The

# THOMAS

families of

## Carmarthenshire,

## Pembrokeshire,

and

Glamorganshire

## © Chris Green

Noddyshall, Rockshaw Road, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3DB 01737 644145 chris.<u>noddyshall@btinternet.com</u>

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Introduction	4
G4 – THOMAS family	5
Sarah THOMAS (1855 – 1917) 013L	12
Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?) 013M	12
Mary Anne THOMAS (1860 – 1919)	12
Martha Ann (Hannah) THOMAS (1867 – ?) 013N	12
Appendix 013L – Sarah THOMAS (1854 – 1917)	14
Appendix 013M – Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?)	
Appendix 013N – Martha Ann (Hannah) THOMAS (1867 – ?)	22
Appendix 1 – Newspaper extracts	23
Weekly Mail, Cardiff, Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> September 1919 (page 4)	23
Weekly Mail, Cardiff, Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> September 1919 (p4) +photo	23

## Introduction

My great-grandmother on this branch of the family was Mary Ann OWEN (née THOMAS).



Tracing the line of a family named THOMAS in Wales has not proved at all easy, especially as her father was Thomas THOMAS and her mother's maiden name was also THOMAS.

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.

Much of the information concerning Sarah THOMAS, elder sister of Mary Anne, has been provided by my third cousin Simon ROWLANDS.

## G4 – THOMAS family

My great-great-grandfather in this line was Thomas H THOMAS<sup>1</sup>: from two sources<sup>2</sup> I believe the 'H' stood for 'Howell', although the origin of this rather unusual forename has not been found. He has been found in each census return from 1841 to 1901: the various returns show his place of birth as Carmarthenshire (1841), Conwil Elvet – or Cynwyl Elfed (1851), Cilchadyn (1861), Kilredin (1871), Kilrhedyn (1881), Kilrhedin (1891), and Cilrhedin (1901), all of which are stated to be in Carmarthenshire. His year of birth varies from 1823 to 1827.

Cilrhedyn (often anglicised to Kilrhedyn) is in the union of Newcastle Emlyn. It is less than a mile from the extreme eastern border of Pembrokeshire (with Carmarthenshire).

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 never baptised, and this appears to be the case as both the 1841<sup>4</sup> and 1851<sup>5</sup> census returns show his parents as John and Rachel.

Sometime after 1851 Thomas married Anne THOMAS<sup>6</sup>. There are at least three marriages between a Thomas THOMAS and an Anne THOMAS between 1847 and 1854 and without further information it is not possible to determine which one is relevant.

Thomas and Anne's first child was a daughter, Sarah, born in 1855<sup>7</sup>. Sarah later married David ROWLANDS<sup>8</sup>.

About four years later Thomas and Anne had twins, born on 13 FEB 1860<sup>9</sup>; no record of any other children from this marriage has been found. Mary Anne's birth certificate gives her place of birth as 'Castle, Eglwyswrw'; at that time Eglwyswrw (in Pembrokeshire, about 12 miles west of Cilhredyn) was in the registration district of Cardigan. Later census returns show that all three children were born in Eglwyswrw.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> shown on his daughter Mary Ann's marriage certificate and referred to as T. H. THOMAS in her obituary (see Appendix 1)

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> baptism register for Cilrhedyn

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 1841 census return for Tryalbach, Abernant, Carmarthenshire; HO107/1383.7 f38 p3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 1851 census return for Trialibach, Conwil Elvet, Carmarthenshire; HO108/2474 f189 p7

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Mary Anne's birth certificate shows "Anne THOMAS, formerly THOMAS" as the mother

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> there are several possibilities for the birth of a Sarah THOMAS registered in Cardigan: two instances in Q4/1854 (11 b 11 and

<sup>11</sup> b 4) and one in Q3/1855 (11 b 8)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> information from my third cousin, Simon ROWLANDS; see Appendix 013L

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> birth certificate

It appears that Anne died at about the same time as the twins were born<sup>1</sup>, possibly as a result of the birth. Although the twins were born on 13 FEB 1860<sup>2</sup>, the births weren't registered until the twentieth of the following month; this is understandable if Thomas had the death of his wife to cope with as well as the birth of twins.

By the time of the census the following year, in April 1861, Thomas, now a widower, was living with six-year-old Sarah in the village of Eglwyswrw<sup>3</sup> – the village in which all three children had been born. The census return shows him as a farmer, and this is confirmed by Mary Anne's and Thomas's birth certificate. The twins were living elsewhere.

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1861 census return showing the THOMAS family (3<sup>rd</sup> entry)

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>4</sup>. Both men 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>5</sup> – Castell Henllys being about a mile north of Eglyswrw.

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 Eglwyswrw<sup>6</sup>.

Towards the end of 1866<sup>7</sup> Thomas married again, to Martha YOUNG. The marriage was registered in the Haverfordwest district, which at that time did not include Eglwyswrw. Martha,

 $<sup>^1</sup>$  there are three possibilities for the death of Anne THOMAS registered in Cardigan district (which includes Eglwyswrw): Q1/1860 11b 3 or 11b 11, or Q2/1860 11b 11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> birth certificate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 1861 census for 'village of Eglyswrw', Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174 f28 p2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 1861 census return for Pontyglazier, Meline, Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174 f22 p14

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> information from the headmaster at Eglyswrw school

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 1861 census return for Henllanorren, Eglwyswrw, Pembrokeshire, RG9/4174f29 p3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas THOMAS and Martha YOUNG, Q4/1866, Haverfordwest, 11a 1401

who was about four years younger than Thomas, had been born in Pembrokeshire, in a place shown in the 1871 census return as 'Llanver Nantury' (which hasn't been traced<sup>1</sup>).

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1871 census return showing the THOMAS family (18<sup>th</sup> entry)

It is a distinct possibility that Martha was a widow. An entry in the 1861 census return<sup>2</sup> shows William and Martha YOUNG, with two servants but no children, living at Eglwyswrw. William was a farmer of 90 acres. According to this return Martha had been born at Nevern, about five miles west of Eglwyswrw. Two instances of a death of William YOUNG are recorded<sup>3</sup>, one in 1862 and one in 1864; the later one is the more likely. However, this does not explain why Thomas and Martha were married in the Haverfordwest area.

Shortly after their marriage, the THOMAS family moved south to Merthyr Tydfil, where a third daughter, Martha (H)annah, was born about 1867<sup>4</sup>. The 1871 census return<sup>5</sup> shows 'Martha Hannah', whereas that of ten years later<sup>6</sup> records her as 'Martha A'. As well as a change of address, Thomas changed profession from 'farmer' to 'grocer'.

The reason for this move (Merthyr Tydfil is some 75 miles from Eglwyswrw) is unknown; but either as a result of the move, or as a reason for it, by 1871 Thomas was a grocer. Sarah, the eldest daughter, was a 'servant' whilst the twins Thomas and Mary Anne were both 'scholars'.

The population of Merthyr Tydfil had been steadily increasing, from 35,000 in 1841 through 49,800 in 1861 to 51,900 in 1871. More people means more food and more groceries; perhaps this was the reason for the family's move and Thomas's change of occupation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Simon Rowlands, a third cousin, asserts that this is likely to be either Llanfair Nant Gwyn, about a mile from Eglwyswrw, or Llanfair Nant y Gof, about five miles from Haverfordwest

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  1861 census return for Jordan Mill, Cwm, Eglwyswrw, RG9/4174 f40 p8

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> ONS death reference for William Henry YOUNG, Q2/1862, Pembroke, 11a 448 or William YOUNG, Q4/1864, Pembroke, 11a 571

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> there are no birth registrations at Merthyr Tydfil for Martha Hannah about this time, although one for Martha Anna THOMAS, Q4/1867, 11a 376 is likely

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 1871 census return for 24 Union Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG10/5399 f57 p19

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 1881 census return for 17 Mary Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG11/5311 f98 p23

After only seven years of marriage, Martha died<sup>1</sup> in 1873. Less than eight years later Thomas was still in Merthyr Tydfil<sup>2</sup> 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>3</sup>.

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*1881 census return showing the THOMAS family (6<sup>th</sup> entry)* 

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This sounds rather improbable – Thomas is now married to his third wife – and yet this is the only family I can find that seems to fit. The occupation is something of a problem, however, as the 1881 census return (taken in April) 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? It is possible that he carried on both occupations at the same time. There is 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. On the other hand, THOMAS is a very common Welsh surname and this may have been nothing more than a coincidence.

 $<sup>^1</sup>$  ONS death reference for Martha THOMAS, Q2/1873, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 245

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 1881 census return for 17 Mary Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG11/5311 f98 p23

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</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

Ten years later, nothing much had changed. The 1891 census return<sup>1</sup> shows Thomas, still a 'commission agent', with wife Catherine, and living in Rees Street, Merthyr Tydfil. This is a rather larger house than the one in Mary Street, but is literally just around the corner – the two are within sight of one another.

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1891 census return showing the THOMAS family (23<sup>rd</sup> entry)

**n** . . .

Kelly's Directory of 1895 lists a Thomas Hy THOMAS, insurance agent, at Emlyn Cottage, Rees Street. As we shall see in a moment (in the 1901 census) Emlyn Cottage was the name of the house at 8 Rees Street, so this was certainly the right Thomas, but with second name presumably Henry, not Howell. Of course, Kelly's could have got it wrong – it wouldn't be the first time. Certainly 'commission agent' and 'insurance agent' could be the same.

In the census taken ten years later, in 1901<sup>2</sup>, he was at the same address with yet another wife, Margaret, and 'living on own means'. The 1901 entry shown is the only Thomas THOMAS born in either Carmarthenshire or Pembrokeshire between 1821 and 1831 and living in Glamorganshire.

<sup>&</sup>lt;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

Clearly this means that Catherine had died, and the most likely death for Catherine was in 1892<sup>1</sup>. A marriage between Thomas THOMAS and Margaret DAVIES took place in 1900<sup>2</sup> and this is probably the correct one, even though Thomas would have been about 75 at the time.

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Finally, the death of 'Thomas Howell THOMAS' is recorded in 1902 at the age of 77<sup>3</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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> ONS death reference for Catherine THOMAS aged 62, Q4/1892, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 349

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas Howell THOMAS and Margaret DAVIES, Q4/1900, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 1206

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> ONS death reference for Thomas Howell THOMAS age 77, Q2/1902, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 371

### Thomas THOMAS: his four marriages



## Sarah THOMAS (1855 – 1917)

Sarah was the first child of Thomas and Anne THOMAS.

In 1876 she married David ROWLANDS, a grocer's assistant in Merthyr Tydfil<sup>2</sup>. The 1881 census return<sup>3</sup> shows the family (now with the addition of Thomas A, six months old) in Mary Street, Merthyr.

## Thomas THOMAS (1860 – ?) 4

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 Eglwyswrw". 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 possible that she was a general servant with John and Anne EDWARDS in Nevern, Pembrokeshire<sup>5</sup>. John was a farmer; and as Nevern is less than five miles from Eglwyswrw this is feasible<sup>6</sup>. 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 Ann (Hannah) THOMAS (1867 – ?)

Martha married David FRANCIS in 1886. They had one child, who died during infancy.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> see Appendix 013L

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> information from Simon ROWLANDS; ONS marriage reference for Sarah THOMAS and David ROWLANDS, Q3/1876, Merthyr T, 11a 640

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 1881 census return for 49 Mary Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG11/5311 f99 p26

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> see Appendix 013M

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 1881 census for Trewenfionfaior, Nevern, Pembrokeshire, RG11/5425 f89 p4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> there is a possible connection with Nevern in that Thomas's second wife, Martha, may have been born there

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.

Date	Event / source	Wife/family	Place	Occupation
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 Eglwyswrw	
1860 Feb	birth of twins Thomas and Mary Anne	Anne	PEM Eglwyswrw	farmer
1860	death of Anne		PEM Cardigan *	
1861	1861 census	(widower)	PEM Eglwyswrw	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 (1854 – 1917)

Sarah was the first child of Thomas and Anne THOMAS. There are only two birth registrations of a Sarah THOMAS recorded in the Cardigan district<sup>1</sup> (which includes Eglwyswrw) 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. 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>.

For some reason the family 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 year or two later, as they appear in the census of 1891.

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;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>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> information from Simon ROWLANDS

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

Several questions arise from this: not least, what took them there, how could they afford the voyage, and why did they return after only a couple of years? In both the 1881 and 1891 census returns David is a 'grocer's assistant'.

The 1891 census (above) clearly shows that the Rowlands have four children (Thomas, David, Grover and John). and by the time their next son, Archibald, was born in early 1893<sup>1</sup> they were once again living in Merthyr Tydfil.

Two more sons followed in fairly quick succession – Harry<sup>2</sup> and Gilbert<sup>3</sup> – and the 1901 census return shows the family in William Street, Merthyr Tydfil<sup>4</sup>.

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This seems quite straightforward – seven children (all boys) born between 1880 and 1896 following a marriage in 1876 – but the following census, taken ten years later in 1911, clearly shows that the marriage produced only six children.

The same census shows that David was boarding with a family in Merthyr Tydfil, while Sarah and four of the boys were living in Penarth, almost thirty miles to the south

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> ONS birth reference for Archibald ROWLANDS, Q1/1893, Merthyr T, 11a 667

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ONS birth reference for Harry ROWLANDS, Q3/1894, Merthyr T,11a 616

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> ONS birth reference for Gilbert ROWLANDS, Q1/1897, Merthyr T, 11a 278

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 1901 census return for 27 William Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG13/5024 f148 p39

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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>1</sup> and Sarah was at Grove Place, Penarth<sup>2</sup>, with four of their sons.

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David died in 1916<sup>3</sup>, aged 69, and Sarah died the following year<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 1911 census return for 3 Hanover Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG14/32469 ED19 SN146

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 1911 census return for 33 Grove Place, Penarth, RG14.32171, ED6 SN23

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> ONS death reference for David ROWLANDS aged 69, Q1/1916, Cardiff, 11a 520

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> ONS death reference for Sarah ROWLANDS aged 63, Q4/1917, Cardiff, 11a 435

**Thomas Augustus**, born on 19 SEP 1880<sup>1</sup>, became a school teacher, and married Jessie ROBERTS in 1907<sup>2</sup>. The census taken in 1911 confirms that they had married three years earlier; they were living with Jessie's parents<sup>3</sup> and her younger sister. By 1939 he had become a 'Headmaster Senior Service', and he and Jessie were living at 23 The Avenue, Merthyr. Thomas died aged 86 at Bangor in 1962<sup>4</sup>.

**David** was born on 17 DEC 1884<sup>5</sup>. Towards the end of 1914 he married Dorothy E KITCHEN; the marriage was registered at Axbridge (Somerset). The 1939 Register shows them living at 55 Beulah Road, Cardiff, with two children. David was a Civil Servant in the Ministry of Labour. A likely death was at Reading in 1959, when he was aged 74<sup>6</sup>.

**Grover** married Elizabeth MORRIS in 1915<sup>7</sup>. He appears in the 1939 register, living at 48 St Mark's Road, Henley-on-Thames. He was an 'Iron and Steel merchant's representative', and although the register shows him to be married, he was the only occupant of the house. He died towards the end of 1955<sup>8</sup>.

**Archibald** became a Civil Servant and in 1920 married Constance PHILLIPS<sup>9</sup>. In 1939 he was the Second Deputy Secretary at the Air Ministry in London. His death was registered in Henley in 1953<sup>10</sup>.

**Gilbert** died in 1923, aged only 27<sup>11</sup>. He had married a couple of years earlier, to Dorothy E BOWEN.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> from 1939 Register

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ONS marriage reference for Thomas Augustus ROWLANDS and Jessie Harriet L ROBERTS, Q3/1907, Merthyr Tydfil, 11a 1326

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 1911 census reference for 25 Victoria Street, Merthyr Tydfil, RG14/32425, ED1, SN63

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> ONS death reference for Thomas A ROWLANDS aged 86, Q1/1962, Bangor, 8a 127

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> from 1939 Register

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> ONS death reference for David H ROWLANDS aged 74, Q1/1959, Reading, 6a 124

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> ONS marriage reference for Grover C ROWLANDS and Elizabeth G MORRIS, Q1/1915, Cardiff, 11a 701

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> ONS death reference for Grover C ROWLANDS, Q4/1955, Henley, 6b 799

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> ONS marriage reference for Archibald ROWLANDS and Constance M PHILLIPS, Q3/1920, Swansea, 11a 2937

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> ONS death reference for Archibald ROWLANDS, Q3/1953, Henley, 6b 634

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> ONS death reference for Gilbert ROWLANDS, Q3/1923, Cardiff, 11a 340

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

Thomas was the twin brother of Mary Ann, born on 13 FEB 1860<sup>1</sup> at 'Castle Eglwyswrw'. There are today the remains of a castle at Eglwyswrw, 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 Eglyswrw.

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>.

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1871 census return showing the THOMAS family (18<sup>th</sup> entry)

Sometime during the following ten years it seems 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 fewer than ten miles from Eglwyswrw. This family is unlikely to be the same that wet-nursed him in 1861 but the families may, of course, be related.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> birth certificate

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> information from the headmaster at Eglyswrw school

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

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

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1881 census return showing Thomas THOMAS [013M] with the DAVIES family (16<sup>th</sup> entry)

Towards the end of 1881<sup>1</sup> he married either Anne DAVIES or Anna HUGHES, from Penboyr<sup>2</sup>. The uncertainty is because the 1891 census shows his wife as Anna, whereas that of 1901 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>3</sup>, where Thomas was a farmer. They already had five sons of their own, plus a 15-year-old step-daughter Elizabeth – presumably from Anna's previous marriage. Everyone in the family spoke Welsh, but Thomas (senior) was the only person who also spoke English.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> ONS marriage for Thomas THOMAS and Anna HUGHES, Q4/1881, Newcastle Emlyn, 11b 53

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</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>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 1891 census for Eden-Blaenwaun, Kilrhedyn, Carmarthenshire, RG12/4547 f25 p13

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## 1891 census return showing the THOMAS family (9<sup>th</sup> entry)

## 1901 census return showing the THOMAS family (18<sup>th</sup> entry)

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Ten years later still, in 1901, he was a general labourer, and the family had moved back to Cenarth<sup>1</sup>. The third son, David, was a grocer's apprentice – perhaps following in his grandfather's footsteps.

The 1911 census shows only one instance of a Thomas THOMAS born at Eglwyswrw and of the right age, but he was a 'colliery labourer' and the family was living at Abercarn, in Monmouthshire. Moreover, he is shown as 'Thomas H', and he was married to Margaret. A point in favour is that he spoke both Welsh and English (as previous census returns indicated).

The change of occupation, address and wife are all points against this being the right Thomas, but cannot rule it out – indeed, all might be inter-dependent. None of the other census returns shows another Thomas born at Eglwyswrw, and this is a strong point in his favour. In addition, the census shows that they had been married for only one year, so it is possible that Anne had died and Thomas had remarried.

Sure enough the death of Anne THOMAS, age 52, was registered at Newcastle Emlyn (which includes Cenarth) in 1902<sup>2</sup>; but there are too many marriages of a Thomas THOMAS to a Margaret between 1902 and 1909 to be certain of choosing the right one.



1911 census return showing the THOMAS family

Similarly, finding the right death of a Thomas THOMAS is a near-impossible task.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 1901 census for Penywann, Kenarth, Carmarthenshire, RG13/5139 f13 p1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ONS death reference for Anne THOMAS aged 52, Q3/1902, Newcastle E., 11b 571

## Appendix 013N – Martha Ann (Hannah) THOMAS (1867 – ?)

Martha is recorded as living with her parents in both the 1871 and 1881 census returns at Merthyr Tydfil. Her second name is recorded variously as Hannah or Ann.

Information supplied by Simon ROWLANDS states that her married name was FRANCIS; and a marriage took place in 1886 between David FRANCIS and Martha THOMAS<sup>1</sup>. It was registered in Pontypridd.

The 1891 census return shows David and Martha living in Penarth<sup>2</sup>. David was a clerk, and a couple of years older than Martha. They had no children, but two other clerks, presumably work colleagues of David's, were lodging with them.

Ten years later, in 1901, David and Martha had moved a little way along the street<sup>3</sup>. Still no children; Martha's name was recorded as 'Martha A'.

In 1911 she was still 'Martha Anna', but undoubtedly the family is the same. They had remained in Penarth, but had moved to, literally, the next street<sup>4</sup>. David was now a railway clerk, and the census reveals that they had had one child but it had died, presumably in infancy.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> ONS marriage reference for David Morgan FRANCIS and Martha Hannah THOMAS, Q4/1886, Pontypridd, 11a 630

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  1891 census return for 18 Ivy Street, Penarth, RG12/4402 f 17 p29

 $<sup>^3</sup>$  1901 census return for 35 Ivy Street, Penarth, RG13/4989, f151 p40

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> 1911 census return for Gwyndre, Grove Terrace, Penarth, RG14/32173 ED8 SN254

## **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.

The area around Ruthin Gardens and Miskin Street is (2013) very close to the campus of Cardiff University, and consequently many of the houses are now student dwellings. The houses in Ruthin Gardens appear to be largely unaltered from how they were 130 years ago. There is no chapel in Miskin Street; most of the houses are Victorian although there is a row of some four to six much more modern houses that may now occupy the site of the former chapel.