "goodly sum"<sup>2</sup>.

Their first move was to Saint Clair, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. Although the northern Pennsylvanian anthracite coal field was the principal area for Welsh migration, thousands<sup>3</sup> of Welsh had also settled in the middle and southern anthracite fields, particularly in Schuylkill County, a deep mining area<sup>4</sup>. This mining area of Pennsylvania was notorious for its high casualty rate, which was much higher than in Great Britain, a miner was four times more likely to be killed in Schuylkill County than in Great Britain<sup>5</sup>.

It was not unusual for migrants to seek out colonies with the same cultural background as themselves both in language and religion, and also in work,

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald L. Lewis, *Welsh Americans, a History of Assimilation in the Coalfields*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2008, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Obituary, William Jones - *Merthyr Express*, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 1893,

<sup>3</sup> 9,333 Welsh of a population of 115,777 in Schuylkill County in 1870; Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p.155.

and possible welcome by relatives or friends who had migrated earlier<sup>6</sup>. William and Sarah may have known some families who had migrated before them, and Sally was Welsh-speaking and strongly nonconformist<sup>7</sup>. Moving to Wales at the age of five, William would most certainly have learned to speak Welsh, through both work and play over the following decades. William and Sally's move to the USA must have been noteworthy, particularly among Sally's family. Written in the flyleaf of her parents' Welsh language New Testament bible was her Schuylkill address, as well as the dates of birth of both William and Sally and their first five children<sup>8</sup>.

However, William and Sally did not stay long in Saint Clair, their next child Rebecca (1866-1909) was born soon after their arrival, but by 1868 we trace them to Bellaire, Belmont County, Ohio. Bellaire was a small village three-hundred miles west of Saint Clair, on the Ohio river which formed the state boundary between Ohio and West Virginia. Situated in a bituminous coal mining area, for a time Bellaire was known as "Glass City" because of its numerous glassmaking works, which benefited from the ready supply of low-cost coal. Here the family group was enlarged by a further four children: John Albert (1868-1946), Kate (1871-1946), Margaret (1874-1933) and Chester Arthur (1883-1940). As early as 1871 William became a naturalised citizen of the USA and he and Sally lived in Bellaire for the remainder of their lives.

By 1890 Sally's parents were well into their old age, and Sarah may have been aware of her mother's failing health. In June 1890 Sarah set sail from New York for Liverpool on the SS Berlin to visit her family. Sadly, on that outward journey she died of a heart attack, aged fifty-one years. We can only hope that she did not die alone, and that either William or one or more of her children had accompanied her on the voyage. In October that year her mother Ann died, and was buried in Saron graveyard, and three years later her father, John Evan, had died also and joined Ann in Saron. In May 1923 Sally's sister-in-law, Mary JONES, née PHILLIPS (1846-1923), left provision in her will for a new headstone for John Evan and Ann, courtesy of part of her late husband's "goodly sum".

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<sup>6</sup> Harold Carter and Sandra Wheatley, *Merthyr Tydfil in 1851, A Study of the Spatial Structure of a Welsh Industrial Town*, University of Wales, 1982, p.27. Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p.48.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah's younger brother, Thomas Evan Jones (1849) and his children were Welsh speaking, as shown in the 1911 Census returns, and Sarah's parents attended Saron, Troedyrhiw, a Welsh Independent Chapel.

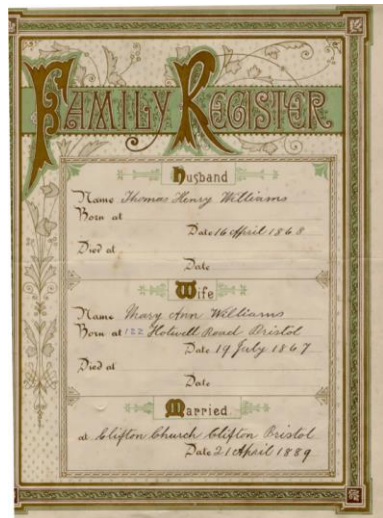
<sup>8</sup> The bible was handed down through Sarah's brother's (Thomas Evan) family.



For William and Sally economic advancement was the principal motivation for emigration to the USA, the “pull of a better paying job and the push of poverty”<sup>9</sup>, equally the USA offered better opportunities for their children. William was a coal miner all his working life, but none of his sons entered the mining industry and none of his daughters married miners. In contrast, in South Wales, William’s older brother, Thomas, was a coal miner and so were his three sons, and Sarah’s brother, Thomas Evan JONES (1849), was the ancestor of a further two generations of coal miners<sup>10</sup>. Thus, despite the probable hardships of their early years in the USA, they achieved the principal aim of their migration.

## BIBLE STORIES

Do you or your family own a ‘Family’ Bible that has been kept over the years and has recorded births, marriages and deaths of family members? If so, please let us know if you find an unofficial family tree, or unexpected references and photographs. These can often be a source of information when the relevant census records are perhaps confusing. Let us know what you find (see Letters page for an unexpected ‘find’ one of our members has come across).



<sup>9</sup> Lewis, Welsh Americans, p.36.

<sup>10</sup> My grandfather, Caradog Jones (1896-1971), was the last collier in the ‘Jones’ family.



DAVID H LEWIS OF ABERDARE (1840-1901)  
MARY LEWIS/WILLIAMS (1879-1957)

#20107 Lynn Schindler



My grandmother, Grace WILLIAMS, was born in Pentre, Rhondda, on 22 August 1896. Grace's mother was Elizabeth (Lizzie) MORGAN born in 1864 in Taffs Well and her father was Walter Williams born in 1862/3 in Forge Row, Rhymney. Lizzie and Walter married in 1892 in Penuel Chapel Pontypridd.

Sadly, my great-grandmother, Lizzie, died in 1897 of tuberculosis in London where she had gone to a clinic in the hope of getting better. Lizzie was only 33 and had been married to my great-grandfather Walter for 5 years. Their daughter, my grandmother Grace was barely 2 years old.

Walter Williams, whose father was Rees Williams (1824- ) was an iron puddler and then an iron worker, rail inspector and steel works manager. One of at least 9 children, Walter became a draper, following training in London, and then a JP and a member of Rhondda District Council.

The first shop Walter owned and ran was Lloyds House in Pentre in 1897, where my grandmother grew up. In 1901 according to Kelly's directory and the census he had a drapers and outfitters in 84 Llewelyn Street, Pentre, where he lived with his daughter Grace. Walter was also very involved in the



Calvinistic Methodist Church Forward Movement and supporting missionaries in India.

When Grace was 7 years old her father, Walter, married Mary (May) LEWIS, the only living daughter and child of David Hopkin Lewis. Mary was 25 years and Walter 42 years when they married on 21 October 1903 in St David's Chapel, Pontypridd. The announcement in the Rhondda Leader paper was:

*On Wednesday evening last a tea was given to the children and young people of Nazareth Chapel in celebration of the marriage of Mr Walter Williams, Lloyd's shop and Miss May Lewis of Aberdare. The parties are a well-to-do and influential couple and command great respect in both Pentre and Aberdare. We wish the happy couple joy and happiness in the matrimonial state.*

*(Above right: Mary Lewis, later Williams)*



David Hopkin Lewis, Mary's father was born in 1840 in Aberdare. In the 1861 census he was 21 and a grocer's clerk living with his uncle, David HOPKIN, aged 49, in Harriet Street Aberdare. In 1864 David Hopkin Lewis married Margaret DAVID from Durvol Farm in St Brides Major.

Margaret was the youngest of 9 children; two brothers went to Nevada, USA and another to Australia. Durvol was the name of the house where Walter, Mary and Grace lived (Durvol, St Stephen's Ave, Pentre) in 1911. What is charming about genealogy is seeing how people and places are linked, and that place and children's names are repeated throughout the family.

In the 1871 census David Hopkin and Margaret had moved to a grocer shop in Cynon Place, Aberdare, where they had a son, Thomas Hopkin, aged 3. In 1881 the family were in 17 Harriet Street with two children, Thomas Hopkin, aged 13 and Mary, aged 1. Sadly in 1891 the only child mentioned is Mary. Thomas, died in September 1889, aged 21. Mary's mother, Margaret, died in 1894 (aged 52) when Mary was only 14. By 1901 Mary was 21 years old living with her father, David Hopkin Lewis (aged 61), a retired grocer still in 17 Harriet Street. David died later that year on 16 August 1901. I also found through a gravestone inscription that David Hopkin and Margaret had another daughter, Mary Jane, who died January 1867, aged only 18 months. David Hopkin was not just a grocer and draper but also on the Board of Guardians for Merthyr



*Mary and Walter Williams*

What I find so moving is that Mary had had so much grief in her early life and being orphaned quite young. Mary was the main beneficiary of her father's will. David Hopkin was also a landlord of several properties in Harriet Street, Windsor Street and Church Row. David Hopkin Lewis made a lot of provisions, and like a lot of wills, it is quite hard to understand, but what I feel is that he really respected and trusted women.

He left £10 to various women, eg Jane Hughes, wife of an auctioneer; Mary Davies, wife of a minister and various relatives.

The will includes the following lines:

*I declare that all interests and benefits herein given to females shall be for their own sole and separate use and benefit. I direct my Trustees to open a Banking Account in their names as Trustees and to pay all rents, interest, dividends and income to such Banking Account on the first Monday in each month.*

David Hopkin had 6 trustees (one of whom was his step-brother from his father's second marriage) to manage his estate until his daughter, Mary, was 23 and pay her an allowance of £25 a quarter in advance as well as her rates, taxes and rent:

*In trust thereout to furnish a house for and to the satisfaction of my daughter Mary in which she may reside namely Irvon Villa, Trecynon or any other house of equal value she may select wherever situate and whether belonging to my estate or not.*

When she was 23 or, in the event of her marriage, if before:

*My Trustees shall pay to her all the net income of all my Estate during her natural life. And also pay over to her when she shall attain the age of 23 years or on her marriage should she marry under that age all the net income saved out of my estate in the meantime for her own absolute use and benefit.*

David Hopkin wanted Mary to be involved in managing her money, at a time when very few women had their own bank accounts\*.

*I also direct that my Trustees shall keep a proper Ledger Account and prepare a balance sheet every six months, a copy of which shall be regularly given to my daughter, who is also to have the perfect right to examine the said Banking Account and Ledger whenever she may so desire.*

Walter Williams died 12<sup>th</sup> February 1933 when Mary was only 54. She never remarried. By 1939 Mary had moved back to Aberdare to Irvon Villa, Windsor Street. 'Irvon' is the name Grace, and her husband, William ROWLANDS, gave it to their home when they bought a new house in 1961 in Porthmadog.

Mary died on 22 November 1957, (aged 78) and she left her estate to her stepdaughter/my grandmother Grace. Sadly, she had no children of her own, but was very fond of Grace's two children - my mother (Menna) and her brother (Ivor). However, Mary was a strong and positive person. My mother called her Gramma and had very fond memories of her.

Mary's death was just before my mother's marriage in April 1958, so my grandmother gave to my parents her old furniture and kept the furniture from South Wales. When Grace died in 1990, before my marriage in 1991, my mother gave to me Grace's furniture which is now in my house. So, I feel a direct connection to Mary and the estate of a grocer from Aberdare.

Mary sounds like a wonderful woman, and she came to influence our family in a very positive way. I just wish I had met her.

**Sources:** Census records 1861,1871, 1881,1891,1901  
Tombstone records (from Patricia Grimes)  
Wills and probate and newspaper articles

*\*Ed: Women have always been allowed to hold bank accounts but some banks were less accommodating than others. It was not until the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) that all financial institutions had to treat women in the same way as men.*

# A JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND

## #1801 Clive Davies, Part 2

*Images right: William Jenkins (1807-1856)  
Margaret Jenkins, née Hopkins, (1808-1884)*

In Part 1 I wrote about how my relative, William Jenkins, was converted to the Mormon faith by Dan Jones, himself a friend of the founder of the Mormon church, Joseph Smith. This is the account of their perilous journey to Salt Lake City in Utah.

William Jenkins, his wife Margaret and three children left Liverpool on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1856 in the large square rigger, *S Curling*. Her master and part owner was Capt Sanders CURLING of Thomastown, Maine. She carried 707 passengers, mostly Welsh Mormons, led by Dan Jones.

The fare was low, £4, and covered transportation and food. However, passengers provided their own mattresses and a box or barrel to hold their personal belongings and cooking utensils. A bucket or chamber pot provided sanitary facilities. The claustrophobic conditions of the overcrowded quarters compounded the misery of the stench, seasickness and various diseases

The passengers were quartered below deck, side by side, in crowded bunks. Anyone with known exposure to a contagious disease was excluded from travel and yet measles, chicken pox and other ailments afflicted many. Often children suffered and six died during the 35-day passage, whilst two babies were born: Dan Curling DEE and Claudia Curling REYNOLDS. Their middle name reflected the high esteem in which the ship's captain was held by the passengers.

Excerpts from Dan Jones' letter written to Franklin RICHARDS (1821-96), a Mormon apostle, from the ship on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1856:

*".....and babes suffered much, six of the latter have died, namely Joseph J DAVIES, son of George W Davies, of Cardiff, aged one year and five months, of inflammation of the lungs, on 28th of April; Hyrum BASSETT, son*



*of John Bassett, of Wales, 29th of April, aged ten months, of inflammation of the lungs; Joseph THOMAS, son of William Thomas, of Milford Haven, on the 8th of May, aged nine months and five days; Parley R LEWIS, son of John Lewis, of Tredegar, of cancer in the breast, aged seven months, on the 9th of May; John DAVIES, son of Evan D Davies, of Glamorganshire, of consumption, on the 17th of May; and Joseph PRICE, son of John Price, of Pembrokeshire, May 21st, of consumption, aged twelve months. Three of the former, however, were so weakly, that the doctor said while inspecting them at Liverpool, they would not live ten days.*

*Notwithstanding the roughness of this wintry passage, we continued to be quite a devotional people. At 5 am each day the bugle called the men out to clean their wards, and then to retire on deck while the ladies were dressing for morning prayers, at a quarter to six o'clock. At dusk the bugle called all hands to prayer again...."*

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1856 the passengers disembarked at Boston and waited there for three days until a chartered train was arranged by Dan Jones to transport them to Iowa City, a journey of eight days. There they camped for some three weeks as they prepared carts, tents and other vital needs for the perilous journey of 1,300 miles/2,080 kilometres across the plains to Utah.

Illness prevented Dan Jones from continuing and the experienced Edward BUNKER took over the leadership. Early in their three-week journey to Florence, Nebraska their campsite was flooded in a violent storm and the track churned into thick mud. Florence was the last settlement before the arduous 1,000 mile trek across the trackless plains to the Promised Land.

On 31<sup>st</sup> July 320 pioneers of the Third (Welsh, sometimes Bunker) Handcart Company left Florence pulling their 64 laden handcarts. Their rations were meagre and the privations great. Some died and were buried beside the way.

Priscilla EVANS (1835-1914), a native of Monkton, Pembrokeshire, had married just before leaving Wales, and was pregnant with her first child. She was to bear eleven more in Utah. Here is an excerpt from her journal of the trek:

*"We began our journey with a handcart for each family, some families consisting of just a man and wife, and some had quite large families. Each handcart had one hundred pounds of flour, that to be divided up and we were to get more from the wagons as required. At first we had a little coffee and bacon, but that was soon gone and we had no use for any cooking utensils but a frying pan. The Welsh people had no experience and very few of them could speak English.*



*My husband had lost a leg in his early childhood and walked on a wooden stump, which caused him a great deal of pain and discomfort. When his knee, which rested on a pad, became very sore, my husband was not able to walk any farther and I could not pull him in the little cart, being so sick myself, so one late afternoon he felt he could not go on so he stopped to rest beside some tall sagebrush. I pleaded with him to try to walk farther, that if he stayed there he would die, and I could not go on without him.*



Church of Latter Day Saints publication 'History'

*The company did not miss us until they rested for the night and when the names were checked we were not among the company and a rider on a horse came back looking for us. When they saw the pitiful condition of my husband's knee he was assigned to the commissary wagon and helped dispense the food for the rest of the journey. I hated to see him suffer so but it was with relish that I ate his little cake when he was too miserable to care for food.*

*We had no grease for the wheels on the handcarts and one day they killed an old buffalo and my husband and John THAIN, a butcher, sat up all night to boil some to get some grease to grease the handcarts, but it was so old and tough there was not a speck of grease in it.*

*Thomas D GILES, a blind man had a wife, baby girl and two boys. Not long after starting the trek the baby became ill. After a short time she died and was buried beside the trail. It wasn't long until his wife became ill, passed away, and was also buried beside the trail. Fearing the same for his two boys, when an east bound group passed, he sent the two boys, ages seven and nine back to join a later company that included a group of Welsh saints.*



Not far from Fort Bridger, Giles himself became seriously ill. The company was held up for two days waiting for either improvement in his condition or further deterioration. Finally, Captain Bunker determined the end was within hours, ordered the group to move on, and left two men to bury Brother Giles when the end came.



Thomas Giles (1820-94), born in Blaenavon, Monmouthshire, survived the trek, as did his two sons, Joseph and Hyrum. He married Hannah Evans (1821-87) in 1857 at Ogden, Utah. From this marriage there was a further son, Henry (1859-1938). Thomas Giles became well known in Utah as the 'Blind Harpist'.

The diary of George William TURNER (1823-91), recorded the fate of William Jenkins. The diarist was known as George DAVIES when in Wales and during his early years in Utah.

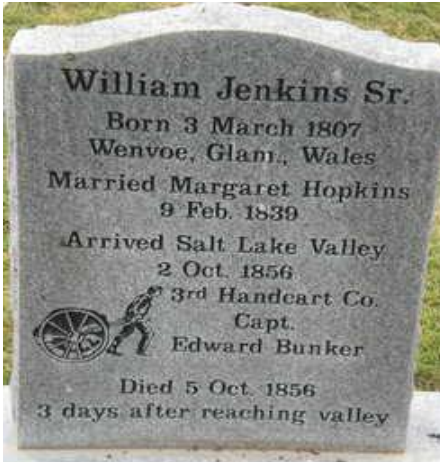
*"I shall never forget the words of one brother named William Jenkins, a large able-bodied man who left Cardiff with us. "...says.the day before he died. If any person asks you the cause of my death tell them it was the lack of the proper amount of necessary food to sustain my body in this long and laborious journey, some of the brethren and sisters have said many hard things in my hearing about the Church authorities in regard to the handcart enterprise owing to the great amount of suffering and death caused by that movement, but I do not blame anyone.. I believe that the Brethren in their desire to be economical in the matter and through inexperience put a greater amount on the human system than it could bear."*

The last two handcart companies to make the trek in 1856 started later in the season. The ship carrying the emigrants was late sailing from England and they were further delayed by a lack of handcarts and other supplies. This delay was calamitous. The trekkers were trapped by severe blizzards in Wyoming, and some 200 out of 1,076 perished from cold and hunger. Many others lost fingers and toes to frostbite.

Patience LOADER born in 1827 was one of 13 children of an Oxfordshire couple. She was in the last handcart company to complete the trek. She recalled a river crossing during that traumatic journey:

*"...the water was deep and very cold and we drifted out of the regular crossing and we came near bein drowned... the water came near our arm pits.... poor mother was standing on the bank screaming as we got near the bank I heard her say for god sake some of you men help my poor girls..."*

*several of the men came down the bank of the river and pulled our cart for us ...mother was there to meet us her clothing was dry but ours was wett and cold and very soon frozen ...mother took off one of her underskirts and put it on one of us and her apron for another to keep the wett cloth from us for we had to travel several miles before we could camp ..... was saddened by the sight of a less fortunate hand cart member when we was in the middle of the river I saw a poor brother carreying his child on his back he fell down in the water I never knew if he drowned or not..."*



William and his family arrived in Salt Lake City on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1856. The trek exacted a heavy price. The exhausted and spent William Jenkins expired three days after reaching his Promised Land.

His three children married in Utah and produced large families:

William (1841-1931), 10 children, Elizabeth (1843-1901), 9 children and Thomas (1847-1915), 9 children by two wives. Their descendants number several hundred.

## FRONT COVER

This wintery scene is a typical South Wales Valleys view of a row of miners' cottages, built over 90 years ago to house the influx of families coming to work in the collieries.

*Photograph from the Garw Valley Heritage Society archives.*

## GIFT AID

If you Gift Aid your subscription each year please check the date on your journal label as some members have not completed a new GA form for a few years. A new Gift Aid form was included in the Centre Insert of the September journal or contact [membership@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:membership@glamfhs.org.uk)

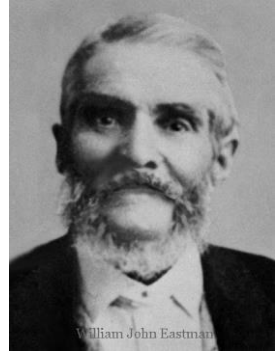
## THE EASTMAN FAMILY: LEAVING NEATH ONE AT A TIME

Jill Morgan

The records of the Neath branch (congregation) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints show that an Ann Eastman was baptised as a convert to that Church in 1848. This was just months after her marriage to William and he would join her in her new faith in 1853. Ann was an early



local convert as a formal branch of the Church wasn't established in Swansea until 1848 and Neath in 1849. She was born Ann Harris in Neath of a Welsh father and Irish mother, but William's family were from Bideford in Devon. Thirteen children would be born to their marriage, two of whom died as infants.



The Neath branch records show the baptisms of several of their children in the 1870s and 1880s, as they became old enough<sup>1</sup>: Joseph in 1872; Heber and Lorenzo in 1873; Margaret in 1874; Ephraim, Susan and Matilda in 1882. Others of their children may also have been baptised but the branch records had become sporadic by that time.

William and Ann are listed in the 1881 census, living in 1 Evans Road, Melincryddan, with six of their children at home. But their house was also a meeting place for Church groups, notably for the children. Primary, the children's organisation for the LDS Church, was first established in Farmington (Utah) in 1878, but it took time for it to be established in other parts of the world. The Minutes of the Neath Primary in 1882 state that it is the *First Primary in England and Wales*. Ann Eastman became the president of the Neath primary and her children are noted frequently as participating in the meetings. The other three families featuring in the Minutes are the children of George and Betsy LANG, those of Henry and FANNY NEWHAM, and those of Sarah WILLIAMS, all of whom lived locally and must have formed the nucleus of the Neath branch.

William, Ann and their nine living children emigrated to America, as was common for converts at the time, and settled in Utah. However, although we

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<sup>1</sup> Children are not baptised in the LDS Church until the age of 8

often picture whole families trudging across the plains with their wagons or handcarts to the American West, the Eastman family left piecemeal – and in what would have been considered great style by the early pioneer emigrants.

The journal of LDS missionary John Thomas<sup>2</sup> offers some insights:

*“14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1886: went to Eastmans and got a good Chat with Sister Eastman. One of their little Girls went by the Last Emigration”*

This would have been Susan, then age 15. Her diary<sup>i</sup> records:

*“I left home to come to America on October 13 1886. It was raining very hard when I left the house. Father came to the station and Mrs Lang, Maggie Phillips and Louisa, Dolly Morgan, Catherine Arnold, Mary Gwillins, Persila Arlood, Jane Welling, Maggie Lewis, Jack Harris.”*

We don't know whether these were fellow Church members, or kindly neighbours and friends, but clearly her departure did not go unnoticed. Susan describes the terrible weather on the ship and her subsequent sea-sickness, as well as home-sickness, and then travelling all the way to Salt Lake City by train. The days of wagons and handcarts were well past, as the Intercontinental Railroad had been completed in 1869.

John Thomas' next journal entry about the Eastmans' emigration reads:

*3<sup>rd</sup> May 1887: went over to Eastman, had a long talk about Utah. They are very anxious about their [there?] as they have four of their Children Over [in Utah]*

In addition to Susan, Heber had emigrated in 1884, John in 1882 (he was there to welcome Susan when she arrived in Salt Lake City) and Elizabeth had been the first to emigrate in 1876. Then in 1888 two entries record:

*5<sup>th</sup> Jan: In a little While we went to Eastmans. Got a good Chat also good News. Saying they will Soon be leaving for our Mountain Home. News he has had from his Daughters.*

*28<sup>th</sup> July: Seen Bro & Sister Eastman they have Only had One pass & Louisa Eastman is going.*

By this time, those wishing to emigrate who had family already in America had to be sent a pass in order to join them – presumably a system akin to modern sponsorship for taking up residence in the USA. Louisa was allowed

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<sup>2</sup> Available online at: <https://welshsaints.byu.edu>. Search *Immigrants* section for John Thomas (born Llanelli, 1837)

to use that single pass and left Liverpool for New York aboard the *Wisconsin* in August 1888. William and Ann finally emigrated in 1889, with their son Ephraim, then age 20.

So the Eastman family did all emigrate as converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, but it took a decade for them to be finally reunited many thousands of miles from their home in Melincryddan.

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## ASSISTANT EDITOR

Provide support to the Journal Editor in selecting and proof reading articles, formatting content and compilation of the mailing list.

For further information please contact:  
[chairman@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@glamfhs.org.uk) OR [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk)

## BOOK REVIEWS

### JOHN BEDFORD AND THE IRONWORKS AT CEFN CRIBWR: Philip Riden

I was drawn to this book because I have often been to the ironworks at Bedford Park in Cefn Cribwr when walking the dog, and the sight of the ruined stone buildings set in a hollow besides the fast-flowing river reminds me of some of JMW Turner's paintings, so evocative of his early Industrial Revolution scenes.

Born in Birmingham in the late 1720s, John Bedford spent his early life after leaving Birmingham operating iron forges at Trostrey and Rogerstone, near Newport, and then from 1770 attempting to establish a blast furnace, forge and associated mines and collieries at his newly-purchased estate at Cefn Cribwr.

He wrote in great detail about iron-making techniques as well as giving an account of his whole career in Birmingham and South Wales, and this book is based on his writings, many of which are lodged with the National Museum of Wales, as is the painting of him on the cover, executed by Moses Haughton.

Even though his enterprise was a failure, his writings together with the buildings that remain, act as a memorial to a remarkable man, as does his house, Plas Cefn, still standing overlooking the ironworks.

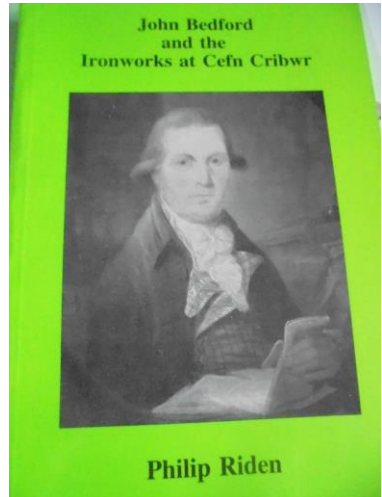
Author Philip Riden at the time of publication was Lecturer in Local History at the University of Wales in Cardiff.

Paperback, ISBN 0 9503299 7 5 £7.95

Published by Philip Riden and printed by Technical Print Services Ltd, Brentcliffe Avenue, Carlton Road, Nottingham, NG3 7AG

A copy will be held at the ARC.

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



## LETTERS/EMAILS to the EDITOR

**Rick Woolls** has written about the Family Bible he has inherited from his grandmother. He knows the Bible was not originally in his family, but he was intrigued by the handwritten list of entries of births with the surname of Gammon, with William being the first-named in 1829 of a family with 10 siblings. He has asked if this could have been the family of William J Gammon, the coxswain of the Mumbles lifeboat that was so tragically lost, with all its crew, in 1947. Those listed in the Bible have all been identified up to 1854 from the various databases available, and colleagues at the ARC are helping to fill in the family tree after that date. If more information becomes available we will be able to write more on William Gammon.

**Philip Newton Webb** has asked for further information about his family's occupation of several houses in Hills Road, Cardiff - read his article on page 33.

Is your surname **Morgan**?? If so you may be interested in **Eoghan Walsh's** request for volunteers to help determine if his Morgan ancestor from 1658 in County Limerick is really from a Welsh family. He is asking if any Glamorgan men with Morgan as a surname would be interested in doing a YDNA 37 marker test at Family Tree DNA to see how they relate to the Morgans from Limerick. **Contact the editor to be put in touch.**

**Thomas Preece** has been following Oliver Davies's diary accounts of his Rhondda childhood, and wants to know if anyone has information on the Miss John he mentions who was a headmistress of Alaw school in the 1880s. This Miss John was one of four siblings, and so was his ancestor Margaret John, who was teaching in the area until 1890 - could they be the same person from the same family (his)? Any information on the John family would be very welcome.

There has been considerable correspondence in connection with those with the surname **Jenkins**, driven by the article we printed last time on the 'Journey to the Promised Land' by **Clive Davies**, which featured William Jenkins and his conversion to the Mormon faith and travel to Utah. Part 2 of that article is included in this journal, and future journals will include more Jenkins' stories, not necessarily related to the Jenkins already featured.

If anyone can help with the enquiries above, or has any further information, then please contact the editor, who will pass on all answers and relevant correspondence.

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

# NEWS FROM GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES

## Staff

- Sadly, we have to report that one of our staff, Assistant Archivist Harvey Thomas, passed away at the end of August. He will be greatly missed.

## Access and Community Engagement

- Our events programme restarted in September following a short summer break with a talk by Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed of Cardiff University on 'The Story of Islam in Wales'.
- Events coming up include Prof. Martin Johnes on 'Welsh Not - Elementary Education and the Anglicisation of Wales' on Wednesday 6 November at 6pm, and Tola Munro on 'Wales' Forgotten Pioneering Women Police Officers' on Thursday 28 November at 6pm.
- In July we hosted a 'writeathon' delivered by the Dictionary of Welsh Biography's Diversity Project. Funded by Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Fund, the aim of the day was to train participants in writing new entries for the Dictionary of Welsh Biography, with a focus on people previously overlooked, in order to ensure its increased diversity.
- With the National Eisteddfod visiting Pontypridd in August, we published a series of blog posts looking back at the Eisteddfod's visit to Treorchy in 1928.
- In September we held our annual Open Doors events. We were very pleased to be joined this year by volunteers from GFHS who were on hand to answer visitor queries and also delivered two short talks. Our behind the scenes tours were fully booked, and 77 people attended in total.
- Also in September we were a stop on the Maggie's Cancer Centre Culture Crawl. The fundraising events sees participants walk 10k around Cardiff, stopping at cultural venues along the route. 110 participants called into the Archives for a short introduction to our work.
- School visits have restarted with two classes from Creigiau Primary attending in September for our Second World War workshops.
- Our Glamorgan's Blood exhibition visited Insole Court in July for their Heritage Weekend, and was displayed at various libraries in the Bridgend area during September as part of their heritage month activities.
- A third cohort of Invisible Cardiff trainees visited the Archives for training in September. The trainees, all people who have experienced homelessness, will be supported to become tour guides in Cardiff.
- We have a new Newsletter! The first issue was circulated in September and it will be published on a quarterly basis. You can sign up to receive it by email by subscribing to our blog <https://glamarchives.wordpress.com/>.
- Students from Cardiff University's Department of Continuing and Professional Education studying a module on the History of Cardiff visited in July for a tour and to view relevant documents from the collection. Many of the students were keen to return to carry out research in the future.



- Members of the team visited Cathays Heritage Library to learn more about their collections. In return, a number of Library staff attended the Archives for a tour of the building and to learn more about our services and collections. We frequently refer customers to each other, so the visits will be very beneficial.
- Our 'Ask the Experts' family history sessions, delivered in partnership with volunteers from GFHS, continue to prove popular with visitors seeking additional support with their genealogical research.
- Members of GFHS Cardiff Branch returned to the Archives in September. The theme for the meeting was maritime records.

## **Collections**

- Notable accessions received recently include:

### **Womens' Institutes, Glamorgan Records (DXNO)**

An additional deposit of Women's Institute records has been received and includes minute books, accounts and photographs. The records are from branches across Glamorgan, including those in Brackla, Southerndown, Bryncethin, Merthyr Mawr, Llanblethian, St Fagans, Aberkenfig, Penarth Peers, Llantrisant, Pendoylan, Cadoxton (Barry), Beulah, Cardiff, Tonyrefail, Efail Isaf, Llanmaes, Gwaelod-y-Garth, Rhondda, and Mynydd Cynffig/Kenfig Hill.

### **Derek Smith of Tonteg Collection (D2054)**

The records include certificates and photographs of Morgan (Mog) Edmunds from Tynant who bred champion racing pigeons. One of his greatest achievements was in 1926 when his one of his pigeons won the prestigious National Flying Club Trophy, an annual race from San Sebastian. Other records in the collection relate to the Absalom and Williams families of Treforest and include photographs of family members, Coedpenmaen Rugby Football Team, 1910-1911 and Treforest Scouts in 1918. There are also letters from family in Ohio in 1932 and correspondence organising a trip to the United States in 1948.

### **Illuminated address presented to William Bowen of Rhymney Iron Works (D2047)**

The address was presented to Mr William Bowen in recognition of his service to the Rhymney Iron Company Limited, by Stan Owen, Chairman, Daniel Owen, Treasurer and Elias Jones, Secretary, May 1903. At the time of the presentation William Bowen was about to take up a new appointment with Guest Keen and Company's Cyfarthfa Collieries. The address includes a photograph of William Bowen and the Rhymney Ironworks.

### **Rhondda Urban District Council Education Committee, Evacuation of Children Papers (D2037)**

The records relate to the educational provision for evacuees to the Rhondda Urban District Council area, including instructions and information sent from Central Government. It includes a return of evacuees still in the area on 30 November 1945 with names, ages, billet address and home address.

### **South Bargoed Junior Boys'Y Graig Mixed School Records (ECG/38)**

The log books and admission registers for South Bargoed Junior Boys'Y Graig Mixed School are welcome additions to our collection of education records. The log books in particular are invaluable as a resource for our school workshops, particularly for teaching the impact of the Second World War on schools and local communities.

### **Joan and Edward King Collection of Cardiff Bay Records (D2041)**

Joan and Edward King of Cardiff both worked at Currans Electrics/Engineering and the collection includes papers and photographs of workers there in the 1940s, as well a photograph of a reunion of workers in 2000. The couple also enjoyed visiting Cardiff Bay and compiled a number of scrapbooks of photographs and newscuttings charting the development and changes in Cardiff Bay and the surrounding area from 1986-2002.

### **Glamorgan County Council Records: Education Authority Music Service (GD/E)**

A diary compiled by members and staff of the Glamorgan Youth Orchestra was discovered in the music store of RCT music service. The diary charts the orchestra's tour of Western Slovakia in 1966. We understand a reciprocal visit was made by musicians from Bratislava.  
*Rhian Diggins*

Articles for inclusion in the journal should be sent via email to [editor@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@glamfhs.org.uk) . It is useful if you can quote the sources used so that other members can benefit from your research findings. Articles should be approximately 1000-1500 words in length. We reserve the right to serialise articles which are over a certain length.

Contributors should ensure, if submitting images and documents, that they have obtained the permission of the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder of digital images used on websites will be different to the original copyright holder and their permission is also needed to enable us to reproduce the digital image in the journal. The Editors reserve the right to remove any images from articles where permission to use has not been obtained.

# SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Eisteddfod was very successful, despite the very Welsh weather. We got to talk to a lot of people (in Welsh!!) - some people were interested in taking out a membership, others came to ask about specific genealogical research or just to chat about their on-going research. It has highlighted the importance of producing dual language literature, paperwork and website and this is being looked into in the next few months.

The Society is still getting a number of queries for help with family research and these are being directed to the various branches or dealt with by volunteers in the Resource Centre at Aberkenfig (ARC).

The next big project will be the birthday celebration and there are some ideas in hand for this. The logo has been revamped and will be added to a variety of different items.

*Penny Williams, [bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE

The ARC has continued to open twice a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays between 10am and 2pm. However, visitor numbers remain very low. We would welcome your views on why this may be? With this in mind from January 2025 we will trial a new opening day. So, the ARC will open on Tuesdays, still the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks on the month and the same times 10am to 2pm. This will be trialled for six months to see if it helps. Please remember though, that if these times do not suit, we can open on any day/time by prior arrangement. We just need to ensure we have two volunteers available to support visitors. This also applies to branches and visits can be arranged if we have two or three weeks' notice.

The Saturday sessions will depend on the Bridgend branch being available, but attendance at these sessions has also been low, so once again, these may be by appointment only.

The card index digitalising project is continuing and we are in discussion to clarify the best way to move into the second phase.

Research requests are continuing to come in steadily and these are either being dealt with on the Wednesday opening days or the monthly Saturday session. Some are directed to the other Branches who have more extensive local knowledge.

**NEWS:** From January 2025 ARC opening days will be 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> **TUESDAYS**

## ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY

On return from our summer break, we had a research session which was poorly attended.

A Guided tour was undertaken of famous local people buried in Aberdare Cemetery; our thanks to Rob Jones for being our guide, organising the route and checking the research material. This was a very interesting and successful visit. It was agreed to do another one next year as we have enough material to look at other people of interest.

**October:** after our AGM we had a talk on the Robertstown Iron Tramway Bridge by Rob Jones. The Robertstown Iron Tramway Bridge is one of the oldest bridges in the UK. The bridge was made of cast iron and built in 1811; it is an important example of 19th century industrial construction techniques and transport systems. The iron to build the bridge came from a local iron foundry in Abernant. The bridge was recently restored and was reinstated this summer.

During our AGM the following people were re-elected to their prior positions:

Mervyn Pugh - Chairman

Robert Lake - Vice Chair

Pat Rees -Treasurer

Pat Rees - Secretary

Pat Rees - Projects

Pat Rees was re-elected as branch representative for Executive Committee.

Due to low or non-attendance for the research trial in Aberdare Library it was decided to just keep them to bi-monthly in the Cynon Valley Museum.

Two members volunteered to work on transcribing documents and we have agreed to look at local material held in Aberdare library.

It was also agreed to look at arranging further branch outings, and suggestions were made as to where. These will be looked into and a schedule reported back to members.

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

Our Resource Centre at Aberkenfig  
now has a new telephone number:

07490 457058

## BRIDGEND

Several members had a really interesting visit to Llanelly House in September (see photographs on the back cover). This is a renovated Georgian house in the centre of Llanelli, just opposite the church, which has undergone a number of dramatic changes over its history from a monastery to shops and now houses a restaurant and cafe as well as rooms reconstructed to show aspects of the house's long history. We had an excellent tour which included information about the development of the house as well as some of its residents including a resident ghost. They have the largest collection of the finest quality porcelain in the world, which has recently been purchased back from America and for that reason alone is worth a visit. If you get the chance to go I would highly recommend it - it's brilliant.

We are planning a trip to the Glamorgan Archives to have a tour behind the scenes and to look at some of the maps and other fascinating items. I have to admit it's a place I've never ever visited. Another possible trip is to the soon to be re-opened Awen Museum in Maesteg, which is opening for events in the next month or two. It may also be possible to get involved in a number of projects to help them organise, catalogue, display and generally publicise what they have there.

Bridgend Council has just completed its month long Ogwr Heritage Month. I attended a few of the talks in various locations around the County and they were excellent. I'm hoping one or two speakers will come and talk to the Bridgend branch and also perhaps next year the ARC and the Bridgend Branch can be involved as possibly the host for one of the events. There seems to be limited work that we would have to do to provide a venue and it might introduce more people to the ARC and its facilities. It would also promote links with the Council which is never about a bad thing. There is a meeting in Maesteg next month to discuss developing heritage across the County.

Our last meeting speaker was Rowena Williams from the Bridgend U3A History Group. She talked about the project her group had undertaken researching the area and family history during the beginning of WW2. They are hoping to complete a second project about the end of the War. They have produced a number of excellent display boards about their project and have unearthed some fascinating facts and photographs.

*Penny Williams, [bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk)*

## CARDIFF & VALE

The Cardiff and Vale branch of Glamorgan Family History Society has continued to provide opportunities for members to meet in person over the past year. We have held a number of successful meetings on Tuesday afternoons at Glamorgan Archives, organised by Karen Prior and facilitated by Rhian Diggins. These meetings were held in December, February, April and June. Meetings at the archives recommenced in September after a summer break, focusing on maritime records, a very useful topic for those of us with ancestors who were seafarers and dock workers.

We have also had four in-person evening talks over the past year – in September, November, March and May – from Norena Shopland, Ted Richards, Jenni Phillips, and Martin Johnes. These meetings took place in the chapel at Cathays Cemetery, and we are grateful to Cardiff Bereavement Services – in particular, Carmel Thomas – for giving us use of the chapel to host these talks. Thanks also go to TraceySims for providing refreshments, and Douglas Legg for helping to manage entry to the venue. We have not yet arranged a programme of evening talks for the forthcoming year, as we need branch members to volunteer to help with organising these meetings if they are to continue.

We are grateful to branch members who have attended in-person meetings this year; the interaction and questions asked on these occasions adds considerable value, and allows us to share and learn from our respective research experiences

Our branch AGM was held online in October. Jenni Phillips was re-elected as chair, with Stephen Fairhurst as treasurer, and Karen Prior as a committee member. Nick Davey has agreed to be co-opted to the committee for another year, and Stephen Fairhurst was also confirmed as our new branch trustee. Formal proceedings were followed by an excellent talk on using solicitors' records for genealogical research from qualified genealogist Trisha O'Reilly.

Jenni Phillips, [cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk)

## PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA

We have had excellent talks this year with good attendance. Sadly our Vice Chairman, David Shewring, died. He will be greatly missed by all. He was always ready to help out at family history fairs and meetings.

In August, Mike, Deborah and Eleanor helped out on our stand at the Eisteddfod. Deborah helped particularly with research and everyone was very grateful for her help.

In September Meic was intending to show a film of Thomas & Evans, the well known Rhondda pop manufacturer. However he was unable to do so due to a technical problem and so one of our members, John Roberts, stood in and spoke about his research into the history of his grandfather's life. He spoke very well considering nothing was prepared. Everyone found it very interesting despite the fact he had never spoken before. Well done John!

Our AGM in October was not well attended due to illness of some of the members. However we had enough to form a quorum.

Election of Officers:

Chairman & Branch Trustee: Meic Jones

Vice Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Jane Jones

Treasurer: Creighton Sims

Committee: Neil Gazzard, Debra Cooke, Jan Johnson, Eira Morgan, John Phillips, Ryland Williams and Angela Hughes.

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

## MERTHYR TYDFIL

There are no changes in the committee and running of the Merthyr Branch. The members who attend the monthly meetings are very happy in Soar, as it is the Welsh Centre we all even try to speak a few words in Welsh. In September Christine Trevett gave a fascinating talk on the nature and origin of first names with an emphasis on WWI. It was amazing to discover how many people were named Ypres or Verdun. Barrie Jones gave a talk in October cleverly tying sport to his own Merthyr Tydfil ancestry and showing some fascinating old family photographs. He asked the question as to whether an ability and interest in a sport comes about from birth inheritance or nurture. Barrie also writes articles for Merthyr Historians, the annual book produced by the Merthyr Tydfil and District Historical Society. Each volume of this useful publication has around 20 articles and many of the subjects are relevant and useful for family historians. The Society has a new web-site listing the subjects covered, which include many individuals and families, such as for example the 'Martin Family of Dowlais', 'Child Emigration from Merthyr Tydfil Workhouse', 'Evacuation to Merthyr Tydfil', 'The female drunkard in the mid nineteenth century' and numerous other fascinating topics. See:- <https://mtdhs.org.uk/resources.html#/>

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

## SWANSEA

We are continuing to hold our monthly meetings in West Glamorgan Archives on the second Tuesday at 2pm. We are grateful to the staff at the archives who arrange a variety of talks to start our meetings each month.

In August, Janet Neilson attended the National Eisteddfod of Wales in Pontypridd. This was a very exciting venture for her as she had never been to Pontypridd before! On the two days she attended the weather was glorious, but, in between, the Maes was virtually flooded, which meant that many of the Society's volunteers were drenched and wellingtons or walking boots were needed to wade through the mud!

In September we began with a talk by Rebecca Shields. She was able to update us on the research carried out by the archives to discover more about a hundred and twenty-one year old postcard which had been delivered to a local building society in Swansea recently. Some of you may have seen a BBC Welsh News report which interviewed Andrew Dullely, the Chief Archivist who discussed details revealed on the card.

The card had been delivered to a Miss Lydia Davies at 11 Craddock Street, Swansea, it had been posted in Fishguard, Pembrokeshire in August 1903. The message on the card appeared to be from a family member named Ewart. This became clearer when the archive staff searched the 1901 Census and found a family living at number 11 who had a daughter named Lydia and a son Ewart. Lydia's father was James Davies, a master tailor who traded from a shop at that address.

Following the news report the archives were contacted by descendants of the family who subsequently met up for the first time at the archives and were filmed by the BBC for the second news report. Where had the card been for the last 121 years? Had it been languishing in a dark corner of the GPO sorting office? Writing on the card, which appears to have been added later, leads the archives to believe that the card had been found or bought by someone who re-posted it. What an interesting result for the Davies family and a reminder to family historians that we can further our research in unexpected ways.

In October, a new archivist, Lowri Jenkins, (Welcome to West Glamorgan Archives, Lowri!) spoke about her research on The Women's Peace petition, which was signed by thousands in Wales in the 1920s. A new part of this "project" which will be available online very shortly, will show us the signatures of these people, which are being digitised, and then will be available to search.

*Cherry King and Janet Neilson, [swansea@glamfhs.org.uk](mailto:swansea@glamfhs.org.uk)*



# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

## **ABERDARE BRANCH**

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

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

9 Jan

13 Feb

13 Mar

## **BRIDGEND BRANCH**

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

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

20 Jan

17 Feb

17 Mar

## **CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH**

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

Glamorgan Archives, 2 pm first Tuesday every other month

7 Jan – Barry & Cardiff documents

4 Mar – Solicitor's 'Records'

## **MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH**

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

Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the  
2nd Tuesday of each month unless alternative is given

14 Jan: The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake: Carl Llewellyn

11 Feb: Meet 2pm in Soar and then a short walk to Merthyr Tydfil Central  
Library: Viewing Library Archives

11 Mar: The 1874 Train Crash at Merthyr Station: Steve Brewer

## **PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH**

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

Pontypridd Museum, third Tuesday at 7 pm

21 January  
18 February  
18 March

## **SWANSEA BRANCH**

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

West Glamorgan Archives,,  
Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN, 2pm first Tuesday

7 Jan  
4 Feb  
4 March

Every month talk by one of the  
archives staff,  
then time to help people with their research.

## **ONLINE BRANCH (Ar Lein)**

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

See website for details

Berginners sessions will continue in the New Year

**For more information and to 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 social media [www.glamfhs.org.uk/events](http://www.glamfhs.org.uk/events)

### **Other Events:**

Saturday 8 February 10-4  
The Family History Show Online

Saturday 15 March 10-4  
The Family History Show Midlands  
Severn Hall, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

Saturday 29 March 10-4  
The Really Useful Show Live  
Kinson Community Centre, Bournemouth, BH10 7LH



## GFHS: ARC OPENING DATES

2<sup>ND</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup>

**TUESDAY OF THE MONTH:**

PLEASE CHECK IF IT'S A BANK HOLIDAY

10am - 2pm

### 2025 ARC OPENING DATES

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

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

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

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

MAY: 13<sup>TH</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

JUNE: 10<sup>TH</sup> & 24<sup>TH</sup>

JULY: 8<sup>TH</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>

AUGUST: 12<sup>TH</sup> & 26<sup>TH</sup>

SEPTEMBER: 9<sup>TH</sup> & 25<sup>TH</sup>

OCTOBER: 14<sup>TH</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>

NOVEMBER: 13<sup>TH</sup> & 27<sup>TH</sup>

DECEMBER: 9<sup>TH</sup> & **CLOSED 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**NADOLIG LLAWEN**

SATURDAY OPENING BY BRIDGEND BRANCH

10AM – 12MD: **To be confirmed**

Contact:

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

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



Bridgend Members'  
Day Out:  
The excursion to  
Llanelly House  
See Bridgend Branch  
Report.

Llanelly House: The dramatic slant of this Georgian window and landing show the effects of subsidence over the years.



If undelivered please return to  
Glamorgan Family History Society  
c/o 63 Clos Pwll Clai, Tondy, Bridgend, CF32 9BZ