

David Jones of Wallington : his stay in Cowbridge and Llanblethian 3rd – 22nd May 1880

David Jones grew up in Llanblethian and made extensive notes and drawings of life in Cowbridge and Llanblethian during the 19th century. This visit was presumably made after some years away from the area, and for the purpose of seeing to the tomb of his late wife in Llanblethian churchyard.

His recordings are kept in Cardiff reference library and these notes were copied by Jeff Alden around 2000.

Monday 3rd May 1880. Dull weather. Kept in house till afternoon. Walked then through the back fields to Mrs Barnes, calling at Dr Edwards's on my way. Dear Mrs B quite herself and very bonny. Talked much of dear M and of old times. After an hour's chat set out for Mrs Thomas's taking Broadway (to see great alterations), then Cae Rex, then Butts pool etc. Read to Miss Thomas my own excerpts and from books of hers and MA Brown's poems etc.

Tuesday 4th May. Cowbridge fair. Very warm. Poor fair. Walked to Cross Inn, then to Llanfrynach : copied a few welsh epitaphs. Across fields to Pentre Meyrick. Looked over Mynydd Bychan and took outline plans of old Roman camp. Then on to Ewenny. Old woman near lodge walked down with me. Church undergoing (slow) restoration. Nave furnished and chancel, which for generations had been walled off from the church and used as a private mortuary chapel of Turberville family, is to be thrown into church, which then will be one of the largest...churches in the county. Saw the Lloyd grave, also Jones of ?Brantwen. Old Anne Jenkins.

Wednesday 5th May. Did not leave house till afternoon when Miss Thomas and I went to spend evening with Mrs Barnes and Emily. Dear old lady is quite herself most of the time and is very merry, but requires to be amused like a child and is restless. David Davis who helps them in managing the old lady showed us a portfolio of prints and drawings and gave one many hints as to the past of Cowbridge. Cromlech spoken of by Nicholas and others is supposed to have been by the pump in East Village: field behind called Croft y Carreg Wen. D... on his own compilation of that of Llantwit. When he retired, Jenkins of gasworks writing – told me he had seen three printed sermons of Rev. John Walters of Llandough in defence of Worsley. Wesley preached more than once at Llandough, so tradition says.

Thursday 6th May. Very fine but I am lazy. I go to Cross Inn for my ?coat, then to church where I see John Williams the sexton and his wife. See the improvements. Back to Cowbridge. Dine with the Birds. Just before saw Griffiths little dog die of poison taken accidentally a few minutes before at Rogers. At half past one we have pony and trap from Horse and Groom- two Miss Thomases, Mrs Griffiths.....down to Llantrithyd (visit church and place), St Hilary (church) to Old Beaupre. Joneses glad to see us. Thomas Jones home from Australia these four years. Home by 6.30. Pay for trap 5/-. Spend evening together at Mrs Griffiths. Mrs Lloyd of Llanblethian comes in to chat with us – chiefly of old times.

Friday 7th May. Up early to Cross Inn. John Hopkins went with me to church and we examined tomb together. He will put it in repair and cut dear M's name on it. Then to Llanmihangel, deciphered inscription on old effigied stone at east end of chancel outside. Griffith Grants then to Rectory and chatted with Mr(?) Evans showed us plate and registers. Back to church with him. Took inscription. Left key at Llanmihangel House. House much altered by substantial renovations, then to Llandough. Saw David Thomas – his Uncle Lewis still alive at Llanmaes and in his hundredth year.

Visited Llandough church – open, much altered, extreme ritualistic.....Home by the fields and Llanblethian. Cross House empty. The village much and sadly altered. Old thatched cottages tiled over and look utterly place. John the Weavers old house all in ruins and grass growing over the stones. Along the bottom of the hill, the Vurlong field found old Richard Thomas sitting on the stile. Did not know him. When I had passed he recognized me (by my voice) and very glad I was to see him. Talked of the times when he worked....2/-.

Saturday 8th May. Spent a quiet day in the house. Saw Mr Bird in the evening. Got a newspaper or two. Also a lock from Maria Thomas.

Sunday 9th May. Very fine. To Llandough. Met Thomas Deere and Will the Crack. Service very high. 28 candles on the altar. Not lighted as they had a low celebration. New processional cross presented by the Rector's two young sons. Singing very poor. Dined at David Thomas. Spent the rest of the day with them. Two sons and two daughters. Elder son a fine young fellow, goes hunting, saw his cob. Promised to go to St Mary Church but could not. Mr Thomas helped me to folk lore and an old song.

Monday May 10th. Another quiet day in the house. Gloomy weather. Did some writing in the evening. Looked in at Tim's, also Mr Birds. Nightingales we heard at Llandough this summer. Have not been heard scarce in the memory of any now alive. My father in these years used to leave his bedroom window open at this time of the year that he might hear them in his house at Llanblethian sing in Llandough wood.

Tuesday May 11th. Did not leave the house all day. Poorly. Mr William Thomas of Llantwit called. Pressed me to come and see him at Llantwit. In the evening walked to Stalling Down. Went by new road, back by the old. Met Dr Edwards and his daughter. He looks feeble and decaying. The Miss Thomases my kind hostesses and I had whist with a dummy. While we played someone rushed in from Mr Davies's (next door) to beg Maria to come in, for the governess was hysterical. Our play ceased. Then David Davis came in and we chatted about antiquities.

Wednesday May 12th. By train to Pontyclun. Met Mr Thomas auctioneer.... Mrs Williams and M at station. Walked from Pontyclun to Llantrisant with Graig. Visited church, castle and highest point of Graig where is rear of our old tower (round)....splendid view. Fair day. Young men playing in a tennis court. Poor fair seemingly. To Llanharan via Lanelay. From cottage up dingle – steep, wooded, romantic, numberless cascades from streams. Abundance of ferns, some rare. Found walk longer than expected. Farm house got refreshments there. Elder ?daughter of farm Llanblethian staying there, but were absent today. Chatted pleasantly, then to well with old man from Dinas Powis (81). Splendid view. Drank water. Returned to Llanharan, called in Inn. Whisky. Saw church and copied inscriptions. Old man once of Llanharan Mill occupied me. On to Llanharan. On way just outside Llanharan found Moonwork (?).....Researched Llanharan. Clergyman took me over church, showed me plate. Disappointed.....old church had been destroyed. New in Mill and in Llanharan.in Rectory a full house and had long chat.....topic of chiefly personal gossip. Then home – overtook a young man named Harry, one of Thomas Harry's from Aberthin who had been to Tonyrefail to look for work. Handsome young fellow, lived at L....Bach, Tringill. Had been bailiff to Mrs Jenkins of Caercady and had helped it is said Mrs Jenkins to the drink which had killed her. He had seen the famous Caercady ghost.

Thursday May 13th. Wrote up diary in morning. In afternoon, to Penlline, Llangan – took sketch of cross - , St Mary Hill and across fields to Llanilid. Very curious church. Looks older than Llanfrynach. Walked to Cowbridge via Mynydd Ruthin. Saw a son of Mrs Jenkins, recognised him by his

resemblance to his mother, but did not speak as I was tired and ill. Got to Miss Thomas, supped and to bed.

Friday May 14th. In bed all day, or rather till 4 o'clock when I got up and walked with Miss Thomas to the old Eagle which Edward John has just taken and is having altered and repaired to suit his business as a seed merchant etc. Fine room that old schoolroom. Galleries at both ends. Dutch tiles in fireplace as well as in other parts of the house.

Saturday May 15th. Got up at noon. In evening walked to Llanblethian to see if church inscription had been cut. Hopkin has not touched it. Went to Cross Inn. He will do it on Monday. Feel poorly. Called on the Griffiths. Mrs Davies, Mrs Rogers' mother, died this afternoon.

Sunday May 16th. Fine. Walked to St Mary Church. Morning service. Dined with the Howes and took tea also. Sheep's milk pudding! Mr Howe has been suffering from calceous deposit in bladder. Given over by Dr Phillips. 'Cursed' by treatment of a woman in Llantwit Vardre. Pellitory-of-the-wall one of the chief things used. I got some from wall of St Mary Church churchyard and had tea made in evening. Miss Anne Howe wonderfully chatty.

Monday 17th May. Athletic sports at Cowbridge. A fine day. Passed the field in afternoon on way to Llanblethian. John Hopkin has cut down lettering on tomb. Through the lower meadows and Cae Pant to Nash, Llandow (took sketch of church), Llysworney and home. Tired. Called on Revd. William Llewellyn and arranged to go with him to meadows tomorrow. Lewis Thomas formerly of Llanmihangel (?), near Llanmaes, - 100. Mrs Barnes 93. Mrs Brooks over 90. Mr Bradley 95. Several others in the neighbourhood over 90.

Tuesday 18th May. William Llewellyn and I go round meadows. Agree that something should be done to river. He will ask Homfray, Ballard and others to help to do a complete job, subscribing £1 each. If not in clean just below to and in meadows not to cost more than £1 in all (*difficult to read writing*). Walked to Aberthin. Met Mrs Butler (Kitty Richards) then to Llanquian. On way back called on M Barnes and then I lunched. At Mr Bird with whom I left cheque £5 to be cashed. Earlier Walter Smyth called, going to

Wednesday 19th May. Fine. Indoors most of the morning. Half holiday movement at Cowbridge. Shops all closed in afternoon. Mrs Griffiths came to say goodbye....called on Mr Bird. After tea to Llansannor. Sketched church. Found a rare kind of cranesbill in churchyard. Could not get keys of church. Saw Mrs Williams (my tenant) during day to whom I expressed my great annoyance that she should have paid Mr W Llewellyn the 'penny' for right of way which he urgently demanded of her. Strictly charged her never to pay it again. Mrs Davies the milk woman came not today. We found that her cows had been carried off in the night by Jew moneylenders with whom she had had dealings. The debt was about £9 and her cows were worth £30.

Thursday May 20th 1880. Bade my dear old friend Mrs Barnes goodbye. She is 93. Tim stayed quiet in house all morning. Wrote a little and finished 'Silas Marner'. After dinner to Llanblethian. Cleared Uncle Rowland's grave and his wife's. Hard work. John Hopkins bringing large monument there. Went to Cross Inn and waited till he came by with ?Holly. gave him instructions to put Uncle's initials on small stone, also Aunt's. Four o'clock by this time but started for St Donats. Got there before 6. Trouble in getting key of church. Sketched church. South side was a cross. Left St Donats a little before 8. Many signs of drought. Pines dry etc. Large tumulus near farmhouse supposed to be Brynsach. Found Alexanders at St Donats and astonished women by taking specimen.

Friday 21st May. Fine and dry. In the house most of the day. Went in the evening to bid the Birds goodbye, also the Feltons. Maria Thomas went with a friend of Mrs Brooks who came by late train in Bear carriage over to Llanmaes. Caroline Spickett (now Mrs Brooks's companion) returned with her to stay till Monday.

Saturday 22nd May. Up at 6. Completed packing. Took leave of my two kind friends and Miss Spickett who got up to see me off. David Davis at station. Fine and bright. Train full.....