

Llanblethian House, Llanblethian

Llanblethian House and No. 2, including forecourt walls and railings, Church Road.

Listed Grade 2, 16/09/1999

Early to mid 19th century, once 3 houses now two.

Exterior – two houses. Two storeys, 5 windows in all. Smooth (No. 2) and roughcast render over stone, slate roof, rectangular stone chimneys. No. 2 is two-windowed house; on first floor, two 12-pane hornless sashes; on ground floor, door, early twentieth century to right, and 16-pane hornless sash window. No 2 has lower block to left, with upper loading door and 2 ground floor windows in gable. In front of this, lean-to garage whose wall (to left) has Gothic archway, apparently re-used medieval material.

Llanblethian House has 3 windows on first floor, left window (at lower level) is 16-pane sash, others 12-pane sashes. On ground floor, doorway covered by porch with small-pane glazing, and paneled door; to left, 12-pane and 16-pane sash window, to right, 12-pane sash window.

Houses have stone garden walls with iron railings and gates with spear finials.

A fine late eighteenth-century grade II listed building, with a medieval stone doorway now a little out of place in the garden wall, this was known as ‘the Nicholl’s house’ throughout the nineteenth century. Edward Nicholl, one of the Nicholl family of *The Ham* in Llantwit Major, and whose brother lived for a short time in *Hill House*, owned *Llanblethian House* in the first part of that century. The left-hand side was probably the servants’ quarters, while the right-hand side, for the resident family, contained more spacious and taller rooms. At a number of times in the past - as at present - the house has been divided into two properties.

In 1839, according to David Jones of Wallington, Thomas Donne was living there with his third wife, a wealthy English lady, and her daughter. (His first wife had been a farmer’s daughter, and the second was Mary Anne Entwisle nee Bassett, who had a somewhat dubious reputation, and so her friends and her late husband’s family had been glad to see her married off to Donne). Donne however soon moved in with his brother at *Great House*, and in 1840, the Revd Thomas Powell was the occupant of the house, which was let partly furnished.

The 1851 census shows the three Powell brothers living in the house. Revd Thomas Powell, a Brecknockshire man, was curate of Llanmihangel with Flemingston, and had married the daughter of Capt. MacGregor of the *Great House*. They had lived briefly at Llanmihangel and then moved to Llanblethian, where to supplement their income (and to support the family of seven children) they took in lady and gentlemen boarders; Thomas also taught at the Grammar School. Revd John Powell was rector of Llanharry, and brother-in-law of Edward Ballard, junior, of Cowbridge, for they had married the Thomas sisters of *The Cross* in Cowbridge. Mrs Powell had died before Thomas moved to Llanblethian. David Powell, the third brother, was a retired excise officer.

Something of a surprise occurred in 1856, with the marriage of Elizabeth, one of Thomas’s daughters, to the Revd Michael Farrar, second master at the Grammar School. He was

a widower, she was a minor - the difference in their ages must have caused some talk! Eventually his son (who was therefore her step-son) married one of her sisters. Michael Farrar became headmaster of a school in Brecknockshire, but when Revd Thomas Powell died, some of Powell's sons, and the Farrars, emigrated to Canada.

The Powells were followed in *Llanblethian House* by the Ords. Ralph Ord died in 1860, so the 1861 census shows his widow, Christiania, living there with four daughters, three sons and a servant. Mrs Ord had been born in North London, but the children had been born in Durham, Yorkshire, London and St Mellons, showing that the family had travelled about a great deal. The Ords soon moved on to *Heath House* in Cowbridge, and were replaced in *Llanblethian House* by one of the Nicholl family - George W Nicholl, born in Roath, with his wife, three sons and three daughters.

The censuses for 1871, 1881 and 1891 all show GW Nicholl in residence, and during his occupation one of the rooms had its ceiling raised to accommodate an organ. The Nicholl estate was put up for auction at *The Bear* in Cowbridge in 1899. The house, with stables, coach house, lawns and gardens, was bought by DW Savours of Fontigary, as were the two cottages to the north, and the ruined cottage to the south, all of which would have been inside the boundaries of the present *Llanblethian House* properties.

'Llanblethian Buildings and People' 2001

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This was supposedly the Dower House of Dunraven Castle (where the mother goes when her son takes over the castle), but was inhabited by Wm Bruce (died 1768 - tablet in church, the Nicholls, Wyndham Quin - a cousin of Dunraven, and the Bassetts of Beaupre. It was "a residence", i.e. no land attached.

There was a thatched white cottage in the garden (steps still visible). Nat and Kate Gifford (he a cobbler) lived on the right hand side, and Sam White, railwayman, on the left.

It was one house, then divided into two a number of times. The Freemans lived on the upper side - they probably were servants' quarters because the ceilings are low, and there were stables outside. The Minas family lived in the "posh" part (in the 1970-90s) - taller rooms, music room (the floor was lowered and the ceiling raised to accommodate an organ when the Nicholls lived there).

At one stage, there was a large family in the part where the Minas family lived - there was an agreement to use one bedroom in the wing of the other part, accessed via the garden.....

(probably) 1767 Margaret Thomas, widow, 1 acre, messuage and 1 garden: 6.75d
ButeR6/17-19

1778 Margaret Tomas
1801 “

Bute R6/17-19

1805 ‘spent the afternoon at Llanblethian at my brother Edward’s’ - *personal a/c bk*
 of Robert Nicholl *D/D CF 16*
1820 Edward Nicholl, do *Bute R6/17-19*

- 1839 Thos Donne, occ
 "Thos Donne in 1839 was living with his third wife, a lady of some fortune. His family included a daughter by his first wife (who'd been a farmer's daughter). His second marriage was a provident one, the lady was a widow of a somewhat tarnished reputation, and both her own friends and those of her late husband (Philip Entwisle) were glad to see her under the protection of a second husband even though he wasn't of their own choosing. With the third wife, an Englishwoman, he lived at the Nicholl's house at Llanblethian."
David Jones, in WAHF, Vol 27, p 62
- 1840 Edward Nicholl, owned, Revd T Powell, occ *Tithe#209*
- 1851 Revd T Powell, 41, curate of Llanmihangel and Flemston, b Llandilo'r fan, Brecs + w + 7chn +
 Revd John Powell, 58, rector of Llanharry, b Llywel, Brecs +
 David Powell, superannuated excise officer, b Llywel, Brecs + 4 servs *Census#36*
- 1852 Revd Thos Powell occ, Mr Nicholl, o *R 13 2/5*
- 1856 Marriage of Elizabeth Martha Powell, minor, of Llb, dau of Revd Thos Powell to Michael Andrews Farrar, widower, clergyman of Cowb, son of Squire Farrar, gent *Llb. parish records*
- 1858, 20th February Inventory of the house of Revd Thomas Powell of Llanblethian (? Llanblethian House) - auction of effects *Bridgend Chronicle*
- 1860 Death of Ralph Ord, Esq, of Llanblethian aged 56, 3/1/1860
Nat. probate index & Cambrian
- 1861 Christiana Ord, w, 50, fundholder, b N London + 4ds + 3s + 1 serv (Children born Durham, Yorks, Durham, London, St Mellons) *Census#33*
- 1861 Death of Ralph Ord junior in Christchurch, NZ, aged 25 2/5/1861
Cambrian
- 1862 Death of Louise Susannah Ord aged 17 at Llanblethian
- 1863 Marriage of Charlotte Ord to Christopher Douglas of Cardiff, 15/5/63 *Cambrian*
- 1865/69 Wm Geo Nicholl, o, Mrs Ord, occupied *Electoral Roll*
- 1866 Death of Emily Ord aged 26 at Llanblethian
- 1868 February Death of Charles Ord aged 19 of Llanblethian

(Widowed mother, Christiana Ord, moved to the Armoury, Cowbridge by 1871, dying the following year).

1871 (Pont Elman) Geo W Nicholl, landed prop, 46, b Roath +
w + 3s + 3d + 2 servs *Census#*

1877 Sale of Llanblethian House, property of the late John Bruce Pryce. *Western Mail*

Cottage(s) above the house

1877 cottage and gdn (*Tithe 208*) occ Nathaniel Gifford; part of Caercady estate sale
Fo LB61.658.82

Cottage below the house

1877 cottage and garden (*Tithe 210*) occ Ellen Smith; part of Caercady Est Sale
Fo LB61.658.82

Also see article re Johns

Cottage opposite

1877 cottage and garden (*Tithe 211*) occ GW Nicholl; part of Caercady Estate sale
Fo LB61.658.82

1881 GW Nicholl + w + 3s + 3d + 1serv *Census#55*

1891 GW Nicholl + w + 3d + servt *Census#20*

1895 “Llanblethian House, one of the big houses of the village. The owner was Frank Nicholl (sons, Frank, Whitlock, daughters Elizabeth, Bella Lottie)”
‘Llb in 1895’, Robert Thomas

1899 Sale of the Nicholl Estate, by auction, Bear Hotel. F/h residence with stables, coach-house, lawns, gardens, outbuildings (1a 1r 0p) with 2 freehold cottages and gardens to the north west, and one freehold cottage and garden (now in ruins) to the south east... sold for £500 to DW Savours, Fontigary
D/D SA 8/15 and Western Mail

1910 PT Bassett, occ, Miss Nicholl, o, Llanblethian House
D/D PRO/VAL/1/46

1911 Mr and Mrs Bassett *Tilley scrapbooks*

1914 Mrs Harry Lewis of Llanblethian House needing a cook *Western Mail*

1915 Agreement between Henry Lewis of Llanblethian House and Philip Thurstan Bruce Basset of Beaupre - to take Llb Ho for less than a full year because Mr Lewis’s tenancy may end on 29 Sept in any year
G & G, Box I Bundle 11

Sources/references :

GRO = Glamorgan Record Office

PRO = Public Record Office, Kew

NLW = National Library of Wales

But deeds in GRO & NLW

D/D = deeds in GRO

G & G = Gwyn & Gwyn, solicitors (Cowbridge)

WAH Fisher notes in Cardiff Central Library