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Cylchlythyr Cymdeithas Hanes Cwm Cynon.

The Story Behind the Old Jug... by Dewi F. Thomas.

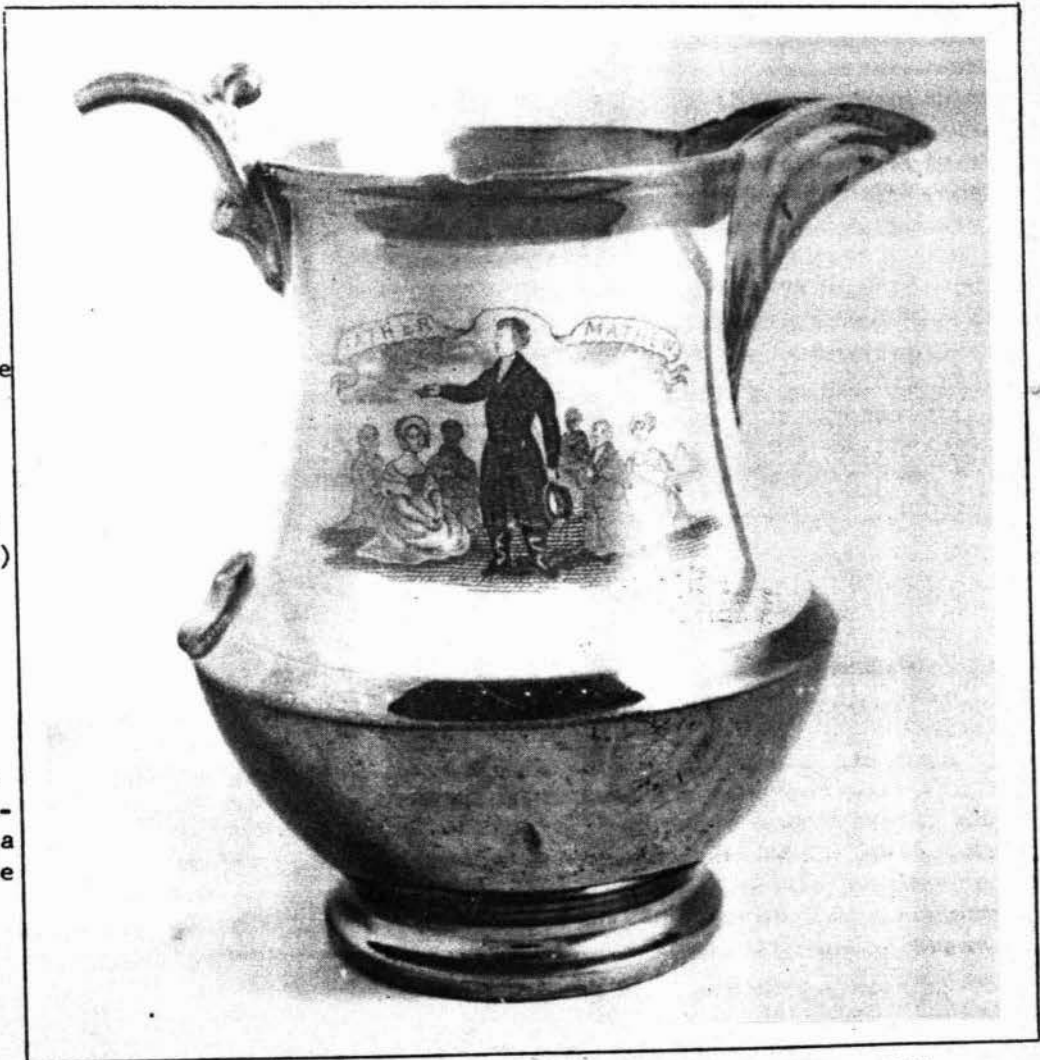
This photograph of an old lustre jug kept in the family for a long time shows a man standing before a seated group of people, with hills in the background. Above is an inscription: 'Father Mathew'.

This jug and its scene intrigued me as a boy. I heard then that the handle had been broken years before when my great-grandfather, William Francis (who lived in Beaufort - or Cendl as it was then called - in 1838) came eventually to Aberdare, to work in the Abernant Ironworks.

The family story was that the farm cart used to carry his furniture & china from Beaufort broke down on the Merthyr mountain, and some of his china was broken - including the jug's handle.

For a time, I puzzled as to whom the person on the jug might be. Then I began to dig into our family history. I found that the temperance movement had influenced our family during William Francis' time; and that

the jug must have been bought during the heady days of that movement in the 1840's. But what continued to intrigue me was the identity of the 'Father Mathew' on the jug.



OLD PHOTOGRAPHS NO.4: Father Theolbald Mathew, 1790 - 1856; a relative of the Mathews of Aberaman. (Source: Mr Dewi Francis Thomas.).

.../continued on page 2...

.../THE OLD JUG (continued):

I found out that there was an ancient Mathew family connected with Aberaman House. When I joined the Cynon Valley History Society and bought volume 1 of Old Aberdare, I saw that the 'Descriptive & Historical Sketch' of the district written in 1885 mentioned that "The Mathews...were one of the oldest families of the place, from whom the celebrated apostle of temperance, Father Mathew, was descended (p.59).

Later, I borrowed from Aberdare Library a travel book entitled Cork and Kerry, by Sean Jennett. There I found mention of a statue in Cork city commemorating 'Father Mathew'. I then wrote to the Cork City Librarian with a description of the jug, and asked whether there was any link with the statue. Mr Kieran Burke, Cork's Local History Librarian, replied that "The Father Mathew on your jug is the same person as that commemorated in the statue and in the church in Cork City." He also sent me relevant pictures & further information.

Soon thereafter, and by chance, I spoke to Mr Glyn Davies, a well-known photographer and member of our Society, and asked him if he had ever been in Cork. In fact, he had; and he supplied me with pictures of statues at Cork & Cashel.

I searched further in a book called The Water Drinkers, by N Longmate, and found a brief description of Father Mathew which agreed with his appearance on our old jug: "He was usually dressed in a long, black frock-coat, and in polished Hessian boots." In another work, One Hundred Irish Lives, there was an entry for Father Theobald Mathew. This noted that "His Roman Catholic father was Land Agent to a cousin, the 1st Baron Llandaff (*), who had discreetly become a Protestant to preserve the family estates" (p.90).

Father Theobald Mathew (often called 'Toby') was born in Thomastown Castle, nr. Cashel, Co. Tipperary, on the 10th October, 1790; and he was dubbed the 'Apostle of Temperance' by the famous Irish land-reformer, Daniel O'Connell.

During the 1830's, he threw himself into temperance work among the poor of Ireland, who turned to alcohol as a relief from their miserable circumstances. He had widespread success in his own country, & also visited Britain and the United States. However, his work was seriously impaired when the Great Famine struck.

During his visit to Britain, he met the dukes of Wellington and of Norfolk, & also visited Liverpool and Glasgow. It may

well have been during the interest created by this visit that our old jug first came into my family.

Theobald Mathew died in Queenstown (now called Cobh), in county Cork, on the 8th December, 1856, and was buried in St Joseph's cemetery, Cork, where a memorial church stands in his honour today.

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(*) EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this fascinating article Dewi Thomas alludes to the fact that Father Theobald Mathew was born a cousin of the "first Baron Llandaff".

The earls of Llandaff (for such was their rank in the Irish peerage) were descended of George Mathew of Radur, nr. Cardiff. He sold the family's patrimony at Radur and emigrated to Ireland. He died in 1636. His son, Theobald Mathew (d 1699) received an estate at Thurles, co. Tipperary, from his brother-in-law, the first duke of Ormond. Theobald Mathew's great-grandson (one George Mathew) acquired in 1740, by marriage with another branch of the family in Ireland, a further estate at Thomas Town, county Tipperary. He was succeeded only by a daughter, and bequeathed his lands to the third branch of the Irish Mathews - those of Annefield - at his decease in 1760. Along with these Irish lands, the manor of Llandaff was bequeathed to Thomas Mathew of Annefield (who died in 1777).

Both the earls of Llandaff and Father Theobald Mathew, the apostle of temperance, were born of this Annefield line. Thomas Mathew's son, Francis, became the 1st Earl Llandaff of Thomas Town in 1793 (having been made a baron in 1783). This is the peer to whom Dewi Thomas refers in his article. (The earldom became extinct in 1833).

The Radur (& Irish) line of the Mathew family was descended from Sir David Mathew, standard-bearer to Edward IV at the battle of Towton in 1461. The Aberaman branch of the clan was descended from Sir David's brother, Robert Mathew of Castell Mynach nr. Llantrisant. The main line of Aberaman died out in 1788 with the death of Edward Mathew IV (eleventh in line of descent from Robert of Castell Mynach).

There may be a number of people descended from the various Mathew branches (including Mr Hugh Pawley Mathew, of Saffron Walden, Essex, born of the Radur line, and who was concerned with the recent refurbishment of St John's parish church, Aberdare).

First Will And Testament

The following is the earliest surviving will made by a resident of the parish of Aberdare. It dates from the 28th January, 1546 (OS)/1547 (NS). An abbreviated version was quoted in Geoffmøy Evans' History of St John's Church, 1982 (p.37). There is a slight textual variation.

"I, MORGAN AP JENKYN OF THE PARISH OF ABERDARE (bequeath my) Soul unto almighty god, his blessed mother the virgin Mary and to all the holy company of heaven; my body to be buried within the church of Aberdare. To the cathedral church of Landaff, 2s. Two groats to the bridge of Landaffe. For tithes forgotten a yearling and 18d of money. To my ghostly father 2s. To my parish church of Aberdare £4 to buy a cope in the church at the oversight of my overseer. All my kine, young and old, to be divided between Thomas ap Morgan my son and Rys ap Jenkin and Gwenlean my wife. To Edward Lewys esq. 40s and he to be overseer. To Ivan Thomas Yghan a cow. To Gwenlleian Morgan a yearling. Residue of all goods to Rys ap Jenkyn, whom I make execu-

tor. witnesses: Sir John Yonge, curate of Aberdare, Lewys Jonys, Thomas Llewellyn, Thomas Lewys, John Gwilym, with divers others." (PROVED IN THE PREROGATIVE COURT OF CANTERBURY, 15th MARCH, 1546/47, BY THE EXECUTOR IN THE PERSON OF JOHN LEWYS, NOTARY PUBLIC, PROCTOR,).

N.B: 2s=10 new pence; a groat=4 old pence; tithes=a levy of one-tenth on parishoners in support of the clergyman; ghostly father=spiritual father; 18d=7½ new pence; cope=a church vestment; Rys ap Jenkyn=testator's brother ?; E. Lewys=poss. of The Court, Merthyr, & of Van; Yghan=Ychan/Vaughan; Sir John Yonge=courtesy title of a clergyman; divers=various.



Statue of Father Theobald Mathew (1790 - 1856), descended of the Mathews of Radur. The statue stands in the centre of Cork City, Ireland. (Photo: courtesy of Mr Glyn Davies, *Galys*).

.../THE OLD JUG (continued):

The legitimate male Aberaman line ended with Edward Mathew IV of Rhws and Aberaman in 1788. He was survived by three daughters, and the estate in the parish of Aberdare and elsewhere was divided between them (and their husbands). For details of the division, see Old Aberdare, vol.4, pp.5 & 32.

The Aberaman line survives, however, in the current Mathew family of Ystradowen, who are descended of Humphrey, illegitimate son of Humphrey Mathew, himself the 2nd son of William Mathew of Aberaman, sheriff of Glamorgan in 1693.

..NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS..

- * CVHS ANNUAL DINNER: This will be held at Plasdraw on Thursday, 29th May, 1986; & our guest speaker this year will be a distinguished old Aberdarian, professor Mansel Davies, previously head of the department of Chemistry at U.C.W. Aberystwyth. Further details (& tickets) at the forthcoming monthly meetings of the Society. Dates are: 20th March; 17th April, and 15th May. Arrangements will again be in the hands of Mr Tom Evans, who would appreciate our early co-operation.
- * FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS: The Committee of the Society are aiming to produce volume 5 of Old Aberdare in time for next Christmas. Contributors this time are likely to be Stephen Cooke (on the champion cyclists of Aberaman & Aberdare); John Mear (on the life & work of John Davies, Pendar); Geoffrey Evans (on the 'Big Houses' of the Aberdare district); & Victor Evans (on Aberdare & the First World War). This is likely to be another well-balanced and fast-selling number. So, watch this space, as they say!
- * AGAIN: The Committee also hope to produce a substantial volume comprising a pictorial history of Aberdare, & to publish it in the summer. Preparatory work on this is well-advanced, and the book is likely to run to some 150 pages with scores of photographs most of which will never have been published before. The working party planning its production is comprised of Tom Evans, Doug Williams, John Mear & D.L. Davies.
- * CVHS ANNUAL TRIP(S): Doug Williams or our secretary, John Mear, would welcome any suggestions members might have for the trip/s to be organised during 1986.
- * W.E.A. LECTURE PROGRAMME: The Workers' Education Asssociation has acquired a hard-working local committee recently. Mike Richards from our own committee is one of its active members. The W.E.A. has prepared a number of lectures during coming weeks. The first, on 'The Case of the Eccentric Dr William Price', was given by Brian Davies (of Big Pit Museum, Blaenafon) on the 26th February. Others are: Margaret Minhinnick on 'Conservation or Crisis' (06/03); Ann Murcott on 'It's a Pleasure to Cook for Him: the Sociology of Food' (17/03); and D.L. Davies on 'Welsh Emigration to the Americas in the 19th Century' (25/03). All start at 7.30 pm at Gadlys School.
- * A HISTORY OF THE WERFA FAMILIES: the editor has received from Society member Mr Edward Williams of Chepstow a valuable summary of the history of those families

connected with the Werfa farm, Abernant. It is intended to include this summary account in one or more ensuing issues of Hanes. Mr Williams is descended of these 'Werfa families', and is a loyal member of the Society despite the distance at which he lives.

- * CONDOLENCES: We extend our sincere sympathy to another long-distance, but supportive, member of the Society - Dr Brynley Roberts, the National Librarian at Aberystwyth. Dr Roberts' mother, Mrs Laura Jane Roberts, died recently. She had lived for many years in Stuart Street, Aberdare, but had lately moved to live at Aberystwyth. Ein cydymdeimlad didwyll i'r teulu oll yn y golled a gawsant.
- * ABERDARE FESTIVAL FORTNIGHT: This will be held from the 21st June to the 5th July this year. Following our vastly successful temporary museum during last year's Festival, the Society hopes to arrange a number of events with historical leanings this year. These will probably include a local history 'treasure hunt' and photo competition. Further details to follow.
- * A HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL: Society member, Mrs Denise Jones, Abernant, is exploring the possibilities of writing a history of Aberdare's Catholic School where she is a member of staff. The school's 'roots' go back to the establishment of St Joseph's Church in the 1850's, and to educational work undertaken by nuns of the Marquess of Bute's pioneer hospital at the Trap, Abernant, circa 1878. (Incidentally, it is from this hospital that the present St Winifred's, Cardiff, is descended). We wish Denise well in her research. If anyone has any information that might help her with the task, any committee member will be happy to pass this on.

MR RICHARD ARNOLD, BOROUGH LIBRARIAN:

Just as this issue of Hanes was being finished, we heard of the most untimely death of our borough librarian, Richard Arnold. Richard was a stalwart of the Society, & had been a member of its committee for many years. He was a devoted & uniquely helpful person, and we extend to Mrs Beryl Arnold and her two daughters our deepest sympathy. We share a small part of their great loss as a family.

NOTICE REGARDING MEMBERSHIP & PUBLICATIONS:
 New members are always welcome. Please contact J.F. Mear, 7, Tudor Tce, ABERDARE (tel: 878349). A few copies of Old Aberdare vols. 3 & 4 remain with Doug Williams, 29, Tudor Tce, ABERDARE (877398). Correspondence re. Hanes to D.L. Davies, 5, Milton St, CWMAMAN (873226).