

Morgan and Thomas families of Aberthin and the Cowbridge Arms (linked with the David and Russell families of the Westgate Inn)

Information from Mrs Carla Crozier, from Worthing, Sussex, in a series of e-mails sent to Jeff Alden in 2006 and 2007. (She was one of twin girls, born in 1952, when her parents lived at 1 Aberthin Rd., Cowbridge) :

Carla's grandfather's mother was Mary Williams (born 16/11/1871, and she was Margaret Thomas's much younger half-sister (they had the same father, John, from Red farm, Penllyn, who was married twice). Mary lived with Margaret and her family at the Cowbridge Arms for some years, then married a William Thomas, who was born 1869 in Llanblethian parish (probably Aberthin), his parents being William and Elizabeth Thomas*. His father was a farmer and butcher (90 acres) and he had five other siblings – Mary, Susanna, Thomas, David and Elizabeth. His brother David ran Brewery Court farm, Aberthin for some years around 1900. William married Mary Williams on August 5th 1891 at Holy Cross church, Cowbridge. Two of his brothers, William David and Thomas David, were witnesses but no other family members were present.

William and Mary Thomas (Carla's great grandparents) lived near Llanquian farm and Brewery Court farm in Aberthin. They had three children; then, about February 1900, William went off to the Boer War with the Glamorgan Yeomanry. In June that year Carla's grandfather David Glyndwr Thomas** was born to Mary at Llanquian farm. She believes Mary went there for the birth, living on her own with three small children. Mary's next child was Thomas Thomas, born in 1902 (*he and his wife Philippa later owned and lived at Brynglas, Aberthin, next to the Farmers Arms. Their son, William Gwyn Thomas was living in St Athan in 2006 and was a member of Cowbridge Rugby Club*). In 1904, Mary had another son, Daniel, and went on to have three more children, making nine in all.

Sometime between 1901 and 1904, Mary had started living with a Daniel Raymond, who had been working at Brewery Court farm. Her last four children were definitely by him and Carla thought Thomas was probably also his son. Mary never married Daniel, though she was eventually known as Mrs Raymond (and drew her state pension in that name). Carla has been told that all her children have 'William Thomas' named as their father on their birth certificates. Mary and Daniel ran the Crown and Anchor in Cowbridge (on Cardiff Rd) for a time, then lived at East Downs cottage, St Hilary. Between 1908 and 1910, Mary and Daniel lived at Church Cottage, Aberthin, where two of their children were born. In the 1930s, after Daniel's death, Mary worked as housekeeper to Mr. Crockett, vicar of St Hilary. She died two weeks after her 81st birthday in 1952. Her children adored her, and apparently, Daniel Raymond was equally loved by them all, even those who weren't his by blood. Glyndwr, Carla's grandfather, cried for weeks after Mary died and he was 52 at the time.

The family story was that Mary's husband, William, returned home later than all the other Yeomanry from the Boer War, and on finding Mary living as another man's wife, he disappeared from the scene. He met two of his sons by chance in their adult years, introduced himself as their father, then disappeared again. He apparently died in the Bridgend and Cowbridge Union Workhouse, Quarella Road, Bridgend. His second eldest son, Bill, paid for his burial but no-one seems to know where he was buried.

One of Margaret Thomas's sons (John 'Jack' Thomas) owned a house called Hillside in Aberthin, next door to Ivydene (it was originally the stables for Ivydene and was converted into a house by David Thomas). Carla's grandfather, David Glyndwr Thomas and his family lived at Hillside from about the mid 1930s to the early 1970s, and for some years cared for 'Uncle Watkin' there. Watkin was one of Margaret's other sons (not William Watkin). David Glyndwr's daughter Maureen (Carla's mother) said Watkin was unmarried, very fat and had 'dropsy'. He was already living at Hillside when the family went there to look after him but seems to have died soon after that.

David Thomas married a Cecilia. He died 16th December 1867, leaving six children – William, Morgan, David, Thomas, Edmund and Daniel. William died in February 1871, unmarried;

Morgan Thomas, describing himself in his will of 1880 as a butcher, brewer and publican of the Cowbridge Arms, died on July 11th 1881 of injuries when robbers stole the gold he was carrying to buy land in Little Rock, Arkansas, USA. His death is recorded on his gravestone in Saron Congregational Chapel in Treoes. He left his estate (including the Cowbridge Arms) to his wife Margaret, and in 1891, Margaret was residing there; her brother David was at Treseison, St Mary Hill, a carpenter; brother Thomas at Ty Candy, St Mary Hill; brother Edmund at Woodside, near Aberdeen, a draper; and brother Daniel at Dan y Lan, St Mary Hill, a farmer.

In 1905, David was innkeeper of the Nantymoel Hotel, Ogmore Valley.

Margaret's son, William Edgar Thomas was at the Cowbridge Arms, Margaret having died there on May 22nd 1900.

Carla's maternal grandparents were Maud (nee Miles) and Glyn Thomas, who lived at Church Cottage, St Hilary from about 1925. Her mother Maureen was born there on 31st January 1928. The family then moved to 1 The Causeway, Llanblethian about 1930, and in about 1939 moved again to Hillside, Aberthin to look after a disabled cousin Watkin Thomas, whose brother John owned the house. Maud and Glyn lived at Hillside till the mid 1960s, Glyn's brother Thomas Thomas having meanwhile bought the house from Watkin's brother.

Grandmother Maud had a sister Ann who married Bert David (featured in '*Cowbridge on Film*' DVD *carrying the mace*) and they lived at Church Cottage, Llanblethian, next to the General Picton pub in the early 1920s. By 1928 they were living at 5 Westgate in Cowbridge, and then moved to a cottage across the street at the 'Pelican' towards the Bear.

Another sister Sarah Blanche (Miles) lived with husband William Baker at Kingscombe Cottage, Llanblethian at about the same time. William Baker worked at Crossways hospital, and was also caretaker for Llanblethian church. He chose his burial plot in the churchyard whilst working there!

***Carla's grandfather Glyn Thomas was born at Llanquian farm, Aberthin in June 1900.*

The Miles side of her family :

Carla's great-grandparents, David and Angelina Miles, lived in the Malt House, Llanblethian until 1913, and then Rock House, Cowbridge. They had nine children and Carla has an autobiography written by her great-uncle Arthur (one of their sons) covering the first 30 years of his life in those places.

Carla's grandmother, Maud Thomas (nee Miles) had an older brother David Miles who died in action in World War I, aged 17, on May 9th 1915 at Richebourg, St Vast, France. He had enlisted in the Royal Sussex regiment on September 4th 1914, and is commemorated on the war memorial at Le Touret.

He was born 15th December 1897 in Cadoxton, Barry, but around 1900 the family moved to Dinas Powis, first at 22 Railway Terrace and in 1906 at Springfield House, just down the road. He went to Dinas Powis school. He was a very popular boy, whose treasured possession was a Raleigh bicycle, which he spent hours cleaning. He also loved playing the mouth organ, could play a tune well, and would sit playing outside local pubs, gathering a crowd very quickly.

In about 1911, he worked for a farmer Mr Jones at his farm 'Ysguborgoch' in Dinas Powis, then in 1912 Mr Jones moved to Hollybush Farm, Cowbridge and David went to live there. His mother missed him so much the whole family moved in early 1913 from Dinas Powis to Rock House, Cowbridge to be near him. The next move of the family was to The Malt House in Llanblethian, and it was from there that David joined up in 1914.

Carla's paternal grandfather, William Arthur Baskerville, was Cowbridge postmaster about 1948, she believes. Her mother Maureen married Gordon Russell Baskerville in June 1950, and they moved to 1 Aberthin Rd, Cowbridge. Carla and her twin sister were born there in May 1952, and then they all moved to Sussex in 1954.

Information from Randolph Thomas (written in 2006 to Jeff Alden from Bushey, Herts.) *Randolph lived at Ivydene, Aberthin :*

Small photo family group is of Mr Thomas Thomas of Ty-Candy Farm, St Mary Hill. He was the brother of Randolph Thomas's grandfather, Morgan Thomas of the Cowbridge Arms. His second cousin, Margaret Rees of Laleston, gave him the photo.

Family group of Margaret Thomas – The three on the extreme right (vertically) are unknown, though possibly the bottom lady is Mary Williams, Margaret's half-sister. The man at the top right may be one of the two of Randolph's father's brothers. One of the brothers is not in the group – Randolph does not know their names. They both joined a Canadian unit to fight in the Great War and both were killed. Randolph's father tried to get their names put on the Cowbridge War Memorial as they were born local men, but a man called Yorwerth (a town mayor) refused as they joined up in Canada.

Family group photo of Mrs Morgan Thomas and family, thought to have been taken at the Cowbridge Arms about 1890. (Her husband Morgan had died in the USA in 1881 after being mugged).

The military group (chs 01831)– is of David Thomas, colour sergeant, standing on the left-hand side of the photograph, in the Glamorgan Yeomanry It was taken in the grounds of Penllyne Castle about 1900.

Information from Alice Ryan of Newport, Gwent in 1986 :

Photograph of her father, William Edgar Thomas (1873 – 1937) holding a gun, ca 1901. He was publican of the Cowbridge Arms at that time. *This information on the back of the photograph.*

Alice Ryan was born 1912 and died 2005.

*** William and Elizabeth Thomas.**

Information from Mrs Barbara Morgan, great granddaughter of William Thomas (2), to Jeff Alden ca 2006 :

William Thomas (1) was born Bassaleg about 1808; he married Susanna Williams at Ystradowen on 28th April 1831. In 1851, aged 43, he was a butcher/farmer of 13 acres. In 1881, he was farming 97 acres at Prisk. The couple had eight children between 1833 and 1850.

Their third child was William Thomas (2), born Prisk 1838. His first wife was Elizabeth David (1838 - ?1874) from Great House, Aberthin. In 1871, they were living in Aberthin, probably in a house where The Orchard houses are today. Their six children were Mary born 1861 and Susanna born 1863 (probably in Prisk), Thomas born 1866 in Ystradowen, William born 1869 and David born 1871 (probably in Aberthin), and Elizabeth born 1874 at Ty Isha, Welsh St Donats.

This last Elizabeth married David Morgan, who worked for his uncles at Ffistla farm, Penlline and at Church farm, Ystradowen. According to David Morgan himself, it was when driving the milk cart from Church farm to Cowbridge that he 'first cast eyes upon the fair Elizabeth from Great House'.

Perhaps the mother Elizabeth died in childbirth or soon after.

William (2) then married Catherine Evans on April 29th 1878, and in 1881 was probably living in Sweetings, Aberthin. In 1884, he bought the Great House from the Castell y Mynach estate.

WAH Fisher, who lived in the Great House much later (a local historian) said that William, who had a stammer, was a butcher with a stall in Cardiff market. His wife apparently, on finding the panelling in the Long Parlour rotten, had it removed, and also the carved over-mantel, and possibly also destroyed tapestries in the house. William (2) died in 1901, leaving wife Catherine £1117-15-4d. They are buried together at Ystradowen.

Document produced and typed by B. Alden 2016 from various notes provided by the Morgan/Thomas families. The Thomas family of the Cowbridge Arms is linked by the marriage of William Edgar Thomas to the David/Russell families of the Westgate Inn (chs 01848).