



Glamorgan Family History Society *Cymdeithas Hanes Teuluol Morgannwg*



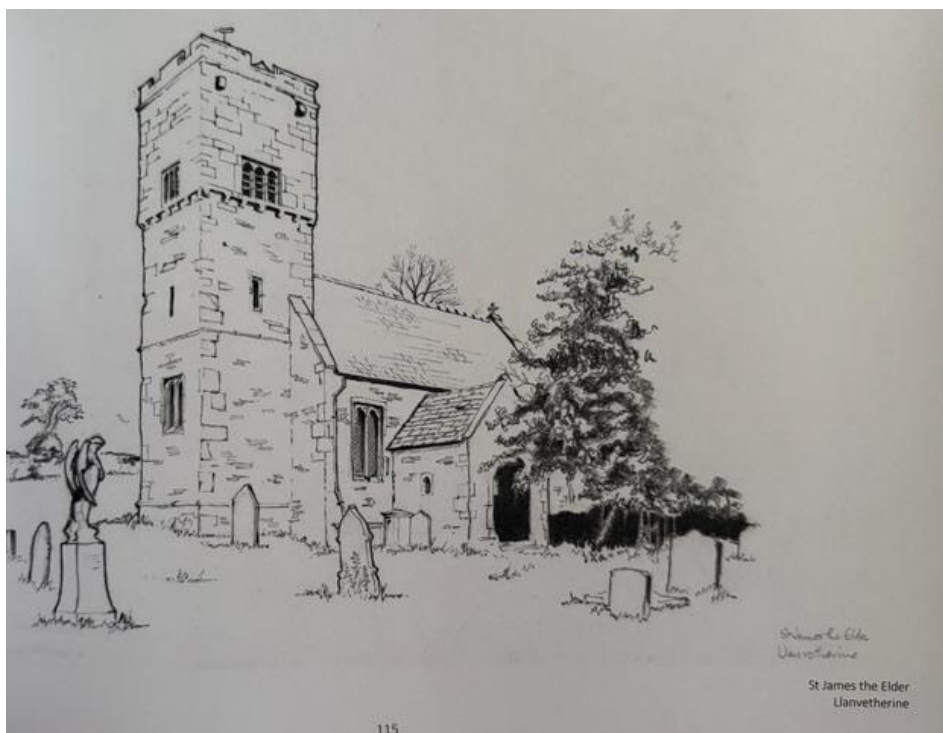
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A drawing of St James the Elder church in Llanvetherine, by Nevil James.
(See Letters to the Editor and Book Reviews).

FRONT COVER: The photograph is taken of a selection of the Bibles both Welsh and English that have been donated to the Garw Valley Heritage Society. These bibles are typical of the often very large, leather-bound and iron-clasped family heirlooms of years ago. Many contain beautiful illustrations, and these have been known to have been torn out and framed individually and sold at various markets. Luckily the bibles shown have remained intact. They can be an overlooked source for the family history researcher, containing details of long-ago births and deaths.

See Diane Brook's article in this journal, on what she found when she purchased two old bibles.

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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.

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EDITORIAL

Croeso, Welcome, to our first journal of the year, with March always a hopeful time after the miserable winter weather. It is the month of Wales' patron saint David, and also the month when International Women's Day is celebrated on the 8th, and our homage to this comes with the second part of Gail du Pisanie's account of the achievements of Catherine Hopkin, or Kathleen Thomas as she was later known. A remarkable event from a remarkable woman.

I hope you will also enjoy the other articles we have included: Clive Davies writes of the farmer and famous stud farm owner Joseph Staien, and Terry Leyshon writes of Merthyr Tydfil and the vast infrastructure required to supply the needs of the people of Merthyr in its industrial heyday. David England writes of a colliery accident when his father worked at the Gethin pit, (see previous references to pit accidents in the last 2 journals) and in Cardiff Branch's report we have shown a page from the Accident Book in which such an accident would have been reported.

We have politics in the story of the Gower's first Labour MP, and we find out again how the patronymic naming and common first names in Welsh families can cause a real headache for the family researcher when gaining information from family bibles! Diane Brook has given part 1 of her account of the families recorded in the two bibles she recently bought, and our front cover photograph gives a reminder of how impressive some of these old bibles were – Have you got one in your attic that you could tell us about?

Our bilingual article this time features the story of Enid Lewis's great-great-grandfather, who emigrated to Australia from a Swansea valley with his large family. Enid only recently came across the diaries he had written of the whole experience. Written originally in Welsh, Enid has translated them for us, and they make a fascinating and often moving read.

As ever I am immensely thankful to all our contributors; your family stories and photographs never fail to interest and often amaze, and I hope that you will continue to send in those family stories, recollections and photographs. These are vital records and insights into what life was like for our ancestors in contexts which nowadays we may find hard to recognise, so they are so very important to students and researchers of the future. Please keep them coming!

Hwyl Fawr!

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It has been a relatively quiet time since the last Journal. We have received the required nomination forms for the Society Officers and Trustees for approval at the AGM with one vacancy for a Trustee. The Society also still has no Chair nor Vice Chair, and no one has expressed an interest in taking on these roles. Please do get in touch if you or anyone else is interested in any of these roles.

Penny Williams, secretary2@glamfhs.org.uk

Saturday 21 March at 1pm AGM followed by AGM TALK POSTPONED FROM 2025



Rhestr o Enwau Lleodedd Hanesyddol
List of Historic Place Names

historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk



Our Speaker at the AGM will be **James January-McCann**, the project manager of the groundbreaking project to record hundreds of thousands of place names across Wales. Using a wide range of sources, some dating back to the 2nd century AD, in various languages, including Breton, Latin and Low German, the website will protect and ensure the continuing use of Welsh place names. These give an invaluable insight into topographical features and land usage which can add detail to family research.

The project organisers are keen to add more details about the historical county of Glamorgan and this will be a useful introduction to the project and how members of the GFHS can get involved in recording their local areas.

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 Editor reserves the right to remove any images from articles where permission to use has not been obtained for their use.

JOSEPH STAIEN – WARWICKSHIRE BORN, GLAMORGAN MADE

#1801 Clive Davies

My mother spoke admiringly of a relative, Joe STAIEN, so who was this man with a strange name?

Joseph Staien was born on 6th July 1852 in the village of Shottery, a mile west of Stratford-on-Avon. The cottage of Ann HATHAWAY, Shakespeare's wife, still stands in Shottery.

His parents were Joseph Staien (1820-91) and the London-born, Ann PACE (1820-89). They had married in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire on 7th August 1848. There were five children, four daughters and a son, Joseph. He was baptized on 12th September 1852 at Holy Trinity church in Stratford.

On the 1871 census of Shottery, Joseph Staien, 51, and son, Joseph, 18, were both working as agricultural labourers. Joseph soon left Warwickshire for Wales where he found work on the Nantcribba Estate in Montgomeryshire. This estate had been bought in 1863 and expanded by John NAYLOR, a Liverpool banker and shipping magnate.

In 1875 at Forden, Montgomeryshire, Joseph Staien wed Sarah Elizabeth DAVIES. She was born in 1857 at the nearby village of Berriew. On the 1871 census she was aged 14, living at Siglen, a 30-acre farm, at Hendomen with her parents William and Mary Davies together with two siblings. The hamlet of Hendomen lies close to the Nantcribba Estate.

Alas, their marriage was all too brief. Sarah Elizabeth died on 15th November 1875 at Siglen, her parents' farm, shortly after giving birth to a son, William Joseph Staien. He only survived a few days and lies with his mother in the graveyard of Montgomery town, one mile southeast of Hendomen.

Joseph was not found on the 1881 census but at his 1882 Margam marriage to Mary RODERICK (1855-1932) he was working as a labourer on the Margam Estate. Mary was the sister of my great grandmother, Elizabeth Roderick (1852-1925). Their parents were Evan Roderick (1826-1902) and Catherine, nee RICHARD/S (1828-1902). Evan spent much of his working life labouring on the Margam Estate.

Evan and Joseph were avid gardeners. The Bridgend and Neath Chronicle reported on their numerous prizes won at agricultural shows in Margam and

Aberavon between 1884 and 1890. Joseph had his greatest successes with honeycombs and potatoes.

On the 1891 census at Bryngarn, Margam:

Joseph Staien, 38, Under Game Keeper, b. Leicester??, England, wife Mary aged 35 and 4 children: Joseph Roderick 7, Annie Ellen 6, Edward Thomas 4 and Kate Gwendoline 2. All born Margam.*

*Other censuses confirm a Warwickshire birth.

At the January 1894 baptism of their youngest child, Eva Mary Staien, he was described as a Farrier of Pentre Meyrick, Penllyn (2 miles west of Cowbridge). A report in the Gloucester Chronicle of 12th March 1898 showed he had expanded into horse breeding and owned a stud:

Joseph Stain (sic) of Cross Stud Farm (Pentre Meyrick), Cowbridge has sued Alf Cooper of Cinderford (Gloucestershire) to recover 3 guineas for the use of his entire horse (stallion) Romeo. Joseph Staien was successful.

1901 census Pentre Meyrick, Penllyn:

Joseph Staien, 48, Farmer & Entire Horse (Stallion) Keeper b. Stratford-on-Avon, wife Mary 45 and children: Joseph Roderick 17 Auctioneer's Clerk, Annie Ellen 15, Edward Thomas 13, Kate Gwenllian 11 and Eva Mary Staien 7. All born Margam.

In 1910 a government scheme was introduced to improve the breeding of horses for military and artillery use. It subsidised the stud fees for superior stallions. Joseph Staien was a major beneficiary as this notice in the Western Mail of 11th April 1921 illustrated:



LIGHT HORSE BREEDING SCHEME.
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.
To Serve this Season: "The King's Premium" Thoroughbred Stallion, "Tidal Wave," winner of the "Ascot Gold Vase," the property of Mr. Joseph Staien. Fee £1, and 2s 6d. Groom's Fee.
"Tidal Wave" will Travel Weekly Pontypool, Abergavenny, Baglan, Monmouth, Tintern, Chepstow, Magor. Week-ends White Hart Hotel, Caerleon.
Further Particulars apply Owner, Coed Hills Stud Farm, St. Hilary, near Cowbridge.
5203

1911 census St Hilary:

Joseph Staien 58 Inn Keeper & Horse Proprietor, b. Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, wife Mary 55 and children: Joseph Roderick 27 Clerk, Edward Thomas 23 Plumber, Kate Gwenllian 22 Assisting in Business. All born

Margam, and Eva Mary 17 born Penllyn, Invalid from birth (Paralysis). Plus 2 Grooms and 1 Farm Labourer.

His occupation as Inn Keeper probably refers to The Sportmans Rest in Peterston-Super-Ely. Joseph and his wife, Mary, were fined in November 1917 for a breach of the Liquor Order at the premises. Mary's sister, Gwenllian (1866-1951) and her husband, Thomas BAKER (1866-1929), were landlords of the other village pub, the Three Horseshoes.

The fine stallions bred by Joseph brought considerable stud fees. One of his prized stallions was sire to some fifty top hunting horses. This newfound wealth was evident in the purchase of the St Hilary Estate in November 1913. He became the owner of Coed Hills, Valley and Eastdown farms, a quarry, 4 pasture fields and grazing rights to St Hilary Down. In St Hilary village he acquired the Manor House and The Cross, both substantial dwellings, with 14 cottages and the Bush Inn.

The 1909 Lloyd George budget had introduced death duties and punitive land taxes and a sharp drop in the value of many estates ensued. Many owners, unable to fund the new charges, sold up. He was now a wealthy man, but that only fed rumours of his ethnicity. These were further ignited by the outbreak of war with Germany in 1914. In the Glamorgan Gazette on 23rd July 1915, he refuted these claims:

Notice given by Joseph Staien, Coed Hills Stud Farm and the Bush Inn, St Hilary – to the public & all whom it may concern: whereas reports have been circulated and statements made to the effect that I am a German, which...are utterly untrue as I am British born of British parents. The place of my birth, and that of my Father & Mother was Stratford-on-Avon, while my paternal Grandfather & Great-grandfather were born in Packington, Warwickshire, and my maternal Grandparents were also born in that county. If, after the publication of this notice, any person or persons circulate reports or make statements to the effect that I am of German or other Alien nationality, I will cause proceedings to be instituted.... (Witnessed by Wm. T. Gwyn, solicitor, Cowbridge).

This statement was incorrect. His maternal forebears were not Warwickshire people.

1921 census: Coed Hills Farm, St Hilary

Joseph Staien 68, Farmer, b. Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. Wife Mary 66 & children: Joseph Roderick 38 Assisting father, Edward Thomas 34 Assisting father. All born Margam and Eva Mary Staien 27, Invalid, born Penllyn plus 1 Domestic Servant and 2 Horsemen.

In 1923 the stud fee for his stallion, Tidal Wave, winner of the prestigious Ascot Gold Vase, was 10 guineas (worth £812 in 2025) plus a groom's fee.

Coed Hills Farm was now regarded as one of the finest studs in the country. Its stallion, Jingling Geordie, won the prestigious King's Premium Cup from 1917 to 1923. The stallion was described as a '*magnificent horse of great bone and the best of limbs*'.

In July 1927 Joseph was interviewed by a reporter from the Pontypridd Observer. Excerpts from the article:

A FAMOUS STUD FARM

The old gentleman although 75 is hale and hearty and when we suggested he would probably live to become a centenarian he replied that 80 would be his limit and that would satisfy him. There were many horses, all of the best, all thoroughbreds and all magnificent animals.

Mr Staien still takes a great deal of interest in his farm and believes in up-to-date methods and modern machinery. The view from Coed Hills farm is magnificent....



Joseph Staien purchased the Beaupre Estate in January 1931. This included Beaupre Castle and some 450–500 acres of land. His name now appeared in Burke's List of Landed Gentry. Part of Beaupre lies in ruins, but it is known for its three-storeyed gatehouse, Tudor porch and 14th century fireplace. Cadw now maintain the site. It was acquired by them in 1962 from the Staien family.

Joseph Staien received the ultimate accolade on 2nd March 1932 when he was presented with the King's Champion Cup at London's Royal Show by Prince George, Duke of York, the future King George VI (see above, Sheffield Independent, 3 March 1932). The supreme stallion was Ballynahinch and the reserve champion, Monksford, also from the Coed Hills stud.

It was a bittersweet time for Joseph. Mary, his wife of 50 years, had died on 5th February 1932 at Coed Hills Farm less than a month before his triumph at the Royal Show. Joseph Staien died, aged 88, on 19th July 1940 at St Winifred's Hospital in Cardiff following an operation.

His obituary in the Western Mail:

OBITUARY

MR. JOSEPH STAIEN, COWBRIDGE

THE death occurred at St. Winifred's Private Hospital, Cardiff, on Friday of Mr. Joseph Staien, of Coed Hills Stud Farm, St. Hilary, Cowbridge, at the age of 88.

Mr. Staien was well known throughout the kingdom as the owner of a large stud of thoroughbred stallions, and won the Gold Cup in 1931 and 1932 with the well-known stallions "Monksford" and "Ballynahinch." The cup was presented to him in London by the present King, who was then the Duke of York.

Mr. Staien was the first to introduce Cleveland bay and Yorkshire coach sires to South Wales. He had several horses in training for many years.

He was a prominent member and past president of the Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Society. He was also a member of the Hunters' Improvement Society and a well-known figure at the Newmarket Sales.

His two sons take a prominent part in the agricultural life of the neighbourhood. They are Mr. J. R. Staien, of Eastcourt, Cowbridge, and Councillor E. T. Staien, of Tyfry, Llantrithyd.



MR. JOSEPH STAIEN

Boy Coombs (nephew); Messrs. D. Hill, A. Jones, and T. Harrington. Funeral arrangements by Augustine J. Stone, Ltd., 5, Working-street, Cardiff.

LATE MR. A. JONES, CARDIFF

Mr. Alexander Jones, 31, Hancock-street, Canton, Cardiff, was buried on Friday in Cardiff Cemetery.

Captain Fletcher, of the Salvation Army, officiated.

Chief mourners were:—Mrs. Jones (widow); Mr. and Mrs. Isaac, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Matthews.

THE BEAUPRE ESTATE.

SOLD BY PRIVATE TREATY.

The Beaupré Estate, in the parish of St. Hilary, near Cowbridge, has been sold by private treaty.

There are many historical associations with the old Beaupré Estate, and it is generally regarded as one of the most interesting in the whole Vale of Glamorgan.

From 400 to 500 acres in extent, the estate surrounds the ruins of Beaupré Castle, formerly the seat of the Basset family.

W. T. Pike's "Contemporary Biographies" says: "Sir Philip Basset, who first settled at Beaupré, was Lord Chief Justice of England, and he is given the credit of having drawn up the Magna Carta."

The entrance to the ruins has a remarkably fine gateway with a porch, both of carved stone in the style of the Renaissance period, ornamented with coats of arms and inscriptions. The doorway has a Tudor arch, but all the other details show Italian influence. Above the doorway is a shield with the Basset arms and the family motto, "Gwell angeu na chywilydd" (Death rather than dishonour).

Mr. Joseph Staien, of the Coed Hills Stud Farm, St. Hilary, is the purchaser, and the negotiations were carried out by Mr. T. J. Yorwerth, Cowbridge.

Joseph and Mary Staien's grave lies by the lych gate at St Hilary's churchyard. The adjacent grave is that of their elder son, Joseph Roderick Staien (1883-1965) and his wife Kate (PHYSICK) (1905-2000).

An amusing adjunct to the above is this account given by Joseph Roderick Staien (1883-1965) for the Cowbridge Publican memories. It also appeared in his autobiography, *A Life of Spice*, published in 1964.

In the Autumn of 1907 I was a clerk in a local Brewery, Wine & Spirit Stores and Mineral Water Works. We brewed beer about twice a week, and it was the town's boozing paradise, especially on a Sunday. It was the Vicars' and Curates' meeting place on a Tuesday. They would walk down the passageway, papers in their hands, and some with handbags, and step briskly up a step into a room at the back of the office. All quiet there; some would buy whisky, others gin, and always a stiff glass of spirit. I remember one Vicar coming in to the cool back room on a very hot day, and saying, "Bring me a pint as big as a

bucket," and standing up, with his frothy pint, say "If it wasn't for my cloth I would stand on the office door and drink it."

Chapel people would come for a bottle of whisky, gin, or brandy, only in the dark, and say to me, "It is only Doctor's orders. It's for my husband, you know, he's got a bad heart."

All the men working in the brewery drank excessively and died before they were sixty.

A great character was the milkman, and a familiar spectacle with milk cans hanging from his yoke. He bought a bottle of rum at 3/6 every morning except Sundays for ten years, and he would drink four or five rums and milk on his journey.

Sometimes the wives would come to the cellar to receive their wages from their husbands, otherwise they would not see much of it. I remember one foggy November evening, one of the worker's wives stood inside the doorway, and at the back of her was a large round tub of barm. Her husband came in after receiving wages, "Harry, hand over," she said. He gave her a gentle push, in a friendly manner; she stepped backwards and sat in the tub of barm. I can now see her two black stockinged legs standing straight out, and the barm bubbling over the sides. She managed to get out, shouting vengeance to her husband, as she ran up the passageway, with her black dress dragging at her heels, and the white barm covering the brown bricks.*

**barm = frothy yeast from brewing*

1st March – St David's Day in Wales, Dydd Gwyl Dewi Sant

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than 60 churches in Wales dedicated to St David.
It was Pope Callistus, around 1120 AD, who decreed that 2 pilgrimages to
St David's equalled one to Rome.

A FAVORITE SAYING OF ST DAVID:

David's last words to his followers were reputed to have been:
"Be joyful, keep the faith, do the little things you have seen and heard me
do".

The Welsh 'Gwnewch y pethau bychan'
Do the little things, is a saying heard often in Wales.

CATHERINE MARGARET HOPKIN

Part 2, Her historic achievement

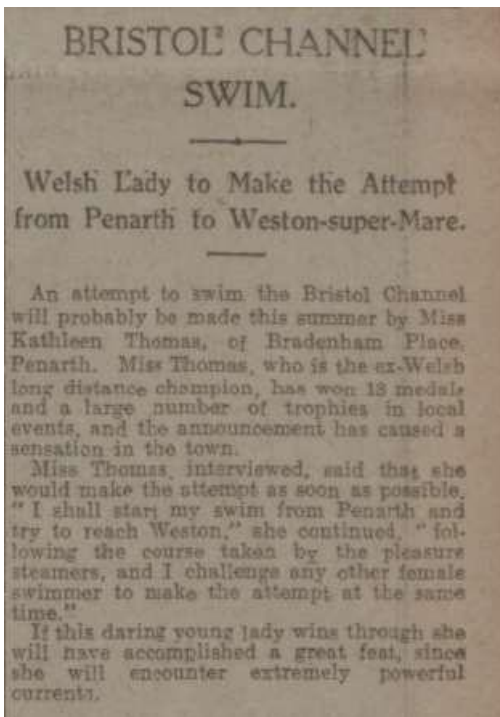
#10902 Gail du Pisanie

In Part 1 I wrote of how Catherine Margaret Hopkin, born in Wales but left behind when her family emigrated to Canada, became Kathleen Thomas when she was brought up from the age of 4 by her great aunt and uncle, Kate and John Thomas. In this part she is referred to only as Kathleen, the name by which she was known for the rest of her life and achievements.

The first person to swim the English Channel was Matthew WEBB, in 1875; the second was Thomas William BURGESS, in 1911, and the third was Henry SULLIVAN, in 1923. The first woman to achieve this feat, Gertrude ERDERLE, did so in 1926. By the middle of the 1920s swimming the Channel became a

challenge for proficient women swimmers from around the world. In 1927 the British publication, *The Graphic*, published an illustrated article entitled "The Overcrowded Channel" naming and depicting a number of the aspiring swimmers. However, Kathleen was not included in this number. She had set her mind to another goal. In the second half of August her intention to attempt the Bristol Channel from Penarth to Weston super Mare was reported in the press. She did not give a date for the attempt (see left from *The Western Daily Press*, 13 August 1927).

There had been some attempts in crossing the Bristol Channel in previous decades, but none was successful.



Kathleen's epic swim took place on Monday, 5 September 1927. The South Wales newspaper, *The Western Mail*, devoted two columns to every aspect of the swim in their edition on 6 September. The following details were recorded:

Kathleen entered the water at Penarth Head at 4.15 am. She was accompanied by a pilot boat and a motor launch. Her brother was on the pilot boat and her father on the motor launch, both men being Channel pilots familiar with the tides, currents and dangers of the Channel. The motor launch also carried an official of the Welsh Amateur Swimming Association. Her brother guided her through the darkness with a torch and she swam towards the West Cardiff Buoy before heading for Flat Holm Island. The area around Flat Holm and Steep Holm Islands was known to be the most difficult part of the route because of the strong currents and eddies. Two accomplished swimmers joined her for about an hour each to encourage and assist her. She had some trouble with her shoulder but managed to keep going, resting on her back at times when conditions allowed. As she approached Weston super Mare a pleasure boat, on which her mother was a passenger, drew near. When she stood up in the shallow water at Anchor Point, Anchor Head, at 11.35 am crowds of onlookers greeted her. It was estimated that she had swum 20 miles to cover the distance of about 11 miles.

On her arrival Kathleen had a light meal and retired to bed. That evening she and her party were guests of Paolo RADMILOVIC, Welsh water polo captain and Olympic swimmer. Among the many telegrams of congratulation was one from the Lord Mayor of Cardiff on behalf of the citizens of Cardiff. She was also feted when she appeared at the Regent Street Picture House and the Knightstone Baths.



Kathleen returned to Penarth by ferry the next morning with a civic reception held at the Penarth Pier Pavilion that evening. The news flashed across the country and the world. A simple search of British newspapers for that week found 29 reports of the swim, many accompanied by photographs, and some reports were very detailed. It was also widely reported across the world. Significantly, it was well reported in Canada, as can be read in *The Brandon Sun* (Manitoba) on 31st October 1927, and *The Lethbridge Herald* in Alberta on 5th November 1927.

Kathleen's life after her epic swim

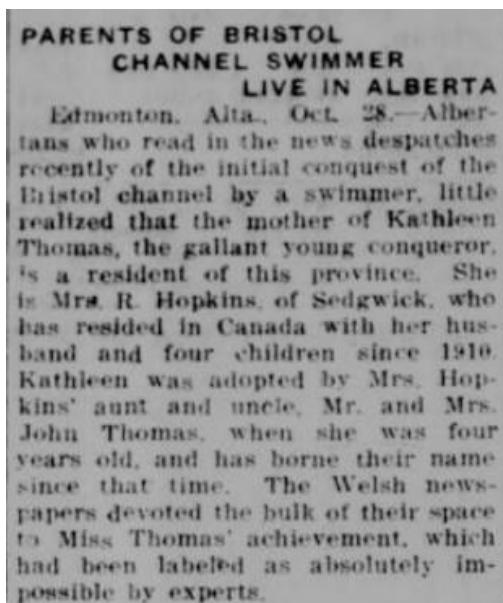
In the months following her achievement Kathleen was feted with receptions, presentations, parades and guest appearances at swimming galas. There were

more attempts by others to swim the Bristol Channel; the person who first succeeded after Kathleen was Edward Harry TEMME. Temme, an insurance clerk from London, had already swum the English Channel. In 1934 he became the first man to swim the English Channel both ways. He was also a water polo player who competed in the 1928 and 1934 Olympics. He managed his swim from Penarth to St Thomas Head, Weston super Mare on 8 July 1928 in 6 hours, 35 minutes. He struggled greatly at times during the swim, at one stage taking an hour to cover 100 yards. He was reported as saying, "I did not have much in me when I finished up, and I ended in worse condition than when I swam the English Channel." Jack Thomas Jnr again manned the pilot boat and Kathleen Thomas and Jack Thomas Snr were among those on the accompanying motor launch. Temme paid tribute to Jack Thomas Jnr for his advice and assistance (see *Western Mail*, 9th July 1928, for all these details).

In 1928 there was some talk in the press that Kathleen would attempt the English Channel. However, this did not eventuate. A report in *The Western Mail* on 7 July 1928 mentioned in passing that she had recently become a professional, so this status would preclude her from any inclusion in an Olympic team. A report in *The Western Mail* on 2 May 1930 stated that she had been appointed swimming coach by the London County Council.

On 9 September 1931 the *Western Mail* reported Kathleen's engagement to Thomas Kenneth Frederick DAY of Highgate, London. Her fiancé was reported to be an analyst with the Government printers, Messrs Samuel Jones. He had been educated at Oxford, was an athlete, spoke five languages, and was an etcher and artist too. The article with accompanying photographs stated that the couple were both members of the Roehampton Golf Club. On 1 December 1931 the same newspaper reported their marriage at St Mary's Church, Bexley, Kent. It was reported to be a quiet event in view of a recent family

bereavement [John Henry THOMAS, Kathleen's adoptive father had died in July that year]. The guests were Mrs Thomas and close relatives of Frederick. Kathleen was given away by Mr RP GREEN, Secretary of the Welsh Amateur



Swimming Association. The civil registration of their marriage recorded the bride's name as Catherine M Hopkin.

Despite having left Wales, Kathleen was not quickly forgotten. On 4 December 1934 *The Western Mail* reported that she had given birth to a daughter. She and her husband, Frederick, went on to have four children. At the time of the 1939 Register they had two children, and Frederick was still employed in the paper industry, as a publicity and advertising manager.

Kathleen and Frederick died within 5 weeks of each other in 1987. They were living in Eastbourne. Kathleen passed away on 11 August and Frederick on 16 September of that year. They were cremated and they are commemorated with a memorial inscription at Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne. In 2007 a son reported that the family had followed their mother's wishes and scattered her ashes into the Bristol Channel from a pilot boat.

Catherine Margaret Hopkin/Kathleen Thomas remembered

Kathleen's magnificent swim is still remembered and celebrated more than 90 years later.



In July 1952 there was a press reference to the 'silver jubilee' of the swim. The 80th anniversary of the swim sparked renewed interest. That year the Penarth Town Council erected a plaque on the Pier to commemorate the swim. Newspaper details of its unveiling on 5 September that year gave extensive details of her remarkable

feat and quoted her children who expressed great pride in their mother's great achievement. On the same occasion the Town Council of Weston super Mare erected a plaque of commemoration on the Anchor Head seawall in the town.

see <https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/blue-plaques/#Kathleen-Thomas>

In the years since then Kathleen's name and swim continue to be found across a number of websites, some as recent as 2018.

I write this in 2020. I have little doubt that Kathleen will be remembered and celebrated again in 2027, a century after she became the first person to conquer

the waters of the Bristol Channel in a magnificent swim. I did not know her, but she was without doubt a most remarkable and talented person and it is gratifying that this is still recognised today. It so happened that, as a four-year old, she was separated from her birth family and that she grew up with a great-aunt and uncle as her mother and father. Given her talent and temperament, she may well have achieved great things had she lived in Alberta with her family. However, living in land-locked Alberta, it is unlikely that she would have been a champion and world class swimmer, with achievements still recognised today! The support, encouragement and opportunities that her adoptive family provided as she became a champion must also be acknowledged and applauded.

NOTE *My research has come from many sources over the years, particularly online resources and the Press, but space precludes me from quoting them all here. They are all listed and acknowledged in my original work, and if any reader wishes to see that longer article, please contact the editor who will be pleased to forward a copy.*

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TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE – EATON AND THOMAS FAMILY BIBLES

#2 Diane Brook

My nephew on my husband's side is my ally in family history, having spoken to his grandmother when he was only 12, saying. 'I wish I knew more about my grandmother's grandmother.' As his surname is Thomas, when I saw a nineteenth-century Thomas Bible on eBay for a family in Pontardulais, I thought it might be part of his ancestry on his father's side.

I bought it, a huge Welsh language one, and it came with a second, English language Bible, for an Eaton family, also very large.

The family records in both Bibles were detailed and I was soon able to rule out any link to my nephew, unfortunately. Now, to trace the families and find a descendant who wanted the books.

Thomas of the Red Cow Inn

The Thomas family of the Welsh Bible were innholders of the Red Cow, Pontardulais, just over the Glamorgan border, west into Carmarthenshire. The pub closed in 2013 but had a long history.

It is featured in a town history online:

The heat of the tin mills demanded constant liquid refreshment, and the 'Red lion' and 'Black Horse' were too far to provide it, so some of the new houses along Hendy road became public houses to cater for this need. There was the 'Gwili Inn' run by David Jones, a blacksmith from Llannon and his wife Elizabeth. The 'Salutation Inn' was run by John Morgan from Llandybie and his wife Sarah. The 'Red Cow Inn' was kept by Lewis Thomas, a farmer, and his wife Anne. Finally, the 'Green Dragon Inn' was held by Mr John Parry, a carpenter and his wife Margaret. In all cases, the men carried on their normal trade during the day with their wives looking after the public houses. John Parry of the 'Green Dragon' built a wooden partition in his bar because of the draught created by the wind when the front door was opened. Having great faith in the preservative quality of red lead paint, he painted the partition with red lead paint, and to complete the 'decor', he hung red curtains on the windows. Since then, the 'Green Dragon' has always been known as 'Ty-coch'. Of the four public houses, only the 'Red Cow Inn' had a spirit license. The other three were just beer houses.

https://www.pontarddulaistowncouncil.gov.uk/Potted_History_of_Pontarddu_lais_29025.aspx

The Thomas Bible is that of Lewis Thomas and his wife Ann with records of their nine children. The entries read:

Henry Thomas by Thomas Thomas and Elizabeth his wife, was born at Tyisha, Llannon.

Anne Thomas by Henry Thomas and Elizabeth his wife, was born at Pantydwr on January 16th 1831.

Eleanor Jane Thomas by Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife, was born at the Red Cow Inn, Pontardulais on April 28th 1882, and was adopted by the above Henry and Anne Thomas on July 9th in the year of our Lord 1883.

Lewis, son of Henry Thomas and Elizabeth his wife was born at Pantydwr, Llannedy on the 27th of April in the Year of our Lord 1838.

Anne, daughter of Thomas Thomas and Elizabeth his wife was born at Tyisha Llannon on the 21st of October the Year of our Lord 1837.

Achrestr Deuluaid (Family genealogy)

Enwau y Plant (Names of children)

1. Elizabeth daughter of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at Tyisha, Llannon on 5th Decr. in the Year of our Lord 1864.

2. Henry Eaton, son of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at Tyisha, Llannon on 27th of July in the Year of our Lord 1866.

3. Mary, daughter of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on 1st of Jany. in the Year of our Lord 1869.

4. Thomas Lewis, son of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on 1st of Jany. in the Year of our Lord 1871 and died Seven Weeks old.

5. Thomas Lewis, son of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on 27th of March in the Year of our Lord 1872.

6. Sarah Anne daughter of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on 6th of June in the Year of our Lord 1874.

7. Margaret daughter of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on 6th of Octr. in the Year of our Lord 1875 and died Five Weeks old.

8. Margaret Jane daughter of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on the 6th of May in the Year of our Lord 1877 and died Sixteen Months old.

9. Eleanor Jane daughter of Lewis Thomas and Anne his wife was born at the "Red Cow Inn" on the 28th of April in the Year of our Lord 1882.

Marwolaethau (Deaths)

Anne, the wife of Lewis Thomas, Red Cow Inn died April 5th 1884 and was interred at Llanedy Parish Churchyard. Aged 46.

Lewis Thomas, above-named. Red Cow Inn died February 10th 1898 (from results of accident) and was interred at Llanedy Parish Churchyard on Feb: 15th 1898. Aged 59.

As three of the children died very young, I was now looking for possible descendants of some six people.

Searches in the census provided most of the necessary information with additions from FreeBMD, and, various records on Ancestry and Find My Past. I had thought there were bound to be living descendants with six children reaching adulthood. It soon became apparent that four of the six, Elizabeth, Thomas Lewis, Sarah Anne and Eleanor Jane, had never married. Ancestry trees that had Sarah Anne as wife of Edmund Guest were mistaken as 'my' Sarah Anne who was at home with her siblings on the censuses in 1901, 1911, 1921 and in the 1939 Register.

This left Henry Eaton Thomas, born 1866, and Mary, born about 1869. Henry Eaton Thomas had a career as an Anglican clergyman, serving in Wrexham and Oswestry, and more will be written of him, and his family and the Eaton bible, in the next edition of the journal.

Don't miss the 'Cut-Off Dates'

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

Mar Issue	20 Jan	Jun Issue	20 April
Sept issue	20 July	Dec Issue	20 October

A JOURNEY FROM YNYSMEUDWY TO SYDNEY

#20932 Enid Lewis

My great-great-grandfather Daniel Bevan was brought up along with his brother Hopcyn on a remote farm Twll y Gwyddyl in the Swansea Valley. They married two sisters, Serviah and Catherine, from a nearby farm Pistyll Llwyd. Daniel and Serviah married and lived in Twll y Gwyddyl while Hopcyn and Catherine emigrated to Australia with their 12 children, possibly as a result of religious persecution. An advance party of 3 of the children was sent to Australia in 1884. William was the eldest, aged 23, Tom the second eldest, aged 22, and Serviah, the second daughter, aged 17. Serviah is a good family name and it was as a result of searching for 'Serviah' in newspapers that I came across William's voyage to Sydney in 1884. What a find – I certainly hit the jackpot! The fact that William and family emigrated to Australia has had a significant positive impact on my life. There have been regular visits from Australian cousins to Wales over the years which led me to get a transfer to Sydney office for 2 years. I am still in regular contact with some of my fourth cousins down under! The link continues after 140 years! Here is the photo of William's family taken before they left.

An extract from *Y Celt*, 4 April 1884, details the meeting that took place before departure:

YNYSMEUDWY.—Departure meeting for Australia. — On Thursday, the 27th of March, a meeting of the above nature was held at Bethesda, this place, ably chaired by the Rev. D. Onllwyn Brace, Ystalyfera. The emigrants were two sons and a daughter of Mr Hopkin Bevan, an aluminium mill carpenter, and as their father is a staunch temperate, the few

temperates here decided to give them a gift, the boys were given two beautiful illustrated Bibles and a Testament to the girl. There was an interesting meeting from start to finish, though the speakers tended to the humourous, it was



obvious on everyone's faces that their hearts were sad, and all wished that they reach their destination safely to their adopted country.

A letter sent home after arriving:

"JOURNEY FROM YNYSMEUDWY, CWMTAWE TO SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA." Sydney, New South Wales, July 29th, 1884.

MY DEAR COMPATRIOTS,—Little did I think a year ago that my destiny would be in Australia on the date of the heading to my letter, and that I would undertake the task of writing about our journey to this distant country, but so it proved to be. We had a very comfortable voyage for the most part, and were welcomed by relatives and friends upon arrival in Sydney, which we won't forget any time soon. We wish to say a word here, that we would advise no one, whomsoever, to come out here without obtaining advice and guidance from someone from this country. We were extremely fortunate in this matter, by coming into contact with some who had come out before us from the old country.

The record of the voyage was published in 7 publications of *Tarian y Gweithiwr* in Welsh, and before starting his diary entries he writes of his love for Wales, and gratitude to all those he left behind: (I've placed the English translation below it).

O! Gymru annwyl, y mae hen atgofion hiraethus ac annwyl am dy gysegredig dir yn ymwithio draws eu gilydd drwy fynwes dy blentyn, y funud hon, fel tonau am y cyntaf tua'r lan, a deigr yn serch yn ymdreiglo yn lladradaidd dros fy ngrudd wrth ymaflyd yn yr ysgrifbin i ysgrifio yr ychydig linellau hyn at fy nghydgenedl. Ni thybiais erioed fod y fath garedigrwydd yn nghalon y Cymro nes yr ymadawsom ni ein tri am Awstralia. Cyn dechrau ar hanes y daith gadawer ni yn y fan hon, ar ran fy hun, ac ar ran fy mrawd a'm chwaer, Thomas a Serviah; i gydnabod ein diolchgarwch mwyaf diffuant i'n cyfeillion lluosog a thwymgalon yng Nghraigcefnparc ac Ynysmeudwy am eu caredigrwydd mawr ac annisgwyladwy i ni pan ymadawsom am y wlad bellennig hon. Yr oedd y teimladau da a ddangoswyd atom—yr anrhegion, a'r rhoddion sylweddol eraill a dderbyniasom ar y pryd, yn gwneud ein calonnau yn rhy lawnion i'n tafodau lefaru. Y mae y diolchgarwch oddi yma yr un mor ddiffuant, a gwn y bydd yn llawn mor dderbyniol genych chwithau. Ni anghofiwn byth y ddau gyfarfod ymadawol a gynhaliwyd mewn perthynas â ni--y naill yn ysgoldy y Bwrdd, Craigcefnparc, a'r llall yn nghapel Ynysmeudwy a bydd y Beiblau a dderbyniasom yn yr olaf drwy law Mr. Michael, ar ran y Gymdeithas Ddirwestol, yn drysorau pennaf ein calonnau am byth, gan hyderu y cawn gymorth gras i fyw yn deilwng o'r anrhegion amhrisiadwy hyn. Gyda hyn o ragymadrodd, dechreuwn ar hanes ein taith.

Oh! Dear Wales, old longing and dear memories of your sacred land strive with one another through your child's bosom, this moment, like waves competing for the shore, and a tear of love rolls stealthily down my cheek as I struggle with

pen to write these few lines to my fellow nation. I never thought there was such kindness in the hearts of the Welsh until the three of us left for Australia. Before starting the story of the trip let us undertake, on behalf of myself, and on behalf of my brother and sister, Thomas and Serviah; to acknowledge our most sincere gratitude to our many and warmhearted friends in Craigcefnparc and Ynysmeudwy for their great and unexpected kindness to us when we left for this distant country. The good feelings shown to us - the gifts, and the other significant donations we received at the time, made our hearts too full for our tongues to speak. The gratitude from here is just as sincere, and I know that it will be fully as acceptable to you. We will never forget the two farewell meetings held for us - one in the Board's schoolhouse, Craigcefnparc, and the other in Ynysmeudwy chapel and the Bibles we received in the latter through the hand of Mr. Michael, on behalf of the Temperance Society, are the greatest treasures of our hearts forever, trusting that we will receive the grace to live to be worthy of these priceless gifts. With this introduction, we begin the story of our journey.

The Diary entries start, In Welsh with my translation of the 29th March following:

Y 29ain o Fawrth.—Dyma fore a hir gofir gennym - y bore caletaf aeth dros ein pennau erioed. Yr oeddem wedi gweled llawer o'n blaen yn ymadael â chartref am wlad bellennig. Yr oeddem ninnau wedi ymadael â chartref mewn breuddwyd fisoedd cyn hyn; ond heddiw mae y bore wedi gwawrio-bore i sylweddoli beth oedd ymadael â chartref—sylweddoli beth oedd cefnu ar wlad ein genedigaeth, efallai byth i'w gwaled mwy; ffarwelio â llu o gyfeillion mynwesol, ie, sylweddoli beth oedd ymadael mewn dagrau ag aelwyd gynnes tad a mam annwyl, brodyr, a chwiorydd cu a mynwesol. Ond y mae yr amser wedi dyfod i ben; rhaid cychwyn -rhaid i'r penderfyniad beidio cael ei orchfygu gan y teimlad. Am haner awr wedi pedwar y bore mae y ceir wrth y drws; ffwrdd â ni i gyfarfod yr agerbeiriant i Gastellnedd. Am ddeg mynd wedi saith cychwynnodd y gerbydres o Gastellnedd, a ffwrdd â hi fel pe byddai am i ni anghofio cartref; ond dim posibl oedd hyn. Wylem yn hidl, yn neilltuol wrth gofio am y plant. Cyfarfyddasom ar ein taith y bore hwn ag un Thomas Jones, o Dredegar, a thri eraill o Loegr. Cyraeddasom Plymouth erbyn haner awr wedi pedwar, ac yr oeddem yn y *depot* am chwech. Brys-hysbysiad oddi wrth Owen Bowen am hanner awr wedi wyth o'r gloch heno, a thrwy fawr drafferth yn cael myned i gyfarfod â Serviah i'r orsaf.

The 29th of March. - This is a morning we will long remember - the hardest morning that ever overcame us. We had seen many before us leaving home for a distant land. We had dreamt of leaving home months before; but today the morning has dawned – a morning to realise what it was to leave home - to realise what it was to abandon the land of our birth, perhaps never to see it again; saying goodbye to many close friends, yes, realising what it was to leave in tears the warm hearth of a beloved father and mother, dear and close brothers and sisters. But the time has come; a start must be made - the decision must

not be overcome by feelings. At half past four in the morning the carriages are at the door; off we go to Neath to meet the steam locomotive. At ten past seven the train started from Neath, and away it went as if it wanted us to forget home; but this was not possible. We wept profusely, especially when remembering the children. We met on our journey this morning one Thomas Jones, from Tredegar, and three others from England. We arrived at Plymouth by half past four, and were at the depot at six. An urgent message from Owen Bowen at half past eight this evening, and with great difficulty got to meet Serviah at the station.

March 30th. — Get up today at six o'clock. This morning there was a ship load of people going to Queensland, when the place was cleared, only a few remained at the depot for New South Wales. We spoke to several Welshmen from the North and from the Rhondda Valley the morning before they set off for Queensland. Owen Bowen was in early this morning intending to get us out to town for the day; but it was not possible to get permission. He had to go without us. This was very hard for us at the time, but we had to be satisfied with the arrangement. Today in the prison (depot) my brother Thomas was celebrating his birthday, but he did not know what time of day. Allowed out of the depot at three in the afternoon, and we got to see many wonders of the town. We were at the depot until Friday, April 4th, when we went in a packet to the ship. We were all very glad to be freed from our captivity - everyone was tired of the depot, because it was so confining there. There was, it is true, plenty of fun, but we did not get much enjoyment from such fun as was there. We received a sermon from a Church of England priest on Thursday night, and communion. The Catholic priest also ministered to the Irish who were here on Thursday night and Friday morning - forgiving their sins until they reached Sydney.

Part 2 will follow in the next edition of the Journal.

Cardiff Irish Club Photograph - Inside Back Cover

Back Row – Left to Right

D KELLEHER, H CHICHESTER, M LENAHAN, A FLETCHER, W BARRY

Middle Row – Left to Right

S COOPEY, J CONNOLLY, JO SULLIVAN, SO HARE, D JENKINS,
D JONES

Front Row – Left to Right

F COOPEY, J MARLOW (Hon Sec), J BROWNE (Chairman), W COOPEY
(Captain), J MCCARTHY (President), J LEHANE (Vice Captain),
T SAVAGE

FEEDING MERTHYR'S FURNACES

#3388 Terry Leyshon

The four iron works: Cyfarthfa, Dowlais, Penydarren and Plymouth had over the years depleted the locally available iron ore so further sources were required. A pack horse could carry 50lbs, a horse pulling a wagon on a tramroad could move 5 tons but a horse pulling a barge could move 50 tons. Hence the Glamorganshire Canal and iron ore could be brought in from the Taff Estuary via the sea-lock at the Cardiff Basin, transferred from the ship into a barge then through 51 locks up to the iron works. Employment for a bargeman, his boy and a horse. By 1845 the Taff Vale Railway had superseded the Canal, a steam locomotive could move a train of 20-30 wagons carrying 5 tons per wagon. A barge would take a least a day for the journey to Merthyr because of delays transiting locks and could only travel in daylight, while a train would take an hour and travel safely 24 hours a day.

The height of the sill at the sea-lock limited entry to the Basin to vessels of no more than 200 tons. Therefore, in October 1839, the Marquis of Bute created Cardiff's West Dock enabling 1,000 ton ocean-going vessels to transit from the Estuary. There was a channel between the Basin and the Dock whereby using rope and capstan a vessel could be pulled through to access more staiths for loading coal. An analysis of these internal transits is examined later.

The primary source material for vessels arriving and departing was the weekly *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, which was published on a Saturday and quoted the vessel, master, cargo, dock and port of departure for arrivals or destination for sailings. The first online edition of the *Guardian* within the British Newspaper Archive website was 5 July 1845 and the first entry for the data collection process is dated 23 June 1845. To have a sufficiently comprehensive body of shipping to provide a meaningful analysis of Cardiff's logistics the data acquisition continued up to 4 July 1846, making just over a year's comings and goings. To verify the single source material, entries from the daily *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* (also known as Lloyd's List) were also accessed. The *Gazette* is a 'newspaper of record' on shipping matters and is primarily for the benefit of ship insurance, hence it quotes the specific date, vessel, master and port of departure or destination, whereas the *Guardian* only quotes the week in which the event occurred. The total number of individual entries for the year is 14,576, ie over 7,200 arrivals and departures, however, the *Gazette* being concerned with world-wide shipping on the high seas tended to pay little attention to Cardiff's Severn-specific traffic. Within the period under scrutiny arrivals of iron ore at Cardiff principally came from eight ports, three in Cumbria, four Severn related and one from Cornwall. From Whitehaven 295 voyages took the seven-day journey to Cardiff, 238 from

Fowey in Cornwall, 217 from Bullo Pill brought Forest of Dean ore, 90 came from Gloucester using the Sharpness Canal, 59 from Barrow-in-Furness, 54 from Bristol, 22 from Ulverston near Barrow and 14 sailed up the Severn from Minehead. None came from abroad. Bullo, around the Awre bend in the Severn above Sharpness, used what were known as a 'Severn Trow', a small craft with a mast for a sail crewed by a man and his boy that could carry 45 tons of iron ore, while all the other locations used traditional sailing vessels. The Bullo craft flowed down the Severn to Cardiff's canal basin and there the ore was loaded into TVR railway wagons. From the Forest of Dean mines the ore was moved to the Bullo quay by narrow gauge tramways, later becoming railways. Although Forest iron ore was of high quality, its days as a supplier were numbered following the first successful Bessemer Converter at Dowlais in 1865 to turn pig iron into steel. Iron rails needed constant replacement, while expensive steel rails lasted 'forever'. Unfortunately, Forest iron was also rich in phosphorus which produced brittle steel and was commercially useless. Because the *Gazette* was not concerned with cargoes and the *Guardian* did not report tonnage the total volume of ore moved was not quantifiable for this period.

As well as iron ore the other vital ingredient for the smelting process to turn ore into iron is limestone which also needed to be transported to the iron works. The mix in the furnace is iron, coke and limestone in the ratio of 4:2:1 with enormous volumes of air blasted through. The limestone is a catalyst to combine with the non-iron elements in the ore turning them into slag, leaving pig iron for further processing if necessary. The *Guardian* identified 69 cargoes of limestone arriving - the principal two ports being Waterford with 27 and Cork with 26.

Although the Marquis of Bute's dream was for Cardiff to emulate Liverpool as an *entrepôt* supporting a vast hinterland, that was unlikely to happen because of the additional capital required for infrastructure like warehousing. In this period of the 1840s, of the 7,200+ vessels that arrived 792 were towed in empty down from Bristol or across from Bridgwater. Where cargo was reported, apart from supplying Merthyr, the range was limited: pitprops, building materials, livestock, potatoes and 'sundries'. Most arrived in ballast so the commercial world was not flocking to Cardiff bringing trade goods anyway. Ships arrived to take coal to the world. This was so profitable that the owners could afford to shift uncommercial ballast, which had to be bought at source and pay to unload.

Cardiff ships were sailing ships, only one arrival was a propellor driven steam steamship, William Frederick IV, having first delivered a cargo to Bristol steamed down to Cardiff to take on a cargo of coal and then left for Cronstadt in the Baltic possibly with fuel for the Russian navy. All other steamers were side-paddle steamers, two of which were the *Lady Charlotte* and the *Prince of*

Wales which ran a scheduled service between Bristol and Cardiff on alternate days. The remaining vessels were tugs, side-paddle for manoeuvrability as they could turn in their own length. They plied the Severn towing, usually a train of vessels, that had no cargo and chose not to load ballast. Any ship needs weight to be stable and dirigible, otherwise it bobs along at the whim of the prevailing wind and could capsize under the top heaviness of the masts. Trows for instance to return up-river with no cargo, since the Forest had its own coal mines, would require ballast to sail which had to be purchased in the docks and then dumped back at Billo prior to the next voyage. The alternative was to gather with other tows and pay a tug for a tow. The tugs: Argus, Cambria, Dragon and Superb probably only entered the Cardiff's docks to refuel.

There were 88 internal transits through the channel between the basin and the dock, 63 from the dock to the basin and 25 from the basin to the dock. It is probable that when the TVR brought railway iron (rails, shoes to hold track and spikes to secure shoe to sleeper), the basin was the more appropriate loading point. By far the most common transit was large vessels that brought iron ore to the dock, which were moved to the basin to load iron for coastal and foreign ports, (presumably loads under 200 tons to clear the sill).

Where the cargo was reported, the majority of arrivals came in ballast which was useful for the port's management and a nightmare for the Harbourmaster. The Harbourmaster, at the dock entrance was a civil servant not a port employee and was responsible for recording the comings and goings for Board of Trade purposes. A vessel had to pay to remove the ballast so that coal could be loaded. Ballast could also be sold to make weight if a vessel had insufficient cargo for stability. The ballast was a bonus for the expansion of the port to stabilise the surrounding marshland and create more docks. The nightmare was a vessel seeking to avoid having to pay for ballast removal by dumping it in Penarth Roads at the dock entrance which already required constant dredging to maintain the depth of water for large vessels.

This was also the period of the commencement of another potato blight in Ireland and many vessels sailing from Ireland to Cardiff for coal offered cheap passage to victims of the British Government's policies to make weight on board as ballast. From the master's point of view this ballast was self-removing. So many were the numbers that the strain on Cardiff's local authority's poor relief caused an outcry, so rather than alighting in Cardiff the Irish fleeing from the famine back home could often be offloaded anywhere on the seashore before docking. The blight was Europe-wide and not confined to Britain, but Britain's actions in alleviating the disaster did not have the urgency required because the political will was not present, with the ongoing struggle between Whitehall and Dublin over Irish independence being ever uppermost in decision-making at the time.

AN INCIDENT AT THE GETHIN PIT

#1804 David England

During the course of the two articles in the last journal relating to collieries and the families working there the Gethin Pit was mentioned. This was one of two owned by Crawshay, the Castle Pit being the other, and was well known for its poor accident record where the production of coal was more important than the safety of the workers employed. There having been two major incidents there in the past¹

These articles recalled an incident in my father's early life. Joseph England, 'Joe', was born on 20 June 1901 the eldest of four children. His father, Luther, was an intelligent but idle man, and considered that the world owed him a living and expected others to provide for him, he having been declared bankrupt once and therefore the family were in a poor financial condition. The family were living on Cilsanws mountain and on reaching the age of 13², the school leaving age at that time, Joe was expected to go to work. It seems that he first went to work in the Dowlais Iron Works for a period of about two years, Cyfarthfa Iron Works being closed, and subsequently to the Gethin Pit. He was put to work with an experienced miner by the name of David EATON, recorded at that time as being 17 years old, so he, David, may have started there probably at the age of 13. Joe had only worked there for a short period of time when he was involved in an accident and slightly injured, carrying scars of coal dust on his back until the day he died. However, the miner next to him, David, was not so lucky and he was killed. The report of the accident was recorded on page 6 of the Merthyr Express on Saturday the 23 September 1916.

Fatal Accident at Gethin Pit

A sad fatality occurred at Gethin Pit on Friday. David Arthur, (17), the son of Mrs Eaton, Swansea Road, went to work at 6 o'clock in the morning, and a few hours later a huge stone fell from the roof, knocking him backwards and crushing him so badly that he expired soon afterwards. David was a good boy to his mother and was much liked by his fellow workers at the pit. This was shown on Tuesday then the funeral was attended by several hundreds of the workmen from Gethin and Castle Pits. Much sympathy felt with the family.

Having found this item, I searched the newspapers for a possible inquest into this tragedy. These days any incident like that would call for an inquiry as to

¹ Two major incidences occurred. The first, in 1862 saw the death of 47 men and boys, the second, in 1865 when another 34 were victims. Welsh Coal Mines <https://welshcoalmines.co.uk/GlamEast/Gethin.htm> Details of those killed is listed on this web site.

² The school leaving age for State run schools was 10 years in 1880 but as progressively increased to 11 years from 1893; 13 years old from 1899; 14 years from 1918; 15yrs from 1947 and 16 in 1972.

the cause of the accident and what preventative measures could have been taken. There did not appear to be one. I was not satisfied by the lack of information and out of curiosity sent for the Death certificate for David Eaton, a resume of which is shown below:

16 Sept 1916, Gethin Pit, Merthyr Tydfil, David Arthur Eaton, Male, 16 years, Collier

34 Swansea Rd, Merthyr Tydfil, Accidentally killed by a fall of stone

Certificate received from RJ Rhys coroner for Merthyr Tydfil.

Inquest held 18 Sept. 1916

This showed that there had indeed been an inquest held two days after his death, but not a public one, it being held in house with the coroner's office.

Further investigation showed that mining accidents were so commonplace that usually only those involving machinery; major roof falls or explosions were investigated in a public way. So, it transpires that a 16-year-old, not 17 as reported in the Merthyr Express, was in charge of a 15-year-old novice, essentially two teenagers together.

Following this near miss, Joe's mother insisted he was not to go back underground and on the 23 January 1917, he was issued with a form for the purposes of the Factories and Workshop Act 1901, setting out a true copy of his birth details. 'For the purposes of employment in labour of a child under 16 years old'. Father was five months short of his 16 birthday when this was issued. This was the point where he entered Cyfarthfa Park as an apprentice gardener and the start of a new career, which is another story entirely.

The Gethin Pit which had produced coking coal for Cyfarthfa Works did not survive for much longer and ceased coal production in the 1920's, subsequently used as a pumping station until its demise in 1947.

JOHN WILLIAMS, GOWER'S FIRST LABOUR MP

#11028 JOHN P LETHBRIDGE

Introduction. My previous articles in this and other Welsh journals looked at the Talfan DAVIES family; at Swansea East's first three Labour MPs; at the 1913 Merthyr Tydfil Liberal candidate selection process for the 1915 General Election that was not held because of the First World War; and at Thomas ARTEMUS JONES'S early life. Here I look at Gower's first Labour MP John WILLIAMS.

Gower parliamentary constituency was set up in 1885. Until 1918 it contained Swansea Borough; and Gower, Pontardawe and Swansea Sessional

Divisions. From 1918 to 1950 it contained Oystermouth Urban District; and Gower and Swansea Rural Districts.

Early Life. John Williams was born on 17 February 1861 in Aberaman. I have been unable to find his birth certificate. Apart from his having a very common name civil (birth) registration, although compulsory from July 1837, there was no financial penalty until 1875. His parents were David Williams, a miner, and Hannah Williams nee Davies.

John Williams left school, aged twelve, and became a miner initially being a door boy at the Plough Colliery in Aberaman. He opened and shut the internal doors which are vital in ventilating mines. The 1881 Census lists him, aged twenty, as a miner living in Merthyr Tydfil with his parents and his younger brother, Thomas Williams, aged seventeen.

Eight years after John Williams became a miner he was elected check-weighman at the Lady Windsor Colliery in Ynysybwll owned by the Ocean Company. On 19 February 1885, aged twenty four, he married Elizabeth Jane *Betsey* EUSTIS, twenty one, at Swansea Registry Office. His father had died by this time. Her parents were Richard Eustis an engineer; and Ann Eustis nee THOMAS. They had nine other children.

John and Elizabeth Williams were to have at least two sons and three daughters - Urias Eustace Williams born in 1885 and died in 1961; David Williams born in 1890; Mary Emily Williams born in 1892 and died in 1956; Gabriel Williams born in 1894 and died in 1954; and Annie Lavinia Williams born in 1897 and died in 1945.

After twelve years as a check-weighman John Williams became a full time Advisory Agent for the Western Miners' Association, a post he held until his death. He was based first at Neath and then at Swansea. He sat on the South Wales Miners Executive Committee; was appointed General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of South Wales Colliery Workers in 1889; and sat on the Workmen's Side of the South Wales Mining Conciliation Board.

John Williams was a Baptist lay minister. He was bi-lingual and had a wide knowledge of English and Welsh literature. His Welsh poetry won him a place in the Gorsedd Circle as Eryr Glan Gwawr. He sat on Mountain Ash District Council. In 1898 he was nominated as a Liberal candidate for a seat on Glamorgan County Council but declined to stand. He lectured on economics to various groups.

Politically John Williams started his career as a Liberal. He was a close associate of William ABRAHAMS, ie *MABON*, who represented Rhondda Parliamentary Constituency from 1885 to 1918 and East Rhondda 1918-1920. In 1898 they quarrelled and Williams replaced Mabon as Chairman of the South

Wales Miners Conference. They later became friends again and Mabon resumed this Chairmanship.

1906. A General Election was held in January-February 1906. The sitting Liberal MP, John Aeron THOMAS, a solicitor, colliery owner, tinplate manufacturer, and former Mayor of Swansea, did not stand again. He remained active in Swansea local Liberal politics and died in 1935 aged eighty four.

John Williams stood as a Lib-Lab ie a Liberal-Labour candidate. The official Liberals stood Thomas Jeremiah Williams, a barrister. The Conservatives stood Ernest HELME who came from an old Gower landowning family. He was born in 1873; was educated at Winchester and Christ College, Oxford; was a Lieutenant in the Glamorgan Imperial Yeomanry; and had helped promote the Welsh Industries Fair at Swansea.

John Williams got 4,841 votes 42.8%. Thomas Jeremiah Williams got 4,522 votes 40%. Ernest Helme got 1,939 votes, 17.2%. The turnout was eighty three percent of registered voters. Nationally the Liberals won 397 seats; the Conservatives 156; the Irish Nationalists 82, and Labour 29,

In the 1906-1910 parliament John Williams spoke ten times. His first recorded contribution was on 4 July 1906 during a debate about Inspectors of Mines. He initially took the Liberal Whip but in 1909 the Welsh Miners Federation affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee, ie the Labour Party. He became an official Labour MP.

January-February 1910. There was a constitutional crisis after the House of Lords rejected LLOYD GEORGE's *Robber Budget* which heavily taxed the rich. This paid for increased military and especially naval expenditure as Britain prepared for the First World War; and welfare measures including old age pensions.

John Williams stood again at Gower and got 9,312 votes 78.6%. A Conservative barrister, Percy Reginald Owen Abel SIMNER, got 2,532 votes 21.4%. Nationally the Liberals won 274 seats, the Conservatives, 272, the Irish Nationalists 71, and Labour 40. The Labour gain of eleven seats included Lib-Labs such as John Williams breaking from the Liberals. In the 1910 parliament he spoke five times.

The ASQUITH Liberal government now relied on Irish Nationalist and Labour support. No party likes being in this situation.

December 1910. Another General Election was held in December 1910. At Gower John Williams got 5,480 votes 54.8%. The Liberals stood the Reverend William Francis PHILLIPS, a Calvinistic Minister who bitterly campaigned

against socialism. He got 4,527 votes 45.2%. Many Liberals who had supported John Williams against the Conservatives had reverted to their normal allegiance.

Nationally at this election the Liberals won 272 seats, the Conservatives 272, the Irish Nationalists 74, and Labour 42. After two general elections in a year party funds and workers were exhausted. The Liberal government gritted its teeth and co-operated with the Irish Nationalists and Labour.

The Liberal government, with King George V's co-operation, got the House of Lords veto reduced to two years. This enabled it to pass an Irish Home Rule Act. The Ulstermen and Catholic Ireland armed and by 1914 it looked as if civil war was coming in Ireland. In August 1914 the First World War broke out. This temporarily was such a civil war.

In the 1910-1918 Parliament John Williams spoke thirty times. His speeches and questions concerned matters of concern to Swansea voters including mining, shipping, housing, Industrial Tuberculosis, Workmen's Compensation, Medical Officers of Health and smelter fumes.

1918. Once the First World War ended on 11 November 1918 parliament was dissolved and a General Election was held on Saturday 14 December 1918. At Gower John Williams got 10,109 votes 54.8%. The Liberal candidate, David Henry Williams, a Congregationalist, local headmaster and National Union of Teachers' leader, got 8,353 votes, 45.2%.

Nationally the Coalition Conservatives won 379 seats; David Lloyd George's Coalition Liberals 127; Labour 57; and Asquith's Independent Liberals 36 seats. Sinn Fein won 73 Irish seats but its elected members refused to take the Oath of Allegiance, declared themselves an Irish parliament, and declared Ireland independent. The constitutionally-minded Irish Nationalists were reduced to seven seats.

John Williams spoke three times in parliament in 1919. Apart from his parliamentary, union, religious and Welsh cultural activities he was a magistrate and a Governor of the University College of Wales.

By 1920 John Williams was dying of stomach cancer. He announced he would stand down at the next General Election. Gower Labour Party selected David Rhys GRENFELL as their prospective parliamentary candidate. He was born in 1881, worked underground in collieries for twelve years and in 1916 was appointed a Miners' Agent. Gower Labour Party considered but rejected Alderman Ivor Hael GWYNNE, a metal worker and trade unionist.

John Williams last spoke in the Commons on 23 February 1921 asking a question about improving railway passenger train safety. The Parliamentary

Secretary to the Ministry of Transport Arthur NEAL, a Sheffield solicitor who represented Sheffield, Hillsborough, said that this was being looked into.

Gower Liberals selected David Henry Williams of the Lloyd George Liberal faction as their Prospective Parliamentary candidate again. They overwhelmingly rejected Thomas Artemus Jones, a Denbigh stone mason's son, who left school aged eleven, was in turn a newsboy, a journalist and a barrister, and belonged to the Asquith Liberal faction. William Albert JENKINS, a wholesale coal merchant, coal exporter and ship-owner was considered but declined to stand.

Death. John Williams MP died of stomach cancer aged sixty-one at his Swansea home on Tuesday 20 June 1922. His brother-in-law Howell JONES informed the authorities of the death. The death certificate called John Williams a Miners' Agent. He left £2,460 11s 9d. Probate went to his widow, Elizabeth Williams. The funeral service was held at Bethel Burial Ground on Saturday 24 June 1922 and was well attended.

John Williams was given long obituaries in Welsh newspapers. They praised him as a moderate who had opposed Bolshevism from the beginning, unlike some Labour MPs who were slow to do this.

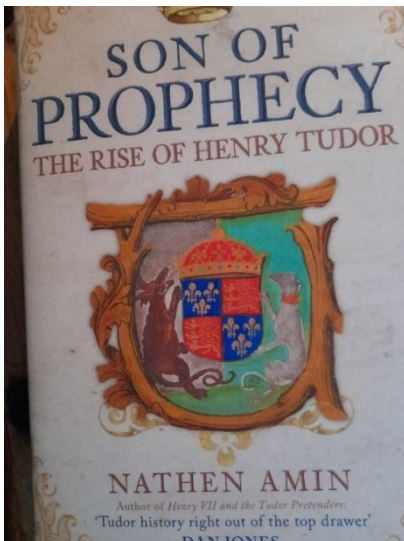
A story reported in the Wednesday 21 June 1922 *Western Mail* was that John Williams once sat down in the House of Commons Dining Room at a table reserved for government ministers. A waiter asked if he was a Minister and John Williams replied that he was a Minister of God. The waiter retorted *I am afraid, sir, this table is not good enough for you*. John Williams laughed and moved to another table.

On 14 June 1931 John Williams's widow Elizabeth Jane *Betsey* Williams died, aged sixty-eight, at her Swansea home. She left £1,769 10s 6d. Probate went to her son, Urias Williams, and her daughter, Mary Williams.

Aftermath. A Gower parliamentary by-election was held on Thursday 20 July 1922. David Rhys Grenfell got 13,296 votes, 58.5%, and held the seat for Labour. David Henry Williams for the Lloyd George Liberals got 9,841 votes 42.5%.

David Grenfell held Gower until 1959 when he stood down after having been re-elected ten times. In 1953 he became the Father of the House, ie the longest continuously serving backbench MP. He died in 1968 aged eighty-seven.

BOOK REVIEWS



When I first heard of this book I thought it would be yet another about the Tudors, about whom there has been a glut in print and films of recent years, but there is a different slant in approach with this one.

The author Nathen Amin, from Carmarthenshire, has written previous books on the Tudors, but in this he points out how the family, that was to become one of England's most memorable dynasties, actually originated in Wales, and it is this largely unknown Welsh heritage that he seeks to explore.

To quote from the flyleaf: When Henry Tudor won the English crown by defeating Richard III, he was a stranger to the people

he now ruled, 'an unknown Welshman' in the words of his defeated foe. In Wales however he had long been championed as the Son of Prophecy, a foretold national Messiah who would free his oppressed people from their lengthy misery.

Many people have argued over the years that the Tudors had no claim at all to the English throne, but the family tree provided in the book showing his descent from the 12th century Ednyfed Fychan indicates that his claim is at least as good (or poor), as any of his contemporary claimants. Henry's life was a roller coaster in its trials, hopes, disappointments and achievements, expectations always placed on him by his redoubtable mother, Margaret Beaufort, who was only 13 when she bore him. His Tudor ancestry is delved into through eight generations, and many of us will not have heard anything at all about their places in history so it is quite a revelation. The book is also a detailed exploration of the 'Wars of the Roses', the feud between the houses of Lancaster and York, a prime subject of school history lessons! It was Henry Tudor of course who ended them, by marrying Elizabeth of York.

As for whether he really was the Son of Prophecy the reader will have to decide; there were others likewise designated, but Henry Tudor remains a likely candidate for the title.

ISBN: 9781 3981 10472, hardback £25, Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Stroud, Glos, GL5 4EP possibly cheaper via online sources or as an ebook.

LETTERS/EMAILS to the EDITOR

#2149 Barbara Lee has written:

Thanks for the article by Diane Brook "The Kings of Glamorgan and their Descendants". Thanks to Barry's generosity, I can add myself to that company. Not by a male line unfortunately, and through an illegitimacy, but it's still a proud boast to be connected to the pre-Norman kings of Wales. Barry even mentioned me in his revisions. In his "Family of Godwin (Herbert)", under Thomas of Garth, generation 21 is James Thomas the Younger of Garth. His fourth child was Catherine Thomas who married William Clawdy (I spell it Claudy) in 1794. Her only child was an Ebenezer Claudy, who had many children by his wife, but also an illegitimate son, Alexander Richards, from whom I am descended. Barry notes of Alexander "He had seven children, descendants of whom are still living, including Ms Barbara Lee, Crosby, Liverpool." That's me!

I know of over 150 descendants of Alexander, and there are probably many more, as some of those distant cousins must be grandparents or even great grandparents by now. Further, Ancestry shows me DNA matches to more of Alexander's descendants, otherwise unknown to me, and even one or two matches to his father's Claudy descendants. Most of these people probably have no idea of their long family line into the kings of Glamorgan.

If anyone reading this can make their own connection, please let us know!

I have been contacted by **Nick James** to pass on information regarding a book of drawings that his father Nevil had carried out before his death 2 years ago. The book consists of more than 200 drawings of churches from all over South Wales (see inside front cover for one example). It is as yet unpublished, but if it would interest any member, please contact the editor and I will pass on the request to Nick.

Nevil James has also self-published a book of drawings of Llandaff, the Cathedral and Insole Court, ISBN 9781036906726, which is available through the online Llandaff Cathedral shop:

Llandaff Sketchbook: shop www.llandaffcathedral.org.uk.

Jean Fowlds, editor@glamfhs.org.uk

SOCIETY NEWS & REPORTS

ABERKENFIG RESOURCE CENTRE

The ARC has continued to open on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays over the winter months. This arrangement seems to be working well and a small number of visitors have been welcomed. Volunteers' numbers are steady, although there is always something to do if new volunteers come forward. We seem to have a growing list of projects and activities needing your help. The planned "Volunteers days" has not continued unfortunately, but this is something that could be re-instated should the opportunity arise.

Visitors are always welcome and if possible, a little advance notice of both your visit and what you are looking for help with would enable us to better focus the help on offer. Group visits can also be accommodated, but once again a little notice is needed as the ARC is a relatively small area. Also, remember we can open at other days/times but will need a week or two's notice to ensure we can have two or three volunteers there to help.

We are pleased to announce that we can now offer access to "***The Genealogist***" a very good research package. It is particularly good at linking a map reference to a discovered item such as a census record. It is lovely to actually see where an ancestor may have lived. Training for volunteers in this package is ongoing.

Another development is that the ARC has been actively pursuing Accreditation with **Family Search** to become an "**Affiliated Centre**". This would mean volunteers would have training in how to better access the Family Search records, and also have more access to some of the more advanced resources the organisation manages. This again is going to be a valuable addition to the ARC resources and one we hope visitors will benefit from using. Accreditation to become an Affiliated Library will hopefully be completed over the next few weeks.

Contact us on: arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

EXCHANGE JOURNALS

Did you know:

The Society website has over 100 journals from other countrywide Family History Societies, all available to members, so take a look, as you never know who may turn up from another area of the country.

NEW PUBLICATION

ARC focus this journal is on a **NEW PUBLICATION** that some of you may be interested in. It is hoped to have this publication available on GENFAIR www.genfair.co.uk for download only by the time this journal reaches you.

CWM SCHOOL, SWANSEA ADMISSION REGISTERS (1877-1925)

Recorded By Glamorgan Family History Society

With kind permission of West Glamorgan Archive Service
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Example:

Admit No	Date	Year	Surname	Forenames	DOB	Yr of B	Address	Parents Names		Occ	Prev Sch	Remarks
1783	18JUN	1900	ABBOTT	MABEL	01APR	1894	BOG	ABOTT	JAMES			
384	04Sept	1882	ABRAHAM	GRIFFITH	19JAN	1879	SPELTER WKS	ABRAHAM	EVAN	WATCH MAN		

ABERDARE/CYNON VALLEY

The last few months have proven to be very quiet within the branch.

Ongoing support is offered to anyone needing help with their family history research.

We have also been offering additional monthly research sessions in Mountain Ash library, and during the month of February a weekly introduction course into family history research was held.

Monthly meetings are ongoing in the Cynon Valley Museum; we are currently offering bi-monthly meetings with research sessions or welcoming guest speakers.

Transcribing of the Aberdare Leader obituaries continues. We are currently working on the years 1951-1960. Progress however is slow and so we would welcome any volunteers who would like to join the branch transcribing team. We are very grateful to our members who are currently supporting this project.

Pat Rees, aberdare@glamfhs.org.uk

BRIDGEND

Since the last Journal the Branch has been very quiet, mainly due to the dreary weather which means we all want to stay at home. Volunteers from the Branch, helped by several members from further afield, continue to support the ARC regularly by attending the twice monthly open days to help with in-person queries and email requests for help. They are also working on a number of on-going projects including re-organising the Library and cataloguing the family trees.

There was a social meeting in January which a few of the members found useful being able to advance aspects of their family history research. We returned to our Speakers programme in February with a talk about the Maid of Cefn Ydfa by Anna Ranking from the Maesteg Heritage Centre. We held the first two 2026 meetings on a Saturday morning as might hopefully encourage more members to attend, and avoided the cold wintery Monday evenings. In March we will return to our usual Monday evening meetings.

Members of the Branch are continuing to attend the regular Awen Heritage Group meetings held around the Bridgend area and this is helping establish links with various historical groups.

Penny Williams, bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

CARDIFF & VALE

For our November meeting we were fortunate to have the Reading Room at the Archives for our personal use. The members who attended found relevant and interesting documents to aid their family and house history. We are very grateful to the archivists for their help at that session.

We kicked off 2026 by looking back at some of the new acquisitions received by Glamorgan Archives during 2025. There were 186 of these altogether, some consisting of one piece only, such as a photograph or sketch, others consisting of many pages. Rhian Diggins, senior archivist, guided us through a selection of these, and members were delighted to find items relevant to their research and interests.

Here is the list of documents that Rhian selected for us to view:

1) Pisgah Baptist Chapel, Pyle, Records (D2101)

In July this year we received a collection of records for Pisgah Baptist Chapel, Pyle, via the Baptist Union of Wales, following its closure in 2022. The first Pisgah Chapel opened 1836. By 1855 it was decided to build a larger Chapel

due to the increase in population, which opened in 1857. This building was demolished in 1912 and a new Chapel built.

Document: Register of Graves, 1955-1984, D2101/8

2) Mary Traynor of Cardiff Collection (D1093)

We were sad to hear of the death of artist Mary Traynor in August this year. The Archives already held a large collection of her work, which serves as a wonderful visual record of buildings, many at risk or now demolished, in Cardiff and the surrounding area. Mary Traynor's family deposited the rest of her collection with us in October. The additional sketches and paintings will be added to the existing collection, including this one of Castell Coch.

Document: Drawing of Castell Coch

3) Parc and Dare Colliery, Cwmparc, Treorchy Accident book (D2136)

This is a page from an accident book for Parc Colliery, Cwmparc, Rhondda. It records deaths and accidents that occurred between 1898-1900. It came to Glamorgan Archives in August, and is the only accident book held for Parc Colliery. It includes reports on injuries to children, such as this one to William Haydn Lewis, who was 12 years old at the time.

Document: Accident book, D2136/1 – see next page

4) Stanwell School Records (D2100)

A large collection of records from Stanwell School in Penarth arrived at the Archives in February and March. They date back to the early years of the school, when it was known as Penarth County Boys School and Penarth County Girls School. These schools, established in 1897, combined to become Penarth Grammar School in 1960. In 1970 it became a comprehensive school, and was later renamed Stanwell School.

Document: Penarth County School for Girls, magazines, 1914-1952, D2100/2/7

5) Booth-Meller Family Papers (D2103)

The Meller family ran a medical practice in Cowbridge from 1891 to 1974. Charles Booth-Meller was born in Yorkshire in 1858. In 1881 he moved to Cowbridge to assist in the medical practice and in 1891 he set up his own practice in Caercady House. He was also Medical Officer of Health and public vaccinator. He married Emily MCCANDLESS in 1924. She worked as an Assistant in the Medical Practice. After Charles Booth-Meller died, Emily continued to run the practice until it was taken over by her daughter Kathleen. The GP surgery continued at Caerdady House until a new health centre was built in 1974.

Document: Record of births attended by Dr Booth-Meller, 1921-1922, D2103/1/4/3

REPORT OF ACCIDENT.

Name of Pit *Dall*Date *Jan 10/00*Time *1. pm*Name of Person injured:— *Wm. Haydn Lowe*

" " killed:—

Age last birthday *22 Years*Address *178 High St*Occupation *Collier* *156*Married or Single *Single*Period the person injured or killed has been in your employment *About 4 Weeks*

Where previously employed

Cause and description of Accident (full and accurate):— *While passing the full tram along the Batty face, with his hand on the corner of the tram, it got crushed between the tram and a post**Doctors Report: Crushed & fractured finger & R. arm strong**Jan 4/00. Received claim for 14 per week from Jan 24/00**Resumed work Feb 19/00*6) Cardiff Irish Club Photograph (D2105)

We don't know much about the Cardiff Irish Club, but it is listed as being at 4 Bute Terrace in the Western Mail Cardiff Directory for 1922. The Steward of the Club at that time was William COOPEY, the grandfather of the donor. He was also the Captain of the Club's Billiard and Bagatelle Team.

Document: Photograph of the Cardiff Irish Club Billiard and Bagatelle Team, winners of the Challenge Bowl, 1922-1923, D2105/1 (see image inside back cover)

7) Aion Welsh Baptist Chapel, Ynyshir, Rhondda, Records (D2106)

A daughter church of Salem Welsh Baptist Chapel, Porth, the cause started in Ynyshir in the early 1880s. Initially they met at a private house in Thomas Place, Ynyshir and later at the Cardiff Arms Hotel. In 1884 a vestry was built on South Street and then, two years later, the remainder of the church was constructed at a cost of £2000, seating 800. In 1894 Aion established a daughter chapel, Calfaria, in Wattstown.

Document: Attendance register, 1908-1915, D2106/4/1

8) Tabernacle English Wesleyan Chapel, Treorchy Records (D1821)

Tabernacle English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Dumfries Street, Treorchy, was built in 1867. It was previously a Welsh Independent/Congregationalist chapel before being taken over by the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1994 the church was converted into a community space.

Document: Minute Book and Sunday School Register, 1880-1887, D1821/2/1

9) W Clarke of Llandaff, Masons, Records (D2117)

The family firm has a long history in Cardiff, dating back to 1841. Masonry work was undertaken for Llandaff Cathedral (including post-war rebuilding), for churches across Glamorgan, on Cardiff Castle (linked to Burges) and on private houses.

Document: Day book, 1899-1902, D2117/1/1/1

10) George Telfer Papers (D2118)

The Home Guard had at least one lookout point on the wall of the Bishop's Palace, Llandaff, and the Bishop would often come and chat to them when they were on night duty there. The Cathedral was bombed on the night of the blitz 1st January 1941 and the Home Guard were very busy. The home of George Telfer suffered fire damage due to the incendiary bombs.

Document: Photograph of Llandaff Home Guard, 1942 (D2118/1)

11) Port of Cardiff Pilotage Boarding Cards (D2120)

The following information is recorded on the boarding cards: ship's name, port of registration, Captain's name, registered tonnage, port it had sailed from, where the Pilot had boarded, name of Dock the ship was being taken to, draught of water, description of cargo and ballast, name of broker, extra days, extra tides and signature of Captain and Pilot. This information was provided to pilots to help them navigate the ship safely into and out of port.

Document: Boarding cards, 1876, D2120/1

12) Alan Phillips Collection (D2079)

Alan Phillips was the author of 'Rhondda Fawr, Then and Now', and 'Maes-yr-Haf: The Time, The Place,' in addition to magazine articles. This collection

arose as a result of his research for those books and articles. He also worked for Rhondda CBC in leisure services, having previously worked as a self-employed builder.

Document: Photograph album, Treorchy, C19th-C20th, D2079/10

13) Parc and Dare Workmen's Institute, Plans (D2137)

Parc and Dare Workmen's Institute, later known as Parc and Dare Theatre, was built in 1892 as a library for the miners of the local collieries, Parc Colliery and Dare Colliery, Cwmparc. The library was financed by the miners and they hired Jacob Rees, Architect, Pentre to design the building incorporating a reading room, smoking room and guest rooms. The second building, adjoining the library, was built in 1912 and opened in 1913 as a theatre and cinema. The hall was sold to the Ocean Coal Company in 1926 as the miners were no longer able to support it due to the National Coal Strike. It was repurchased by the National Union of Mineworkers local lodge in 1952 following the nationalisation of the coal industry. The building was donated to Rhondda Borough Council in 1975.

Document: Plan of Proposed Library at Treorchy, 1892, D2137/1

14) Rosemary White (nee Thomas) of Cardiff, Collection (D2140)

Rosemary White was Headmistress of Trowbridge Infants School at its opening. She was also a teacher and former pupil at Allensbank School.

Document: A History of Allensbank Primary School 1905-2004, D2140/7

15) Mount Stuart Square Board School (EC)

The log book states that it is a record of Mount Stuart Board School, formerly Bute Docks British School, and that it opened in 1875. Trade directories refer to Mount Stuart Square National School, and also Bute Town National School on Mount Stuart Square which opened in 1869.

Document: Log book, 1896-1905, EC/47/2

16) Langley Family of Canton, Cardiff, papers (D2171)

John Langley (1924-2009) lived in Canton, Cardiff with his parents until he joined the RAF during the Second World War. He spent his later years in West Sussex. In 1969 he was awarded an MBE when he was Senior Executive Officer of the Board of Trade. He was awarded an OBE in 1984 when he was Principal of the Department of Transport. Also includes records of his father, Douglas, Able Seaman in the Merchant Navy in First World War, and William Loveless, sailor.

Document: City of Cardiff High School year photograph, 1938, D2171/4/3

There were 170 new acquisitions during the period, a lot more than this, so don't forget to explore Canfod, the Glamorgan Archives catalogue to find out what's there. You might have a nice surprise!

Karen Prior, cardiffmeetings@glamfhs.org.uk

MERTHYR TYDFIL

As last year the Merthyr Tydfil Branch had a December buffet in Soar on the second Tuesday of the month. We invited our speakers, local historians and friends, as Janet Karn who is an expert on family and history in Gwent. We continue to have excellent monthly talks in Soar. To start the year Barrie Jones, who writes articles both for the Glamorgan Journal and the Merthyr Historians, gave an interesting talk on 'Cheshunt College, Hertfordshire and the Welsh connection'.

Following a meeting, which we attended along with the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society, a decision was made to restore a special family history facility in Merthyr Tydfil Central Library, and we have been asked to provide volunteers to assist with this.

We are also invited to take part in two forthcoming events - see below.

Saturday 7th March: the **Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society** is to have a 'History Day' in Dowlais Church on the theme of Wales in the twentieth century. The cost will be £10 for a number of talks and a lunch buffet, including tea and coffee. To Book Contact: secretary@mtdhs.org.uk.

- Prof Kier Waddington: Beating the Flu: The 1918/1919 flu epidemic in Wales.
- Debra John: A day in the life of housemaids and footmen in a big house.

Details from the Merthyr Tydfil Historical Society website:-
www.mtdhs.org.uk/index.html.

The **Dic Penderyn Society** is to hold its annual event in the Merthyr Tydfil Labour Club on the **Saturday 30th May**. This day is themed around the subject of Radical Wales and consists of 4 lectures between 9am and 4pm, with breaks for tea and coffee and lunch.

Enquiries contact Viv Pugh on 07464771965. All welcome.

Carolyn Jacob, merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA

We have had two meetings since our last report.

In November, we enjoyed Howard Thomas's fascinating presentation about the Italian café families of Pontypridd, evoking memories from members who live in the area as these cafés played a big part in their social lives.

Our first meeting of 2026 was held on 20th January when we were privileged to hear David Maddox and Alun Morgan speak about the Parc Hall, Cwmparc, a Miners' Institute which celebrated its 150th anniversary last year. We are grateful to all those members and guests who ventured out in such miserable weather. I'm sure they would agree that it was well worth the effort.

We continue to meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7pm at the Pontypridd Museum. It is always difficult to maintain numbers at meetings during the winter months, but we manage to average 12 attendees per meeting. We always welcome guests as well as members to our meetings, so please join us if you see a topic of interest to you.

We would again like to extend our best wishes for better health to Meic and Jane Jones, long-standing members who have contributed so much to the Society over the years.

Eleanor Aubrey, rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk

HERE ARE THE LATEST MI BOOKLETS FOR SALE ON GENFAIR

O0102 Oxwich St Illtyd MIs £5
P0201 Pendoylan St Cadoc & Bethania Chapel MIs £5
P0302 Penllyn, Craig Penllyn Presbyterian MIs £5
L1301 Penllyn, Llanfrynach St Brynach MIs £5
P0401 Penmaen St John the Baptist MIs £5
P0601 Pennard, Gower St Mary MIs £5

www.genfair.co.uk

SWANSEA BRANCH REPORT

The branch will be holding an EXTRAORDINARY MEETING on Tuesday 10 February at 2pm, to decide the future of the branch. Members living in or near Swansea have been emailed.

The meeting will start with a tour of the new archives, followed by the meeting. Known as Y Storfa, the building that houses the new archives also includes the South Wales Miners Library, the general library, advice services etc and the place is packed with people on the laptops, ipads etc because there is free wi-fi. **See back cover for photographs of the 'new ' archives.** No other meetings have, as yet, been arranged because of the extraordinary meeting. Parking arrangements are currently uncertain but local buses serve the area. See link below for directions to the Archives.

Two members of the branch have just completed transcribing the admissions of Cwm School, Swansea. These records will soon be available for members. Transcribing records will continue, even if the branch "ceases to meet". The branch has 4 laptops so we would be delighted if some volunteers would like to help with this work.

Janet Neilson, swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

Directions to West Glamorgan Archives
<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/visitingarchives>

ONLINE BRANCH

The Online Branch has continued to support the running of the Society by providing opportunities both for Branch meetings and volunteer training.

In November a planning meeting was held to look at how to make the J Barry Davies collection available online to our members. Volunteers came forward to help with preparation of the material but we still need volunteers to upload the information to the website. Website training can be provided.

As our Resource Centre at Aberkenfig now has a subscription to The Genealogist in December Nick Davey and Sue Hamer gave a presentation to both volunteers and members on its features.

Our January meeting was a 'Coffee and Chat' session entitled 'Did your Ancestors cross the Bristol Channel to South Wales? when members shared their research hints when searching for migrating ancestors.

arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

NEWS FROM GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES

News from Glamorgan Archives

October-December 2025

Access and Community Engagement

- We held two talks in November, both of which were sold out. The first was 'The Story of the Rhondda Tunnel: From its Conception to its Future' and was delivered by Tony Moon, Project Secretary of the Rhondda Tunnel Society. The second, 'Overtaken by Steam – George Overton and The Railway', was presented by Stephen K Jones and Stephen Rowson.
- Our events continue in January with Keith Moger speaking on 'The Welsh National Memorial Association: An NHS Forerunner'. And in February with a talk by Roger Gilbert on George Sibbering, Chief Engineer of the Taff Vale Railway.
- We were busy through the autumn with school visits. Two classes visited from St Philip Evans RC Primary in Llanedeyrn, four classes from St Francis RC Primary in Ely, two classes from Llanishen Fach Primary, two classes from Radyr Primary, and two classes from Fitzalan High School.
- We also welcomed student visits from Cardiff University's Welsh School of Architecture and the School of Welsh, along with the History Department at the University of South Wales.
- Members of GFHS Cardiff & Vale Branch met in the searchroom in November to undertake research
- Talks at branch libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taff have continued, with visits to Mountain Ash and Hirwaun libraries. The talk introduced our coal collections.
- Volunteers from Bridgend Libraries visited for a tour and to view items from the collection.
- Articles on our blog have featured Christmas at the Pontyclun Red Cross Hospital in 1916, and the Pontypridd Dragons football team
- Thank you to GFHS volunteers for their continued support of our 'Ask the Experts' family history sessions.
- Glamorgan Archives was used as a location for filming for BBC's Casualty.

Collections

- A successful Collections Week was held in November. One team of archivists progressed the work on records of our current local authorities, cataloguing the committee agenda and reports of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The other team of archivists dealt with outstanding large accessions received during the past 12 months. They completed work on the papers of the Meller Family of Cowbridge, who ran a medical practice in the town from the late-19th century onwards. They also began work on cataloguing the large collection of records received

from William Clarke, Masons, of Llandaff. The records assistants continued the stock check in the strongrooms, making sure that all records are in the correct place.

- Our next collections week will be held from 9-13 February when we will focus on the records of Associated British Ports.
- Notable accessions received recently include:

Flying Officer William Austin Harvey of Gilfach, Bargoed, Papers (D2156)

William Austin Harvey was born in Gilfach, Bargoed, in 1922 and served in the RAF in the Second World War, becoming a Flying Officer (Pilot) flying Sunderland Flying Boats. He served in Canada, America, West Africa, Scotland and Northern Ireland and was Mentioned in Despatches in April 1945. He died in a crash of a Sunderland Flying Boat in the Thames Estuary on 21 October 1947, shortly before he was due for release from RAF service. He is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Ystrad Mynach. Papers donated include photographs and notice of the King's Order mentioning Warrant Officer WA Harvey in Despatches for distinguished service.

United Services Mess, Cardiff, Records (D2157)

The United Services Mess was founded in Cardiff in January 1909 by senior non-commissioned officers of the rank of Sergeant and above, plus commissioned officers, all from Maindy Barracks. It was established in rooms in Wharton Street, Cardiff and gave members of various armed services a place to meet outside the barracks. By mid-2025 it was decided that the financial income from the Mess bar and associated functions was insufficient to meet maintenance and other costs so the decision was made to formally close the Mess and return the premises to the landlord. The records include minute books, membership records, accounts, visitor books and photographs and cover the period 1909-2025.

Pontypridd Dragons Football Club Photographs (D2152)

Pontypridd Association Football Club (nicknamed 'The Dragons') was formed c1908 and turned professional in time to join the Southern League for the 1911-12 season. They played at Taff Vale Park in Trefforest. The club was dissolved in 1926.

Non Pugh of Merthyr Tydfil, Papers (D2155)

Non Pugh represented the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil as the 'Croeso Hostess' during the 1969 Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales. She walked in procession directly behind the Prince as he entered Caernarfon Castle. This scrapbook of material relating to Croeso '69 events for the year of the investiture was transferred to us from the Richard Burton Archives, Swansea University.

Mary Traynor of Cardiff Collection (D1093)

We were sad to hear of the death of artist Mary Traynor in August. Mary was a member of the Cardiff Civic Society and the Victorian Society, keen to preserve the city's architectural history. The Archives already held a large collection of her work, which serves as a wonderful visual record of buildings, many at risk or now demolished, in Cardiff and the surrounding area. The family were keen for the rest of her collection to come to us, so additional sketches and paintings was delivered in October and they will be added to the existing collection.

Senghenydd Boys' School Form 1 Magazine (D2164)

This magazine was compiled by students in Form 1 at Senghenydd Boys' School in February 1937. It appears to have been compiled to send to their form tutor and Woodwork Master, Mr I H Harris while he was in hospital. We can tell from the school log book that Mr Harris was admitted to Cardiff Royal Infirmary in the January; his death is recorded on 22 February.

Wick General Baptist & Unitarian Chapel Records (D2172)

The Unitarian Chapel at Wick has a long history, having been established in 1792. The records received include a lease for land which ended up in America before being returned to the chapel in 1987, following years of searching by church officers. Also included are an account book, burial fees book and photographs of the building.

Rhian Diggins

ARC OPENING DATES 2026

arc2@glamfhs.org.uk

2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month, 10am-2pm

Other days/times available by appointment

February 10 and 24th

March 10 and 24th

April 14 and 28th

May 12 and 26th

June 9 and 23rd

July 14 and 28th

August 11 and 25th

September 8 and 22nd

October 13 and 27th

November 10 and 24th

December 8th - closed on 22nd

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

Suggestions have been made for branch outings for the summer months these are currently being planned. Branch members will be notified of the dates/details of future events.

12 March: Guest Speaker Mervyn Pugh
who will be showing his Miners photographic collection.

9 April: Research session

14 May: Guest speaker to be confirmed

11 June: Research Session

9 July: Guest speaker to be confirmed

August no Meeting

BRIDGEND BRANCH

bridgend@glamfhs.org.uk

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

16 March

20 April

18 May

15 June

20 July

17 Aug

21 Sep: AGM

CARDIFF & VALE BRANCH

cardiffmeetings@glamfhs.org.uk

1st Tuesday in the month, 2 pm at Glamorgan Archives.

Tuesday 3 March

Tuesday 5 May

Tuesday 2 July

Topics TBC

MERTHYR TYDFIL BRANCH

merthyr@glamfhs.org.uk

All meetings in Soar, Welsh Centre, Pontmorlais on the 2nd Tuesday of each month starting at 2pm.

Tues 10 March: A Pictorial Survey of Old Merthyr Tydfil – Carl Llewellyn

Tues 14 April: A Merthyr Medley - Steve Brewer

May: Annual Trip TBA

PONTYPRIDD & RHONDDA BRANCH

rhondda@glamfhs.org.uk

3rd Tuesday of the month 7 pm at Pontypridd Museum

17 February

Ron Keats 'Hidden History (Glamorganshire Canal, Pontypridd)'

17 March

Darren Macey 'No Pasaran: Welsh Volunteers and the International Brigade' (postponed from June 2025)

21 April

Robert Jones 'The Heir Family and Pontypridd'

19 May

Ben Price 'Voices of 1842' - The Stories behind Child Labour in Wales

SWANSEA BRANCH

swansea@glamfhs.org.uk

See Swansea Branch Report

ONLINE BRANCH (Ar Lein)

arlein@glamfhs.org.uk

Tuesday 28 April – Rootstech Topics

Thursday 14 May – Coffee & Chat

Tuesday 9 June – Talk TBC

Thursday 9 July – Coffee & Chat

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



Cardiff Irish Club 1922-23 – See Page 24 for names



Cardiff Branch at Glamorgan Archives January 2026



Inside Y Storfa, West Glamorgan Archives new location
at 277-278 Oxford Street, Swansea, SA1 3EL



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