

Picton House (General Picton), Church Road, Llanblethian

1819, 18th September Court leet of manor of Llanblethian at dwelling house of Mary Lloyd,
innkeeper on Friday October 1st *Cambrian*

1837 New lodge for Independent Order of Oddfellows – Loyal St Quentins Lodge met at
General Picton *Cambrian* 23/12/1837

1838 Parochial meeting of tithe owners at the dwelling house of Thomas Lloyd called The
General Picton *Cambrian* 11/8/1838

The Llanblethian Tithe Map of 1840 records a terrace of three dwellings on plots 130, 131 and 132 under the ownership of James Hiscocks, a Cowbridge grocer apparently then living in the village. Hiscock had owned the cottages in 1824 as the Bute Estate Terrier of that year showed 'the garden in front of his cottages' as belonging to the Bute Estate. It is possible that these cottages, like the adjacent Rose Cottage, were 'taken in from the waste' of the Manor of Llanblethian somewhat earlier.

At the time of the 1840 Tithe apportionment, plot 130, nearest to the church, was occupied by Elizabeth Jones, 131 was the house and garden of Mary Lloyd and 132 at the west end of the terrace comprised an Inn and garden also in the occupation of Mary Lloyd. She is named in the 1824 Ale House Recognisances as the licensee of the *General Picton Inn*, with John Jenkins, miller, of Llanblethian standing as surety, and again in 1826 with a different surety, Samuel Marks, jeweller, of Cowbridge. She is recorded as living at the *General Picton* in the 1844 Slater's directory, but not in the census seven years later. The notebook of David Jones of Wallington, the celebrated Vale historian of the 19th century, states "In Molly Llwyd's time, dancing took place for two or three nights at the Picton. Outside the Picton there was a *pabill* for dancing in. It was a rudely-built structure, posts, with wattled sides, and thatched. The young people would meet twice or thrice a week for dancing. The paraphernalia of the Morris Dancers was kept in this *pabill*, Morris dancing being then quite a recognised public amusement, and frequent exhibitions of it were made about the country. The *pabill* at Llanblethian was accidentally burned down." A letter from EW Miles to Revd Hopkin James (Cardiff Lib, MS4.615) suggests that, if this was Llanblethian pleasure fair, it was held near the Cross on Easter Monday - near enough to the Picton, and with probably more space for dancing, as there used to be a well in the Picton's front garden.

The choice of the General Picton as the name of one of the two Llanblethian public houses at that time remains something of a mystery. The General was from Carmarthen, but his elder brother (who had changed his name to Turberville) lived at Ewenny, and Hopkin-James in *Old Cowbridge* states "Local tradition says that the great General was driven from Ewenny Priory, his brother's seat, by a Cowbridge coachman when he set out for Waterloo". Taken in conjunction with the change in name of the public house in the centre of Cowbridge from *Black Horse* to *Duke of Wellington*, victory fever may be a cause.

The original building continued in multiple occupation until late in the 20th century. The public house known as the *General Picton* or the *Picton Inn* occupied the western and centre section, with the eastern part referred to in the Census returns as 'near Picton' or 'by Picton'. With the closure

of the inn in the 1920s there were periods when there were three separate households in occupation, the western section recorded as The Picton, Picton or Picton House, the eastern section with or without the centre known as Picton Cottage and Glen View Cottage, or as Lavender Cottage on its own. The latter name appears in deeds but not on electoral rolls for the period.

The 1851 census (#8) shows John Williams, victualler and farm bailiff, born in Llantwit Major, as head of household with his wife Frances, and a servant, with Christopher Evans an agricultural labourer and his wife living next door (#9). These were still the occupants in 1861 (#14 and #13). By John Williams's time, David Jones made this comment "Dancing for some years has been discontinued and the revel (initially at the Whitsun Fair, and later on Easter Monday) has sunk into a mere carousal. Our host John o' the *Picton* emulates his neighbour Shon-y-Gwaith (in the *King's Head*) as to who shall have the best tap, and the competition for that honour causes each of them to add an extra bushel of malt to his brewing, to gratify the village toppers. The thing is probably finished up with a little fighting, at least it is a portion of the standing annual gossip of the village to enquire after the event 'Has there been any fighting?' The *General Picton* is by far the best house of the two. Close to the Church, it derives all the benefit that bell-ringing, marriages and burials can bring it, as well as being the place of meeting for all parish vestries."

An article in the Central Glamorgan Gazette on June 18th, 1869 emphasised the importance of the inn for village affairs. "The 32nd anniversary of the Loyal St Quintins Lodge of the Manchester order of Oddfellows took place at the General Picton Inn last Saturday. Members, headed by the Cowbridge Band, proceeded to the Parish Church for a powerful and eloquent sermon by Revd Thomas Edmondson, then processed to Cross Inn and through Westgate into Cowbridge to the Town Hall for refreshments; then up Eastgate and over Broadway to their lodge room for dinner."

In 1871, Thomas Morgan, born in St Hilary, was the innkeeper - he lived in the *Picton* with his wife and niece (#12), and Margaret Jenkins, a widow, lived in the adjoining property (#13).

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1874 Thomas Morgan occupied; Mr John Morgan owned – house and garden; Lord Bute owned, garden
Margaret Jenkins occupied; John Morgan owned

Glamorgan County Rate 8

Glam. County Rate 9

By the time of the 1881 census, the *Picton* had been taken over by Edwin Thomas and his family (#10), and Margaret Jenkins was still living next door. Edwin Thomas and his then larger family, together with four lodgers, was in the *Picton* in 1891 (#52), while Margaret Jenkins continued at the age of 88 to live in the attached dwelling, but was then accompanied by her nephew Harry Sedgebeer, his wife and son (#53). Kelly's Directory for 1895 puts Henry Sedgebeer as landlord of the *Picton*; in 1906 it names Mrs Mary Morgan, and in 1911, Mrs Elizabeth LA Morgan

Ownership of the building had passed on the death of James Hiscock on 12th June 1858 to Anne John, niece of his late wife Catherine, who died intestate on 2nd February 1860. Her three brothers had assumed the name Jones and all emigrated to the United States, William dying in 1835, David in 1849, and Simon Lloyd Jones being still alive in 1860. David's son became heir to Anne John, and as he conveyed other Llanblethian properties to his uncle Simon Lloyd Jones in

1868, we can assume that the Picton property had been included round about that time. (Source: Bute papers, NLW, Bute 1516, p27)

By conveyance dated 14th May 1870, Simon Lloyd Jones of 244 California Street in the county of San Francisco in the state of California, sold to John Morgan, farmer of Llanharry, for £300 “that dwellinghouse and public house known by the name and sign of General Picton and also a dwellinghouse or cottage adjoining with the brewhouse, stable, pig styes and gardens to the said dwellinghouse situate near the church, used as a public house now in the occupation of Thomas Morgan, and the dwelling house or cottage adjoining of Margaret Jenkin, widow.”

John Morgan and his family sold the property in 1896 to Mrs Margaret Davies of Barry, from whom it passed in 1913 to Mrs G Yorath, the last of the absentee landlords. She in turn conveyed the building in the following year to James Edward Llewellyn (who died in 1922) and his wife Elizabeth, during whose ownership the public house ceased trading.

Elizabeth Llewellyn died in 1931. *Picton Inn*, as it was still called, passed to Miss Edith Llewellyn with *Glen View*, the centre and eastern sections, being bought by Sidney and Mrs Emily Llewellyn. Three years later, *Picton House*, the former *Picton Inn*, was sold to Edgar Chedzoy and his wife Lilian, whose two daughters Brenda and Lilian were born here.

The Chedzoys confirmed that during the years 1934 to 1949 there were still separate entrances to the three cottages, and no interconnecting links. Two paths led to *Picton House*, one directly in front of the main entrance – the window above having been opened up by their father – and the other beside the outhouses. They had electricity in one room, and one cold water tap in the back kitchen. Members of the Llewellyn family occupied the other two cottages, the middle section comprising one room up, one room down, a kitchen and a staircase. In the back garden was a privy for each family, a three-seater for the Llewellyns and a two-seater for the Chedzoys. Their father had closed up the well but there was a spring in the back cellar, requiring constant baling out.

In March 1962, Edgar Chedzoy sold *Picton House* to Dr Bernard Knight, forensic scientist. Dr Knight's ownership lasted only until October of that year, but must have made such an impression that he has used the nom-de-plume Bernard Picton for his subsequent detective novels.

‘Llb Buildings & People’

An indenture dated 28th August 1896 records the death of John Morgan on 18th November 1880, bequeathing the property to his wife Jennet Morgan, and after her death to his two daughters Eliza Evans and Margaret Davies in fee simple. Jennet Morgan died in 1886, and ten years later Eliza and her husband Thomas Evans of Kemeys Commander, Usk, convey their moiety (half share) of a public house called General Picton ... to Mrs Margaret Davies, wife of John Davies of Barry Hotel, Barry (who probably also bought the other half).

1889 Edwin Thomas, General Picton inn

County Register

Ownership of the property passed on 4th December 1913 from Mrs Davies to a Mrs G Yorath, the last of the absentee landlords. She sold it on 2nd June 1914 to James Edward Llewellyn (who died in 1922) and his wife Mrs Elizabeth Llewellyn, during whose ownership the public house ceased trading.

Mrs Elizabeth Llewellyn died in 1931. *Picton Inn* as it was still called passed in October that year to Miss Edith Llewellyn, with *Glen View Cottage*, the centre and eastern sections, passing to Sidney and Mrs Emily Llewellyn. Three years later *Picton House*, the former *Picton Inn*, was sold to Edgar Chedzoy and his wife Lilian, whose two daughters Brenda and Lilian were born there. (They now live in Newport, Mon and Fareham, Surrey respectively).

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In March 1962, Edgar Chedzoy sold Picton House for £2,500 to Dr BH Knight, a forensic scientist, and moved down the hill into a bungalow he had built near the Homestead, pulling down an old dwelling to make room for it. Dr Knight's ownership lasted only until October 1962, but must have made such an impression that Dr Knight utilised the nom-de-plume Bernard Picton for his subsequent detective novels.

The purchaser was a Mrs BH Williams. In 1964, Glen View Cottage was sold by Mrs Emily Llewelyn to David Norman Jenkins, and subsequently Glen View was divided into two, the middle reverting to Picton House and the eastern part remaining as Lavender Cottage in the ownership of Idris David Pugh. It was he who in 1970 negotiated the purchase for £100 from the Representative Body of the Church in Wales "all that piece or parcel of land containing thirty square yards forming part of the burial ground of St John the Baptist Church". This allowed access from front to back garden without the necessity of going through the cottage.

Roger B Bradshaw, a consultant surgeon, purchased Picton House in September 1972, and confirms that then Picton House comprised the western and centre sections of the building, with a Mr and Mrs Rowley living in Glen View Cottage next door.

The whole property is now one dwelling.

Sources/references :

GRO = Glamorgan Record Office, where most of the source documents can be found