

Welcome to the first edition of the Ceredigion Archives Newsletter. Since Ceredigion Archives became independent of its former Dyfed sister-offices at Carmarthen and Haverfordwest in April 1996 we have wanted to produce a regular information source for our researchers, perhaps something not unlike the old Dyfed Archives Newsletter. This first issue is a gift and an invitation. We want to send you all the best wishes of the season, and to show what is happening at Ceredigion Archives now. We also want to let you know what new documents have come into the office in which you might be interested. We have produced a short Christmas article, which we very much hope you will enjoy.

There are three staff at Ceredigion Archives - as everyone who has visited our office will know ! Gwyneth Roberts has been with the record office since Dyfed days, whilst Glenys McBurnie began working here just before the advent of Ceredigion. Helen Palmer joined the staff as the archivist in May 1996, and some people will remember her from her time in the Carmarthen Record Office. We must also mention the invaluable assistance of our caretakers Paul Jenkins and Ray Blewer, without whom there would be no plants and fewer shelves.

Many changes have been made since Ceredigion Archives first opened its doors in April 1996. The door itself has changed, and the searchroom has been restored to something of its former glory, with new paint and the restoration of the great gilt mirror over the mantelpiece. We are building up a collection of reference books useful to our searchers, and house a very interesting small library of books, periodicals and transcripts from the Cardiganshire Family History Society. Our banana plants have produced bananas this year, and Paul our caretaker continues to cultivate the most astonishing African Violets to beautify the room. And the sea views are still wonderful, of course.

Downstairs in the strongrooms far more dramatic changes have occurred. New rooms acquired in 1996 almost doubled our strongroom capacity, and the first year was spent in building work, ensuring that the new areas were sound and secure. The old fire extinguisher system had to be removed and was replaced by a new system which runs throughout the archive strongrooms. We are just completing the shelving of the new areas, which

are already nearly full. We have set out to box all the records - many were just placed straight onto the shelves in the past - and this huge task is nearing completion. We have introduced humidity and temperature monitoring to the strongrooms, and are gradually purchasing plans cabinets to house large items more safely. Conservation is a massive and expensive challenge, but the unique nature of archives means that we must respond to need. We are beginning by evaluating our conservation needs, whilst taking steps to preserve items better to minimize wear [and tear!] when in use. In addition to holding historic records for the county the Archives maintains the modern records of the county council, and about 700 cubic feet of modern records have been received, sorted, listed, boxed and shelved in the last two years. They join the thousands of modern records boxes already held here from Dyfed and Cardiganshire days.

We are frequently "out and about" in the county, giving talks and presentations to local clubs and societies, which is always fun especially when tea and biscuits - and sometimes *cake* - follows the talk ! We have a small exhibition on the mezzanine floor of our building here at the County Offices, which is currently on a Christmas theme. This year we have also had exhibitions on the history of the University, the eightieth anniversary of the Armistice, ephemera from a grocer's shop ("I remember it like yesterday..."), Education in the County, Hospital Archives in Ceredigion and Holidays in Ceredigion. What a mixture !

We hope to produce the newsletter, with its triple theme of office news, new accessions and an article based on the holdings of the office, three times a year. It is hoped to produce newsletters at the end of March, the end of September and the end of December (or Lady Day, Michelmás and Christmas !).

We believe that a small annual charge will have to be made to cover the costs of producing and mailing the newsletter. If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, please return the form at the bottom of this edition with a cheque for £4.00 made out to Ceredigion Archives. Postal orders and international money orders would also be welcome, but sorry, no stamps or cash through the post.

We look forward very much to hearing from you, and hope that you will support this newsletter and Ceredigion Archives. With best wishes for a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year,

Glenys, Gwyneth and Helen.

What happened that Christmas?

A few weeks ago a searcher brought a sampler into the office, which belonged to his family and commemorated the life of a young girl called Mary George who sadly died at the age of twelve. She is buried in Llanilar, about six miles south east of Aberystwyth. We looked at the census for 1891, and 1881 and discovered that she was the daughter of John and Ann George of Borth. A marriage certificate from the Registrar showed that John and Ann had married on Christmas Day 1871, and we found a notice of their wedding in the Cambrian News for 29th December 1871 :

MARRIAGE : George - Jones

December 25th at the Registrar's Office, Aberystwyth

Mr John George of Borth to Miss Ann Jones of Troedyrhyw, Llanfarian.

Then we started wondering what else happened in this area on that particular Christmas Day. As John and Ann celebrated their wedding, what kind of day were other people in the county having?

Christmas morning was wet. Long before dawn people in the seaside village of Borth went to attend the Christmas day service at church :

BORTH

Christmas Services

Notwithstanding the wet weather, a large number of adults and children met at 6 o'clock, on the morning of Christmas Day at the church, and many were unable to gain admittance.

The Rev. D. Evans, Corris preached from John 1 chapter 14 and the gentleman also conducted an English service at nine, one in Welsh at eleven, on the same good morning.

(CambrianNews)

Churches and chapels throughout the county had been preparing to look their best in time for the special Christmas worship :

DECORATION OF LLANGOEDMORE CHURCH

This church was very chastely decorated with texts and designs suitable for the season during Christmas. On the baptismal font we noticed a very pretty cross formed of holly leaves and berries, the

body of the church being surrounded by a magnificent wreath of evergreens, whilst under the pulpit was a handsome cross of evergreens and berries; the lectern was also decorated with evergreens. All the windows were laid out with moss and leaves of evergreens. It is only fair to add, without bestowing any undue praise, that very much credit is due to the Misses North for their judgment in selecting the several mottoes, and their great taste in the decorations throughout.

(Cardigan and Teivyside Advertiser)

How, we wondered, had John George make his trip to the Aberystwyth Registry Office that Christmas Day ? He might have gone the short journey by rail, if he wanted to keep his wedding clothes smart :

Cambrian Railways

Christmas Holidays

Ordinary return tickets issued on Friday December 22nd and intervening days, will be available for return any day up to and including Saturday December 30th.

On Christmas Day the trains will run as on Sunday.

Ann's father was a gamekeeper ; he was one of the witnesses at the wedding, and perhaps he attended some celebration afterwards. Elsewhere on Christmas evening, in the countryside near Llancynfelin another gamekeeper was busy with his duties. The weather had improved ; it was a moonlit night, but this proved unlucky for some :

Llanbadarn Fawr Petty Sessions

Night Poaching

Evan Jenkins, foundryman, Aberystwyth was charged by Sir Pryse Pryse Bart. Gogerddan with night poaching in Cwmcynfelin wood. John Clark, gamekeeper under Sir Pryse Pryse said that he was at Cwmcynfelin on the night of December 25th at about 11 o'clock and his son Thomas Clark was with him when he heard the report of a gun.....

It being a moonlit night the witness called to his son who came up, seized the prisoner and took his gun from him.The prisoner admitted the offence. The Bench committed Jenkins to prison for one

calendar month with hard labour, and ordered him at the expiration of that time to be bound over, himself in £10 and 2 sureties in the sum of £10 each, not to offend for one year, and in case no sureties could be found to be imprisoned for a further period of 6 calendar months. (Cambrian News)

Who were these people ? We looked at the 1871 census to see. The Jenkins family lived in Poplar Row, Aberystwyth :

Evan Jenkins	Head	Married	Age 26	Ironmoulder
Hannah Jenkins	Wife	Married	Age 28	
Thomas Jenkins	Son		Age 4	
James Jenkins	Son		Age 3mths	

John and Thomas Clark[e] lived at Old Cwm, Vaenor Lower according to the census. John came from Eaton Hastings in Berkshire originally, had married a woman from Lechlade in Gloucestershire, and the couple had raised their children in Buscot, Berkshire. They had arrived in Cardiganshire some time between 1861 and 1871, to work for the Pryse family of Gogerddan.

John Clarke	Head	Married	Age 50	Gamekeeper
Eliza Clarke	Wife	Married	Age 50	
Thomas Clarke	Son	Unm.	Age 25	Gamekeeper
Rebecca Clarke	Daughter	Unm.	Age 16	
John Clark	Son	Unm.	Age 12	
Princes[s] Clarke	Daughter	Unm.	Age 9	

Ten years later we can see that the Clarke family is still in the area. Thomas married a local girl and had three children by the time of the 1881 census. Of Evan and Hannah Jenkins and their family there is no trace. By 1881 they had left the county.

From the evidence we have it appears that people went out more on Christmas day than they do now, and that there were more events to attend. Nowadays a walk through the fields or along the promenade is as much as many of us can manage in between religious observations, the consumption of elaborate meals and the pacification of relatives disappointed by their presents. In 1871 it was rather different :

ABERYSTWYTH

Christmas Evans

On Christmas Day a tea meeting took place in the school room of the English Baptist chapel. About 300 persons were present. At seven o'clock in the evening a lecture was delivered in the chapel upon 'Christmas Evans' by the Rev.T.E. Williams, the minister of the place. The peroration 'to a most interesting lecture' consisted of a descriptive account of a visit to the grave of Christmas Evans, at Swansea.

Concert

The Aberystwyth United Choral Society assisted by several amateurs, gave a complimentary concert to Mr R.S. Hughes (Royal Academy of Music, London) in the Temperance Hall, on Christmas Day.
(Cambrian News)

CARDIGAN

Glanrhyd Methodist Chapel

A very successful meeting was held on the evening of Christmas Day at this new and very neat chapel... Member of the [six] different choirs gave several recitations and a very able address on Education was delivered by Mr. James Griffiths, butcher, Cardigan. The subjects for the extempore speech was "Hen esgyd" and six competed... Two parties competed on "Smoking" forming an extempore **debate**...**All** who won prizes very handsomely presented them to the building **fund**... The chapel was very full, a pleasant evening was spent and the proceeds to the building fund were considerable. At the close coffee was plentifully provided by the friends of the chapel for all who chose to partake of it.
(Cardigan and Teivyside Advertiser)

Below, we can see that Christmas dinner for the paupers in the Workhouse often consisted of roast beef. Elsewhere too there was less of a concentration on poultry than there is today. Both The Cambrian News and The Cardigan and Teivyside Advertiser reported on the meat available locally. Anyone who thinks of "sourced meat" as a recent innovation should read on !

Christmas Market

Mr George Thomas, Trecregin, brought to town on Thursday several first class turkeys, weighing from 12 to 16 pounds each, which were disposed of at the rate of 9pence per pound, also, a remarkably fine barn door fowl, eight months old, which weighed no less than six pounds.

(Cardigan and Teivyside Advertiser)

Pembroke Christmas fat Cattle Show

This annual show of stock took place on Monday last, and although several eminent breeders of the neighborhood were conspicuous by their absence, was a great success.

Mr David Davies, Newcastle - **Emlyn**, had a magnificent Shorthorn white heifer, with excellent points throughout, very **level**, and of splendid quality, and this beautiful animal, handsome notwithstanding her extreme fatness, carried the honours of the day, winning the first place in class A, and the two other special prizes, and at the sale by auction at the close of the exhibition was knocked down for the large sum of £65.

Mr D Davies was also awarded a special prize, given by J H Scourfield, Esq., M.P., a silver cup, values at £5, to the best animal of the four first classes. He also received a silver cup, given by T. Meyrick, Esq., M.P.

(Cardigan and Teivy Side Advertiser)

Friday December 22nd 1871

Aberystwyth Christmas Fare

The purveyors in the town show a determination to swell the enjoyment of this festive season by displaying in their shops great abundance of good cheer of every description, from the commonest requirements of the housewife to the most agreeable relishes of an epicurean. An account of the Christmas stock offered for sale by the butchers may not be uninteresting.

Mr James Woodcock, Great Darkgate Street, exhibits first-class Hereford bullocks and heifers, **Ayreshire** bullocks and heifers; Shropshire and Southdown sheep from Mr Cotterell, **Derry Ormond** Park, besides Welsh mutton, and bacon pigs and porkers.

Mr Edward Edwards, Little Darkgate Street offers beef from animals bought of the right Hon. the Earl of **Lisburne**, Crosswood, and from animals bought of Mr Lewis Pugh Pugh of Abermaide. Welsh sheep

obtained from Mr James **Loxdale**, Castle-Hill, and Mr John Davies, Erglodd, Southdown sheep, bought of Mr John Miller, Morfa Mawr, and Mr Daniel Thomas, Frondeg and porkers bought of Mr John Miller, Morfa Mawr.

Mr J G **Berrow**, Little Darkagate Street displays prime ox beef and an heifer purchased of Mr Lewis Pugh **Pugh**; ox beef, bred and fed by Colonel Powell of Nanteos; sheep bred and fed by Colonel Powell. Mr William Rowlands of North - Parade offers ox **beef**, bred and fed by Mr F.R. Roberts, **Pengwern**, also ox beef from a prize ox at the Crosswood Agricultural show, fed by Thomas Jones, Bryncastell; and prime Welsh mutton, bacon pigs, and porkers.

Mrs Edwards and Son, Bridge Street, have one prime bullock, bred and fed by Mr F.R. Roberts, Pengwern, and one bullock bought of Mr L.P. Pugh; together with a quantity of Welsh mutton, purchased of Mr Thomas Pugh, Matalog.

Mr Frank Fear has an excellent display of game, poultry etc;

We hope our readers will not forget -

"To aid the friendless - the despairing cheer"

(Cambrian News)

Readers of the Cardigan and Teivyside Advertiser were meanwhile assured that the poor were not forgotten at this time of year :

Pennal

Seasonable Benevolence

On Christmas Day Mrs. **Thurston**, Talgarth Hall, with her usual liberality, distributed bedclothes and all kinds of wearing apparel to the most deserving poor of the neighborhood. Miss Davies, **Penmaen Dovey**, distributed many tons of coal among the poor; and Mr. Clement A Thurston, Pennal Towers, also kindly gave to most of the families of the place a large quantity of wood, and the seasonable gifts were highly appreciated and gratefully acknowledged by the recipients.

Cardigan and Tivy Side Advertiser

Friday December 29th 1871

For those whose circumstances had obliged them to enter the workhouse, there was at least a Christmas dinner of sorts - frequently the subject of much discussion beforehand by the Board of Guardians who were always

concerned that serving beer (a proposed Christmas treat) might corrupt the morals of their inmates.

Machynlleth Board of Guardians ordered the inmates to be provided with the usual dinner of roast beef and plum pudding.
(Cambrian News)

The week before Christmas four new inmates had come to Cardigan Workhouse. Of those, two stayed for only two days - Martha Rees of Nevern aged 29 and her baby John, but the other two, both elderly widows, remained over the Christmas period. About forty five people were in the Workhouse on Christmas Day, ranging in age from small babies of a month or two to 89 year old Mary Jones from Cardigan St. Mary's. The records of the workhouse do not tell us very much about the day itself, but we know from elsewhere that special arrangements were made.

Poor Mr. Edwards, a merchant in Cardigan town had a thoroughly nasty Christmas Day. He slipped on the steps of the sail lofts at his warehouse, and broke his leg in two places. Dr. Thomas was called in to treat him, and by the following Friday the newspaper reported him to be "doing favourably".

The schools throughout the county were closed on Christmas Day - but *only* on the day itself. At Llanddewi Brefi British School a new teacher had just arrived .

25th - 29th December : Attendance small but larger than last week. The Rain prevented many of the children from attending. Some of them have about 6 or 7 miles to walk every day, that is, 6 or 7 miles back and for.

I commence School at 1.30 p.m. in the afternoon and end at 3.45 p.m., for the children to get time to rech [sic] home, before night. The School was open only eight times this week because Monday was Christmas Day.

Lewis was very frustrated about the low attendance. The Saturday after Christmas he reports "**I went about the place and asked the people if they would send their children to school - I was very low hearted when asking but my labour was crowned with success, for I had about 70 children the following week**". A busy New Year's teaching schedule for Mr. Davies !

And what of the newly-wed Mr. & Mrs George ? They settled in Penparke (later Penparcau) where the family appears on the 1881 and 1891 census ; John was away at sea on both occasions, but we can see the names of their children - John (born about 1875) and Anne Jane (born about 1878) and younger sister Mary Elizabeth (born about 1880). Tragedy visited the family when Mary died some two years after the census was taken, but the other children grew up, and their descendants still flourish today. We would like to thank the family for their permission to tell their story, and to wish them - and all our other searchers and friends - an excellent Christmas and a Happy New Year.

90	
<u>November & December 1841.</u>	
Friday 24 th	The severity of the weather interfered with the progress of the Classes. The 3 rd and 4 th Standards had a lesson in Geography on Tuesday and another in Grammar this afternoon.
Friday 1 st Dec	Ordinary progress with nothing calling for special mention.
Friday 8 th	Very severe frost throughout this week. Roads very slippery - A few children unable to attend in consequence.
Friday 15 th	Pretty good attendance this week. The Monitors had reached Division in Algebra. The numbers in the 1 st Standard had lately been swelled to an unwieldy extent.
Friday 22 nd	Attendance similar to last week. Weather very cold and wet every day. No fuel, and consequently no fire.
Friday 29 th	Another wet and cold week. Ordinary progress. Monitors advanced to "Simple Equations" in Algebra, the inflection of the Pronoun in Grammar and the "Counties & County towns" in Geography of England. Last Monday being Xmas Day there was no school. Broke up school for a week.

Selected accessions since May 1996

- 968 - 970 Documents from Aberystwyth Borough, which came from the old Town Hall at re-organisation. These include the Abersywyth Corporation Minute Book 1847-1875 and Town Council Minute Book 1875 - 1887; Aberystwyth Cemetery Burial Registers 1877 - 1973 ; expired leases of the Borough Council 19th and 20th century.
- 972 Deeds relating to properties in parish of Penbryn 1772 - 1895
- 985 Photograph of William Lewis, headmaster of Llandysul County School with his family c. 1912 and photographs of school teams Llandysul County School c. 1917
- 990 Documents concerning the Bryn Arian and Pwll Roman silver lead mines near Talybont c. 1823 - 1856, part-owned by the Colman family (mustard manufacturers of Norwich).
- 992 Building Control plans for Aberystwyth c. 1890 - 1920 [these are plans of buildings erected in the borough at that period. They are usually plans & elevations, but sometimes also include written specifications.]
First and second edition 75" - 1 mile Ordnance Survey maps for Aberystwyth area (1889 and 1905)
- 994 Ysgubor y Coed Community Council records 1895 - 1988
- 997 Pennant School Log Book 1914 - 1960 [Purchased in a sale and donated to us.]
- 1008 Minute Books and correspondence of the Memorial Hall Committee of Caerwedros, Llandysilio-gogo 1946 - 1992
- 1013 Items relating to the life of the late Frank Evans of Aberystwyth. Frank Evans was a
1016 Cardiganshire man who was imprisoned by the Japanese in the second world war. He later wrote a book called Roll Call at Oevama and forged links of friendship between the Aberystwyth area and Japan.
- 1018 Deposited plans of Llandilo and Lampeter Light Railway, sheets 1 -7 . May 1905
[these are in need of conservation. Please phone to check they are here if you wish to see these items].
- 1024 Printed treasurer's accounts for Cardiganshire Quarter Sessions 1861 - 1866, lists of paupers in Aberaeron area 1870 - 1872, and other items of 19th century ephemera relating to Aberaeron.
- 1031 Transcript & index for the Caron tithe apportionment
- 1038 Transcript and indices for Llantrisant churchyard (p. Llanfihangel y Creuddyn)
- 1045 Further records of Lledrod Community Council 1974 - 1996
- 1048 Postcard album relating to Major D. Harton Davies, a prisoner of war in the 1914 - 1918 war.
- 1049 Two account books of David Davies, smith of Aberaeron 1832 - c.1908
- 1054 Clandestine marriage certificate 1753 [with other items]
- 1055 Photographs of the Woosnam family of Pontrydfendigaid, and others including personnel of the Manchester & Milford railway. n.d.

- 1056 Documents and ephemera concerning the late Laura Roberts of Aberystwyth.
20th century
- 1057 Logbook of Mynach School [Devil's Bridge] 1959 - 1988
- 1058 Records and photographs from Dinas and Ardwyn Schools 1940s - 1970s
- 1071 Port Book for the port of Aberystwyth 1858 - 1901 [with gaps]
- 1072 Records of the Guides Association in the county 1915 - 1985
- 1093 Slater's Trade Directory 1858-9 for Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire,
North and South Wales.
- 1112 Day books of a 19th century general store, with notes on his lectures etc.
by the late Rev. E. Pryce Jones.

We have also received from Ceredigion Museum at the Coliseum in Aberystwyth a large number of documents, photographs and ephemera collected by them in past years. These include ledgers and day books of several nineteenth century businesses in the county, scrapbooks compiled by Miss Florrie Hamer who worked at Nanteos and had a keen interest in local history, 19th and 20th century sale posters from the Caxton Hall Press at Lampeter and the Cardigan and Teivyside press at Cardigan, ephemera relating to the 1914 - 1918 war, and the erection of the Abersystwyth war memorial, and numerous other interesting and remarkable items.

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