

HANES Bach February 2021 (Issue 7)



*Dear Members, already almost into Spring! Membership numbers are now in excess of 90 persons which is most encouraging. The Committee still meets by zoom on a monthly basis and we are in the final process of obtaining a zoom licence which will eliminate the current meeting time restrictions. We intend to widen its application and provide the opportunity for additional contact with members such as lectures etc. We could possibly have a zoom AGM ! but would much prefer the real thing and plan to have live lectures later on in the year. A more detailed programme will be issued in April. Pleased to say that Celia Georgina Thomas, having been in hospital for a hernia operation is now safely home. We wish her well and **We Wish You All Well***

Backs to Basics by Gareth Thomas



All too often prominent public places like Victoria Square, Aberdare, feature on Edwardian postcards. The Glan Road entrance gates to Aberdare Park can easily be found on postcards. The fronts of public buildings like Aberaman Hall were photographed frequently.

All too rarely were the backs of buildings photographed, but take a look at the postcard photograph here. The postcard is unused but probably dates to about 1910. Disappointingly, the photographer is not identified, which is a great shame for the photograph is of very high quality and the aspect shown i.e. the backs of premises, is very unusual.

The photographer was probably standing on 'Nici-Naci' tip. To his immediate right were the Treaman Sidings and to his left was Cardiff Road. Behind him were the buildings of Treaman Colliery, which closed in 1911. (Please, see the map to help you visualise the spot. On the map, Y marks The Swan and X the approximate position of the photographer when he took the photograph).

On the left hand side of the photograph stands The Swan Inn, Cardiff Road. Champion cyclists Arthur Linton and Jimmy Michael trained there. What seems to be a conservatory and also a glasshouse feature in the photograph.

Beyond a privet hedge seems to be some sort of play area. What looks like a log-climbing frame can be seen. The noise of engines travelling up and down the line would probably be termed 'noise pollution' now. The smuts from the smoke of the engines would have ruined many lines of Monday-morning washing and dusted the frothy heads of pints of beer if they had been taken outside to drink. Some of the houses to the right of The Swan have substantial outbuildings.

The first houses of Lower Street may be seen towards the right hand side of the photograph.

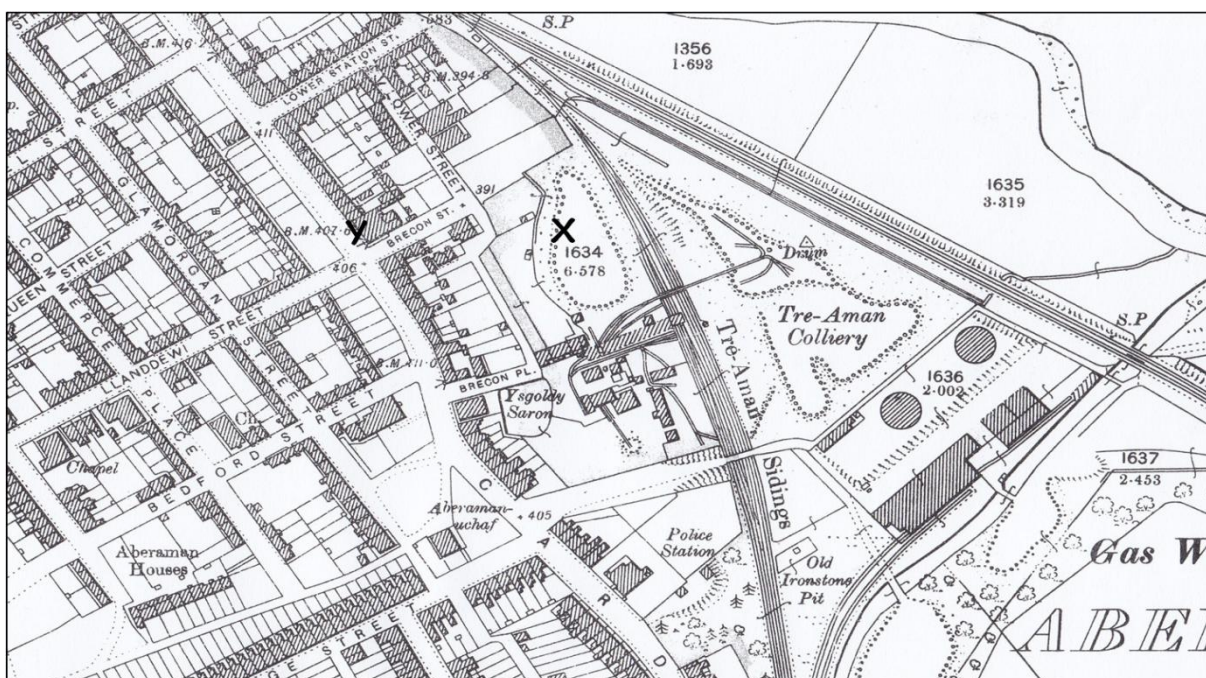
Just off the photograph to the right was Aberaman Station. As child, my mother lived with her

grandparents at 197, Cardiff Road, long-demolished. She remembers running down Lower Station Street* and standing on the bridge over the railway line, having fun in the steam and smoke when an engine passed under the bridge. Cost-free, simple pleasures!

*Often the street sign identifying 'Lower Station Street' will be vandalised, with 'Lower' obliterated by paint. Take a look when next you pass that way. I don't know who the dauber is, and I doubt if he or she would ever volunteer their identity, but I suppose whoever it is takes offence at the word 'Lower'. If only he or she realised that no two streets in a single postal district were supposed to have the same street name. Aberdare and Aberaman were in the same postal district in Victorian and Edwardian times. There is a Station Street in Aberdare, so the street leading down to Aberaman Station needed to be named differently, hence 'Lower Station Street'.

So, that's my brief postcard-based offering for the present edition of 'Hanes Bach'.

If any Reader can identify the photographer for me, I'd be delighted. (Gareth Thomas)



Quiz Number 7, by Alan Abraham

Before I proceed, I must sincerely apologise for serious mistakes in the last quiz by omitting the seventh question, and Q 5 should have been quoted (11) and not (9) letters. Hence, it was impossible to solve the anagram. Sorry no anagram in this edition and all today's answers are found locally.

- Q 1: My father was born in a street that had been previously called "Cwm Mill Road"; what was it called in 1906 when he was born there?
- Q 2: My mother was born in a street that had been previously called "Fforchaman Street"; what was it called in 1912 when she was born there?
- Q 3: My father's father was born in a street that was then called "Gooseberry Hill"; what is it called today?
- Q 4: A great uncle was the last owner and publican of a Public House called "The Rose and Castle", where was it located?
- Q 5: A great grandfather of mine, as his wedding certificate indicated, was living in "Primrose Hill", where is it located?

Answers to the last quiz/puzzle:

Answers:— 1. Llanelly. 2. Non. 3. Gwennlian. 4. Orangery. 5. Augustinian. 6. David Lloyd George. 7. not set.
 Anagram:— Unable to complete, use letter "T" if you want to complete.

American Links *by John Samuel*

In 1841 one set of my great-great grandparents, Thomas and Eliza Morgan lived in Big Row Abernant. The name of the street was later changed to Long Row, to avoid confusion with Big Row, Cwmbach. They were parents of three daughters, Mary, Elizabeth and Gwenllian Morgan. Mary married John Jenkins and they were my great-grandparents. When Mary, on marriage, moved out to Little Row, Thomas Morgan took in a lodger, Walter George from Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, who had obtained work at Abernant Ironworks. Walter later married the second daughter, Elizabeth and in 1888, they with five children had emigrated to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, USA, where Walter found work in the Red Ash Mine. (Wilkes-Barre, which is near to Scranton, is situated in the former important coal-mining area in Northeastern Pennsylvania. It was an area to which many Welsh families emigrated.)

Walter and Elizabeth George parented many more children in America, so that, in time, the area where they lived acquired the nickname, 'Georgetown'. Three generations later, in the 1950s we were in contact with some of their descendants, who were, by then, part of the Kingston family. They still lived in the Laurel Run Boro district of Wilkes-Barre. About seven years ago, I was contacted by a cousin, Lola, from the Kingston family who was compiling a family tree. Although by this time she had moved to Newport News, Virginia, we were able to exchange lots of family details.

In 1958/59 I was one of a party of young people who assisted the chaplain at Aberdare General Hospital, Rev. Meredith Morgan of Heolyfelin while he conducted brief services in each of the three wards there on a Sunday evening. Another member of the group was a girl called Sylvia Evans, (later Mrs Whitehead), who still lives in Cwmdare. She and I have never been in direct contact since that time, though we are both members of the Facebook group, 'A Bit of Old Aberdare'. It was there that I noticed a recent post by Sylvia saying that her great-grandparents, John and Margaret Evans and their three daughters had emigrated to Wilkes-Barre. I contacted Sylvia, because of the Wilkes-Barre connection. The Evans family left New Scales Houses in Llwydcoed in 1882. However they left behind their eldest son, Evan John Evans, who was then aged 11 years, to live with and later care for his maternal Beynon grandparents in Llwydcoed. He was the father of Sylvia's father, Tom Evans. In the same way that the George family had married into the Kingston family, descendants of the Evans family married into the Gregory family and Sylvia is still in touch with her Gregory cousins. It didn't take us long to wonder whether these two family groups knew each other over the years. They did, because we discovered that they lived only a few doors apart in Laurel Run Boro. Various children had been in Primary and High School together, without realising that they had a common bond, with their links to a place called Aberdare. The world can be a small place at times.

It didn't take us long to wonder whether these two family groups knew each other over the years. They did, because we discovered that they lived only a few doors apart in Laurel Run Boro. Various children had been in Primary and High School together, without realising that they had a common bond, with their links to a place called Aberdare. **The world can be a small place at times.**

Bethel W.B. Chapel, Abernant Road, Abernant. *(jhd)*

Bethel was built in 1856, enlarged in 1862 and 1895. Demolished late 2020.

The chapel was 'next door' to **Bethesda, W.I.**, which was built in 1860, rebuilt in 1906, closed in 1995 and 'converted' into a house in 1999.

I had noted that Bethel was about to be demolished and was determined to photograph it before that happened. As usual, when I did get around to photographing it, all I could see was ***a pile of rubble and told that two houses were being built on the site.***

Nothing for me to record for the future! The only information I had on Bethel was from Alan Vernon Jones superb book 'CHAPELS OF THE CYNON VALLEY.' (CVHS)

HOWEVER, as you can see something happened! When talking with John Samuel about his article (in this HB7) and mentioning my regret about failing to take a photograph of Bethel he then emailed me to say 'If you are going to include comments about the demolition of Bethel Abernant, (the chapel where I was brought up and baptised and where my father was organist for 30 years), you have

probably got photos of the exterior. You may not have any of the interior. I have taken the liberty of attaching some photos, should you wish to use any of them. —And so, (apart from the rubbish one), here are some photographs from John S. of exterior and interior.



Perseverance

The name 'PERSEVERANCE' of NASA's plutonium powered robot, which successfully landed on Mars in February 2021, was familiar but why? One of our members provided the answer. The name is on a plaque on a house in Gadlys Road, Aberdare. So here are some details from a Society member.

During the period of industrialisation in the valley in the 1800s, houses had to be built very quickly to provide homes for the influx of workers who had moved into the valley to work in the iron ore mines and coalmines. One such builder was Rees Morgan who built houses in various parts of the valley. He was born about 1838 in Penderyn. His father Richard Morgan was a skilled stonemason.

Rees Morgan always attempted to insert a sculptured stone plaque into the houses that he built. One of these plaques can be seen today on a terraced house in Gadlys Road. RM is his initials and the word PERSVERANCE seems to be Rees Morgan's logo — (apparently copied from the Crawshay family) (another story). The site name of the houses he built on was originally called Perseverance Place, (re 1860 local map), but many years later Perseverance Place disappeared when Gadlys Road was renumbered.



Friendly Societies —The editor of HANES has asked that reference be made to one of Geoff Evans' latest contributions to the Museum online exhibition of local history.

To see it, visit

<https://cynonvalleymuseum.wales/2021/02/17/sheperds-foresters-and-buffaloes-the-friendly-societies-of-aberdare/>