

Marlais Mill (Brechfa) and the Latter Day Saints Jill Morgan

The original Marlais Mill (Felin Marlais) is no longer in use, and is now used simply for storage. It is the small white building, top left in the photograph below. The dwelling now known as Felin Marlais is the much larger and newer house on the opposite side of the lane, on the right.

Marlais Mill was the site of baptisms for local converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the mid-nineteenth century. It is the furthest of the buildings in the photograph above, with Marlais brook running to its left.



Photograph courtesy of Mr Elfryn Daniels

A stone building with corrugated metal roof, the mill was water-powered and used both to grind corn and to power tools, as the more recent owners of the mill were also carpenters. It sits on the Marlais brook which runs deeply enough



in places to be used for baptisms (which are performed by immersion by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). The mill itself is the further of the two buildings seen in this photograph.

Photograph: Author

Marlais Mill is situated on the lane which branches off the road from the centre of Brechfa, north towards Llanllwni. It is barely half a mile from the centre of Brechfa to where the lane turns off. The original mill sits on the right side of this lane across the small bridge over the Marlais brook.

Individuals associated with the place

LDS Church members **Evan Morgan** (1808-1899) and his wife **Ann** (1802-1886) lived with their family at Nanthir further along the lane from the mill. A local stone mason, Evan was for many years the president of the LDS branch at Brechfa.



Photograph: Nanthir, where Evan and Ann Morgan lived for many years, and where LDS church meetings were often held. [Photograph courtesy of Cardiff University Special Collections. Copyright expired.]

Many missionaries in the later decades of the 19th century recorded receiving a welcome bed and board here with the Morgans. The cottage no longer exists but formerly stood below the lane on the left just beyond Marlais Mill.

Missionary John Thomas recorded in May 1888:

19th [Sat] Got up late got breakfast after a While Started for Breachfa to See Prest Morgans When we got their found he had gone Out Went up to Bryn Marlas to See Sister Jones She is feeling good. We got a Nice Cup of Tea With her. Then Started for Bro Morgans found him Home & feeling Very good Will help his Neice to Emigrate this Season We Intend to Preach tomorrow at Breachfa if the Wether Will permit.

Evan and Ann Morgan never did emigrate – although some of their family members did - but are buried in Brechfa parish churchyard.

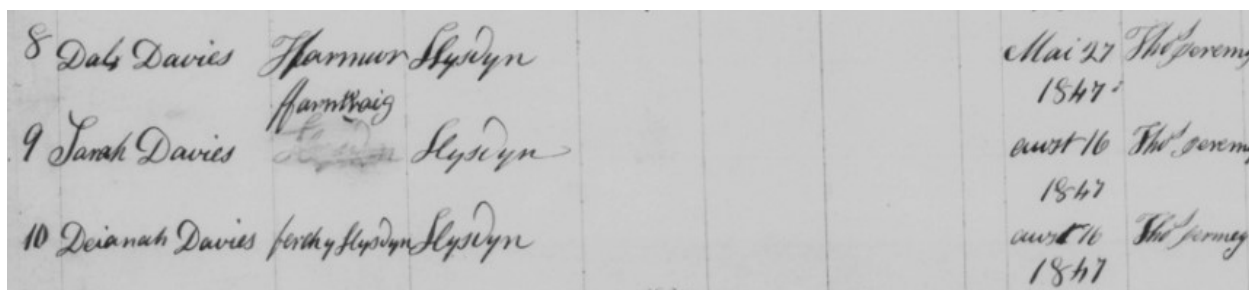
Bryn Marlais, the home of **Sister Jones** mentioned above, is on the road to Llanllwni, about a mile from Marlais Mill.



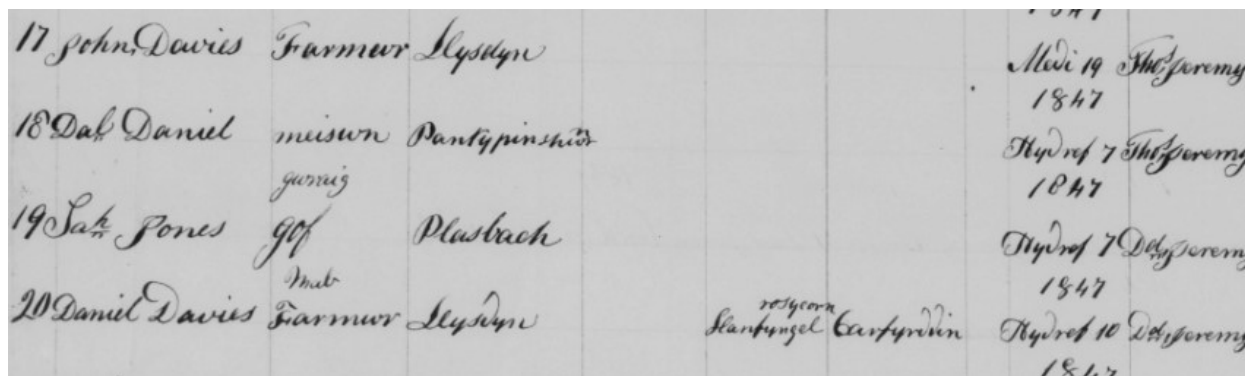
Daniel Davis (1793-1849) farmed at Llystyn, less than a mile away across the fields to the east of Marlais Mill. He was the first of his family to convert to the Latter Day Saint cause and was baptized on the 27th May 1847. He was soon followed by his wife **Sarah** (nee Thomas, 1797-1864), and their youngest daughter **Diana** on the 16th August of the same year. As these excerpts



from the Brechfa branch records show, they were all baptized by Thomas Jeremy who had himself been baptized the previous year in Llanybydder, and who, with his wife, was the first in that area to accept the message brought to their home by missionary Dan Jones. Thomas Jeremy's brother David also served as president of the Brechfa branch.



Daniel and Sarah's sons **John Ira** and **Daniel** were baptized in September and October respectively. The numbers to the left of their names in the lists above and below indicate the chronological order in which individuals were baptized into the branch. Daniel and Sarah were the eighth and ninth to be baptized into the branch. Between September 1846 and October 1848 sixty individuals were baptized in the area.



Two of the Llystyn farm servants also converted. Daughter **Ann** would follow in January 1848, with **Lettice** and **Mary** together in the February, and **Sarah** in the July. The family can be seen in the 1841 census living at Llystyn, which is in the parish of Llanfihangelrhosycorn.

Daniel and Sarah emigrated with one son and four daughters in the first group of 316

Welsh converts under the leadership of missionary Dan Jones. They sailed aboard the *Buena Vista* in February 1849. [A detailed account of this voyage and its passengers can be found in *The Call of Zion* - see *Sources of information* below.] Their married daughter Lettice was also in the group, with her husband and their young son.

Marlais Mill could well have been the place where the Davis family were baptized, given the short distance from their farm.

Photograph [author]: Marlais brook just below the bridge which leads into the old mill yard



At this spot (pictured below) on the road to Llanllwni, less than a mile from Marlais Mill, LDS missionaries would frequently preach in the mid-nineteenth century, drawing large crowds. The area is known as Keepers and the road takes a sharp turn to the left around what is now the car park serving walkers on the various trails beginning here. The lane which can be seen leading off beyond the corner of the fence leads past Bryn Marlais where member Sister Jones lived.



Sources for this historical information:

Photographs of Marlais Mill courtesy of Mr Elfryn Daniels whose grandfather (seen here) and great-grandfather owned and ran the mill during the twentieth century. They were not members of the LDS church.

Brechfa Branch Record of Members 1846-1875. Online at: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/> [Permission may be required to access]

Ronald D. Dennis *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration*. 1987. Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University. Online at: <http://www.welshsaints.byu.edu/Resources/pdf/8624.pdf>

Mr Elfryn Daniels

The T.H. Lewis Papers, Cardiff University Special Collections

