

## Eastfield House

**Grade II listed 1999** – ‘Early 19<sup>th</sup> century house, featured on the tithe map. House : channelled and scribed stucco, slate roof, two storeys, 3 windows plus 2 set back. First floor of main block has three 16-paned horned sash windows. On ground floor, pedimented doorcase flanked by 12-pane hornless sashes. In 2-window block to right, two 16-pane horned sashes to each floor. Well preserved’.

Among the lands belonging to the Gwyn family of Llansannor was a three-acre field just to the east of the borough of Cowbridge, along the road leading to Stalling Down. In 1805, this field, known as Tair Erw Pen y Pentre, was sold to Isaiah Verity of Cowbridge, who soon afterwards built this pleasing Georgian house, with stables, on part of the field. Verity was a successful Cowbridge mercer; according to David Jones of Wallington, he made some of his money from dealing with smugglers, and when he refused to pay one called Banks for his smuggled tea and rum he became the butt of jokes and rhymes :

Verity, Verity, verity, Vee, won't pay Banks for his smuggled tea.

Verity, verity, verity, Vum, pay the poor man for his smuggled rum.

When Isaiah died in 1838, he left the property to his son Abraham, a surgeon living in Bridgend, who let out the house to a series of professional men. These included John Bellingham, or Billingham, and William Wood, in the period between 1840 and 1850. Henry Rogers, an army captain born in Wexford, was recorded there in the 1851 census, and was followed in 1852 by a Mr Webbley.

An advert in the Bridgend Chronicle for December 1857 runs as follows : 'Eastfield House Commercial Academy. Mr George Rees, formerly master of schools in Swansea and Bath, is opening a school with boarders and day pupils (premises recently occupied by M. Barnett, French master of the Grammar School'. Whether that school actually opened is not known, but by 1861 it was once again a family residence - that of Thomas Williams, a commercial traveller born in Michaelston, with his wife, five children, father-in-law and a servant. It seems that the Williamses moved here from Eglwysilan, only the youngest, 10 month old, son being born in Llanblethian parish.

The Williamses did not stay long, for a deed of 1866 records the recent occupants as being Lewis Jenkins, maltster, preceded by Mr Daniel Ithiel Edwards, surgeon - an old friend of David Jones of Wallington.

Thereafter came stability in occupation. John Thomas, aged 49, who had been born in Ewenny, was recorded there in 1871, with his wife Mary and two servants. John Thomas was an auctioneer - papers of the time frequently record the sales organised by him - and in addition farmed 170 acres and employed seven men. The censuses of 1881 and 1891 also show him living in Eastfield House, though he was then described as a land agent. In 1881, also living there were a niece and two nephews - E T Alexander, an auctioneer, one of the 'founding fathers' of the firm Stephenson and Alexander, and W D Alexander, a farmer, who later in the same year married Mrs Lydia Harding of Cowbridge Town Mill.

After John Thomas died in 1893, there was again a rapid series of owners and occupiers; William Roberts, and then his widow Catherine, were there in 1896 and 1897,

.....land agent. In 1881, also living there were a niece and two nephews - E T Alexander, an auctioneer, one of the 'founding fathers' of the firm Stephenson and Alexander, and W D Alexander, a farmer, who later in the same year married Mrs Lydia Harding of Cowbridge Town Mill.

After John Thomas died in 1893, there was again a rapid series of owners and occupiers; William Roberts, and then his widow Catherine, were there in 1896 and 1897, when it was sold to Alfred Myers, a railway agent of Islington. The following year Mary Rees took over, then Arthur Leyshon of Llantrisant in 1902 and John Evans of Trealaw in 1907. Later in 1907, the house was sold to the then tenant, Arthur S Evans.

Arthur Stephen Evans was one of the sons of S D Evans, the draper of 37-39 High St in Cowbridge. Arthur was one of the pioneers of motoring in the town. He initially took over his father's drapery business, but gradually developed his interest in transport, by first opening a cycle depot at no. 39 (by 1912), and then by 1914 running a motor garage at 4 High St (where there is now a car park for the Filco supermarket). This site was too narrow for effective use, as he hired out cars as well as selling and repairing them, and so A S Evans built the garage at the Bridge, and ran it successfully for many years. He died in 1958 aged 93.

**Research :**

1805 Surrender by John Francis Gwyn esq. for £500 – close of customaryhold land



called Tair Erw Pen y Pentre, containing (est) two and three quarters acres in the parish of Llanblethian, having the turnpike road from Cowbridge to Cardiff on the north, a lane called Heol y Coxsight on the west, and land of Thos. Edwards esq. deceased on all other sides.

The said premises were lately occ. by Morgan David, victualler.  
John Miles as trustee.

To the use of Isaiah Verity, mercer of Cowbridge and his will.

*Bute 1516 (NLW)*

‘Soon after 1805’

Isaiah Verity, mercer of Cowbridge, erected a dwelling house, stable and other dwellings on part of Tair Erw Pen y Pentre

1822 John Miles died intestate as to the estates vested in him as a trustee, leaving his son, John Miles of Aberthin, as customary heir.

1824 Isaiah Verity owned; Morgan Thomas occupied *Bute terrier*

2<sup>nd</sup> April 1827

Will of Isaiah Verity – bequeathing all his estate to his son Abraham Verity of Bridgend, surgeon (on condition of payment of annuities mentioned in the will).  
Abraham Verity, executor. *Bute p 85*

12<sup>th</sup> January 1838 After death of I Verity, will proved *Bute p 85*

18/19<sup>th</sup> November 1839 Land and property mortgaged for £1000 to Llewellyn Jones of Laleston and later Newcastle (5% interest).  
Indenture of appointment and release. *Bute p 85*

Llewellyn Jones called upon Abraham Verity to surrender the land and premises to Ll. Jones’s use.

1844 Surrendered to Llewellyn Jones, property as occupied by  
(1) Isaiah Verity  
(2) Mr Billingham  
(3) Mr William Wood *Bute p 88*

1851 Henry Rogers, 58, Army, born Wexford  
Wife Mary, 64 and daughter Isabella, 24 *Census 89*

1852 Mr Webbley occupied; late Verity owned *R13 2/5*

1857, December ‘Eastfield House Commercial Academy.

Mr George Rees, formerly master of Ynyspenllwch school, Swansea and the Wellow School, Bath (nearly 8 yrs teaching experience), is opening a school on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January with boarders and day pupils. Boarders under 12 - 22 gns pa, over 12 - 25 gns pa (including tuition), day pupils 2 gns pa. The premises were recently occ. by Monsieur Bauer, formerly French master of the Grammar School.

Details given of syllabus and fees

*Bridgend Chronicle, Cowbridge & Llantrisant Mercury*

1857, December 26<sup>th</sup> ‘Eastfield House Commercial Academy conducted by Mr George Rees, formerly master of the Ynyspenllwch schools, Swansea, and recently conductor of the Wellow School, Bath, has determined to open the school on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January.

Boarders under 12.....22 guineas p a  
Over 12.....25 guineas p a (including tuition)  
Day pupils.....2 guineas p a  
Mr Rees had nearly 8 years teaching experience.'

*Bridgend Chronicle*

(Mr George Rees had taken the premises recently occupied by Mons. Bauer, French master at the Grammar School).

1858, July 10<sup>th</sup> Eastfield Academy – George Rees

*Glamorgan Gazette*

1858, 7<sup>th</sup> August Marriage of George Rees, Eastfield Academy, to Mrs Porter of the same place

*Glamorgan Gazette*

1859 Llewellyn Jones mortgaged the property to David James Harmer of Bath

*Bute p 296*

1861 Thomas Williams, 42, commercial traveller, b. Michaelston

Wife Elizabeth, 38, father-in-law, 2 sons, 3 daughters and a servant

*Census 90*

1864 D J Harmar – sale, lot 17; occ. by Dr Edwards as tenant.

Three f/hold cottages, occ. by Thos Taylor, George Swanton and John Foley

By 1866 Harmar had foreclosed and agreed to sell to Edward Gwyn of Newton, Cardiff. Gwyn died in 1865 – the property to trustees of his will.

Occupants in the house were Mr Daniel Ithiel Edwards, surgeon, then Mr Lewis Jenkins, maltster

*Bute p 301*

1868 Exparte trustees of Edward Gwyn

1871 John Thomas, 49, auctioneer and farmer of 170 acres, employing 9, born Ewenny, with wife Mary and 2 servants

*Census 91*

1874 John Thomas occ.; Gwyn owned

*Glamorgan County Rate 86*

1881 John Thomas, 59, land agent, farmer of 150 acres, employing 7.

Nephew E T Alexander, auctioneer, plus nephew W D Alexander, niece Mary Thomas, and 2 servants

*Census 102*

1881 Marriage of W D Alexander of Eastfield House, farmer, son of Edward Alexander, merchant captain, to Lydia Harding, widow, of the Town Mills, daughter of David Miles, farmer

*Llb church records*

1891 John Thomas, 65, land agent, with wife and 3 servants

*Census 110*

1896 William David Roberts, Eastfield House

*Electoral register*

- 1896 Sale of customaryhold or copyhold dwelling house called Eastfield, with lawn, garden, stables and outbuildings, and a field adjoining let to Mrs W D Roberts at £40 12s p a (lease expiring 1/7/1898)  
*High Ct of Justice, Chancery Div. Rees v. Griffiths*
- 1897 Sold to Alfred Myers, railway agent of Islington; occ. by Mrs Catherine Roberts  
*Bute p 307*
- 1902 Sold to Arthur Leyshon of Bryn yr Haul, Cross Inn, Llantrisant *Bute p 373*
- 1907 Sold to John Rees Evans of Cynog Villa, Trelaw, provision merchant (for £750)  
*Bute p 28*
- Later in 1907 Sold to Arthur Stephen Evans, son of S D Evans, draper of High St., who developed a motor business in the town.
- 1911 Mr and Mrs George Morris *Tilley scrapbook*
- .....

**Cottages - from the deeds of Eastfield House (in private hands)**

- 1839 Conveyance, Isaiah Verity, son of Isaiah Verity, to Abraham Verity, surgeon – cottage or dwelling house and garden (16 p) in the occupation of Morgan Thomas and then Isaiah Verity the elder.  
Recites : I.V. took down the cottage and erected 3 new cottages to the south of the road, with Eastfield house on the south, occ. by David Williams, carrier, Richard Jenkins and William Fletcher.
- 1864 Three cottages occ. by Thomas Taylor, Owen Roberts and John Foley.

1896 Sale, lot 3. – two f/hold cottages and gardens, and ruined cottage adj., occ. by John Fitzgerald and Mary Roberts.

1898 Cottages occ. by Mary Roberts and Levi Thomas

1902 Cottages occ. by William Gunning and Levi Thomas

***Sources/references :***

*Bute deeds in National Library of Wales*

*Other deeds in the Glamorgan Record Office*