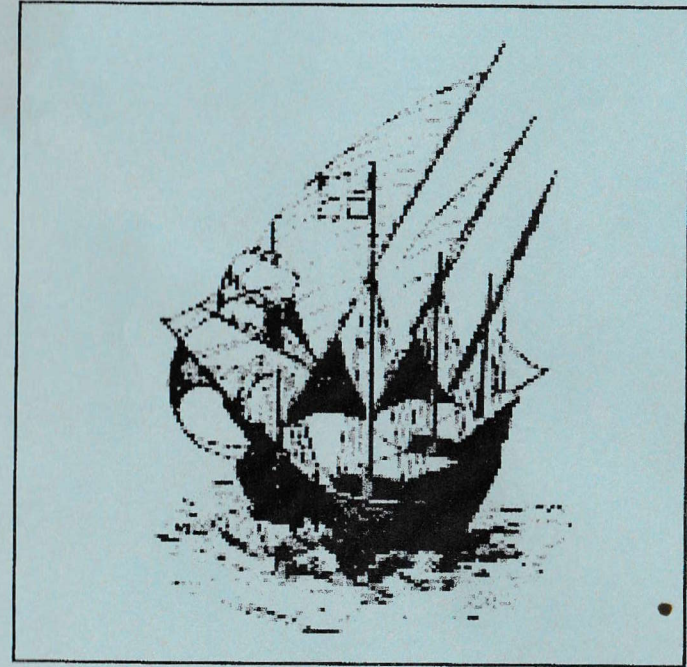


The Old Faith Yr Hen Ffydd



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bcp

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No. 10 Spring 2003

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THE OLD FAITH

No. 10

Spring 2003

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EDITORIAL

As our Chairman, Bill Morris, stated in his report our commitment to copying the Rosminian Archives is a huge undertaking and the preparation involved has resulted in a delay in publishing this issue. We apologise for the delay.

The members of the editorial committee are confident that you will find this issue interesting and amusing. Most of the articles are the result of research done by our members and we are most grateful for contributions received. Keep them coming in!

Three works due for separate publication shortly deserve mention. Veronica MacQuillan has written a short history of the Abersychan Parish of St. Francis of Assisi. Celia Nash has written for printing her most successful talk on the Jones/Herbert Family of Llanarth and Lillie Fennell has produced a book on the medieval Goldcliff Priory. Lillie's research took her to Eton College which has ancient manuscripts and documents granting them certain rights in regard to the priory property near Newport.

In this issue you will find an introductory article to a compelling series, written by Veronica Summers on "The Irish and Crime in Victorian Cardiff." Veronica who is one of our most supportive members based her work on investigations she undertook for an M.A. dissertation. She shows vividly the part played by prejudice in establishing an unjustified reputation for lawlessness which caused riots and forced Father Millea - the priest who built the first St. David's church - to leave Cardiff.

Tracing family history has become a very popular pastime and the efforts of those who succeeded in getting back to the early nineteenth century and even beyond make interesting reading. Irish ancestry is often difficult to trace. Jane Horton describes the progress she made in a piece entitled "All Roads Lead to County Cork!" This was written a little while ago but she has promised to bring us up-to-date in a future edition.

To remind members how important it is to write down "history" lest it be forgotten, we reproduce an amusing anecdote about forgetfulness..

Do keep those articles and stories - long or short - coming in so that we can publish them.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On the 1st September, 2002 I took up the post of Chairman of the Society, a position that I took with considerable trepidation. How does one follow Dan Chidgey? I know that Dan is around and at all times ready to support, as are all the Committee and, for this, I thank them very much.

My first commitment as Chairman was on Sunday, 22nd September, 2002 when together with 34 of our members we visited The Museum of Welsh Life, at St. Fagans, Cardiff to view the partly completed restoration of the Mediaeval Church of St Teilo - Llandeilo, Tal-y-Bont. The work of restoration is being carried out in a dedicated and specialised manner and all of this was explained to us by Mr. Ray Smith and Mr. Cen Brassil.

On the 13th October we held the first meeting, of what I hope will be many, of the newly formed Pre-Reformation Group (to be known as The 1520 Group).

Sunday, 10th November we met again at All Hallows Church, Llantrisant, where some 39 members had the pleasure of listening to a most enthralling presentation on 19th Century Delinquent Children and the Reformatory Schools of the time by Dr. Anita Jordan.

We are currently very busily engaged in copying to CD, the relevant archives of the Institute of Charity (Rosminians). The work was made possible by the generosity of Sir Julian Hodge, our Vice President, on whose recommendation the Jane Hodge Trust provided a grant to cover the cost of all the equipment needed. The Rosminians have a tremendous history of involvement in the development of Catholicism in the South Wales area and, unless this work is undertaken, many of the records involving them will be lost to us, as next year, all their archive material will be taken to Stresa in Italy. As Chair I kindly thank all those who have volunteered to undertake this work. Should any person feel they are able to help on a weekday afternoon at the Pastoral Centre, please let me, or a member of the Society know.

The Library Group, under the guidance of Brian Passey, continues to meet weekly and they are making excellent progress in cataloguing the volumes and computerising titles.

Finally, my thanks to all the Committee for their help and support, it is greatly appreciated.

William Morris
Chairman

PUBLICATIONS

The Millennium Series

- No. 1 The Life and Times of Bishop Thomas Joseph Brown (1798 - 1880)
No. 2 A Short History of St. David's Cathedral, Cardiff
No. 3 The Catholic Church in Cardiff First Annual Report 1879
No. 4 "The Old Catholic Families - The Vaughans of Courtfield"
No. 5 "The Last Bishop of Newport" - Bishop John Cuthbert Hedley, O.S.B. (1837 - 1915)
No. 6 Religious Orders in Herefordshire - Before and after the Reformation.
No. 7 Catholic Cardiff and the Bute Family
No. 8 The Catholic Church in Modern Wales

Back numbers available from the WAMCHS Secretary, Pastoral Resources Centre, 910 Newport Road, Cardiff CF3 4LL

Other titles of interest:

The Catholic Revival in Newport
Saint David and the Early Welsh Saints
The Life and Legends of St. David
The Life and Memorials of St. Teilo
St. Peter's Parish, Roath, Cardiff
Catholicity a Hundred Years Ago

PROGRAMME

Sunday 16th March - 2.30 p.m. St. Benedict's, Sketty, Swansea
Canon Seamus Cunnane - Breton Monks in Wales

Saturday 26th April - 10.30 a.m. Catholic Abergavenny. The Medieval Treasures and Catholic survival in Penal Times. (Some walking - a gentle stroll involved!) Detailed programme to be circulated. (Celia & Paddy Nash)

Saturday 7th June-10.30 a.m. St. David's College, Cardiff. Catholic History Day, and A.G.M. The Rosminians in Wales. Fr. Terry Watson I.C. and Sean Cleary. Buffet Lunch

Saturday 13th September - Trip to Tenby and Caldey Island.

Other meetings/activities will be notified to members by post or e-mail. e.g. 1520 Group visit to Llandaff Cathedral; further meetings arranged in Port Talbot - Swansea area.

COPY FROM S.WALES ARGUS April 18th 1908

DAYS OF THE PAST

INTERESTING DISCOVERY AT ABERGAVENNY

Relics of Father Baker Lewis, the Catholic Martyr by J. KYRLE FLETCHER

In Cross-street, Abergavenny, just below the Angel Hotel, stands a row of four old-fashioned, low-built houses. The end house of the four was recently purchased by Mrs. Fowler, and with a view of making the premises more suitable to modern requirements extensive alterations are being made. It was first discovered that the four small houses had originally been one large house, with one front facing the street, and with a garden front behind. In recent years the house now owned by Mrs. Fowler had been an inn - first known as the Parrot, and latterly as the Cardiff Arms. When the builders who are altering the house came to the top storey, and began to demolish the partitions dividing the small bedrooms, they discovered a secret room behind the end bedroom. The walls of this secret room were painted in rude fresco with the Jesuit sign, I.H.S., a figure of the Virgin, with the infant Saviour, and other religious subjects found in Catholic chapels. It was, in fact, a secret chapel used by the Roman Catholics of Abergavenny during the days of persecution, between 1650 and 1690. On removing the boards of the floor a mass of old deeds were found there, mostly relating to Thomas Gunter, of Abergavenny. These have clearly established the identity of the spot, and of the people who worshipped there. In the days of Beddoe, the priest-catcher - that is between 1670 and 1680 - there lived in Abergavenny two brothers of the name of Gunter, both leading men of the town. Walter Gunter of the Priory and his brother, Thomas Gunter, an attorney. Abergavenny in the 17 century from the number of Roman Catholics who lived there, was known as "Catholic Bergenny". In fact, William Wroth of Llanvaches, the founder of Welsh Nonconformity, was one of the Catholic family of Wroth of Abergavenny, his father William Wroth, being on the Recusant Roll of 1595. In 1680, during the fierce persecution of the local Catholics, Mr. Arnold of Llanvihangel, near Aber-

gavenny, was examined before the House of Commons, and in his examination we get a clear account of the old house in Cross Street, Abergavenny. In his deposition he said: "He had seen a public chapel at the house of Mr. Thomas Gunter, a Popist convict, in Abergavenny, adorned with the marks of the Jesuits on the outside and is informed that mass is said there by Captain Evans and David Lewis; that very great numbers resort to the said chapel and he heard that a hundred hath gone out of the said chapel when only forty have gone out of the great church (the parish church); that the chapel is situated in a public street of the town, and doth front the street."

Mr. Greenhaugh, the vicar of Abergavenny, also deposed "that Thomas Gunter had told him that in Oliver Cromwell's time of severity he kept a priest and would keep one now". The fate of the two unfortunate priests who ministered in this chapel now so strangely discovered was a terrible one. Father Philip Evans was taken at the Sker House near Porthcawl and hanged, drawn and quartered at Cardiff, July 22nd 1679. Father David Lewis, commonly called Father Baker, was tried at the Assizes at Monmouth, 28th March 1679, and being condemned to death was removed to Usk, where the sentence was carried out on the island in the river, near the Usk bridge. The last of the Gunters to inhabit the old house in Cross-street was Walter, who was living there in 1717 and is described as "of Cross-street, Abergavenny"; his son James Gunter, migrated to London and from him is descended Colonel Sir Robert Gunter, of Wetherby, Yorks. On the outside of the old house traces of a staircase have been discovered, leading from the chapel down into the garden. This interesting discovery has attracted much attention. Three of our local antiquarians have visited the spot and made notes of the discovery. The Rev. John Davies, Pandy, was the first to be informed of the find and on his advice Col. J. A. Bradney of Talycoed and Mr. Hobson Matthews were communicated with, so that the place has been thoroughly examined, and all agree this was without doubt the house of Thomas Gunter. It opens up a curious chapter in local history, of the old bitter days of intolerance, gone, let us hope, never to return. In the present Abergavenny Catholic church there is a fine memorial window to Father Baker Lewis, who, I find, was a cousin to Thomas Gunter, of Cross-street, Abergavenny.



The tale of Matthew Hopkins Witch-Finder General of Essex

Matthew Hopkins is perhaps the most famous of the witch finders of 17th century Britain. The sense of imminent violence, mistrust and religious fervour surrounding the ongoing English civil war provided all that was needed for supernatural paranoia to take hold. It was within such an atmosphere a man such as Matthew Hopkins could thrive.

During his career as a witch-finder Hopkins had between 200 and 400 executed for witchcraft, with 68 of those being in Suffolk alone. This reign of terror began in Manningtree, Essex, in 1644. Old one-legged Elizabeth Clarke was the first victim of Hopkins' search for enemies of God, by the time Clarke's interrogation was over thirty-one accomplices had been named.

The reputation and horror grows

Hopkins' career began modestly, but as his reputation grew, so did his ego. He began to proclaim himself Witch Finder General and commanded large expenses for his work. At a time when average daily wages were around two pence, Hopkins would take up over £20 for ridding a village of witchcraft. While not strictly guilty of torture, which was forbidden under law, Hopkins and his minions used sleep deprivation to secure confessions.

Torture and trickery

While appearing outwardly honest and earnest in his beliefs Matthew Hopkins began to use trickery in his search for convictions. It was believed that witches' spots did not bleed, and so Hopkins made use of a knife with a retractable blade that wouldn't pierce the skin of the accused. His specialisation was extracting confessions from elderly women with pets. For example, Faith Mills of Fressingham admitted following

interrogation, that her three pet birds, Tom, Robert, and John, were familiars who had magically made a cow jump over a sty and break a cart. Faith Mills was hanged.

Another method of uncovering witchcraft was to throw the accused in the lake. It was believed witches would not sink because their bodies rejected baptism and thus water. If the accused floated they were guilty, if they sank they were innocent. Contrary to popular belief, those that sank did not usually drown, they were pulled out with a rope that had been tied around them. John Lowe, 70 year-old vicar of Brandeston, received this treatment. He was kept awake for three days and nights, and then forced to walk without rest until his feet were blistered, before being ducked in a lake. He was denied visitation by the clergy and had to recite his own funeral verses on the way to the gallows.

The world turns against Hopkins

As the carnage continued some Villages would not allow Hopkins to enter. Resentment was growing against his methods. Reverend John Gaule of Great Staughton wrote a pamphlet in 1646 called "Select Cases of Conscience towards Witches and Witchcraft" exposing Hopkins' methods. He also preached against Hopkins suggesting that the Witch-Finder General may actually be a witch himself.

Hopkins did publish a reply, "The Discovery of Witchcraft", but his reputation was ruined. Fewer towns and villages were willing to accept his services. His demise, perhaps aptly, is shrouded in mystery. One simple explanation is that he died in bed of tuberculosis. The other version of events is that he was set upon by villagers, ironically accusing him of witchcraft, and he was lynched.

A queer little boy who had been to school
And was up to all sorts of tricks
Discovered that 9, when upside down
Would pass for the figure 6

So when asked his age by a good old dame
The comical youngster said:
I'm 9 when I stand on my feet like this
But 6 when I stand on my head

THE CHURCH IN THE WEST

The history of the post-Reformation revival of the Catholic Church in south-west Wales has received a tremendous boost with the publication of *Carmarthen Mission: The Early Years* by Alan Randall. Alan, who is a member of our Society has produced a superbly researched and very readable account of a long, hard campaign to re-establish Catholic worship (and eventually parish life) in an area of Wales where the Old Faith had been virtually wiped out.

In his introduction, Alan quotes *A Return of Papists in the Diocese of St. David's in 1767*, reporting the identification of only one papist in Carmarthenshire – a midwife in Llangathen ! From there the story unfolds of the struggle to bring the Mass back to an area of Wales which by 1831 contained the fourth largest town in Wales, Carmarthen. Although it is mainly the story of this historic Welsh town, stories of many interesting personalities and incidents from surrounding districts are included.

Early in the biographies of priests serving a huge area appears the name of L'Abbe Sejan a refugee from the French Revolution who had settled in Swansea. Later another Swansea based priest suggested that Catholic workers in Pembroke Dock were so far away that it would be easier for them to go by packet from Milford to Waterford to attend to their spiritual needs ! With the coming of Bishop Brown as the newly appointed Vicar Apostolic for Wales things improved, slowly but surely. The arrival of Mgr. Peter Lewis on the scene in 1845 was a catalyst for development and for facing the great problem which was already starting to cause concern – the Irish Famine.

Anti-Catholic prejudice was inflamed by the arrival of these starving, oppressed individuals who were dumped on beaches along the south-Wales coast. Most of them sought to move towards the industrial south-east but many stayed on in Carmarthenshire and set up small colonies in the larger towns. The book relates many examples of local outrage at the "invasion" but we remember that they played a large part in the subsequent growth of Catholic communities.

The development of the Catholic communities in Carmarthen and its associated parishes owes much to Rev. Lewis Havard (Jnr.) who succeeded Mgr. Lewis and opened the new church in the town. Stories are related

of other priests who had care of the Mission until it was taken over by the Passionists in 1889 and they remained there until 1986.

As with most areas in Wales and Monmouthshire the survival and revival of the Catholic Church can be attributed largely to the support of great and influential individuals and families. Alan Randall has listed many of them and related intriguing facts about their lives and generosity.

This is a book which can be heartily recommended to our members and other readers. Even if you don't know Carmarthen and its neighbourhood it is a fascinating read and its notes and references are commendable as leads for further information on Catholic revival in 19th/20th century.

Carmarthen Mission: The Early Years by Alan Randall £2.50 (includes postage.) from Alan Randall, Parade House, 11 Parade Road, Carmarthen SA31 1LL. Tel: [01267-231639].

All proceeds go to Rainbows - a Registered Charity helping children who have been bereaved through parental death, separation or divorce to work through the grieving process which follows significant loss.
Alan Randall is Archivist for the Menevia Diocese and the Passionist Order.

Society Journal - Request for written Contributions

Our thanks to those who have contributed to this Journal. It is fitting that the Society should re-publish material relative to Wales and the Marches which has appeared elsewhere but it is a particular pleasure to see work written for the Journal by its members. One of the prime purposes of the Society is to encourage research at all levels and to provide a forum for its wider consideration via the Journal. Contributions for the Autumn Edition are invited by 1st August - to the Pastoral Resources Centre. If you wish to discuss a possible contribution please speak with Dan Chidgey on 029 2056 7485 and he will advise you or give you a contact who will help you.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE

Extracts from a Lecture delivered by T. Canning, in the
Catholic School, Cwmbran, 17th February 1885

Introduction: One of the joys of rummaging amongst boxes of old books is to unearth something that has probably not seen daylight for more than a hundred years and yet gives an insight into what was of interest and entertainment in 19th century Catholic missions. (They weren't officially parishes until the 1900's)

Here we had a gathering, in the Cwmbran schoolroom on a cold Tuesday evening in February, of parishioners from a wide area. After a long day at work they came to listen to Alderman Thomas Canning from Newport talking about the early history of the Catholic Church in these lands. The Chairman was a Franciscan Friar from St. Alban's, Pontypool. It must have been a well-attended and successful occasion since we are told shorthand notes were taken and with a few additions from the lecturer they were shipped off to London to be printed by Wyman & Sons at Lincoln Inn Fields.

The scholarship reading and research that went into the preparation of the lecture was immense and given the length of the work (we are told that the last two sections of the lecture were summarised on the night for want of time.) For want of space we are restricted to printing extracts, in this and future editions of *The Old Faith - Yr Hen Ffydd*, extracts which we hope that you will find intriguing. The book contains legends, tradition and fact. The lecturer never fails to declare what he believes to be fact and his suspicion of doubtful or improbable material.

Our first extract starts with some of the final points, aimed at demonstrating that the Early Church of Wales was from the start in communion with the See of Rome. The lecturer instanced this under eight headings.

First The first authentic account we have of an organised Christian Church in Britain shows it to have been established by Pope Eleutherius. King Lucius having been a Christian king, asked the Pope to send the missionaries Fagan and Dyvan to convert his people.

He then quoted testimonies in support of this from:

The Lives of the Cambro-British Saints; The History of the Venerable Bede; The Chronicles of William of Malmesbury: The name of St. Fagan still preserved in the village near Cardiff; Vatican manuscripts and a list of Popes found in the library of Queen Christina of Sweden - quoted by Alban Butler:

Second British bishops were present at the Council of Arles the decisions of which were submitted to the Pope.

Third Machen in the middle of the fifth century wrote a work on a pilgrimage to Rome and dedicated it to Pope Leo I.

Fourth St. Germanus was sent into Britain by Pope Celestine to put down the Pelagian heresy.

Fifth The decrees of St. David's Synod were confirmed by "Roman Authority".

Sixth St. Cadoc made *seven* pilgrimages to Rome.

Seventh St. Samson, with the Pope's authority founded the archbishopric of Dol in A.D.555 and later attended the Council of Paris in communion with bishops acknowledging Rome.

Eighth St. Kentigern, intimate friend of St. David was well known for his strong devotion to Rome.

The early references to Papal authority are supported by Howell Dda's action with the princes of his country when in 914 he submitted to Pope Anastasius for his approval the laws of Wales. After the Norman conquest Bishop Urban of Llandaff in writing to the Pope states, "The Church of Llandaff ever since the days of Eleutherius, Pope of the See of Rome, and since the coming of Augustine, has always been truly Catholic." This is recorded in the "Liber Landavensis".

The speaker concluded with these thoughts, In the brief glance we have directed on the ancient Cymry Church we have been able to see how the lives of its sons were models of peace in an age of turbulence, and examples of self-denial and high trust in a Sovereign Power above the ways and thoughts of men. The Church was the promoter of education in its large schools, such as Llancarvan and Bangor, she was the foremost then in fostering agriculture, in training the people to industry, in calming their excited passions and filling them with her own glorious hope of a better kingdom when their eyes were

closing for ever. She was before all, the mother of the poor. By the preaching of such men as St. David, the poison of error was totally expelled and men's morals reformed. Welshmen are proud of St. David and they have a right to be; and many of my hearers, who are Irish and faithful children of St. Patrick, may find in St. David a link to bind them with old Wales, for his faith was their faith.

Future extracts will include, "How the Cymry people lived"; "Saints and Monasteries" and "Doctrine, Liturgy and Ritual" in the Early Church of Wales.



BROOM SELLER

A CHANCE TO BE A 'HISTORY HELPER'

During the 1800's and especially after Catholic Emancipation in 1829 Catholic newspapers and magazines were published and circulated in increasing numbers. The aim of these was to inform, educate and entertain members of the Catholic community in England and Wales. The secular press at that time was hostile and prejudiced against the Church. When the Hierarchy was restored in 1850, the reporting of it and the cartoons of the time, helped to whip up opposition and encouraged protest meetings and violent reactions in many places. A Catholic press and a series of monthly magazines gave an opportunity for leading clergy and informed laymen to provide answers and reasonable counter-arguments which were readily available whenever controversy arose.

The Bishops and the priests at St. David's in Cardiff collected copies of *The Tablet* from the 1870's. These are being searched and items of local news are being listed by members of our history society. Numerous pamphlets and leaflets on a huge range of subjects were bound and saved. Those who took this wise precaution little realised that they would become valuable source material for historians in the third millennium. All these were kept in the Bishop's Library in the Cathedral Clergy House until it was rebuilt in the 1960's.

A most interesting discovery made recently was a number of runs of 19th century magazines many of which, perhaps have not been opened for fifty or even a hundred years! There are more than a hundred volumes.

One of the magazines to achieve a wide readership was the *Orthodox Journal* (it actually changed its name several times). First published in the 1830's it contained news items such as the death of Napoleon's mother "Madame Mere" and an account of the opening of the new St. Francis Xavier's Church, Hereford. Its main features were illustrated with line drawings. Articles and reports of meetings and disputations included some held near Bath where the Church's teaching was boldly proclaimed and defended by a monk of Downside. The reports are above the signature T. J. B. Bishop Thomas Joseph Brown was destined to be the first Vicar Apostolic of Wales and in 1850 the first Bishop of Newport and Menevia.

Dolman's Magazine - price two shillings-had a relatively short life last-

ing until 1848. Its price and contents - especially its advertisements and book reviews show that it was definitely aimed at the upper end of the market. It well merits a close study and a report on its articles and features could be of immense interest to future historians. An example of this is in the very first item of Vol.1, No.1 "Correspondence Between Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Beste on Irish Agrarian Outrages". (The son of Charles Dolman was a monk at Belmont Abbey).

Most intriguing is a magazine called *Merry England*. Launched in May 1883, the first copy that we have is No.7 and the last No.129. Published monthly by T. F. O'Connor of 43 Essex Street London, its print, layout and pictures are a powerful indication of the advances made in magazine presentation in seventy years. Priced at one shilling it must have had greater appeal than Dolman's and was surely a "must" for Catholic parish and society libraries which were common in England and Wales at the end of the 19th century. Just opening one copy at random (No.29 - September 1885) we find "A Reminiscence of Napoleon I" by the captain of the *Northumberland* which took Bonaparte to St. Helena. It even showed the seating plan for dinner. Several interesting articles later we find "Hope For The Dark Continent" with a photograph of Mr. H. M. Stanley - (of "*Dr. Livingstone I Presume*" fame). The range and variety of topics covered is quite remarkable and even the advertisements tell us much of the age in which they were written.

How can we make sure that what is to be found in these magazines is widely known and can be made available to students of Catholic history? Perhaps you can assist by becoming a "History Helper". If any member has the time and inclination to take a batch of say five volumes, read and index the articles, list the illustrations and perhaps indicate on a scale of 1-5 how interesting they found each entry.

We have been unable to find any mention of "Merry England" on the internet or reference to it in any bibliography or book list. It is possible that copies are quite rare. They are mostly in reasonable condition but some, of course, reflect their age with broken spines and the occasional missing cover.

If you are interested in doing some practical historical research by joining this scheme please contact us at WAMCHS, Pastoral Resources Centre, 910 Newport Road, Cardiff CF3 4LL.

e-mail: info@wamchs.co.uk Tel. W. Morris (029) 20217909

Interesting articles reprinted from the "Tablet" 1820-1900

ABERGAVENNY

The tourist and antiquarian alike turn with pleasure to the mountain ranges of Monmouthshire, rich in ancient tradition and monuments of past glory as well as in natural beauty. Very early in the history of nations the Faith was planted in Siluria and both miracles and martyrs abounded where Druidical worship had prevailed. It was no easy triumph that the Cross achieved for, according to tradition Satan wrestled with St. Michael on the mountain still called the Holy Mountain and the force of their conflict rent the rocks from under them. Overshadowed by this very mountain nestles the picturesque town of Abergavenny; there, as in most of the districts around, is a sufficiently numerous Catholic population, in a great measure Irish, but interspersed with descendants of the Welsh Catholics of the far past. The Benedictines, who have charge of the Mission, are much hindered in their efforts for the poor by the absence of constant workers. At this moment there is a chance of a working sisterhood, who would take charge of the sick, nurse in the cottages and have night homes for girls and boys, who at present are left to run wild and learn bad language. Several Sisters will come at once if only a moderate sum can be guaranteed for three years to give them time to make their foundation. During the month of St. Michael and the Angels, while enjoying the benefit of their graces, we depend on a few Catholics coming forward to realise £60 a year for 3 years. Such an offering would be a suitable devotion to the glorious Archangel and draw down his protection on the givers and on the Mission shadowed by his mountain which pilgrims still ascend and where the earth is bare from small pieces of turf being taken away as relics. Many have asked for earth from the spot where once stood a chapel dedicated to St. Michael. The late Countess of Shrewsbury was one of those who had great veneration for this Holy spot. Donations and subscriptions to be sent to the Hon. Mrs. Herbert of Llanarth, Llanarth, Raglan, S. Wales; Mrs. Francis Vaughan, Courtfield, Ross; and the Rev. F Guy, St. Michael's Church, Abergavenny.

St. Michael's Day 1878

100 YEARS AGO!

January 1903

Belmont which was the common novitiate and house of studies for the Benedictine Order admitted its own first two novices.

February 1903

Lord Bute gave £1,000 towards the installation of electric light at Cardiff Infirmary.

An order of Cassinese Benedictines exiled from Brittany have settled in Pembrey, Carmarthenshire where they will build a monastery. Breton nuns, Sisters of the Holy Ghost have settled in Monmouth, thanks in great part to the generosity of Hon. Mrs. Herbert of Llanover.

Belmont, which was to become an Abbey in its own right in due course, celebrated its fiftieth year as the residence of the Benedictine community. The property and the magnificent church was offered to and accepted by the Bishop of Newport and Menevia by Mr. F. R. Wegg-Prosser, a convert to the Faith.

An appeal in *The Tablet* by Bishop Hedley for help in repairing the presbytery in Brynmawr reads, "If your friends knew how rough is the weather in the Monmouthshire hills, and how poor your flock, they would not refuse to help you."

Silver Jubilee of the pontificate of Pope Leo XIII.

March 1903

Letter in *The Tablet* by John Hobson Matthews, historian and secretary of the St. Teilo Catholic History Society, in a dispute concerning the use of the term 'Roman' Catholic.

Rev. J. H. Filmer, formerly well known in Cardiff as curate in charge of the Anglican St. Martin's Church, preached his first sermon as a Catholic priest to a large congregation containing many Anglicans at St. Peter's, Cardiff.

Milford Haven – there is no church here yet but there is a resident priest and a site waiting.

The Council at Newport has shown its appreciation of one of its Catholic members by electing *Mr. Thomas Canning* to the Court of Governors of the University of Wales. (see report of Cwmbran lecture on another page.)

IS SOMEONE LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER?

Recently, I was diagnosed with AAADD - Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder. This is how it manifests:

I decided to wash my car. As I started toward the garage, I noticed that there is mail on the hall table. I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I lay my keys down on the table, put the junk mail in the rubbish bin under the table, and notice that the rubbish bin is full. So I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the rubbish first. But then I think since I'm going to be near the mailbox when I take out the rubbish anyway, I may as well pay the bills first. I take my cheque book off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My extra cheques are in my desk in the study, so I go to my desk where I find the bottle of juice that I had been drinking. I'm going to look for my cheques but first I need to push the juice aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. I see that the juice is getting warm, and I decide I should put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. As I head toward the kitchen with the juice, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye- they need to be watered. I set the juice down on the counter and I discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning. I decide I had better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I realise that tonight when we go to watch TV we will be looking for the remote, but nobody will remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the lounge where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers. I splash some water on the flowers, but most of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back down on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: the car isn't washed, the bills aren't paid, there is a warm bottle of juice sitting on the counter, the flowers aren't watered, there is still only one cheque in my cheque book, I can't find the remote, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys.

Then when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long, and I'm really tired. I realise this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my email.

Do me a favour, will you?

Forward this message to everyone you know, because I don't remember to whom it has been sent.

FR. GAVAZZI

In the 1850's there seems to have been a renegade priest touring the country preaching about the 'abuses' of the Church. The 'Welshman' newspaper for 24th January 1851, records that an Italian monk Fr. Gavazzi addressed an audience in the Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street on the abuses which successive Popes had heaped on the Church. It stated that 'the Father was attired in his black serge habit as a Barnabite monk, and wore on his breast the rude wooden cross of his order.' He appealed to them to 'keep aloof from the Church of Pio Nono... and to deprecate, denounce and demolish the accumulated abuses of the Popedom.'

The following January, Fr. Gavazzi was in Brecon, again attired in the robes of his Barnabite order. He was described as wearing a frock reaching to his heels, on the breast whereof was a large embroidered cross over which was a loose gown; on the left shoulder of which was another cross. The audience was informed that he was about 48 years of age, but the reporter felt that 'he certainly appeared from a distance to be several years younger, with swarthy countenance; hair 'black as a raven's wing, and an eye like that of an eagle.'... the audience separated highly delighted with what they had seen and heard, only regretting that they could not understand the wonderful oration'!!!

He was back in Wales five years later. The 'Carmarthen Journal' October 1856, reported:

Llanelly: Father Gavazzi, the Italian orator, delivered a thrilling lecture on the 'Inquisition', at the Llanelly school on Wednesday evening. The absurdity, cunning and falsity of Popery were theatrically portrayed, and produced an electrifying effect on a numerous audience.

A NEW VENTURE

There are in our communities remarkable people of advancing years who have wonderfully clear memories of priests, teachers, church activities and parish life that they encountered in their childhood. We should record these for future generations to enjoy. Taking advantage of the wonders of modern technology, we have purchased one of the latest models of a sound recorder. Easily carried and capable of recording for up to four hours, this machine is ideal for bringing to life those early experiences which might be lost for ever.

We would be pleased to hear from anyone who has an elderly relative whose memories deserve to be preserved.

ST. WINEFRIDE THE WONDER WORKER AND A GREAT WELSH DOCTOR

There has fallen into the hands of the writer an old life of St. Winefride, printed in London (second edition), in 1713 "for Sam Buckley, at the Dolphin in Little Britain." The writer was a Jesuit Missioner, whose proper name seems to have been Philip Leigh, but was commonly known by the aliases of Layton or Metcalf. The first edition was issued in 1712. It appeared at a time when the prospects of the Faith were at its lowest ebb, and the darkest period of Catholicism had been reached in this country. The hopes conceived by Catholics under James II had been rudely shattered by the Revolution. "It is interesting, to find," as Fr. Thurston S.J. remarks in an introduction he wrote for a reprint of this life in 1922 for the Catholic Truth Society, "that even in this period of discouragement, St. Winefride's Well was not deserted." The wonder-working spring in North Wales became a rallying point of Catholic piety. "In the travelling season," says Fr. Metcalf S.J. in the Life "the town of Holywell appears populous, crowded with zealous pilgrims from all parts of Britain. The well itself receives a succession of visitants from sunrise till late at night." And the Bishop of St. Asaph, Fleetwood, who lived ten miles away from the Well, wrote an answer to this life in 1713, in which he says: "Winefride is held for a Saint of great reputation among them (the Papists), and great resort is had to Holywell by pilgrims, as they call them, from all the different quarters of the kingdom, and even from Ireland." Fleetwood looked on the Holywell pilgrimage as a thorn in his side, and regarded it as a centre of active Catholic propaganda. "The enemy we have to deal with" he wrote "grows more numerous, is active, vigilant, and daring, daily pushes on its conquests, is in good heart and under no discouragement but that of laws." This special friend of Queen Anne, the reigning Sovereign, no doubt regarded the Well as a monument of steadfast faith at a time when the constancy of Catholics was more than usually tried.

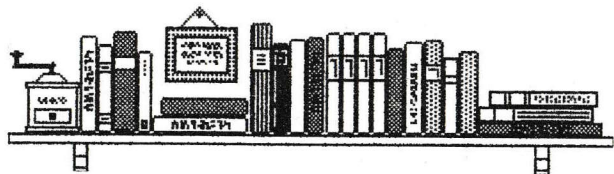
Not the least interesting part of the book is the account of the miracles, which cast many interesting sidelights on the practice of religion in those far off days. Fr. Metcalf gives what he describes as "a few late miracles," wrought at the Well. "I will not travel further back than the Last Age" he writes "lest it be objected that many things are asserted, happening long ago, which may rationally be disbelieved, but cannot be disproved. The

original attestations at this moment lie before us, and where I do not abbreviate I will deliver what I offer in the very expressions of authentic records. They are taken from aged witnesses, who were persons of tender conscience and nice honour, sometimes given in their own handwriting."

The first miracle recorded is one of very great interest to South Wales. The person on whom the miracle was worked was a Protestant at the time—one of the Bodenhams of Rotherwas in Herefordshire. He became a Catholic as the result of his cure. And what a gift it proved to be! The Bodenhams thereby became a staunchly Catholic, family, and Rotherwas became the stronghold of Catholicism for two centuries and more in Herefordshire. Thus indirectly there is due to St. Winefride the saving of the faith of so many of the old Catholics in neighbourhood of Hereford. The other interesting fact is that Dr. John David Rees is no other than the Catholic friend of the Catholic Stradlings of St. Donat's Castle in the days of Elizabeth. There he lived in his younger days with the young heir of the Stradlings. His literary gifts were nor unknown. He produced a Welsh Grammar, written in Latin. In the closing years of his life he retired to a little cottage near Brecon. Some writer has asserted that he gave up the practice of his faith because some relatives were not Catholics. But the statements made in this account of the cure of Sir Roger Bodenham "Doctor Rees being a Roman Catholic," must at once set at rest all doubt as to his religious views. Himself a gifted man of science, reputed one of the greatest physicians of the day, the master in medical science of many learned men, he sends his patient to Holywell when all his own efforts have failed, and with remarkable results as we see in the following narrative:

"In the Year of our Lord God One Thousand, Six hundred, and Six, Sir Roger Bodenham, Knight of the Honorable Order of the Bath, after a tedious Quartan Ague, had a gross Humor settled in his Legs, which soon after broke out into an apparent Leprosy. He made use of many Able Physicians, but depended most on Doctor John David Rhes, a Cambro-Britain, who commenced Doctor at Sienna, profess'd Physick at Padua, was Practitioner in divers Parts of Italy, and afterwards in England, He was near Sixty Years of Age when Sir Roger consulted him. This Learned Man ran thro' all Remedies that Concern could suggest, or Art devise, without any Success or Ease to the Knight. He therefore advised him to lay the Case before the College of Physicians in London, which was stated very faithfully and learnedly by the aforesaid Rhes, and was

carry'd up by Mr. Thomas Beale, Steward of Sir Roger's Courts. The College at London being conven'd, the Case was read and debated, as also the Practice and Prescriptions of Doctor Rhes, which Beale deliver'd to them in Writing. They wrote back to Sir Roger their Opinion, that his Physician had hit right on his Disease, and had apply'd proper Remedies for a Cure, that he was a Person so eminently Learned, that they acknowledg'd themselves his Inferiors, he having been Reader to most of them; and if the he took, had no effect, there was not in nature any Cure for him. The Knight found not any satisfaction by the Answer, which was penned to the Commendation of his Physician. Doctor Rhes being a Roman Catholick. advised his Patient to remove to Saint Wenefride's Well, to try, whether by the Saint's Intercession, he might not obtain a Cure, which was not in the power of Art to effect. He acquainted him with the Holiness of the Place, and what Miraculous Favors were there obtain'd. Sir Roger, extremely desirous of Health, obey'd his Physician and undertook a painful journey, full Seventy Eight British Miles, from Rotherwas to Holy Well. He bathed himself in the Miraculous Fountain, and became as sound and clean from all Scurf and Leprosy, as a Child new born, and afterwards continued so. This happed'n providentially; for as Naaman, Captain General of Syria, was directed to wash in the River Jordan, which completed a Twofold Cure of his Soul as well as of his Body.* In like manner the Leper, Sir Roger, came to wash in the Stream of Holy Well: He was not at that time a Catholick; but the Miraculous Cure, with other Motives of Credibility, induced him to embrace the True Faith, and he was reconciled to the Church of Christ; he rendered thanks and praises to Almighty God, for both these Favors. Besides this relation, which Sir Roger gave to the Lady his Wife, and to his Daughter in Law, Wife of his Eldest Son, Mrs. Mary Bodenham; there were other Witnesses, the aforesaid Thomas Beale, William Green and his Wife, Richard Bray, John Henley and many more Attendants on Sir Roger Bodenham".



1520 GROUP

This Group was formed as a follow-up to the exciting venture to rebuild, at St Pagans, the medieval church of St. Teilo originally sited on the bank of the River Lougher near Pontarddulais. Its name derives from the fact that the decision was taken to restore it as it would have been - a Catholic church in 1520. What was the liturgy and worship like at that time? How was the parish organised? How were priests educated and how were they maintained? These and many more questions were raised and answered at the first two meetings held at the close of 2002. At the first some members spoke on aspects of medieval parish life. The second meeting was led by Mr. Daveth Frost - a teacher from St. David's Sixth Form College whose speciality is the pre- Reformation Church. He provided some stunning illustrations and stimulated a lively discussion.

Two initiatives resulted from these meetings. The first was a desire to visit and see some pre-Reformation churches and their undamaged relics of a bygone age. Hence we are making arrangements to visit Abergavenny Priory Church (Saturday 26th April 2003 and Llandaff Cathedral at a date to be arranged.)

An important find was "*Church Life in Medieval England and Wales - The Parishes*".

This wonderful little book (108 pages) answered many of the questions raised by our meetings. It was written by the late Mgr. Laurence Goulder who was Master of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom. Republished in 1988 and selling at only £2.50 it contains much information and many gems. One of these is the Sarum Rite Mass. Many of the rubrics are unusual but what are most striking are the similarities to the Mass we offer to-day in English and Welsh in our Catholic churches.

The York Bidding Prayer is very revealing in that it gives a hint of the timescale of the Sunday Mass. This bidding prayer alone consists of two pages of small print. It starts off -

To God almighty and the glorious virgin Mother, our lady St. Mary, and all the glorious company of heaven.

For the pope and his cardinals, for the patriarch of Jerusalem, and for the holy cross, that God bring it out of heathen men's hands into Christian men's keeping
Ye shall make a special prayer for your fathers' souls and for your mothers'

souls, godfathers' souls and From then on nobody is omitted and as it draws to a conclusion the congregation is reminded. Godmothers' souls

And that our prayers may somewhat stand them in good stead, let every man and woman in this church help them with a *Pater Nosier* and an *Ave Maria*.

Although this is based on the York Rite, the Sarum (Salisbury) Rite was most commonly used but there were also separate Liturgies in Bangor and Hereford. (Wales and the Marches !)

COMMITTEE

Oh give me your pity, I'm on a committee,
Which means that both morning and night,
We attend and amend, contend and defend,
Without a conclusion in sight,
We confer and concur, we defer and demur,
And reiterate all of our thoughts,
We compose and propose, we support and oppose,
And points of procedure are fun!!
And though various notions are brought up as motions,
There's terribly little gets done,
We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve,
Since it's out of the question for us,
What a shattering pity to end our committee,
Where else could we make such a fuss...

The Irish and Crime in Victorian Cardiff

Introduction: Before the Famine

The Irish are shadowed by the negative power of a stereotype that can be traced at least as far back as the twelfth century, when Gerald of Wales described them as wild and 'cut off from well-behaved and law-abiding people'. By the eighteenth century, perceptions of the Irish as inherently criminal were commonplace, during a significant period in the development of the modern criminal justice system. Influential writers, including Henry Fielding and Thomas Carlyle, sustained this perception through the next 150 years, ensuring that famine refugees arriving in Cardiff and elsewhere during the 1840's faced an already prejudiced reception.

This series of three articles offers an overview of 'Irish' crime in Cardiff from the 1840's to the First World War. In this issue, crime among the Irish and attitudes towards them are considered for the early 1840s, the period immediately before the Great Famine.

Definitions of 'crime' evolve over time, reflecting changing political, social and economic conditions. Many offences recorded in the 1840s would not be seen as crimes today, including playing marbles in the street. Conversely, some Victorian penalties, including those for beating wives, were less severe than we would now expect. D. Gareth Evans noted that contemporary government records portrayed the Welsh as a lawless, subversive and immoral people, particularly in episodes of social disorder, such as the Rebecca Riots and Chartist marches. Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Sir Edmund Head even compared the South Wales coalfield to a penal colony in 1839. The consequent backlash against 'foreigners' was fuelled by the growth of nonconformist aspirations to respectability and the emergence of Welsh nationalistic pride.

Few local court records survived from the 1840's. Research on press reports providing a 'snapshot' of crime in 1843, suggest that the Irish were no more criminal than the rest of Cardiff's population. They committed under one thirteenth of crimes reported, representing slightly less than their share of the population. Crime was heavily concentrated in drink-related offences and theft. While only two cases were reportedly linked to prostitution, others were probably hidden in the eight recorded robberies

of drunken men. Crimes were predominantly located in the notorious Whitmore Lane area, the docks and public - or beer houses. Contrary to their reputation, the Irish did not feature among the town's vagrants reported, who were given short shrift wherever they came from. John Langdon, 'an inveterate young beggar' asked the magistrates for 6d to leave town. They eventually handed him 1/- and discharged him, only to hear that he was spotted later in the day using this money to play 'pitch and toss'.

The authorities took a keen interest in working class recreational habits, particularly what was happening in public- and beer houses. John Phillips, landlord of the Richard's Arms, was charged a severe £8, with 8/- costs, for allowing card-playing on his premises at 'unseasonable hours'.

Irish criminals reported at this stage were clearly differentiated in the press reports with mocking rather than hateful undertones. Michael Daly and Henry O'Halty, 'two fierce-looking Emeralds', were charged with assaulting Thomas Rafferty 'a model teetotaler' who had 'forgot his pledge ... and took to drinking'. The row, apparently, was over the beer. Later, Charles Collins, a 'tidy, tipsy, little Hibernian', was fined 5/- for being drunk, breaking a door and threatening to head-butt the owner, and the 'lovable Paddy' image was again expressed with regard to an Irishman put in the stocks:

A lively little red-haired Irishman, measuring five feet nothing and with an irreclaimable predilection for whiskey punch, underwent the penalty of the stocks on Tuesday, as the consequence of his inability to pay the fine imposed for drunkenness. Paddy went through the ordeal with the most edifying equanimity.

When released 'as he wended his way down Mary Street' he was heard whistling "Haste to the Wedding".

The Irish dialect was often mocked in press reports of court hearings. On October 14th, an Irish group had been arguing outside the court room. A magistrate called one of them in and asked what was wrong. The Irishman replied 'The childer's life is in danger, yer honor, an' I want satisfacshun an' protecshun from the varmints, I do.'

At this point, the Irish were viewed as disorderly rather than seriously criminal in nature. In reality, this mirrored criminality in the rest of the

population. The situation was soon to change with the influx of famine refugees, at a time of astonishing growth in the port. The next article examines the increase in crime, particularly theft of food and other items necessary for survival, as the most desperate Irish arrived, often as ballast in returning coal ships. At the same time, nationally and locally, the Irish became perceived as a threat, resulting in a dramatic change of tone in press reports and attitudes towards them.

To be continued in the next issue

WHEN IN ROME . . . SURF THE NET

It was a great pleasure to receive the following e-mail recently.

Congratulations on your website which I came across while looking for Information on Cardiff Archdiocese.

(You could do the Archdiocese a great service to supply a website as excellent as the standard of yours)

It is very informative, lively, and welcoming.

May the Society prosper.

Chris Fuse

Rosminian General Curia, Via di Porta Latina, 1700179 Rome, Italy.

Fr. Chris Fuse is a Cardiff born Rosminian priest currently based at the Rome H.Q. of the Institute of Charity.

Make three correct guesses consecutively
and everybody will regard you as an expert.

"I have never met a person so ignorant I could
not learn something from him," said Alice

All roads lead to County Cork (or researching a maternal family tree)

Sadly, my mother, Nora DAVIES, died in 1971, long before I had developed any sort of interest in family history, and within the space of another thirteen years all her siblings had also passed away. The date of the last funeral coincided with the beginnings of my interest in genealogy and so shortly afterwards a gathering of cousins was arranged to collect together all the information we had about our common family. Our combined resources enabled us to produce an outline family tree.

As well as drawing up the tree we also compared notes about different family stories that we had been told. We had all heard different things about our grandfather, Jack SULLIVAN, for example. We all knew that he came to South Wales from Ireland, although none of us knew why, we had all heard different tales about his size and strength, he was always referred to in the community, even when we were children long after his death, as 'Big Jack'. Some stories said that he was as broad as he was tall and that he was over six feet tall, others said that he could carry two sacks of coal at the same time, one under each arm yet another tale was that he could drink twenty pints of beer at one time and be completely unaffected! It also seems that he was a stern disciplinarian, and had locked out one of our aunts because she came home late one evening. Late was after 9.30 p.m. and the aunt in question was twenty-three at the time, it seems she spent the night in the outside lavatory until my grandmother got up in the morning and let her in.

Between us we could list seven children of my maternal grandparents, Jack SULLIVAN and Catherine NEAGLE, most of their grandchildren and quite a few their great grandchildren. In fact the younger generations of the family had kept in quite close contact with each other, possibly because our parents had nearly all died relatively young, so there was considerable consensus amongst those taking part, as well as a few small differences of opinion. Some second cousins also joined in the exercise and with their help we managed to further expand the tree to include three of Catherine NEAGLE's sisters and some of their descendents. We were sure that there were probably other ancestors and descendents of whom we were unaware, but felt that at least we had a starting point. My other cousins were interested and ready to help provide information, but did not

really want to be actively involved in any research, hence it was that in 1984 I started what proved to be a fascinating, totally absorbing, often frustrating but eventually very rewarding search to discover my mother's family tree.

The first thing that became clear was that there were no indication of dates of births, marriages or deaths. We each knew, or thought we knew, the dates for our own parents, we were pretty sure of the dates for our siblings, and certain of the dates concerning our descendents, but even pooling our information we could not categorically put our aunts and uncles into chronological order. Nowhere were there any surviving birth certificates, we did have, between us a few marriage and death certificates, so the first step seemed to be to try to ascertain the order of birth of the children of Jack and Catherine SULLIVAN and then once the date of birth of the oldest child was known, an approximate date for their marriage could be calculated. It was fairly certain that they had lived in Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire for some time, but it was by no means certain that all the children had been born there. My father was adamant that my mother was the youngest child in her family and that she was born in 1924, so using this information it was decided to start a search of the General Register Office (GRO) indexes with 1924 and work backwards. Between 1924 and 1911 the search was relatively easy as the mother's maiden name is included in the index and NEAGLE is, fortunately, not that common, so without too much effort it was possible to establish the following:

Name	Mother's Maiden Name	GRO Reference
Nora SULLIVAN	Neagle	1925 Q1 Bedwellty 11a 160
Michael SULLIVAN	Neagle	1918 Q2 Bedwellty 11a 197
Ellen SULLIVAN	Neagle	1916 Q1 Bedwellty 11a 190
Kathleen SULLIVAN	Neagle	1913 Q4 Bedwellty 11a 257
John SULLIVAN	Neagle	1911 Q3 Bedwellty 11a 278

At first there seemed to be no reference for Uncle Pat, but we were all agreed that he was one of the younger siblings, so it would make sense that he should be in the gap between Michael registered in 1918 and Nora registered in 1925. A second more thorough search of the GRO indexes for these years resulted in the following reference:

1922 Q3 SULLIVAN Patrick *Heagle* Bedwellty 11a 194

Seemingly the 'N' of Neagle had been transcribed as 'H'. That accounted

for six of the seven known children, and it seemed that these had all been registered in the Bedwellty registration district, which covered Ebbw Vale. There were no significant gaps in the years when the other children had been registered, and providing that there had been no other mis-transcriptions it seemed that there was a good chance that the missing sister was the eldest child and possibly also born in Ebbw Vale. A further search of the indexes was carried out to try to find an entry for Margaret SULLIVAN in the Bedwellty district before 1911, there were, only four such entries between 1911 and 1908, one in the December quarter of 1910, one in the June quarter of 1909 and two in 1908, in the June and September quarters. As the span of years covered was less than five the local superintendent registrar was contacted and a search requested. In due course a copy of my aunt's birth certificate was received, showing that she had been born at 4 Railway View, Ebbw Vale on 28 February 1909.

Flushed with initial success, came the first big mistake. Instead of following the original plan of obtaining my grandparents' marriage certificate in order to ascertain their fathers' names, complacency set in and the decision was made to try to uncover both the parents of my grandmother at once by obtaining a copy of her birth certificate. Again several cousins could remember attending her funeral in November 1962 and agreed that she was seventy-three years old when she died and that her birthday was 14 January. Putting these facts together resulted in her date of birth being calculated as 14 January 1889, so it should have been registered in the first quarter of that year, place of registration unknown, but happily not a common surname. All the entries for the children had given the mother's maiden name as NEAGLE and so naturally a search was conducted in the GRO birth indexes in the first quarter of 1889 for an entry for Catherine NEAGLE. Having been warned about the dangers of name variation, when what seemed to be a suitable entry was found in the Kensington registration district the corresponding certificate was requested. The certificate showed Catherine NAGLE (note spelling) having been born on 14 January 1889 to Edwin NAGLE and Emma nee CROUCH at 35 Lonsdale Road, Kensington. There then followed a long period of further fruitless research until sanity prevailed and the decision was made to follow an amended version of the original plan and obtain copies of my grandmother's marriage and death certificates. The death certificate gave her age as seventy-four which, of course, put the date of birth as 14 January 1888 not 1889, a search of the birth indexes for 1888 showed an entry for

Catherine NEAGLE, note spelling, registered in Bedwellty, a much more logical place to find it than Kensington, and a further search of the marriage indexes backwards from 1909, the date of my aunt Margaret's birth turned up a reference also in Bedwellty for a marriage between John SULLIVAN and Catherine NEAGLE in the second quarter of 1908. A copy of the marriage certificate relating to this reference was requested, and, of course, Catherine's father's name, Michael NEAGLE, on the marriage certificate agreed with that on her birth certificate. So having spent some considerable time following a dead end a salutary lesson had been learned and the search for my mother's ancestors was resumed with rather more care and considerably greater success than before.

The above research enabled the completion of a provisional family group sheet for John and Catherine SULLIVAN which included the date of their marriage and the dates of birth of their children. Additionally, my father could remember addressing letters from my grandmother to her husband's brother and sister-in-law to a place called Bocarnaugh near Glengarriff in County Cork, and he thought that this was where the SULLIVAN family originated. In the absence of any other information it was decided to assume, in the first instance, that this was correct. Subsequent research in Ireland has corroborated this; I now have a copy of my grandfather's birth certificate and have traced him on the 1901 Irish census. So the first branch of my mother's family has led directly to County Cork,

The next step was to try to follow back my maternal grandmother's ancestry. Since she was born in 1888 it was far enough back to be within the scope of the 1891 census, all the above research had been carried out through family members and the GRO indexes and the subsequent purchase of relevant (and not so relevant) certificates, and while useful it required frequent access to a copy of the indexes, which at that time was not readily available. Being able to combine infrequent access to the GRO indexes with the use of census material made researching much easier. Since both the birth and marriage certificates gave the address as Pontygof, Ebbw Vale, in 1888 and 1908 respectively, it was a fairly safe assumption that the family had been reasonably static during that period; local knowledge meant that I knew that Pontygof was and indeed still is, a small, compact area of Ebbw Vale consisting mainly of 'two up, two down' terraced cottages of a kind typical to the South Wales valleys. A search through the Pontygof area in the 1891 census for a family by the name of NEAGLE with a three-year-old daughter Catherine yielded the following single entry:

District: Aberystruth
 Urban District Council: Ebbw Vale
 Parish: St. John

3 Pontygof	Michael NEAGLE	Head	M	36	Labourer	Co. Cork IRE
	Margaret NEAGLE	Wife	M	36		Merthyr Tydfil GLA
	Margaret NEAGLE	Dau	S	16	Servant Dom	Merthyr Tydfil GLA
	Mary NEAGLE	Dau	S	14		Ebbw Vale MNM
	Michael NEAGLE	Son	S	9		Ebbw Vale MNM
	Kate NEAGLE	Dau	S	4		Ebbw Vale MNM
	Timothy NEAGLE	Son	S	1		Ebbw Vale MNM
	Peter LEAM	Lodger	S	54	Labourer	Co. Cork IRE
	Mike DALY	Lodger	S	30	Labourer	Co. Cork IRE

It appeared that there were nine people of differing ages, sexes and relationships living in the one house, it must have been quite crowded, but there was little doubt that this was the right family, however the entry contained some surprises. We had been able to identify four NEAGLE sisters, but no one in the family had any idea that there were any brothers. Michael NEAGLE (senior) was shown as being born in County Cork, so it seemed that yet another branch of my mother's family was rooted in Ireland. The entry also indicated that Catherine, seemingly called Kate, was far from being the oldest child of her parents. This caused a search of the 1881 census to be initiated, firstly via the national name index but then corroborated from the original microfilms. The 1881 census contained the following entry:

District: Aberystruth
 Urban Sanitary District: Ebbw Vale
 Parish: St. John

Pant y	Michael NEAGLE	Head	M	30	Labourer	Co. Cork IRE
Pudding	Margrett NEAGLE	Wife	M	27		Merthyr Tydfil GLA
Pontygof	Margrett NEAGLE	Dau	S	6		Merthyr Tydfil GLA
	Mary NEAGLE	Dau	S	4		Ebbw Vale
	Elizabeth NEAGLE	Dau	S	11m		Ebbw Vale

This confirmed the details of the 1891 census, apart from some small discrepancies in ages, but introduced another daughter Elizabeth, who should have been ten years old on the 1891 census. Subsequent research has revealed that she died in August 1881 aged just fourteen months from infantile convulsions.

Considering the information in these two census entries, it seemed sensi-

ble to conclude that Michael and Margaret NEAGLE were probably married in Merthyr sometime around 1875; this assumes that their daughter Margaret was their first child and that they were married when the wife would have been about twenty years of age, all of which seemed logical. It was also known from Catherine NEAGLE's birth certificate that Margaret NEAGLE was Margaret COLLINS before her marriage. Further searches through the GRO marriage indexes produced a reference to a marriage in Merthyr in 1874, and the certificate was obtained. To try to ensure that as far as possible this was the correct entry a search through the GRO marriage indexes was conducted from 1864 to 1884 and there were no other suitable entries. Assuming that the correct entry is not one of the many that are not recorded in the indexes it can be assumed with some confidence that this certificate does indeed refer to the marriage sought. So far the research had been relatively straightforward, helped by the fact that NEAGLE or NAGLE as the spelling had now become, is not a particularly common name in England and Wales, so there are relatively few entries in each year of the GRO indexes. COLLINS, however, is much more common, and from this point onwards the results of the research become less reliable.

While the various sources used indicate that Michael NEAGLE could have been born anywhere between 1851 (23 on marriage in 1874 and 30 at time of 1881 census) and 1855 (36 at time of 1891 census), the same sources give a much smaller span of years for Margaret COLLINS, namely 1854 (20 on marriage in 1874 and 27 at time of 1881 census) and 1855 (36 at time of 1891 census). It was decided, therefore, to try to locate a birth reference for Margaret COLLINS in Merthyr in the correct time period. There were, fortunately, only two suitable entries in the Merthyr registration district in 1854 or 1855, and a letter to the superintendent registrar resulted in the receipt of what is hopefully the correct birth certificate. If this certificate does relate correctly then it would indicate that Margaret COLLINS' mother was also called Margaret (maiden name MURPHY) and that she was the widow of Mr. BUCKLEY when she married Timothy COLLINS. Repeated searches of the GRO indexes from 1860 back to 1840 have resulted in just one entry, in 1853, for a marriage in Merthyr between Timothy COLLINS and Margaret MURPHY, and not a single entry for a marriage between Timothy COLLINS and Margaret BUCKLEY. As Margaret COLLINS' birth certificate states that the mother was 'Margaret Collins late Buckley formerly Murphy' the marriage reference should be in the name of BUCKLEY.

If the Margaret COLLINS born in 1854 is the correct ancestor then as she was

also married in Merthyr it would seem sensible to assume that she should appear there, with her parents, on the 1861 census. Glamorgan Family History Society have done a wonderful job of transcribing and indexing the censuses for Merthyr for 1841, 1851, 1881 and 1891, but no transcripts or indexes are currently available for 1861 or 1871, I believe they are in progress. This means, though, that to date I have been unable to investigate the 1861 census records to try to find Margaret and her parents. The 1851 census transcript for Merthyr, however, contains the following entry:

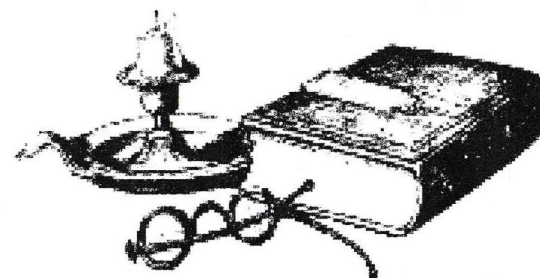
Pedwranfach	Timothy COLLINS	Head	M	40	Labourer,	IRL	Cork	Hadwill
					Mason's +			
	Margaret COLLINS	Wife	M	35		IRL	Cork	Hadwill
	William COLLINS	Son	U	6	Scholar	GLA	Merthyr	Tydfil
	John TWONEY	Ldg	M	24	Labourer	IRL	Cork	Glanmire
	Hannah TWONEY	Ldg	M	25	Lg's wife	IRL	Cork	Glanmire
	Mary TWONEY	Ldg	U	3	Lg's dau	MNM	Bedwelty	
	Thomas ROACH	Ldg	U	18	Labourer	IRL	Cork	Glanmire

At first this seemed promising, and a further search was conducted in the GRO indexes for the birth registration of William COLLINS born about 1845. There were surprisingly few entries for the five-year period 1843 to 1848 and another letter to the Superintendent Registrar resulted in a birth certificate being received. This, however, shows that although the parents are indeed Timothy and Margaret COLLINS, the mother's maiden name is RYAN and not BUCKLEY or MURPHY. It is probable, therefore, that the family found in the 1851 census is not the family that I am looking for, and further research needs to be carried out using the 1861 and 1871 Merthyr censuses.

Simply because no appropriate marriage reference has been found in the GRO indexes, does not, of course, mean that the marriage did not take place in Wales, and it may also be that the family found in the 1851 census is, in fact the correct one and that Timothy COLLINS was also a widower when he and Margaret BUCKLEY married, sometime between 1844 (William's birth), and 1854 (Margaret's birth), and that his first wife, also called Margaret (nee RYAN) was William's mother. All this remains to be discovered, what does seem clear though, is that, whether or not the 1851 census family is the correct one, it is probable that both parties, that is, Timothy COLLINS and Margaret BUCKLEY (nee MURPHY) came originally from Ireland, and most probably from County Cork. A check of the census records for Merthyr for 1841, 1851, 1881 and 1891 indicates that over 95% of

the entries for the name COLLINS hail from County Cork, and I believe it is unlikely that Timothy would have married far from home.

The search for my mother's ancestry has been an interesting one thus far, and promises to be even more interesting in the future, since all routes seem to lead, within three generations, not to Rome but to County Cork, or maybe to both as the family was, and to a large extent still is, Roman Catholic. Research in Ireland, in my very limited experience, can be frustrating because many of the records we take for granted in the UK are missing, however there are significant compensations. The records that have survived are freely available, and not copies on microfiche or microfilm, but the actual documents themselves. It is a very humbling experience handling the actual census forms completed and signed by your great grandfather nearly a hundred years ago and conversely, a very uplifting experience sitting in a vestry with a parish priest for several hours drinking Guinness while trying to translate baptismal entries written in Latin with appalling handwriting. I am already impatient for the next visit.



Letter from Llanelli Historical Society

Dear Mr. Chidgey,

Thanks for your message and your kind offer to assist in our research.

The Churches in question are Capel Dewi and Capel Gunlet and are being researched as part of a Pilgrims Route from Cwrt y Carne grange at Loughor(given to the monks at Neath Abbey by King John in a Charter of 1208) through Llanelli to St. David's.

Capel Dewi (Berwick Hamlet) map reference SS53899968

Page 119, item 347, Inventory of 1917, Royal Commission Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales "some remains of a building, near Llwynhendy are said to be those of a small chapel that was dedicated to St. David"

The Report of the Commissioners appointed by Edward VI.A.D.1552, "Inventory of Church Goods in Carmarthenshire" states that Capel Dewi possessed a chalice.

Small sections of the south and west walls still stand and when the foundations of the new St. David's Church - across the road - were excavated in 1882, it is reported that quantities of human bones were discovered with teeth in a perfect state and that some of the remains were removed to a museum. Also, that a grave stone was seen with letters on it which were neither Welsh nor English and looked like hieroglyphics (Ogram?) We checked with Swansea Museum but they have no record of neither the bones nor grave stone being transferred to them - the Museum was founded in 1834. However, they checked the Archaeologia Cambrensis and advise that the Chapel was annexed to the Abbey of Talley by 1291, when it was valued at four pounds.

Capel Gunlet also known as Capel Gwynllyw map reference SN5201500595 (Westfa Hamlet) Page 119, item 348, Inventory 1917 (as above) "...the saint commemorated is supposed to be St. Gwynlliw".

The Report of the Commissioners (as above) states that Capel Gwnlei possessed a chalice and a bell. Nothing now exists at ground level.

A note made by a Reverend D. Williams, Vicar of Llanelli, (date not given) mentions that Gwnlei must be Gwynllyw the Warrior who, in the 5th Century renounced his worldly possessions and devoted himself to a religious life.

The Society has reached an impasse and is looking for a way forward. We would be grateful for any assistance you can give.

Looking forward to your reply but fully appreciating that you deal mainly with the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Thank you

Regards Ken Jones—on behalf of the Llanelli Historical Society

Can any of our members assist in the search to help with this research. (Ed.)