

## The Stibbs family.

First record is an indenture agreement apprenticing Henry French, son of John French of Cardiff, to Robert Stibbs baker and confectioner of Cowbridge, dated September 29th 1828. The agreement is a family document in my possession.

The 1830 Land tax records:-

Thomas Llewellyn, junior as owner and Robert Stibbs as occupier of a house and garden taxed at eight shillings. Pigot's directory also dated 1830, however records Thomas Stibbs as a baker and confectioner, but this is changed to Robert Stibbs in their 1835 directory.

There are entries for both the north and south sides of Eastgate in the 1843 Tithe commutation.:-

Ref. 108 (north) Robert Stibbs, owner, and John Vaughan, occupier,

Ref. 107 (north) Robert Stibbs, owner, and Evan Edwards, occupier.

Ref. 120 (south) Robert Stibbs, owner, and Mr. Griffiths, occupier,

Ref. 121 (south) Robert Stibbs, owner, and Robert Stibbs, occupier.

By this time Robert had evidently prospered enough to acquire property and owned the houses now occupied by numbers 9 to 13 on the north side, and numbers 10 and 12 on the south side of Eastgate.

He also had a substantial family. The 1851 census ref. 71 includes:-

Robert Stibbs, head of household, aged 50, born in Cowbridge as baker and confectioner,

his wife Elizabeth, aged 48, who was born in Gloucester, and their five children:-

Elizabeth aged 14, Thomas aged 12, Richard aged 9, Fred aged 6 and Joseph aged 4.

There were however no servants recorded in the census. Robert continues to be noted as a baker and confectioner in trade directories of 1848 and 1852.

By the 1861 census Robert was described as a 'Proprietor of houses' and was living in East Village (Ref. 15, probably present number 12) still with his wife and his son Thomas now aged 22 described as a draper's assistant.

Other members of the family had now moved and are listed under ref. 178 (present number 13 ~~High St~~):-

William Stibbs, head, aged 26, master confectioner, born in Cowbridge but not listed in the 1851 census, his wife Catherine, and two children Charles and Annie, the first of whom was born in Swansea. Also in the household were William's sister Elizabeth now 24, his brother Fred aged 16, both working in the confectionery business and both unmarried.

In 1871 both William and Elizabeth were noted as confectioners (William was also recorded as a baker), both in High St. with William placed at Ivor House, which I believe was 13 High St. Elizabeth lived at present number 34 High St. William still had three children at home between the ages of 13 and 2, and had a servant, Fanny Jenkins, who was only 13 years old and came from Llanblethian. Elizabeth shared her home

with her brother Fred, they remained unmarried and both worked in the confectionery business.

Worral's trade directory of 1875 records William as an agent for W.E. Vaughan and Co. Dyers, as well as a baker and confectioner, and Elizabeth was still in business.

By 1881 Elizabeth's nephew Fred, aged 14, had evidently gone to live with her, and the household had been joined by Charles Davies, aged 18 and described as a servant but also a baker. He was still in the household in 1891. Elizabeth did not marry and was still recorded as a confectioner in the High St. in trade directories until 1895 when she would have been 68 years old. She died in        and is buried in Cowbridge churchyard with other members of the family.

13th. March 2000

Yes, Robert Stibbs of No.30 High St. Cowbridge was my great grand father, and Elizabeth (May), his wife , my great grandmother. One of his sons, Frederick was my grandfather, and my grandmother Margaret Evelyn Griffiths, whose father was a blacksmith, lived almost next door I understand. You give details of the Griffiths family at No. 26, so I feel sure this must be where she lived.

The eldest child of Robert Stibbs was Anna Maria who married Nathaniel Bird. You kindly sent me a copy of a page of Ralph Bird's reminiscences. As Anna was childless, could you please advise Ralph's relationship?

Yours sincerely,



L J P Stibbs

2000

Dear Jeff,

I am glad you found it interesting. No, unfortunately I do not have any

photographs of the Cowbridge Stibbs but Leonard Stibbs , who is the grandson of the "third member " you refer to in your article, might have. Leonard has been the main force in gathering the Stibbs family history. I have today written to him about your request.

My grandfather was Roberts's fourth son William who married Catherine Jones of Llandough. He too was a baker and confectioner and must have carried on his father's business at 30 High Street. The 1861 census confirms this and that his sister Elizabeth was a partner in the confectionery business. William does not appear in the 1871 census but sister Elizabeth and her brother Frederick, also a baker, do. William and wife Catherine next appear in the 1881 census for Usk where they had apparently opened a bakers shop.

A letter written to me by an uncle in 1982 refers to "an unmarried Stibbs who had tuck shop on the main road next to the Grammar School which was known as the Cowbridge School Tuck Shop and was in daily use until 1924". Perhaps the bakery had become the tuck shop.

My grandfather Frederick William was born in Usk and married Frances Annie Jenkins of there. They set up house in Cardiff. Grandfather Fred was active in the Labour party and socialist movement in general and was one of the founders of the Rhiwbina Garden Village. I do have photographs of him, one with Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald. There is a mention of Robert Stibbs in the Register of Burgesses of Cardiff which Leonard found in the Society of Genealogists records. Robert was admitted 11 May 1826

"by birth" and his trade is given as confectioner.

Thanks to the efforts of Leonard Stibbs I have other material should you be interested. For example the family's presence in Cardiff started with Lionell Stibbs who was posted there as an Excise Officer sometime about 1698. He was killed in a sword fight in 1703. However I realise that your interest may focus on Cowbridge and not extend as far as Cardiff.

John Stibbs (bd 1829), the second son of the Robert Stibbs mentioned in your book and column, emigrated to Canada and settled in Ontario. His grandson Norman Stibbs (bd 1884) became the mayor of the city of Nelson, British Columbia, I

believe in the late 1930's. 1940 he wrote to Cowbridge officials in an effort to contact any young Stibbs who still might be living in the area with a view to offering them refuge (there was an officially sponsored evacuation scheme for children at the time). Apparently there were no Stibbs remaining in Cowbridge and the letter eventually reached my widowed mother who was living with her parents in Rhiwbina, Cardiff. I believe plans were under way for my sister and me to join Norman Stibbs in Canada when the liner "City of Benares" was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland with the loss of many children and the government stopped all further evacuations.

Yours sincerely

D.M.Stibbs

2006

If you have occasion to climb the stairs to the dentists next to Great House pharmacy in Cowbridge, you will notice the filled-in outline of a large window, with stone mullions. This of course was a seventeenth-century window of Great House, the garden of which had stretched along the High Street for some distance. When Great House was advertised for letting in the *Cambrian* newspaper of the 1800s, the view towards the river, and the garden itself, were considered major selling points. However, Robert Franklen, the owner of Great House, lived at Clemenstone, and in the period between 1830 and 1840 leased or sold off all the garden for building.

The first plot was leased by Robert Stibbs, and on it – and adjoining Great House – he built his three-storey dwelling house and shop. He was a baker and confectioner, born in Cardiff; members of the Stibbs family kept the bakery going into the twentieth century – and so the Ogmores Vale bakery today operates in a building with a long tradition of selling bread and cakes.

I had intended to include a photograph of the filled-in window in *How Well Do You Know Cowbridge* but found that the photo was not contrasty enough to merit publication. What has occurred, however, is that the Stibbs family have appeared three times in the book. Robert also owned property in Eastgate, Nos 10 and 12, and it was there that he installed the 'Chinese pattern' railings, the former communion rails which he bought from the church when it was refurbished in 1850. It was his oldest son, Thomas, who was reputed to have thrown an inkpot at his teacher in the Eagle Academy (after a severe caning from the disciplinarian teacher, William Lewis). The pot smashed against the wall and left what John Richards in *The Cowbridge Story* called a 'stain of freedom', which stayed on the wall for many years. The third member of the family to be mentioned was another son, Frederick, who appeared in the marathon football match in Aberthin in 1868; he was to marry Margaret Griffiths, the daughter of the Cowbridge blacksmith, and so still has relatives living in Cowbridge today.