

For BERTHA MARY BOWN

1887 - 1923

PREFACE

For the anecdotal contributions, and much further information in this narrative, I am indebted to the late Miss Freda Evans, whose mother was a first cousin of our grandfather, W. T. Gwyn.

I had heard in pre-1939 days my Gwyn grandparents refer to her as "CISSIE EVANS," but I must say that when she wrote to me in July 1985, on the kind introduction of my cousin Margaret (EDWARDS), I assumed she was one of the Evans family who lived in Eastgate, and who were nieces of Grandpa Gwyn. As you will learn later this was a considerable error on my part!

Cissie was the name by which she was known as a child in her family, because "when my elder brother was told he had a little sister, he could only say Sissy, which later became CISSIE." She went on to say that she found it difficult to remember "who calls me Freda and who, Cissie."

In 1986 my sister Isobel and I had the great pleasure of visiting her at home - The Bridge House, 5 High Street, Cowbridge, which had previously belonged to her parents. Despite poor eyesight, she was living alone, aged 92, and during the short time we were with her she displayed remarkable memory and conversational powers. She showed us some very interesting family photographs between about 1860 and 1910, including one of a very young W. T. GWYN. (After her death I enquired of the Solicitor, acting for her Estate, about the intended disposal of these photographs, but was told that together with the family Bible, they had been left to a Dr. Benson, a second cousin).

I subsequently wrote to him, explaining that I hoped the Bible might show some family dates and details which might be helpful to me in compiling the Family Tree, but he told me the Bible had no annotations regarding family dates etc. He did, however, supply me with interesting items about his side of the family.

In January 1988 (we had exchanged many letters in the meantime), Freda wrote to me from the Manor Nursing Home, St. Hilary, where she had gone after "three unhappy weeks" in hospital in Bridgend. I telephoned my cousin Ann (WILLIAMS), who was unaware of Freda's illness and she arranged to go and see her at St. Hilary. Ann told me that a cousin of Freda's, living on Broadway (Cowbridge), was keeping an eye on her. I made enquiries of the nursing home and was told on the telephone that "she was doing fine, considering her age." However, she died on March 9th. In her Will,

she directed that her ashes should be buried in the grave of her grandparents (John and Catherine Gwyn) at St. Mary Church.

A year later, my friend at St. Mary Church, Douglas Turner, reported to me that no form of inscription had been put where Freda's ashes had been interred. There followed considerable delay, despite my badgering the Solicitors, who rarely answered my letters (interfering so-and-so?) and it was not until September 1992 that they at last reported that the headstone with the inscription, had been laid. This was confirmed to me by Douglas, who told me the inscription read:

Freda Gwendoline Evans (Cissie)
only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Evans of
Bridge House, Cowbridge, and granddaughter
of the above

Born 7 March 1894

Died 9 March 1988

R.I.P.

I have devoted what may seem a disproportionate amount of space to Freda, but it should be borne in mind that without her contribution, the following narrative would be somewhat dry as dust, composed of dates and deaths.

In addition to acknowledging Freda's help, I would like to thank Mrs. Jacqueline Dell of Whitchurch, Cardiff, for the extensive enquiries she made in various church records and census returns. Also my thanks are due to Douglas Turner, sometime Churchwarden of St. Mary Church and to Mrs. Dulcie Cadwgan, Churchwarden of Llandough, for their help in passing on to me the results of their enquiries in various local records. And finally, my considerable appreciation and thanks to my niece, Mrs. Patricia Terrell, for deciphering my writing and so kindly and patiently typing this narrative.

WILLIAM BOWN
Cerne Abbas
16 November 1993

Errata:

Chapter VI. Page 24. Line 4 Council read Council.
Chapter VIII Page 44. Line 9 Griffiths read Griffith.
Line 12 Griffiths read Griffith.

CHAPTER I

The Gwyns of Llanccarfan

The Gwyn Family Tree, which I compiled and sent to my two (GWYN) sisters, and my cousins in November 1986, began with William and Mary Gwyn, with no relative dates shown.

Between November 1986 and January 1989, I had made no progress in discovering anything further about the Gwyns of St. Mary Church, apart from being told by Mr. Douglas Turner about an entry in St. Mary Church Parish Register, of the burial on 14th February, 1774 of Catherine Gwynne: (There was no clue as to whether Catherine was a spinster, widow or wife of a Gwyn). Douglas said that this was the earliest reference to any Gwyn, but that this did not mean that there were no previous entries - it was just that he could not read the old script. (At this stage it is worth pointing out that the family name varies in these registers between GWYN, GWYNNE and GWINN. The spelling would be dependent on the scholarship, or even the handwriting, of the writer of the parish records).

However, in January 1989 I received, through my cousin Ann (WILLIAMS), a letter from a Mr. John Gwynn of Sutton in Surrey, enquiring about various Gwyns who had lived in the Bridgend area in the 1860's. I was quite unable to give him any such information, but nevertheless, in a subsequent letter, he sent me a beautifully set out Family Tree of the descendants (about 90 in number, including spouses, down to our present generation i.e. the grandchildren of W. T. GWYN) of our EDWARD GWYN, who was a farmer at Molton, a hamlet near Llanccarfan. This same Edward was the father of William Gwyn, born 1751, whose name was at the head of the Family Tree, which I had compiled in 1986.

Just when the correspondence with John Gwynn was becoming interesting (at least to me!) it petered out. I did not receive any reply to my two subsequent letters: perhaps he had realized the small extent to which I could help him!

So I then made enquiries through Mrs. Dell about the Llanccarfan Church register, which revealed that a William Gwyn was married to Catherine Howell on 21st May, 1696. It is possible, but not entirely certain (because of the lack of Llanccarfan records) that they were the parents of Edward Gwyn (of Molton) the father of our William, born in 1751.

Unfortunately there are no records existing at, or for, Llancarfan between 1696 and 1724, and I was quite unable to obtain any information from the gravestones there. However, I think it is safe to assume that Edward was born during this period when no records are available - partly, as explained to Mrs. Dell by the Records Office, by the fact that the parchment was either in poor condition or illegible.

However, we can be certain that the William born at Llancarfan (or Molton) in 1751 (his elder brother also named William, born in 1750 had died in 1751) moved to St. Mary Church, presumably to farm, and in 1813 he is shown as Churchwarden there. I have been unable to discover any information about his wife Mary, but I have set out a supplementary Family Tree relating to the foregoing `Llancarfan Gwyns` which links up with Sheet 1 of the Tree I compiled in 1986.

Before I leave the Llancarfan Gwyns, I might add that whilst the village has in recent years suffered from some `gentrification,` the Church of 13th century structure appears to be largely unaltered and well maintained. It occupies the site of the Celtic monastery founded in the 6th century by St. Catwg, and then subsequently occupied by the Benedictine order (the Church came under the jurisdiction of the Abbey of St. Peter in Gloucester). There is an impressive rood screen and an unusually fine medieval chest.

A little local history

Edward Williams (whose bardic name was IOLO MORGANWG) was born in 1746 at Pennon, a hamlet within the parish of Llancarfan. He became a stonemason, like his father, and in 1781 he married Margaret Roberts at St. Mary Church.

In his spare time he became an antiquary of some note (his works are in the British Library and in the National Library of Wales). He was also the mainspring in the renewal of the Gorsedd of the Bards and also the Eisteddfod, but there seems to have been an element of romanticism in his make up, which resulted in some (many?) of his literary works being `economical with the truth.` One account of him says that `out of a particular desire to prove that Glamorgan had a richer tradition than any other county, he fabricated folk tales, genealogies (this worries me!), historic records and manuscripts.`

He had connections with Cowbridge, for although his home was at nearby Flemingston, in later years he set up a bookshop in the High Street, and this is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of Birds' shop, with a Welsh inscription.

Those of you familiar with the morning declamation by the Reverend Eli Jenkins in 'Under Milk Wood' may appreciate the following poem by Iolo (for which I am indebted to Douglas Turner) in praise of the Vale:

Delicious Vale by Nature dress'd
In Beauty's rich array
Here let me waste in mental rest
my peaceful days away
And let my soul on virtue bent
attend bright Wisdom's tale
She, with an Angel called Content
Dwells in Davona's* Vale

(* DAVONA = Welsh Down + the River Thaw (Ddaw) which I think rises just below Llanharry, then past Llansannor Court, to Cowbridge. It then meanders below Llanblethian, past Llandough and Grabla Wood, below St. Mary Church to Howe Mill, on near Beaupre Castle to Gigman Mill. Then flowing between Fishweir and Treguff, ancient home of the Lougher family, on through Flemingston Moor to Llancadle and past the cement works to the Bristol Channel at Aberthaw.

Whilst on the subject of the Eisteddfod, I think I might, at this stage, make reference in advance to our grandfather, W. T. GWYN, who, I think it was in 1921, attended the nearby National Eisteddfod at Barry. There he was made a tertiary member of the Gorsedd Bardic circle, with the name of GWILYM BONTFAEN, probably in recognition of his services as Town Clerk of the ancient borough since 1892. (I think he had a smattering of Welsh and I certainly remember him employing light-hearted Welsh phrases).

To return to Iolo, I must recommend that you read in the chapter 'Towards a National Character' in Jan Morris' splendid book 'The Matter of Wales,' her most interesting account and assessment of the life of Edward Williams, whose memorial in Welsh and English is in Flemingston Church.

And now, in Chapter II, to the Gwyns of St. Mary Church.

CHAPTER II

St. Mary Church was joined with Llandough as a Civil Parish in 1895 under the name of LLANFAIR, but the ecclesiastical parishes were united in 1797, the patrons being the TALBOT family of MARGAM. In 1966 the benefice of the two parishes was grouped with COWBRIDGE and LLANBLETHIAN.

The present church, dedicated to the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, dates from 1862, when the original 13th century church underwent the usual (but almost certainly necessary) Victorian restoration: in fact, the only link with medieval times is the embattled Norman tower.

Above the south porch, in a niche, there is a rather touching sculptured representation of the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, and in the churchyard (which is beautifully kept, mainly by my good friend Douglas Turner), there is a Calvary Cross of three steps, surmounted by the socket stone of a medieval cross.

I will be making mention of various GWYN graves and tombstones later, but at this point, I will say that at the church end of the main path, on the left side, with a handsome standard rose by it, is the grave of our grandfather WILLIAM THOMAS GWYN, who died in 1931, aged 74. On the tombstone, reference is made to him and to his sister in law, CATHERINE ANN EADES, who died aged 71 in 1927. There is, of course, reference also to our grandmother, LUCY DAY GWYN (1855 - 1955), but her body was cremated and the ashes were buried in the same plot of the Eades family in Moseley Parish Church, where she was baptised, confirmed and married.

Perhaps the main item of interest, in the interior of this little church, is that it contains an unusual chancel, in that it `weeps` to the south, whereas normally `weeping` chancels are angled to the north. These `weeping` chancels are fairly rare and the tradition is that they were built to remind worshippers that when our Lord was crucified, His head drooped to one side.

A silver chalice, flagon and paten were given by parishoners and pupils of LLANFAIR school in memory of my grandfather, ALBERT BOWN, who was Churchwarden from 1885 to 1940, and schoolmaster from 1883 to 1922, and who lived at The Cottage, Llandough.

As I have previously mentioned, Edward Williams (~IOLO MORGANWG~) was married in the church to Margaret Roberts ~of this parish~ on 18th July 1781.

The Old Rectory of St. Mary Church nearby is a 13th century building, and according to various accounts was occupied between 1660 and 1699 by the Rector, the Reverend Thomas WILKINS, who was an eminent antiquarian and collector of Welsh manuscripts, including what is considered to be the richest single manuscript compilation of medieval Welsh literature - The Red Book of HERGEST - which his son, on Wilkins' death, presented to his old college - Jesus College, Oxford, and which is now in the Bodleian Library. (Medieval Churches of the Vale of Glamorgan, by Geoffrey ORRIN).

The Rectory was not used as such after 1797 when the two parishes were united. Freda Evans in a letter to me (15th July 1987) wrote:

~In my very young days, what is now called the Old Rectory was then called the Tithe Cottages, and Miss Jane Lewis (who was called Lucy) and her brother, Mr. Evan Lewis, lived in one, and a widow woman with five children lived in the other. She married the gamekeeper and went to live the other side of the road from ABERNANT in the Keeper's Cottage. A man named Willie Fisher, nephew of the Headmaster of St. Athan School, bought the two cottages, and from the deeds, discovered they had been the Rectory. He turned the two into one house, and in time sold it for a large sum. He died several years ago, and I hear it has been sold for a very large sum, as I expect you know.~

(Douglas Turner told me that a fairly recent sale price was of the order of £125,000, after considerable improvements had been carried out. He said that in 1945, the Dunraven Estate - the landlords after the Talbots - offered the property to the sitting tenant, the late Mr. Alfred Humphreys for £100, but being an agricultural labourer, he was unable to raise the money at the time).

~When my mother wanted to go away for a day, we were taken up to Lucy for her to look after us and how we loved it! and how many happy days we spent with her and her brother. She had been a lady's maid to Mrs. Stephen Nicholl.~

(Stephen Nicholl was Rector of Llandough and St. Mary Church from 1867 to 1898. It was he, who suggested to our Grandparents Bown, that our father,

William Reginald, born 20th September 1884, should be named Matthew - the Saint's day is on 21st September. The Nicholls were a very old established Glamorgan family at Merthyr Mawr and were connected with the Carnes of Nash Manor. The Revd. Stephen Nicholl was succeeded by his son Henry, as Rector (1899 - 1917)).

^..and she used to be fetched to St. Athan of a Wednesday, when we lived there, and stayed for the week (sic) being taken home on the Friday evening, sewing all the household mending, turning sheets' sides to middle and making my frocks. She also taught me how to sew!! How times have changed and what happy times we had. I believe I am right in saying that she gave her Dutch clock to your Father and Mother, as a wedding present. In my mind's eye I can see it now where it hung on the wall."

(I can remember my father telling me about Lucy and what a character she was).

Freda went on to say: "St. Mary Church is now being overbuilt (as are so many villages, and I think spoiled). Such is life."

Sadly the "gentrification" of both Llandough and St. Mary Church in recent years has not resulted in any additions to the ageing congregations of each church, which are around 10 to 15 in number, at Services which of necessity are infrequent. Douglas Turner visualizes the possibility of closure of at least one of the churches, probably St. Mary Church which is faced with considerable expenditure on the tower, well beyond the means of the parish, and probably the Diocese.

CHAPTER III

To return to the Gwyns of St. Mary Church. I was told by Freda Evans that Gwyns have lain buried in the churchyard there since the 17th century (though there is no visible evidence of this). She also mentioned that the Gwyns, and the LOUGHERS of Treguff were the oldest families in the Vale of Glamorgan, and that `our` Gwyns were connected with the Gwyns of Llansannor, but I have not been able to verify this. However, in a later chapter, I will make more detailed reference to the Llansannor Gwyns, as inscriptions on certain graves in the churchyard there indicate that Gwyns (of the post Forde Abbey period) were connected with the village in W. T. GWYN`S time, and were distantly related to him.

In Chapter I, I mentioned that William Gwyn (b.1751) moved from Llancarfan to St. Mary Church to farm there, and he is shown in 1813 as being the Churchwarden. Reference to the parish registers from 1584 to 1744 do not reveal any Gwyns, apart from the entry of the burial on 14th February 1744 of Catherine Gwyn, of whom I have no further information.

Since producing the Family Tree in 1986, I have discovered that Anne (b.1783) was not the first child of William and Mary. This was William, who was born in 1781, but died in 1785. His namesake, born in 1793 is the one in whom we are interested, as he is our great great grandfather. In 1823 he married Alice (sometimes shown as ALYS) Bradford, who was born in 1797 at BETTWS, a village six miles north of Bridgend. I remember Grandpa Gwyn telling me that there was a family connection with William Bradford, the Pilgrim Father of Mayflower fame. This same Alice is enshrined in a family story which I will recount later, and when I asked Freda if she had heard it, she mournfully replied: `many times and over and over again!`

William farmed, as presumably did his father, Parsonage Farm (now known as PENYRHEOL Farm) on the St. Athan road, as a tenant of the Talbots (of Margam) Estate. In the 1851 Census he is shown as farming 130 acres and employing 4 men. His tenancy later passed to John (b.1830) and not to David (b.1828), our great grandfather, for reasons which I will explain later.

When Isobel and I visited Freda in May 1986, she showed us a photograph taken in 1870 of William and Alice. (This and others, of which there were a few Gwyn photographs, were retained by her Benson relatives after her death).

In the 1861 Census, William is shown as farming 150 acres and employing 4 labourers, but by the 1871 Census he and Alice are shown as living at The Cottage, Llandough (a Talbot property) where in 1901 my Bown grandparents were the tenants. The Cottage, Freda told me, was built as a hunting lodge by the Talbot family, and was at one time the home of John Sterling, the friend of Thomas Carlyle, who often stayed there.

The 1871 Census also shows that living with William and Alice was Sarah Rees aged 26 from Llanmaes, their servant.

William died in 1878 and Alice went to live with her son David, by then a retired farmer and butcher, according to the 1881 Census. He and his wife Ann were then living at The Herberts, another Talbot property, at the bottom of the hill leading up to St. Mary Church.

In the 1881 Census, Alice is shown as being blind, but not so in the 1871 Census, so perhaps it was between these years that the oft repeated incident took place, when W. T. Gwyn pushed his grandmother in a wheelchair on the rather steep road leading from the church, and temporarily lost control of it, only to hear her call out: 'beautiful air, William.'

Alice died in 1882 and is buried with her husband at St. Mary Church.

CHAPTER IV

Since completing Chapter III, it has occurred to me that it might be helpful to my patient reader if, in relation to the family tree which I distributed in 1986, I were now to set out a more detailed one to include the Llancarfan connection, down to our Grandfather Gwyn's family.

This then is contained on a separate page, commencing with William Gwyn (d. 1748) and his wife Catherine, to whom I referred in Chapter I, and continuing with the descendants of William Gwyn (b. 1751) who went to St. Mary Church from Llancarfan.

I have been able to discover very few details of his family, apart from their marriages and of course apart from William, our great great grandfather, described in the previous chapter. It is interesting to note that a daughter, Margaret (b. 1787) married into the LOUGHER family. John (b. 1785) and his wife Elizabeth presumably lived in Llandough parish, as their three children Mary, John and Elizabeth were all baptized in Llandough church.

The youngest child of William and Mary was David (b. 1803) and he, unlike his brothers John and Edward, appears in various St. Mary Church Census returns. For quite some time during my researches I confused him with our great grandfather of the same name, who of course was his nephew! This "uncle" David is shown in the 1851 Census as being "a Blacksmith, Victualler, and farmer of 20 acres, employing one man and being resident in St. Mary Church with his wife and four daughters and three sons." By the time of the 1861 Census, his description is the same, except for "Victualler" - now read "Publican." His wife Mary had died in 1857 and his eldest daughter Jane is shown as housekeeper. One of his three sons had since died, William, who in the 1851 Census is shown as being "aged 12, living at home, an invalid."

In the 1871 Census, David is shown as "a Publican" (The Talbot Arms, which is specifically mentioned, has long since disappeared) also as "a farmer," but this time "with 60 acres, still employing only one man." His daughter Jane was still residing with him, and also Watkin Watkins, a grandson aged 2, but there is no mention of other members of the family.

Finally in the 1881 Census, David then aged 78, and his faithful daughter Jane, are shown as living in St. Mary Church. He died in 1885 and is buried at

Llandough as also are Mary his wife, Mary their daughter aged 24 and Jane who died in 1887 aged 56.

Coming now to the next generation, and in particular to the children of William and Alice, my great great grandparents, I have, thanks to Freda, obtained some information about each of their seven children.

Margaret, the eldest, married John Jones, who was born in 1818 at St. Georges (between Peterston-super-Ely and St. Nicholas) and who in the 1881 Census is shown as farming 200 acres at FISHWEIR, which is just south of St. Mary Church, employing 2 labourers and 3 boys. The Jones' had no children, but I shall refer to them later in connection with the help and guidance which John gave to his widowed sister in law, Catherine (née Thomas) whose husband John Gwyn had died aged 42 in 1872. The Jones' also feature in the saga of Alice - Grandpa Gwyn's sister.

The 1881 Census throws up something of a mystery regarding the Jones' household, which I have been unable to fathom. Living at FISHWEIR are shown John and Margaret, their servants Alice Grant aged 30 and Jane Trew aged 14, both of St. Mary Church; David Lewis aged 43 from Llandough, described as a Farm Servant, and three young local boys under 18 years of age ... and in addition William Gwyn, described as being ... 'wife's (i.e. Margaret's) nephew and an annuitant (?) born in Cardiff aged 21.' Our grandfather W.T.G. was born in Cardiff, but in 1881 he was aged 24 and at that time was living in Cowbridge with his Uncle and Aunt Rees. So this other William remains a mystery as Margaret could only have been aunt to sons of her brothers John and David, neither of whom had a son born in 1860 in Cardiff. However, another 'ANNUITANT' mysteriously appears later on, in the household of John and Catherine Gwyn.

On her husband's death, Margaret went to live with her niece Alice (Grandpa Gwyn's sister) in Eastgate Street, Cowbridge. We will hear (thanks to Freda) a great deal about Alice in a later chapter.

The second child of William and Alice was Jane, who married John Thomas, who farmed Tyle House Farm at Boverton. They had one son, who Freda told me, died very young, and also a daughter Alice, who was only six weeks old when Jane died on Christmas Day 1854. Her grave is to the right of the porch at St. Mary Church. Alice was brought up by her Uncle and Aunt Thomas, who farmed at Flemingston, and it was at Flemingston Church

that she married John Llewellyn, the Chemist at Cowbridge. Freda tells a pleasant little story:

~Maud (Llewellyn) often told me that there were 3 yards of silk in her ~little mother`s~ wedding dress, and that there was still rice in the hem of her wedding veil.~

I will mention the Llewellyn/Stockwood connection in a later chapter.

The third child of William and Alice was our great grandfather DAVID, and I will write about him in the next chapter.

Next came John, who married Catherine Thomas of The Cross, St. Hilary, which later became the Vicarage. Her father had Sandpits Farm nearby, of 250 acres, and her mother was Catherine David, born at COYCHURCH in 1817, and prior to her marriage, lived at TYN-Y-CAIA Farm, St. Brides Major, with her father Samuel David and her brother Timothy. (This Timothy was the great grandfather of Jo! I am indebted to Jo`s cousin, Owen David for information concerning the David family connection).

Returning to John Gwyn, he is shown in the 1871 Census as ~farming 150 acres (previously farmed by his father) and employing 4 labourers.~ This was Parsonage Farm, which Freda said had previously been the Old Rectory ~standing where the little spinney is now, next to the Churchyard.~ Freda`s mother, who had lived there, told her, ~it was a very pretty house with a large lawn in front and a yard and a pool at the back. It was divided from the Church by a wall with a stile going over into the Churchyard, which the family always used when going to Church.

In the 1871 Census, there are only 2 children shown - Mary aged 3 and William aged 1. Their sisters Jane and Catherine ANNE (Freda`s mother) are shown in the Cowbridge Census for that year as being ~aged 6 and 5, boarders living with Jane Llewellyn, sadler.~ In John`s household were ~Frances Lewis aged 21, born at Neath, a dressmaker; Lydia Morgan aged 20, domestic servant, born at Pentyrch (near Radyr) and Margaret Grant aged 16 also a domestic servant of St. Mary Church, and finally Thomas Flanders aged 13 of Llandough, farm worker.~

John died in 1872 leaving Catherine aged 32 with five children aged between 8 years and 6 weeks. In the 1881 Census she is shown as farming 180 acres and

employing 3 men and 2 boys. Her son William had died aged 7. The two daughters living at home were Catherine ANNE, now shown as being "in domestic employment" and Alice aged 9, scholar." Catherine's mother, Catherine Thomas, shown as "a retired farmer, aged 63" was also living in the house, as also was yet another "ANNUITANT." Annie Gwyn shown as "cousin, unmarried, born at Cardiff aged 24" (presumably a sister of William's at Fishweir).

Freda wrote in some detail of Catherine and her family, since Catherine Anne was her mother. Freda mentioned that Catherine stayed on at the farm, with a bailiff and a "head man named Perkins, and that Uncle Jones used to come over daily from Fishweir to see that all was well."

In 1893 Catherine and three of her daughters went to live at Llandough Cottage, as tenants of the Talbot Estate. They stayed on there until 1901, when our Grandparents BOWN moved down from the Old Schoolhouse.

Freda writes:

"John Morgan, who considered himself a Welsh Bard (Douglas Turner believes that his bardic name was IEUAN TRITHYD), put in for Parsonage Farm, but wanted a new farm house. He was told by the young squire, Mr. Talbot, that "what was good enough for Mrs. Gwyn is good enough for you". Shortly afterwards the old house went on fire and burnt out. It was freely spoken of that John Morgan had put it on fire to get the house he wanted .. which was built where it now is - "PENYRHEOL" which roughly translated I believe means "Top of the Road." John Morgan was not a nice man. During the Second World War, when we were being bombed, the 13th bomb to drop hit the house and the red roof and gabled windows were replaced by ordinary windows and a slate roof. It is not now as pretty as it was."

I might add that when we were children staying with our grandparents at Llandough, Aunt Lilian and sometimes Uncle Arthur, used to come over in cars from Cowbridge to take us and our Jenkins and Gwyn cousins to the sea at The Leys, and from the top of the road, opposite Penyrheol we had our first and exciting (if somewhat distant) view of the sea (the Bristol Channel) and the Somerset coast. Opposite Penyrheol there was, and still is, a cottage in which there lived an old lady, a Mrs. Dunn, who used to sell not altogether clean sweets, yet perfectly acceptable to the local

children, including me, somewhat against Granny Bown's wishes!

As an aside, I can add my personal anecdote about John Morgan. (Incidentally two characters have now entered this family story, both of whom I saw alive!) The first is the aforementioned Grandmother Catherine, referred to by Grandpa and Granny Gwyn as "AUNT CASSIE," who died at Cowbridge in 1927 at 39 High Street: this was the house of her daughter Catherine Anne, married to Frederick Evans (Freda's parents). Catherine is buried at St. Mary Church with her husband John, and alongside are buried, at her direction, Freda's ashes.

The other person from the past era was the problematical John Morgan himself, who in about 1922 was living, aged 100, with his son and daughter in law at Penyrheol. My Granny Bown took me to see him, and I can without any difficulty still visualize the gnome-like figure at whom I gazed with some awe in view of his age (centenarians were not as common in those days!) On being presented to him I was surprised to hear a somewhat high-pitched South Walian voice saying: "Let me look at you. Well, you are not so ugly looking as your father was." This, as you may guess must have caused consternation and affront to Granny Bown who, quite rightly, could think no wrong of Reggie, and I think the interview with the ancient bard was quickly terminated! I must say I never heard any suggestions, similar to those of Freda against his character, from my grandparents, but as you might say, "there is no smoke without fire." However, Douglas Turner did tell me that, "it was said locally that old man Morgan used to feed vagrants at the family table, and that they could sleep in his barn, but that he never gave them money."

Freda's family, and the information she gave me regarding them, in particular her aunts and cousins, could be the subject of another narrative! I did compile a tree of their side of the family, which was approved by Freda, and I sent a copy to her relative, Dr. Benson, mentioned in the Preface.

The story relating to the next two children of William and Alice is a sad one. Anne who was born in 1828, died in 1832. Another daughter, her namesake, was born in February 1832 and died in the following May. Both are buried in their parents' grave. The St. Mary Church Burial register reads thus:

ANNE GWYNNE of Parsonage House aged 4 years:
Buried 20 February 1832

and

ANNE GWYNNE of Parsonage House aged 3 months:
Buried 15 May 1832

The youngest member of the family was Mary, who married Thomas Rees of Boverton, born in 1838. He subsequently became a solicitor in Cowbridge, and Grandpa Gwyn and his brother Charlie served their articles with him. In due course W.T.G. became a partner in the firm of Rees and Gwyn, which after Thomas Rees' death in 1900 became the firm of Gwyn and Gwyn, Charlie being the other partner.

In the 1871 Census for Cowbridge, W.T.G. and Charles Jackson Gwyn are shown as living in East Village with the Rees' who were childless, and following the death of their father in 1872, the two boys were brought up by the Rees'.

On the axiom 'De mortuis, nil nisi bonum' I ought to be somewhat circumspect about what I write regarding Uncle Rees, but it does appear that he maintained a somewhat extravagant style of living, of which I learnt an aspect from an elderly lady living here in Cerne Abbas - Miss Margaret SAYERS, a distant relation of Jo's. She told me that her grandfather was a schoolboy friend (at the Eagle School) of Thomas Rees, to whom in later life he lent £400 (a lot of money in those days) and 'did not see it back!'

Suffice to say that on Uncle Rees' death in 1900, W.T.G. was faced with considerable partnership debts incurred by Uncle Rees, and these debts were cleared in full by W.T.G., with help from Granny Gwyn, who told me about this.

Perhaps in fairness to his memory, we should bear in mind the almost certain fact that Charles Jackson Gwyn might never have been able to go up to Pembroke College, Oxford without some financial help from Uncle Rees (who was the mayor of Cowbridge in 1887).

In the next chapter I will write about our great grandfather DAVID and his wife Ann.

CHAPTER V

We now come to our great grandfather DAVID GWYN and his wife ANN.

I must say I cannot remember our Grandpa Gwyn ever saying anything to me about them. As I have previously said, I wasted a certain amount of time in my research through the St. Mary Church census returns by confusing David with his Uncle David. Since then I have realized he spent only a small period of his life in St. Mary Church.

He was born in 1828 at Parsonage House and in the 1851 Census is shown as a bachelor - he was presumably helping his father on the farm. However, there is no reference to him in the Parish's 1861 Census.

He married, either in 1853 or 1854, ANN WILLIAMS (the fifth child of Thomas and Sarah Williams) who was born in 1826 at Kingswood, a village next to Wotton under Edge in Gloucestershire. In Ann's entry in the Kingswood Baptism register, Thomas is described as a labourer. At the time of his marriage on 18th February 1811 at Wotton under Edge to Sarah Leonard, his home was at North Nibley, a nearby hamlet.

By remarkable coincidence, a Bown ancestor around 1750 lived at Horsley, only a few miles from Wotton under Edge, before moving to a village beyond Cirencester, Ampney Crucis. In the meantime there was no connection between the two families, until the marriage of my father and mother.

Both Barbara and I remember Granny Gwyn talking about Wotton under Edge, and we both assumed that this was the place where her mother lived. This, as you might guess, somewhat delayed the outcome of my enquiries, which were further confused by the fact that Kingswood used to be in Wiltshire!

Disappointingly, I cannot find any record of the marriage of David and Ann in the local records. It may even have taken place in London, where their first child, Alice Sarah, was born in 1855. (According to the Cardiff Census of 1861, at this time David was described as a stoker, living at 3 Adelaide Street, in the Docks area). By the time when our grandfather, W.T.G., was born there in 1857, David is described on his son's birth certificate as an engine driver.

All four sons of David and Ann were born at Adelaide Street, which was either bombed in the last war, or subsequently demolished. The present house is distinctly post-war.

The 1871 Cardiff Census for Adelaide Street shows no Gwyns and we can only assume that the family had moved elsewhere, probably still in Cardiff, as by that time they had not returned to St. Mary Church, where the family appear in the 1881 Census.

We will never know what induced David to be the first to break with tradition and leave his birthplace surroundings. Perhaps a disagreement with his father, whose tenancy of Parsonage Farm then passed to the second son John, or was it that David saw possibilities of employment in the rapidly expanding Docks of Cardiff. And did he meet his future wife then? It was unusual in those days for a young countryman to find a bride at such a distance from home, particularly when that home was in the rural surroundings of the Vale.

In the 1881 Census, David is shown as a retired farmer and butcher. His widowed sister in law, Catherine, as we have already seen, was farming Parsonage Farm at that time, and I think David must have had a small holding near The Herberts (mid-way between St. Mary Church and Llandough) where he died aged 52 during the year of that Census. At that time his household was made up of himself and his wife, and two sons, John aged 17, a bank clerk, and David aged 15, a scholar. The two older brothers, W.T.G. and Charlie, as we already know, were with their Uncle and Aunt Rees in Cowbridge.

Also in David's household were his mother, Alice, then aged 84 and shown as blind; in addition Eliza Gilford, a domestic servant aged 14 from Llandough.

David's widow, Ann, subsequently went to live with her daughter Alice in Cowbridge. She died in 1898, and she and David are buried at St. Mary Church.

I will now turn to their children, with the exception of our grandfather, W.T.G., of whom I will write in the next chapter.

Firstly, ALICE, whom we noticed with some surprise was born in London.

In 1985 when Jo was engaged in the long drawn out matter of obtaining a power of attorney for May Farmer, the daughter of David Gwyn (brother of W.T.G.), I supplied the Solicitor acting in the matter, with a Family Tree including David Gwyn, Alice his sister and his three brothers. I started the Tree with "ALICE 1855 - ? (not known if married)." That was in the pre-Freda correspondence days! In a way this unintended misinformation saved me (and the Solicitor acting) endless time and trouble, because if the information which I subsequently obtained from Freda had been available, the Tree would have been increased, for a start, by Alice's eleven children, and I doubt if Jo would ever have completed her self-appointed, and thankless task, to obtain the grant of the power of attorney by the Court of Protection.

The facts, as related to me by Freda, are as follows, but as there are grandchildren of Alice's still living, we should, I think you will agree, be reticent in passing on Freda's information about Alice's husband, William Evans.

I had written to Freda asking her for some information about Alice and she replied:

"My mother (your grandfather's first cousin) married Fred Evans of Cowbridge - NO (this was underlined three times!) relation whatsoever of the Evans family who used to farm the small farm at Gigman Mill." (near St. Mary Church).

Later in the letter she went on:

"But it is of Alice you want to know about. Well, she was taken by her Aunt Margaret, who had married a Mr. Jones who farmed Fishweir Farm, and had no children of their own. Alice was their two eyes," (presumably a reference to the "apple of their eye" - neither of them, according to the Census were blind) "and spoilt beyond words. It was a terrible blow to them when she married William Evans of Gigman Mill, who was most unsuitable in every way. They thought they had squashed the association and were pleased when Alice went to stay with a cousin on the Bradford side (*) of the family, in Cardiff. You may remember her - a Mrs. Williams."

And here I might make an interruption. This Mrs. Williams I remember well. Always dressed in black and with very rosy cheeks. She used to stay

(*) her grandmother Alice's maiden name

occasionally at Llynthurst. Her house was in Rawdon Place near Cathedral Road in Cardiff. She was a great support to my father when my mother died in 1923.

~However, (Freda went on) it was all arranged and Alice and William Evans were married at St. Johns Church in Canton (Cardiff). Uncle Jones then rented and stocked the Herberts farm for them, making the best of a bad job, but William Evans did no good there - spent his days in the house and nights poaching, and was caught red-handed one night by the keeper, with his gun in one hand, and some game in the other. Mr. Talbot (Llandough Castle) gave him immediate notice to quit, and Uncle Jones put him in a smaller farm at Llanblethian, but he did no good there, and ended up by being a porter on the Cowbridge branch of the Taff Vale Railway.~

Freda then went on to give the names, and short comments on each, of the eleven children. Despite the somewhat picaresque career of their father, they all seem to have done well and prospered. Of one of them in particular, perhaps I might quote Freda:

~John Evans, through the good offices of Uncle Rees (*) was apprenticed to the engineering branch of the Taff Vale Railway, and later went out to Chile in charge of a project building a railway out there.~

I remember him at the Eastgate Street house, very crippled with rheumatism. I think Evie remained at home with her mother, whilst Clara first went into the Post Office at Cowbridge and later became a supervisor at the Cardiff Head Office. Here I must make a guilty confession. It begins to worry me a little after all these years, and arises from compiling this little history, although in the meantime I had quite forgotten about it. I think it must have occurred soon after Granny Gwyn's death in 1955, when at Christmas I was somewhat surprised to receive a card from Clara and I quite clearly remember that she added a note that, "as relatives we must keep in touch with each other," or words to that effect. I am afraid I did nothing about it, and I have since discovered that she died, aged 77, in August 1959 and is buried at St. Mary Church in the same grave as her uncle, Charles Jackson Gwyn.

In another letter Freda wrote (regarding the William Evans family:

(*) another point in his favour!

~I knew nothing of Aunt Alice and her family until I went to school, aged 12, at the Intermediate School for girls in Cowbridge.(*). Until then I had had a governess at home. Evie (Evans) was there at Uncle Charlie's expense. She informed me that she was my cousin, and when I went home and told my mother of this, she told me I was not to go to their house on any account. I had a good excuse in saying I had to catch my train to get home to St. Athan, and it was not until we came to live in Cowbridge that I got to know any of the family, of which my mother then told me. Hence my knowledge of them.~

It is not difficult to imagine that the William Evans saga provided much opportunity and material for family tongues in a small market town!

Back to Alice again. When her Uncle Jones (Fishweir) died, his widow Margaret came to live with Alice and William in a house in Eastgate Street. After William's death in 1919, Alice, with Clara, Evie and John, moved to a smaller house on the opposite side of Eastgate Street, and it is there that I remember them. Alice died in 1934, and is buried at St. Mary Church with her husband, who had died in 1919, aged 70.

After Alice came W.T.G. and I will refer to him and to Lucy Day Gwyn (EADES) in the next chapter.

The next child of David and Ann, after W.T.G., was CHARLES JACKSON GWYN, invariably known as Uncle Charlie born in Cardiff in 1862. I have not been able to discover the reason for his middle name. My rather fanciful suggestion is that his father may have been an admirer of the Southerners in the American Civil War, and in particular of Thomas (~Stonewall~) Jackson, their general, killed in 1863 at the Battle of Chancellorsville. It should be remembered that sympathy for the Southern Confederacy was strong in Britain.

As we have seen in Chapter IV, Charlie was living at the time of the 1881 Census, and also W.T.G., at the home of their Uncle and Aunt Rees (the house is next to the present offices of Gwyn and Gwyn). Both boys went to the Eagle School and then to the Grammar School. Freda says that, at Uncle Rees' expense, Charlie went

(*) where my mother, she said, taught her the piano.

up to Pembroke College, Oxford (not Jesus College as might be expected in view of the Grammar School connections). On coming down, he served his articles with Rees and Gwyn, and later after Uncle Rees' death, joined his brother in the firm of Gwyn and Gwyn.

From the many accounts I, as a child, heard of him, he was an extremely witty man and a wonderful raconteur, much in demand as an after dinner speaker. Sadly, his health, never strong, deteriorated and he died, a bachelor aged 53 in 1915. He is buried at St. Mary Church.

The next brother was JOHN, born in 1864. Unlike his brothers he had no second christian name. He is shown in the 1881 Census as a bank clerk, living at St. Mary Church with his parents. At an extremely young age he became the Manager of Barclays Bank at Milford Haven, where sadly he died aged 31. He is buried at St. Mary Church. His wife was a Miss Bertha COUND, about whom I have little information, except that Freda says that some time after John's death she remarried, and went to live at Porthcawl. Their two children were Mary Louie and John, who was born after his father's death. Freda remembered him as being extremely good looking, but that he stuttered badly. Mary Louie married a Mr. David Cule, but sadly she died in childbirth aged 35 and is buried at St. Mary Church. Mr. Douglas Turner tells me that her grave is next to the Evans' and that her husband David remarried and lived in Cardiff, but that on each Palm Sunday he used to put flowers on her grave. Freda said their daughter Rosemary went to live with her Uncle John at Brighton.

The youngest son was DAVID JAMES born in 1866. He is shown in the 1881 Census as a scholar (probably at Cowbridge Grammar School) living with his parents at St. Mary Church. He went into the Midland Bank and progressed to Manager at their Aberdare branch, then to Bridgend, with a sub branch at Cowbridge. He married a Bridgend girl, a Miss Mary Morgan, known as Polly, whom I am sorry to say was frequently mentioned (in my presence as a child) as being a bit of a pain in the neck, and a great complainer! They had two daughters, one of whom died very young at Aberdare - as the result, Freda said, of a tragic accident. Freda wrote:

~There was another little girl before Mary arrived, who pulled a scalding teapot over herself, and later died of shock.~

The other daughter, Evelyn Mary, known as May, married Charles Farmer, a photographer, and lived in

Barry. Their only son. John Gwyn Farmer was killed aged 18 in a motor accident. May died aged 93 in 1987. As we know, she was the subject of a Court of Protection order taken out on her behalf by Jo in 1985, when she had become incapable of dealing with her affairs.

To return to DAVID: Freda said that he was a born actor, and always took the chief part in plays put on in Bridgend. She said:

~He really was very good and I knew him very well and saw a lot of him.~

I can remember him (pre-1939) as being a tall and very handsome man, with a delightful speaking voice (hence the actor).

Freda told me that David and Polly lived in various different houses in Bridgend.

~She was always on the move, but I remember them in Park Street and the last house they lived in was on the Merthyr Mawr road where Polly died.~

The story then becomes a sad one. Freda wrote:

~Uncle David had a very indifferent housekeeper for a time before giving up his house, in the hope of living with May and Charles at Barry, but they would not have him. Evie (Evans) a niece, went to Bridgend for a time to clear up the house before it was sold, and Uncle David asked her to have him to live with them in Cowbridge - also he gave a small hint that he might come to me (Freda) - but Evie told him that it was May's place to have him with them. Nothing came of that and he got rooms in Cardiff - which part I don't know - but he died there in his sleep in 1952.~

In the next chapter I will write about Grandpa and Granny Gwyn, but before closing this I think we can all agree that, bearing in mind the humble and rural background of their parents, the children of David and Ann achieved remarkably.

CHAPTER VI

As we have already seen, our grandfather William Thomas Gwyn was born on 24 March 1857 at No.3 Adelaide Street, Cardiff. This is in the Bute Docks area, which is now about to be transformed by the Cardiff Bay Development.

The family returned to the Vale some time between the dates of the 1861 and 1871 Censuses. In the latter, the family are shown in St. Mary Church with the exception of Willie (as he was usually known in the family) and Charlie; both boys were living with their Uncle and Aunt Rees in Cowbridge, where they attended the Eagle School (near the old West Gate and on the site of the 'Spread Eagle,' one of the better of the many public houses in Cowbridge in the 18th century). From there they went on to the Grammar School.

On leaving school, Willie was articled to his solicitor uncle, Thomas Rees, principal of the firm of Rees & Co., which commenced in 1867. He was admitted Solicitor in 1883 when he became a partner with his Uncle in the firm of Rees & Gwyn. Since writing the previous chapter, I have discovered that Charlie became a partner in 1888, and on the death of Thomas Rees in 1900, the Firm became known as Gwyn & Gwyn, and as such exists today, if only in name.

Willie was appointed Town Clerk of Cowbridge in 1892 in succession to Mr. John Stockwood, and was described in the Reverend Doctor Hopkin-James' book ('Old Cowbridge' 1922) as 'The present most respected and courteous Town Clerk of the Borough.' In the book 'Cowbridge and Llanblethian, Past and Present' (James and Francis 1979) our grandfather is said 'to have served no less than twenty-one Mayors, with dignity and distinction. Mr. Gwyn was a stickler for ceremonial, and he always regarded the customs and institutions of the old Borough with the sort of awe that a Sherpa reserves for the majestic heights of Everest.'*

Since writing Chapter I, in which I made reference to Grandpa being made a Bard at the 1921 Eisteddfod at Barry, I have been told by Hilary that she had heard that the award may have had some connection with the following story:

* On his retirement in 1930 he was, as we know, succeeded in the office by Uncle Arthur.

A retired General was riding his horse through Cowbridge sometime prior to the 1914/18 war, and the steed slipped on the then untarmaced road, bringing the General down. He threatened to sue the Borough, but was appeased by the action of the Town Clerk, who quickly made arrangements for an improvement in the main road surface, and perhaps therefore was recommended for some recognition by the grateful Mayor and Aldermen of the ancient Borough of BONTFAEN (sometime spelt PONTFAEN).

There is a delightful photograph in `Cowbridge and Llanblethian` taken in the garden of `Lynthurst` in 1928 of the Borough Council, with W.T.G. resplendent in wig and stock, sitting next to the Mayor.

In this same garden, which seemed larger to me in those years, there were vegetables on one side of a long path, and on the other side, a lawn with a large tree in the middle, from which in summer time there hung a hammock, which gave us all a lot of pleasure.

Many of us will probably remember a photograph of Granny Gwyn with all her grandchildren (this was before Ann and Jo were born) on a seat in the garden, and I still retain memories of being very impressed with the way Barbara and Hilary, and also Mary and Isobel, (after tucking their frocks inside their knickers) used to walk on their hands on the grass.

At the end of the garden, there was a large field which conveniently used to flood slightly most winters, being near the River Thaw, thus giving me the opportunity, which I loved, of walking in it in my gumboots. On the far side of the field were the Town Swimming Baths, and there is a lovely photograph taken at the opening in 1911 of Uncles Vivian, Arthur and Ivor all `showing off.` (Ivor at that time was working in the National Provincial Bank in Cowbridge).

He and Arthur took it in turns in the early twenties to be `Father Christmas` at the family celebrations which, getting yearly larger, were transferred conveniently to the Rural District Council offices, next door to Lynthurst, no doubt available due to the municipal activities of both Grandpa, and Uncle Vivian, Clerk to the R.D.C. On these occasions, as `senior mate.` I had to maintain, for the benefit of my younger cousins and sisters, a belief in the existence of Father Christmas (whose trouser edges sometimes showed!)

My other recollection of Cowbridge Christmas` is that of the family pantomime party at the New Theatre.

Cardiff, when Grandpa used to `take` a box for the family.

When I spent a year (between 1921 and 1922) at my Grandparents Bown at Llandough (and attended my grandfather's school), I frequently visited my Grandparents Gwyn, and even at that tender age can remember W.T.G. returning from Town Council meetings complaining to Granny of some of the Councillors' tedious habits during debates, at the same time worrying about Town matters in a very conscientious way.

Freda wrote, `Uncle and Aunt Rees took your Grandfather (Uncle Willie) and Uncle Charlie to Llandrindod Wells with them one year on their usual yearly change of air.` (lovely expression!) `There they met Mrs. Eades from Birmingham, and her daughters. It was thought locally at the time that Uncle Willie was on the eve of becoming engaged to Miss Alice Culverwell of Cowbridge.` Freda wrote, `Mrs. Culverwell and her daughters, Alice and Bessie, together with a German and a French governess kept a high class boarding school `for young ladies` in Cowbridge - very select! (My mother helped Mrs. Culverwell in the Sunday School, and I still have her Teachers' Bible given to her by Mrs. Culverwell).

Granny Gwyn told me that he first `noticed` her when, at a little concert at the hotel, she sang some songs.

They were married at Moseley Parish Church on 5th June 1884 (Freda's Aunt Jane was one of the bridesmaids, and Charlie was the best man). Granny told me that they spent their honeymoon at Ilfracombe.

They began their married life in a house in Eastgate, which continued to be the family home until Granny went to live with Aunt Lilian at Kings Norton in 1946. The house which is opposite the offices of Gwyn & Gwyn was called `LYNTHURST`, presumably named by Granny after a house, and hamlet near Bromsgrove (though spelt LINTHURST). This LINTHURST house belonged (by a coincidence) to Barbara's grandfather-in-law, Robert Milward, a Birmingham solicitor, and Barbara has shown me a very interesting photograph, taken at LINTHURST of a house party on the occasion of the Birmingham Triennial Festival of 1888. The group includes Hubert Parry, Charles Gounod, Hans Richter, Edward Grieg and Anton Dvorak. (The latter left a letter of thanks to his hostess promising that on his

return to Prague he would `write a great work` for her - but it must have been lost in the post!

Barbara says that it was hinted by Granny to Lilian that through some skullduggery the house should have passed to the Eades family, but did not, possibly through the machinations of the solicitor, Mr. Milward. For further information about this interesting character, see `In Patagonia` by the late Bruce Chatwin (his great grandson).

Our grandparents` first child was Uncle Vivian, whose second name was Sedgley (Granny`s mother`s maiden name). He was born in 1885, and was followed by my mother Bertha Mary, born in 1887. Their third child, Thomas Bradford, died in infancy in 1889, aged 10 months. Arthur William was born in 1890 and Lilian May in 1893.

In about 1894 the family moved temporarily to a house, which still stands, off the Bridgend road on the outskirts of the town, called Llynhelig, a farm on the Penllyn Estate. Freda said that previously a Mr. Culverwell, a gentleman farmer, his wife and daughters had lived there. (The aforementioned Alice was one of the daughters).

Grandpa rented Llynhelig whilst Lynthurst was being enlarged to accommodate the growing family. My sisters and cousins will remember the long (at least so it seemed to us) linoleumed corridor that led from the original part of the house to the extension, at the end of which was a bathroom and two bedrooms. This corridor was useful on a wet day, when we could play various ball games and at one end I can visualize a large cupboard from which Barbara used to contrive short (very short) plays!

Freda, writing of the stay at Llynhelig, said, `Your Uncle Arthur was about 4 years old at the time and had often told me that he used to `go farming` with Mr. Thomas, the tenant farmer, every morning and that Mr. Thomas used to carry him `pick a back` to the house at midday when he was tired out with walking.` Freda also said that one of the old labourers on the farm had been a soldier in the Crimean War, and used to give Arthur rides on the plough horses.

Freda was uncertain as to when Grandpa`s eyesight began to deteriorate. She wrote, `Your Grandfather had eye trouble in the early part of his married life. I think it started with a cold in his eye, but he lost the sight and I have an idea that the eye was removed.

I always remember him with sight only in one eye, as you do.

I have seen him in a photograph in his Town Clerk's array, with wig but without the usual eye patch, with which we were familiar. I think that for many years Granny had to shave him.

It is difficult, in fact impossible, for me to give a rounded picture of Grandpa Gwyn. I can only remember him always as being very kind and courteous and certainly tender-hearted where animals were concerned. He was a great devotee of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, from which he could quote with great facility. To a small boy he seemed to be a regular, and generous, dispenser of shillings on the occasion of family outings to the seaside at Font-y-gary (near Aberthaw), which had been a favourite beach for the Gwyn children, and also on visits to Southerndown or the Leys.

His death, following a painful illness, came rather suddenly in January 1931. I remember that he and Granny stayed with us at Hoylake in the summer of 1930, and that we went by boat from Liverpool to Llandudno for the day. On our return, I succeeded in taking them on the wrong underground railway from Liverpool to Birkenhead and ended up at Rock Ferry, instead of Birkenhead Park!

There is a plaque to his memory in Cowbridge Church, which reads as follows:

In memory of

William Thomas Gwyn
(Town Clerk of Cowbridge 1892 - 1930)
For many years Churchwarden
of this Parish
Born 24 March 1857, died 18 January 1931
Buried at St. Mary Church, near Cowbridge

Our grandmother, LUCY DAY GWYN (née EADES) was born on 22 May 1855 at 70 Grant Street in the St. Thomas district of Birmingham, the fifth child of William Eades and Elizabeth Eades (nee SEDGLEY). I had great difficulty in discovering that her birthplace was at Dunchurch, near Rugby. In the EADES family Bible, which was held by Dick Walker (the great grandson of William and Elizabeth) there is the following inscription:

~The gift of William and Mary Eades. Hoping they will read it, and make it their Rule of Life. August 7 1843.~

When I told Betty Walker the date of our mutual great grandparents' Eades' wedding (which actually was 25 July 1843 at Dunchurch), she wrote, "I am glad to know my great grandmother's wedding day. I have part of her wedding dress: it would be valuable now, were it not for the fact that Auntie Daisy cut into it for the purpose of a school play!"

The part of Grant Street where they lived was bombed in the War, but like the surrounding area in the Lea Valley, must have contained Georgian type houses. The family later moved to Moseley.

William Eades is described in Granny's marriage certificate as an "engineer." Hilary made many valiant, but unsuccessful, efforts to discover details of the Eades family. However, during the time she was going round factories in Birmingham, she often saw the name of Eades cast into the ironwork, and learnt about the "Eades pulley block," presumably the invention of one of the family.

Hilary and Barbara went in pursuit of the DAY connection, but although they discovered many local baptism and marriage entries in that name, it was not possible to link them specifically with the Eades family. Barbara also tried to obtain details about the Eades family from a Mr. Bernard Eades, whom she knew to be a member of the family, but sadly he was far from forthcoming with any information. (Barbara has an interesting, but possibly libellous theory, as to the reason for "non-disclosure," but we will leave it at that!)

However, back to Granny's family. She had two brothers: William born in 1845 and Henry born in 1849. Then came the four girls. Elizabeth Mary born in 1847, who married Richard Hearn of Newport in the Isle of

Wight. (I will give further details of her in a later chapter). Then Helen (Nellie) born in 1853, who married Harry Durack Houlston of Lichfield.

Freda wrote, "Mrs. Houlston came as a widow to live with her family at Bridgend, in Park Street. I have a vague idea they came from Bournemouth." (Freda then makes, I believe, one of her very rare slips of memory. She is obviously referring to the Hearn's, particularly as she then added, "I think her husband was a Bank manager. I didn't know their daughters, but I think they went in for nursing.") She then went on, "the Houlston sons, Sidney and Harry, opened a garage in Nolton Street and it was there that my younger brother was apprenticed, so I knew them quite well. Sidney became engaged to a Miss Lloyd of Bridgend, but it came to nothing. Harry married Gladys Bradick and they lived at Porthcawl, but had no children. The Bradicks used to farm at St. Mary Church, but gave up farming and opened a first class boarding house in Porthcawl where we, as a family, often spent our summer holidays."

Betty added to the information about the Houlston family, by saying that Nellie had two daughters, Elsie and Dorothy, and that Sidney emigrated to Australia.

In 1855 Granny was born and in 1856 the last of the family, Catherine Ann, who remained unmarried. Towards the end of her life she was often at Lynthurst and she is buried at St. Mary Church. She was a water colourist of above average ability and in Mary's house in Salisbury there is a delightful "Llandough Cottage" which she painted in 1911. Betty told me that Auntie "Katie" had been a governess to the family of a Peer for many years, but that she did not know the name of the family.

(I have recently re-read the correspondence I had with Hilary in 1983 and 1984, and now realize and appreciate what a lot of trouble she took for me in trying to elucidate various church register entries regarding the Eades and the Days, apart from making enquiries at the Birmingham Library, where sadly records were prefaced with a warning that much of the material had been damaged and some lost).

Regarding the Eades brothers, it is probable that both were in the family engineering business, but apart from vaguely remembering the name of Willie Eades being mentioned at Lynthurst, I know nothing of the brothers.

whereas Granny's sisters were often in contact with her after she left Birmingham for Cowbridge, and they continued to do so until their deaths.

When she was about 25, Granny taught at a boys preparatory school at Moseley, "Woodrofes," where one of the small boys was to become Major Congreve who won the V.C. in 1916 on the Somme, where he was killed.

We have heard how she met Grandpa at Llandrindod Wells, and of their early married life at Cowbridge.

It would be foolish and presumptuous of me to attempt even a minute biography of our grandparents, which would, in any case, be largely based on hearsay, but a pleasant little story persists in my memory, and which I would like to record. It refers to a day in 1892 when the Cowbridge and Aberthaw Railway was officially opened. This was an extension of the Taff Vale Railway line, principally with the intention of linking up with the small port of Aberthaw and its lime works. Granny told me that a special train carrying important guests, including the Mayor, the Town Clerk and Aldermen of the Borough (and their wives) went down to Aberthaw where champagne was served, and on the return to Cowbridge a dinner was held at the Bear Hotel. I am sure one of Granny's large and imposing hats was in evidence that day.

I personally had a great affection for the Taff Vale Railway, and in particular for the happy hours spent in the Cowbridge signal box with Tom Bennett, the signalman, whose wife Annie used to work at Lynthurst.

Apropos of the Railway Station. I am reminded of a strange story which I heard when I was quite young ... about the mysterious disappearance of a Cowbridge shopkeeper, who one day purchased a single ticket to Cardiff, and was never seen again by his family or anyone else in Cowbridge.

The other memory I have of the Station is being surprised to read, in the station Waiting Room, a framed notice indicating that Mrs. L. D. Gwyn of Lynthurst, Eastgate, Cowbridge was the local secretary of the Girls Friendly Society. This prompted me to imagine that straying girls from the Valleys might invade Lynthurst to seek a cup of tea and a shilling!

I can remember that in about 1920, Granny and Uncle Arthur purchased an H.M.V. gramophone and set up a large collection of records, together with a splendid cupboard-like receptacle into which the records (78s) neatly fitted. There was a very wide variety extending from Handel, Bach, Mendelssohn etc., to Harry Tate's motoring sketch, "The Preacher and the Bear," and "My friend John," both of which I can, to a large extent, still recite!

I remember Barbara in particular executing graceful dances to various Delibes ballet tunes and also from "Peer Gynt!"

The gramophone used to be in the corner of one of the two front rooms at Lynthurst. Facing the house, the one on the left was, I fancy, very rarely used, a Drawing room presumably. The only thing I can remember was that the furniture never seemed to be disturbed, and that in a glass cabinet, amongst various objects, the only one that appealed to me was the Army issue dry biscuit, brought back from the Western Front by Uncle Arthur, who wisely had not trusted his teeth on it!

The other front room (with the gramophone) was known as the Dining room, as opposed to the Breakfast room (which was behind it) where most of the meals were taken. The Dining room was where the Gwyn & Gwyn mail was opened each morning, usually by Uncle Arthur before the office opened. I remember at about the age of 10 being allowed to help him in this job, which involved sorting the various letters intended for the three partners. On occasions I was allowed to go over to the office where the typists, whom I can clearly visualize today, were Miss Green and Miss Mackintosh. The former, bravely, I now realize, used to travel on a light motor cycle from Pendoylan or in that direction, and on rainy days used to resemble a female "Michelin Man" in her efforts to combat the elements. Miss Mackintosh, whom I always connected with the toffees of that name, was I think a more local resident. Both used to let me put paper through their typewriters and execute some one finger typing, but sadly my efforts never went beyond that stage. The other member of staff whom I remember was a Mr. Davies, a nice man, slightly lame, who endearingly addressed me as "Sir William."

I have heard (and to a certain extent observed) that Granny was a notable provider of meals to many Cowbridge characters, including Mr. Codd, the Barclays Bank manager, who was a widower, and also the delightfully and appropriately named Reverend Isaiah

Roberts, Vicar of Cowbridge, and various curates, including my godfather, the Reverend Gilbert Thomas, who later became Vicar of Bonvilston. The latter once told me an amusing story, which had been handed down to him, but may have taken place at Holy Cross, Cowbridge. It concerned a curate, who had failed to get on with his Vicar, and in due course obtained a living elsewhere. The Vicar granted him the pulpit for a farewell sermon and as his text the Curate chose, with some irony, Chapter 22, verse 5 of the Book of Genesis - "Abide ye here with the Ass, etc. etc."

My cousins and sisters will have their own memories and recollections of both Grandpa and Granny and I am aware that my contribution does not do justice to them. I do remember that (to my displeasure) Granny was a great dispenser of cinnamon tea to deal with colds, and she had a happy habit of humming tunes (which I have inherited!) She was, I believe, a somewhat fierce and exacting disciplinarian where domestic staff were concerned, but I remember my step mother often remarking how kind and welcoming Granny was to her, when she "took on" Bertha's children. And I am sure we all can see her, in her later years at Lynthurst, sitting in the window watching the world go by!

After Grandpa's death, Granny stayed on at Lynthurst until 1946. At the end of September 1939, my T.A. Artillery regiment was in camp for a few days at Newport, prior to departure to France, and I was able to obtain a 24 hour pass, and managed to obtain a "lift" to Cowbridge. After visiting my grandparents Bown at Llandough, I returned to Lynthurst. During the evening an air raid warning sounded, and Granny and I went to the appointed "shelter," which was under the stairs and from this somewhat cramped situation we were fortunately able to emerge not long afterwards!

Through the introduction of the Town Clerk (Arthur) she took evacuees during the War, and one of them, a Cockney woman (with her sister and their three children) was at Lynthurst for about a year. Jo happened to pick up a book one day, written by this woman, in which she made happy reference to their stay at Lynthurst, whilst acknowledging Granny's fiercer qualities!

In 1946 she sold Lynthurst and went to live with Aunt Lilian at King's Norton. I have a photograph taken there of her with Lilian, Barbara and her great grandson John (aged 4) on a day when Margaret, David (aged 1) and I came over for the day from Islip, whilst

staying there with Margaret's parents.

Subsequently, in about 1953 Granny went into a nursing home in Arthur Road, Edgbaston, and afterwards to a private nursing home in Northfield run by Mrs. Hogan. It was there that she celebrated her 100th birthday and where, I am glad to say, I was able to visit her. As we know, she died one month later. The funeral service was at King's Norton Church, but her ashes were placed in the Eades family grave at Moseley Parish Church, where she had been baptized, confirmed and married. As has been said, she is commemorated on Grandpa's grave at St. Mary Church.

I should like to end this chapter with a little story. My father, accompanied by Granny Bown, was driving Granny Gwyn, one afternoon in the thirties, to catch a train for Birmingham. Near Bonvilston, a cyclist emerged at speed from a side road, and my father, in order to avoid him, sharply turned and the car ended up in a hedge. My father remembered a silence, broken by Granny Bown saying to Granny Gwyn, "I think you will miss your train Mrs. Gwyn." "Yes, I think I will, Mrs. Bown." (Although on happy terms, there was never any reference to Christian names in those days!)

CHAPTER VII

The nature of this little `history` somewhat alters now, to enable me to record some of my own reminiscences, also to refer to some of Granny Gwyn`s relations, and in particular an account of how the much loved stepmother of Mary, Isobel and myself came into the story.

The eldest sister of Granny Gwyn was Elizabeth Mary Eades, who married Richard Hearn. He came from Newport in the Isle of Wight. At Chale Church on the Island, there is a stained glass window commemorating a relation who emigrated to the United States, and subsequently became a benefactor of the Church.

Richard Hearn became the Manager of the Burton on Trent branch of the (as it then was) National Provincial Bank of England. At the time of her marriage, Elizabeth was a cook/housekeeper at a boys school in Moseley (presumably Woodrofes). This information was given to me by Betty Panton, her grand-daughter, who also remembers that Elizabeth had the reputation of being a wonderful cook. (Betty also told me that her grandmother and our grandmother Gwyn attended wood carving classes together, and that she has a number of pieces made by Elizabeth. I remember that Hilary has some oak stools carved by Lucy)

The Hearn had five daughters:

Margaret Frances (Daisy)	1879 - 1965
Katherine Elizabeth (Katie)	1880 - 1979
Ethel Mary	1882 - 1968
Beatrice May	1883 - 1978
Lina Muriel	1886 - 1926

Betty wrote, `I think they were all very fond of their Cowbridge cousins: I do not know which of them was closest to your mother, but perhaps it was Lina, nearest in age. I know all of them loved Maidie.` (More about `Maidie` later on. Betty added that Uncle Vivian was her godfather).

Betty mentioned that Willy Eades was the father of May Eades, who, like her Aunt Catherine, was an accomplished artist, and often stayed at Lynthurst. When I was aged about 10, and staying at Llandough, she perhaps unwisely let me see a murder mystery book which she was reading, much to the horror of Granny Bown who discovered this. The outcome I believe was that May made no further visits to Llandough, but not before she

had completed an attractive water colour of the River Thaw, below the Cottage.

Returning to Richard and Elizabeth Hearn. On his retirement in 1904 from the Bank, they went to live in Bournemouth, in Linwood Road, and later in Richmond Park Road. After Richard's death the family moved to nearby 12 Myrtle Road. "Maidie" told me that Grandpa Hearn had a season ticket in the summer on the paddle steamers, which used to go from Bournemouth to the Isle of Wight, his native land. He also used to spend some time watching Hampshire County Cricket Club at their matches at the local Dean Park ground, and also the football in Kings Park.

He died in January 1920 aged 79 and Elizabeth died in September of that year. Both are buried in Wimborne Road Cemetery in Bournemouth. On the same gravestone is commemorated Frances Jane Hearn, who died in 1915 aged 86: presumably she was Richard's elder sister.

At the time of my Mother's death in March 1923, Mary, Isobel and I all had measles - whether German or otherwise I cannot remember - I believe the former. Granny Bown who was looking after us, mysteriously referred to this illness as a "blessing in disguise" - an opinion with which at the time I must have disagreed.

As a consequence, in the spring of that year, Grandpa and Granny Gwyn took me (Mary and Isobel being too young) to stay at an hotel in Bournemouth - The Queen Hotel in Lansdowne Square (now an office block). I cannot remember much about the holiday except that we went by charabanc to the New Forest to see the Rufus Stone. But I do remember we visited the Hearn nieces and that Beatrice gave me some butterscotch with which, till then, my teeth were unaccustomed: I was a chocolate and wine gum addict - see the Chapter "The Bicycle and The Sweet Shop" in the late Roald Dahl's book "Boy" in which I appear, though in fictional disguise.

When we went to live in Bournemouth in 1950, we got to know "the Hearn girls" (as we called them - but not to their faces) very well. Daisy for many years had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and was very housebound. Ethel was a very brisk person, still driving her Austin 7, with some panache, much to the delight of David and James. She had been a Sister at the Royal Hampshire Hospital in Winchester. They were joined in the mid-fifties by Beatrice, who had done private nursing in London, including as her patients

the Aga Khan, Rudyard Kipling and in particular a Mr. Benson, of whom she often spoke.

Their sister Katie trained at the Royal Hospital Sheffield and joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in 1908. She married the Reverend Francis Joseph Walker in 1913 at Tientsin in China, where at the time he was an Army Chaplain. Later he became invalided out in 1928*, when he and Katie went to live in Bedford. They had one son, Richard Hearn Walker, born in 1914, and one daughter, Betty, born in 1918, who married Fergus Stormont Penton in Karachi in 1944: they had four sons, one of whom lived only 9 days and another who died aged 9.

Dick Walker, educated at Bedford School, went into the Royal Engineers after attending the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and ended the War with the rank of Colonel. My Sapper friend, Colonel Barry Armstrong, MC spoke highly of him. Dick married Isobel Johnstone of Edinburgh in 1948, and they had a son and a daughter.

On his retirement from the Army in 1971 as Brigadier, he became Clerk to the Chapter of Durham Cathedral for ten years. Sadly, he died in 1982 shortly after retiring.

The youngest daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Hearn was Lina, nearest to my Mother in age and who was named after her German godmother, who had taught at the school in Moseley. Betty said that Lina spent a year with her godmother in Heidelberg in 1904. I remember Maidie telling me that she and Lina had had a short holiday in Paris around 1921, at the time that Maidie was working in Bournemouth. She used to say that Lina was "the greatest fun." Unlike her sisters she died at an early age.

My patient readers, if you have reached this far, may wonder why I have devoted so much to the Eades/Hearn story in this so-called history of the Gwyns of St. Mary Church, but I think it will be agreed that an account of the link provided by "Maidie" will provide the reason, and at the same time reveal a remarkable coincidence.

And at this stage, I make acknowledgement with great pleasure and appreciation, to my second cousin Betty Panton, for kindly supplying me with information as long ago as 1985, which she had by now I suppose imagined that I had either lost or forgotten!

* when he was Assistant Chaplain General to the Forces

Fanny Marjorie BOWN (nee Kingwell) 1892 - 1980 was the third child of Robert Webber Kingwell and Evelyn Piddocke Hanson* and was born in Palmers Green, London. Subsequently the family moved to Muswell Hill, Mr. Kingwell having become the Chief Controller (of Advances) in the National Provincial Bank of England, at their Head Office in London. Marjorie's first name was in honour of her Aunt Fanny, a remarkable old lady who lived on her own at her home in Ventnor, Isle of Wight, until her death at the age of 92. She had had an interesting life, having been the chief buyer for Gorringes in London, and in that connection often travelled to Paris.

The Kingwells had four sons and two daughters (two sons were killed in the 1914/18 War). Marjorie, after leaving school, trained as a nurse at the Evelina Childrens Hospital in East London, but owing to illness she had to give up this career. However, during the War she worked temporarily in the Dividend and Interest Office of the Bank of England - there was a wonderful photograph in her possession showing the entire staff of the Bank taken on Armistice Day, or soon after.

In 1920 she joined the staff of the National Provincial Bank in Bournemouth, and at some early stage she was introduced to the Hearn family - it is almost certain that her mother's family were known to the Hearn family in Burton on Trent, where the Hansons were brewers. In 1922 the illness of her sister Vera compelled her to return to the family home, which was now at Wyton in Huntingdonshire, where the Rector was brother in law to Mrs. Kingwell. It was at Wyton that she received an appeal early in 1924 from the Hearn family, to consider going as a housekeeper to the widower of their cousin Bertha Mary Bown, who had died tragically young, in March 1923.

My father, devastated by his loss, had nevertheless managed, with the aid of his cook, the excellent Miss Ruth Ellington (from March in Cambridgeshire), who had joined the family when my father was stationed on the East Coast in 1917 at Hunstanton, where Mary was born.

* an unsung heroine who, left a widow in 1908, single-handed brought up her young family, on very little money, facing the severe rationing difficulties during the 1914/18 War. I really ought to get Elizabeth to write an appreciation of her, whom I remember ending her days at 59 The Close, Salisbury, during the last War, still enjoying her cigarettes with our grandmother Bown, both in their nineties!

Between them they managed for a short time to keep the household going, with three small children aged 9, 5 and 2, until a housekeeper, whose name I have forgotten, appeared temporarily on the scene, but left after a short while unable perhaps to meet the rather severely high standards expected by both my father and Ruth! She was followed by Miss Breed, who came from Essex, a tall, rather sad-faced lady, whom I remember as being very kind ... but I think rather fearful of W.R.B. She made, I recollect, gallant efforts to learn to play the piano ... by correspondence course method ... in order to be able to play hymns on a Sunday evening, as our mother had done.

Some domestic crisis at home caused her to return to Essex, and I remember being genuinely sorry, as she certainly had `done her best` for us. So Aunt Lilian (Bertha's sister) then made an appeal to the Hearnys, who in turn thought that `Maidie` might provide the answer, if only temporarily.

Maidie's first reaction was to refuse, as there was uncertainty about the health of both her mother and her sister, but when a second appeal came from 12 Myrtle Road, she rather reluctantly agreed, on the understanding that it was only to be of a temporary nature

In the meantime, our next-door neighbour, a Miss Thomas who lived with her elderly mother, used to help Ruth, but I rather think on the understanding that she would only be `around` whilst our father was at the Bank!

So early in 1924 Maidie came in some trepidation (as she subsequently - much later - told me), and after initial uncertainties decided to stay on. I think her intention was for one year, until someone else could be obtained.

She was much helped, as she later told me, by Ruth and by the kindness and understanding shown by Granny Gwyn - I think that from the beginning she was in some awe of Granny Bown, probably connected with the latter's maternal pride in `her Reggie!` Mary, Isobel and I were very happy with her `from the word `go`.` and it was I suspect, with great relief and happiness that we were told in the Spring of 1925 that she and Reggie were to be married. The wedding took place in June of that year at Wyton Church. Our father's best man (and colleague at Lloyds Bank, Cardiff Docks) was the excellent W. Ace Edwards, D.S.O., who as a Lieutenant, had been recommended for the V.C. after the Battle of Loos in 1915, where he suffered a permanent and severe injury to one of his legs.

I would like to end this chapter with a heartfelt tribute to a dear stepmother who was the very opposite to the `wicked stepmother` of whom we read in the Tales of the Brothers Grimm, or in other fairy stories!

What Mary, Isobel and I owe to her is immeasurabile, and we will always remember her with loving affection and gratitude.

It seemed entirely appropriate that, apart from a short time latterly, she should have ended her long life in the tranquil and serene setting of The Close at Salisbury.

CHAPTER VIII

For some time now, whilst preparing this little history, it has occurred to me that it would show a lack of appreciation if, in this penultimate chapter, I were to ignore some of the many other items of information which Freda gave me, which however did not specifically refer to `our` Gwyns.

As I have previously mentioned, Freda gave me a very full account of her family and near relations, particularly on the BENSON side, and as a result I completed for her a little Family Tree showing the connection between `our` Gwyns and hers. She was kind enough to express pleasure and appreciation. Of the many Evans relations whom she mentioned, I thought I would like to make reference to one in particular, whom I knew in the early `twenties` at Lynthurst TREVOR LINK, who was a son of Freda`s aunt, Alice Elizabeth.

When I wrote to Freda asking her to refresh my memory about him, she replied that Trevor was the third child of Frederick and Alice Link.

`Trevor came to Lynthurst with the object of going in Gwyn and Gwyn`s office, and being a solicitor with them, but he didn`t seem to like the idea after some years, and went into Barclays Bank. One day he went sailing around the coast with friends, caught a chill and died later of T.B., unmarried. He was a nice boy and very good looking. It was a pity he didn`t stay in Cowbridge, and go in for law.`

I certainly can vouch for Freda`s appreciation of his good looks. It was at that time that someone gave me a book about the Royal Flying Corps `ace` of the 1914/18 War - my boyhood hero - Captain Albert Ball, V.C., whose good looks, I thought, quite resembled Trevor!

Freda, when writing of our more `distant` Gwyns said:

`There were Gwyns living in Llanelly, but I don`t know how they were related; although one of them, whom we called `Uncle David` used to come and see us when we lived at St. Athan. He spelt his name `GWYNN` - he had four daughters, one of whom I remember played the harp. Uncle David, as my mother called him, was a very dapper man, always very well dressed.

Another uncle (John) used to come and stay with us every year for the trout fly fishing. My father used to get him permission to fish the Thaw, also the Fonmon river where Mrs. Oliver Jones of Fonmon Castle gave him permission. They used to go out every evening - the fish in the Fonmon river were pinked flesh, and those in the Thaw were white fleshed.

This Uncle John was a leather merchant in Bristol, a partner in Gerrish and Gwyn. He lived in Clifton and his wife, Auntie Carrie was very small and pretty. They had two sons and five daughters. Percy served in the South African War, contracted T.B. and died unmarried. Bertie (very jolly) was in a bank for a time, and then left to join his father's firm. He married a Wills (of tobacco fame) and lived in Clifton, keeping up a tremendous style.* They had one child - John, and the last I heard of him was that he was a gentleman farmer on the edge of Salisbury Plain.

Of John Gwyn's five daughters, she wrote:

Of the girls, Maud married a doctor, Elsie a chemist, and Daisy after marriage went to live in South Africa. Mary was engaged to a naval man who died on active service and she remained a spinster. The last daughter, Dora, married a bank manager. Mary used to spend a lot of time at Lynthurst, and we all thought that she and your Uncle Arthur would marry, but nothing came of it. I suppose they are all dead by now. I know Mary is.

Apart from Mary, I personally knew nothing of the Gwyns of Clifton, beyond the fact that I still have a devotional book which John Gwyn, her godfather, gave my mother on her Confirmation day in December 1901.

I do remember Mary Gwyn on her visits to Lynthurst - not knowing anything of the sad outcome of her engagement with the naval man. I also remember however, that perhaps because I had recently lost my mother, she was always very kind to me on her visits to Lynthurst. I also remember that Grandpa Gwyn used to tease her about what I remember was a rather pink/red looking neck - used to tell her she ought to cover it ... (in the style of the 1850's), but it was all in good humour.

Jo recently told me that when, at the beginning of her married life she and Hugh had lived in a little

* understandably, with a tobacco heiress at hand!

cottage near Taunton, which needed a lot of work on it. Uncle Arthur had suggested that Mary Gwyn might help with the curtains. But Jo remembers that the finished product was not quite up to her expectations!

I suppose, on reflection, I might have deduced through the Family Tree, which Mr. John Gwynn gave me (as I mentioned in Chapter I) that there was a connection with the Clifton Gwyns, if not the Llanelly Gwynns, but apart from the information in my mother's Confirmation book, which he signed: "John Gwyn, Bristol," and also the aforesaid Mary Gwyn, I knew nothing of them.

Rambling on now, I suppose I ought to make some reference to the Bishop Mervyn Stockwood connection, however tenuous it may be. Since coming to live at Cerne Abbas, and because of our friendship with the late Bishop Gerald Ellison, previously Bishop of London, I met Mervyn Stockwood on a couple of occasions. Each time I introduced myself as a grandson of W. T. Gwyn, Town Clerk of Cowbridge, as I knew from his book, "Chanctonbury Ring," of the distant connection between the Stockwood and Gwyn families. This relates back to Jane Gwyn (Chapter IV) whose daughter, Alice, married John Llewellyn, the chemist at Cowbridge. They had five children of whom Freda wrote:

"The first was Gladys, who died between the ages of 3 and 5 - I didn't know her. Then Alice (Dot) who married a Wesleyan minister. They had one child, Joan, who married and lived at Iver in Buckinghamshire. Then Edith who married Charles Stockwood, who became the Archdeacon of the Isle of Man. They had one daughter, Mary."

(Charlie Stockwood was the uncle of Mervyn Stockwood, whose father, Arthur, a solicitor, had been killed in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme, when Mervyn was 3 years old.)

Freda went on:

"Then their son Lister, a very clever doctor who specialized in miners' chest diseases. The youngest daughter was Maud, who remained a spinster at home looking after her very old father."

I remember Maud very well. She always seemed to me to have a permanent dew drop at the end of her nose and this seemed to affect her tone of speech (obviously!) However, she was, I recollect, very kindly disposed to me following my mother's death, always referring to me

as `dear little Billy.` and I really ought to remember her with affection ... and not by the way she spoke!

Before moving on to the Llansannor connection, I would like to include a little story, which Freda told me in a letter replying to an enquiry I had made about the mother of a mutual friend ... who shall remain anonymous as she (the friend) is still alive.

Freda wrote:

`Your reference to her brought back a memory of her mother calling on us at St. Athan one very hot summer`s day, on her way, by `push bike,` to Barry from Boverton.* to meet her future husband. She was very hot and bothered, and had some orange squash to revive her (and although I was only a small child at the time, I remember my mother remarking after she had left: `How very unromantic she must look when she gets to Barry.`)

Freda went on:

`I had quite forgotten about it until I received your letter. `Little pitchers have long ears.`

And now a few words on the Llansannor connection, which I had been quite unable to prove, despite some helpful information from both Kathleen and Jo, who gave me copies of old documents.

I suppose the first time I unconsciously knew about it, was when it was explained to me that the pleasant painting (by Catherine Eades)** which used to hang in the dining room at Lynthurst was of Forde Abbey, at that time in Devon, now in Dorset, and I think I was told that there was some connection with nearby Llansannor.

Forde Abbey (a 12th century Cistercian foundation) was the home of Sir Francis Gwyn (1648 - 1734) who had been the Secretary of State to Queen Anne (he was

* at least 10 miles

** present whereabouts unknown

described at that time `Secretary at War`)). He was born at nearby Combe Florey, and lived for a time at Llansannor, and was Mayor of Cowbridge.

He married in 1690, his cousin Margaret, the daughter and heir of Sir Edmund Prideaux, the owner of Forde Abbey, who died in 1702. They had two sons, Edward Prideaux Gwyn (1698 - 1736) and Francis Gwyn, of Llansannor who, on the death of his brother, inherited Forde (and like his brother became M.P. for Wells). He died in 1777 childless, and bequeathed Llansannor to his cousin Anthony Gwyn, and Forde Abbey to a cousin John, son of William Fraunceis* of Combe Florey, on condition that he took the name of Gwyn.

John was succeeded at Forde in 1789 by his son, John Fraunceis Gwyn, who lived there, a bachelor, until his death without an heir in 1845, after which the house and lands passed out of the family. In the private chapel, his memorial indicates him to be `late of Combe Florey in the county of Somerset, and of Llansannor in the County of Glamorgan.

Freda reminded me that at the west end of Cowbridge Parish Church (which incidentally was where my mother was baptized, confirmed and married - then known as St. Marys, whereas it has since reverted to Holy Cross, its original and pre-reformation dedication) there is a board giving lists of Benefactions, and one of them reads as follows:

`1845 Dec 11th. John Francis Gwyn of Ford Abbey in the Parish of Thorncombe in the County of Devon, Esquire, by his Will of this date has made the following Bequest, ... (There follows in legal terms the bequest of £200 on Trust to invest in the Public Fund of Great Britain, and to apply the dividend and annual proceeds thereof in such manner as they shall think fit.)`

Regarding the Gwyn legacy, Freda wrote:

`when I was in the Bank, I used to deal with the Sundry Charities Fund account, from which distributions were made each year in apprenticing two boys and two girls in different jobs, and also giving blankets to the poor.`

In an earlier letter, Freda writing of herself said:

* sometimes spelt Francis

~I went into the N.P. Bank at Cowbridge to do war work in World War I. And it came to pass that only the Manager was left with three girls to carry on the Branch at Cowbridge and the Agency at Llantwit Major. At the end of the War, two of the girls were given notice, but I was kept on and left on 1st October 1948 after 32 years service!~

In another letter she wrote:

~When I first went into the Bank, a Mr. Griffiths of Llansannor House banked with us and I can still see (in my mind's eye) his signature. He always signed his cheques ~Gwynne Griffiths,~ and he made so many circles of the G's. He always claimed that he and the Gwyns of St. Mary Church were one and the same family - W.T. Gwyn was his solicitor.~

He lived at Llansannor House, a rather fine early Victorian house with his widowed sister, and in 1920 they went to live at Weston super Mare, where he died a bachelor.

In 1986 Isobel and I spent a very pleasant hour or so at Llansannor, visiting the Church. From the notes I made at the time, I recollect a beautifully carved reredos, also an interesting stone effigy of a knight in armour of around the 15th century. I was told that the silver chalice was the gift of J.F. Gwyn in 1795. The lady cleaning the Church mentioned that the former Welsh rugby hero, Mr. J.P.R. Williams, now an orthopaedic surgeon, lived near The Court and supplied four members (his young daughters) for the small choir.

We also met the rector, the Reverend Lodwick, who was helpful in pointing out some graves of the Griffith family, including that of Francis Gwyn, younger son of the late John FRAUNCEIS Griffith, who died in 1904 aged 52; also the grave of John FRANCEIS Griffith ~elder son of ... (illegible), died 9 March 1920 aged 68.~ This was Freda's bank customer, and presumably these were twin brothers, but the mystery of John Franceis signing his cheques ~Gwynne~ remains!

The Revd. Lodwick, who is also the vicar of nearby Penllyn, told me that the Gwyns were Patrons of the living from 1561 to 1816. Later he wrote to tell me that he could not find any Gwyn baptisms at Llansannor.

The Gwyns of Llansannor Court were a very old established Glamorgan family, three generations having served as Sheriffs of the County between 1513 and 1625. As I have already said, I cannot trace the relationship

(if any) between our Gwyns and the Llansannor Gwyns. but I cannot believe that the identical names (and spelling) does not indicate that there is some connection between the two families, particularly as they were living so close to each other.

Someone, with a greater genealogical ability than I possess, might well be able to follow up my discovery that one of the many younger sons of the Llansannor family married in the 17th century and settled in the Llanrcarfan area. I have discovered, for example, that Anthony Gwyn of Llansannor, Sheriff in 1624 who subsequently lived at Llantrithyd (next to Llanrcarfan) had nine sons, of whom four died in infancy. One of the five remaining sons may well have been the father of 'our' William Gwyn, whose wedding at Llanrcarfan is recorded in 1696.

I am ending this chapter by returning to Forde Abbey. It is open to the public and well worth a visit, with its delightful and well kept grounds: the Mortlake Tapestries in the house, which were given to Sir Francis Gwyn by Queen Anne, are particularly fine.

Amongst the many paintings is one by Sir Peter Lely of 'Nell Gwynne with a spaniel.' Barbara showed me a library book 'The House of Nell Gwyn 1670 - 1974' relating to the families descended from the surviving boy (there were two) arising from the liason with the 'Merry Monarch.' The authors of the book suggest that Nell, whose surname is variously spelt Gwynne, Gwyn and Gwynn was born in February 1650 near Covent Garden in London. 'She came from a sadly reduced family, originally of Llansannor in Glamorganshire. Her grandfather Edward Gwyn is said to have been a Canon of Christ Church, Oxford in the reign of Charles I. Her father, Thomas Gwyn, was a Captain in the Royalist Army, who after the Civil War fell on hard times and married much beneath himself. He is thought to have died in a debtors' prison in Oxford. Before long Mrs. Gwyn was installed in a squalid alley off Drury Lane with her daughters Rose and Nell.'

And on that slightly lighter note, we leave the 'Llansannor connection.'

CHAPTER IX

John David Gwyn
11.6.1922 - 2.12.1943

And so we come to the last chapter in our story of the Gwyns of St. Mary Church.

In one of her letters, Freda wrote:

"I think around here there were seven only sons killed much about the same time as John Gwyn, in 1943. It was a sad time for many people."

I always thought that it was particularly sad and tragic for Arthur and Elsie, and also for Jo. Arthur was wounded and suffered from shell shock at Mametz Wood in July 1916 when serving in the Cardiff Battalion of the Welch Regiment, as a Lieutenant.*

Elsie, who had a first class brain, had read Classics at Girton, graduating in 1913. In those days degrees were not awarded to women, and as Jo says:

"although she could have presented herself to receive it when a more enlightened age arrived, she was by then too old to bother."

Increasing deafness made life very difficult for her in later years, a handicap which nowadays might have been overcome earlier.

After 50 years, John is still very much in our proud and happy memory, although I think there is still that haunting perception regarding his unfulfilled talents and promise.

Perhaps I may be allowed to give some personal memories of him. He was only 7 years old when my family left Llandaff to live at Hoylake in Cheshire, and my recollections of him then are vague. Rather large glasses suited his somewhat scholarly appearance, even in those days, when at the local Board school (Pontfaen) on Broadway, the immortal words were said of

* It is perhaps appropriate to quote the words of Robert Graves, who was an officer in the Royal Welch Fusiliers part of the 38th (Welsh) Division in that battle:

"To day I found in Mametz Wood
a certain cure for lust of blood"

him in double negative, and envy, by a fellow pupil:
"Our teacher can't teach John Gwyn nothin'."

For some strange reason, I still have a clear recollection - I can see the place where it occurred, the gate leading up the drive at "Bryn-y-fro" - when in 1931, with some (unjustified) pride, I announced to Arthur and John, who were with him, my "victory" in the School Certificate, after two successive defeats at the hands of the Mathematics examiners. On reflection, I suppose John was probably up to that standard even in those days!

At about this time, I think he used, in the holidays, to be the "personal assistant" to Dai Cox the milkman on Broadway (and no doubt restructured his book-keeping procedure!)

I saw little of John in the Thirties as our visits to Llandough and Cowbridge were infrequent, but in the summer of 1938, John and I (and I think Mary) went to a cinema in Cardiff to see Leslie Howard in "Pimpernel Smith," a film which dealt with the Nazi threat more urgently than did the Press or radio news at that time.

I last saw John at my Grandfather Bown's funeral in February 1940. John had come over from "Bryn-y-Fro" in the morning, and I remember we went for a walk towards Howe Mill before the funeral in the afternoon.

At the age of 10, John went on to the Grammar School (like his father and Grandfather Gwyn). From there he went, on a State Scholarship in 1939 to St. John's College, Cambridge where in 1942 he took a First Class degree in the Law Tripos, and was elected a Scholar of St. John's. Subsequently he was awarded the University's Post Graduate McMahon Studentship in Law. John also won the St. John's English Essay prize, being the only undergraduate outside the English Faculty ever to do so, up to that time.

I am indebted to Jo for this information. At my request she also wrote the following:

"John had so many talents and interests. He was widely read, and wrote both prose and poetry. He was a talented musician, playing the piano to almost professional standard, and reading musical scores with as much enjoyment as a book. Music was of great importance to him and his willingness

to play for other people from Beethoven to Jazz, from grand piano to piano accordion, brought great pleasure to many.

He was very keen on fitness, and though not a brilliant athlete, he enjoyed all kinds of physical activity; cricket and soccer, swimming, walking, climbing and dancing.

He loved his family, the countryside, his time at school, and especially his years at Cambridge. He made many friends who loved him for his great modesty and his lovely sense of humour.

Everything which he undertook, he did with great enthusiasm. Like many other young men, he joined the Welch Regiment to do his part in defeating the enemy, hoping then to be able to get on with his life, which held so much promise for a fine career in the Legal profession and much else.

He was much loved.~

Whilst at Cambridge he had trained with the University Senior Training Corps. After taking his degree in June 1942, he joined up and undertook preliminary training at Wrotham in Kent, for which he obviously had little affection!

At the beginning of 1943 I must have been told of the successful outcome of his O.C.T.U.* course, and that he had been commissioned 2nd Lieutenant. (There is an excellent photograph of him taken at this time, in the book "Cowbridge and Llanblethian, Past and Present.") I wrote congratulating him and fortunately I retained his letter in which he replied, and which I now set out in full.

* Officer Cadet Training Unit

6104975 CADET GWYN JD
8 Pl. A COY
163 O.C.T.U.
HEYSHAM TOWERS
MORECAMBE
LANCS. 14.ii.43

Dear Bill.

Many thanks for your letter of congratulations. I was glad to hear from you, but am sorry that your letter arrived at a time when like you, I am very busy. We are just getting ready to move away from Morecambe, into North Lancashire for a week's schemes.

I have another three months here yet. Thank God that awful place Wrotham is a thing of the past, and we are now in an efficient and pleasant unit. There is no doubt that this is the best infantry O.C.T.U. in the country from our own personal point of view. Morecambe is all one could wish, with four dance halls and innumerable pubs and cafes. Also we have a phenomenal number of W.A.A.F's* here! Unfortunately the weather is not all one might wish for, as it almost invariably rains, and at present it is very cold. I had a fortnight in hospital with blood poisoning after my first four weeks, and so unfortunately got put back to another Company to start all over again. However, my present Company is far preferable to 'D' Coy, in which I was at first.

We are getting some leave, all being well, on 13 March and I'm looking forward to that very much. I hope to spend one day of it at Oxford with Joyce, and also hope to see Isobel as I hear she has gone there now. I should like to see her again, as I haven't for over two years now.

The OCTU, from the point of view of physical toughness and discipline, is much easier than either Barmouth or Douglas, let alone the other two, Dunbar and Aldershot, which have a fearsome reputation. Most of the officers here are Light Infantry or Black Watch - the NCO's are mainly Lancashire regiments or Highland regiments.

* in case some (younger) readers do not know
"Womens Auxiliary Air Force."

We do about four weeks out of the course at places about 20 miles from Morecambe, and tomorrow is our first week out.

I hope things are all right with you. Please give my best wishes to Uncle when you write to him next, and to Mary and Isobel if you meet them.

Sincerely yours

John`

After passing out from the O.C.T.U., John was posted in May 1943 to the 18th Btn. The Welch Regiment, stationed at Sheringham in Norfolk. After embarkation leave in September 1943, he took a draft of other ranks out to North Africa and was in Algiers and Bizerte. He then, independently, re-joined his unit, who by that time were near the front line in Italy, but he was then struck down with dysentery and was shipped over to hospital in North Africa.

Subsequently he returned to Italy via Tripoli on an American assault craft to Salerno, when he was posted to the 2/5 Btn. of the Leicestershire Regiment, who had been depleted in recent fighting.

In November, he was at Sessa Aurunca (which is about 30 miles north west of Naples, and about 18 miles south of Cassino) and it was there that he wrote the poem "Cambridge"* to which reference will be made later.

Some ten miles from Cassino is the small village of San Clemente where John was killed on 2nd December 1943. His grave was at first at San Clemente, but later was moved to the Cassino War Cemetery, and it was there in 1981 that Field Marshal Alexander led the homage at the unveiling of the Cassino Memorial in the Commonwealth War Cemetery. Elsie and Jo were present on that of occasion, and the Field Marshal had a few words with them.

In the early part of 1945, when I was rather ill in hospital in Salisbury, Arthur was often in touch with my father and I quote from his letter to Reggie, in which he castigates the Cardiff Telephone Exchange for what he suspects is a lack of truth in their excuse for

* a copy follows after page 53.

not getting through to Salisbury. After enquiries about me, he then goes on:

Among John's few treasures was a letter from Walter de La Mare.* John had written to him in Dec. 1936 expressing appreciation for the pleasure he had got from his poems and asking the source of his inspiration for the 'Sea Song.' W. de La M. had written in July 1937 'Dear Mr. Gwyn' (John was then 14!) ...apologizing for overlooking his cherished letter. The reply was a very nice one which John no doubt felt honoured to receive, especially after the long wait. I sent W. de La M. his original letter to John, explaining everything and sent him The Two Poems. Enclosed I send you a copy of his letter to me, received last week. He is a keen critic and I think you will agree this is praise indeed, and he has evidently gone to the trouble to study the poems, and has almost arrived at a true estimate of John's character.

I have found 6 more poems of John's written in 1941 - 1942 at Cambridge: they are all scratched out as unsatisfactory, but the Senior Classics Master at the Grammar School - a brilliant man - says two of them are wonderful: We shall see what 'Walter' says.'

(There was no trace in my father's correspondence of any further reference to 'Walter's' reply or to John's other poems, and Jo does not know what happened to them).

This was the letter from W. de La M. to Arthur, mentioned above, and written 26 February 1945 from The Old Park, Penn.

'Dear Mr. Gwyn.

You will, I am sure, forgive the ten days delay in thanking you for your letter and for the copy of 'The Two Poems' you very kindly sent me. Is there no hope of any others being retrieved? It seems to me extremely improbable that your son wrote these only: almost out of the question in view of their qualities. They may have been among his lost papers or perhaps (as he was probably a severe critic of his own

* Walter de La Mare O.M. 1873 - 1956
Poet and man of letters

work, in spite of his age) he himself destroyed them. In either case, it is much to be regretted. It is as though Rupert Brooke had died leaving only his "Grantchester" - which "Cambridge" of course cannot but remind me, although there is little in common between them, apart from their theme, and such characteristics as wit, vivacity, intense interest in being alive, atmosphere and imagination; and in these each is completely independent of the other. In "Cambridge" there is a most unusual range of interest, comprehension and precision of detail. Now, perhaps the most remarkable feature is its maturity of outlook, combined with the technical skill, chiefly spontaneous though that may have been.

What particularly delights me too is the meditative undercurrent welling up in such fragments as: "Fall gentle leaves," "The breeze and I," "The heaven's love," "we cannot save their souls but in song," "There is no other such" - and "I am away this winter."

All this is clearly the promise of a rich and unusual mind, and I haven't any doubt that its loss is a very real one to the future. I have gone into particulars like this because, although one delights in and admires a poem first and at once - and, if not, no mere reasons for doing so are likely to be of much avail. Still there are reasons, and the poem shines only the more brightly in their light.

It is difficult to suggest any way of making the poem better known other than by sending copies to those whom you think would be interested. The fact that they have appeared in print might preclude their being accepted by a Magazine or Review; and "Cambridge" is rather long - too long for the great majority: But you might try "The New Statesmen" or "The Spectator."

Unfortunately one is not likely to hear of an anthology until it is on the point of publication.*

* exactly Jo's experience with the Salamander Trust with their anthology.

I realize how much you must wish that
`Cambridge` shall not be forgotten.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) W J de La Mare`

Let me end with John`s other recorded poem. It
was headed `North Africa, October 1943` and one feels
that it foreshadows his death at San Clemente, not many
weeks later.

`Nothing can matter now: the ageing year
Nor the eternal desert of the sea
Nor things to come, unknown, nor enmity
I can still live on dead things I hold dear.

We who have spun our dreams from ecstasy
Have nothing more to fear, not even dying
A thousand things are with me: I`m not trying
To hope for better till eternity.`

CAMBRIDGE

Others, no doubt, have felt the same delight
In you, my magic town of the soul's dwelling,
Conventional it seems for me to write
Of things not mine alone, but still things stay
Immortal in their beauty. Endless telling
Of loveliness will not take beauty away.

The best remains the best though too much praised;
And I, who know your scars, can better see.
The time is gone when sun and moonshine dazed
My diffident mind, and now I see your size,
Limit, and close, your untold majesty.
Fear not my voice who have seen you with such eyes.

Seasons become you well, though the wet snow
Lies tattered on your cold and tangled roofs
Ungainly: though the summer heat can dry
Your lovely lawns, and strangle into slow
Wood-floating apathy and make aloof
The river that reflects the hanging sky.

Fall gentle leaves
Where the slim bridges leap;
Span the dark river,
Branches aquiver,
And the grey walls asleep;
Fall gentle leaves . . .

Winter has thrown
Astringent whiteness
From Magdalene to Trumpington,
Look at the whiteness
Of the snow soft blown:
Stop, everyone,
See the black-gowned, staid
Saunter of doctors down King's Parade:
Throw down your books
And come and have some coffee . . .

I met Cynara in the place,
Winter's red apples in her face,
And all the lusty crew:
What were we going to do
To-night? how about the Arts?
Or we might go and play darts
Or concertos of Mozart's,
Go to the party at Corpus if you choose:
They have a record of the Jazz-me-blues.
Or the dance
In aid of Free France. . . .
So all the winter regardless
Till Margarita
Sweet—and discreet—
It brings back a sound of music so tender
But no tropical splendour:
And we wonder why
The breeze and I. . . .

Send me again such thunderous March mornings
On the edge of spring with all the vista'd towers
Angelic in the sun, and the blue awnings
Of a ciel-sans-nuages slung above,
And all the shining towns in the early hours
Smiling and wondering at the heaven's love.

Reward for freezing darkness on St. John's
Gigantic chapel, searching the raiders' moon,
To wake and find a sparkle like the fons
Bandusiae across the morning town.
That year to hangover March there came strange June
And all the winter orgies tumbled down.

Remember the girls and men
Whose company was cakes and ale enough:
Basil, wise Yorkshireman; the fey, rough-
haired Blond Pantagruel of Essex;
Ian, all-beauty-seeing, whose sure thought
Saw loveliness with no discriminations
In César Franck's symphonic variations
And the trimmed fury of planes:
Much still remains. . . .

The genial cynic from the scowling Tyne:
Eric, colossal-chested, gentle dreamer,
Admitted Lesbians and scented males;
And the bloodies with red nails—
Margot, the tigress with the gentle eyes;
Sheila, simple and wise;
Joyce, who gave thoughts to deprave
But made us behave. . . .
Remember these, and also the blind brave
Since gone towards the sun; we cannot save
Their souls but in song.

Gentle and tolerant, my lovely town,
You cradled these strange mascherades and never
Lost your own pride of genius and gown
And never looked askance at the crazy, the dumb
Searching the dusty languages for ever,
But red revolt you know far more than some.

Noble and century-ancient those grand walls,
The strawberry bricks, the grey green-trailing stone:
Old grace of Queen's: the cathedralic halls
Of Trinity and John's: the night of King's:
Magdalene serene and dim, aloof, alone:
Clare's bridge, the graceful wreck which never falls:

Cold ancient Corpus: royal Trinity:
The mundane courts of Christ's: Emmanuel,
Episcopalian: the gravity
Of Catherine's, grimmer than a Spanish keep:
The magic elfin echo of Caius bell:
Carousing Pembroke: Sidney half asleep:

Downing, wide spaced and lulled by those deep chimes:
Trinity Hall, the holy home of law:
And all the mass of roofs that changing times
Have left untouched; and I could say so much
And canonize a hundred places more
Out of this town; there is no other such.

When the trombones of summer played
Over King's Parade,
Then I could see the ineluctable ends:
The ascent of the Tripos, goodbye to friends,
No more chop suey and parties till three,
And no more nostalgic lethargy
Of the green pools of Grantchester at noon,
Or the carnival in the afternoon
(When Louis Armstrong's lusty brass
Startled the wood-nymphs from the grass):
No more summer night songs on the river
Under the bridge at King's,
And lots of things
Not always enthralling
But worth the recalling. . . .

I look back and listen, lover,
Hearing the plaintive oboe and the strings
And the faint ecstasies and jazzy things
Linked with you, Cambridge; the music calls to me:
Summer night blossoms heavy in the dark
And one small face; the night's unhalloved dreams
And the drunken skyscrapings of the mind. . . .

Give me the thought again
Of summer rain on the willows
And the foaming billows of leaves
That the summer weaves. . . .

The wind grieves
And I am away this winter
Who was all you are and have been—
All the things you are.

SEBIA AUBUNCA, November, 1943.

JOHN DAVID GWYN

B.A. (CANTAB.), LIEUTENANT, WELCH REGIMENT,
WAS KILLED IN ACTION AT SAN CLEMENTE, ITALY,
ON DECEMBER 2, 1943, AGED 21 YEARS

ENVOI

With John's death, the male branch of our St. Mary Church Gwyns ceased. As we all know, there are many grandchildren and great grandchildren of both Vivian and Arthur and perhaps my next (pleasurable) task will be to bring that part of the Family Tree up to date.

As I mentioned in Chapter VIII, I feel certain that there may still be existing branches of the Llancarfan Gwyns and possibly even the St. Mary Church Gwyns. I never went deep enough to follow up the Clifton Gwyns or the Llanelly* Gwynns.

Nevertheless, I hope that this somewhat long delayed `saga` will be of interest to my sisters and my cousins, and also to their children.

Although I realize that there are many who are more interested in the present than in the past (remember Lot's wife), I think nevertheless that we would all agree that we now wish we had asked many more questions of our grandparents regarding their forebears. Therefore I hope that this little `history`, though limited, may make some amends in that direction and I know that you will all agree how much we are in Freda's debt for all her help and contributions.

As I was putting the story together, I began to think about the tranquil and rural scenes of the Vale in the 19th Century, in which nevertheless our ancestors no doubt experienced the same human joys and sorrows of today. It is, I should imagine, almost certain that they would have been unaware, in those days of limited communication, of the happenings in the outside world, unlike us with our relatively extensive knowledge of the horrors (and yet also the achievements) of the 20th Century.

However `let not Ambition mock their useful toil, their homely joys and destiny obscure.`

And in that connection, I thought the closing words from George Eliot's novel `Middlemarch`, to which the Prince of Wales referred in a recent speech, were appropriate to be brought into this `remembrance of things past.`

* now spelt Llanelli

~For the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs.~

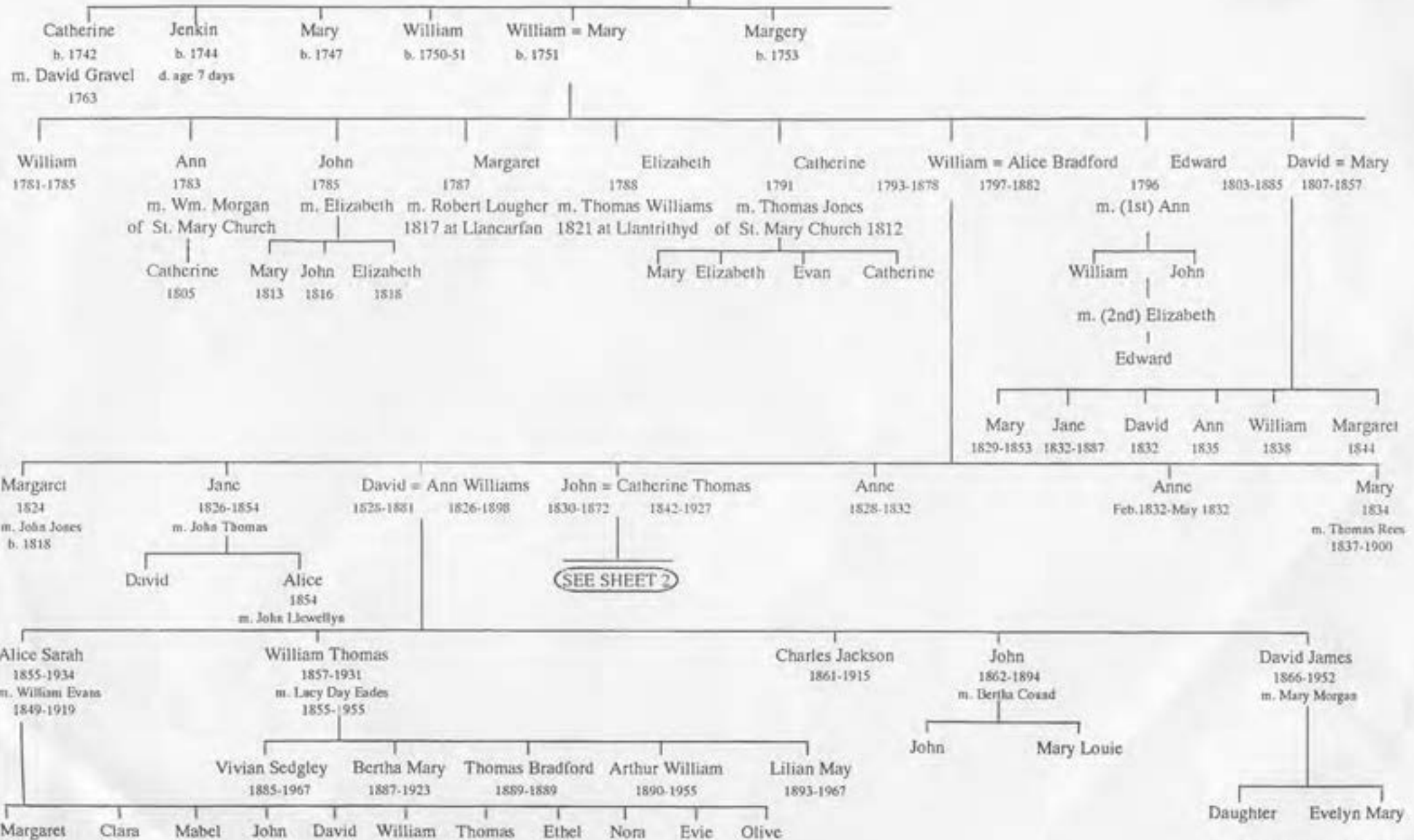
But the quotation with which I would like to end is from the final sentence of ~Wuthering Heights,~ although referring as it does, almost certainly, to somewhat more tumultuous characters.

~I lingered round them under that benign sky, watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.~

WILLIAM BOWN
Cerne Abbas
15 May 1994

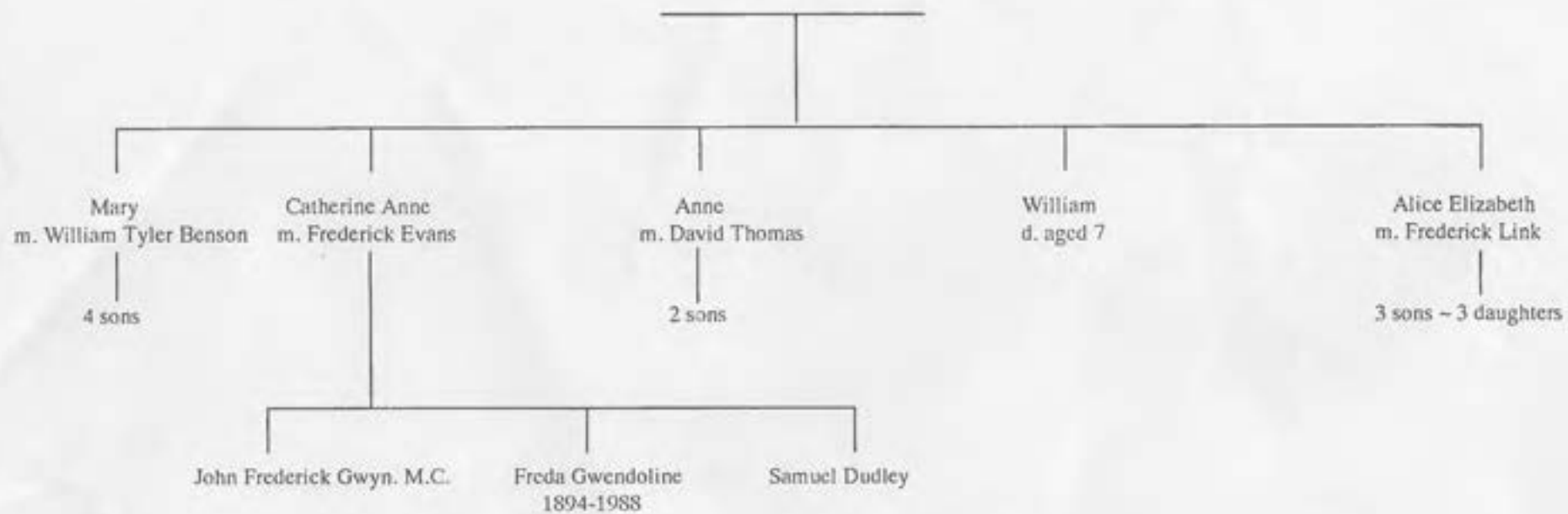
William Gwyn = Catherine Howell
d. 1748 d. 1744

Edward = Jane d. 1789



SEE SHEET 2

John = Catherine Thomas - (see sheet 1)
1830-1872 1842-1927



- p.5 Willie Fisher: W.A.H.Fisher (1876-1957), local historian and genealogist. Obituary notice in Morgannwg, I (1957), pp.51-2.
- p.7 The first-born child of William and Mary Gwyn was Mary, baptised at Welsh St Donats in 1777. She married in 1805 Edward Lloyd, later of Proglands, Llanmaes.
- p.7 William Gwyn (1793-1878) married in 1822 Alice James of Betws. She was a descendant of John Bradford of Betws (1706-85).
- p.8 The Cottage at Llandough was at one time the home of Charles Redwood (1802-54), the friend of Thomas Carlyle who visited him when writing his biography of John Sterling.
- p.9 William Gwyn (c.1749-1829) married in 1776 Mary Lewis of Welsh St Donats. William Gwyn died in 1829 aged 80 and was buried at Welsh St Donats. The name on his tombstone is spelt Gwynn.
- p.11 The Parsonage Farm (or House) at St Mary Church should not be confused with the 'Old Rectory' mentioned on p.5.
- p.12 John Morgan's 'bardic name' was Ioan Trithyd. In 1893 the owner of the Margam Estate was Miss Emily Charlotte Talbot who had succeeded her father in 1890. She was then about 50.
- p.17 John Jones of Fishweir (1817-87). He was buried at Marcross.
- p.25 Thomas Culverwell (1818-74) moved from Goathurst in Somerset to Llwynhelyg about 1861-2.
- p.25 Evan Thomas (1827-1903) was the tenant farmer at Llwynhelyg from about 1875. His grandson was Herbert R. Thomas, the Cowbridge auctioneer.
- p.42 Francis Gwyn of Llansannor and Forde Abbey was not a knight.
- p.44 Gwyns were sheriffs of Glamorgan in 1573, 1598 and 1625.
- p.45 With the patronymic system of surnames that prevailed in Wales, there is no reason why different Gwyn families should be related.