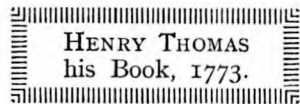


AN ACCOUNT BOOK (1773):  
ABURTHYN CHAPEL, GLAM.

In Volume V., No. 3, page 33, of the C. M. Historical Journal, reference was made in the article on the "Hour Glass of Aburthyn Chapel near Cowbridge" to another relic connected with that church which was said to be interesting enough to deserve special notice in a future number of the Journal. The reference was to a small *Account Book* of some 56 pages, 9 inches long by 3½ ins., in width, bound in calf and bearing the bookmark—



I have not been able to ascertain who this Henry Thomas was; but the Rev. J. O. Evans, the present C. M. Minister of Trehill, St. Nicholas, who kindly lent me the Account Book, informs me that Henry Thomas might very possibly be an ancestor of Mr. J. C. Thomas, J.P., Boverton, a prominent member at Bethesda'r Fro to-day. It seems that a number of sympathizers with the Rev. Peter Williams of Carmarthen, left the Methodist Connexion in the neighbourhood of Aburthyn at the time of his expulsion in 1796 and formed a separate community adopting the same Sabellian view of the Trinity; and judging from the contents of the Account Book, Henry Thomas was very probably among those seceders.

The Rev. J. O. Evans found the Account Book amongst the papers of the late Mr. W. Morgan, Pant, his father in law and the joint editor with the late Dr. J. Morgan Jones of "Y Tadau Methodistaidd." It had been given to Mr. W. Morgan by the late Rev. W. Lewis of Pontypridd, who had for some years been minister of Penmark and St. Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Briefly stated the Contents of the Account Book are these:—

1. A List of Subscribers for the Parts of the Second Edition of Peter Williams's Bible.
2. The Sums of Money collected towards the building of Aburthyn Chapel in 1780, and another towards the renovation of the building in 1863.

3. A short list of the texts of Sermons preached at an Association in Cowbridge in July, 1843 and again in Oct. 1883.
4. Miscellaneous items.

Out of the 156 pages in the Account Book 92 are blank and 5 or 6 leaves have been torn out. Entries are to be found in it in other handwritings than that of Mr. Henry Thomas, and he himself began making his entries at both ends of the book. The miscellaneous items are not worth transcribing here, they are simply jottings about a Road and Poor Tax paid in 1795 and 1796 at Llanblethian, a bill for cheese and butter paid by Thomas Jones, an Account of Captain Picton settled on July 6, and a payment for paper down to 1785, paid by Mr. Prichard to Henry Thomas. Does this last entry and the fact that Mr. Henry Thomas sold Peter Williams's Bible to subscribers suggest that he himself served as a kind of stationer and bookseller for the district round Cowbridge? A receipt on page 26 says that H. Thomas lived at Cowbridge.

The entries about the Cowbridge 'Associations' are in two different handwritings in the middle of the book. The former simply records the texts on which the Rev. William Morris of St. David (1783-1861) preached at Cowbridge in a Quarterly Association July, 1843, and these were 1 Peter ii. 13: Romans vi, 23 and Proverbs xxviii, 13.

The latter entry is in a lady's handwriting who signs herself J—D—Cowbridge, 18th Oct. 1883. It reads as follows:—

"Sassiwn held at Cowbridge 9th, 10th and 11th of October, 1883. Principal Edwards of Aberystwyth, the Rev. J. Evans, Tredegar and the Rev. D. Williams, Llanely, preached at 6 o'clock on Tuesday. Wednesday at 3 p.m., in the C.M. Chapel—the Rev. W. Jenkins, St. Davids and Principal Edwards. At 10 a.m., on Thursday, the Rev. Wm. Williams, Swansea and Rev. Dr. Hughes, Rev. Thos. Levi and the Rev. D. Lloyd Jones, Rev. J. Cynddylan Jones, Rev. Mr. W. Powell, Rev. Thomas Evans and others."

Neither of the above Associations are recorded in Mr. Robinson's "Canmlynedd o Gymdeithasfaoedd," printed in 1900; nor are they mentioned in the "Trysorfa" for those respective years.

The Account Book also refers to a visit of the Rev. Thomas Richards (1783-1856) Fishguard, to preach in October 1844 at Soar Bonvilstone and Cowbridge. His texts on those occasions were Psl. 62. 8. and Rom. 10. 12.

In our previous article on Aburthyn Chapel we quoted extracts from the Diary of Howell Harris, which showed that Harris was very fond of visiting this place and that he had a Meeting House set apart for the Society there as early as May, 1749. The Rev. J. O. Evans suggests that the Meeting House of 1749 was probably no more than a wing or room added to the dwelling house known in those days as Y Berth Ynn, or Y Berthen, and that the first chapel was built in 1780 as recorded in Henry Thomas's Account Book. But whether the chapel of 1780 be the first or the second built at Aburthyn, the detailed account given by Henry Thomas is worth recording here. It seems that both he and the Revd. David Jones of Llangan collected money towards the Building Fund, the former brought £174 and the latter £20. There are some 40 names in the list of subscribers and their contributions vary from ten guineas to a shilling. It would be interesting to know whether descendants of these early subscribers still belong to the Methodist Connexion and are now attached to the same homes and chapel. These are some of the names:—

George Prichard Newton. He not only contributed £5 5s., himself, but collected £20 in London towards the chapel. Edward Williams, Llantrisant; Thos. Lewis and W. Thomas, Pendoylan; David William, Beauper; Margaret Miles, Maindy; Anne Thomas and David James of Burthin; Anthony Thomas and Mr. Williams of St. Athan; Mr. Robert Thomas, St. Mary Hill; Walter Coffin, Bridgend; John Griffith, Malster, Edward Thomas and Anne Prosser of Cowbridge; Mary Jones, Ioan Jones and Mr. Williams of Lisworney; John Llewellyn, Ca Main; Thomas Williams, Fleminston; W. Cadogan and John Griffith of St. Hillary; Catherine Miles and John Thomas of Newton; Rd. William, Port Ciry; Thomas the Miller of New Mill; W. Thomas, Caia; W. Evan, Goodwel; John Thomas, Landough; Lewelin Yorath of Lantrithyd; Evan Morgan and John Morgan of Lanblethian; James Prichard, Tallygarn; Evan Prichard, Collenau; Thos. Williams, Lantwit; Thos. John, Ty'nycaia; Richard Thomas, Nash; John Lewelin, Caera; Edward Lewelin Celly Seren; Wm. David Treguff, Edward William, Mas Mawr; Mr. Bassett, Aberthaw.

The last mentioned contributor seems to have taken special interest in the building of Aburthin Chapel, for like the Rev. D. Jones of Llangan, Mr. Prichard of Newton and Mr. Williams of St. Athan, he brings £10 10s., also to the Fund, which he had collected from his own circle of friends. The Rev. Christopher Bassett, M.A., the son of Methodist parents and converts of Howell Harris, who lived at Aberthaw, was himself one of those zealous clergy who sided with the Meth-

odists and itinerated to preach at their Societies. He served as curate of St. Fagans and Porthceri and died in 1784, at the early age of 31. Mr. Williams of St. Athan was the well known hymnist, John Williams (1726-1806) who wrote the popular hymn, "Pwy welaf o Edom yn dod." An interesting book in this connection is the following:—

Llythyr, oddiwrth Dafydd ab Ioan y pererin [ie., David Jones, Llangan] at Ioan ab Gwilym y Prydydd [ie., John Williams, St. Athan]: yn rhoddi byrr hanes—Christopher Basset o Aberddawen. Ynghyd â Marwnad ar ei farwolaeth—gan Ioan ab Gwilym, &c. Trevecca, 1784. 36 pp.

[This volume contains also the first printed version of the above-mentioned hymn.]

John Williams of St. Athan as well as Thos. William of Bethesda'r Fro wrote elegies on Peter Williams of Carmarthen and these were printed together in P.W.'s Memoir (1817).

Following the list of subscriptions towards the Building Fund we have an Account by Henry Thomas of how the money was disbursed. The following items will illustrate the cost of materials and labour as well as the customs associated with building in 1780:—

	£	s.	d.
" For Ale when the foundation was laid, 8th of April, 1780		0	1 6
For Ale when the Couples was raised, May ye 20th, 1780		0	3 0
For Ale for the Tylers when raising the Stable couple		0	3 0
For 1,000 tile stones from Heol y Cawl		1	0 6
For haling 2560 tile stones from Aberthaw		0	12 0
For 7 Crannugs and 8 pecks of Lime for ye tylers		0	15 0
For tiling 14 pools and 2½ yards at 9s. per pool		6	11 10
For trimming 12000 tyles at 2s. 6d., per 1000		1	10 0
For 55 foot of free stone Crests @ 7 per foot		1	12 0
For Table stones from Kevan hirgod		0	11 6
Lost in four light guineas		0	2 6
Lime for White liming the house and for the turnpike from St. Hillary		0	0 9
Paid John Griffith, blacksmith for Ironwork		1	5 4
To Henry and Thos, William for making Causeway		0	10 0
Pd John Davies, Carpenter		85	0 6
Pd Jno Griffith, Mason		56	6 6
Pd Francis Thomas, Glazier		0	10 0
For 12000 Pembrokeshire Tiles		5	2 0
For 3500 Laths @ 1s. 3d. per 1000		4	0 6
For paint and oyl and carriage		1	14 2
For 5 deal boards from Bristol via Aberthaw		1	0 10
For slitting the said boards		0	1 3
For ½ hundred nails		0	0 6
To Dd. Hopkin for making benches and cupboard		1	1 0
For 12 days work in painting @ 1s. 6d. per day		0	18 0
Ironwork done by Jenkin Jeremiah		0	10 6
Candlesticks for ye pulpit		0	10 0
Total expenditure	£179	18	10½

On page 130 of the Account Book we have a short list of 23 names, written in Welsh, viz., the members of Aburthyn chapel who contributed towards its renovation in 1863. The largest contribution is £2 and the smallest a 1s., the total sum being £18 3s. It would be interesting to know how long after 1863 the Welsh language continued to be used at Aburthyn Chapel. All the contributors belonged to the village with the exception of a Thomas and Morgan of Prisk, a David of Maindy, Thomas of Park, Rees and John of Trerhingyll, Davies of Penteyrn, Harris of Pant Wilkin and Collier of Penylan.

The last and probably the most interesting entry in the Account Book is its List of 260 Subscribers for the Second Edition of Peter Williams's Bible. To the Rev. Peter Williams of Carmarthen (1722-1796) belongs the credit, (a) of writing the first Welsh Commentary on the *whole* Bible; (b) of having the Welsh Bible printed for the first time in Wales. Of course it had to be done in a clandestine manner, inasmuch as the Copyright which the London and Oxford and Cambridge Printers solely possessed in those days to issue the Bible text, could only be over ruled by publishing Annotations and Comments along with the text. The success which attended Peter Williams's venture has been remarkable, for not only was he able to supply the growing need of the spiritually awakened Welsh people with Bibles, but his Notes at the end of each chapter have been so enjoyed by the readers from his own day to ours that some 38 editions of Peter Williams's Bible have been issued between 1770 and 1900. Much of the popularity of his 'Bible' was also due to the fact that the text was printed in large type and that it was issued in periodical parts at one shilling each, being thus brought within the reach of the poorest peasant.

From "The Bible in Wales" (London: Sotheran & Co., 1906) we glean the following particulars about the first two editions of Peter Williams's Bible:—

1770 Y || Bibl Sanctaidd: || sef, || Yr Hen Destament; a'r ||  
Newydd, || gyda || Nodau a Sylwiadau ar bob Pennod. ||  
.....Caerfyrddin, || Argraffwyd dros y Parchedig  
Mr. P. Williams, gan I. Ross. || MDCCLXX. ||

4to (8); double columns, with marginal notes and references, and commentary at end of each chapter.

This first edition of *Bibl Peter Williams* was published by the author, in shilling parts, the first appearing in 1767 and sold complete, with or without the Apocrypha for £1. 8.600 copies printed.

The *second edition* was printed 1779-81 and issued without the Apocrypha and a few of the Tables at the end of N. T. 6400 copies printed and issued in 15 shilling parts.

From the Account Book we gather that not only Henry Thomas but the Rev. Christopher Bassett as well, helped to sell a large number of the above Second Edition in the Vale of Glamorgan; and that the Parts came to the subscribers' hands on the following dates,—Part I, May, 1779; II Sept.; III Oct.; IV Dec. 1779; V March, 1780; VI July; VII Sept.; VIII Dec., 1780; IX April, 1781; X May; XI Aug.; XII Oct., 1781; XIII March, 1782; XIV June; XV Oct., 1782; Complete Bible in Jan. 1783.

To add to the interest of the above entries in the Account Book, the payments for the Parts are actually received in the Book—the first by Peter Williams on May 19th, 1779, and the remaining four by John Williams "for my father P.W." on Sept. 2, Oct. 18th and 21st, and March 3rd, 1780, respectively. Judging by the names and addresses of the subscribers in the list we gather that not only some of the most characteristic surnames of families in the Vale of Glamorgan are included; e.g., David, Cadogan, Hopkin, John, Miles, Mathews, Howel, Bassett, Millward, Gronow, Prosser, Wade, Morgan, Thomas, and Williams; but that Henry Thomas and Christopher Bassett had scoured the whole county for purchasers, as these place-names will indicate,—Ewenny, St. Hillary, Coychurch, Pendoylan, Leckwith, Llantrithyd, Britton, Colwinston, Goodwell, St. Mary Hill, Ystrad, White Cross, Lansannor, Lisworney, Llwynhelig, Lanmaes, St. Andrews, Bonvilston, St. Nicholas, Wick, Welsh St. Donats, Penlline, Langan, Croesvane, Castella, Pentyrch, Peterstone, Dyffrin, Landough, Newton, St. Brides Major, Lanquian, Landaff, Lantrishant, Trecrement, Caerphilly, Llanwonno, Mynydd Yslwyn, Lantwit, Bridgend St. Mary Church, Trerhingyll, St. Athan, Dynas Powis, Radir, Caera, Drope, St. Lithans and Lanharan.

Anyone acquainted with the itineraries of the early Methodist Preachers will see at once that most of the above place-names are situated along the routes usually followed in the preaching tours of Howell Harris and his contemporaries; but one would like to know, if data could only be got, why Peter Williams and his Bible became so popular in this part of Glamorgan. Was he a greater favourite and therefore less persecuted around Aburthyn than in other parts of Wales? Do we find in the zeal of Henry Thomas and Christopher Bassett to get as many as 260 subscribers for Peter Williams's Bible, the origin of the movement that led to the secession of so many members from the Methodist

Churches in the Vale under the leadership of John Williams of St. Athan and Thomas Williams of Bethesda'r Fro, as a kind of protest against the expulsion of Peter Williams by the Sasiwn in 1791, for his Sabellian comments on the 1st chapter of St. John's Gospel? Until further light comes on this controversy, we recommend the reader to read Vol. II, pages 58-82 of the Biography of Thomas Charles of Bala, by the Rev. D. E. Jenkins, Denbigh (1908). He deals in a very able and exhaustive manner with the Expulsion of Peter Williams and refers to the disastrous effects of P.W's visit to Aburthyn after the expulsion.

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M.H.J.