

The

**THOMAS**

families of

**Carmarthen**

and

**Pembrokeshire**

*The THOMAS families of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan*

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*The THOMAS families*

Introduction .....	4
G4 – THOMAS family.....	5
Sarah THOMAS (1855 – ?) 013L .....	7
Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?) 013M .....	7
Mary Anne THOMAS (1860 – 1919).....	7
Appendix 013M – Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?) .....	10
Appendix 1 – Newspaper extracts.....	12
Weekly Mail, Cardiff, Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> September 1919 (page 4).....	12
Weekly Mail, Cardiff, Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> September 1919 (p4) +photo .....	12
Charts and diagrams .....	13
Outline tree for the THOMAS family .....	13
THOMAS G4 .....	13
Thomas THOMAS 013M.....	14

## ***Introduction***

Tracing the line of a family named THOMAS in Wales has not proved at all easy.

The information below hangs together well; although much of it is demonstrably correct, some of it is guesswork – although, in every case, guesswork that is far from random. Appendix 2 gives step-by-step details of how the various guesses were arrived at.

## **G4 – THOMAS family**

My great-great-grandfather in this line was Thomas THOMAS<sup>1</sup>: from two sources<sup>2</sup> I believe the 'H' stood for 'Howell'. According to the various census returns, he was born in Cilrhedyn (often anglicised to Kilrhedyn), which is on the border of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, in the union of Newcastle Emlyn. Various entries offer Cilchadyn, Kilredin, Kilrhedyn or Cilrhedin; and his year of birth varies from 1823 to 1827.

The baptism registers for Cilrhedyn show only two entries for Thomas THOMAS between 1813 and 1831. One, in 1818, is likely to be too early; the other gives a baptism date of *28 APR 1823*<sup>3</sup>. If this is indeed my gt-gt-grandfather it seems that he was illegitimate, for the register shows only 'Anna – single woman' in the entry. Of course, there remains the possibility that he was baptised elsewhere, or never baptised.

Towards the end of 1850 he married Anne THOMAS<sup>4</sup> – possibly a cousin, or some other relation, but I am unlikely ever to be able to prove it. If she had also been baptised in Cilrhedyn there is only one possibility, the date of which is *17 MAR 1823*. Rather unfortunately she too appears to have been illegitimate as her father John, a carpenter, is shown, but no mother.

Thomas and Anne's first child was a daughter, Sarah, born in 1854<sup>5</sup>. She later married David ROWLANDS<sup>6</sup>.

Six years later, on 13 FEB 1860<sup>7</sup>, Anne gave birth to twins, Thomas and Mary Anne. It appears that she died at about the same time as the twins were born<sup>8</sup>, possibly as a result of the birth; in the 1861 census return<sup>9</sup> Thomas was a widower. From census returns all three children were born in Eglwysrw, in Pembrokeshire, about 12 miles west of Cilrhedyn; Mary Anne's birth certificate gives her place of birth as 'Castle, Eglwysrw'.

Although the twins were born in February the births weren't registered until the twentieth of the following month; quite understandable if Thomas had the death of his wife to cope with as well as the birth of twins.

By the time of the next census, in April 1861, Thomas (senior) was living with a six-year-old Sarah in Eglwysrw<sup>10</sup> – the village in which she and the twins had been born. He was a farmer, and this is confirmed by Mary Anne's and Thomas's birth certificate.

Baby Thomas was a 'nursling' (in the care of a wet-nurse) with Thomas and Maria DAVIES and their daughter and son-in-law Elizabeth and Thomas DAVIES, at Meline<sup>11</sup>. Both Thomases were agricultural labourers and were, possibly, workers on the THOMAS farm. Meline is the 'church

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<sup>1</sup> shown on his daughter Mary Ann's marriage certificate and referred to as Thomas H. THOMAS in her obit. (see Appendix 1)

<sup>2</sup> a marriage in 1900 to Margaret DAVIES (see later) and a death reference in 1902 (also see later)

<sup>3</sup> baptism register for Cilrhedyn

<sup>4</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas THOMAS and Anne THOMAS, Q4/1850, Carmarthen 26 841: Mary Anne's birth certificate shows "Anne THOMAS, formerly THOMAS" as the mother

<sup>5</sup> there are several possibilities for the birth of a Sarah THOMAS registered in Cardigan but the most likely is Q4/1853 ref 11b 11

<sup>6</sup> information from my second cousin, Simon ROWLANDS; see Appendix 013L

<sup>7</sup> birth certificate

<sup>8</sup> there are three possibilities for the death of Anne THOMAS registered in Cardigan district (which includes Eglwysrw): Q1/1860 11b 3 or 11b 11, or Q2/1860 11b 11

<sup>9</sup> 1861 census return for 'village of Eglwysrw', Pembrokeshire,

<sup>10</sup> 1861 census for 'village of Eglwysrw', Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174 f28 p2

<sup>11</sup> 1861 census return for Pontyglazier, Meline, Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174 f22 p14

### *The THOMAS families*

next to the site of the Celtic Fort of Castell Henllys<sup>1</sup> – Castell Henllys being about a mile north of Eglwysrw.

His twin sister Mary Anne was living with Daniel and Elizabeth EVANS and their three children – she is shown as a ‘boarder’, albeit at the age of one! – in Eglwysrw<sup>2</sup>.

During the next ten years a great deal happened in the life of this family. Thomas had married again, to Martha YOUNG, towards the end of 1866<sup>3</sup>. The marriage was registered in the Haverfordwest district, which at that time did not include Eglwysrw. She was about four years younger than Thomas, and had been born in Pembrokeshire, in a place shown in the 1871 census return as ‘Llanver Nantury’. I haven’t found this on any map, but my second cousin Simon advises that it is probably either Llanfair-Nant-Gwyn, which is a mere couple of miles from Eglwysrw, or Llanfair Nant y Gof, about five miles outside Haverfordwest. Shortly after their marriage, the now reunited family moved south to Merthyr Tydfil, where a third daughter, Martha Hannah, was born about 1867.

The reason for this move is unknown (it is some 75 miles from Eglwysrw); but either as a result of the move, or as a reason for it, by 1871 Thomas was a grocer<sup>4</sup>. The census return for that year shows Thomas, wife Martha, Sarah, Thomas, and Mary Ann, plus daughter Martha Hannah. The family were also employing a servant, Sarah JONES.

Kelly’s Cardiff Directory for 1875 lists a Thomas THOMAS, grocer, in Merthyr Road, Hirwaun, Aberdare (Hirwaun is about four miles north-west of Aberdare, about seven miles west of Merthyr Tydfil).

After only seven years of marriage, Martha died<sup>5</sup> in 1873; less than eight years later Thomas was still in Merthyr Tydfil but at a different address, a different profession – by now he was a ‘commission agent’ – and with a different wife, Catherine. She had been born in Llantrisant, a suburb of Cardiff, and was about the same age as Thomas. There are three possibilities for this marriage<sup>6</sup>.

This sounds rather improbable – Thomas is now married to his third wife – and yet this is the only family that seems to fit. There is a ‘Thomas’, born in Carmarthenshire and living in Pembrokeshire, with wife Martha; but none of the children fit, he was a ‘founder in iron works’ and came from Pendine, near Tenby on the south coast. The occupation is something of a problem, however, as in 1881 Thomas was shown as a ‘commission agent’ whereas on his daughter Mary Anne’s marriage certificate (December 1881) he is clearly shown as a grocer – is it likely that he was a grocer in 1871, a commission agent in April 1881 and a grocer once more eight months later? There is, however, a further point in favour of this family – staying in the same house was a Samuel THOMAS aged 55 – i.e. a year older than Thomas – who was a Baptist minister. Although he was shown as a lodger, it is possible that he was Thomas’s brother, who appears with him in the 1841 census.

Kelly’s Cardiff directory for 1884 lists a ‘Thomas THOMAS, grocer’ at 23 Cardiff Road, Aberaman, Aberdare. As this is the same road in which the OWEN family (into which Mary married) was living it is at least possible that this was Mary Ann’s father. Later on, though, both

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<sup>1</sup> information from the headmaster at Eglwysrw school

<sup>2</sup> 1861 census return for Henllanorren, Eglwysrw, Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174f29 p3

<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 1866, Haverfordwest, 11a 1401

<sup>4</sup> 1871 census return for 24 Union Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG10/5399 f57 p19

<sup>5</sup> ONS death reference for Martha THOMAS, Q2/1873, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 245

<sup>6</sup> ONS marriage references for Thomas THOMAS, all Merthyr Tydfil: Q1/1876, Catherine THOMAS, 11a 459; Q4/1880, Catherine EVANS, 11a 690; Q4/1880, Catherine CHARLES, 11a 629

the 1891<sup>1</sup> and 1901<sup>2</sup> census returns show him living in Merthyr Tydfil, at the same address. In the former he is with wife Catherine, and a 'commission agent'; in the latter he is with yet another wife, Margaret<sup>3</sup>, and 'living on own means'. The 1901 entry is the only Thomas THOMAS born in either Carmarthenshire or Pembrokeshire between 1821 and 1831 and living in Glamorganshire.

The most likely death for Catherine was in 1892<sup>4</sup>. A marriage between Thomas THOMAS and Margaret DAVIES took place in 1900<sup>5</sup> and this is a possibility, even though Thomas would have been over 70 at the time.

Finally, the death of 'Thomas Howell THOMAS' is recorded in 1902 at the age of 77<sup>6</sup>, giving a YoB of 1825; I believe that this is 'my' Thomas.

Mary Ann's obituary (1919) refers to her 'late' father and so he had certainly died by this date.

### **Sarah THOMAS (1855 – ?)**<sup>7</sup>

**013L**

Sarah was the first child of Thomas and Anne THOMAS. There are only two birth registrations recorded in the Cardigan district<sup>8</sup> (which includes Eglwysrwrw) between April 1854 and April 1855; these dates assume that Sarah's age was recorded correctly in the census returns.

In 1876 she married David ROWLANDS, a grocer's assistant in Merthyr Tydfil<sup>9</sup>. The 1881 census return<sup>10</sup> shows the family (now with the addition of Thomas A, six months old) in Mary Street, Merthyr – but there is a problem here in that Sarah's place of birth is shown as 'Conwil Elvet'. There is indeed such a place, but it is some 18 miles SE of Eglwysrwrw.

### **Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?)**<sup>11</sup>

**013M**

Thomas, twin brother of Mary, was born on 13 FEB 1860. He married either Anna or Anne and they had at least five children.

### **Mary Anne THOMAS (1860 – 1919)**

Mary Anne was one of my four great-grandmothers. Her birth certificate confirms her date of birth as 13 FEB 1860 and the place as "Castle Eglwysrwrw". It also confirms her parents as Thomas THOMAS (farmer) and Anne THOMAS, formerly THOMAS.

She has not been found in the 1881 census, although it is just possible that she was a general servant with John and Anne EDWARDS in Nevern, Pembrokeshire<sup>12</sup>. John was a farmer; and as

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<sup>1</sup> 1891 census for 8 Rees Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG12/4436 f21 p3

<sup>2</sup> 1901 census for Emlyn Cottage, Rees Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG13/5024 f149 p42

<sup>3</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas Howell THOMAS and Margaret DAVIES, Q4/1900, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 1206

<sup>4</sup> ONS death reference for Catherine THOMAS aged 62, Q4/1892, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 349

<sup>5</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas Howell THOMAS and Margaret DAVIES, Q4/1900, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 1206

<sup>6</sup> ONS death reference for Thomas Howell THOMAS age 77, Q2/1902, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 371

<sup>7</sup> see Appendix 013L

<sup>8</sup> ONS birth registrations for Sarah THOMAS at Cardigan, both Q4/1854: either 11b 11 or 11b 4

<sup>9</sup> information from Simon ROWLANDS; ONS marriage reference for Sarah THOMAS and David ROWLANDS, Q3/1876, Merthyr T, 11a 640

<sup>10</sup> 1881 census return for 49 Mary Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG11/5311 f99 p26

<sup>11</sup> see Appendix 013M

<sup>12</sup> 1881 census for Trewenfionfaior, Nevern, Pembrokeshire, RG11/5425 f89 p4

*The THOMAS families*

Nevern is less than five miles from Eglwysrwr this is feasible. However, her age shown in this census is 17 (whereas it should be 21).

What is certain, though, is that eight months later, in December, she married Evan OWEN in Aberaman. Their story continues in the 'Present Generations' booklet.

**Martha Hannah THOMAS (1867 – ?)**

**013N**



*The THOMAS families*

The above history, particularly that relating to Thomas THOMAS (senior), is complicated and, in parts, difficult to accept. The table summarises the various points along the way.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event / source</b>	<b>Wife/family</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
1823	birth (from possible baptism)		CMN Kilrhedyn	
1825	birth (from census and death cert)		CMN Kilrhedyn	
1850	married Anne THOMAS	Anne THOMAS	Carmarthen *	
1855	birth of Sarah (1861 census)	Anne	PEM Eglwysrw	
1860 Feb	birth of twins Thomas and Mary Anne	Anne	PEM Eglwysrw	farmer
1860	death of Anne		PEM Cardigan *	
1861	1861 census	(widower)	PEM Eglwysrw	farmer
1866	married Martha YOUNG	Martha	Haverfordwest *	
1867	birth of Martha Hannah	Martha	Merthyr Tydfil *	
1871	1871 census	Martha	Merthyr Tydfil, Union Street	grocer
1873	death of Martha			
1875	Kelly's Directory		Hirwaun	grocer
1881 Apr	1881 census	Catherine	Merthyr Tydfil, Mary Street	commission agent
1881 Dec	Mary Anne's marriage			grocer
1884	Kelly's Directory		Aberaman Cardiff Road	grocer
1891	1891 census	Catherine	Merthyr Tydfil, Rees Street	commission agent
1892	death of Catherine		Merthyr Tydfil *	
1900	married Margaret DAVIES	Margaret	Merthyr Tydfil *	
1901	1901 census	Margaret	Merthyr Tydfil, Rees Street	'on own means'
1902	death			

\* indicates a registration district rather than a village or parish

## **Appendix 013L – Sarah THOMAS (1855 – 1917)**

Sarah was the first child of Thomas and Anne THOMAS. There are only two birth registrations recorded in the Cardigan district<sup>1</sup> (which includes Eglwysrwrw) between April 1854 and April 1855; these dates assume that Sarah's age was recorded correctly in the census returns, which are all consistent with one another.

In 1876 she married David ROWLANDS, a grocer's assistant in Merthyr Tydfil<sup>2</sup>. He was about four years older than Sarah and had been born in a small village in Brecknockshire<sup>3</sup>. The 1881 census return<sup>4</sup> shows the family (now with the addition of Thomas A, six months old) in Mary Street, Merthyr – but there is a problem here in that Sarah's place of birth is shown as 'Conwil Elvet'. There is indeed such a place, but it is some 18 miles SE of Eglwysrwrw. However, this is undoubtedly the right family as Thomas<sup>5</sup> appears in later returns. Their second son David Howard was born early in 1885<sup>6</sup>.

The family does not appear in the next census, that of 1891, but this is because they travelled to New York, arriving on 16 APR 1888, on the SS Baltic<sup>7</sup>. That year another son, Grover Cleveland<sup>8</sup>, was born. However, whatever the reason for their voyage they returned to England just a few years later, and by the time their next son, Archibald, was born in early 1893<sup>9</sup> they were once again living in Merthyr Tydfil.

Two more sons followed in fairly quick succession – Harry<sup>10</sup> and Gilbert<sup>11</sup> – and the 1901 census return shows the family in William Street, Merthyr Tydfil<sup>12</sup>.

Ten years later David is shown as a 'grocery manager' (rather than as an assistant), but the census return shows him living apart from the rest of the family, perhaps because he was about to retire and was still running a shop. Whatever the reason, he was living as a boarder with the RICHARDS family in Merthyr Tydfil<sup>13</sup> and Sarah was at Grove Place, Penarth<sup>14</sup>, with four of their sons.

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<sup>1</sup> ONS birth registrations for Sarah THOMAS at Cardigan, both Q4/1854: either 11b 11 or 11b 4

<sup>2</sup> ONS marriage reference for Sarah THOMAS and David ROWLANDS, Q3/1876, Merthyr T, 11a 640

<sup>3</sup> Llywel: on the northern edge of the present Brecon Beacons National Park, and about 22 miles NW of Merthyr Tydfil

<sup>4</sup> 1881 census return for 49 Mary Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG11/5311 f99 p26

<sup>5</sup> ONS birth reference for Thomas Augustus ROWLANDS, Q4/1880, Merthyr T, 11a 382

<sup>6</sup> ONS birth reference for David Howard ROWLANDS, Q1/1885, Merthyr , 11a 534

<sup>7</sup> information from Simon ROWLANDS

<sup>8</sup> named after the US President, Grover Cleveland, who was in office 1885 – 1889

<sup>9</sup> ONS birth reference for Archibald ROWLANDS, Q1/1893, Merthyr T, 11a 667

<sup>10</sup> ONS birth reference for Harry ROWLANDS, Q3/1894, Merthyr T, 11a 616

<sup>11</sup> ONS birth reference for Gilbert ROWLANDS, Q1/1897, Merthyr T, 11a 278

<sup>12</sup> 1901 census return for 27 William Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG13/5024 f148 p39

<sup>13</sup> 1911 census return for 3 Hanover Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG14/32469 ED19 SN146

<sup>14</sup> 1911 census return for 33 Grove Place, Penarth, RG14.32171, ED6 SN23

## **Appendix 013M – Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?)**

Thomas was the twin brother of Mary Ann, born on 13 FEB 1860<sup>1</sup> at ‘Castle Eglwysrwr’. There are today the remains of a castle at Eglwysrwr, located to the west of the village, which is about six miles south-west of Cardigan and miles east of Fishguard.

As his mother, Anne, died soon after his birth, Thomas was taken to live with Thomas and Maria DAVIES and their daughter and son-in-law Elizabeth and Thomas DAVIES, at Meline<sup>2</sup>, where we was described in the 1861 census as a ‘nursling’ (in the care of a wet-nurse). Both Thomases were agricultural labourers and were, possibly, workers on the THOMAS farm. Meline is the ‘church next to the site of the Celtic Fort of Castell Henllys’<sup>3</sup> – Castell Henllys being about a mile north of Eglwysrwr.

Although ten years later, in 1871, Thomas was living with the rest of his family (father, step-mother Martha, two sisters and half-sister Martha Hanna) in Merthyr Tydfil<sup>4</sup>, it seems that some time after that he returned to his father’s native Carmarthenshire. The 1881 census records him living as a farm servant with the DAVIES family at Cenarth<sup>5</sup>, just inside Carmarthenshire but less than ten miles from Eglwysrwr. This family is unlikely to be the same that wet-nursed him in 1861 but the families may, of course, be related. Towards the end of 1881<sup>6</sup> he married either Anne DAVIES or Anna HUGHES, from Penboyr<sup>7</sup>. The uncertainty is because the 1891 census shows his wife as Anna, whereas that of 1891 shows her as Anne.

Penboyr is a small village in Carmarthenshire about ten miles south-east of Newcastle Emlyn. Anna (or Anne) was about ten years older than Thomas, according to the census indexes.

By the time of the next census in 1891 Thomas and Ann were living in his father’s home village of Kilrhedyn<sup>8</sup>. The 1891 census shows five boys and a step-daughter, presumably Ann’s daughter from a first marriage although her surname is given as ‘Thomas’. Thomas’s profession is shown as ‘farmer’. Ten years later still, in 1901, he was a general labourer, and the family had moved back to Cenarth<sup>9</sup>. They have not been found in the 1911 census.

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<sup>1</sup> birth certificate

<sup>2</sup> 1861 census return for Pontyglazier, Meline, Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174 f22 p14

<sup>3</sup> information from the headmaster at Eglwysrwr school

<sup>4</sup> 1871 census return for 24 Union Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG10/5399 f57 p19

<sup>5</sup> 1881 census for Penralltygills, Kenarth, Carmarthenshire, RG11/5430 f54 p4

<sup>6</sup> ONS marriage for Thomas THOMAS and Anna HUGHES, Q4/1881, Newcastle Emlyn, 11b 53

<sup>7</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas THOMAS and either Anna HUGHES, Q4/1881, Newcastle E., 11b 53, or Anne DAVIES, Q4/1881, Newcastle E., 11b 57

<sup>8</sup> 1891 census for Eden-Blaenwaun, Kilrhedyn, Carmarthenshire, RG12/4547 f25 p13

<sup>9</sup> 1901 census for Penywann, Kenarth, Carmarthenshire, RG13/5139 f13 p1

## **Appendix 1 – Newspaper extracts**

### **Weekly Mail, Cardiff, Sat 6<sup>th</sup> September 1919 (page 4)**

#### **DEATHS**

OWEN On August 29th, suddenly, at Llwyn On, Ruthin Gardens, Cardiff, Mary Anne, the beloved wife of Councillor Evan Owen, JP, in her 59th year.

### **Weekly Mail, Cardiff, Sat 6<sup>th</sup> September 1919 (p4) +photo**

#### **OBITUARY** Mrs Evan Owen, Cardiff

The death took place suddenly on Friday morning at her residence, Llwyn On, Ruthin Gardens, Cardiff, of Mrs Evan Owen, wife of Councillor Evan Owen, JP. Mrs Owen, who was in her 59th year, was the daughter of the late Mr T. H. Thomas, a retired grocer of Merthyr, and in 1881 she was married to Councillor Evan Owen, and they had lived in Cardiff ever since. Mrs Owen had been a member of the Cardiff Union Board of Guardians for about 15 years, and all through her life she took a keen and active interest in the Welsh Baptist Union, having been the Treasurer of the Zenana section of that movement for 13 years, during which period nearly £ 25,000 passed through her hands. She leaves 4 sons and a daughter. Two of the sons are in West Africa, one being the manager of the Elder Dempster Agency there, and another is a bank inspector. Another son is a barrister in Canada, and the fourth is an electrical engineer at Wigan. Mrs Owen was a member of the Board of Management of King Edward VII Hospital. It was only recently that Councillor and Mrs Owen returned from a holiday at Bath, and the deepest sympathy is felt with Councillor Owen and family in their bereavement.

The funeral took place at the Cardiff Cemetery on Tuesday. In the heavy downpour of rain, many hundreds of friends of Mrs Owen joined the relatives in paying respect to one who had endeared herself to the poor of the district. After leaving the house the cortege halted at the Miskin Street United Methodist Church, where the Revd Charles Davies, the Tabernacle, assisted by Principal Edwards and the Revd H. M. Hughes conducted an impressive service. "She lived for Cathays", remarked Principal Edwards during the course of the service.

*Western Mail, Cardiff, Sat 30th August 1919 (page 1)*

#### **DEATHS**

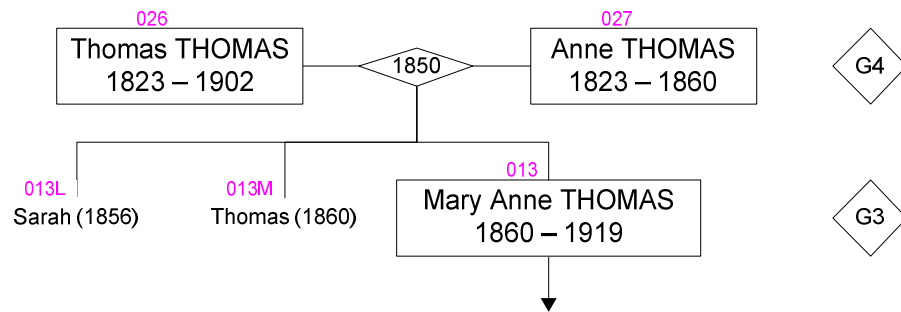
OWEN On August 29th, suddenly, at Llwyn On, Ruthin Gardens, Cardiff, Mary Anne, the beloved wife of Councillor Evan Owen, JP, in her 59th year. Funeral 3 p.m., Tuesday, for Cardiff cemetery.

and additionally, on 1st September

...Service at 3 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, Miskin Street.

## Charts and diagrams

### Outline tree for the THOMAS family



### THOMAS G4

