

Memories of Cowbridge and Llanblethian by Mrs Viv Wythe    October 2000

When Viv lived in Westgate with her parents, Tim Buchalik's grandmother lived next door and Mrs Tilley lived at Ivy House.

Viv's husband Doug lived in rooms above the Gypsy Café, 85 Eastgate, in 1945, when they were courting. Maud Hutchins (Ken's auntie, Maud) ran the café. Doug was a fireman, the fire station being where the Lesser Hall is now. He had to sleep in the Town Hall cells when on duty.

Viv's parents moved into two of the Llanblethian cottages – now called Leys Cottage, but at that time Rose Cottage. They made the two into one house (different levels). Before them was Viv Llewellyn. The Georges moved into the third one, and eventually bought all three, making it into one.

After Viv's father died, her mother bought one of the Causeway cottages from Alan Gibbs, who owned and lived in Hill House. The cottage (the second one in) was occupied by his gardener, Mr Coles, who lived there with his wife. Viv's mother also owned the path in front of the cottage and all the garden in the front.

The family also moved into the Firs at one point, and modernised it. Before them there was Mrs Butler. Mrs Morgan (whose husband worked at Parc Hospital, Bridgend) bought it from Viv's parents, and later on the Perrimans lived there (now Dr Jemmett).

Viv and Doug Wythe married in 1945/6, and lived in one of the terraced cottages just below the castle – it belonged (and still does) to Dai John's family. Dai John's grandmother had lived there. Before them there was a Mr Fuller with his mother, and before him was a Mr Penny, gardener at the Grammar School.

At the bottom of the hill on the left, as it joins Piccadilly, was the home of Flo and Bill Greening (she ran the Tuck Shop and the café in High St, Cowbridge) They made the previous two cottages into one. Earlier, old Mrs. Wyatt had lived in one.

In Piccadilly, on the Llanblethian Hill side, there were in those days five cottages. After the Baptist Sunday School, the first two (today's Rose Cottage) were occupied by Darcy Summers and the Chisells. Darcy Summers was a Cornish bloke, he was a hell of a man. They reckon he used to get in trouble, he'd get boozed, and the cops couldn't hold him: he'd dart in between their legs. He moved over to the Bakehouse after a bit; in fact that first house changed hands a few times. Wyndham Williams went there. The next two, now Half Moon Cottage, were where old Lil Jones and Mrs Boobyer lived, and then the last one (now Hill Drop) had a tin roof held on with wire and old Miss Williams lived there. There was one cottage on the other side where Roberts who did the murder on Llanblethian Hill in 1885 used to live; old Mrs Ridge lived here. She used to come home on Saturday nights with flagons in the pram, from Cowbridge. Old George Williams lived next door, in Brooklyn; he had a couple of fields and six or seven cows.

The kids used to play in the river – putting the worms with a hook on, under the walls, and pulling the eels out, sniggling they used to call it – you don't see any of it today. The sergeant was always asking “Where's these boys of yours, Harry? I've had complaints.” “Well, catch them” – “But I can't catch them”, he'd say to my father. Old Sgt Burston was always here about the boys, because we'd been putting taps on the windows and things like that. He was good old sort. He'd have given us a row if he'd caught us, but he never caught us. We knew he was after us, and when we saw him we were gone.

There was no destruction, but the boys were up to everything. Girls - girls weren't safe – I'm talking about willing girls, there was no rape or anything like that, but I can think of some who were buggers for the girls. Others, the younger ones, used to put taps on windows, long ball of wool with a little washer on it, and they'd tap tap tap – and when someone came out they'd drop it, and of course in the dark no-one could see the wool or the washer. That's the sort of thing we'd get complaints about. The Girls Friendly Society used to meet in the Church Hall, and what we'd do was bunk somebody up on the roof with a big clod of earth and a handful of grass, He drop the grass down the chimney onto the fire, then stick the clod to block the chimney and smoke them out. Another thing we used to do – they used to make the tea outside and we'd go up and talk to old Baker or whoever was on there and we'd stick a couple of pounds of Epsom salts which we'd got from Williams the chemist into the tea water. It was harmless – no wilful destruction, but we used to play hell with the Girls Friendly Society. It is a wonder that no-one

Brook Cottage - Gilead Spencer, wheelwright; Llewellyn Spencer had run the mill.

Brooklyn - Geo Williams

(Coopersale)cottage: Mrs Ridge, who'd come home with a pram full of flagons.

Lodger - Jack Ray, a plumber/jointer (Water in Llb 1923); Then moved to the Bakehouse which was much smaller then.

After murder, 2 coppers and a sergeant dug all the garden, 2 spades deep.

Geo Williams owned it, used to live in Hillside). Arrested 4 - locked up for the night.

Piccadilly - 5 houses +

1. Darky Summers, little Cornish man, took 8 policemen to hold him down when drunk

2. Chisells - widowed early; chn were Fred, Agnes, 1 other

3. Lil Jones, and d Lottie

4. Mrs Boobyer

5 Miss Williams in Hill Drop (tin roof)

Little cubby hole next - some old boy lived there

Jameses in Hillside - Herbert, Tom, Ossie, Ralph, Dai, Frank, Idris and Ted.

Ted a marvellous cricketer, a lovely bat; played for Llanblethian.

Wicket was behind Hunt stables - a proper wicket, laid for Sir Geoffrey Byass. Glamorgan

Hunt team

also used it. Grazed outfield. Matches every Saturday in summer; many James

boys and 3 Stone brothers.

Soccer team on Harry Thomas's field.

Ted Lewis in Mill cottages was a good bowler for Cowbridge.

Glebe - Jim Warren and son Fred

Tadwick. Chedzoys lived there (and Mrs Lee, later) Ian Jewell's wife's mother named it Tadwick.

Pleasant View. Davids lived there - there was a well in the corner. Very old ramshackle place.

Edgar Chedzoy altered it and lived there some years. Edgar Chedzoy lost 1st wife young.

Lived in Picton.

Gwyn Llewellyn lived in Rose Cottage next to Picton (Min's father)

E llewellyn in Picton 0 licence surrendered 1928? Then ? Then Sid Llewellyn.

Great House divided into 2

1. Hubert Thomas's father - farmed Llb farm. Brewers used to live in Llb farm.

2. Gwyn Morgan's father, who paid £2000 for all 26 acres.

Mrs Nora Prichard - son John killed 1944 (had married Agatha Christie's daughter, Rosalind. She remarried Charles Hicks, went to live at Greenaway on the Dart).

Mrs Nora Prichard, d 19/9/1979, and Miss Isabel Carne.

Brynhyfryd - called American Cot.