

Revd Joseph Romilly, rector of Porthkerry

Romilly's visits to Wales, 1827 - 1854; MGM Morris. Gomer, 1998

The Rector at Porthkerry (1830)

Friday 9 July: Cardiff. There met Mrs Malkin and F Taynton*. To Sir Charles Tyler's* at Cottrell,* where hospitality received. Miss Tyler* very agreeable; gave interesting account of Jumpers.*

Saturday 10 July: Rode over with Mr Roper Tyler* to Penmark to see Dr Casberd,* as sour as a bear with &c; then to Porthkerry. I like much Mr and Mrs Churchwarden Evans - deformed young woman I took for a baby. Dined with the Tayntons, where met Dr and Mrs Malkin* and Major Taynton*. Slept at Bear at Cowbridge.

Sunday 11 July: Gave breakfast to Taynton. By chaise with Taynton to read in at Porthkerry; dined between services with Churchwarden Evans. Then to Sir Charles Tyler's, where met Leach* and young Ackland*. Sir Charles fell into the fire* and frightened us. Dreadfully wet.

Monday 12 July: Left Sir Charles on Curate; rode with Mr Whapham* to visit my glebe*. Called on all the farmers; fine view of sea from farmer Haynes's. Called on R. Tyler at Wenvoe*; visited Barry. Gave dinner to Whapham at Cardiff - dog-tired.

NOTES

9 July: Francis Taynton, born in 1799, was made deacon by the Bishop of Salisbury in 1822 and priested by the Bishop of Bristol two years later, on letters dimissory from Llandaff. He was licensed to a curacy at Llancarvan in 1828, Eglwysbrewis (five miles west of Porthkerry) the following year, and Porthkerry itself in 1838. Since Romilly calls Taynton his Curate, presumably a previous licence, renewed by the Bishop for Romilly's successor, has been lost. Taynton went on to serve at Pendoylan and Ystradowen, and took over Talygarn chapel of ease in Llantrisant parish in 1846; he was still there in 1851, apparently living in Cowbridge. Here his father and namesake, married to Mrs Malkin's sister, was town clerk.

Admiral Sir Charles Tyler K.C.B. (1760-1835) - he was promoted G.C.B. in 1833 - was a veteran of Trafalgar (commanding *Tonnant*, captured from the French at the Nile) and a former C. in C. at the Cape of Good Hope. In 1795 his action in dealing with an insubordinate army lieutenant aboard *H.M.S. Diadem* led to soldiers in warships, considered by the army to be exempt from naval discipline, being replaced by marines. John Hensleigh Allen, Lady Tyler's first cousin, wrote in 1808 when Tyler got his flag, 'I was delighted with Tyler's promotion ... if he goes out again it will be in pursuit of a Peerage, this will completely reconcile him to losing the Colonelcy of Marines' (a sinecure which had eked out his half-pay as post captain and the £250 pension from Trafalgar). The peerage never came.

Cottrell, near Bonvilston, had been in the hands of many related families. The Glamorgan antiquarian Rice Meyrick (died 1586), Admiral Sir Thomas Button (pioneer explorer of the Hudson Straits in 1612-3) and the Rev Samuel Gwinnett, whose brother signed the American Declaration of Independence, all lived here.

Jumpers were Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. The custom originated in west Wales in about 1760: the congregation jumped for joy, with loud groans and violent gestures, sometimes ending in complete exhaustion.

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10 July: Roper Trevor Tyler (1801-1885) was Sir Charles's second son by his second wife. Ordained in 1824, he became Rector of Llantrithyd, and held the living of Mynachlog-ddu from 1836 till his death.

John Thomas Casberd D.C.L., son-in-law of Robert Jones of Fonmon, was Rector of Porthkerry from 1805 till 1823; he held other livings including Penmark. In 1819 he received the prebendal stall of Fairwell in Llandaff Cathedral. His son John Robert succeeded him at Porthkerry in 1823, having been priested that year. Romilly took over from him when Casberd became Rector of St Athan in 1829.

Dr Benjamin Heath Malkin (1769-1842), author of *The Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography, of South Wales*, lived at Cowbridge. He married Charlotte Williams, daughter of the Curate and Grammar school master there.

Major (by 1836 Colonel) Taynton was Francis Taynton's uncle.

11 July: Sir Charles was an old man and unlikely to have been steady on his legs: a small bone had been removed from the left one in 1777, leaving him lame, and a musket-ball had badly wounded his right thigh at Trafalgar.

12 July: Was Mr Whapham responsible for collecting the tithe for the absentee Rector? In 1851 Porthkerry had sixty-three acres of glebe.

Wenvoe Castle (now demolished) was built in 1780 by Robert Jenner's maternal grandfather to a design by Robert Adam. It had three storeys with lower wings and a tower at either end. Malkin, aware perhaps that a genuine castle once stood here, deplored this pointless imitation; the only purpose of the towers was 'to aim at the convenience of a bow-window'.

1836

Wednesday 27 July: After breakfast went to explore Barry harbour and Island. Though the tide was out I found there were little streams in the harbour beyond the power of shoes and stockings, so I took them off as also my trowsers and with said clothes under my arm went across. Bathed from the Island; the sands here are firm and quite delightful. At luncheon today we had Mr Halket (Edward's man of business) so Edward couldn't come over to dine with the Malkins. Left Porthkerry at 2.15 in the car. Mrs Edward has got a slight cold and sore throat. Her little errand-boy William drove me over in the car. Dined with the Malkins and met Dr Williams* and his agreeable daughter, Mrs Howell. I was also much pleased with his son Charles Williams*. My Curate, Taynton, and his uncle, Col Taynton, were also there. The rest of the company were a pretty Miss Jenkins and brother, a Mr Edmond* (Vicar of Cowbridge) and Mr Redwood, a coxcombial* young lawyer, who talked political economy. The party was very agreeable indeed; all the guests were in perfect good humour though we discussed Dr Hampden,* whom I defended against Mr Charles Williams; I was in a minority of one on this question. Played whist with Mr Edmond, Col Taynton and my Curate.

Thursday 28 July: Breakfasted with Col and Francis Taynton and met a Mr Rawes and his sister Miss Rawes (possibly Mrs - about 50) and a young redhaired niece of the same name. The man is an invalid with a bad cough. He is much of a humourist and from his constant censures of every thing and every body reminded me of Matthew Bramble.*

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Called on Mrs Malkin to take leave. Off from Cowbridge at 12 by the mail; obliged to go inside from want of outside room. A hot close day, but without rain. Reached Bristol at 6.

NOTES

27 July: William Williams (1765-1847) had married Elizabeth, Mrs Malkin's sister, and was Headmaster of Cowbridge Grammar School.

Charles Williams (1807-1877), his third son, was a Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and in 1857 became its Principal.

Thomas E. Edmondes (1806-1892), Vicar of Cowbridge, married a sister of Charles Williams, and was the father of Archdeacon Charles Edmondes, Principal of St David's College, Lampeter, and of Archdeacon Frederick Edmondes of Llandaff.

'coxcombial': foppish or vain.

Renn Dickson Hampden (1793-1868) had just been appointed Professor of Divinity at Oxford amid loud protests about his orthodoxy. A similar outcry attended his nomination to the see of Hereford in 1847 (he had applied for St Davids in 1840).

28 July: Matthew Bramble is a character in *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* by Tobias Smollett (1771)

1834 and 1838: Mrs Ballard of *The Bear*.