



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



St Mary's Church, Caerau ©Glamorgan FHS

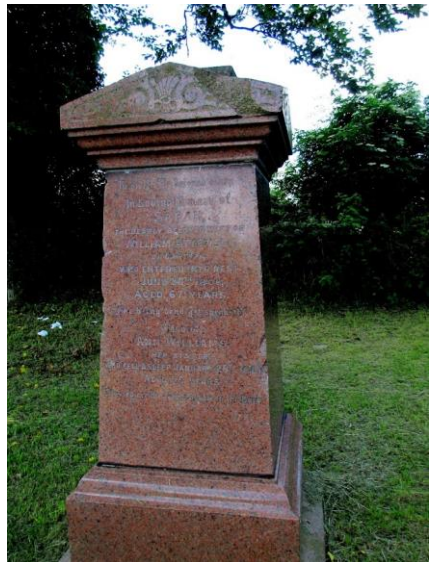
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Images of the interior and exterior of St Marys Caerau, taken early 20th century, can be viewed on the Peoples Collection Wales website. See also page 24 for full inscriptions

<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/>

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Society's Objectives

© Glamorgan Family History Society

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

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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 our Summer edition of the Journal, which I believe has something to interest everyone. We did not ask for any specific topic this time, and so have been rewarded by a range of stories and experiences covering many aspects of Glamorgan life through the years. Some useful tips are included too for the intrepid family historian.

We have Guy Bevan's second part of his ancestor Hugh's rise and rise through Bridgend society; an account of the transition between farming and coal for Porth, some reminiscences of the grittier side of life in the Valleys with the presence of the boxing booths, a mystery leading to a brick wall, and a man 'famous for fifteen minutes'. Together with an account of how essential DNA was in the confirmation of Lynda Newbury's family tree members, and some book reviews and helpful hints, you should be able to go into the garden, hopefully in the sunshine, with a glass of something cheery and have a GOOD READ.

For our next edition in September we would like some stories of Service life: those who joined the Forces, or whose forebearers did, their families and how they managed as they moved around, in fact all aspects, good or bad, at war or in peacetime, let us have your tales. Photographs are an added bonus!

We are already looking towards 2024, and find a few notable dates that may bring family stories to mind: the miners' strike started in March 1984, so it will be an anniversary of 40 years' standing and there will likely be media interest; the Eisteddfod will be held in South Wales next year (venue TBA in June, and you may know where by the time you receive this), so eisteddfod stories most welcome; we already have one waiting, so please send more.

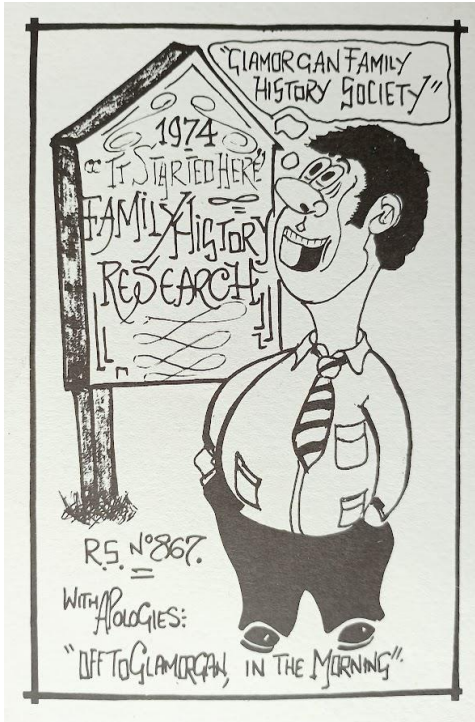
2024 also brings the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Glamorgan Family History Society, so if anyone has any recollections of those early days, do let us know. Anyone reading Clive Davies' article on his distant family will be reminded of those research days BEFORE the internet - hard to imagine it now!

As ever we welcome your comments and suggestions so if you have any other topic you'd like to introduce, please let us know. In the meantime, enjoy the Summer!

Hwyl Fawr!

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Looking forwards 2024 will be our 50th Anniversary and also when the National Eisteddfod/ Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru returns to Glamorgan with the location of Y Maes within Rhondda Cynon Taf (still to be decided at the time of writing). (Image: Glamorgan FHS Journal 42, June 1996).

Our Branches are planning events for the Summer months which include visits as well as face to face and online meetings so there should be something to interest everyone. Have a look at our website for more details where plans are not yet finalized for later in the Summer.

Our Pontypridd and Rhondda Branch are this year celebrating their 25th Anniversary, which has been delayed as a result of the

pandemic. They held their first meeting on 14 May 1996 in Pontypridd Library when twenty three members attended.

So as usual we are looking for volunteers to help out with a wide range of activities. Notices have been included as a reminder of the roles that need to be filled as regards Society administration and a job description for the position of Society Secretary is included on the next page together with that of Assistant Secretary. In the past we also had a Minutes Secretary who would record the EC and AGM Meetings. The skills needed to carry out Society administration have changed over the past 30 years and also, since the pandemic, with the organisation and administration of online meetings now needing to be part of certain volunteer roles. The Assistant Secretary role has therefore been revised to provide support for the Society Secretary and perform agreed activities. It is not envisaged that the role will involve deputizing for the Secretary nor to eventually succeeding to the Secretary's role. For further information on any of our vacancies please contact me on the email below.

Sue Hamer, Chairman, 1 May 2023
chairman@glamfhs.org.uk

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE POSTS OF SOCIETY SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY

1. Overview

The **Secretary** is one of the four Society Officers and a Trustee elected at the Annual General Meeting to serve for one year and a maximum of five consecutive years.

The **Assistant Secretary** is a non-elected role in support of the Society Secretary. The Assistant Secretary by agreement can undertake some of the Society's duties and responsibilities during the year and can cover for the Secretary eg during holidays.

2. Commitment:

Society Secretary: daily administrative check eg emails, four Executive committee (EC) meetings per year (via Zoom in January, April, July and October), Society General Meetings eg Annual General Meeting. The Society Secretary as a Society Officer and Trustee could also represent the Society at external meetings eg Association of Family History Society of Wales, Federation of Family History Society meetings.

3. Main Duties and Responsibilities

a. Acting as the first contact between the public and the Society via telephone, email and post. Replying to both internal and external queries either directly or by forwarding to an appropriate Society Officer, Committee Member, Branch or volunteer.

b. To ensure the smooth and efficient running of meetings, providing assistance and support to the Chair of the board of trustees. on the planning, setting, organising and administering of EC meetings and AGMs. Drafting the agendas and obtaining the supporting papers for these meetings.

b. To include setting up and administering a Zoom account to organise and administer the quarterly EC meetings and Society General Meetings.

c. Assisting the Chair of the Society and Treasurer in drafting and circulating the Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with the Constitution for agreement by the Executive Committee.

d. Filing and backing up of copies of Society documentation including Minutes of Trustee Meetings, contracts etc.

Assistant Secretary: approx one day per week dependant upon duties and responsibilities agreed with Society Secretary.

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

FAMOUS BUT ONLY FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES

#11028 John P Lethbridge

The pop artist Andy Warhol once said that everybody should be famous for fifteen minutes. Here I look at a man who was briefly famous before returning to obscurity.

Early Life: Gavin James Frederick GRAVELL was born on 8 September 1912 at 32 Water Street in Kidwelly. His parents were Theophilus Gravell a coalminer and Jenny Gravell nee THORBURN. The 1921 census shows Theophilus Gravell, thirty-one, an unemployed coal miner living at 32 Water Street, Kidwelly, with his wife Jenny, thirty-four, a housewife; their son Gavin eight, and their daughter Gwyneth Mary, five.

On 3 September 1932 Gavin Gravell, nineteen, a Kidwelly coalminer, married Martha Rhianydd Wilma EVANS, twenty three, the daughter of Philip EVANS, a colliery underground repairman. The marriage service was conducted at the Bridge Street Independent Chapel in Kidwelly.

The couple were to have a daughter Hoglah¹ Jean Gravell born on 10 August 1933 at Llanelly/Llanelli Hospital. The father is listed as a Kidwelly coal miner. The 1939 Register shows Gavin Gravell as a public works contractor's Clerk in Charge living with his wife in Kidwelly.

On 22 May 1954 Hoglah Jean Gravell, twenty, married Ernest Myrddin MORGAN twenty-four, a drainage contractor at the chapel where her parents married more than twenty years before. Ernest and Hoglah Morgan were to have at least two children.

The Moment of Fame: On Monday 21 April 1959 the *Western Mail* reported that:

Trip Got Me The Sack

The Western Mail Reporter wrote:

A Kidwelly councillor thinks he may have lost his job at Carmarthen Bay Power Station because he joined a council deputation to London to try to get the giant new RTB steel plant sited in West Wales. Mr Gavin Gravell, a member of Kidwelly Town Council for seven years, told me last night "I had been off work with flu for ten days before the deputation went to London".

When I restarted the following week the superintendent sent for me and said I was being sacked for losing so much work. The superintendent did not mention the deputation but a union official at the interview told me afterwards I

¹ Editor's footnote: The unusual name of Hoglah comes from the Old Testament, the Book of Numbers, chapters 26 v.33, 27 v.1, 36 v.11, and also in Joshua chapter 17 v.3. Hoglah was the third of five daughters born to Zelophehad the Gileadite.

was asking for trouble by going to London and getting my name in the papers”.

Mr Gravell, a fitter's mate in the mechanical maintenance department, received a week's notice on Friday.

“It is perfectly true I have lost a lot of time this winter because of illness” he said. “I have had two bouts of flu and altogether lost about six weeks work. I thought it my duty to go to London although far from fit”.

His suggestion: Mr Gravell was one of a deputation of five, headed by Lady Megan LLOYD GEORGE and the Mayor of Kidwelly (Alderman BJ HARRIES) which met the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade.

“I suggested the idea of a deputation to the council after Lady Megan had urged us to go all out for the new plant. At Westminster we were able to give first-hand information which may be invaluable when a government decision is being reached”. He added, “I have worked at the power station for five years and have never asked for any privileges in connection with the council's affairs”.

The Mayor of Kidwelly told me “The news of Mr Gravell's dismissal has come as a bombshell. He has worked very hard for the good of this area and was a most useful member of the deputation”.

Later Life: Gavin Gravell became a Social Security Inspector. He died on 3 August 1989, aged seventy-six, at Ferry Park Nursing Home in Ferryside.

Hoglah Jean Morgan nee Gravell died on 12 July 1995 aged sixty-one. Her husband Ernest Myrddin Morgan died at Kidwelly on 11 May 2002 aged seventy-two. His occupation was named on his death certificate as a building contractor.

The other delegates: According to the *Western Mail* report quoted above, the five-strong delegation to parliament of which Gravell was a member was led by Lady Megan Lloyd George MP, and included Alderman BJ HARRIES, the Mayor of Kidwelly.

Alderman BJ Harries, the Mayor of Kidwelly, was Benjamin Arthur Harries, a dairy farmer of Castle Farm Kidwelly. He was born in Kidwelly on 31 July 1905 the son of John and Mary Harries of Castle Farm. He died there on 23 December 1978 aged seventy-three.

Lady Megan Arfon Lloyd George MP who led the delegation was born on 23 April 1902, the youngest of the five children of David Lloyd George, the great Liberal leader who introduced old age pensions and led Britain to victory in the First World War. By 1959 she was the Labour MP for Carmarthen. She died in 1966 aged sixty-two. She never married and her title of Lady was because her father was made an earl in 1943.

Catrin SIMON of Carmarthen Library has told me that the fourth delegation member was Jeremiah *James* GRIFFITHS MP the Labour MP for Llanelli. He was born in 1890, the youngest of ten children of William Griffiths a blacksmith and Margaret Griffiths, a handloom weaver's daughter. He started working underground as a miner aged thirteen, became a union leader, and was Llanelli's Labour MP from a 1936 by election to 1970. He died in 1975 aged eighty- four.

I have been unable to find out who the fifth member of the delegation was. Iwan ap DAFYDD of the National Library of Wales checked the Lady Megan Lloyd George papers and could not find out either. Lady Megan Lloyd George had a very long and busy political life.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade who the delegation met, Frederick James ERROLL, was born on 27 May 1914 the only child of George Murison Erroll, an engineer, and Kathleen Donovan Erroll, nee EDINGTON. George Murison Erroll was Dutch and had changed his surname by deed poll from BERGMANS.

Frederick James Erroll was educated at Oundle, did a year as an engineering apprentice and then studied mechanical science at Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating in 1938. He began work for Metropolitan Vickers and served in the British Army in the Second World War as a technical adviser on tank construction, rising to be a colonel.

In 1945 Erroll was elected Conservative MP for Altrincham and Sale and by April 1958 was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. Aged thirty-one he was the baby of the house. He believed in the free market and free trade views which were then unfashionable. He was re-elected at the 1964 general election, but after a bout of pneumonia, stood down from parliament and was made the 1st Lord Erroll of Hale later in 1964. He died in 2000 aged eighty-six. He was married but childless and his title died with him.

A Vain Sacrifice: Lady Megan Lloyd George and James Griffiths fought hard for their constituents but many other areas wanted the RTB (Richard Thomas and Baldwin) steelworks. It was eventually opened at Llanwern near Newport. RTB had been nationalised in 1951. The Conservatives officially privatised the iron and steel industry in 1953 but private firms were reluctant to buy RTB and it was still publicly owned when in 1967 the Labour government re-nationalised the iron and steel industry, creating British Steel, which has since been privatised. RTB was publicly owned so the government decided where to put its new plant. The October 1945 Location of Industries Act gave the government the power to decide where new factories were sited even by private companies. Firms that wanted to open them in the South, the Home Counties or the Midlands were forced to open them in what were in the 1930s called the depressed areas.

THE MYSTERY OF JOHN YORATH

#20806 Simon Carter

Tracing back into my family history I came across the surname YORATH. This intrigued me, as growing up in Newport (Mon) in the 1950s there was the LLOYD & YORATH brewery in Cambrian Road almost next to our bus stop to get home. Was there a connection to the brewery perhaps?

The reference to Yorath came from a marriage (by banns) between William PHILLIPS and Elizabeth Yorath on 30 May 1819 at St John's, Cardiff. William was of the parish of Radir (Radyr) and Elizabeth of the parish of Cardiff (which I assume to be St John's). I do not have easy access to the original Parish Records, so cannot see if there is any useful additional information². William was a mason and the family are later recorded (1841) in Union Street, Cardiff. The 1851 census states that Elizabeth was born in Dinas Powis c1794/95.

At St Andrew's Major, Dinas Powis, there is a baptism for Elizabeth the daughter of John & Anne Yorath, baptised 23 April 1795. For this John Yorath, there is a marriage to Anne JOHN at St Andrew's Major on 11 May 1794. The marriage entry describes John Yorath as "of the Parish of Penarth". However, the Penarth St Augustine parish records (mainly from Bishop's Transcripts, as PRs appear not to have survived for this period) contain no Yorath references. Whether John Yorath himself was originally from St Andrew's Major is open to question: the baptismal records for St Andrew's Major are missing for the period 1757-71 as an entry in the register states: "*From 1757 to 1771 Mr POWEL, the Curate neglected to register*". Some subsequent entries may also be missing. BTs appear to have survived (from 1724), and seem to have the missing entries, but not in respect of any Yorath families.

Some of the couple's other children were also baptised at St Andrew's Major (twins Charlotte and Susannah both dying in infancy a few days apart just after birth in 1799). The family remained in St Andrew's Major parish until c1800 before moving to Cardiff where a daughter, Charlotte, was baptised at St John's in 1803. However, in 1807, a son, David, was born and his birth was noted in the registers of Bethany Baptist Chapel, St Mary St, Cardiff (see TNA RG4/3493). John and Anne are later listed in the 1841 Census in St John's parish, Cardiff; John then being described as a labourer. John died (of "decay of nature") in 1847 at Quay Street, Cardiff; Anne later lived in Spring Gardens (St John's parish) and was described as a "pauper" in the 1851 census. When she died in 1857 (aged 89) she was living in Edward Street,

² Editor: Original Parish Registers for St Johns, Cardiff are now available on Find My Past and Ancestry. The only further information are the names of two witnesses: Evan Lewis and George Kibbey. Both William and Elizabeth made their mark.

Canton and was recorded as the widow of John Yorath, Iron Wharf Labourer. No burial record for either John or Anne has been found.

So far, so good. But who was John Yorath?

Much has been produced by other researchers concerning the Yorath family of Glamorgan (complete with links to the brewers "*Lloyd & Yorath*" of Cambrian Road, Newport), but I am currently unable to link my John Yorath to these families. The main theories are:

- a. That John Yorath was tried on a charge of burglary at Glamorgan Assizes in 1811 and sentenced to death, later commuted to transportation to Australia. Records exist at TNA that track his movement from Glamorgan Assizes to a prison hulk at Woolwich (the "*Retribution*") and thence to Sydney, New South Wales on the convict transport "*Earl Spencer*", but I am unable to verify that this is our man: the John Yorath in question was much too young (he was said to be 18 in 1811) and the likelihood of returning from Australia after transportation to be enumerated in the 1841 census in Cardiff is extremely remote. To compound matters further there is a marriage (in Australia in Jan 1831) for the convict John Yorath (of the ship "*Earl Spencer*") to Bridget Coghlan (of the ship "*Elizabeth*"). This theory remains highly unlikely.
- b. That John Yorath belongs to a Yorath family in and around Llanfair Kilgeddin in Monmouthshire, but although some of this family (in particular Howell Yorath 1770-1818: see will NLW LL/1818/25) settled in or around Cardiff, no connection has been established.
- c. That John Yorath is a son of Llewellyn Yorath and his wife Jane EUSTANCE of Llansannor, Glamorgan. However, whilst a birth is possible around the period 1771-72, no such baptism is noted in the Llansannor parish registers whereas others of their children around the period were baptised there, and there is no mention of him in either parents' will; all other children of this couple being duly noted and neatly accounted for. Again this theory remains unlikely.
- d. That John Yorath is the son of a certain John Yorath and his wife Elizabeth YOUNG, but I have found no record of such a couple nor of any baptism. In turn, John Yorath senior is said to be the son of William Yorath and his wife Mary MORGAN, but again this has not been confirmed by any parish register entry. This theory has some merit in that William Yorath is probably the son of Llewellyn Yorath (1710-1762) of Llanharry, but such connections remain somewhat speculative at present.

This is something of a brick wall. Was he a "natural" son? If so, any baptism may be recorded under his mother's surname and be virtually impossible to find. Any suggestions would be very welcome.

HUGH BEVAN, BRIDGEND MERCHANT AND PHILANTHROPIST (1821-1898)

PART 2

#20252 Guy Bevan

The story of a boy from Merthyr Tydfil who made his way through life in the Victorian Age, earned his fortune in Bridgend and almost built a railway and dock on the River Ogmore. In part 1 we left Hugh and Louisa in Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, in 1861. It is now 1866 and they are in Bridgend.

A Bridgend Merchant

A few years later Hugh had stopped being a commercial traveller for Bretherton of Gloucester and set up his own provisions business in Caroline Street, Bridgend. The 1889 profile says “*In 1866 he came to Bridgend and took the Ewenny Shop in Caroline Street.*” From his years as a travelling salesman he probably knew the market in the area well.

In 1867 Hugh was in the papers again when on 19th April the Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette records Hugh accusing an errand boy in his employ of theft of some tobacco (the case failed because the packet found on the boy could not be precisely identified).

Two years later Hugh Bevan was increasing his profile in the Bridgend local community. The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette of 22nd May 1869 reports Hugh chairing a meeting of local shopkeepers in the schoolroom of Hope Chapel to discuss setting up a Wednesday half-holiday for the benefit of shop assistants. There were objections, with one trader insisting that the traders stay open until five o'clock instead of the proposal to close at three o'clock. In the end the meeting agreed to the half-holiday for the summer season albeit with “*a good amount of grumbling*” from some.

This is the first example which I have found of Hugh chairing a meeting, but taking responsibility is clearly in his DNA and he will continue to develop similar roles throughout his life.

The following year Hugh again chairs a meeting of traders. The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette of 8th October 1870 reports:

“Early Closing - A meeting was held on Monday evening to promote this desirable objective throughout the winter. Mr Hugh Bevan was voted to the chair. After some discussion it was agreed to close at three on Wednesday afternoons, during the winter months, as has been the practice throughout the summer.”

The 1871 census shows Hugh and his wife, Louisa, living in Nolton Street, Lower Coity, Bridgend. Hugh is shown as a grocer and local Wesleyan preacher. Living with them are five of Hugh's "shopmen", a female servant and Louisa's niece.

In the culmination of his campaign for early closing, Hugh is one of over 30 traders listed in The Central Glamorgan Gazette of 22nd March 1872 under the heading "Early Closing" agreeing that: "*We the undersigned TRADESMEN of Bridgend have resolved to CLOSE our respective Establishments at Three o'clock every Wednesday, from the first week in April to the last week of September 1872.*" The whole subject of shop hours was part of a wider national movement which started in the 1840s to control daily opening hours and restrict Sunday trading.

Hugh's campaigning zeal goes beyond early closing. In its edition dated 4th October 1872 the South Wales Daily News records that in Bridgend Town Hall Hugh Bevan was elected as Treasurer of the Western Temperance League, whose objective is the "*promulgation of total abstinence principles*" throughout South Wales, clearly something close to his heart. The Western Temperance League was founded in London in 1836 and spread throughout southern England and parts of South Wales.

Early in 1873 with his Bridgend business clearly doing well Hugh Bevan took over a 30-acre farmstead north of Bridgend called Tirisha. Its previous owner William WILLIAMS, a local land surveyor and member of the Bridgend and Cowbridge Board of Guardians, had died the previous year.

It seems that Tirisha was in a run-down state when Hugh initially took it on, but Hugh was keen to share the estate with the local community. The Central Glamorgan Gazette of 1st August 1873 headed "*Wesleyan School Treat*" Records that 150 children were ferried from Bridgend by a "*Special Train*" which carried them the short distance to Hugh and Louisa Bevan's nearby property at Tirisha for a day of fun and games.

The article says: "*Tirisha is a pleasant, well-sheltered spot, having a view of the Bristol Channel, but the lawn and avenue have been allowed to run wild for some time, and the place is altogether in a chaotic state. Mr Bevan is trying to put it in ship-shape order and will no doubt succeed. The trees in the orchard are well laden with rosy and mellow-looking fruit, and the children had a liberal supply served out to them in the evening.*"

Tirisha is also referred to in contemporary documents as Ty Risha and Tir-Isaf. Today the farmhouse is a pub called the Ty Risha Alehouse, (pictured on the following page) just south of junction 36 Sarn Services on the M4). What the teetotal Hugh would have thought of the licenced premises is anyone's guess.

It lies (as Hugh describes it in the 1889 newspaper profile) approximately two miles to the north of Bridgend and a few hundred metres east of what was then the Llynvi and Ogmere Railway line, sitting above the River Ogmere valley. Before modern developments Hugh's Ty Risha must have been a lovely spot, sitting on the hillside 100 feet above the river with its ancient stone bridge, and the nearby railway doesn't seem to have bothered him. Even today it is still quiet, hidden behind a large nearby retail park and the M4 motorway with its flyover roaring high above the leafy little Ogmere valley.

Although one should perhaps not get too carried away: Victorian St Brides parish was mainly a coal-mining district, and Hugh's description of the property comes from a time when he was considering selling up and moving out of the area.



Ty Risha – Photo: Guy Bevan - August 2020

Not everything goes Hugh's way however. In the 3rd October 1873 edition of the Central Glamorgan Gazette, a Mr COLLIER regrets that Hugh Bevan had not been elected to the Bridgend Board of Health: *"He carried on a gigantic trade in the town, and belonged to that class of people who he thought ought to be elected to represent the town..... people who are making a way for themselves also conferring benefit on the district where they lived."* But *"Gigantic trade"* tells us something about Hugh's trade. He is not a simple shopkeeper, but a wholesaler, selling provisions in bulk to the shopkeepers across South Wales and the valleys.

He also remains an active preacher. Among many examples, Hugh is recorded in the South Wales Daily News of 11th August 1874 preaching at the English Wesleyan Sunday School in Llantrisant, west of Bridgend.

From at least 1875 Hugh was one of the Guardians of the Bridgend and Cowbridge Union Workhouse. Following the 1834 New Poor Law Amendment Act, Government Commissioners were appointed to supervise Boards of Guardians made up of elected ratepayers and prominent local people with magistrates as ex-officio members. Various parishes were combined into Unions and a workhouse built for each Union.

Life in the workhouse was undoubtedly harsh, but it was all there was in those days before the welfare state and someone had to organise it. According to a book 'The Bridgend-Cowbridge Union Workhouse Guardians' "*The sexes had to be kept apart, even when married, as conjugal life was not allowed. Drunkenness had to be avoided. Work had to be found for inmates, and Vagrants had to do their quota in order to pay for their keep. The activities of children had to be organised and arrangements made for illness to be treated. Food had to be ordered, meals cooked and served, clothing attended to, and the building maintained in a reasonable state of repair.*"

The book records Hugh, an active member on a range of the Guardian's sub committees, including: January 1875 - management committee to consider school attendance; February 1875 - sub-committee to consider admitting "*harmless lunatics*" to the Workhouse due to overcrowding of the local asylum; March 1875 - sub-committee to consider establishing an industrial school.

By 1876 Hugh Bevan was also, after his previous failure, finally elected a member of the Bridgend Local Board of Health.

In the 1881 census Hugh and Louisa (aged 59 and 56 respectively) are shown living just north of Bridgend at "Tyrisha" in the parish of St Brides Minor, close to the village of Aberkenfig. Hugh is listed as a provision dealer.

Also in the 1881 census, Hugh's sister, Maria, was now living close by in Lower Coity, Bridgend, at number 16 Caroline Street, next door to the Castle Hotel (pictured right below). She is listed as "*Housekeeper Domestic*", aged 52, born in Merthyr and she is the senior person listed at the premises. Others listed there include a grocer's assistant and a grocer's apprentice, plus a female servant.

As the photo below shows, that building was immediately across the street from the location of Hugh's main shop in Bridgend on the junction of Caroline and Nolton Streets (Bevan & Lloyd, with the sign just visible above the arched door, pictured left below). It seems more than coincidence that Maria is living in Bridgend and is also housekeeper to two young grocery workers, but whether Hugh owned or leased 16 Caroline Street is not known.



Bevan and Lloyd's shop (see sign left-hand side) on the junction of Caroline and Nolton Streets in Bridgend in the 1880s. Daniel Lloyd, originally an employee, was Hugh's business partner from 1882 to 1890. (Picture Source: Trevor Bevan on Pinterest)

In its 29th April 1881 edition the South Wales Daily News notes that Hugh has been elected Chairman of the Bridgend Local Health Board. The Local Health Board had been founded thirty years earlier in 1851 following a report on poor sanitation in the town by one George Thomas CLARK. This highlighted the lack of basic sanitation, drainage and fresh water. The initial Board of Health included Mr RANDALL (a local solicitor who was the agent of Lord Dunraven) and its “members had to own £800 or be paying rates on a property with a rateable value of at least £20 per annum.”

From the start the Local Health Board met fortnightly and as most meetings are reported in the newspapers there are far more press articles recording Hugh's involvement on the Board than it is practical to quote in full.

Hugh is very clearly a dedicated committee man. The South Wales Echo dated 20th August 1881 shows Hugh chairing a meeting at the offices of the Merchants' Protection League in Cardiff to consider the creditors of a Mr W GROVE, Grocer of Maesteg, who has total liabilities of £2,316. A resolution of liquidation was passed.

Around this time, in the early 1880s, Hugh is reported to have contributed significant sums of money to Wesleyan causes, for example: “About five years ago the new Wesleyan Chapel, schoolroom and lecture hall was opened, and Mr Bevan has contributed..... not less than £1,100.....” (from the Bridgend Chronicle, Cowbridge, Llantrisant and Maesteg Advertiser of 24th December

1886.) The same article also records lesser donations by Hugh to chapels in “Porthcawl, Blackmill, Cefn, Tynewydd, Brycoch and other places”.

On 16th November 1882 the Western Mail records Hugh presiding at a meeting held in Bridgend Town Hall (“with a large attendance, including the Earl of Dunraven”) which aimed to promote locating a new University College for South Wales in Bridgend (Bridgend lost out to Cardiff, where the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire was founded in 1883).

In about 1882 Hugh took on a business partner. The newspaper 1889 profile says: “About seven years ago Mr Bevan took into partnership Mr LLOYD, who had served him faithfully as a manager for a considerable period, and the firm of Bevan and Lloyd is now one of the most important in the whole of the district.” “Mr Lloyd” was Daniel Herbert Lloyd.

The following year was to see Hugh’s efforts to promote the formation of the Ogmere Dock and Llynfi Railway - to be related in Part 3 in the next edition of the Journal.

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THOSE POOR BASTARDS

#1801 Clive Davies

My ancestors rarely rated a mention on the paternal side of my family. Their conversation was dominated by freemasonry and church matters. Some thirty years ago I became curious and I began asking more venerable family members for recollections of their Davies antecedents.

My father was of some help. He knew his own father's place and date of birth and that his grandfather was James Rees DAVIES, a colliery checkweigher, who was killed underground. Where that occurred, he was unsure, but probably in the Rhondda Valley but was hazy beyond that. This grandfather was also partial to a drink or three, once exchanging the family's Christmas goose for a barrel of beer. Of his grandmother, he knew not a jot. An elderly aunt was even less forthcoming:

"I think James Rees Davies, had a sister, Emma. Or perhaps it was his daughter. She had a turn in her eye. She had a son called Henry who had a turn too but they were both nice. My mother said never to ask about the Davieses. I think there was something funny there".

I telephoned two years later with an ancestral illegitimacy to be silenced with: *"I'm eighty four now. I always thought highly of my mother and I will go to my grave thinking that way. Good Night and God Bless."*

Never one to surrender to eighty-four year-olds when they are twelve thousand miles distant, I delved deeper.

My grandfather's birth certificate, courtesy of the Superintendent Registrar, Pontypridd, showed: *James Evan Davies* born at *Llwynypia, Rhondda* on *October 5th 1873*, Father: *James Rees Davies - Coal Weigher*, Mother: *Jane, formerly Jenkins*.

I located their marriage on the St Catherine's Indexes and the subsequent certificate showed them to be married in Caerau. The then hamlet of some 200 souls has now been swallowed by the western suburbs of Cardiff. The bride, Jane JENKINS, 23, was a resident of Sweldon, a farm in the Caerau parish and James Rees Davies, 23, was a labourer in a colliery and residing in Llwynypia (Rhondda). Her father was Evan Jenkins, a mason, his father James REES, farmer. Rees! Were these the murky waters into which Aunt Lill feared to venture?

Off went a letter to the National Library of Wales requesting details of the James Rees Davies family on the 1881 Census and anything else they could unearth. The NLW located the family at 31 Dinas Road, Dinas, Rhondda:

James R Davies, Head Mar, 32, Coal Miner, Glam, Llandaff
Jane Davies, Wife, 35, Glam, Eglwys Heilan Parish (Eglwysilan)
Children: James E, 7, Mary J, 3, & Maud Davies 1 month.
All born Ystradyfodwg
Henry Davies, Brother, Unm, 22, Coal Miner, Glam, Llandaff

Also enclosed was a report from ‘*The Chronicle for South and Mid-Glamorgan*’ on the inquest into the death of James Rees Davies at the Great Western Colliery, Abergwynfi in April, 1898. He was killed instantly when a tram coupling snapped and he was struck on the head. They had also checked for the baptism of a James (Rees) Davies in the Bishop’s Transcripts (BTs) of Llandaff and his birth in the St Catherine’s Indexes for Cardiff Registration District between January 1848 and March 1850 without success.

I mulled over this impasse for some time before a further perusal of the International Genealogical Index (IGI) collated by the Mormon Church. Lo and behold, a James DAVID baptised on 15 July 1849 at St John and Mary, Cardiff with mother, Mary David. A Mary David was also given as the mother of Henry baptised at the same church in 1858. In the local Mormon Church office I was able to view the microfilm of the BTs of St John and Mary. This revealed that Mary was not only an inmate of the Cardiff Union Workhouse, but that James and Henry were not her only offspring:

Baptised 17/3/1844 - Mary Ann, dau of Mary Davies, Union Workhouse*
 “ 25/7/1847 - Mary Anne “ “ “ “ “
 “ 15/7/1849 - James, son “ “ David “ “
 “ 29/1/1854 - Henry*, son “ “ “ “ “
 “ 1/8/1858 - Henry, son “ “ “ “ “

* *Died in infancy.*

Through the Glamorgan Archive Service I was able to obtain the workhouse records and from the Cardiff Registry the birth certificates for both James and Henry David/Davies. James was born on 15 May 1849 with place of birth given as *Union Workhouse, Bonvilston*, Mother - *Mary David*, Informant - *Mary Davies, occupier Union Workhouse, Cardiff* and signed with a mark. Henry’s certificate was similarly transcribed except the surname for both informant and mother was given as David. I subsequently discovered that many a David surname changed to Davies during this period. There was also no workhouse in Bonvilston and his birthplace was almost certainly in Cardiff where the workhouse covering the Bonvilston parish was located.

The Cardiff workhouse records showed that Mary together with one or two children had been inmates at Cardiff from 1851 to 1865 absenting herself for periods in 1852-1853 and 1857-1858 prior to the birth of the two Henrys. She had graduated to the Ely Industrial School during the last seventeen months of her sojourn.

The Census of 1851 shows Mary and son, James, at Cardiff Workhouse:

<i>Mary David</i>	<i>Pauper Unm. 23</i>	<i>Domestic Servant</i>	<i>b. Glam Bonvilston</i>
<i>James David</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>b. W.H.</i>

The 1861 Census of the Cardiff Workhouse:

<i>Mary David</i>	<i>Pauper Unm. 33</i>	<i>Domestic Servant</i>	<i>b. Glam Bonvilston</i>
<i>Henry David</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>b. W.H.</i>

The 12 year old James was found on this Census working as a general servant on a 185 acre farm at Bonvilston, the mother's home village eight miles west of Cardiff. His place of birth was given as Cardiff Union and he was one of six employees of Thomas JONES. His older sister, Mary Ann, was also found with a Bonvilston family a decade earlier. Children would be less a charge on the Bonvilston parish if their upkeep could be offset by putting them to work.

1851 Census - Sutton Road, Bonvilston:

<i>William Griffiths</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar 33</i>	<i>Ag Labourer</i>	<i>b Glam, Llantrithyd</i>
<i>Sarah</i>	<i>" Wife</i>	<i>" 30</i>	<i>" "</i>	<i>b " Bonvilston</i>
<i>Daniel</i>	<i>" Son</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>" "</i>
<i>Mary</i>	<i>" Dau</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>" "</i>
<i>Llewellyn</i>	<i>" Son</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>" "</i>
<i>MaryAnn David</i>	<i>Bastard</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Pauper (Nursing/Bastard)</i>	<i>b. Cardiff W/H</i>

In the 1871 Census we find most of the family, finally free of the workhouse, at Michaelston-super-Ely, now enveloped by Cardiff, at the Cottage by Dusty Forge, Michaelston:

<i>James Davies</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Unmar</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Ag Lab</i>	<i>b Glam, Cardiff</i>
<i>Henry</i>	<i>" Brother</i>		<i>13</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>" "</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>" Nephew</i>		<i>1</i>		<i>" "</i>
<i>Mary Reed</i>	<i>Mother</i>		<i>49</i>	<i>Washerwomen</i>	<i>" Bonvilston</i>

The infant, James, had been born at Cardiff Workhouse on 4 August 1869, the illegitimate son of Mary Ann Davies, the bastard on the 1851 Bonvilston census (above). No trace of Mary Ann can be found in the 1871 census but on the 1881 census a *Mary Davies, unmarried, 32, Washerwoman, b Cardiff* was found as an inmate of the large St Georges Hanover Workhouse in London.

It was now time to turn to the baptismal records of the parish of Bonvilston and hopefully winkle out the beginnings of Mary David.

16 October 1825, Mary Ann David d/o Richard David of Penmark and Mary JOHN of Bonvilston.

In the 1841 Census Mary David, 15, was to be found working as a female servant at the Traherne Arms, St George 2.9 miles from Bonvilston. This was less than three years before the birth of her first child at Cardiff Workhouse. A tavern was no place for a vulnerable girl.

James Rees, farmer, had been declared as the father of my great-grandfather James Rees Davies on his 1872 marriage certificate. That very same James Rees was found on 1871 Census at Ty Ucha Farm, The Drope, St George barely a mile from the Traherne Arms. He was born in 1821, the son of Morgan Rees, a St George farmer and publican. My own father recalled being taken through St. George as a youngster and being told by his father that the family had a connection with the 'Green Down Inn'. James Rees left the leasehold of that inn to his wife, Ann, in his 1893 will.

Mary's father, Richard David of Penmark, was a lusty lad for he had issue from at least three liaisons. In 1833 a daughter was born at Penmark to Richard David and Charlotte IVANS/EVANS. By the time of the 1841 Census he had fathered a further three children to Jane, surname unknown. No trace of any marriage for him has been found. The 1851 Census finds Richard David as a widower, 48, farm labourer, visiting a Mary David, widow, 70, at Penmark. Richard died in the Cardiff workhouse in 1852 but was buried in Penmark.

For some time I thought Mary David's surname of REED on the 1871 Census was a misspelling of Rees but this was resolved with the discovery of a Robert Reed, 70, blacksmith, living at an Ely lodgings close to her Dusty Forge cottage and Mary was described on her death certificate as the widow of same. She had married this elderly widower in Cardiff in 1866. Robert Reed died in 1880 aged 83 and with the departure of her two sons to work in the Rhondda coal mines she was left to bring up her grandson, James.

In 1881 Census they were at 10 Cowbridge Road, Caerau:
William Caswell, Head, 35, b Grindon, Here. plus wife and six sons
Mary Reed, Lodger, 56, Domestic Servant, b Glam. Bonvilston
James Davies " 11, Scholar, b Canton

1891 Census of Saintwell, Caerau:
Mary Reed, Head, Widow, 69, Laundress, b Glam Bonvilston
James Davies, Grandson, 22, Quarryman, b Llandaff

After a hard and troubled life, Mary's end was not a peaceful one, as the newspaper report in the '*Western Mail*' published at Cardiff on October 4th 1892 testifies:

FATAL ACCIDENT AT SAINTWELL

The sad death of Mrs Reed, one of the oldest inhabitants of Caerau at Saintwell has created a painful sensation. Last week the deceased was drawing from a well when the handle escaped from her grasp and struck her on the right arm causing injuries from which she died. She was 71 years of age and much respected, a collection is now being made to defray funeral expenses. On Monday, Mr ER Reece held an inquest at the Caerau Arms and a verdict of accidental death was returned. The jury, however, was of the opinion that a pump should be substituted for a well.

Miss Jenner attended at the request of several of the neighbours.

In the 1881 Census a Miss Gertrude Jenner*, aged 46, and assuredly the lady mentioned above, was resident in the adjacent village of Wenvoe. A lady of some means, whose kin occupied Wenvoe Castle, she gave her occupation in that Census as: *'An Honest Woman'*.

Mary's grave lies in Caerau Parish churchyard. The badly flaked headstone reads:

*.... Remembrance of Mary Reed of this Parish who diedber 1st
1892....years.*

The rest has crumbled away.

With an excess of base-born forebears uncovered, perhaps Aunt Lill was wise to leave her memories unsullied by those *'funny'* Davieses.

**Gertrude Jenner was the well-known suffragist, philanthropist, supporter of the underdog, and scourge of the ruling classes, and has been featured in the GFHS Journal in 2021.*

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

MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS CAERAU CHURCHYARD

As can be seen from the photograph on the front cover and below St Marys, Caerau is now a ruin. A few headstones survive, four of which are shown on the inside front cover.

The Church is situated within the enclosure of a hill fort from whence the place gets its name. The rural aspect of the parish at the beginning of the 20th century has now been completely swallowed up by urban development, first from the building of housing estates which spread outwards from Ely, together with the large retail development that is now Culverhouse Cross. The railway which bypassed the parish connecting the mines in the Rhondda Valley to the docks at Barry was later replaced by the link road to the M4 motorway. The tower of the ruined church can be spotted when driving past on the A4232 link road from the M4 to Cardiff Bay just past the junction for Culverhouse Cross.

The memorial inscriptions in the graveyard were recorded by Society volunteers in 1982 when it was possible to record 61 inscriptions. The comment was made at the time:

“The Church is severely damaged and almost beyond repair. The graveyard is very badly overgrown with brambles and nettles; many of the graves have been vandalized, the headstones damaged or lead lettering removed and some broken into.....”



© Sue Hamer 2013

The inscriptions recorded in 1982 are available as a booklet to purchase via Genfair. The booklet also contains the inscriptions at St Michaelston super Ely. www.genfair.co.uk

A searchable index to our Memorial Inscriptions is also available on our website and on Find My Past.

Images inside front cover - Top Left to Right:
Small granite headstone – some lead lettering damaged or missing:

In Loving Memory of/
Our dear father and mother/
John MURRAY/
Died 27th May 1919, Aged 47/
Also of his wife/
Bridget/
Died 3rd June 1957, Aged 85/
RIP/
Gone not forgotten

Large headstone weathered in places
In Affectionate Memory of/
Catherine/
The Beloved Wife of Richard EVANS/
Who departed this life June 15 1874/
Aged 56 years/
I was long with pain oppressed/that wore my strength away/
It made me long for endless rest/
Which never can decay/
You see dear husband my days are past/
So long to you my love did last
I pray you now no sorrow take
I hope in Paradise to wake/
Also of/
Noah EVANS/
Son of the above died May 16 1865/
Aged 15 years/
In Affectionate Remembrance of/
Richard EVANS/ Who died Nov 1st 1891/
Aged 71 years
Oh not lost but gone before/Let them never be forgot/
Sweet their memory to the lonely/
In our hearts they perish not/
Their End Was Peace

Bottom left to right:
Memorial Cross missing also some lead lettering
In Ever Loving Memory of/
David Lewis MARSDEN/
Priest/
Vicar of Caerau with Ely 1911-1933/
Aged 66/
He liveth with God the Perfect Life/
Also of his wife Christina Margaret/
Died 8th March 1956

Large red granite monument:
He giveth his beloved sleep/
In Loving Memory of/
Sarah/
The dearly beloved wife of/
William ATTEWELL/
of Cardiff/
Who entered unto rest/
June 20th 1896 Aged 67 years/
She being dead yet speaketh/
Also of/ Ann WILLIAMS/Her sister/
Who fell asleep January 26th 1881/
Aged 56 years/
Blessed are they that die in the Lord.

Executive Committee Vacancies

We currently have vacancies for the following to serve on our
Executive Committee for 2023/2024:

Society Treasurer
Vice Chairman
One Executive Committee Member/Trustee

From March 2024 we will also have vacancies for:
Chairman
Secretary

For further information contact: chairman@glamfhs.org.uk

THE FAMILY OF EDWARD AND ELIZABETH WATKINS

#4627 Lynda Newbury

My 2x Great-Grandmother, Gwenllian WATKINS, was born in 1839, one of 11 children of David and Gwenllian Watkins of the Adare Inn, Clydach, Rhondda. Edward was her younger brother born in 1849 and my interest in researching his family was that Gwenllian and Edward were obviously very close. When Edward married Elizabeth DAVIES at Ystradyfodwg Parish Church on 3 April 1869 Gwenllian was a witness and when Gwenllian was dying in August 1883 it was Edward who was with her and he was the informant on her Death Certificate.

I had census returns for Edward in his family, age 2 years in 1851, and aged 12 in 1861, but I could find no further record of him. Using the National Library on-line newspapers I found a record of Edward's death in the Pen-y-graig Colliery Disaster January 1884. Edward as an Overseer had gone into the mine to rescue survivors and had been overcome by gas. The newspaper reports speak of him being held in high regard and he was affectionately known as Ned Adare Inn. The reports refer to him as having gone to the USA after a previous Colliery disaster, and having only returned to Wales about 18 months before his death.

I found an immigration record of an Edwd Watkins age 20, and Elizth Watkins age 20, into Castle Garden/Ellis Island New York on 21 April 1869 along with probably Edward's brother Will Watkins age 20, possibly they were twins? Travel time across the Atlantic at this time was about 10 days, so if they had left for Liverpool immediately after their marriage on 3 April it was possible that this was them entering New York on 21 April. They were then found on the 1870 US census in Hazeltown, Lucerne, Pennsylvania.

Edward's funeral report records him as having 7 children, the eldest about 12 years, but no names of any are mentioned. Before more recent research in the USA, I had found the births of 2 sons, David George born 1877, named after his 2 Grandfathers, and William born 1878, both born in Wales. William was found on the 1891 census at the Colliers Arms, Cymmer with an Aunt Martha, the widow of Richard Watkins, a brother of Gwenllian and Edward. Richard was mentioned in newspaper reports at the time of Edward's death. William, age 12 years, is shown as William RS Watkins. Shown as a Nephew, his full name is recorded as William Richard Spencer Watkins. Spencer is Martha's maiden name. They were added presumably in recognition of having taken William into their home. William trained as a Surgeon at Edinburgh University in the Medical Faculty, he married and had 2 sons and a daughter. I am a DNA match to the daughter's family.

Aunt Martha died in William's home in Eccles, Lancashire. We knew from these 2 sons' births that Edward and Elizabeth returned to Wales sometime before 1877.

I had found nothing more in the UK for any remaining family but had always thought that some may have returned to the USA. That brings me to my more recent research. A Watkins family DNA match on Ancestry had a tree online that I thought was incorrect. She was a descendant of an Alice M Watkins. Alice had married a Joseph NICOL, and in her Gallery she had a copy of a newspaper clipping of their marriage. It read "Joseph Nicol son of Mr & Mrs Andrew Nicol of River Street and Miss Alice Watkins daughter of Mrs Watkins of South Wyoming Street were married 28 Dec 1898. Miss Gwen Watkins, sister of the bride, attended as bridesmaid." The marriage was in Carbondale, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania. Alice and Gwen(Ilian) are both names used by multiple generations of my family so my instinct was that I had to research this more.

I searched the 1900 US census for an Elizabeth Watkins in South Wyoming Street but what I found was a Mrs Elizabeth GRIFFITHS with 3 younger children, surnamed Griffiths and 3 older children, surnamed Watkins in Wyoming Street, Carbondale, Lackawanna Pennsylvania - The Watkins children were Elizabeth born 1874, David born 1877 (the David George I had already found) and Anna born 1882. Another of my DNA matches on Ancestry had an Anna Watkins on their tree so had I found Edward's children? The younger Griffiths children were Sarah born 1887, Garfield born 1890 and Lillian born 1894. On the census return Elizabeth states that she had a total of 14 children, 10 of which were still alive. The eldest of the Griffiths children, Sarah, was born in Wales in 1887 so I went back to UK records to look for a marriage for Elizabeth. I have not found one.

In the 1910 US census Elizabeth is still with David Watkins and Sarah, Margaret, Garfield and Lillian Griffiths and a Grandson, David WILLS, almost 2 years old. Later research shows that David Wills' Mother, Elizabeth A Wills, nee Watkins, Edward & Elizabeth's daughter, had died a year earlier.

In the 1920 census Elizabeth now 69 years old is with her daughter, Anna, who is married to Thomas H MORCOM and they are in Rochester New York together with Elizabeth's youngest daughter, Lillian Griffiths.

A newspaper report in the Carbondale Leader Pennsylvania, dated 23 February 1923, reports that Mrs Elizabeth Griffiths died in Rochester following a Stroke Elizabeth is survived by 3 daughters, Mrs Louis D DAVIS, Mrs Joseph Nicol and Mrs Thomas Morcom. I knew that Mrs Nicol was Alice and Mrs Morcom was Anna and the 1920 Pennsylvania US census gave me Mrs Davis as Gwen.

I had not found Edward on any UK or a US census return after 1870 so went back to look at immigration and passenger lists. I found another 2 Castle Garden (New York) records. In 1880 for Edwd Watkins, age 32 years, his wife Elizth, aged 31, and children Gwendoline, aged 8, Elizth, aged 6, David, aged 4 and Alice, an infant. Then in 1888 the immigration of Gwen Watkins aged 16, Alice, aged 8, Anna M, aged 6 and Thomas E, aged 4. From all these records I had found 11 children: Gwen 1872, Elizabeth A 1873, David George 1877,

William RS 1878, Alice M 1880, Anna 1881, Thomas Edward 1883, the 7 Watkins children as per Edward's funeral report, and Sarah 1887, Margaret 1889, Garfield 1890 and Lillian 1895, these with the Griffiths surname.

I have 5 DNA matches to this family and all are cross checked through shared matches, 1 to William's descendants, 1 to Anna's descendants and 3 to Alice's descendants. Without those DNA matches and the newspaper reports to confirm the census and immigration records in the USA I would never have been able to research the story of Edward Watkins, brother of my 2x Great-Grandmother, of the family's many journeys across the Atlantic, and of his wife Elizabeth and tell their descendants of his tragic death whilst heroically going in rescue the men in the Pen-y-Graig Mining Disaster, January 1884

Volunteers Needed

To help with a range of Society Administration and Projects.

If you are interested in finding out more about our projects or helping to run the Society please contact the following direct.

Membership: membership@glamfhs.org.uk

Finance: finance@glamfhs.org.uk

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

Website: website@glamfhs.org.uk

Projects: projects@glamfhs.org.uk

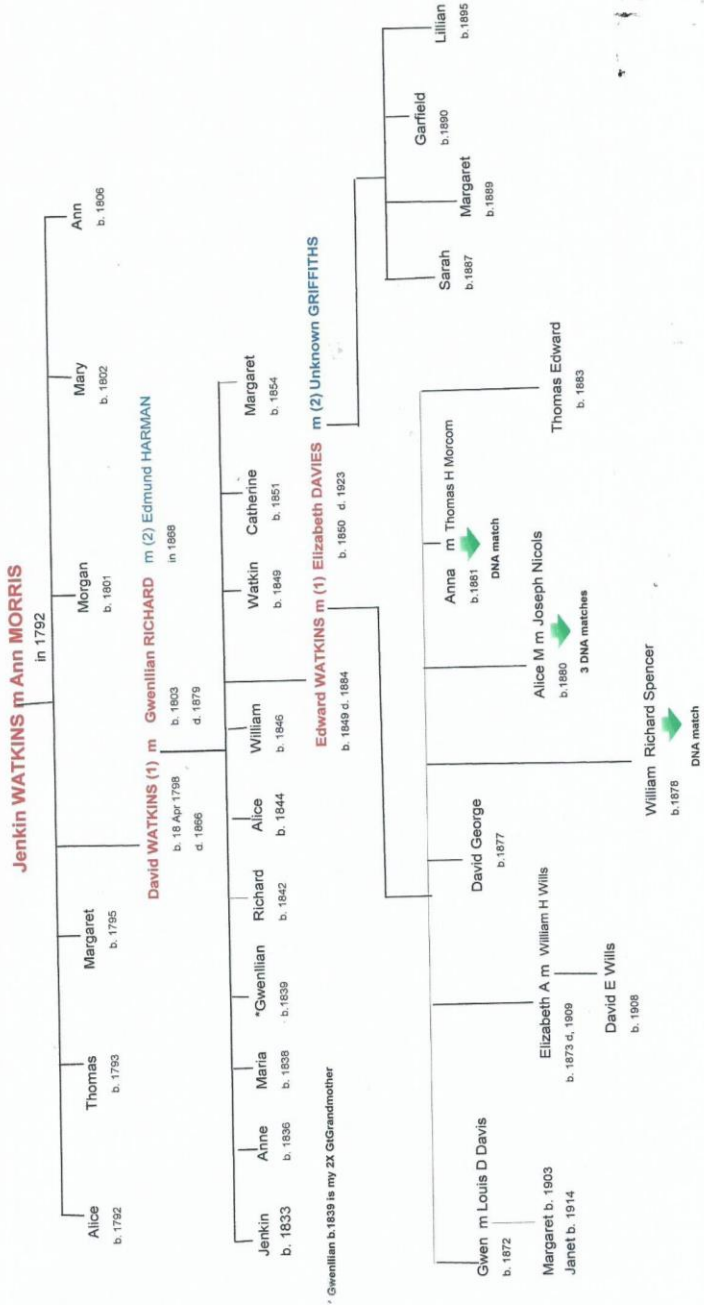
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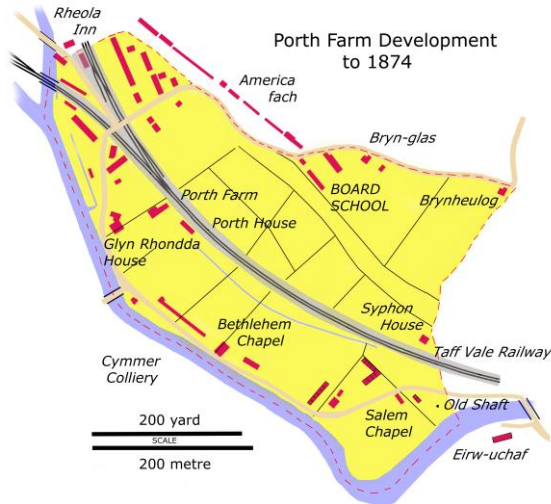
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Your Society NEEDS You!

The Edward Watkins Family Tree



PORTH – FROM FARM to COAL:
AROUND a RHONDDA TOWN
#20670 David Robinson



Author's own sketch

Prior to the early 1840s the Rhondda Valley was revered by visitors for its unspoilt beauty and wildlife, its tiny population living hard lives on scattered farms with little in the way of schooling or medical provision. The land was partitioned by the tumbling and quickly flooding Rhondda rivers, and most crossing places were fords. Communication was difficult. Religion, particularly the Nonconformism espoused by Henry DAVIES and his successors, was an important influence.

Porth Farm occupied 40 acres on the northern river bank just below where the two Rhondda rivers meet. The land rose steeply a little way from the river, crossing the 300 feet contour to reach 500 feet above sea level at the highest corner. It was mostly arable (9 of its 13 enclosures, 56 per cent of its area), with some meadow and pasture (27 per cent and 8 per cent respectively) and some woodland (8 per cent). Most people in the Rhondda Valleys in the early nineteenth century were isolated within a greater Britain by terrain, by education, by language and by religion. In 1842 the people on Porth Farm lived in a rural wilderness, not yet ravaged by the industrial revolution. A boy who in 1851 arrived on the farm to find work wrote in 1903 that the number of houses on the farm then did not exceed a dozen, that all the Porth farm between the River and the North Road from the North Road Bridge up to Rheola Hotel were green fields, and that standing on Cymmer Hill exceedingly pretty scenery was to be seen by looking across the Porth fields to the east. It was, he wrote, "a picture of beauty not often seen nor easily forgotten". (Porthorion, 'Porth Fifty Years Ago', Rhondda Leader, 7 February 1903).

In late 1841 Porth was being farmed by 28 year-old Jane WILLIAMS after the death of her husband earlier that year. She had five children to look after, all under ten: Evan, Levi, Idris, Hannah and Thomas. Her elderly father, Thomas JONES, who owned the farm, lived with them. She was described as 'a most charming woman, exceedingly handsome in appearance, and of commanding presence, large-hearted, of broad views and strong mental powers.' There must have been a lot of work for Jane and her children and her ageing father. With some ploughing and sowing, wheat, oats and barley could be grown. A couple of oxen may have been put to the plough. Cows would require daily milking. Hundreds of sheep were probably kept on the hills.

The Williams family adapted slowly to the rush to mine coal in the Rhondda. The mines and railways were as chicken and egg: neither willing to venture far where the other was not. After David JAMES sank a pit in one corner of their farm, and more mines were opened, the Taff Vale Railway came in 1849, the tracks separating on the farm's northern field, Cae Bont, to access the two valleys, and the rail line split the farm in two. Nevertheless the family continued to grow crops and raise animals for many years, until hundreds of sheep, cows and pigs were sold by auction in 1866 and 1867.

The prospect of being given money for the coal under the land must have appealed, particularly if it did not adversely affect the farm; coal money was an unexpected windfall and was used to educate the children – Idris was able to leave the pit where he had worked since he was nine and spend two years at school in Cardiff and Levi's son, Edward, trained as a solicitor, for example - to build houses for themselves, and enable two chapels and a school to be built on the farm. The lives of Jane's children and grandchildren are documented, though only one grandchild spent his whole life in Porth.

Farmers can take many harvests from the same field, but a coal field yields just once, and it is then exhausted. Mining communities, unlike farms, have a limited life and in many parts of the world ghost towns mark where ore was once mined. Collieries are not built for posterity. In Victorian times alternative energy sources were not available, and pollution was acceptable, just as the evident despoliation of the beautiful Rhondda was acceptable.

The farm had been put in trust for Jane Williams's children 'until all the beneficiaries were of age'. From the 1870s many streets of leasehold houses were built on the farm with the estate holding the freehold. Papers kept by Phyllis May MORRIS, a daughter of Hannah May Williams and granddaughter of Levi Williams, retained information about the estate and the town, the value and income of the estate, how the income was apportioned amongst the descendants, and why and how it was finally wound up, an example of a family trust which owned the freehold of a town development.

The river is a portkey to the past. The wide stony section below the old THOMAS and EVANS' factory, well seen from the bridge which carries the Pontypridd road into the town, recalls the Eirw ford, the southern route into the

farm before the bridge was built. Here one may remember Henry DAVIES (born about 1696) who built the oldest chapel in the Rhondda, Capel y Cymmer, and fathered generations of doctors. He lived beside the river at Eirw Uchaf.



Photograph taken by the author.

Downstream the rocks, which narrowed the river to form Berw Rhondda, a scene that delighted Henry GASTINEAU* in 1830 also remain, almost hidden under the bridge to the Sidings Country Park. These carry memories too, being the same rocks from which sea captain MANBY cast his fishing line with precision in 1802, a few years before developing his apparatus to save lives by projecting a line to ships in distress. In summers in the 1950s teenage boys and girls from Porth met there, sliding from what were to them the 'Pink Rocks' into the water for the river to shoot them through the narrow gap. Local people are restocking the Rhondda with trout and salmon and the sentinel heron seen there in 2021 (shown above) is witness to their success.

**Henry Gastineau, 1791-1876, Huguenot watercolourist painter living in London who took the Welsh landscapes for many of his works. For more of his work, see Wales Illustrated, in a Series of Views Comprising the Picturesque Scenery, Towns, Castles, Seats of the Nobility and Gentry, Antiquities etc, engraved on Steel from Original Drawings, London (Jones & Co) 1830, reprinted in 1976 by EP Publishing, Wakefield.*

Editor's Note: David Robinson has written a book about Porth which develops the themes he has introduced in this article. The book will be published later this summer and will be reviewed in due course (see Book Review section).

BOXING IN BOOTHS AND ON MOUNTAINTOPS

#1801 Clive Davies

My grandfather, James (Jim) Evan DAVIES 1873-1942, from Trealaw, Rhondda had a reputation as a good boxer. His fighting weight was 10st 6lbs and he performed well at local fair-booths and at a mountaintop camp near Aberystwyth when in 'The Volunteers', the military reserve. His interest in boxing was maintained all his life. He was an avid fan of Rhondda's Tommy FARR throughout his career, even travelling to New York for his fight for the World Heavyweight title in 1937 against the formidable Joe LOUIS. James and every Welshmen were convinced Farr had outpointed Louis.

The following anecdotes from the well-known boxing booth showman, Jack SCARROTT (1863-1947), were published in the 'South Wales Echo' in early 1936:

Mountain fighters! That's what they called the miners who used to fight bare-knuckles on the mountain. To tell the truth, mister, we booth boxers were afraid of them. They used to come to the fairgrounds from the collieries with their gangs with them, most of them half drunk, and the very sight of them was enough to freeze the heart out of a bull terrier. Broken noses, black eyes, cauliflower ears, lumps knocked off 'em. If they heard there was a well-known champion at a fair they'd walk fifty miles to have a go at him.

You might not believe it, but the roughest place in the valleys in those days was Ferndale. Treorchy, Tonypandy and Bargoed were almost as bad. I remember a riot booth in Ferndale 48 or 47 years ago. It was only over the shilling which somebody put in the cap when we made a collection for an old mountain fighter which somebody else took out, but before you could say Jack Robinson everybody was fighting through and through and my whole booth was on the floor. Men were hitting each other not knowing who they were hitting and why.

There is an art in being a showman and sometimes we put some pretty smart fakes across the public. I'll tell you how I put on my booth an enormous negro as "The Wild Man" and a little chap from Maesycymmer that I painted yellow as "The Japanese Strangler."

I met this negro when my caravan was on the way from Tonyrefail to Gilfach Goch. The road was bad and I got him to help the horses to pull the caravan along. He couldn't understand a word of English and couldn't make me understand what his name was or where he came from, but I think he'd come on a boat from somewhere to Cardiff and lost the boat.

At Gilfach Goch I put him behind the booth to keep the boys from coming under the canvas, and he was big and ugly enough to scare away a troop of

monkeys, let alone boys. We kept him with us for a few days, and then I saw he was having a good look at the scraps on the booth. One day I made him understand that I'd like to see him try a bit of boxing and I put the gloves on him. He didn't know a boxing glove from a turnip, but he was tremendously strong and dangerous, and I said, "You're the man for the job." I said to the missus, "This man is a champion. He can beat all the Welshmen that come along." She said, "Get rid of him before he murders us in our beds or gets us killed by the crowd on account of him." I said, "Woman, there's a fortune in him."

It was at Pontycymmer I showed him first and I told the crowd he was called 'Dangerous Jack'. We don't let him wander round the streets. When his turn is over he's put behind bars like he was a lion in a menagerie. Like a lion or tiger he won't eat civilized food. Raw meat is the only food he'll eat, and he prefers horseflesh.

But these mountain fighters weren't easily scared, and in a good many places we showed they took him on. They did their best to put him down, but he kept hitting and slashing away at them in a style of his own, and he put six so-called champions out in one week.

I had Dangerous Jack for about a year, and then he found a ship and went back to his own country.

On the road between Crumlin and Pontypridd we picked up a young fellow who was very small, but had extraordinary muscles. He made friends with the boxers I had on my booth, and he followed us to the Pontypool fairground. We kept him as an amusement for the crowd, for he could sing and dance and play the mouth organ. This ju-jitsu was being talked a lot about and I got a bright idea. He looked something like a Jap, so we painted him yellow, shaved off his hair except for one lock on top of his head, and put him on as Yuko Sako, from Yokohama, the Japanese strangler. He used to pretend to write things in Japanese on bits of paper and chuck them in the crowd, but they were just scribbles and scrawls that all the Japanese in creation wouldn't have made anything out of.

After taking a lot of tankings at the start he became a good boxer, so good we were offering a pound to any man of about his size that could stand him for about three rounds. At Porth he laid a man called Mog WILDE, of Trebanog, dead out after swapping a few punches, and when Wilde's brother said, "If you've put my brother out you can't do it to me," Sako put him out as well. Sako became a great draw, but he got that cheeky that there was no living with him and we had to sack him. He wouldn't do what he was told for anybody.

Well it's no wonder that I have plenty of stories to tell after splendid 50 years as a showman in the South Wales Coalfield. I don't think there were many places in the world like the Welsh mining valleys in the good old days. I have heard of a rush to the Klondyke gold field and how towns sprung up like mushrooms in a night, and that there was a middlin' lively lot of customers there. Very much the same sort of thing was happening in the Welsh mining valleys when I was travelling them in my young days.

Editor's Note: there is still talk of the boxing booth erected on the hillside years ago above Pontycymer, where fathers and grandfathers would congregate and even take part if they were good enough.



LETTERS/EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

Readers may recall that September 2022's journal contained a request from Mr Hugh Stott of Chicago, Illinois, asking for help in tracing his STOTT family. I am pleased to say that a photograph of a Stott wedding in 1908 in Pantygog, in the Garw Valley, has been found in a collection donated to the Garw Valley



Heritage Society, and sent to Mr Stott

The newspaper reports of the time stated that twins married twins, but in fact according to Mr Stott, Hugh was four years older than his brother Christopher, and the brides were two years

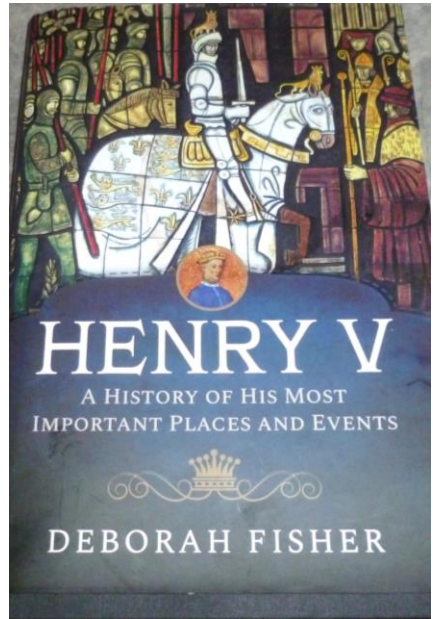
apart in age, so no twins! Information about the "twins" marriage had come from handed-down oral sources stemming from old newspaper reports, so a reminder that such unusual family events should be delved into before being taken for truth!

Mr Stott is still researching his family, and welcomes any further information. Please contact the editor if you can help - editor@glamfhs.org.uk.

BOOK REVIEWS

HENRY V: A HISTORY OF HIS MOST
IMPORTANT PLACES AND EVENTS.
DEBORAH FISHER

This book is an interesting and informative book that looks at one of the most admired English kings, Henry V, whose whole life is covered, not just the Battle of Agincourt, in a book that is relatively easy to follow, though I would have liked to have seen a map linking locations. Like many people I read the plays by William Shakespeare about Henry V, which he wrote based on the history as he knew it in his time, which was over a century after Henry died and, as the author tells us in the introduction, that they are now known to be some way from the truth so we need to be aware that the history in the play and this book will differ in parts.



Deborah Fisher, the author, is a retired librarian, who is a historical and literary researcher, covers the events in Henry's life with a fair balance of both the good and bad points. She states, *"This book is a kind of travelogue, concentrating on places that were important in Henry's Life,"* and that is exactly what it is.

The first part of the book is divided into eight chapters. The first four cover his life as a boy in Monmouth, his time campaigning in Wales and the Shrewsbury area when he was Prince of Wales, including his near fatal injury at the Battle of Shrewsbury. The fifth chapter covers his early kingship, followed by three chapters on his French Campaigns, which includes his most famous victory at Agincourt. Deborah Fisher then writes a conclusion on his life, which shows her to be an admirer of this great king, and follows this with a short epilogue. The author also casts doubts about the authenticity of some of the artefacts that are being displayed as belonging to Henry V.

We then come to the appendix which I found most useful. It is titled, "How to Follow in the Footsteps of Henry of Monmouth." This focuses on places mentioned in the book that still exist today. Practical travelling advice is given on reaching the destinations, not only by car but also by public transport, along with post codes for buildings and their availability to be viewed by the public. This I thought was excellent and I hope to visit some of the places I have not

been to. As for Henry V I am now more than ever an admirer of this great King.

Hardback £16.00 also available to download as e-pub £8.99

Publisher: Pen & Sword, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk. 01266 734222

ISBN 978 1 39907 046 1

Ian Black



BOOKS IN THE PIPELINE:

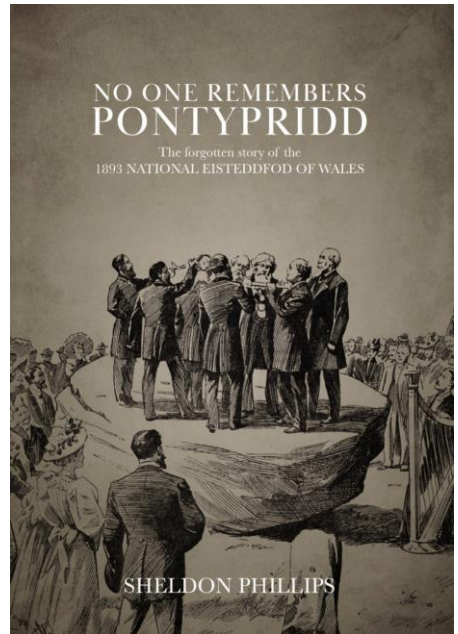
NO-ONE REMEMBERS PONTYPRIDD

the forgotten story of the 1893 National Eisteddfod that was held in Pontypridd, 130 years ago.

The book was inspired by the author's family connections, and includes accounts of other notable events in 19th century Pontypridd, such as the composition of the Welsh National Anthem and the death of Dr. William Price..

Sheldon Philips, published by Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, www.carreg-gwalch.cymru, £12.99 plus £2.50 postage.

The book will be reviewed in our September journal.



PORTH FARM, COAL AND TOWN: a Small History of Mining in the Rhondda David Robinson

The author's book expands on the article he has written about Porth above in this journal, and will be published later this year - full details to be announced in due course.

SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE REPORT

Volunteers are completing the reorganisation of the publication library and stock checking. Some missing booklets and one or two master copies have been reprinted, and any extra copies have been returned to the stock. Stock will be kept to a minimum as the printer does a quick turn-around if additional copies are needed. Some of the publications, which have a large number of booklets in a set, will be promoted via the Journal and at any future events.

The library of donated book from various sources is being indexed to create a comprehensive list of resources available in the ARC.

A number of people have sent in research requests. Some of these will be visiting the ARC in person while the details of the others have been forwarded to volunteers for further investigation.

We are looking forward to welcoming some visitors from America on one of the Wednesday sessions at the ARC in April.

The ARC continues to be open for research sessions on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. Anyone wishing to make a booking should contact the team on arc2@glamhs.org.uk.

Penny Williams, arc2@glamfhs.org.uk



ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY BRANCH

March: we had Ann Watts, who is a regular speaker in our Branch, Ann's talk was on famous people who have visited Aberdare in the past. As usual Ann's talk was very entertaining. Members present were very surprised by the famous names of the people who had visited Barnum Circus - King George and Queen Mary to name but a few.

April: we had our regular project/research session and we were pleased to welcome two new ladies who came along, and were able to help them with their research. I am pleased to report that attendance at these meetings is slowly growing in number.

During our meetings we are pleased to offer support to anyone with their family research, we bring along a number of local booklets and various books and discs relating to Cynon Valley which will aid you in your research, why not come along and browse them at your leisure. You can also email me at the

address below prior to our research meetings, briefly outlining the help you are looking for.

Thanks to our volunteers once again good progress is being made on the Aberdare Leader Obituaries 1951-1960.

Pat Rees, aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk



BRIDGEND BRANCH

The March meeting was used to provide help for members to unpick problems they had encountered and to share some successes in their research. Numbers at the meetings are still fairly low, while the weather doesn't actually encourage people to come out. In April one of our Bridgend members, Joanna Keen, will be speaking on 'Hints and Tips' to give people some alternative resources and avenues to pursue. Zoom facilities will be available, although no-one is currently using this, and the details will be shared with other Groups to draw a wider audience. All up-coming events will be publicised on the website and via Mailchimp. It is continuing to be difficult to find speakers for the bi-monthly meetings but the team will be working on locating speakers for the summer months.

The library research sessions in Aberkenfig and Pyle are continuing over the next few months. These have to be booked in advance, rather than being drop-in sessions to ensure volunteers are available. The numbers haven't been very high but there has been a very positive response from the people who have attended. The library staff continue to be very helpful and welcoming. Some people return for more than one session, and we are encouraging these to take out a membership to gain the full benefit of the Society's resources.

The Branch is thinking about running some field trips during the summer months. We will be making some enquiries over the next few weeks to see if there is any interest among the members for visits to County Record Offices, the National Library of Wales or the National Archive, Kew.

Penny Williams, bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH REPORT

Cardiff & Vale Branch are currently meeting every other month on a Tuesday afternoon at Glamorgan Archives. However many of the current committee cannot attend these meetings and so it has now been decided to research an evening venue for the intervening months commencing September 2023. A visit has also been arranged to the LDS Centre at Rhiwbina for Wednesday 5 July at 7 pm. The Branch is currently without a Chairman, Secretary or Programme Coordinator so if anyone is interested in joining the committee as a first step please contact cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk.

Reports of Cardiff Branch meetings in Glamorgan Archives.

Tuesday, 7 February: Non-Conformist Records

We had a fascinating meeting on Tuesday, 7th February 2023 when 11 people attended to hear an brief introduction to the history of Non-conformity in Cardiff and when and by whom their chapels and churches were founded.

Non-conformists were people who disagreed with the 39 Articles of Faith first published by the Church of England in 1559 and reaffirmed by the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. After 1559 the congregations generally identified as one of the following groups: Baptists, Independents or Congregationalists, Presbyterians, all of which had believers who were of the Puritan persuasion.

There were over 2000 members of the established church, who were known for their Puritan beliefs who, refusing to comply with the 1662 Act of Uniformity, were ejected from their churches along with members of their congregations who founded new Chapels often within the same parishes.

It wasn't until after the Acts of Declaration of Indulgence (1687-1688) under James II and the Act of Toleration 1689 by William and Mary that official persecution ceased. However, that didn't stop local landowners, Justices of the Peace etc from disturbing meetings and harassing members of non-conformist congregations until after 1750.

Quakers came into being during the period of the Commonwealth/Interregnum, when George Fox became dissatisfied the both the Church of England and the dissenters, who felt that his teaching were a blasphemous challenge to social and political order and the Quakers Act 1662 and the Conventicle Act 1664 allowed official persecution.

Members of the Roman Catholic Church should also be considered as non-conformists, as they did not agree with the 1559 Act and were not covered by the 1662 Act of Uniformity. It was not until the passing of the Emancipation Act of 1829 that Catholics were free to worship without hindrance.

To trace any records what may or may not have survived you need to have some idea of the history of the congregation as the records often moved with either the Minister, the leading Elder, or the Chapel Secretary or Administrator.

In Cardiff there are the six historical chapels:

Womanby St Chapel (Congregation/Independent), 1696

Wesleyan Methodists, Church, St 1739

Bethany Baptist Chapel, Wharton St, 1806

Welsh Baptists, The Hayes, 1813

Calvinistic Methodists, Working St, 1827

Quakers, Charles Steet, 1839

St David's Roman Catholic Church, Bute Terrace, 1842

It was from these seven congregations that the vast majority of the non-conformist chapels and churches in the 19th and early 20th century Cardiff were founded as part of their missionary endeavour to preach to the inhabitants of Cardiff as the town expanded into the City which we see today.

Then came the opportunity to examine some examples of the records held in the Glamorgan Archives when the following were made available:

D1890/1/1 – Baptism register, Wood Street Methodist Chapel, Bargoed, 1913-2000

DECONG/10/113/1 - Marriage register, Windsor Road English Congregational Church, Barry, 1902-1915

DBAP53/3 - Register of burial ground, Hengoed Baptist Chapel, 1745-1871

D1430/2/2: Hen Dy Cwrdd, Trecynon, llyfr cofnodion (minute book), 1866-1904 (changes between Welsh and English showing the change in the chapel from Welsh originally to English as the language was lost amongst the local population)

MGCC/CS/52/45 – Chapel survey plan, Ebenezer Congregational Chapel, Cefn Coed y Cymmer

D342/3 – Plan of graves, Cymmer Independent Chapel, Porth, 1877 (the graveyard was removed for building of the Rhondda Relief Road in the early-200s – see blog post)

D565/1/1 – Adroddiad Blynyddol (annual report), Capel Annibynnol Siloah, Nantyllyllon, 1914

DWESCR/592 – Splott Road Methodist Church, Sunday School register, boys and girls, 1918

Tuesday, 4 April: School/Education Records

This month's meeting was devoted to Education Records. Rhian Diggins, Senior Archivist, Glamorgan Archives, who had given an online presentation on education records held in Glamorgan Archives, gave an equally excellent introduction to the examples of some of the school records that she had withdrawn from the archives for us to examine.

Where **building plans** for schools survive, they provide us with clues as to how strict school life was for our ancestors.

School registers give details of a pupils, date of enrolling in the school as well as the date of birth, address at the time, details of parent or guardian, the date of leaving, and possibly the reason for leaving. However, data protection regulations apply for those records after 1920. The same regulations would apply to examination records, that the Glamorgan Archives, hold a small collection of. The majority are held by the exam boards, such as the WJEC, but it is always a good idea to check with of out of county archives should your research require you to do so.

School logbooks were maintained by the head of the school and filled in at the end of each day. Some are more detailed than others, giving details such as total pupil attendance, reasons for absences, which, especially in rural areas, would increase around harvest times. Punishments metered out often with the name of the teacher administering the punishment would be listed in some logbooks.

Photographs: a really valuable source if the photographs are annotated in anyway.

School Magazines: some of these are professionally printed, others created by the pupils, both giving details of school life.

Plays, concert programmes, sporting events include name of pupils who, for example, are acting in plays, performing concerts, or participating in sports' days

Local Education boards records often include the names of the local ministers and other worthies' appointments. Records of these boards are held in the archives and include informaton about the administration of the schools in their areas, giving details of the appointment and dismissal of teaching staff,

how much money was given to each school and what it was expected to be spent on.

Time was then spent examining the following records: -

EC/1/20 – Albany Road School, Roath, Boys Admissions Register, 1902-1912

BC/S/1/5967 – Borough of Cardiff, building regulation plans, Radnor Road School, Canton, 1886

D1341/1/1 - 'Y Llwyni', magazine of Maesteg Grammar Technical School, 1959

D1341/1/4 – Programmes for events at Maesteg Grammar School, 1960s

D1893/1 – 'Higher Tops', magazine of Fronwen Council School, Ogmere Vale, 1926

D854/11/1 – Cowbridge Girls School, Central Welsh Board examination results and pass lists. 1926-1927

DX263/16 – Cardiff High School Old Girls' Association, programmes and orders of service, 20th century

EABG/19/1 – Aberdare Girls Grammar School, photograph album, 1935

EC/4/1 – Cardiff Blind School, log book, 1895-1939

EHGGSEC/4/1 – Howard Gardens High School for Girls, Old Girls' Association minute book, 1930-1959

EMA/4/2 – Carnetown School, Abercynon, punishment book, 1910-1934

ESB/58/1 - Rhondda (Ystradyfodwg) School Board, committee minutes, 1878-1885

ESE/64/1/4 – Whitchurch Boys School, log book, 1905-1924

GD/E/19/2 – Glamorgan County Council, School Copmendum, Gwyndy School, Caerphilly, 1930s

It is proposed to commence a face to face Coffee & Chat on a Saturday in the near future and details will be made available soon.

June's meeting at the Archives will look at Poor Law Records.

Nick Davey, cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH REPORT

Several members of the Merthyr Tydfil Family History Branch attended the Gelligaer Historical Society Conference, which was held for the first time since 2019. We were kindly given a table to display family history records and took along our branch banner. It was an interesting day with talks of a high quality. This was to be repeated on 22nd April at a Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society Day Conference on the theme of WWI and Michael Donovan, who is very knowledgeable on military records, also has a table at this event to display records of local men killed in the conflict. The Merthyr Tydfil Branch is pleased to announce that another section of their obituary project has now been completed. Merthyr Tydfil obituary transcriptions 1910 to 1919 are contained on 2 CDs. This is the second in the series as the first CD covers 1900 to 1909. Initially volunteers worked on the microfilm copy of the Merthyr Express held by Merthyr Tydfil Central Library. This was the Merthyr Tydfil town edition of the Merthyr Express but also contained records for Aberdare and Gelligaer. The newly available CDs are:-

Merthyr Tydfil Obituaries CD2 1910 - 1919 - £10

Merthyr Tydfil WW1 Casualty Lists 1914 - 1919 - £8

(see below and back cover for more information)

They are mainly the work of Andrea Heggie and Michael Donovan but their availability is very much thanks to the kind assistance of Nancy Thomas.

Although not a good date as it was just after the Easter Monday holiday, Huw Williams gave an excellent talk to the Merthyr Branch on the second Tuesday in April about the differences between Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil. He is always a delight to listen to.

We are expecting a visit in April from an American with the unusual name of HADDOCK. His family appear to have been in Merthyr Tydfil since 1805 and were key ironworkers, ballers, roughers and rollers at the Plymouth Ironworks.

The Merthyr Tydfil Branch is also going to take a table and be present at the Dic Penderyn Conference in the Merthyr Labour Club on Saturday 3rd June. There are to be four talks at this event which is free to attend.

For information e-mail: carolynnanson@hotmail.com

Carolyn Jacob, merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

Merthyr Tydfil Obituary Transcriptions CD2

(1910-1919)

©GFHS 2023

FILES:

1910–1919 BY YEAR AND SURNAME:

Each year has A–Z of surnames within that year

1910–1919 BY SURNAME:

Surnames are listed alphabetically A-Z, irrespective of year

This transcribing began long before the National Library of Wales made newspapers available on-line. The project was begun by the Merthyr Tydfil Branch secretary, Mary Watkins and Eira Hopkins, who did a considerable amount of work on the project.

The project commenced with the year 1900 (CD1). CD2 is the second in the series. Initially volunteers worked on the microfilm copy of the Merthyr Express held by Merthyr Tydfil Central Library. The full title of the paper between 1900 and 1909 was '*The Merthyr Express, Aberdare and East Glamorgan Herald, Tredegar and West Monmouth Times*'.

Founded in November 1864, the newspaper's main content was local news and it has always been a weekly paper. The Merthyr Express is still circulating in the Merthyr Tydfil area but in 1900 it also covered a much wider area; the coal and iron producing areas of South Wales, including Abergavenny, Gelligaer and the Cynon and Rhymney Valleys, (later there were several different editions of the Merthyr Express:- 'East Monmouthshire', Aberdare, Lower Valley etc).

The obituaries were found throughout the newspaper in the form of death notices, an obituary column, accident reports, coroner's inquests and funeral reports. These were scattered throughout starting on the front page, which had a 'Births, Marriages and Deaths' column consisting mainly of 'Deaths' with sections of 'Acknowledgements' and 'In Memoriam'.

Many of the original hand-written obituary transcripts have been typed, however, it has not always been possible to work out certain abbreviations of this period and write them in full. This is therefore a resource to help researchers find an obituary but people will also need to check the actual newspaper. What is not indicated is that these obituaries can be anything from 400 to less than 15 words in the original newspaper. This project is still continuing, it is hoped to produce future years in batches of ten years.

Special thanks to the endeavours and hard work of Michael Donovan, Andrea Heggie and the Merthyr Tydfil Family History Branch would like to thank all the volunteers for their hard work and conscientious attention to detail.

Merthyr Tydfil WW1 Casualty Transcriptions Obituaries (1914-1919)

©GFHS 2023

FILES:

1914–1919 BY YEAR AND SURNAME:

Each year has A–Z of surnames within that year

1914–1919 BY SURNAME:

Surnames are listed alphabetically A-Z irrespective of year

This CD holds information of WW1 Casualties listed in the Merthyr Express and were extracted as part of the above Obituaries Project. These have been arranged by both Date/Name and Name only.

CDs can be purchased via Genfair: www.genfair.co.uk.



PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH REPORT

We have had a number of talks by various people this year, including Keith Jones, who has an extensive list of talks, Dean Powell from Llantrisant Guildhall, David Maddox who is one of our members, and last night Gwerfyl Gardner, who spoke of the treachery of the Blue Books.

We had two visitors, one lady from USA and the other from New Zealand.

Each of our talks have attracted a good number of members, both current and new. We are sure that the fact Neil sends out posters advertising the talks to members, and local libraries has helped.

Our Chairman, Mike Jones, recently spent a fortnight in hospital with a slight stroke, and unfortunately the ward he was in, had to be closed because of Covid! Luckily he had no adverse effects and is now recovering at home.

In June we intend holding a belated party for the 25th Anniversary of the Pontypridd and Rhondda Branch. This should have taken place in 2020 but floods and Covid put paid to that. If anyone would like to join us they will be most welcome.

Jane Jones, rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk



Editor: We send Mike our best wishes for a speedy recovery!

SWANSEA BRANCH REPORT

During the winter months we have held research sessions in the Discovery Room at Swansea Central Library. Attendance numbers have fluctuated but on the whole have been small.

In the next few months, at the invitation of West Glamorgan Archives we will be holding our meetings in their research room. The meetings will be open to both members and non-members. One of the archivists will give a brief talk or provide items of interest of their choosing to begin our meeting. The archivists hope to introduce some little-used resources which could prove useful to family historians. This will be followed by an opportunity to make use of other resources, including the computers with access to 'Find My Past' and 'Ancestry', subject to availability. Committee members will be happy to help anyone new to the archives or beginning their family history.

The first of these sessions will be on 18th April and will run through until July. Depending on the popularity of these meetings we will then decide on the way forward for the autumn.

There will be no meeting in August.

It is with regret we have to record the sad death, in her 90th year, of one of the early members of Swansea Branch, Mrs Joy Cook. In addition to being a long-standing member of the committee, Joy was heavily involved in recording MIs in many of the Gower Parishes.

Cherry King, swansea@glamfhs.org.uk



ONLINE BRANCH REPORT (AR LEIN)

We have had some excellent and fascinating talks and 'Coffee and Chat' sessions during the past few months including subjects as diverse as Ancient DNA, One Place Studies, Commonwealth War Graves Commission Archives and Education Records. Although during April and May the programme of talks has had to be reduced to one a month due to public holidays the Summer programme returns to two sessions a month with the first talk 'Before the Zip: the invisible history of thread, string, textiles and their makers' on Thursday 8 June at 7.30 pm booking as usual is via Eventbrite – see forthcoming events for more details.

Sue Hamer, arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

ABERDARE BRANCH

aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

Cynon Valley Museum at 2 pm on the second Thursday each month
8 June – Family Research: Carol Scott.
13 July - Dr Richard Griffiths: Brian Davies
August - No Meeting
14 September - Research and Projects Session.
12 October - AGM and guest speaker TBC

BRIDGEND BRANCH

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

Len Evans Hall (next to the ARC) at 7.30 pm third Monday each month
Meeting dates
19 June
17 July
21 August
18 September
See website for details.

Saturday Library Help Sessions – see inside back cover

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH

cardiffandvale@glamfhs.org.uk

2 pm at Glamorgan Archives
Tuesday 6th June – Poor Law Records

7 pm Wed 5 July: Visit to the LDS Centre at Rhiwbina
August – No meeting

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the
2nd Tuesday of each month
13th June - A new look at the Merthyr Rising of 1831: Viv Pugh
11th July - The old shops of Merthyr Tydfil: Mary Owen
August - No Meeting

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk

7 pm at Pontypridd Museum

20 June

18 July

For further information contact the Branch.

SWANSEA BRANCH

swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

2pm at West Glamorgan Archives*,

Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN

Talk by member of Archives staff on records

Available, followed by time for individual research

June – No Meeting

Tuesday 18 July

August – No Meeting

***Please note CHANGE OF VENUE**

ONLINE BRANCH (Ar Lein)

arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

7.30 pm Thurs 8 June: Before the Zip: the invisible history of thread, string, textiles and their makers – Towse Harrison

7 pm Thurs 15 June: Coffee and Chat – How useful are Wills?

7.30 pm Thurs 6 July: Temperance Town, Cardiff – Nick Davey

7 pm Thurs 20 July: Coffee and Chat –

How do you write up your Family History?

August – No meetings

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

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

Further updates on Branch Meetings and Events
are posted on our website

www.glamfhs.org.uk/events

Join us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/glamorganfhs.

Follow us on Twitter: @GlamorganFHS OR @Cardiff_GFHS



Family History Research Sessions

Interested in tracing your roots?

Want to know more about your ancestors?

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

Already started but hit that brick wall?

HELP IS AVAILABLE!

10-12md:	13 th May	- Pyle Library
10-12md:	17 th June	- Aberkenfig Library
10-12md:	15 rd July	- Pyle Library
10-12md:	19 th August	- Aberkenfig Library

Email: bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk - to book – bookings take priority, walk-ins will be accommodated if possible or offered an alternative booking



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

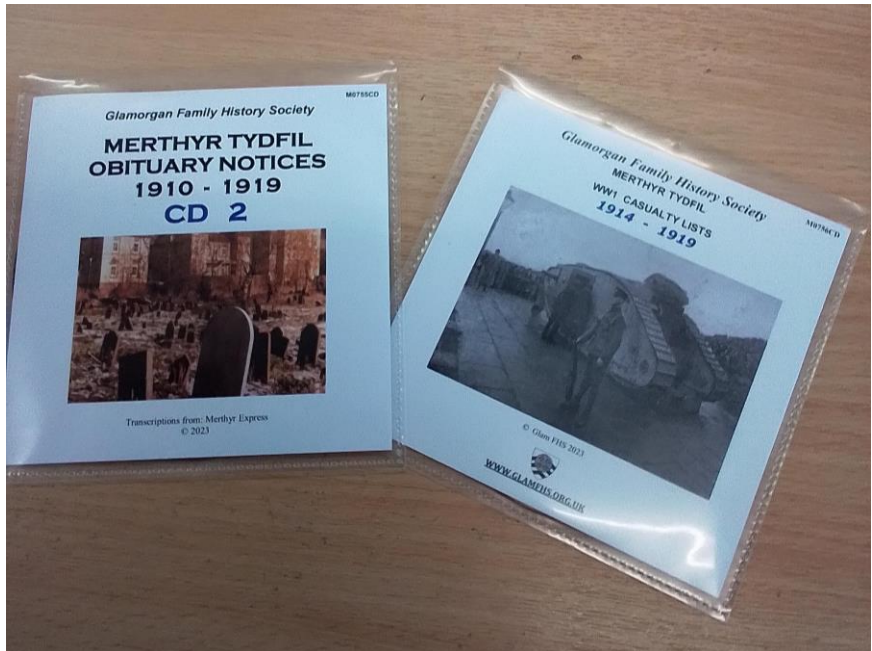
Email to book a place:
bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

Two new CDs

Merthyr Tydfil Obituary Notices CD2: (1910-1919) – £10

Merthyr Tydfil WW1 Casualty Lists: (1914-1919) - £8

CDs can be purchased on Genfair
www.genfair.co.uk



If undelivered please return to:

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