

# **CILYCWYM AS I REMEMBER IT OVER THE LAST 70 YEARS**

By

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**(Written between 1986 – 1987)**

Cilycwm is a small village about three miles north of Llandovery, situated in the north-eastern corner of the old county of Carmarthenshire (now part of Dyfed). The village stands on the river Gwenlais which runs into the Towy about a mile south of the village. The village and the surrounding farms were once part of the “Neuadd Fawr” Estate, whose then owner, Mr Campbell Davys, sold it in its entirety in 1941 because he feared a German victory in Europe. It was the best day’s work the farmers and villagers ever had when they bought their own homes. Since 1941 the farms have been improved and brought up to date: now that they own their own farms it’s an incentive for the farmers to spend money on new buildings and farm the modern way. The cottages have been modernised and look attractive. Most of the cottages have English names, a legacy of their original owners, the Campbell Davys family. Seventy years ago it was a Welsh village, but now there are not many of us left.

I hope to present a record of all the cottages in Cilycwm and of the various people who have lived in them during my lifetime. I start at the northern end of the old village with a cottage names “Clifton House”.

## **Clifton House**

My first memory is of an old lady, a Mrs Evans living there alone. When she died, her daughter, Jane Jones, and her two children, Tommy and Nellie moved in. Nellie was a very good dress maker and took apprentices in to learn the trade. Of these, I recall Olwen Lewis of Llandovery, who was followed by Eileen Davies of “Derw House” Cilycwm, now living in Lampeter. I also remember Maggie Morgan, now living in Caio. Their apprenticeships lasted three years and until Nellie moved to Llandovery they were not paid. Tommy worked in a garage in Llandovery and died young.

After this Dai Llewelyn and his wife lived there for a few years. Dai worked with the horses on the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate. They then moved to "Glanrnosan" to live. The next occupants were Mr Harley Morgan, his wife, and family, having moved here from "Plas-yr-Ardd".. Harley worked on the roads for the council but was also an exceptionally clever salmon poacher. Maggie, his wife, was the village school cleaner and she also cleaned the village church. They had seven children who have now all moved from the village. One of the children, Phillip, has died. In 1954 Mr and Mrs Morgan moved to No. 4 "Rhyd-gwenlais", one of the council houses in the village.

In 1941 Mr L. C. Hill bought "Clifton House" as well as the adjoining two cottages – "Rock House" and "Wyrddol Cottage" (see below) – from Mr Campbell Davys when his estate was out on the market. At the same time he also purchased "Cwmmercnon" Farm, the fishing rights over a stretch of the Tywi and the shooting rights to grouse on Mynydd Mallaen. These cottages were then sold to Mr & Mrs Davi Dicks, with their son, Dai Dicks later buying "Clifton House" and the fishing rights; these latter were later sold to Colonel Tempest.

Mr Dicks still owns the house but he has rented it out over many years. Firstly, to Mr & Mrs Cross and their young son; Mr Cross worked in the local forestry, and their second son was born whilst they were living in Cilycwm. However, they did not stay in Cilycwm long before emigrating to Australia. The next tenants were Ben and Olwen Morgan, whose second and third children were born whilst they were living at "Clifton House". They then moved to a council house just up the road when it was vacated. Since the Morgan family left, "Clifton House" has been rented out as a Summer house.

### **Rock House**

The first occupant during my lifetime was an old lady, Ann Jones, who died when I was very young. She was followed by a Mrs Thomas and her daughter Priscilla who had moved here from a hill farmhouse called "Nant y Difor". After living here for a few years they moved to Llandovery Then a Waggoner who was employed on the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate and his family lived there for a short time. The next occupant was Nurse Morris who lived there for some years before moving to Newton Abbot in Devon.

The next occupants were another nurse, Nurse Williams, her husband, who was a coal miner, and their two sons who lived there for a few years. After the Williams family left, "Rock House" was lived in by Mrs Thomas and her daughter Gwen. Mrs Thomas was the widow of Evan Thomas, the late game keeper on the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate, and Gwen was a teacher in Cilycwm Primary School. Following the death of her mother, Gwen lived alone in "Rock House" for a few years until her death. During the "War" years Mrs Edgar Evans lived there. She then moved to "Llyswen", but died many years ago. Then, for a short time, a man working on the Llyn Brienne dam lived there. The Dicks family, father, mother and son Tom who were retired farmers from "Llwyndina" Farm were the next people to live at "Rock House", having bought the house from L.C. HILL. After his parents died, Tom married and moved in with his wife to "Cwmhouse" – a local smallholding. A Mr and Mrs Britton were the next owners of this cottage, moving here after selling "The Neuadd Arms" (the village pub), and later moving again to Llanwyrtyd Wells. The Britton's sold the house to Mr David and Mrs Annie Mary James, who came to live here after they were married, and whose eldest daughter was born whilst they were living here. Mr and Mrs James now live in "Cwmdynant" Farm and Mrs James's parents, Mr and Mrs Rogers bought the house. Mrs Rogers died about ten years ago and now her father, Mr Will Rogers lives alone in "Rock House".

### **Wyrddol Cottage**

The first occupant during my lifetime was a Mrs. Phillips who lived there until she was very old. Mrs Phillips was the grandmother of Mrs Idwal Davies of Llanwyrtyd. After Mrs Phillips died, Mrs Mary Evans and her family came to live here (having moved from "Waungroeddir", a nearby smallholding which is no longer standing. Mrs Evans lost her husband and daughter, May, during the flu epidemic of 1918. She has a grand-daughter now living in Llansadwrn.

After Mary Evans died and her family moved out, her son Rhys came to live there. He was a cowman at "Neuadd Fawr" Estate. After about four years he married Astrid, a Norwegian working as a cook at "Neuadd Fawr". She was very clever with her hands and crocheted all the curtains for the cottage. She also taught me to knit. They moved when Rhys had a job as a farm bailiff in Cardigan.

They had three children; Lyn, Eric and Andus. The cottage was empty for a few years before David James, who had retired from the Army and worked as a shoemaker, moved there.

### **The Drovers**

As the name suggests this cottage was formerly a public house, with the three cottages just discussed: “Clifton House”, “Rock House” and Wyrddol Cottage” forming stables which belonged to the pub. I first remember it as a private house with about four acres on which the owners kept a cow. This land was then sold to “Mill Farm”, and council houses have since been built on one little field of this land.

I first remember Mr and Mrs Williams and their large family of eight children living in this cottage. Mr Williams, or “Willie Saer”, as we all knew him, worked as a carpenter on the “Neuadd Fawr” Estate (“saer” is the Welsh word for carpenter). Mr Williams also worked as an undertaker as well as being an expert beekeeper. He died many years ago and Alwin, their son, looked after his mother till her death. Alwin worked as a local postman delivering letters to the local farms on bike. Alwin was the last of the Williams’ family to live in “The Drovers”. Two of Alwin’s sisters are still alive: Olive, who lives in Llandrindod Wells, and Enid, who lives in Ystralyfera.

After Alwin’s death, the house was sold to Mr and Mrs David Jones, who had farmed “Dolachddu”. They had a lot of improvements and renovations made to the house. Mrs Jones, however, did not have a long retirement, and Mrs Jones lived there alone until ill health caught up with her, when she returned to live with her daughter at “Dolachddu”.

After that, the cottage was kept as a Summer house for a few years; and then Dutch people lived there for some months. Then the house was sold to the current owner, Miss Jennifer Campbell Davys – daughter of the late Richard Campbell Davys and his wife Jane. Mr Campbell Davys was the last squire of the “Neuadd Fawr” Estate. Miss Campbell Davys is a nurse.

### **The Old Police Station now called "Ty Cornel"**

At one time it was known as "Ty Timothy y Gof", after the then owner, Timothy, a blacksmith by occupation (gof is the Welsh word for blacksmith).

His wife sold the deeds of the house for two shillings and sixpence (about 12p in today's money) without her husband knowing. The side of the house facing "The Drovers Road", or "Heol Llongau", as we know it, had no windows, and this is where the boys used to play ball in the evening. All this was before my time and before the house was first used as a village police station.

My first memory is of Sam Jenkins, a policeman, living there with his wife and large family. He was Methodist and a gifted musician; teaching the young people (including myself) of "Soar Ty Newydd" Chapel to sing. Every year he taught us a cantata which we performed in the Methodist chapel. Mr Jenkins has two children still alive: Elined, a retired district nurse who lives in Pwll (near Llanelli), and Erwid, a retired Income Tax inspector who lives in Brecon. Several policeman and their families, came after Mr Jenkins. In chronological order these were Pc's Rowlands, Thomas, Davies, Fox, another Thomas, Rees (whose son is Dr Hugh Rees and whose daughter Eluned has written a learned Welsh book; both live in Aberystwyth), Hopkins, Phillips (known to us all as Ben 40), yet another C Thomas, followed by :PC Gareth Davies and, finally, PC Lake, whose wife died whilst giving birth to a child. By this time, a new purpose-built police station had been built in the village, so that the house reverted to being a private residence.

The first family not connected with the police force to occupy the house were a Scottish family, the Clealands; father, mother and five children. Mr Clealand worked for the Forestry Commission and they moved to Devon. when Mr Clealand found work there. Then it was sold to Mr and Mrs Neigart of "Abergwenlais" Farm, but they never lived there, and soon sold it to Mr and Mrs Perry who had farmed at "Pen-y-Groes". They had three girls and Mr Perry worked on building the Llyn Brianne dam. They now live in North Wales.

Next came the Rev. Gordon Phillips, after having resigned as Dean of Llandaff in 1971. He was a first class musician and linguist, speaking seven languages. He passed away in 1983.

The house was then sold to Miss Christine Hughes, who is a nurse at an old people's home at Ffairfach. In 1985, Christine married William Theophilus of "Rhiwmallan" Farm, where he now works with his father. In 1986, Christine gave birth to a son, Thomas Christopher.

### **Number 2 Corner House**

The first occupants during my lifetime were a Mr and Mrs Barlow, who lived there with their son Reginald. Mr Barlow was a clog maker. They left for Llandoverly. After that, Dan Theophilus, who worked in the office at the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate, and his wife and daughter moved in. Their son was born while they lived there and after a few years they moved to "Ty Mawr". Next Davi Jones and his wife lived there; Mr Jones had worked as a wood man on the "Neuadd Estate" before his retirement. Mr Jones was a deacon in the local Independent chapel, "Capel y Groes", and a pillar of the movement. He lived alone there for many years after his wife died. He was the grandfather of Mr Bill Williams and Mrs Bessie Walters of Gloucester. No one lived there for many years after he died until Miss Rita Morgan, now Mrs Carl Williams, bought it and name it "Encil". The late Carwyn James used to spend time there writing. The house was then empty for many years until Diana and Michael Jones bought it when they married in 1985. The house has since been sold again to a man from Southampton.

### **Bryngwenlais**

Originally I remember that the house was divided into two halves. In one part of the house lived Mr and Mrs Morgan. Mr Morgan was a tailor – I remember him sitting cross-legged on the table when he was sewing. They had one daughter called Bessie. Mr Morgan was also a deacon in "Capel y Groes", the local Independent chapel. In the other part of the house lived Mrs Thomas, the widow of Enoch Thomas, who had been a gamekeeper at the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate. I always remember her wearing a white lace cap with a violet ribbon. Her daughter, Hilda, worked in a bank in Llandoverly, and her son, Dan, who lived away somewhere, always brought his wife and two sons to spend their holidays in the village.

Later, and up to the present-day, the house has remained a single unit. Mr and Mrs Owen were its first occupants – Dai Owen was a car mechanic on the estate – but they didn't stay there long. They were followed by Mr and Mrs Davies and their daughter Maggie Lizzie. Mrs Davies was in ill health and did not live long; Mr Davies survived her by many years. Maggie Lizzie was the organist in Cilycwm Church for 25 years and she remembered all the history of Cilycwm. After her death in 1982, she bequeathed her lovely Welsh dresser and clock to Abergwili Museum (near Carmarthen).

Presently, a Mrs Ford lived there by herself – she was the headmistress of a private school before retirement. She has one daughter, Sally. Next to “Bryngwelais” there is an old, uninhabited building which was once a house – the last to live there were relatives of the late Carry Phillips. Nowadays it is used to store garden tools by Mrs Galia.

We now leave the main village, which is situated to the west of the Gwenlais river, and go over the bridge that crosses the Gwenlais, travelling along the old “Drovers Road”. The current bridge is the second I remember.

### **The Smithy**

Having crossed the Gwenlais, the Smithy is positioned on the left below road level. The Smithy originally had a thatched roof made from bracken – the same as all the thatch in the district – but it burned down around the turn of the century. It was rebuilt and re-roofed by my grandfather and father in 1906. My father was the last blacksmith to work there, and after he died in 1947, our family kept chickens and hay in the buildings. At one time the Smithy was part of the “Cawdor Estate”, however, early this century, Mr Campbell Davys acquired it.

We kept four or five cows which had to be taken through the village to be milked, as our land – comprising a small-holding of 12 acres (originally part of “Houlbourn” Farm) was situated north of the main village. I was the last member of our family to keep cows. We made butter up until 1942 and after that we just sold some milk wholesale and retail.

The Smithy and land was sold in 1975, the year of my 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday, when I officially retired.

The Smithy was brought by Mr and Mrs Milner from Hitchin, Hertfordshire. They have converted it into a comfortable house whilst preserving the character of the place with, for instance, the original open fireplace being retained. They have also built a leather shop which keeps them very busy.

### **Cae Mawr**

A field, which now belongs to Mr and Mrs Milner, was the site of the “old” village”, comprising a cluster of thatched cottages. It burned down in the same year as the fire of London (1666) – I wonder whether the drovers brought the plague back with them from London! The village was called “Glandwr”, and during very dry summers you can trace the outlines of the foundations of the old buildings.

Across the present-day road (the old “Drovers Road”), was sited “Glandwr Farm”, of which only a part of the wall around the garden of the farm now remains. At one time, Daniel Theophilus and his wife, Jane, lived there; they had two sons, Moses, born in 1792, and David, born in 1799. Records also show that a Mr and Mrs Davies lived here and that Mr Davies died in 1900. Linda Theophilus who lives in America is a direct descendent of the Theophilus family once living in “Glandwr” Farm,.

### **Parish Church Cemetery**

In which many of my forefathers rest. My grandfather forged the iron railings around the cemetery and they are as good as new to this day. The cemetery was extended in 1931 – due to popular demand! – and it now covers what was once the site of an orchard and the sites of two former hay sheds: one belonging to “Glandwr” Shop”, and the other to “Glandwr” farm. Then we come to an outbuilding of “Glandwr” Farm, currently in a state of disrepair.

From the bridge across the Gwenlais looking southward we can see a square-shaped whitewashed building about 50 yards away with a public footpath leading to it. This building was originally a charity school which was started and run by the Rev. Griffith Jones of Llandowror – the school master lived below the school. According to parish records the number of children attending this school during the winter of 1740 and spring of 1741 was 50 and it drew on a wide catchment area covering many miles, with children, of course, making the journey to and from school on foot.



According to local records there was one private school in the parish in 1705. In 1739, Mr Rowland Price of Digoedith founded another private school, with the children being taught by Mr Thomas Meredith, a curate. Later, in 1748 another school was founded by Mr Rowland Price to teach the poor boys the catechism. According to these records there was no public school in the village in 1759, but there were some private schools besides the free school. On his death Mr Rowland Price bequeathed 3 pounds per annum for the support of a charity school, which sum was regularly paid by his representative. This charity school, the “Scoldy Fach” as we all know it, was renovated as a project by the local “Young Farmers” club. It was opened on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1980 with a tea party. It is now used as a meeting place for the church and as a youth club with the room below it being a games room.

### **Y Bont (Glandwr)**

This house once formed part of Lord Cawdor’s Estate. At the time of the drovers, it was a public house with a cellar extending beneath the current road. This cellar has now been blocked up.

My first recollection is of Davi Davies living there (his real surname was Theophilus but he changed it to Davies; however, we knew him as “Davi Bont”). He and his sister – married to John Evans, a school master – both worked on “Glandwr” Farm. When John Evans retired as school master, he and his daughter, Ray, moved from the school house to live at “Y Bont” (Mrs Evans had already died). After John Evans died, Ray lived for some years alone in the house, before moving to live with her brother, Evan Oliver, who was a teacher at Llandovery County School.

The next occupants were Tom and Elizabeth Price and her daughter from a previous marriage. Tom kept himself busy: being a country postman; running a local taxi service; as well as farming the land that went with the house, with the help of his wife and step-daughter. On retiring they moved to Llandovery, where the daughter – now Mrs Worthington – still lives. After them, Dan Jones and his wife bought the farm. They lived here for many years and following the death of her husband, Mrs Jones farmed here alone until she retired to Llandovery. She is 91 this year and has now moved to live with her son and his family in Llangammarch Wells.

Nowadays Mr and Mrs Jones “Divlyn” live in “Y Bont” – they used to farm “The Divlyn”. The land accompanying this house (about 13 acres) was added to the land that belonged to “Holbourn” (about 5 acres), to form the current 19 acres of “Glandwr”; now farmed by their sons Walter and Emrys.

### **Glandwr Shop**

I first remember Isaac Morgan and his wife, Annie, running this shop. They sold groceries, china and animal feedstuffs, with the latter being stored in the old warehouse over the road. They also had a smallholding of a few acres just south of the village (which has since been built on), where they kept a pony and a few dry cows. Mr and Mrs Morgan had one daughter, Bessie – she was headmistress of Cwrtycadno C.P. School up until its forced closure in the early 1970’s Bessie was a proud “Welshman”, being a lover of all things to do with Wales and its culture, and she was also a warden of St. Michael’s Church.

After Isaac Morgan died, Lizzie Williams (Mrs Morgan’s sister) moved in with them and ran the shop on her own. However when Mrs Williams died the shop was closed. Bessie (living in Cwrtycadno) used the house as a weekend home and when she finished teaching she moved back to “Glandwr” Shop and lived there until her death in 1980.

In 1981 the shop was sold to Mrs Cavanagh. At present, her mother, Mrs Galla (originally from Oxford) lives there.

### **Derw House**

The first occupants during my lifetime were Davi Davies, his wife Elin, and their granddaughter Eileen. Davi “Derw House” as we knew him was a road man. He and his wife died many years ago and Eileen lived there on her own – working as a dressmaker from home – until she married and moved to Lampeter. She is now a widow. After Eileen left, Mrs Reed, a retired cook from Neuadd Fawr, came to live here, but she did not stay long. Following her, Mr and Mrs Woodford and their son Ken lived here for a few years and then Mr John Davies and his wife Maggie and four children moved here, having made the short trip literally across the road – where they had lived at “Lamb Shop”.

John Davies worked as a road man and met his death in most unusual circumstances – on his way home from work one day he was knocked down and killed by his own brother. Mrs Davies lived a long time but became an invalid in her old age. She was cared for by her son Gwyn who had to give up his work in the local forestry plantations because of ill health. Ironically he died a little before his mother, but his two brothers are still alive.

Then the house was bought by Mr and Mrs Fink, who had lived at “The Grange” in Llandovery. Since the house was bought needing some repair work, they lived in a council house owned by Robert and Dilys Lewis whilst the necessary repair work was being carried out. Unfortunately Mr Fink did not enjoy the fruition of this work as he died only three weeks after having moved in, and Mrs Fink now lives there alone.

### **No. 2 Church Street (Hafan)**

My first memory is of Thomas Hughes living there, he was a cobbler by profession and lived and worked in the same room. I always remember him having a very dark complexion because of his work. Despite a certain lack of personal cleanliness perhaps, his religious convictions were unquestionable, being a stalwart of this Methodist movement, and he was proudly awarded a medal of recognition for his excellent attendance record at Sunday School.

In more recent years, Mr and Mrs Britton from the “Neuadd Arms” bought the house and renovated it. Following them, Johnnie Morgan came to live here. He was a roadman who had previously lived at “Dinasbach” Farm, Rhandirmwyn. It was in memory of this, probably, that he renamed the house “Dinas”. Johnnie was also a keen follower of sheep dog trialling. After his death, Wyn and Rhian Morgan moved in after they were married. Their two daughters were born whilst they were living here. They have now moved to Llandovery, where Wyn runs a fish and chip shop – carrying on his father’s business – and Rhian is a hairdresser. The house was sold to Rev. Goronwy Wyn, a Baptist minister of seven chapels in the district. He lives here with his wife and son and they have renamed the house “Hafan”.

### **Lisburn House**

The first occupants during my lifetime were Mr and Mrs Evan Phillips and their two children, Bronwen and Jack. Another daughter, Gwyneth, was born later.

Mr Phillips was a carpenter and he also worked as an insurance agent. In 1923 he became the village sub-postmaster, a position which he held up until his retirement in 1942. After Mr Phillips died, his wife lived there alone for a few years before moving to live with her daughter, Gwyneth, in Llanwrtyd Wells. Bronwen, who is now a widow, lives in Glyn Neath, and Jack, a retired teacher, lives in Swansea.

The house was sold in 1965 to Miss Edith Evans, who moved here from "Llwynnelig" (a local smallholding).

### **St. Michael's Church: (Eglwys Sant Mihangel)**

According to "The Inventory of Ancient Monuments" (Carmarthenshire, vol. 5, p. 16) the south aisle was added to the building in the fifteenth century. The walls of the aisle have traces of mural paintings. These include depictions of Moses pointing to the tablets into which the Ten Commandments have been inscribed, on the south wall of the aisle, and depictions of death on the west wall – where the murals are best preserved. These murals were discovered, quite by chance, when large mural tablets which had concealed them were removed in 1906 as part of the church restoration programme. One of the wall tablets from the south wall is dated at 1724. In 1985 the church was renovated once again, with the work being carried out under the job creation scheme. In my opinion, a good job was done in the restoration of the floor, but I think the murals have been spoilt since they have lost their antiquity. The Church also has stained glass windows, with one window depicting "The Last Supper" as painted by Leonardo de Vinci, and another depicting the parable of "The Good Samaritan". Another interesting fact is that the yew tree at the back of the Church is older than the Church building itself.

There is much more that could be written about the history of the Church building itself, but I will instead concentrate on the history of the parish vicars during this century. One of the best-loved was the Rev. D. T. Davies, who was the vicar during the Church's restoration in 1906. He and his wife visited every farm and cottage in the parish.

A collection was made within the parish to pay for the renovations in 1906 and I wonder whether anyone has a record of it? – as it would be most interesting. The next vicar was the Rev. Evan Jenkins, who was married with two children. He was inducted on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1914. Their daughter, Caroline helped at home, and their son worked in a bank. In addition, the family also farmed a few acres. They were resident in Cilycwm during the great flu epidemic of 1918 when Mrs Jenkins helped out by taking baskets of food to those families that were confined to their beds. Rev. Jenkins and his family stayed in Cilycwm for many years before moving to Llanybyther. They were replaced by Re. Arch and his wife, and their only daughter being born whilst they were in Cilycwm. Mrs Arch formed a “Women’s Guild” which was held at the Scoldy Fach. Rev. Arch and his wife took no interest in farming and during their stay they rented out the land which went with the vicarage to Mr and Mrs Harris of “Penstacan” Farm.

The next vicar was the Rev. Emrys Thomas, who stayed in Cilycwm for many years. During his stay he was made a Canon and then a Rural Dean. Rev. Thomas was a great lover of amateur dramatics and we, the local parishioners, performed many plays under his directorship. The play which I have fondest memories of was a Welsh drama called “Pen y Daith” – which we performed in all the surrounding villages. On retiring, Rev. Thomas and his wife moved to live near Llandeilo; both have since passed away many years ago.

Next came the Rev. Malcolm Davies with his wife and two children. It was during this time at Cilycwm (about four years) that “Scholdy Fach” was repaired and the Lady chapel was built? The latter was presented by Mr and Mrs Hedly Thomas, in memory of their daughter Eleri who had been tragically killed in a road accident on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1972 at the tender age of 15 – after Eleri’s death Mr and Mrs Thomas moved from “Penstacan” Farm to Llandoverly. Also presented in memories of loved ones were the carpet in the far aisle – by Mr and Mrs Jones of “Gilwen” Farm in memory of their baby daughter who died of cot death – and the current organ – by Mr John Jones of Aberdynant, in memory of his parents and brother.

The next vicar was the Rev. David Lloyd – he was unmarried when he first came to Cilycwm and he married during his time in the village. However, Rev. Lloyd and his newlywed did not remain long before moving to The Oman in the Middle East.

Our present vicar, the Rev. Alan Kettle, combines the post of vicar of “Saint Michael’s”, Cilycwm with being the chaplain of Llandoverly College and being pries in charge of “Saint Barnabus”, Rhandirmwyn, “Saint Paulinus”, Ystradffin, and “Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn”, Cynghordy. Rev. Kettle is married with three sons.

### **The Neuadd Arms**

The only public house in the village. Mr and Mrs Lewis Roderick and their family lived here when I was born. As well as being a publican, Mr Roderick was also an estate manager at “Neuadd Fawr”. He died of flu during the epidemic of 1918; leaving his wife, Mary and daughter, May, to carry on running the pub. They also had a small holding (which now belongs to Miss Lloyd of “Brynllan”) on which they grazed two or three cows – selling the milk in the village and making some butter. May was one of four children; her only brother, Rhys, died young, and she and her two sisters, Annie and Lily, lived at home with their mother. Mrs. Roderick died in 1939. In 1946 Lily married Mr Tom Roberts; the couple emigrated to South Africa and lived there for 25 years before returning to Cilycwm for their retirement – they lived at “Ty Mawr”. Annie and May Roderick, who had been running “The Neuadd Arms” between them, then sold the pub to Mrs Plumton and her son, and moved in to live with Tom and Lily at “Ty Mawr”.

In time, Mrs Plumton married Mr Ted James of “Bwlch-y-Ffin” Farm and moved to live with him. She sold the pub to Mr and Mrs George Williams, they in turn sold it to Mr. R. Britton and family who kept a shop in the coach house. When the Britton’s left, they sold the fields which went with the pub to Miss Lloyd of “Brynllan”. The pub was next sold to Mr and Mrs Davy and their daughter who lived in the coach house which had been turned into a flat. They in turn sold the pub to Mr Moore who lived there with his family. The next owners were Mr and Mrs Lee, they sold the pub to its present owners, but having sold the orchard for building. The present owners are Mr and Mrs Walsh who live there with their two daughters. Mr and Mrs Lee now live in a new bungalow just to the south of the main village. All in all, there have certainly been a great many changes of ownership in my lifetime.

The building which served originally as the stables to the pub has had an interesting history. Currently, this building is used as a grocery shop by the Walsh family.

When the Davy family lived here, it served as a bungalow, first for their daughter, Marian and, after she left, for Mr Davy's mother – she always had a parrot on her shoulder when she walked around the village. The building was then used as a shop both by Mr and Mrs Britton and by the Williams' family.

At the side of the stables there used to be a mounting block, but this has gone many years ago. Also in Cilycwm on either side of the road there is a gutter, but in front of the "Neuadd Arms" this gutter is in the shape of a trough where they used to put butter milk for the geese to drink on their journey to England, (along the drovers road?). Across the road from the "Neuadd Arms", at the side of "Ty Mawr", was the hay shed belonging to the pub – when the stables were in use. Behind the original hay shed there was a garden which belonged to Davi Jones, and in later years to Evan Phillips. All this has now gone and it is now a paddock. Also, at the back of "Ty Mawr" there are two little cottages in disrepair, but I don't remember anyone living in either of them.

### **Ty Mawr**

The original name of "Ty Mawr" was "Gwaelod Pentre". The first person I remember living here was an old lady everyone knew as Dr Jones. She made ointments and medicines from herbs, and her niece, Mary Ann Jones, the post woman, lived with her. At this time, the house had a thatched roof made from bracken. After Mrs Jones died, there were major repairs made to the house; these included a new non-thatched roof. Miss Jones then went to live at "Capel Groes".

Next, Dan Theophilus (a relation of mine) his wife and family moved here from "Corner House". He became steward at "Neuadd Fawr" Estate after Lewis Roderick's death. Mr and Mrs Theophilus had two children – Connie who is a retired teacher living in Shrewsbury, and her brother, Eric, who lives not far from her. They moved when they bought a shop in Clee Hill, in Shropshire, and the next occupants were a Scottish couple, Mr and Mrs Richie – Mr Richie worked on the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate. During their short stay in Cilycwm, Mrs Richie gave birth to a daughter.

The Mr and Mrs Thomas and their two sons came to live here – Mr Thomas was a farm bailiff on the "Neuadd Fawr" Estate – but they also left after a few years.

However, one of their sons, David, still lives locally in a caravan sited on the land of "Ochr-y-Fforest" Farm. Next, Mr and Mrs Gray and family lived here until he was called up to the RAF. The house was then sold to Mr and Mrs Morgan, who lived here for some years before moving to farm near Llandeilo. Then Mr and Mrs Davies and their daughter, retired farmers from "Pantygaseg" Farm, near Myddfai, bought "Ty Mawr" and came to live here. After her parents died, the house was sold by Miss Davies when she married, moving to live in Llangadog. Then Mr Tom Roberts and his wife Lily bought the house.

In 1973, Lily and Tom returned from South Africa to "Ty Mawr", he did not live long however, dying in 1974. May died in 1976 and following this Annie went to a home in Llandrindod in 1980. She has since died.

In February 1983, Lily went to a residential home in Swansea called "The Old Vicarage", a private home. She is still there and "Ty Mawr" is on the market.

### **Llys-Wen**

I first remember this house being owned by Mr and Mrs Davies; they also owned and lived in the Old Post Office (next door). At this time Mr Davies's mother lived here, having moved from a local smallholding called "Glancroyddir". After Mr Davies's mother died, Miss Jones – a sister of Mr Rhys Jones of "Lamb Shop" – lived here until her death. Next Mrs Edgar Evans moved here from "Rock House" with her daughter, Mrs Enid Common. After Mrs Evans died, Miss Jane Davies came to live in "Llys Wen" (having left "Rhydfelen" when her brothers died) and spent the rest of her life here. She was followed by Mr & Mrs Page, who moved in after they were first married and later moved to live in Llandovery. Presently, Mr and Mrs James live here; they are retired farmers. The house is owned by Mr Ken Williams, who had inherited it from Mr and Mrs Davies in late 1940.

### **The Old Post Office**

I originally remember Mr and Mrs Evan Davies living here and running the post office. As well as the post office business, they also sold groceries and some clothes. The post office was also the location of the only public telephone in the area before public telephones were installed in the post offices at Rhandirmwyn and Porthyrhyd.



I remember telegrams being delivered by Evan “Bach” of “Ty Cross”, later by Alwyn of “The Drovers” Inn and also by Rhys of “Lamb Shop”. In addition to the post office work, Mr Davies was also a gardener at “Neuadd Fawr”. Mr and Mrs Davies also had a small holding of about 25 acres called “Waungroeddir” where they kept a few cows for milking. This milk was then carried across four fields to the post office where they used the milk to make butter. Originally these fields were part of “Neuadd Fawr” Estate, but in 1941 they were bought by Mr and Mrs Davies when the estate was sold off. After Mr Davies died, Mrs Davies carried on on her own in the post office but rented the “Waungroeddir” fields.

She gave up the post office in 1923 but kept running shop. When she died, Mr Ken Williams inherited the property and he closed the shop. Mr Williams rented the property to Evan Davies and his wife, who moved here from Llandovery. They re-opened the shop, but had little success and so gave it up. Presently, Mr Davies, who works for the council as a road man lives here alone; Mrs Davies having passed away.

### **Pentre Cottage**

A small derelict house behind the old Post Office.

### **Ty Cross**

My first recollection is of Mr and Mrs Thomas living here with their three children, a son and two daughters. Mr Thomas was a Waggoner on the “Neuadd Fawr” Estate and was known to us all as “Wil Du”. He died when I was young and his family then moved away. The next occupant was Miss Mary Ann Jones – having moved here from “Ty Mawr” after her aunt died. Miss Jones was a post woman and walked many miles each day on her round, she moved to “Pentre House” when it became vacant. After her, a Miss Mary Ann Davies, who had previously lived with her brother at “Blaindyffryn” Farm, came to live here. After she died, Nurse Cox and her husband lived here for a few years before moving to “Glanrhosan” (about a mile north of Cilycwm) and they were followed by Mr and Mrs Will Walters and their daughter Margaret; they had moved here from “Pen-y-Banc” (a local smallholding). Mr Walters worked in the local forestry and Mary Walters was the school cook. They later moved to “Pentre House”, and the house was then rented by Mr Tom Williams, a retired farmer from ~”Cwmdynant” Farm, who lived here on his own.

Since Mr Williams's death the house has not been lived in, however, the ground floor is currently being used as a studio where Mrs Iliff teaches the piano.

**The Vestry** above is used for services during the winter and for some meetings; it is very comfortable. Every year a Christmas party is held in the vestry, with a wonderful spread of food being made by the members of the Chapel. A few guests are invited and gifts are given to the few children who attend the Chapel (only one last year).

### **Capel-yGroes**

An Independent Chapel which was built in 1859 and an exact replica of a building of that period. Another feature of this building is that it has always been painted pink.

The first Minister I can recall was Mr Harris. He lived in Cynghordy where he was also the Minister of the Independent Chapel there ("Bethel"). He used to walk all the way from Cynghordy – a distance of about three miles over a hill – to hold a service in the afternoon at "Capel-y-Groes", after the service he had tea with Miss Morgan of "Green Lodge" and then he would walk back to hold an evening service in Cynghordy. He never missed a Sunday irrespective of the weather or his state of health and many-a-time he was soaked to the skin.

There have been other Ministers since Mr Harris but I shall not give details.

Currently, the Minister is Mr Hugh Roberts. He lives in Myddfai (about three miles south of Llandovery) and looks after five Chapels in all. The current Deacons are Mr Gwilym Jones, Mrs Madge Davies and Trevor Price. There are 23 members with some being very faithful. In 1984 £720 was raised by the Chapel members towards Oxfam's "Hungry for Change" campaign for the relief of suffering in Ethiopia.

### **Cwm House** (originally a smallholding, nowadays a farm)

I first remember Mr Williams, who had been a shoemaker, and his daughter, Lizzie, living there. They had a smallholding of about 12 acres. After Mr Williams died, Mr Campbell Davies wanted to remove Miss Williams from his property. She obliged by moving in with her sister at "Glandwr shop" after the death of her sister's husband.

The next occupants were Mr and Mrs William George and their daughter, Henwen. She married Tom Dicks and they still farm “Cwm House”. They have one daughter.

### **Pentre House**

I first remember Mrs Rees living here – she was the mother of Mrs Roderick who kept “The Neuadd Arms”. After her death, Mr and Mrs Hill and their family, then two children, moved here. Two more children, Christy and Mavis, were born at “Pentre House”.

Mrs Hills’ sister, Miss George, also lived with them and helped look after the family. Mr Hill was a huckster, buying farm produce locally and taking it to be sold in Swansea market. They also ran a car taxi service – running the village children to Llandovery school. They then moved to “Lamb House” as it was a larger house. All of Mr and Mrs Hill’s children are still alive and are living in different parts of Wales.

When the Hill family left, Miss Mary Ann Jones came to live here, having moved from “Ty Cross” – as stated earlier, Miss Jones was the village post woman and she lived alone. When Miss Jones got old she went to live with her niece. The house was then sold to Mrs Jones, who used to live at “Penlan” Farm, but she never lived in the house and sold it to Mr and Mrs Will Walters. Mr Walters did not live for long after having moved here and Mrs Walters – who was the school cook – lived alone until her son-in-law (a forester) died, when her only daughter, Margaret Copley, and her two children, Marian and Gareth, came back to live with her.

### **The Village Green**

This land belongs to “Lamb House” and on this site at one time there stood a house called “Ty Mawr” – known locally as “The Barracks”. It was a large house where four families lived (hence its nickname). I can only remember the chimney stack. Also on this plot of land stood the village water stand pipe from which a constant flow of water always ran. It was removed when, after testing the water, it was found to be not fit for human consumption.

Nowadays the part of the land where the water stand pipe once stood forms the yard of “Pentre House”. The village telephone kiosk is situated on another part of the original plot, where two bushes donated by the local “Womens Institute” also stand.

### **Lamb House**

This house once formed part of the “Abergwenlais” Estate, but this was before I was born. My first memory is of Rhys Jones, his wife and their four children living there. Mr Jones was a shoemaker, hence his popular name of “Rhys Crydd”. When I was at school I wore boots made by Mr Jones; they were very hard and long-wearing but not very good for one’s feet. The Jones family also had a few acres of land where they kept two cows. The cow shed was next to the shed where Rhys Crydd worked (called the “shop waith”). Their fields were on the road to “Ty Newydd”, now part of “Y Felin” Farm, and the cows had to be taken through the village for milking.

Mr Jones carried all the hay in a barrow from the hay shed which was located in a field about a quarter of a mile away.

Mr Jones died before his wife, and after Mrs Jones died, one of their daughters, Annie, lived on in the house. One of Annie’s sisters, Jane, had died young; her other sister, Maggie, was a teacher in Pontypool; and her only brother, Willie, kept a draper’s shop (Jones and Richards) in Blackwood, Gwent. During Annie’s period in the house, the Rev. Emrys Evans, the Methodist Minister, was a lodger there. She became the village post mistress in 1942 when Mr Phillip retired, a position which she held until retiring in 1972. Since her retirement we have not had a post office in the village. Annie spent the last years of her life, between 1980 and 1985, in an old peoples’ home in Llandybie.

When Annie went to Llandybie the house was then sold to Mr and Mrs Osbourn, who moved here with their two children from “Tal Ebolion” (a bungalow just outside the main village). They kept a grocer’s shop for a short time, but because business was not good they closed the shop and moved to Llandovery in 1983. After a period of being empty for a few years the house has now been bought by Mrs Linda Neighbour. She is a hairdresser and has one son. Her father and mother live in Rhandirmwyn.

### **Lamb Shop**

The first person I remember living here was Mr Daniel Jones (I don’t remember his wife). Mr Jones was a huckster, collecting butter and eggs in the district – which extended as far as Rhandirmwyn.

He used a horse and a small gambo for local transport by which he took the produce to Llandovery and thence by train to Swansea market where he kept a stall. During the summer months he took passengers in his gambo as far as Lampeter (about 20 miles away) to connect with the train to Aberaeron. These passenger holidaymakers would generally stay a week in Aberaeron after which he would collect them from Lampeter station for the return journey to Cilycwm. The passengers' journey to and from Lampeter was hardly without incident – they had to get off the cart and help push the cart up every hill. You can imagine the long haul up to the “Mountain Inn” at about 1,000 feet above sea level!

Mr and Mrs Jones had about six acres of land situated on the other side of the road from the school. On this land they kept two cows and a pony – the cows were led through the village for milking in the shed at the back of the house (where there was also a stable for the pony). This milk was then used to make butter. Some of this land has since been built upon.

Mr and Mrs Jones had two daughters, Maggie and Annie. The first to marry was Annie; she married Willie, who was a son of “Pantybryn” Farm and they moved away to live. They had a son, Hedly, and a daughter, Betty. Hedly, was brought up at “Lamb Shop”.

Maggie married another local farmer's son, Tom Harris of “Dolachddu”. In October 1931, Tom and Maggie Harris moved to live at “Penstacan” Farm, taking Hedly (Annie's son) with them – Daniel Jones had died a few years before this – at the same time Mr and Mrs Williams, who had lived at “Penstacan” Farm moved to “Lamb Shop” in some kind of exchange. However, Mr and Mrs Williams only spent about two years in the village before selling the house to Mr and Mrs Hill, who moved here with their children from “Pentre House” because it was a larger property and because Mr Hill had bought Mr Jones's business when he retired. Their daughter, Heather, was born whilst they were living at “Lamb Shop”.

“Lamp Shop” was the gathering place for all the young boys of the village on a Saturday whilst the Hill family were living there.

After the Hill family left, Mr and Mrs Davies from “Efail Fach” (a nearby smallholding) and their four children lived here for a few years. They were followed by Mrs Richards, a widow who had lived at “Glandynant” Farm, and her brother Rhys Williams – Rhys died in 1964 and his sister died in 1974. The house was then sold to Dick Peters and his partner, Riska – Mr Peters is a furniture renovator and Riska is a lecturer in Agriculture at Brecon. Between them they repaired a lot of the house; they have since moved to “Glanrhyd Eryd” (a house about a mile south of the village) selling the house to Mr and Mrs Fontenoy, who presently live there with their son.

### **Holborn**

I first recollect Mr Evan Davies, who worked as a road man, living there. Mr Davies was unmarried and his niece, Annie, lived with, and looked after him. They kept a few cows on a smallholding (of about five acres) situated opposite the cemetery – this land is now farmed by the Jones brothers of “Divlyn” Farm and the old farm buildings have long been pulled down. After Mr Davies died, Annie went to live with her sister in Llandovery.

Then Mr & Mrs Gray and family (three daughters) came to live here in 1946. In 1954 they moved to one of the newly-built council houses in the village. Following their departure the house was empty for about two years before Bessie Williams bought it as a retirement home. Bessie was one of the daughters of “Cwmfran” Farm, however, she had spent all of her working life in London – working in a bank. Bessie had the house extended and modernised, and when her brother, Samuel, and sister, Rachel, retired from “Cwmfran”, they came to live with her. After Bessie died (her brother and sister had died before her), the house was then sold to Mrs Jones of “Clyngell” Farm, who presently lives there with her son, Richard.

### **Green Lodge**

I first remember Miss Elinor Morgan living here. She was a dressmaker by profession, and would spend a week or two at any farm that wanted her services. She also took in lodgers – I remember school teachers and district nurses staying here. Miss Morgan lived to a ripe old age. After she died, Mr and Mrs Price of “Penlan” Farm bought the house, but they never lived here, and they then sold it to someone who used it as a holiday home.

However, the house was soon sold to Mr John Gifford, who is an antiques dealer, and who lived in the house on and off for a few years – he spent the winter months in Spain. Mr Gifford is now spending his old age at the “Castle Hotel” in Llandovery and “Green Lodge” looks in a very poor state.

There are two tumble down cottages at the back of “Green Lodge” and “Holborn”.

### **Number 1 New House**

The Theophilus family have lived here for many centuries. The house was built a long time before “Ty Newydd” Chapel (which was built in 1740). It is on record that Hywel Harries, a Methodist Minister, stayed at “New House” 68 times when the Methodist Chapel was formed at Soar “Ty Newydd” (about half a mile east of the main village along “The Drovers Road”). Numbers 1 and 2 “New House” might well have been one house at that time.

All the male Theophilus’s have been Blacksmiths until this generation. Now Dorothea Theophilus (the author of this record) lives on her own in Number 1 “New House”. Her sister, Annie, lives in Llandovery and her other sister, Mary, who was Sister in Charge of the “Amman Valley” Hospital, died in 1980. Her brother, Donald, lives in Cambridge. He worked for the “Ministry of Agriculture” and is now retired.

### **Number 2 New House**

I first remember John Hughes and his family living here. John Hughes was a cow man at the “Neuadd Fawr” Estate, where he worked very long hours - starting at 4:30 a.m. every morning, including Sundays. I remember him as a very learned old man. He had three children: his son, Stephen was in the Life Guards; his daughter, Lizzie, lived at home and, at one time, cleaned the school – she had a son called Cyril who was killed in Burma during the Second World War; his other daughter, Jane, lived in Ffarmers, where she worked in the village post office.

Next, Ken Hughes and his wife lived here for some years; they had two sons. After that, Mr Harry Harries and his aunt, Jane Harries (who was blind) retired here from “Dolgynton” Farm. Harry looked after his aunt until her death – she died at the grand old age of 99. Then Harry lived here on his own, until he couldn’t look after himself and had to go to an old people’s home – he died in early 1980.

In 1986, Mr and Mrs Cropp brought the house and they and their son Matthew moved in just before Christmas 1986. Mr Cropp is a painter and decorator and his wife is a dinner lady in Cilycwm school.

Number 2 “New House” marks the northern end of the old village. We now come to the “new” bungalows, starting with “Ger-y-Dderwen”.

### **Ger-y-Dderwen**

Which was built on one of the mill fields. Miss Lily and Olwen Williams had the bungalow built for them as a retirement home. They were daughters of the late Mr and Mrs Williams of “Cwmfran” Farm, and had spent most of their lives in and around London, where they had both worked as Dispensers. The sisters died within ten months of each other with Lily passing away first.

Now the bungalow has been sold as a retirement home for Mr and Mrs Lander, who are the parents of Mrs Morgan of “Dolachddu” Farm.

### **Pant Bach**

Also built on the same mill fields (and named after the field it stands on), it was originally built as Mr and Mrs Giles’s retirement home. Mr Roy Giles was the son of an editor of the “Carmarthen Journal” and he worked in a London bank. Mrs Mary Giles, who was another daughter of Mr and Mrs Williams of “Cwmfran” Farm, had worked as a nurse in London. Roy Giles did not live for long after moving to Cilycwm, but Mary Giles lived on her own for many years until her sudden death. She was a very useful member of the community: a member of the Parish Council, a hard worker for the W.I. and, generally, always ready to help with any community work.

Following her death, the house was sold to Mr and Mrs Arthur Davies. Arthur Davies sells records all over Wales and his wife, Moira, works in a bank in Llandeilo.



### **Glanaber**

This house has been built on the other side of the road from “Pant Bach” on a field named “Cae yr Efail” – which at one time was part of my smallholding. In 1975, I sold the field, with outline planning permission, to Mr and Mrs Perry. A few years later they sold the field to Mr Billie Lewis, and he built “Glanaber” and the three adjoining bungalows on it.

“Glanaber” was built in 1980 and Mr and Mrs Field bought it – Mr Field was the Manager of the “National Westminster Bank” in Llandoverly. Mr and Mrs Field and their four children were only in Cilycwm for about three years before moving to Bulth Wells. After they left, the house was empty for some time, until Mr and Mrs Crann bought it; when they, their son, and a friend of theirs moved here from Watford.

### **Cae’r Delyn**

This bungalow was bought by Mr and Mrs Tom Marks. Mr Marks teaches Welsh at Llandoverly College and his wife also works there in catering. They have a daughter called Rhiannon.

### **Heol y Tyle**

Mr and Mrs Smith live here, having bought the bungalow when newly-built back in 1981. They are a retired couple from Birmingham.

### **Brynteg**

The bungalow was originally bought by Mr and Mrs Green, who lived here with their four boys. Mr Green was a computer specialist and commuted to work in London every week. They lived in Cilycwm for about three years. They sold their bungalow to Mrs Hopkins, a retired farmer’s widow, and her mother. Mrs Hopkins’s mother died in 1987 and she has since lived there on her own.

### **Council Houses**

There are four council houses in the village. They were built in 1953 on a small field that belonged to “The Drovers” Inn.

#### **Number 4 Rhydgwenlais**

The first occupants were Mr and Mrs Harley Morgan, having moved here from “Clifton House”. Mr Morgan did not live for long but Mrs Morgan lived for many years despite being in generally poor health. She was looked after by her daughter, Rosemary, who had married Dennis Millichap. They have two daughters.

In 1986, Dennis and Rosemary bought the house. However, shortly afterwards they split up, with Dennis moving out. Soon Rosemary moved to Llandovery and sold the house to Mr and Mrs Ardailino who live here with their three young daughters.

#### **Number 3 Rhydgwenlais**

The first occupants were Mr Robert and Mrs Dilys Lewis who moved in when they were married. Both their sons were born whilst they were living there. Robert farmed “Cwmcroyddir” in partnership with Miss Alice Lewis and Dilys was the school cook. When Dilys’s mother had a stroke, Dilys and Robert moved to her parents’ home, “The Mill”, (a farm) so that she could look after her Mother (who died many years ago). Mr and Mrs Lewis had bought No. 2 “Rhydgwenlais” and when Alice Lewis (my step sister) was crippled with rheumatism she came to live here – she died in 1980.

Meanwhile, Mr and Mrs Fink had moved to No. 2 “Rhydgwenlais” while renovation work was being carried out on their own home (“Derw House”). And when their son Martin married, he and his wife came to live here. They have a daughter called Helen.

#### **Number 2 Rhydgwenlais**

The first occupants were Mr and Mrs Tom Harris, who moved to live here after retiring from “Penstacan” Farm. Whilst living here, Mrs Harris suffered a stroke and, after the death of her husband she went to live with her nephew, Hedly Thomas, and his wife back at “Penstacan” Farm.

The next occupants were Mr Ben Morgan, his wife, Olwen and their three children – having moved from “Clifton House”. Ben was a bus driver. Their youngest daughter, Rhian, was born whilst they were living at No. 2. Ben and Olwen have now separated, with Ben living in Llanwrda and Olwen in Llangadog.

Mr and Mrs Oswin Davies and their two sons came to live here in 1978; they have since bought the house. Oswin works on the roads for the County Council and Kathleen is a dinner lady at the local school.

### **Number 1 Rhydgwenlais**

Mr and Mrs Gray were the first to move in after the council houses were built. They had previously lived at "Holborn" and had three daughters. One lives in the north of England and the other two in the Hereford area. Mrs Gray died in 1982 and now Mr Gray lives on his own in the only council-owned house left in the village since the other three have been bought by their tenants.

### **New bungalows built on "The Neuadd Arms" Orchard**

#### **Hen Berllan**

This aptly named bungalow ("berllan" is the Welsh word for orchard) was built as a retirement home for Mr and Mrs Lesley Thomas. However Mr Thomas, who was a Bank Manager, died before they moved in. Mrs Thomas lived here for a few years before moving to Llanelli in 1986. The bungalow was then sold to Mrs Saywood, who lives there on her own. Mrs Saywood is in her eighties and she is the mother of Mrs Pat Crann who lives at "Glanaber".

#### **Next bungalow**

Here Mr and Mrs Walters and their baby daughter live. Mr Walters is a P.E. Teacher at "Pantycelyn" School, Llandovery and Mrs Walters is a supply teacher.

#### **Gelly Wen**

Mrs Pitman and her daughter, Lucy, live here. Mrs Pitman's parents live at "Pant-y-Bryn" Farm.

#### **Ty Nant**

Mr and Mrs Neighbour live in this, the last bungalow, on this plot of land. Their daughter-in-law lives at "Lamb House".

## **Cilycwm Church School**

The school was built in 1866 – 1867 – the Churchwardens at that time being Thomas Matthews and Thomas Morgan. The first school master I know of was John Evans (1880 – 1922). When I was in school the Headmaster was Mr Vincent Lewis (from 1922 – 1928); Miss Jones was the juniors teacher and Miss Thomas the infants teacher.

School started at 9 a.m., and was signalled by a bell being rung (I wonder where the bell is now?). The first thing we did in the morning – we were around 50 pupils – was stand for prayers. All the children walked to and from school; with some children walking about three miles each way. These latter brought their own packed lunches, which they either ate in some of the houses of the village or beside the stand pipe.

About once a fortnight the Vicar called and twice a year Mr. Warberton, from Llandovery College, came to test us in Scripture. Also, every now and again, the “Whipper in” came to check that we were all attending school (I can remember that he rode a bike).

The school had a football team for the boys and a hockey team for the girls and our playing field was Abergwenlais field, which is over the road from “Brynderi” House. We also cultivated a garden in Miss Lloyd’s field where we were taught gardening twice a week. Also we learned cane work – the work basket I have now was made in school – and needlework, taught by Mrs Lewis, the school master’s wife.

Between 1928 and 1929 the school had a temporary Headmaster in Mr G. L. Lewis. His successor was Mr B. J. Williams (1929 – 1948), followed by Mr Emrys Glyn Evans (1948 – 1953), Mr Meirion Williams (1953 – 1963), Mr Noel Morgan (1954 – 1985) and the current headmaster, Mr Simon Lewis.

At one time there was a school holiday given for every fair, festival, quarterly meeting or harvest thanksgiving held there e.g. on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1917 I note that an Eisteddfod was held in the school and the children were given a holiday the next day for the school to be cleaned. And in July 1913, the school was closed for a fortnight so that the children could assist with the hay harvest.

Also, at the close of 1918, the school was forced to close for two months by order of the “Ministry of Health” owing to an outbreak of flu already referred to in this record.

The school is now run by Dyfed Education Committee and, presently, has a staff of two: a headmaster and one teacher. Nearly all the pupils are English.

### **School House** (part of the school building)

This is where the school headmasters always used to live when the school was run by the Church. Presently, a retired couple, Mr and Mrs Viner live there.

### **Pine Tree Lodge**

Mr and Mrs Seabrook live here, having moved from “Dygoedydd Fach”. It is a large bungalow with extensive grounds.

### **Ger y Nant**

This bungalow was built for Mr and Mrs Lee – in preparation for their retirement in 1980 from the “Neuadd Arms”. Mr and Mrs Lee both still live here; they have an attractive garden which they have worked hard at.

### **Brynderi**

This house (situated across the road and further out of the main village than “Ger y Nant”) was built around 1906 by the “Rhydfelen” family for one of their sons, and his wife – their daughter, M. G. Thomas now lives at “Gellideg” in Llandovery.

However, I first recollect Mrs Davies living here in the 1930’s, having moved here from “Blain-nant-Melyn”. She used to knit long stockings for men, charging 1/6 per pair. Her unmarried niece, Mary Ann Morgan, lived with her. Miss Morgan lived on her own in the house for years after her aunt died. Following Miss Morgan’s death, the house was sold to Mr and Mrs Jones, who lived here with their son – having moved from “Cochmain” Farm.

Then Mr and Mrs Dai Morgan bought the house. All of their eight children were born whilst they lived at “Brynderi”, the first (a son) being born during the cold winter of 1947. Nowadays their children are scattered all over the world, but Mr and Mrs Morgan still live there.

### **The Vicarage**

The land on which the Vicarage is built was bought from “Pant-y-Bryn” Farm. Before it was built, the Vicar had been housed in local farms; firstly, at “Eryd”, which was the old vicarage, and for a short time at “Devlyn” Farm. Some details about former vicars have already been given.

### **Bryn Haulog**

A bungalow built for Mr and Mrs Brychan Thomas, who moved here from “Pant-y-Bryn” Farm. Mrs Thomas works in the bacon factory at Clyngell and Mr Thomas is retired.

### **Police Station (Glasfryn)**

Here PC Parry and Mrs Parry and family lived for about four years, followed by PC Dorian Haig and family – PC Haig was the last village policeman. The house was then sold to the Council and Mr John Davies, his wife and family came to live here – they had formerly lived at “Dolgou”. They soon bought the house from the Council and named it “Glasfryn”. Both their children have married and moved away to live.

Between “Glasfryn” and “Llys Newydd” the little brook Croyddir, whose source is Mynydd Mallaen runs under the road.

### **Llys Newydd**

Mr and Mrs Ken Williams live here, having had the bungalow built for their retirement from farming in 1974. They had farmed “Henllys”. Where the bungalow now stands, I remember there used to be a cow shed and a cluster of farm buildings belonging to Mr and Mrs Davies of the Old Post Office. All have since disappeared and Mr and Mrs Williams have a small holding with a flock of Devon “closewool” sheep.

Their daughter, Ann, is married to the Deputy Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police, and their son, John works for the Wool Board.

### **The west side of the village**

On the west side of the village is “Brynteg” where the first Sunday School in this area was held. At one time an old character known as “Mari’r Caban” lived here; she used to smoke a pipe and drink pints of beer and she still lived well over a hundred years! Nowadays you can’t see where “Brynteg” used to be but the fields around are still known as “Brynteg” fields and form part of “Cwmcroyddir” Farm.

Further on, you come to “Efail Fach” where Morgan Rhys (1716 – 1779) the hymnologist was born. There is a plaque in memory of him there.

### **North of the village**

About a mile north of the village is the “Neuadd Fawr” mansion, former home of the Campbell Davys family. It was a lovely house but is now in ruins due to years of neglect following its sale in 1941. Before 1941, Mr Campbell Davys owned most of the farms and other properties in the valley.

Nearer the village there stands a fallen-down house with one chimney still standing. This house was called “Cwrt Henry” and a descendant of this family founded the Bank of England.

### **East of the village**

About a mile east of the village runs the river Towy – the Towy is the longest river which flows entirely within Wales. The Towy’s source is located about 20 miles north of the village in the wild Cambrian Mountains and the river enters the sea about eight miles from Carmarthen. About five miles north of Cilycwm is the Llyn Brianne dam, where the Towy and other subsidiary rivers have been dammed so as to supply water to Swansea. The dam was opened around 1970.

Closer to the village on its east is “Soar Ty Newydd”, one of the oldest Methodist Chapels in Wales (built in 1740). The Chapel was re-built in 1786, and earlier this century both central heating and electricity was installed. Nearer still is an old sheep pound which was used a long time ago to house stray animals.

### **South of the village**

Llandovery is about three miles south of Cilycwm. Llandovery is a small market town which, outside the area, is probably most noted for its public school, "Llandovery College". Llandovery also has a railway station located on the Central Wales Line linking Swansea and Shrewsbury, many small stops, restaurants and hotels.

Much nearer the village on its southern side is "Abergwenlais" Mill. In 1901 there lived an auctioneer and valuer there who was also the captain of Cilycwm football team. There was also a football team at "The Neuadd Fawr", but not in my lifetime.

### **Other pieces of information**

#### **The War Years (1939 – 1945)**

During the last war there was a Home Guard troop in the village, (about 10 in number), which met in the school under the supervision of Capt. D. J. Williams. There was also a Women's Royal Volunteer Service (of which I was a member), supervised by Mrs Margaret Williams – Capt. Williams's wife. We also welcomed many evacuees, women and children, to the valley – mainly from London and Swansea.

#### **Cilycwm show**

I first remember the show being held on "Abergwenlais" fields (a little off the Drovers Road) with the farm produce being displayed in the school. The show was then moved to a small field behind "Capel-y-Groes" – where it was only held there for a couple of years. After this we didn't have a show of any kind for many years – up until 1952 when a sheep dog trial was held on the fields of "Glandwr" Farm (the officials were: Chairman, T. Price of "Penlan"; Vice-chairman, Z. Williams of "Gwynfas"; Treasurer, Daniel Dicks of "Rock House", Secretary, J.M. Davies of "Nantfforest", Assistant Secretary, Sid Jones of "Divlyn").

In 1953 the Cilycwm Show proper was restarted: admission charges were 2/- for adults and 6d. for children. For the first years the show was held on the field immediately south of the school on the outskirts of the village with the farm produce being displayed in the school.



The show site then moved to the “fish pond” fields, part of “Penfedw Fawr” Farm, which belonged to Mr and Mrs Brychan Thomas. Between 1967 and 1985 the show was held on the “Home Farm” fields, a beautiful site owned by Mr and Mrs David Edwards. This year (1987), the show was held on the fields of “Eryd” Farm (owned by Mr and Mrs Brian Jones); beside the Towy about a mile south-west of the village.

In addition, during May we have a sports day and carnival when the show queen and her attendants are chosen. This event is held over the road from the school on one of the fields of “Brynllan” Farm – kindly lent by Miss Lloyd.

### **Local Council**

There used to be a Parish Council with 13 members. Nowadays it is called a Community Council, with eight members divided into two wards. Robert Lewis is the present Clerk of the Council.

### **Local Clubs**

There is a “Young Farmers” club which has run for nearly 50 years, a flourishing W.I. which celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1986 and a Church Youth Club which meets on a Friday evening.

### **Best kept village**

In 1969 we came first in the best kept village competition for Carmarthenshire and first in the regional village competition. We were awarded a joint second in the “National Village of the Year” competition for villages throughout Wales. The first prize went to Pendoilan near Cardiff – Mrs Vaughan was the Chairperson on the local committee. The presentation of the plaque took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1969.

### **Miscellaneous information**

- (i) Mains electricity came to the village and surrounding area in 1956.
- (ii) Piped water originally came to the village in 1954 from a tank in “Cae Bach” – before this we had to fetch water from a stand pipe on the village green. In recent years piped water has come from Llyn y Fan Fach.
- (iii) There is a pack of fox hounds in the district known as “The Towy and Cothi Hounds”. Mr Robert Powell is the current Master of Hounds.

- (iv) Cricket is played on one of “Cwmcroyddir” Farm’s fields during the summer months and there is a cricket club. I remember another cricket club about 40 years ago.
- (v) There has been a huge increase in wages. At the turn of the century, labourers working on the “Neuadd Fawr” Estate were paid 2/4 per day, working from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and many had to walk miles to and from work. Women working at hay making were paid 1/- per day without a rest. Carpenters were paid 15/- per week.

### **Acknowledgement**

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