





2025 is also the 40th anniversary of the closure of the last coal mine in the Garw Valley, marked here by a plaque raised and looked after by local residents.

FRONT COVER PHOTO: Found in the archives. Has anyone any information on these certificates - who issued them, and for what services (presumably military)? The Welsh inscription is 'Death rather than Dishonour' the motto of the Royal Welsh, Wales's oldest and most decorated regiment. This one is signed by Llewellyn Jones, pioneer of universal health care and aid to Aneurin Bevan in setting up the NHS, amongst his many accomplishments. His story is featured in Journal 147, September 2022.

CONTENTS

Journal 158	June 2025	
Title	Author	Page
Society Officers & Committee Members		4
Editorial	Jean Fowlds	5
Secretary's Report	Penny Williams	6
80 th Anniversary of VE Day	Tony Peters	7
A Close Shave in the Lion's Den		10
John Bulger, Cardiff Sergeant at Arms	Marcus Payne	10
Life and Death of a Caswill Coal Miner	Chris Caswill	14
More Rhondda Memories	Oliver Davies	18
Neil McBride MP, part 2	John P Lethbridge	22
Margaret Evans - 3 marriages and 200 descendants	Clive Davies	26
Our Mormon Family History, part 2	Martin Owen	29
Finding a Home for the Beer Bible, part 1	Diane Brook	33
Some thoughts on immigration	Colin Davies	35
Letters to the Editor	Jean Fowlds	38
Book Reviews		39
Society News and Reports		42
Forthcoming events		49

Society's Objectives

The Glamorgan Family History Society is a registered charity. Its main objectives 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.

SOCIETY OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President: Vacant

Vice President: Diane Brook

Executive Committee & Society Trustees

Chairman
Vice-Chair

Vacant
Vacant

Secretary/Events Coordinator
secretary@glamfhs.org.uk,

Penny Williams
15 St Brides Road, Aberkenfig, Bridgend, CF329PY

Treasurer
treasurer@glamfhs.org.uk

Guy Bevan
Due West, Leaze Road, Marlborough, SNB1JU

Committee Members: Ian Black, Jean Fowlds, Meic Jones, Anouska Osborne, Billie McNamara, Nancy Thomas.

Branch Trustees: *Pat Rees* (Aberdare & Cynon Valley), *Sue Tiller* (Bridgend), *Stephen Fairhurst* (Cardiff & Vale), *Carolyn Jacob* (Merthyr), *Meic Jones* (Pontypridd & Rhondda), *Janet Neilson* (Swansea)

Membership Team
membership@glamfhs.org.uk

c/o 63 Clos Pwll Clai, Tondy, Bridgend,
CF32 9BZ

Editor
editor@glamfhs.org.uk

Jean Fowlds
10 David Street, Blaengarw, Bridgend, CF32 8AD

Website website@glamfhs.org.uk

Resource Centre Team: arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

Branch Secretaries/Contacts

Aberdare & Cynon Valley
aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

Mrs Pat Rees ☎ 01685 875528

Bridgend Secretary
bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

Vicky Salmon, 4 Heol Mair, Litchard, Bridgend,
CF31 1YL ☎ 01656 663940

Cardiff & Vale
cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk

Stephen Fairhurst

Merthyr Secretary
Tydfil,merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

Suzanne Doolan, 1 Park Terrace, The Walk, Merthyr
CF47 8RF ☎ 01685 385818

Pontypridd & Rhondda
rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk

Meic Jones, 44 Hendrecafn Rd, Penygraig,
CF40 1LL ☎ 01443 434547

Swansea

Janet Neilson swansea@gfhs.org.uk

ONLINE (Arlein)

arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

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

EDITORIAL

Croeso, it is the longest day soon, the height of summer when I hope we can all take some time out in our gardens or patch of sunshine and relax whilst reading this latest journal.

As ever, the contents of this edition cover a wide range of topics and experiences from members in all walks of life. We have a lost Bible, a politician in Swansea, a Mace Bearer in Cardiff, some childhood memories in the Rhondda, the second part of Martin Owen's family and their journey to Salt Lake City, and the story of Margaret Evans, her three marriages, her emigration to Australia, and her enormous family. As two of the articles are about emigration FROM Wales to other lands, I am including some of Colin Davies' thoughts on immigration INTO Wales as a balance. This season also held the 80th anniversary of VE Day - Victory in Europe, and Tony Peters of Glamorgan Archives has given us a story from Cardiff about events around that day. Our front cover also features a WW2 connection.

As a new phase for the journal, and because we have received requests to this effect, we will be including one article in Welsh for each future edition, accompanied by its English translation. This is in keeping with nearly all publications now taking place in Wales, and is in line with the Welsh government's policy of all public notices and official documents being bilingual, so I hope that members, particularly those living outside Wales, will find this of interest. For Welsh-speakers, and those learning Welsh, and we know of quite a few, this should be welcome. We are pleased to have the services of Eirian Edwards to help us with this, and she has translated Colin Davies' article on immigration into Wales as her first entry.

TOPICS As ever I would welcome ideas for topics for future journals, and recently a member has written in suggesting canals, rivers and waterways, and another suggests transport, which will cover these subjects as well as trains, buses, even planes- therefore, has anyone family who have lived or made their livings from any form of transport? We have had the subject in previous times, particularly railways, but there must be more out there!

You will shortly be receiving our commemorative edition of the journal, compiled both as a record and a tribute to all you members and volunteers who have worked so hard, often over many years, to keep the society going and make it the success it is today. I hope it will not be too self-congratulatory, but it will acknowledge the work done over the Society's 50 years of existence, and it will show how members and helpers have had to deal with so much change from those early days. The only regret will be that due to lack of space not everyone can be mentioned, but they are all thanked! HWYL FAWR!

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

SECRETARY'S REPORT

There is no Chairman's Report for this edition as the position is, as yet unfilled, so I am 'filling in' temporarily, as Secretary, hoping that someone will soon be stepping forward to take on the role of Chair. While the position is vacant Guy, Nancy and I will be keeping things running and if anyone else would like to get involved please get in touch.

As you know from March's journal Sue Hamer has stepped down as Chair after serving for two periods as Vice-Chair and then Chair since 2012. We all know how much time, effort and expertise Sue has invested in the Society. While she is stepping back somewhat from some activities she will still be working on several aspects of the Society, including the website, and be available for help and advice. On behalf of all of us in the GFHS I wish to express thanks and appreciation to Sue as she steps down as Chairman.

The AGM in March went very well – although it was a shame that the Speaker cancelled at the very last minute. There was a good turn out so thanks to everyone who attended and to the team running the event.

The 50th Anniversary celebration at the ARC also went really well. Thank you to everyone who came along. The teamwork setting it all up and dismantling everything was much appreciated. The harpist was excellent and people thought this was a nice touch. The displays provided were all very interesting and people enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the local area and to chat with other members.

Thanks to the speaker – Rhian Diggins from the Glamorgan Archives - who spoke about resources at the Archives and their recent exhibition on the mining industry. Diane Brook, our esteemed number 2 member, on the history of the Society, and our Vice President, was our expert cake cutter, and The Garw Valley Heritage Society gave insights on the somewhat hazardous life growing up in the Valley. All were really interesting and enjoyed by everyone.

I attended a recent meeting with the Ogwr Heritage Group in Porthcawl Museum – which is well worth a visit with some fantastic displays including restored Victorian/Edwardian dresses. At the time of writing there is a lot going on in the local areas among the nine groups involved including Bridgend and District Historical Society's upcoming exhibition on the 600th anniversary of the bridge across the Ogwr, Cymdeithas Hanes Bro Ogwr's meetings at Y Tair Pedol in Cefn Cribwr and the VE celebration events planned at the Porthcawl Museum on 10th May.

A second history month is being planned for September with a number of events already pencilled in, including open days at St John's House in Bridgend. It would be nice if GFHS could get involved, possibly as a host for a talk at the ARC.

By the time you read this I will have attended the Family History Federation AGM and General Meeting at Wesley's Chapel in London on 10th May. Sue Hamer always attended in person or online so I think it is important to continue to have a presence beyond Glamorgan.

'Open Churches' is being held again on Saturday 31st May and Sunday 1st June. The venues have not yet been publicised, but it might be worth considering that each branch visits somewhere local and writes a short report for the Journal later in the year and for display in the ARC.

Any questions or queries, please contact one of us or call into the ARC on one of the open days for a chat.

Volunteers are needed if the Society is to have stalls at up-coming fairs as it is unrealistic to expect the same small group of volunteers to attend every fair. Please get in touch if you can help in any way.

Penny Williams, secretary@glamfhs.org.uk

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

Tony Peters, Glamorgan Archives Volunteer

On 8 May 2025 we mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. The Second World War in Europe came to an end on Tuesday 8th May 1945, although the fighting in the Far East continued for another three months. After almost six years of conflict, it was announced that there would be two days of celebrations across Britain with the first, the 8th May, to be known as VE Day.

As plans were hastily assembled it was agreed that there would be national radio broadcasts by both the King and the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, with a programme of parades, church services and searchlight displays in all major towns and cities.

As might be expected, it was a euphoric two days. Glamorgan Archives is fortunate in holding an account of VE Day in Cardiff written by a young telephonist, Veronica MOVERLEY, from Carlise Street in Splott, in a letter to her husband-to-be, John, serving with the RAF.

As Veronica reported, there had been rumours for some time that the end of the fighting in Europe was in sight:

All we were doing at home was switching on the wireless to get the latest news. Everything was in uproar when it did come.

After years of blackout, Cardiff was transformed, with public buildings illuminated and popular landmarks, such as Roath Park, decked with lights. Wartime grey and khaki was replaced by red, white and blue with bunting in the streets and people in fancy dress, while the wail of the aid raid sirens was replaced with the sounding of ships' sirens and car horns referred to in the newspapers as a ...*'joyous bedlam'*.

The bad news was that, as someone who worked in an essential service, Veronica was required to work until 8 pm on the first of the two public holidays. However, as work finished, she hurried into the city to join the tens of thousands gathered in front of the loudspeakers at City Hall for the radio broadcast by the King at 9 pm in the evening.

'From there we went to the lake where there were fairy lights all along the promenade and the clock was lit up. We tried to dance but it was hopeless what with the crowds and the fireworks....'

Although it was now late in the evening, Veronica and her friends retraced their steps to Cathays Park, where they *'...saw all the floodlights and again tried to dance outside the City Hall'*. *There were big loudspeakers outside broadcasting dance music and there were hundreds of people about. We left after the 12.00 news....'*

The following day was given over to street parties. Carlise Street, along with all the streets in the area, staged its own celebrations complete with food, games, bonfires and music.

All the afternoon we were in and out watching everyone get ready for the street tea parties and, of course, had to join in the fun dancing and singing... There were wireless sets fitted in windows, pianos, gramophones and goodness knows what else. Flags all out... Everyone joined in. You should have seen my mother dancing in the street and Dad in the races in the street. It was a scream.

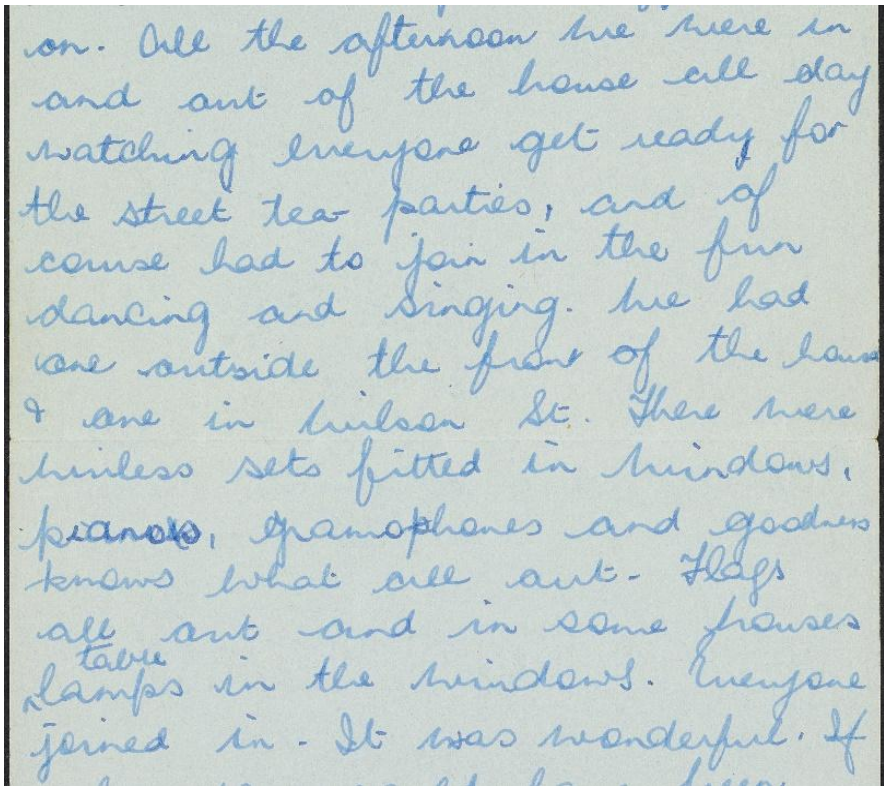
There were bonfires in almost every street each night. When we came home from the dance that finished at 11.00, we joined in dancing around the bonfire, bawling our heads off. People were letting off fireworks and everyone did all sorts of mad things.

Although late in the evening the day was not complete without a parade. In this case those in Carlise Street and Wilson Street formed a band equipped with pots, pans and bin lids and led by a "drum major" with a rolling pin.

We went all along Moorland Road, Courtney Street, Splott Road back up Habershon Street. The young deacon was running back and fore keeping everyone in time and tune – not that we were. You never heard such a din at 12.30 in the night.

The next day found our young telephonist at home, exhausted, hoarse and nursing blistered feet. What had she made of VE Day? As she said in her letter to John - *It was wonderful.*

Veronica Moverley's letter is held at Glamorgan Archives under reference D1771/1.



on. All the afternoon we were in and out of the house all day watching everyone get ready for the street tea parties, and of course had to join in the fun dancing and singing. We had one outside the fire of the house & one in Milson St. There were wireless sets fitted in windows, pianos, gramophones and goodness knows what all out. Flags all out and in some houses table lamps in the windows. Everyone joined in. It was wonderful. If

Don't miss the 'Cut-Off Dates'

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

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

A CLOSE SHAVE IN THE LIONS DEN

Garw Valley Archives

In 1910, SEDGEWICKS No 1 American Circus visited the Bridgend and Maesteg area with its menagerie of hundreds of wild animals, including a herd of elephants and dromedaries. Amongst the events which proved very popular with the crowds was when 'Lorenzo 'The Daring, the Lion Tamer' was shaved by local hairdresser, Mr IC CORBETT of Nolton St, Bridgend. Nothing unusual in that you may think? Except that this shave took place inside the lion's cage with twenty lions looking on!!

When the fearless Mr Corbett repeated his performance at Maesteg a week later he received £5 and a silver cup from the Sedgewick's proprietor, Mr Sedgewick in person.

An added attraction was the Grand Tug o' War match, of twenty men against one elephant. The prize for defeating the pachyderm was a silver cup, to be drawn for by lots.

Seven years later Private 3996 Ivor Charles Corbett, 12th Batt South Wales Borderers, was severely wounded in the attack on Bourn Wood, and died of his wounds on 25th November 1917. He was 32. After 3 days fighting for Bourn Wood the 12th Battalion had lost 10 officers, and 123 men in all were dead, with a further 12 officers and 243 men wounded. This one action earned the 12th Battalion 2 DSOs, 6 MCs, 6 DCMs and 11 MMs.

JOHN BULGER: CARDIFF SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

#21135 Marcus Payne

I have been an avid researcher into my family history for over 40 years. My ancestry is English on my father's side, and Irish on my mother's. On the Irish side, they came over to Wales in the early 1850s. They included John BULGER born in 1830. John Bulger was my great-great grandfather, and also grandfather to Johnny WALSH whose life was related in the previous journal (No 157, March 2025).

There is no evidence of John in the 1851 Cardiff Census. He first appears on 5th September 1859, when he married Honora CUMMINGS, also born in Ireland, in 1836, at St David's Chapel in Cardiff.

John and Honora went on to have six known children. One of them was Ellen Bulger, born on 7th January 1867 in 21 Ellen Street in Cardiff. She married a George WELSH on 27th October 1891 at St David's. One of their children was John Patrick Welsh, mentioned above, who was later

known as Johnny WALSH. That means that John and Honora Bulger are my great great grandparents.

John Bulger seems to have led a fairly ordinary life in Cardiff, appearing in censuses as a "labourer" (1861 & 1881), a "ballast foreman" (1871) and a "coal trimmer" (1891). The main reason that he is of interest is that in his last three years he was appointed to the relatively prestigious post of Sergeant-at-Mace to the Cardiff Corporation. It was reported in Cardiff Council Minutes 1894-95 in Volume 5 of Cardiff Records, as follows:

"1895, May 13: The Mayor reported that he had appointed John Bulger of 15 Sandon Road, Cardiff as Sergeant-at-Mace (Vice: Charles PEARCE deceased); salary £52 per annum, and uniform."

I have calculated that the £52 salary is worth in today's money around £8,737!

There is an interesting short extract about his new job in Volume 5 of the 'Cardiff Records', which is worth quoting at length: "The Serjeants-At-Mace were anciently officers of high authority, and represented the executive. The Serjeants are two in number and were appointed by the Lord previous to 1835. The appointment was made annually until of late years. Since 1876 it has practically been a permanent one, and a regrettable habit has arisen of calling these officers 'Macebearers' - as though it were, legally as well as actually, their principal function. The Serjeants wear a uniform consisting of a long frock coat with a scarlet lappet and pewter buttons (the latter bearing the arms of the borough), a scarlet waistcoat, black trousers, top hat and white gloves."

There is a family story that he had made a full-length portrait of himself in full regalia as Sergeant-at-Arms, which I have never seen, and do not know the whereabouts of, if it still exists. I would love to see that portrait one day, because, as yet, I don't even have a photograph of him. I would be interested to hear from anybody who has come across any images of him, through the Editor.

As already noted, John was appointed following the death of a previous holder of the post, Charles Pearce. The Sergeant-at-Arms position was held in tandem, and John then shared it with Jacob WISE. Jacob was replaced by Thomas THOMAS. After John's death in 1898, he was in turn succeeded by James HOLMAN.

How did a man, leading an ordinary life, working for the most part in the docks, end up having such a prestigious job, late in his life? He was a member of the large Irish Catholic community, that, after the fallout from the Irish famine exodus in the 1850s, had emigrated to many countries including Wales, and, in particular, Cardiff. After a difficult period of isolation, enduring suspicion, violence and prejudice, the at first self-

contained Irish community had gradually become more integrated and accepted into Cardiff society. A major political breakthrough was the election of John Patrick CRICHTON-STUART, 3rd Marquess of Bute, a Scottish lord who owned much of Cardiff, as Cardiff's first Catholic Lord Mayor, in 1890-1. Catholics as a group were now tolerated at the highest levels in the town.

However, the true breakthrough for the Irish Catholic community followed soon after with the election of William Patrick CAREY as the first Irish Catholic Mayor of Cardiff, in 1894-5. He was born in 1850, in Ireland, but grew up in Cardiff. He worked his way up in municipal politics from Member of Cardiff Corporation in 1880, to Alderman in 1886, and Mayor in 1894. A politician like that would have had powers of patronage he could bestow on his supporters and colleagues. I think it should be no surprise that our John was appointed to the vacant position of Macebearer (as the position was popularly called), in 1895, during Carey's tenure as Lord Major. John was probably part of Carey's Irish entourage and was rewarded for his loyalty.

John's death as Sergeant-At-Arms was considered sufficiently newsworthy to deserve a short obituary in the 'Cardiff Times,' on 14th May 1898: "Death of Cardiff Macebearer: John Bulger, the macebearer to the Cardiff Corporation died on Monday at his residence, Sandon Place, Adamsdown. The deceased, who was a ripe old age, was an Irishman by birth, but had long resided in Cardiff. The genial qualities of his race were strongly marked in him, and he was greatly respected by all of the officials of the Corporation". I think he must have been highly regarded by his own community, as a virtually identically worded obituary can be found in the May 1898 edition of 'St Peter's Chair' parish magazine. The latter differed in also giving his date of death as "Monday 9th May", and his address as "Roland Street, Adamsdown". His Death Certificate confirms these details, giving his place of death as "Royal George Hotel, Roland Street".

John may have had the respect of his Corporation, and his fellow Catholics, but not apparently from his wife, Honora. In a rare but fascinating glimpse into the personal life of the Bulger family, they appear in a police court, recorded in almost identical press reports in August 1886. It is worth setting it down in full, from the South Wales Daily News.

26th August 1886: "Yesterday's Police, Cardiff. A Loving Pair, Honora Bulger was charged on a warrant of assaulting John Bulger on the 15th inst. The complainant stated that his wife was in the back kitchen and threw a pan at his head. It was her general conduct against which he complained. She destroyed 'the fruits of years of industry'. He believed if she were medically examined she would be found to be out of her mind. She was in the habit of assaulting the whole family, and he wanted protection. The bench dismissed the case". The Western Mail added that the bench also "advised the woman to behave better in future".

We don't know whether she was crazy or difficult, or she had lost patience with him, but she doesn't appear to have been locked away. Indeed, when she died three years later, on 30th October 1889, it was at their home in 78 Adam Street, with "John, widower of the deceased present", as stated on her death certificate. It is intriguing to speculate whether, if she had survived for much longer, and continued to be disruptive, it might have affected his chances of getting the macebearer post.

DID YOU KNOW?

It was a Welshman, John PARRY, a stonemason, poet and musician, 1789-1868, who became the first musical conductor of the world famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He was born in Flintshire and a convert to Mormonism in 1846, and emigrated to Salt Lake City in 1849. On the way there he formed a choir from 85 of his fellow Welsh emigrants, who were heard by Mormon leader, Brigham Young, on their arrival at their destination. Brigham Young was so impressed that he asked John to develop the choir for the Church of Latter Day Saints' meetings.

John Parry is sometimes confused with Joseph Parry, 1841-1903, famous Welsh composer of 'Myfanwy' and 'Aberystwyth' and the first Welsh opera 'Blodwen'. He was born in Merthyr Tydfil in 1841 and also emigrated, in 1854 with his family, but to Pennsylvania, where he joined many other Welshmen in the mining there. His musical achievements are many and worth pursuing.

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

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

LIFE AND DEATH OF A CASWILL COAL MINER

Part 2

Chris Caswill

Bill (William John) CASWILL was introduced in the March issue. Born on 29 July 1866, he was a coal miner, living in Cefn Cribwr, a mining village near Bridgend. His parents were 'come overs' from Somerset in the late 1850s. Bill was 27 and single, living with his parents, at the beginning of 1894, where his story continues. He married Catherine DAVIES on 27th November, when she was heavily pregnant. Catherine was probably 26¹, one of three sisters living in the White Lion Inn on Bedford Road, one of whom, Joan, was the publican. They had deep Welsh roots, direct descendants of Edward MEAZEY (sometimes MAZEY), who built and opened the White Lion in about 1840. He came from Llanblethian near Bridgend.



White Lion as a house in 2022



Edward Mezey plaque

There are some notable features of the wedding and unanswered questions. Catherine already had an illegitimate daughter, Gwendolyn, born on 12th January 1890, whose whereabouts in the 1890s are as yet unknown. The marriage ceremony was at Bridgend Registry Office and not at Tythegston or Pyle churches, the locations of most other Caswill marriages². None of the extended Caswill or Davies families were witnesses in the Registry Office, and presumably they were not there at all. The Registrar's wife was one of the witnesses.

¹ Probably born on 27 June 1868, some uncertainty about that

² After the 1836 Marriage Act, weddings could also take place in nonconformist chapels, but only if a Registrar was present. Catherine may have refused to be married in a Church of England (including Wales) Church.

There are some uncertainties about the birth of Bill and Catherine's son Edwin Alfred, who was born soon after, most likely on 24th December, which Edwin subsequently recorded as his birth date³. His certificate gives Kenfig Hill as his place of birth, revealing that the newly-weds had left Cefn at that time. They may have stayed with Catherine's brother, Jabez, and family if they had moved to Station Road in Kenfig Hill by then.

The unanswered questions include why the couple left it so late to get married, and whether the location and absence of their families are evidence of some huge familial rift(s)? When Catherine discovered she was pregnant again, was there an argument as to whether Bill was the father? How much did Bill Caswill know about Catherine's daughter Gwendolyn? Was he perhaps also the father of Gwendolyn? Or alternatively not the father of either her nor Edwin but somehow pressured (or willing) to marry her to avoid another illegitimate birth? Was their wedding deliberately boycotted by the two families or did it happen without their knowledge? Why was it held in Bridgend Registry Office – to keep it from the two families, or perhaps because Catherine refused to be married in a Church of England (and Wales) Church? There are no evidenced answers so today's readers must reach their own conclusions.

At that time, the wider Caswill family also had to live with the debilitating illness of Bill's sister, Sarah, who had married William SPANSWICK on 4th December 1886. However, their mother had somehow contracted consumption (Phthisis)⁴ which had already killed her brother – the first Edwin Alfred Caswill - five years earlier. By the end of 1894 the Spanswicks had three children, Sarah Ann, William Henry and Alice Maud. Sarah died on 10th February 1895 and was buried in St James Pyle and Kenfig churchyard on the 14th. She was only 31. Her death certificate makes no reference to the length of her consumptive illness but other examples suggest she would have been diagnosed for some time before and that her condition would have been known within the village.

Bill was still working in the local mines and he and Catherine and their son were soon back in Cefn. Their second son, Wiliam John, was born there on 29th May 1896. The normal patterns of family life resumed with the births of their sons Thomas and Henry James in Cefn in 1897 and 1898

³ His birth certificate recorded him as Edward Arthur, with a Registrars note that his baptismal names were Edwin Alfred. It also registered his birth date as 7th February 1895, which is doubtful as it was the date of the certificate registration. Catherine registered the birth with a mark, so she may have been the author of these confusions, deliberately or otherwise.

⁴ TB – tuberculosis – today

respectively. Around this time the family moved to a house in Bedford Road named Tyn y Coed⁵.

In 1899 Bill's father, William Pinn Caswill, died from 'apoplexy'⁶ on 1st October. He was 76. Since 'coming over' from Somerset he had from time to time found work as a journeyman cooper – his original skill – but otherwise as a mine labourer, above ground. He was buried in the churchyard of St James Pyle on 5th October, no doubt near his youngest son, Edwin, and daughter, Sarah. This would have been an occasion for the wider Caswill family to come together, not least to make sure the widowed Eliza could continue with her 'Fancy Shop' at 14 Overt Road.

There was a second notable event at the end of 1899, when Catherine's sister, Joan, was married to Meredith WATKIN. In the 1890s she had been managing the White Lion in Bedford Road on her own. She died in the White Lion the following year on 3rd November, aged only 35. According to Granville's Cefn account, she died "*in strange if not mysterious circumstances*"⁷. Her death certificate gives the causes as peritonitis and cardiac failure. It was signed by Dr TWIST, who is well thought of in the Granville book, mainly for his efforts to save lives in the 1892 Parc Slip mine disaster. However, this is not the only time some doubt has been cast about his certification of a death in Catherine's family.

Though Catherine's aunt, Mary REED (nee Mazey), returned as his housekeeper. These events were the final acts of the Meazy family line in the management of the White Lion. Notably for about 40 of the 60 years the publicans had been women. Watkin Meredith left the White Lion in August 1902, when it was taken on by Tom BROWNING⁸.

The March 1901 Census confirmed Bill and his family living at Tyn y Coed on Bedford Road. His brother Henry was still living with his wife Dinah and daughter Miriam with Dinah's unmarried brother, Richard JOHN, at 14 Cefn Road. Henry was a miner, and Richard John was now an insurance agent. Bill's widowed sister, Elizabeth FLEW, was living with their mother, Eliza, at her Cefn Road shop. Catherine's siblings were all nearby. Her older sister Ellen STENNER - widowed in the Parc Slip disaster - had a

⁵ According to Neville Granville Tyn y Coed was 'House in the Wood', 'a cottage in the fields just to the west of Bedford Road...though there was no very extensive woodland at that spot' (*letter to the author, 4 July 2023*)

⁶ In Victorian Britain, often referring to a heart attack, a stroke or an aneurysm

⁷ Neville Granville (1980) 'Cefn Cribwr: Chronicle of a Village', Stewart Williams, Barry. p. 159. Her death certificate, signed on 5 November by Dr Twist, reads 'Peritonitis, Cardiac failure'. Watkin Meredith was present at her death.

⁸ 2023 Letter from Neville Granville. By 1911 Watkin Meredith had become a collier, and moved to Bridgend, where he probably died in 1937, age 74.

farm in Tai Isaf Road, just off the Cefn Road, where she lived with her seven children – three of them working in the mines. This was also the first known record of Catherine's illegitimate daughter, Gwen, who was a 10 year old 'visitor' with the Stenners, still shedding no light on where she lived in her young years. Catherine's brother, Jabez DAVIES, was also a miner, living in nearby Kenfig Hill with his wife and five children, and her sister, Theresa JAMES, was in the same street with her husband, David, a mine labourer, and four children.

There may perhaps then have a welcome sense of relative calm in Bill and Catherine's extended Cefn family. After Queen Victoria died in January, the whole country celebrated the accession of Edward VII and his delayed Coronation in October 1901. Their fourth son, Albert Edward, was born on 16th September 1903 and finally a daughter, Catherine Elizabeth, was born on 11th February 1906. They were soon known respectively as Bertie and Kate. In the meantime, their eldest son, Eddie, was becoming a skilled rugby player, and his exploits at scrum half were regularly reported in the local papers. In the 1907-8 season, young Eddie was already a Welsh Schoolboy Rugby International and he soon graduated to play senior rugby, first for Cefn Cribwr and later for Bridgend. All of which must have been a source of pride in Bill's family, even if the washing chores would have been much increased.

But the later years were not to be so kind to these Cefn Caswills.
(To be continued in a later edition).

Printed Family Trees and Charts

Do you want your Family Tree printed for you on one sheet of paper? We can print your tree from your own computer genealogy program files no matter what program you use.

FREE tree design service, FREE colour printing. FREE preview service.

See your tree before you buy or pay a penny. Every customer previews their tree on their own dedicated website before deciding to buy or pay a penny. Prices start from as little as £25 for a 500 person tree. We also produce a wide range of other Family History charts, books and gifts for the genealogist. **FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE** if you are not satisfied with any of our products.

Please visit our website for further details or e-mail us your phone number and we'll call you to answer any questions you may have, you don't even pay for the call.

email: info@genealogyprinters.com

MORE RHONDDA MEMORIES

Oliver Davies, 1904-1994

Oliver Davies was born at 74 Brithweunydd Road, Trealaw, on 14th October, 1904, and whilst in his mid-80s he was encouraged to write of his early life in the Rhondda valley. It is thanks to his son, Clive Davies, now living in Melbourne, Australia, that we are able to publish this evocative account of his childhood in the Rhondda. We have published extracts previously in journals, and this will be the last.

The Church had a great influence on my life. I started church as a little Methodist at the local mission where I first stood on a stage as one of the boys portraying "Fry's Five Boys Chocolate". We wore sailor suits and I was the boy portraying "Realisation". I had to hold my tongue out before the curtain went up. The producer covered it with cocoa and I stood there for some time with my chocolate covered tongue hanging out. When I was 10 years of age a boy, Stanley MOREY, from an English family (the Welsh went to chapel, the English to church) took me to All Saints Church and I joined the choir. Ever since then I have sat in the chancel of a church as a choirboy, a server, lay-reader and priest. I have no idea what life would have been without my church life. Sunday School Outings were the great day of the year. In those days the number attending Sunday School would be counted in hundreds. Special trains would run through the valley. We would join other Sunday Schools on the crowded platform. Barry Island was a favourite place to go as the sands were large and safe. Another attraction in choosing Barry Island was that there were two tunnels on the way. We used to cover the lamps in the compartment and kiss the girls. On one occasion at Barry Island we were having refreshments at the Dorothy Restaurant. One boy from our school, Tommy GILBERT, walked through the French windows onto the stone balcony. He then cocked his leg over the stone parapet and started to walk on the glass veranda. He fell through the glass on to a crowded pavement below and on top of a woman. That caused a stir.

The last night of October, All Souls Night, *Nos Galan Gaeaf*, was great fun. First it was "Ducking Apple Night" when we filled a tub or bath with warm water in front of the fire and had apples floating in it. We had to get the apples out with our mouths. This meant pushing the apples to the bottom of the bath or trying to have the stem in one's mouth. Boys used to strip to the waist for this. Also, on this night young people used to dress up in any old clothes and walk around to one's neighbours. This was before the time when girls wore jeans so the girls used to love to dress in men's suits and with blackened faces. We had to recognise them as part of the fun.

A popular pastime in my boyhood was to go around houses of people we knew and ask if we could see children in their coffins. The first that I remember seeing was that of a girl who had been burned or scalded. She lived in one of the last white-washed farm cottages in Trealaw. The visit was quite a performance. We would be taken into the "front room" if they had one, by the local "layer". She would remove the veil from over the dead person's face and lift us up if we were too small to look over the side of the coffin. There would be a candle or two lit. The coffin lid would stand in a corner and this would have the engraved name of the dead person on a brass or silver panel. I thought there was always a smell of death in these rooms. It must have been that of the oak or elm of which the coffin had been made. My most frightening experience of this custom was when I was invited to see the body of Dick JONES, the son of Dick "Mush", who was a good bass singer. Young Dick had cut his throat in an outside "WC." When the veil was lifted it was noticeable that the throat was well covered. When I was a pupil at the Islwyn School in Porth, the whole school went down to a house in Aber-Rhondda Road, Ynyshir to see a classmate lying in his coffin.

Sometimes we would follow a drover driving cattle from the station to the slaughter house. We would, with a morbid interest, hang around and we were given a pig's bladder with which to play football. We played games that cost little in the way of equipment. Out of a broom handle we would make a "catty & dog". The "catty" was a portion of the handle of about six inches that was pointed at both ends. The catty laying on the ground was struck on one of the points with the "doggy" (about two feet of the rest of the handle). This would cause the catty to rise in the air where it would be struck by the doggy. It was played something like rounders or baseball.



c1922 Margaret (1876-1934), Ivor (1907-1962), Oliver (1904-94) & James Davies (1873-1941)

Boys and girls played "Scotch" in squares on the pavement. The boys also played "Hook Wheel". We had the wheel made by the local blacksmith. The hook could also be made by him, but a short broom handle would propel the wheel along.

On New Year's Day it was the custom for the people who lived in the large houses and also shopkeepers, to give oranges away. We would line up for them and very often go back to the end of the line to receive another orange. We would even change our jackets to carry out this trick. When we received oranges in Trealaw we would hear that they are giving away oranges in shops in Tonypany. We would run all the way there just to get an orange. At that time oranges were 25 to a shilling. The orange boxes had 2 or 3 divisions. These boxes were often used by newly-weds when they started life together in apartments - one front room and one bedroom and sharing the kitchen and outside WC. The boxes were covered by a light material and served as larder etc. In those days a couple would start married life together with just a double bed, a kitchen table and two chairs.

Three Trealaw men come to mind - John TRIGGAR, the Roadman, Mr EVANS, the Crier, and Alf BRYANT, the Household Rubbish Collector. Mr Trigg, judging from his non-Welsh surname must have come from England, and he swept all the roads in lower Trealaw, cleaned the drains and lit and put out the street lamps. I have no idea of the number of hours he must have worked in a week to be able to do all his jobs. His lamp-lighting work included cleaning the lamps and replacing the broken mantles. He carried a pole to reach the lever that let or stopped the flow of gas. At one end was an oiled wick that he lit if the lighted jet failed. We used to use the lamp posts as maypoles. We would hang orange ropes from the arms that were used to steady the ladder for repairs and cleaning. This constant swinging often loosened the lamp post. Mr Trigg would make us run when he came on the scene.

Mr Evans, the Crier, was used a great deal before radio and loudspeakers. If a colliery lodge meeting was called in a hurry or there was a sale in some shop Mr Evans would come and shout from the middle of the long street. If he was calling for a fete, carnival or garden party he would wear his peaked hat and frock coat. In between calls he would walk from corner to corner with his bell tucked on his left elbow. He was short and had a heavy moustache.

Alf Bryant was self-employed and supplied his horse. The local council provided the specially made ash cart with its double-sided doors or lids on the top. Every house used coal fires so there were plenty of coal ashes as well as the usual rubbish. He worked alone. The horse started and stopped at his command. On a windy day the dust from the ashes was great. Alf was a cheerful and handsome man with a fresh complexion and

wavy hair. He was a good churchman and he did a great deal of work for All Saints Church. He married a beautiful girl.

I am very proud of my parents. My mother was an "Angel". She loved working in her shop. She would prefer to be serving her customers than to be on holiday. During her thirty years of keeping shop she saw a few "strikes" and other periods of depression in the coal industry. The local women would often come to her with their troubles. The little office at the back of the shop saw many sad scenes with tears. A box in the safe contained many sovereigns and half-sovereigns each in its own marked paper. These have been "pawned" for food. They had been given to mothers as christening presents for the children. They were never redeemed.

I remember one typical incident. Two men were standing outside the shop window. One had a covered box under his arm. My mother called them into the office. They had been to the nearby cemetery for the burial of a stillborn baby. They had the little body in a cardboard shoe box. The sexton, who was an uncle of mine, William PHILLIPS, informed them the box or coffin had to be made of wood. He referred them to "Checks" as being the nearest shop to the cemetery. My mother emptied a prune box, placed the shoebox in it and had them nail on the lid. They then covered the box with the black cloth they had and returned to the cemetery. To have returned home with the little body would have been very distressing to the mother.

Living on "Cemetery Road" we would often see two men walking toward the cemetery - one with a parcel under his arm. On one occasion I carried such a parcel for Sam DAVIES for whom I had been "best man" at his wedding some months before. There was a by-law that a corpse could not be taken on a public vehicle so that was the reason for the walk to the burial. Many more small babies died in those days. All the fathers concerned wished to have a companion on that sad journey.

50th Anniversary Publication

If you currently opt for the on-line version of the journal and would like to order a paper copy of the 50th Anniversary publication that is to be issued in July please let the editor know by 30 June 2025 so additional copies can be printed and you can be added to the mailing list. Copies ordered after this date will incur an additional charge.

editor@glamfhs.org.uk

NEIL MCBRIDE MP

Part 2

#11208 John P Lethbridge

In part one of this article I looked at Neil MCBRIDE's early life. I concluded with his being elected Swansea East Labour MP at the 20 March 1963 Swansea East by-election. Now I look at his parliamentary career.

1964 A General Election was held on 15 October 1964. Harold WILSON's Labour Party's Swansea East candidate, Neil MCBRIDE, obtained 30,904 votes, 73% of the total.

The 1964 Swansea East Conservative candidate Commander Oliver Cecil WRIGHT obtained 7,863 votes, 18.6% of the total. He was born at Brentford in Middlesex in 1925, was a Royal Navy officer, married in 1961 and was to have four children. He was the unsuccessful Northampton Conservative candidate at the 1966 General Election and in the 1970 Brentford and Chiswick General Election, and died in 2014 aged eighty-nine.

The Plaid Cymru candidate, Edward Christopher (Chris) REES, received 3,556 votes, 8.4% of the total, and lost his deposit. I briefly looked at his life in part one of this article.

Nationally Harold Wilson's Labour Party won 317 seats, gaining fifty nine. (Alexander Frederick (Alec) DOUGLAS-HOME's Conservatives won 304 seats, losing sixty-one. Joseph (Jo) GRIMOND's Liberals obtained nine seats, gaining three. The Labour majority was four. Harold Wilson formed a government; but only the fact that all three parties' election workers were exhausted prevented another 1964 or a 1965 General Election.

1966 The next General Election was held on 31 March 1966, seventeen months after the previous one. Neil McBride at Swansea East received 30,290 votes, more than three-quarters of the total.

The Swansea East Conservative candidate, Timothy KNOWLES, a chartered accountant, obtained 6,241 votes, 15.5% of the total. He was born in 1938, and was to marry and have a daughter. He was a director of various companies and public bodies and a member of the Livery Company of Wales. His hobbies in his Who's Who entry are listed as *travel, watching cricket, golf, genealogy and challenging bureaucracy*.

Chris Rees for Plaid Cymru received 2,749 votes, 6.8%. He lost his deposit again.

The Communist, William Rhys JONES, obtained 902 votes, 2.2% of the total, and lost his deposit. He was born in Port Talbot in 1918. His family

moved to Swansea in 1924. He studied at Danygraig School, was a Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) shop assistant from 1934 to 1950, and served in the South Wales Borderers in Burma in the Second World War. He was married and became a CWS insurance agent in 1950.

William Rhys Jones joined the Communists in 1954. He was an USDAW (Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers) Branch Chairman and sat on Swansea Trades Council. He was active in the tenants' and residents' movement and campaigned against apartheid.

Nationally Labour won 364 seats gaining forty-even. Ted (Edward Richard George) HEATH's Conservatives won 253, losing fifty one. Jo GRIMOND's Liberals won twelve, gaining three. Harold Wilson remained Prime Minister this time with a secure majority.

1970 Harold Wilson called a General Election for Thursday 18 June 1970. He could have waited until 1971 but he was given false hope by favourable opinion polls, and wanted to hold the election before decimal currency was introduced on 15 February 1971.

At Swansea East Neil McBride received 28,183 votes, 68.5% of the total. The Conservative, Michael James MURPHY a British Telecom Engineer and Swansea Councillor, had 8,191 votes, 19.9% of the total. He was born in 1944, was married with children, and was Mayor of Swansea in 1984. He was an active charity worker, particularly with the Swansea Branch of the Leukaemia Research Association.

Plaid Cymru's (David) Roderick EVANS, a barrister, obtained 4,188 votes, 10.2% of the total, and lost his deposit. He was born in 1947 and studied at University College London. He was called to the bar in 1970, taught commercial law at the University of Wales, was made a QC (Queen's Counsel) in 1989, and was to be appointed a High Court Judge and knighted in 2001.

The communist, William Rhys Jones, obtained 563 votes, 1.4% of the total. He too lost his deposit.

Nationally, Ted Heath's Conservatives won 330 seats, gaining 76 seats. Harold Wilson's Labour Party won 288 seats losing 76. Jeremy Thorpe's Liberals won six seats and lost six.

The Scottish National Party (the SNP) won its first seat at a General Election as opposed to by-election victories. Donald James STEWART won Na h-Eileanan an Iar, ie the Outer Hebrides. This is the one area of Scotland where Gaelic is the majority language. Mebyon Kernow, the Cornish equivalent of Plaid Cymru, stood one candidate who received 960 votes.

Unlike the 1945-1951 Labour government the 1964-1970 Labour government disillusioned both many core supporters and the general public. The withdrawal of free school milk for 11-16 years olds upset many. Prescription charges were briefly abolished and then reintroduced. There was rising unemployment, industrial unrest and crime.

February 1974 Ted Heath's Conservative government tried and failed to control the unions. He called a General Election for 28 February 1974.

At Swansea East Neil McBride obtained 28,537 votes, 66.3% of the total. The Conservative, David MERCER, a Swansea solicitor, received 8,850 votes, 20.6% of the total. He later became BBC Tennis Correspondent. He died in 2020, aged seventy.

Plaid Cymru's, John Graham BALL, got 5,135 votes, 11.9% of the total, and lost his deposit. He was born in 1947 in Gorseinon and studied at Dynevor Grammar and Cardiff and Swansea University Colleges. He was a Post Office Engineer, a hardware shop manager, a buyer, and a Welsh Development Agency official. In 1994 he was appointed Senior Business Studies Lecturer at Swansea Business School and in 1996 was granted a University of Wales doctorate. I spoke to him earlier this year (2024), and as far as I know he is still alive.

The communist candidate, William Rhys Jones, got 507 votes 1.2% of the total. He too lost his deposit.

Nationally Labour won 301 seats, gaining fourteen. The Conservatives got 297 losing thirty-three compared to 1970. Jeremy Thorpe's Liberals won fourteen seats, gaining eight. The SNP won seven gaining six. Plaid Cymru won its first two General Election victories – Daffyd Wynne Wigley at Caernarfon and Dafydd Elis-Thomas at Meirionnydd. Both were in majority Welsh speaking areas.

Labour did not have a workable majority, but Harold Wilson became Prime Minister again. He did what he could.

Neil McBride was Secretary of the Parliamentary Labour Party (the PLP) Trade Union Group from 1964 to 1966. He also chaired the PLP Transport Group in this period.

From 1966 to 1968 McBride was an Assistant Labour Government Whip. He was a Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, ie a Junior Whip from 1969 to 1970 when the Labour government fell. Government Whips report to the Chief Whip whose official title is Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury. Their job is to ensure that MPs vote the official government line. From 1970 to 1974 he was a Labour Opposition Whip.

Neil McBride spoke in the House of Commons 719 times. He first spoke in a debate on Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation on 8 April 1963. His last recorded speech was on a debate about food prices on 7 February 1974.

Between 17 November 1966 and 24 July 1970 Neil McBride only spoke once. This was on 14 April 1969 in a debate about the Voting Rights of Ministers and other officials. There is a parliamentary convention by which government Whips do not normally participate in debates or ask questions, except in special circumstances.

When he did speak McBride raised issues of international, European, United Kingdom, Welsh and local Swansea concerns. He travelled extensively in Europe, Africa, South America and the Middle East while an MP. As President of Swansea Male Voice Choir he visited Swansea's twin town Mannheim in Germany.

A former Labour MP told me that international travel on official business is fascinating work but is usually far less glamorous than it sounds. Neil McBride opposed British entry into the Common Market.

Neil McBride chaired the Welsh PLP Group 1972-1973. His achievements for Swansea included helping get the Vehicle Driving and Licensing Centre located there, helping get Morganite Electrical Carbon Ltd to locate there, and he helped to speed up the building of Hafod Comprehensive School in the Swansea area. His hobbies were travel, reading, spreading socialism, and watching sport.

The End By February 1974 Neil McBride had spleen cancer. He could not take his parliamentary oath after he was elected so could not collect his salary. He died of cancer at his Swansea home on Monday 8 September 1974 aged sixty-four. The authorities were told of his death by his sister, May Philomena McBride. He left £14,211.

Neil McBride's widow, Bridget/Delia McBride returned to her native Paisley in Scotland. She died at the Royal Alexandra Hospital there on 21 March 1980 aged seventy. A requiem mass was held in her memory.

The Replacement By 9 September 1974 when Neil McBride died the 10 October 1974 General Election was looming so Swansea East Labour Party had to move fast. Fifty-five candidates were proposed, some of whom refused nomination. Six were shortlisted and Donald ANDERSON, a Swansea man, was selected as the Swansea East Labour candidate. As far as I know he is still alive. His story belongs to another article.

MARGARET EVANS, 3 MARRIAGES AND 200 DESCENDANTS

#1801 Clive Davies

In 1995 and 2005 Elwyn Hunt of Bendigo and GFHS member, organized reunions of the descendants of the three marriages of her great grandmother, Margaret Roderick, née Evans. The gatherings were held at a hall at Wesley Hill, a short distance from Roderick Street, Chewton, named in honour of Margaret's grandson, Bramley, who was mayor of Castlemaine in the 1920s.

Many of Margaret's over two hundred known descendants attended the reunion and viewed the memorabilia with keen interest. My g-g-grandfather's brother, Edward Roderick, Margaret's third husband, was my link to this large family.

Margaret Evans (right) was born in Llanwrda, Carmarthenshire, Wales, in 1833, the illegitimate daughter of Elizabeth Griffiths and Timothy Evans. In 1852 she married Morgan Gwillim at Ystradgynlais, ten miles from her birthplace. On 2nd January 1856 they sailed from Plymouth with their two young sons, Thomas and Richard, on the *Amazon*, arriving in Adelaide on 8th April 1856. Morgan's elder brother, David, his wife and three daughters, Margaret's mother, Elizabeth Griffiths, and her bachelor uncle, Richard Griffiths, a sawyer, were also on board. Anne, Margaret's half sister and her husband, David Davies, made up a party of 13.



The *Amazon* was a three-masted barque of only 796 tons but carried 297 passengers. There was only one death on the voyage, a two year old boy, and the ship's master and surgeon were commended for their zeal and diligence. These assisted passengers were described in the *South Australia Register* newspaper as 'a well selected group of persons'. Both David and Morgan Gwillim were listed on the 1851 census of Ystradgynlais as 'Iron Miner', an occupation much in demand in South Australia with its flourishing copper mines in the Burra district, 160K north of Adelaide. A daughter, Margaret, was born at Redruth Township, Burra to David and Ruth Gwillim on 25th August 1856.

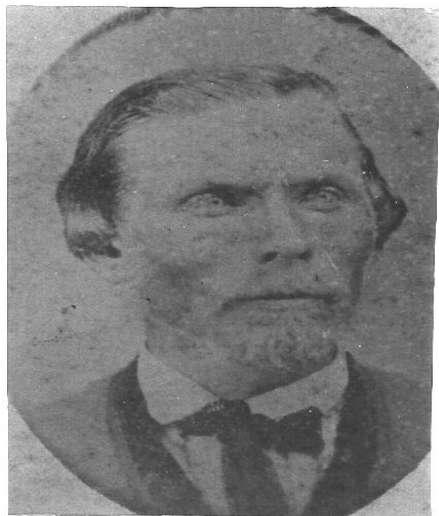
Their stay in Burra was brief, doubtlessly lured away by the burgeoning Victorian goldfields. The two families travelled some 760K on rough bush tracks by bullock cart and settled at Golden Gully, 6K from Castlemaine. 'Settled' might convey some permanence, but their first dwellings would

almost certainly have been tents before a more substantial, if temporary abode, was built at Golden Gully, a largely Welsh village, on the outskirts of Chewton. The 1864 rate books covering Golden Gully, and the adjacent Welsh-settled Donkey Gully, show inhabitants housed in tents, paling tents, bark and calico, slab and shingle and weatherboard huts. Both Gullies ran into the larger settlement of Golden Point. There were only three stone dwellings. Most of the Welsh settlers were former agricultural workers, speaking little English and strongly non-conformist. In 1852, a year after gold was discovered a Welsh chapel was built at nearby Wesley Hill and soon several more were to follow.

On 10th May 1858 tragedy befell the family. Whilst walking home at night from Castlemaine after a visit to the 'Robbie Burns' tavern, Morgan tumbled down a mine-shaft at Dog-Leg Reef and drowned after injuring his head. His body was not discovered until six weeks later by a miner, Ebenezer Way. His brother, David Gwillim, stated at the inquest on 23rd June at Moonlight Flat that *I thought he had two or three "nobbles" and wished to see him home but he did not wish it. I however felt anxious about him and went to his home to ask if he had got home. Search was made then and since.*

Eight months after Morgan's death, Margaret Gwillim married another Welsh gold miner, William Morgan Rees, born 1813 Brynaman, Glamorgan. The couple had three daughters, but only Rachel, born in 1860, survived infancy. Liver disease also took William to an early grave in 1868 and he lies beside his daughters in Franklinton Cemetery.

In 1869 Margaret married for the third time. Her husband was Edward



Roderick, also a Welshman, (photograph left) from Margam in Glamorganshire where he was baptised on 9 June 1832. He was the youngest of eight children of David Rhoderick (1788-1867) and Mary (nee Jenkin, 1790-1843). At the time of the 1851 census he was residing at Fferm Fach, a hamlet near Margam with his father, now widowed, his sister Mary and his niece, Ann. Both he and his father were farm labourers. This work was poorly paid and held little prospect of improvement. The chance of a fortune to be found in the goldfields of Victoria was extremely attractive.

On 22nd November 1854, in the company of three other young men from Margam, George Davies (b 1829) and the brothers Elias (b 1825) and William David (b 1830), Edward sailed from Liverpool on the *Shalimar*, bound for

Australia and the Victorian goldfields. In 1856 Edward was listed at Sebastopol on the 1856 Ballarat West Electoral Roll, where, as the holder of a digger's license, he was eligible to vote.

His pursuit of gold also took him to Tasmania. In June 1860 he was a passenger on the *Mary Grant* from Melbourne to Port Frederick (Devonport). Gold had been discovered 45 miles inland from there at the River Forth in 1859. Evidently he also tried his luck in New Zealand as in March 1862 he was aboard the *Humbolt* bound for Geelong from the Otago goldfields. Almost all the passengers on that ship were miners.

Eventually he settled between Castlemaine and Daylesford where, on 27th July 1869, he married the twice-widowed Margaret Rees at the Dry Diggings, sometimes called the Mt Franklin Goldfield¹. His late marriage at the age of 36 was likely caused by the lack of eligible women on the goldfields. The couple had three children, David, born 1870, Edward, born 1872 and William, born 1873. Rate notices show that Edward worked as a miner for most of his life in Victoria.

Edward Roderick passed away in August 1904. His obituary appeared in the Castlemaine newspaper, *The Mount Alexander Mail*, on 26th August of that year:

Another of the old pioneers of the district, Mr Edward Roderick, died at his residence, Little Bendigo², on Wednesday night at the age of 71. In following his calling as a miner he contracted miner's disease³ which eventually proved fatal. For fifty years he had lived in Victoria and seen all his family grow up, the youngest son having reached the years of manhood.

Further misfortune befell the family in 1915 when granddaughter, Doris Roderick (1901-93), burnt down her house. She was home from school with toothache and placed a candle too close to the curtains. She always said that she was never forgiven for this mishap. Margaret was living there with her son, David Roderick, his wife and nine children. The *Argus* of 28/1/1915 reported that a benefit was held to help replace all their belongings that were lost in the fire. 40 pounds was raised.

Margaret lived on until 1929. Her death notice appeared in the *Castlemaine Mail* on 22 July that year:

One of the earliest residents of the district, Mrs Margaret Roderick, died yesterday at her residence, Little Bendigo, at the advanced age of 96 years and despite her great age maintained her faculties to the end. She was born

¹ The Dry Diggings was 8k north of Daylesford.

² Little Bendigo was between Chewton and Castlemaine..

³ Silica dust from mining caused damage to the lungs, which rendered miners liable to infectious diseases such as bronchitis, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

in the Caermarthen (sic) district of Wales, and was the last of a group of Welsh people who arrived in Adelaide in 1856. She came to Forest Creek⁴ the same year, and except for some years at Yandoit, has resided here continuously and was held in the highest regard by all. She was twice married [actually thrice], her two eldest children being T Gwillim of Mildura who is 76 years of age and Mr R Gwillim who resided with her. Her second [actually third] husband, Mr E Roderick, died twenty-five years ago and among the children of that marriage are Messers David and Edward Roderick of Castlemaine.

Family members recall Nain (Welsh for Gran) Roderick as a woman of resolute if sometimes stubborn character. One descendant, who remembered her, described Nain as ‘a tough old bird.’ Her son, Richard Gwillim, who lived with her, had a girlfriend of whom she did not approve. The girlfriend used to live outside Castlemaine and Richard would go by train to visit her. One night he missed the final train and, rather than face the wrath of his mother, walked home. On his arrival in the small hours of the morning he found Nain waiting up, furious that he should be spending the night with that ‘hussy’. Alas, the girlfriend was to remain forever such, as Richard would not marry whilst his mother was alive and it was a further twenty years before Nain met her Maker.

OUR MORMON FAMILY HISTORY

#10900 Martin Owen

Part 2

In Part One of ‘Our Mormon Family History’ we read about the emigration of Mary Ann Jenkins (my great-grandmother’s sister) to Salt Lake City. We are lucky to have vivid descriptions of her journey.

Voyage of the John J Boyd

With Mary Ann Jenkins aboard, the *John J Boyd* sailed from Liverpool on 23 April 1862 with 702 Saints aboard. A contemporary account recorded:

‘On Monday afternoon, the 21st instant, Presidents Lyman, Rich, and Cannon visited the vessel ... organized the company appointing Elder James S Brown president, and Elders John Lindsay and Joseph C Rich his counselors, and delivered addresses to the Saints on their duties and the necessity for their living continually so as to enjoy the Holy Spirit, that its influence might sustain them under the changing scenes and varied circumstances incident to the journey they had entered upon. The Spirit of God poured forth, and a holy influence shed its power upon all on board’

⁴ Forest Creek was the original name for the Castlemaine area.

The company included a number of missionaries who had travelled from 'Zion' (Salt Lake City) in 1860 and 1861 and were returning to 'their homes in the valleys of the mountains' and a number of Presidents and Elders of English 'Conferences', including Hull, Derbyshire, Essex and Herefordshire, who 'hailed with much joy the arrival of the period when they were privileged to go to Zion with the gathering Saints'.

Counsello Joseph C Rich, just 21 and a returning missionary after two years in the UK, wrote in his journal:

'About half past nine, April 23rd, the tug left us to the mercy of the waves, and a kind Father in heaven. When the anchors were lifted, all hands were singing, laughing and joking. But oh how different the scene before night. Out of 700 passengers, only about a dozen could be found able to do anything.'

It was not all plain sailing.

Rich recorded that throughout the voyage some of the sailors and officers were constantly trying to stir up trouble by insulting the women and picking quarrels with the men. During one hymn singing, the third mate and some sailors 'rudely broke into their midst, knocking and pushing them around and singing loudly in opposition'. The first mate was 'a wicked and adulterous man & is determined to seduce some of the sisters; by his actions we soon perceived this and of course adopted strict guards by night and watches by day'. The captain was informed of this and other problems from the crew and gave them a talking. Brother Brown talked to the Saints publicly, told them we had been grossly insulted but by the assistance of God and the captain we would not be trampled over like dogs, which we all sanctioned. He also cautioned them against getting in the sailors' way and told them to keep down their temper, control their passions, suffer wrong rather than to do wrong & all would turn out right'.

Rations of potatoes, meat, pork, flour, peas, beans, sugar, bread, tea, vinegar, pepper and mustard were distributed. At one point there were apparently representations about the cooking and improvements were made.

'This company like all others are copiously supplied with grumblers, chiefly men who had ought to have better sense'. The following day, Brother Brown held a meeting with most on board present. He 'gave some instructions to the Saints encouraging them to endure their trials manfully. Advised grumblers to adopt a more manly course & be men instead of children'.

At another meeting, Brother Brown stated that 'there were some thieves on board who would do well to stop their stealing as some of them were

known & if they did not change their tactics they would be disfellowshipped’.

It was a stormy passage.

An eleven year old traveller from South Wales, Mary Evans Williams Leatham, later recalled:

‘We were seven weeks on the ocean. It was a very rough voyage. The ship lost a mast during a storm and then began to leak. The passengers had to help the crew work at the pumps day and night to keep from sinking.’

She was travelling with her father, sick mother with a carer, her brother and her two sisters. Sadly, her ten year old brother fell down a hatchway and was killed. Apparently it was the family’s fourth son to die within sixteen months and the only remaining boy.

Passengers were advised to go on deck as much as possible to minimise sea-sickness.

At the end of the voyage the leaders presented the captain with an appreciation of his conduct, including ‘the high respect and kind protection extended during our religious services’ and the solicitude of his wife for the ‘wants of the weak’.

On arrival on 1 June 1862, the ship docked at Castle Garden, America’s first official immigration centre from 1855 to 1890. The captain of each arriving ship filed a Customs Passenger List with the collector of customs. Castle Garden was closed in 1890 and its site is now the Battery.

Journey to Salt Lake City

We do not know exactly which route Mary Ann took from New York to Salt Lake City. But the typical route involved a rail or a steamship journey up the Hudson River to Albany NY (about 150 miles), rail journeys from Albany to near Niagara Falls (about 290 miles), then along the Lakes to Detroit (about 240 miles), then to Chicago (about 280 miles), then to Quincy on the Mississippi (about 310 miles), then to Hannibal, Missouri (about 16 miles), then to Saint Joseph, Missouri (about 190 miles). From there the travellers took a steamboat (open with no protection from heat or cold) up the Missouri River for 3 days to Florence, Nebraska (about 140 miles).

The last leg involved a nearly 1000 mile ox trek from Florence to Salt Lake City, probably with a ‘down-and-back’ team that had come from Salt Lake City. Of Mary Ann’s company, one group of 200 travellers, fifty wagons and teams of oxen left Florence in late June and arrived at Salt Lake City

on 29 September. One traveller in a party which left Florence on 22 July and arrived in Salt Lake City near the end of September, covering about 15 miles a day, recorded:

'Tents were provided one for every wagon & a man appointed to see that the tents were properly staked down each night & placed in the wagon next morning. An average of 12 persons slept in each tent & had all their belongings in one wagon. Prayers were held in each camp night & morning, all were called together for that purpose at the sound of the bugle & the captain gave counsel & issued orders for the day. Flour & bacon was furnished to everybody but of course every family had to do their own cooking, bake, skillets & frying pans & kettles were furnished. Most of the time we could get wood to make the fires. But it was really a great trial for many people to cook their food outdoors in the heat, the wind & the smoke. But each helped the others wherever they could & we got along nicely considering the peculiar conditions they were placed in.'

Another recorded:

'Sun rises, camp guard calls up the people, and in a short time all are busy cooking breakfast, washing, dressing children and preparing for the day's journey. Horn blows for prayers, breakfast is dispatched, the voice of the Cap is heard "oh yes get up the cattle", a general bustle to clear away, pack up and get ready to start. The cattle is yoked up, hitched up and out we roll once more at half past 8 on our journey to the gathering place of the Saints. Travel 7 miles, corral, water the cattle, get dinner, hitch up and off again over a rough road for 8 miles and corral once more, get supper, and as it is a fine moonlight night, get in groups sitting round the fires talking merrily. Horn blows, we assemble for prayers and instructions are given relative to our duties by Cap Johnson, interpreted to the Swiss by Bro Woodward, the evening hymn and benediction closes the scene and all retire to rest.'

Those who could, walked, others travelled in the wagons. Singing and dancing was common in the evenings. The weather and terrain were very variable. Rivers had to be forded, mountains crossed. Some small settlements and groups of Indians (usually friendly) were passed en route.

Part 3 will describe Mary Ann's later life in Utah, her marriage to another Welshman, and the adventures of her older sister, Catherine, and brother, William Rudolph Jenkins, when they too sailed from London a year after Mary Ann. We also read of what Charles Dickens thought about all these would-be settlers (and the Welsh!).

FINDING A HOME FOR THE BEER BIBLE

#2 Diane Brook

Part 1

It was 4 January 2025. Patience and research were finally rewarded but it had been a long story.

Before Covid and Zoom meetings, the Cardiff branch of the Glamorgan Family History Society committee was meeting. Jean JONES, a very long term member, asked if anyone would take a huge Bible she had been given and find a family member who would appreciate it. Her granddaughter had found it, in the loft of a flat in Barry. As I had connections in Barry and had moved to a large house there, I agreed to take it on, thinking it could be fairly straightforward and fun to research. It was found about 2007 and I must have taken it about 2013 to 2014 as I moved to Barry in early 2013.

The large English Bible was not a traditional family one as it didn't have birth, marriage and death entries. It did have printed pages for these, in the usual position between the Old and New Testaments, but nothing had been filled in. It had only a dedication on a blank front page which reads:

'Presented to Myra Elizabeth BEER by her loving Mother Mary Beer on her 16th Birthday April 14th 1915', followed by 'Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life And they are they which testify of me, St John 5th chapter, 39th verse.'

So, a nice distinctive forename, Myra, and a less common surname, Beer, a birth date and the mother's forename.

I think Jean had already found Myra's birth record, June quarter of 1899 in Cardiff district. The 1901 census shows Myra with her parents, William J Beer and Mary, and siblings. The children's birthplaces show the family had come from Swansea to Cardiff between 1895 and 1899.

One Ancestry tree has Myra's mother as Mary Leyshon with the reference to FreeBMD indexes (www.FreeBMD.org.uk). A check there shows that the Mary Leyshon married in Swansea in 1894 did not match a William Beer but the index has the page number mistranscribed as 1481 instead of 1484 as shown in the image of the general register index: (https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp).

So, Myra had Welsh ancestry, Leyshon being a good Glamorgan surname while Beer originates in Devon although spread to many places.

No doubt the Beer and Leyshon families could be traced further back but did Myra have descendants?

Myra married George LEWIS in Barry in 1919. Their son, William Edward Lewis, was born the following year, 1920. Records were found mainly on Ancestry. Attempts to find relatives through Ancestry trees bore no fruit. I left the search on one side for quite a while.

I took up the search again in 2020, posting on the Glamorgan FHS Facebook page in August. I got one reply:

‘....there's a record for a William E Lewis at 2, Pontypridd Rd, Barry, CF62 7LX in 2002. The other occupant is Sarah Lewis.

William was single in the 1939 register, and potential marriages in Glamorgan after then offer Sarah SIMS, Jun Q 1842 (Swansea) or Sarah Evans (Ponty); Sarah Evans (E Glam) Jun Q 1943; or Sarah Berry (Ponty) Jun Q 1946.’

I had an email conversation with a member then who posted the above reply. She worked on the family further, following forward Myra's siblings and suggesting possible contacts which I tried, but no one answered. She also checked for deaths and burials and found a probable death for William Lewis in 2001.

By 2024, I was seriously thinking about sorting out my library; too many books, my own family papers, remains of projects and research, and items that needed donation, including the Bible. I thought if I couldn't find a taker, I could just preserve the dedication page and actually throw away the book. Or, perhaps it could be used as sort of visitors book at the ARC.

In November 2024, I reviewed all the possible Ancestry users I had tried before and either they hadn't replied to my messages, or were no longer active. I looked again for other users with this particular Beer family on their tree and found an active user based in Cardiff with a number of trees. I messaged them in hope and got a very helpful reply outlining a bit more about the Beer family but they didn't want the Bible as the connection was only by marriage. With the new suggested relatives I did yet another search. This time I got new results including an active researcher but with a private tree. As I keep my own Ancestry tree private, this didn't put me off and I messaged Lisa, the tree owner.

What a lovely response.

‘Hi Diane, this sounds lovely and I would definitely cherish something that relates to my family. My email is [email address]. Although we live in Staffordshire, my husband and I would be willing to travel and meet somewhere to pick up the bible. I have maternal family who live in Cardiff so a visit to Barry would be more than wonderful. I would love to see some pictures of the bible, if you are able to email. Thank you so much Lisa’

At last! I made haste to reply, sending some images. We arranged for them to meet me in Barry on the 4th of January in the New Year.

Lisa replied:

'Brilliant. I will be happy to tell you of the family connection when we meet. I will bring a tree of my connection to Myra as well. The bible verse quoted is extraordinary and while I know there are many interpretations and meanings, it has a meaning to me. My eldest daughter has a lot of faith in the Church of England, so I know this will be something she will want eventually passed to her as an heirloom.'

And so, they came, and we talked family history and other interests too, passing a very pleasant afternoon. The Beer family connection was relatively remote but well established as Lisa has extensively researched the wider Beer family.

As Lisa has other Welsh connections she may join the Glamorgan Family History Society.

Part 2 of the story of the Bible will tell of my further research into the Beer family, and where I believe the Bible was actually found.

BEYOND THE HORIZON - SOME THOUGHTS ON IMMIGRATION INTO GLAMORGAN.

#3450 CT Davies

Migration is a multi-faceted subject and as such the angle of light and the viewer's standpoint makes a world of difference to their observations when compared to that of others.

Migration into Glamorgan to find employment in the new industrial expansion was not necessarily a permanent move. Many individuals and those with young families, moved on to other places, and took up other occupations. Glamorgan may have eventually contained half the population of Wales within its boundaries, however, how many of those over time have returned home or travelled far and wide.

What then is the outcome when an individual remains where they are, and the artificial boundary is moved? As far as Glamorgan is concerned there have been changes in the boundaries of Glamorgan and Breconshire that have been absorbed over time, so our individual, the fourth generation born on the family farm, and who continues to farm there, wakes up one morning to find that he is now a resident in another county. He appears in locally based studies as a migrant, when clearly he was not!

Although Ravenstein's "Laws of Migration", drawn up in 1885, may have been a work of importance at the time, he did not have the advantage of access to the Census Returns for the detailed birthplaces of individuals. As experienced researchers will confirm, no matter what nine family members did to seek a better lifestyle; there is always a tenth member who does not abide by the "Laws". The pattern of age, sex, work, and home, and of migrants, were not necessarily in line with Ravenstein's thinking.

To try and detail migration into an artificially defined location can be an exhausting challenge. Any individual drawing up a series of lines on a map leading from where their ancestors were born, and placing a dot on that locality, may have a result that looks like beads on a chain: some straight, or curved, or one that is jumbled into a mess.

Some may decide to specialise in their family from more distant parts or one with an unusual surname, simply because too many "migrated" to allow a study in depth. At some stage in their lives two distant cousins may arrive at the same place, and then the fun begins trying to plot the route each branch took to become united again. This I have experienced quite recently after nearly 38 years of research when I discovered that my niece and her best friend from school days are 6th cousins.

Many family tree students will have discovered ancestors from outside their home county, and Glamorgan is full of them. Come to think about it, we are all descendants of migrants. Our ancestors did not spring to life from tubers lying dormant under the ice when it began to retreat 10,000 years ago.

Y TU HWNT I'R GORWEL – MYFYRDOD AR YMFUDO I FORGANNWG #3450 CT Davies

Mae ymfudiad yn bwnc amlochrog ac felly mae gogwydd a safbwynt y gwyliwr yn gwneud byd o wahaniaeth i'w sylwadau wrth eu cymharu â rhai pobl eraill.

Nid oedd ymfudo i Forgannwg i ddod o hyd i waith yn yr Ymlediad Diwydiannol o angenrheidrwydd yn symudiad parhaol. Symudodd nifer o unigolion, a'r rheini gyda theuluoedd ifanc, i leoedd gwahanol, gan ymgymryd â gwaith gwahanol. Yn y diwedd efallai bod Morgannwg wedi rhoi cartref i hanner poblogaeth Cymru o fewn ei ffiniau, ond faint o'r rheini dros y blynyddoedd sydd wedi dychwelyd adref neu wedi teithio ymhell i fwrdd?

Beth felly yw'r canlyniad pan fydd unigolyn yn aros yn y man lle mae, a phan fydd y ffin artiffisial yn symud? Cyn belled ag y mae Morgannwg yn y cwestiwn bu nifer o newidiadau yn ffiniau Morgannwg a Brycheiniog a lyncwyd dros amser, felly mae ein hunigolyn, y bedwaredd genhedlaeth a anwyd ar fferm y teulu, ac sy'n dal i ffermio yno, yn deffro un bore i ddeall ei fod bellach yn byw mewn sir arall. Mewn astudiaethau lleol mae'n ymddangos fel ymfudwr, ond heb os doedd hynny ddim yn wir!

Er bod "Cyfreithiau Ymfudo/Laws of Migration" Ravenstein, a luniwyd ym 1885, yn waith pwysig ar y pryd, nid oedd ganddo'r fantais o weld manylion man geni unigolion yn Ffurflenni'r Cyfrifiad. Fel y bydd ymchwilyr profiadol yn cadarnhau, does dim ots beth wnaeth naw aelod o'r teulu i chwilio am fywyd gwell, heb os, ni fydd y degfed aelod yn dilyn y "Cyfreithiau". Nid oedd patrwm oed, rhyw, gwaith, cartref, nac ymfudwyr, o angenrheidrwydd yn dilyn ffordd o feddwl Ravenstein.

Mae ceisio neilltuo ymfudo i mewn i leoliad a grëwyd yn artiffisial yn medru bod yn sialens lafurus. Mae'n bosibl y bydd unrhyw unigolyn sy'n rhoi cyfres o linellau ar fap yn arwain oddi wrth y lle y ganwyd eu cyndeidiau, gan roi dot ar yr ardal honno, yn cael canlyniad sy'n edrych fel gleiniau ar gadwyn, rhai'n syth, neu wedi'u gwyro, neu un sydd yn gymysg oll i gyd.

Efallai y bydd eraill yn penderfynu canolbwyntio ar eu teulu o bellafodd byd, neu un gyda chyfenw anghyffredin, yn syml oherwydd i ormod ohonynt "ymfudo" i alluogi astudiaeth fanwl. Ar ryw adeg yn eu bywydau efallai y bydd dau gefnder pell yn cyrraedd yr un lle, ac yna mae'r hwyl yn dechrau wrth geisio olrhain y llwybr a gymerwyd gan bob cangen er mwyn ail ymuno â'i gilydd. Rwyf wedi profi hyn yn ddiweddar iawn ar ôl bron i 38 blynedd o ymchwil pan ddarganfyddais fod fy nith a'i ffrind gorau o ddyddiau ysgol yn 6ed cyfnitherod.

Bydd nifer o'r rheini sy'n astudio'r Goeden Deuluol yn darganfod cyndeidiau o'r tu allan i'w sir deuluol, ac mae Morgannwg yn llawn ohonynt. Wrth feddwl am y peth, rydym i gyd yn ddisgynyddion ymfudwyr. Ni wnaeth ein cyndeidiau neidio i fodolaeth o gloronen a fu'n gorwedd yn ddifywyd o dan iâ pan ddechreuodd gilio 10,000 o flynyddoedd yn ôl.

Translation EE Edwards

LETTERS/EMAILS to the EDITOR

Jan Donald has written to ask for more information on members of the Cory family (Cory Bros of Cardiff). She is the 3x great-granddaughter of Richard Cory (1799-18820), and has already accumulated material from public records on the internet, but as she lives in the Highlands of Scotland visiting other sites is difficult, although she intends to visit Welsh archives once she retires.

Joanna Wilkins is trying to trace her late father's family who came from Llantwit Major and surrounding villages. She lives in Sussex so has to rely on research online. She writes: 'Using Find My Past and carefully checking dates and data, I am reasonably confident I can trace his family back to a Christopher Wilkins who married an Anne Rodman in Llysworney on 22/7/1723 but can find no earlier details for either. As they and their descendants lived in Llantwit Major I contacted their local history society and they sent me an article that linked my ancestors to Rev Thomas Wilkins of St Mary Church. However, when I checked his dates and those of his sons I could not find a suitable link. Also, as Christopher and Evan have been dominant names in my family from the 1700s to present times, and the antecedents of Rev Thomas did not have these names, I am not convinced of the connection.'

Random sightings show a large number of Christopher and Evan Wilkin(s) in neighbouring villages going back to the late 1500s but so far I can establish no link between any of them and my ancestor. I wonder if this is an area of research for any of our members? I have traced all subsequent lines of my father's family, both male and female, and would be delighted to share these with any interested member'.

Colin Davies is asking if anyone has information on the Grand Order of the Buffaloes - he knows there was a branch in Blaengarw as he has come across a certificate of registration dated 1920 given to his paternal grandfather, but would like to know more about the order: how long did this last and were there any other orders in Glamorgan?

If anyone can help, then please contact the editor:

editor@glamfhs.org.uk who will pass on all answers and relevant contact details.

FROM THE MEMORY CHEST:

Summer Berries

Summer is the time for wimberries/whinberries - spellings vary, those small blackish-blue berries growing close to the ground of the upland areas of Glamorgan. Not quite the taste of blackcurrants, (blackcurrants are sharper), and not quite like blueberries, and different from blackberries, their unique taste made a wonderful tart served up warm with custard. Older people remember how as children they were sent out up the mountainside to pick these so that a tart could be made, and the more enterprising children would collect them in pint-sized milk bottles and sell them to gain some extra pocket money. If they were lucky they could get two shillings for a pint, and on a good day, two shillings and sixpence. Growing so close to the ground these berries meant that the younger the picker was, the faster they could fill their bottles, as the bending and kneeling was not good for older knees!

BOOK REVIEWS

I am bringing two works to your attention this time, the first is the 34th volume of the Merthyr Historian, reviewed by Huw Williams of Cardiff University, and the second is from Pen & Sword books that sheds light on a dark period of our past, Victorian Baby Farming: some shocking stories of the underbelly of Victorian life.

THE MERTHYR HISTORIAN

VOLUME 34

Merthyr Tydfil and District Historical Society does not disappoint yet again with its almost annual publications and volume 34 is an attractive volume, well-illustrated in black and white and colour, with numerous authors – some brand new to the publication, others well recognised over many years, committee members and those living away (one contributing author now resides in the Philippines). Given that in many ways local history is but family history by another name, this volume is again at the forefront of family research and draws on several themes of local and national interest. Minorities within the town are finally accorded a recollection: ethnic individuals, LGBT, a revered Jewish family and the boxing career of Cuthbert Taylor (1909-1977), who by dint of his colour, was marginalised and barred from the due accolades of the fight ring. Daryl Leeworthy, a notable and prolific author on South Wales history, contributes a detailed resume of the background and history of the gay scene within Merthyr Tydfil. There is something in this book for everyone's tastes.

A brief editorial at the outset includes a tribute to the late and much-lamented Brian Davies, a contributor to several numbers of the Merthyr Historian. There is also contained at the front on a single page "Guidance For Submissions To Merthyr Historian". The local historian will revel at a walk (albeit an illegal sojourn on the railway lines barely closed at the beginning of the 1960s) along the track northwards out of Dowlais towards Pontsticill with several well captioned photographs of what once was the Brecon to Merthyr Tydfil (and Dowlais) railway line. Several transcriptions of hitherto awkward or plain hard-to-get sources are included here: on several educational developments within the town taken from a rare Almanack of 1897 and a transcription taken from HW Southey, printer and publisher of the town on education in the parish; a more than useful history of Abermorlais School situated on the so-called British Tip overlooking Georgetown and Merthyr Tydfil town centre; up to date, news from the Welsh Heritage School's Initiative and the 2024 prize winners. There is coverage in the pages of the Merthyr Express newspaper of David Morgans (Cerddwyson, to give him his Bardic title) and his pioneering research on local music and musicians. A review of non-conformity in the area, again amply illustrated, is provided by the hardest working historian of the town and secretary to the Society, Stephen Brewer, and an account of medieval Morlais Castle provide a wide range of topics.

The volume is a pleasing production and more is promised next year at the bicentenary of Cyfarthfa Castle, home of the Crawshay ironmasters, 1825-2025 and where another Society publication is pending publication in the course of 2025.

£12.00 per volume + p & p, Huw Williams, January 2025

Contact the Society at: www.mtdhs.org.uk

Editor's note: *Huw Williams is a retired historian who taught for 25 years at Swansea, Cardiff and Glamorgan Universities. In retirement he is a part-time lecturer and gives 'walks and talks' around the Merthyr area as Merthyr's official town crier, wearing full dress!*

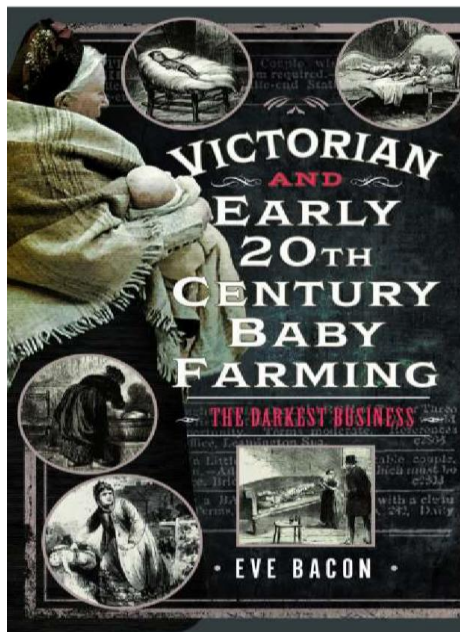
COPYRIGHT - PLEASE NOTE

When submitting material for publication in the journal that the copyright of all images and source material used in articles must be attributed, preferably in foot or end notes.

Where, after considerable research, it has not been possible to identify the original owner of the copyright prior to publication, attribution if later available, will be provided in a subsequent edition

VICTORIAN AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY BABY FARMING - The Darkest Business Eve Bacon

The book examines the Victorian business of baby farming and the society which helped to foster it, and the later attempts to bring it to an end. I found it an enthralling but difficult read, and ultimately very depressing. Over 100 baby farming cases are detailed: 'the good, the bad, and the murderous' as the press release states, covering the chapter headings of Abandonment, Fraud, Cruelty, Manslaughter and Murder. There are some good stories of baby farming, but not many, and I was surprised to learn of how some of our long-established and well-known insurance companies obtained much business providing insurances for some of these 'carers'. The roles of midwives, coroners, judiciary and police are also examined, and there are many illustrations of the people and places involved.



There are some shocking stories but they should be told, and the family historian could well be asking if there was a baby farmer in his or her family, or indeed if he or she had one of these abandoned children who survived, as an ancestor.

The Author, Eve Bacon, was an English teacher before retirement with a fascination for the Victorian period. She has often been called upon to give talks on the subject to various family history societies and has featured as an expert in a BBC Radio documentary.

Pen & Sword Books, 240 pages hardback, £25.00, ISBN:9781036119567

SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY

Unfortunately, we had to make changes to our planned event for January due to our guest speaker being unwell. It was decided to hold a research session instead.

In February we welcomed Keith Jones, a new speaker to our Branch, who was warmly received. Keith spoke about some of Wales most 'inspirational women', some of whom were local women. Keith has agreed to come back in July to give us another talk.

In March Jennifer George returned and gave us a talk on "Cynon Valley's Hall of Fame". Jennifer is a very knowledgeable and entertaining speaker; she gave us an excellent talk on George Henry Hall, who was a Labour politician and a Member of Parliament, who rose from humble origins to become the first miner to ever sit in the House of Lords.

In April, we had a research session and the time was well spent helping members with their research using Ancestry records. David Barnard came along and successfully set the Society database up on our Branch laptop.

ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE

The ARC continues to open on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays for visitors and research. Visitor numbers remain low, but it is hoped that as the summer progresses that this will change. We have bookings for April and May, so let's hope so.

The volunteers are continuing their work with the reference library and the family trees, this is an activity that will take most of this summer to complete. The scanning of index cards is continuing as is the conversion of the publications to downloads.

The ARC team has helped prepare books and materials for the Malvern Show in March, which was well attended and proved useful.

On 5th April the ARC with the Bridgend branch hosted a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Society. It was well attended and had a couple of short very interesting talks, with background music from a local harpist.

ARC Focus: This quarter we are focussing on Family Trees. There is a considerable collection of trees held in the ARC. They are being collated and it is hoped to provide a list of them on the website: it is always worth

checking with us in case we have a connection to your research area. Some are quite old and it is difficult to decipher some of the writing. If interested contact us on: arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

BRIDGEND

Things have been fairly quiet in Bridgend since the last report. Obviously, the highlight was the 50th Anniversary celebration at the ARC. Thank you to everyone who attended as a speaker, with a display from their Society and to help with the setting up. The great teamwork made the whole day run perfectly. And the cake was superb! It was great to see so many people doing research in the ARC in the morning – with at least 40 people attending it was practically standing room only. All that and a harpist too – what more can we ask.

Our recent speakers, both returning speakers, have been very well received. Ian Price gave an excellent talk on the fascinating extended family of Caroline Williams, who has a blue plaque on Newcastle Hill, Bridgend and was a relative of Dr Richard Price. It is always fascinating to learn about remarkable local residents, especially women. Jennifer Evans returned to talk to us about the Edwin Miles Photo Collection at the Gwent Archive. Miles specialised in photos of local sites around the Bridgend area which provide a valuable record for genealogists and historians. Some of us spent a very productive few minutes searching for the location of one photo of a substantial archway in Aberkenfig – which I was convinced was mis-labelled. We located it on an old map in the ARC and worked out it led into a local business back in the early 1900s. We have several possible speakers in line for the summer months.

Visits are being planned for the coming months including one to the Glamorgan Archives and a minibus trip up to the National Library in Aberystwyth. Further details will be shared via Mailchimp in the next weeks.

CARDIFF & VALE

The topic of our March meeting, at Glamorgan archives, was “Solicitors’ Records”. The documents displayed ranged from 1720, with a Court Roll from the Manor of St Hilary (Gwyn and Gwyn Solicitors, Cowbridge), until 1992, with a photograph of a visit to Cardiff Bay by the House of Commons Select Committee. (Iwan Humphreys, solicitor CBDC).

Many of the items were concerned with property, for example, Title Deeds from James Street, Cardiff 1851-1948, lettings on Heath Estate 1921, and sale particulars for the Beaupre Estate, 1909. There was a copy of the Will and Probate of Mary Matthews, Cardiff, 1755, from Llewellyn and Hann solicitors, and a Wills book 1894-1907 from Gwyn and Gwyn, Cowbridge.

Other firms represented in the collection were: Larby Williams of Cowbridge; Vaughan and Roche of Newport and Cardiff (a logbook for a voyage from London to Philadelphia, 1913); Randall Solicitors of Bridgend (a judging book from Bridgend Fat Stock Show 1909; Arthurs Solicitors, (lists of freeholders in Vale parishes, 1807); and Stockwood Solicitors of Bridgend (theatre programmes, 1861-1879).

Our thanks to Rhian Diggins, Senior Archivist, for showing us that there can be quite a few unexpected items worth searching for in the records of our local solicitor firms!

Members from other branches are always most welcome to attend.

Karen Prior, cardiff@glamfhs.org.uk

MERTHYR TYDFIL

The first 3 meetings of the year were well attended but this had fallen off in April, possibly due to the wonderful weather. We will review having a meeting every month.

However, more people than ever went to the Gelligaer History Day and it was as excellent as ever. Although we much regretted the closure of Llancaiach Fawr and its probable sale by Caerphilly Council, we still enjoyed the new venue. The four talks took place in the new council chambers and so we felt very comfortable. The talks covered a huge variety of subjects and there was certainly something for everyone: ancient links between Wales and Rome, links with the Ukraine, reclaiming industrial land in Wales and writings on Welsh history. It was a good chance to see old friends and the event was superbly organised as usual.

Cyfarthfa Castle is celebrating its bicentenary this year and the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society have invited our branch to join in with their book launch of an amazing book on Cyfarthfa Castle which commemorates this. Our members have researched the lives of the servants of the Crawshay family of Cyfarthfa.

The Merthyr Branch also assists with a further local event. The Labour Club (formerly the old Court House and the oldest building in Merthyr) is hosting the Dic Penderyn Society Day Conference on Saturday 31st May from 10am. Attendees are welcome to attend in the morning, the afternoon or both.

Nearby Brecon has a new wonderful local history museum, and we are planning a trip over the Beacons to view this and their local history library, now in the same building.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of one of our oldest members, Dr Fred Holley. As well as attending our meetings in his 96th year he was also president of the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society and an important member of the Gelligaer Historical Society. When I last saw him, he assured me with a twinkle in his eye that he would come to a meeting so long as I promised that the speaker would have an exceptionally loud voice. Fred's dedication and involvement with local history never ended.

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA

Since our last report, we have continued to meet on the third Tuesday of the month at the Pontypridd Museum and have welcomed interesting speakers to all of our meetings.

In January, our Branch Chairman, Mike Jones, presented an excellent film made in the 1980s called 'The Prince of Porth' about William Evans and the story of Corona 'pop'.

By pure co-incidence, our speaker in February was Dr John Geraint, author and documentary maker who had produced that film. John's topic was 'Writing the Rhondda: Fact or Fiction?' and was based on his recent books (which are highly recommended if you have an interest in or connection to the Rhondda Valleys)

In March, we welcomed Phil Rowlands who told us about the history of the Mid-Rhondda Athletic Field and in April, Keith Jones's thought-provoking topic was 'The Demon Drink: Chapels, Temperance and Government Interference'.

Attendance has been around 10-12 members and guests per meeting. It would be nice to see more attending particularly as the weather should now be improving. We have some interesting talks lined up for the summer months so please feel free to visit us if any of them interest you.

Finally, I am sure you will all join us in sending our very best wishes to our secretary, Jane Jones, who has not been well lately.

SWANSEA BRANCH REPORT

Secretary's Report – the branch continues to meet at the West Glamorgan Archives on the second Tuesday of each month, although there will be no meeting in July or August, and we would normally expect an average of 8-10 people attending.

This year the talks from the archivists will continue as before, followed by time given to helping people with their research, and we thank the archivists for their willingness to continue with these talks throughout 2025.

Preparations are being made to move the main library and archives to a refurbished building in the city centre. We do not know when this will happen, but we already foresee parking problems, as there are no parking spaces near this building for those with limited walking ability.

The archives team continues to surprise us with the records available. In March, Andrew Dulley spoke to us about the history of health, from Medieval times to the present day. This included the building of almshouses, workhouses, infirmaries and the importance of building and friendly societies.

Unfortunately, as this talk was taking place, our former secretary, Cherry King, had a nasty fall in the city centre and ended up in Morriston Hospital having 12 stitches in her lip. Thank goodness for our NHS.

In April we looked at maps and publications connected with the copper trade in Swansea.

We have not, as a branch, attended any local family history fairs due to lack of volunteers. We have had some approaches from people willing to help with transcribing and training will be instigated. Anyone interested please contact:

Janet Neilson, swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

NEWS FROM GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES JANUARY-MARCH 2025

Staff

- Anna Watson, Corporate Trainee Digital (Archive) Assistant joined us in early-January. Anna will be working on all things digital across the office, including digitising of documents, enhancing catalogue data, and producing content for social media.

Access and Community Engagement

- Our talks in February and March were both fully booked. On 3 February Dr Ben Curtis spoke on 'The Final Battle: The South Wales Miners, 1979-1985'. And on 26 March Ted Richards from the Friends of Cathays Cemetery gave a talk on the cemetery's history, nature, and some of the people buried there.
- On 28 April at 2pm we will be joined by Keith Moger who will be giving a talk entitled 'The Story of Cardiff's Hospitals'. On 16 May we are hosting a day school on women's history organised by Women's Archive Wales. And on 11 June we will be joined by Tiger Bay and the World for a talk on

their work and their collection. Booking details can be found on our website.

- School visits continue, with a research group from Deri Primary visiting as part of their work to create a local history app for their village. We also began a series of visits by all schools from Ely and Caerau in Cardiff. Each Year 6 class will visit during the spring for a workshop looking at the development of the housing estates in the area. The first school to visit at the end of March was Ysgol Nant Caerau.
- A group of Masters students in history at Cardiff University visited for a tour behind the scenes and to discover more about our services and collections.
- Members of GFHS Cardiff & Vale Branch visited the Archives for their March meeting. The theme was solicitors' records.
- Visits have also been made by a range of groups, including Cardiff Medical Society, the Heritage and Cultural Exchange in Butetown, the Innovate Trust, Cardiff Council Tenants Together, and Menter Caerdydd.
- The LGBTQ+ extension to the House of Memories app is now live, and includes content contributed by Glamorgan Archives. House of Memories is a museums-led dementia awareness programme. The app includes images of objects from historic collections, using them to prompt memories through conversations. It aims to support people with dementia and connect heritage and culture with health, housing and community and social care. The app reflects Welsh experiences and is available bilingually.
- The latest issue of the Glamorgan Archives newsletter was circulated in early-March. You can sign up to receive it by email by subscribing to our blog <https://glamarchives.wordpress.com/>.
- In January we marked the 125th season of our neighbours, Cardiff City FC, with an article on our blog based on plans of Ninian Park by renowned stadium architect, Archibald Leitch. Also on the blog we continued to commemorate 40 years since the end of the Miners' Strike of 1984/85.
- Glamorgan Archives has now joined Tik Tok! We also post regularly on Facebook and Instagram.
- We continue to run monthly 'Ask the Experts' family history sessions, with the support of volunteers from GFHS.

Collections

- An additional collections week was held in February to support the work of cataloguing the plans within the Associated British Ports collection. Over 600 entries were added to the catalogue during the week.
- Notable accessions received recently include:

Mervyn Crawshay of Llantwit Major, Papers (D787)

A donation of wartime letters of Mervyn Crawshay has been received. Mervyn Crawshay was the elder son of Tudor Crawshay and Marie Augusta (nee Ayres) of Dimlands, Llantwit Major. In 1912 he married

Violet von Mumm and he died on active service at Messines, Belgium, on 31 October 1914. The bundle of correspondence donated primarily comprises letters written by Mervyn to his wife, Violet, up to a few days before his death. They complement material previously donated including a copy of Crawshay's wartime diary.

Pontypridd Divisional Conservative and Unionist Association Records (D2098)

Pontypridd Divisional Conservative and Unionist Association was formed in 1884. By 1891 the Association had over 400 members. A minute book of the group has been transferred from Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre after it was discovered among the records of the Hereford and South Herefordshire Conservative Association. It records all the meetings of the Association for the period 1931-1939.

Stanwell School Records (D2100)

The records of Stanwell School in Penarth have been received and include admission registers, registers of pupil progress and school magazines. Some of the records date back to the early period of the school when it was known as Penarth County Boys School and Penarth County Girls School. These schools had been established in 1897, both occupying separate parts of the same building on Archer Road, Penarth. In 1960 the schools combined to become Penarth Grammar School and in 1970 it became a Comprehensive School, later being renamed Stanwell School.

Personal and family papers of Tom and Anne Davies (D2099)

Anne Davies, nee Mitchell, was from Pyle Cross where her parents, William and Margaret Mitchell, ran the fish and chip shop. TJ (Tom) Davies was from the Rhondda. He was Deputy Chief Financial Officer of the Mid-Rhondda Co-operative Society. The papers include accounts and photographs of the family fish and chip shop, records of the Mid-Rhondda Co-operative Society and a series of letters dating from the 1850s to the 1920s, some of which are bilingual, written home to the Rhondda by relatives who had moved to live in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and London.

Thomas James, Blacksmith of Llandaff, family papers (D2093)

Thomas James was born c1790 in St Fagans and married Sarah Millward of Dinas Powys. He was a Master Blacksmith and had a son, Thomas, born 1825, who also became a blacksmith. The records donated include an exercise book and other papers that were enclosed within it relating to members of the James family, including a letter of reference to Howells School. They also include more recent photographs when the granddaughter of Thomas James junior revisited the family home, Pant-y-celyn, Ely Road, Llandaff.

Rhian Diggins

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

ABERDARE BRANCH

aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

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

Up-coming Events

We are in the process of arranging a few branch outings, members will be informed once the dates have been confirmed.

12 June - Research session

10 July - Keith Jones: "Children Evacuees in Wales during the Second World War".

August – No meeting

11 September - Research session

9 October: AGM followed by Rob Jones who will be giving us a talk on his new book release "They Buried Them at Home" based on the Story of World War 1 Cynon Valley Commonwealth Graves,



BRIDGEND BRANCH

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

Aberkenfig Resource Centre at 7.30 pm third Monday each month

16 June

21 July

18 August

Contact the Branch for details.

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH

cardiffandvale@glamfhs.org.uk

2 pm at Glamorgan Archives

1 July - Archive Research - how best to search the catalogue

August – no meeting

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the
2nd Tuesday of each month

10 June - Visit to Y Gaer, Brecknock Museum

8 July - Carl Llewellyn – Topic TBC

No meeting in August

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk

7 pm on the third Tuesday each month at Pontypridd Museum

20 May

Hywel Matthews (Reference and Local Studies Librarian RCT)

Family History Resources and Research at RCT Libraries

17 June

Darren Macey (Operational Manager, RCT Heritage and Outreach Service)

No Pasaran: Welsh Volunteers and the International Brigade

15 July - TBC

SWANSEA BRANCH

swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

2pm 2nd Tuesday each month at West Glamorgan Archives

Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN

10 June

8 July

August – No Meeting

For more information and to register for our online events on Eventbrite:

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

Further updates on Branch Meetings and Events are posted on our website
and social media www.glamfhs.org.uk/events

ARC OPENING DATES

June 10th & 24th

July 8th & 22nd

August 12th & 26th

September 9th & 23rd

October 14th & 28th

November 11th & 25th

December 9th & CLOSED 23RD

NADOLIG LLAWEN

Saturday opening by Bridgend Branch

Contact arc2@glamfhs.org.uk for more information

50th Anniversary Tea
at the ARC, 5 April 2025





If undelivered, please return to :
63 Clos Pwll Clai, Tondy, Bridgend, CF32 9BZ