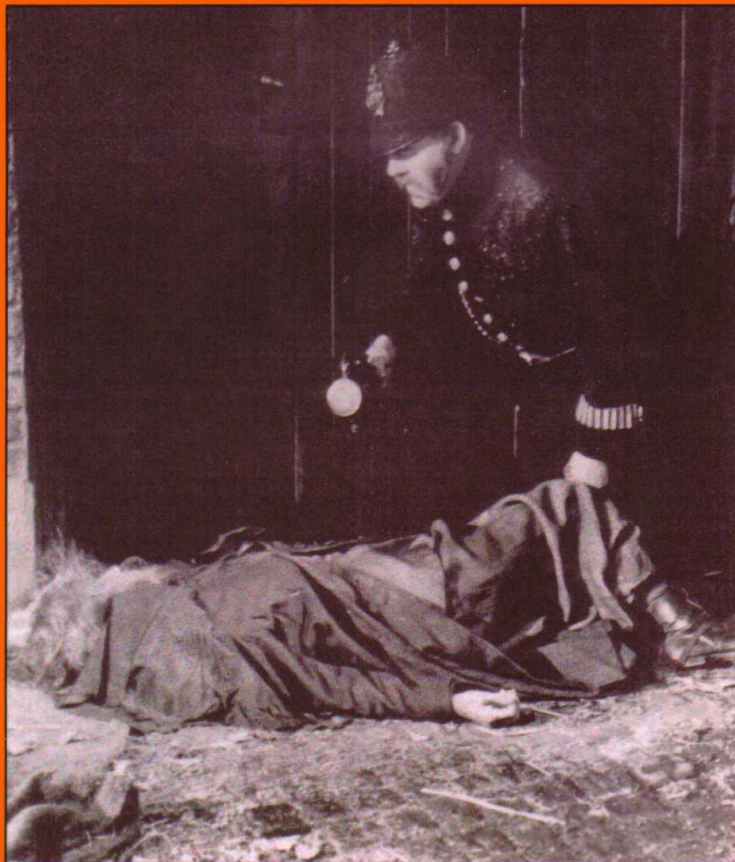


**THE PONTYPRIDD MURDERS**  
and other crimes in the district 1884 to 1920



By Gareth Harris

THIS BOOK TELLS OF CRIMES THAT WERE COMMITTED IN THE PONTYPRIDD DISTRICT WHEN THE TOWN WAS STILL YOUNG.

IT RECORDS EVENTS MANY YEARS AGO AT VARIOUS DISTRICTS INCLUDING CILFYNYDD, YNYSYBWL, COEDPENMAEN, BEDDAU, PWLLGWAUN, HOPKINSTOWN, GRAIG, TREForest AND LLANWONNO. IT SHOWS THAT PRESENT DAY VIOLENCE DUE TO DRINK IS NOTHING NEW AND IF ANYTHING HAS DECREASED.

OF COURSE THE MINING INDUSTRY IN THE DISTRICT IN THESE EARLY DAYS BROUGHT MANY VISITORS TO THE TOWN, ESPECIALLY AT THE WEEKEND, WHEN DRUNKENNESS AND PROSTITUTION WERE RIFE.

HOWEVER, DRINK WAS NOT THE ONLY CAUSE OF VIOLENCE AS AFFAIRS OF THE HEART ALSO BROUGHT ABOUT ITS OWN 'CRIMES OF PASSION.' THERE ARE ALSO VERY SAD TALES OF SUICIDE AND STORIES WHERE INNOCENT PEOPLE MERELY PASSING BY MET THEIR FATE WHEN THEY LEAST EXPECTED IT.

CHILDREN WERE NOT EXEMPT IN THIS RESPECT AND TWO OF THE STORIES INVOLVE SERIOUS VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUNGSTERS.

FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY OR CRIME STORIES, THIS BOOK WILL BE OF EXTREME INTEREST. FOR THOSE THAT BELIEVE SOCIETY IS MORE VIOLENT THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN, TAKE A LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THE PONTYPRIDD DISTRICT.

Price £10.99

ISBN: 987-0-9564711-1-6

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by

Gareth Harris

**First Published in Great Britain in 2010**

by Coalopolis Publishing

9 Cefn Lane

Glyncoch

Pontypridd, CF37 3BP

© Coalopolis Publishing 2010

Printed by: Print on demand

9 Culley Court

Bakewell Rd

Orton Southgate

Peterborough

PE2 6WA

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British Library Cataloguing-in-publication Data

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

ISBN No. 9870956471116

## **Acknowledgments**

Many thanks again to David Gwyer and Brian Davies of the Pontypridd Museum. Thanks also to Howell Matthews at the reference section in the Pontypridd Library who puts up with my various inquiries.



## **Introduction**

by the author

The history of the town of Pontypridd, as would probably be natural for its situation at the mouth of the Rhondda Valley, is tied up with the mining industry. It brought into the district people from many places, all eager to earn a living in a booming industrial period. As a result Pontypridd was a noisy, rough place, plagued with drunkenness and prostitution. Despite this, actual reports of murder in the town and outlying districts are comparatively few, and far more people were killed while carrying out their employment than those in violent incidents.

Premeditated murder cases over this period were practically unheard of and therefore this book carries reports of murders, manslaughters, suicides and other incidents of note without entering into accounts of the disasters at the Great Western Colliery, Hopkinstown in 1893, where 63 people lost their lives, and the following year when 290 others were lost at the Albion Colliery, Cilfynydd. These events are well chronicled in other publications and this book concentrates on less known, but still fascinating events that have happened long ago that have been forgotten. Events are recorded as they appeared in the local newspapers of the time and give a fascinating insight into the area up to 120 years ago.

Gareth Harris

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## Chapter One

### LANDLADY'S DEATH AT BEDDAU

April 16<sup>th</sup> 1884

In 1884 Beddau was a very small community midway between Llantrisant and Pontypridd, and the mysterious death of the landlady of the Gelynog Inn, at the centre of the district, would bring the area into the public eye for a short period that year.

The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' of April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1884 reported: - Mrs. Selby, wife of Maurice Selby, of the Gelynog Inn, Croes-Heol-y-Beddau, and daughter of Mrs. Evans, ironmonger, Pontypridd, a lady of highly respectful connections, died on Friday morning, last week, and as it was reported that there were marks of violence of some kind on the body, and rumours were circulated as to a quarrel having taken place between the deceased and her husband on Tuesday night, considerable interest was excited in the case. Certain representations appear to have been made to the police, and the coroner having been communicated with, ordered a *post mortem* examination of the body. This was commenced on Sunday by Dr. W. Naunton Davies, Llantrisant, and completed on Monday. Certain indications found on Sunday, however, led Sergt. Hoyle, of Llantrisant, to take the deceased's husband, Maurice Selby, into custody on suspicion of having caused his wife's death.

The very serious aspect, which the domestic tragedy had assumed, caused deep and widespread consternation through this and adjoining districts, where the members of the family of the deceased woman were held in very great respect. Mrs. Evans, her mother, was an old lady of about seventy, and had for the previous four years conducted with credit and success a local ironmonger's business. The deceased, herself, too, was also an amiable person and well liked. It was known, however, that of late years she had given way to somewhat intemperate habits.

Gelynog is situated between Pontypridd and Llantrisant, and is pretty nigh equidistant. There are perhaps three score dwellings in the locality. Mrs. Selby was the landlady of the Gelynog Inn. She was a widow conducting this Inn when she made the acquaintance of Selby.

The deceased, who was 50 years of age, went from Pontypridd some fourteen years ago, with her first husband Mr. Richard Thomas, surveyor, (a son of the late Superintendent Thomas of Pontypridd) to reside at the Gelynog Inn, where she died.

Down to five years ago she continued a widow, and in that capacity reared up respectably her sons and daughters. About that time Selby, who is a native of the Forest of Dean, came to reside in the neighbourhood. A friendship sprang up between the two people, and notwithstanding the difference in their ages (Selby being much the younger of the two) they were married. The evidence adducted at the inquest gives some ideas of the life they led of late years. Two sons of the deceased live at Cardiff, and are employed by the Taff Vale Railway Company. A married daughter lives in Cardiff, but was home on her holidays when her mother died.

### **The inquest**

A full report of the inquest read: - On Tuesday, at the Gelynog Inn, Mr. E. B. Reece, Coroner, and a jury of fourteen held an inquest upon the body of the landlady of the house, Mrs. Selby. The only people present, besides the officials and reporters, were the deceased's husband, Maurice Selby, and her brother, Mr. R. Evans, Pontypridd. The Coroner, after formally opening the proceedings, asked the police to call the daughter of the deceased. Frances Mary Richards, wife of Palmer Richards, guard on the Taff Vale Railway, said: "The deceased, Mary Selby, was my mother. The name of her husband is Maurice Selby. They kept this Inn. My father's name was Richard Jones Thomas. Deceased was the widow of my father. Her age was 49 last birthday. I was not at home when my mother died."

The Coroner desired a witness to be called to identify the body. He understood there was a daughter who lived at home. Jessie Thomas, another daughter of the deceased was then called. She said, "I was in Cardiff, at school, but am home for my holidays. Have been at home for a week. I was here when my mother died. She died on Friday, the 18<sup>th</sup>. I came home last Thursday week." The Coroner asked if she remembered any dispute between her stepfather and mother.

She replied, "I went away on Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, to Pontypridd, and came back on Wednesday night, the 16<sup>th</sup>. My mother was well when I came back. She did not complain of being ill until Thursday. I went to her and I thought there was something strange the matter with her and the girls said it was fits. When I came home on Wednesday evening, I noticed she had black eye. She had not when I went away. I asked her how she got the black eye, and she told my stepfather and me she sat in the corner on Tuesday on the other, and she cheeked him, and called him a drunken beast, and he got up and gave her a slap in the face. She told me to look at her head to see if I could see a mark. I looked but could not see anything. She told me to go upstairs and see the headdress. I went with another girl and saw the headdress. There was blood on it. When I got down, I asked her how it came there. She said, 'The wall was very hard, you know, and you have seen my head-dress.' She would say no more. The place she showed me was at the back of the head. There was a little blood on the headdress - not much. She did not say her husband did it."

Then continuing: "I did not ask her if Selby had knocked her head against the wall. She did not seem at all stupid on Wednesday evening. She went to bed soon after 10 o'clock. I did not sleep in the same room. Selby had gone to bed when she told me this. Next morning, about eight, I went into her room. Her husband by this time had got up. I asked her to fasten my dress. She could not. I asked her if I should go to Mrs. John's. She said it was a private funeral. I jumped off the bed, and found her looking at her hands. I went for my apron, and when I went back again she was ill, and the girl said she had a fit. I then called Maurice up. Her eyes were turned up. It

was afterwards that the servant girl told me she had a fit - about midday, when she was in a similar condition. Maurice went up and I left them. When I went up again, about a quarter to one, she was not talking sensibly, and she could not give me any sensible answer. I soon after saw her walking about the house in her petticoat. The girl and I failed to get her to go upstairs again. So we sent for the girl's mother. We went and had some dinner, and while we were at dinner I heard a fall; we went upstairs and again found her in a fit.

Then her husband (whom I called up) and the servant put her back to bed. Maurice sent for Dr. Hopkins but he would not come; it was too cold. He did not come. Maurice asked if he should send for Dr. Davies and my mother said 'No.' I slept with her on Thursday night. She awoke me three times in the night to get her some coffee; she was sensible. I got her the coffee and she drunk it. She was quite sensible during the night. On Friday morning, about half-past six, Maurice came in and asked if he should send for the doctor, and she said 'No.' She asked him for some tea; he gave it to her, but she became sick, and threw it back. I then got up at his request to get her some coffee. She drank a cupful, and then I came down to have my breakfast. I went up about nine o'clock. She asked me to shut the door as I went, and that was the last I saw her until Maurice went up and found her dead. Maurice called, I went up and saw her dead, and said 'Oh, dear, ma is dead.' Neighbours came in afterwards. I did not see her take anything but tea, coffee and cocoa on Thursday and Friday."

Questioned by the Corner witness stated that her mother and Maurice quarreled very often, especially when he got drunk and sometimes he drank a great deal, and had seen him strike her before with his open hand. She had spoken to him on Wednesday night about the black eye, but he said nothing, and it was not mentioned again. She had not smelt drink on her mother when she returned home on Monday night.



A juror (ex-Sergeant Tamplin) asked if they had called in the police to stop a row more than once to which she replied: "often." He asked if they had both had black eyes at various times, to which she said "No, not my mother." She had seen Selby with a black eye once, but it was her brother that had given him it, not her mother.

Ellen Prodgers, said, "I live at Gelynog. I used to come in to do the work at the Inn three days a week. Had been doing this for about three months. Mr. Selby engaged me. I don't know anything about a row, but last Tuesday night I came in for a beer, about half-past seven to quarter to eight in the evening. She came out of the parlour, slamming the door after her and told me to come to the other room tin the bar parlour after her. She seemed out of temper. She looked at her head in the glass. She had a handkerchief tied to her eye, and she told me Mr. Selby hit her. There was some blood - not much - upon the white headdress she wore. She told me Mr. Selby hit her eye with his hand and bumped her head against the wall. She asked me to get her a scissors, which I failed to get. I got her some water to bathe the wound, and then I saw a small cut on the left side, but no swelling when I looked. It bled a good deal, and there was blood on her turnover. She looked very low-hearted.

After her husband went to bed, she came into the parlour. When I came in first, I saw Selby drunk, and he cursed me and asked what I wanted. I said I did not want him. She told me to come in, not to listen to him, that he was not right. He afterwards went to bed. We both came in here. Then she said he had finished her. She seemed to be half-drunk and very red. When I left, she called in Mr. Richards, the old gentleman living the other side. She called me in the morning to come and wash the floor. She was then very poorly, and could eat nothing. That was on Wednesday. She could not find her headdress anywhere, so she asked me to get another from the drawer. I asked her where she felt bad, and she said about her head and about her back. She told me on Wednesday that she could not help drinking and that her husband was drinking also. She did not drink anything that day - at least, I did not see her. He was out in the garden all day doing

something with the ashes. I don't think she drank on Thursday. She looked very wild, and I thought she was delirious. She was very unwilling to go upstairs after she came down on Thursday. She was very violent, and we were obliged to put her in bed. She had a cup of tea taken up to her, but she would not drink it. She had a fit after dinner. I don't think she had any drink that day. I left the house about half-past five that day. I had heard of their quarrelling before, but had not seen Mr. Selby drunk very often; or Mrs. Selby, could not tell by her very well. I don't know whether they drank a good deal or not."

Mrs. Prodger, the wife of Zorobabel Prodger, postman, under questioning by Sergt. Jones stated that Mrs. Selby had washed a little white turnover on Wednesday, and she had not seen the cut on Tuesday night as she was at Pontypridd. The Coroner said the only thing about the drink was, he feared, the poor woman was suffering from drink on Thursday from the day before.

Selby, in reply to the Coroner, said he had nothing to ask - it was all right, as far as he knew; he remembered nothing about the blow.

Nicholas Richards, an old man, living at Beddau, said, "I was in here on Tuesday night after the 'row.' I saw nothing. Did not see him. I turned in here to fetch my son's little boy. Mrs. Selby, who was in the backroom, asked me not to go as she wanted to see me. I took the child home and returned. Saw her black eye, and asked what she had. She said he had struck her with his open hand. I remarked that it would not have been much if he had struck her somewhere out of sight. Then she turned up her turnover and showed blood on it, she said had come from her nose.

### **The doctor testifies**

Dr. W. Naunton Davies, Llantrisant, said: - "On Friday I was called to the Gelynog Inn by Maurice Selby. He came to my house, and said his wife was very ill, and he thought it was a bad case with her. He asked me to go over immediately. I had the horse put in the trap and



went at once. I saw her about half-past ten. She was dead - very lately dead. She was lying in bed, on her side. I have since made a post mortem examination. It was on Sunday and continued on Monday. I found a bruise on the left great toe, a bruise over the left upper eyelid, slight. A cut on the scalp, on the left side of the head, the posterior part of the parietal bone. It was triangular and equilateral shaped; base measuring six-eighths of an inch. The edges of the cut were bruised and coated with dry blood. The cut extended down to the bone, but narrowed as it neared the bone. All the tissues were extravagated with blood, surrounding the wound. No signs of union in the wound - it had not begun to heal. It was not a severe wound, as far as I could tell externally.”

The internal examination: - “On making the incision through the scalp for the purpose of removing the bones of the head an ounce of dark fluid blood oozed out; the *dura matter* was firmly adherent to the bone, and much thickened here and there were old fibrous adhesions. Menegeal vessels distended with blood, the middle menegeal arteries being very hard. On opening the *dura matter* there was a large clot of dark blood, underneath the second membrane, suffused in the subarachnoid space. The blood occupied that position of the brain corresponding with the triangular wound on the scalp. It was a clot four inches by two. The origin was from a rent in a small vein. All the indications of recent inflammation of the covering of the brain were present. The heart was large - weight 12oz. - flabby, and covered with fat. The usual weight is 9½ inches females, and 10 inches males. The valves were healthy. There was an old adhesion between the heart and the pericardium - signs of illness in times gone by. It was not of much consequence. The kidneys were greatly congested, but fairly healthy. Lungs congested at the bases. The immediate cause of death was the clot of blood before mentioned.”

Coroner: “Was it due to dissipation? It may be the result of apoplexy”

Witness: “It might.”

Coroner: “Did it result from be the result of apoplexy or violence?”

Witness: "I think it resulted from injuries."

Coroner: "Do you think it resulted from this blow?"

Witness: "Most probably. I think that at the time of the blow there was a great shock to the brain arteries; some of the coats gave way, but all the covering did not do so at the same time. The shock caused the inflammatory condition of the brain."

Coroner: "Would this inflammation of the brain come from the blow given on Tuesday?" - Witness: "Oh certainly."

Coroner: "The softness of the brain that you speak of, was it the result of inflammation?" - Witness: "Yes."

Coroner: "Of long standing?" - Witness: "Quite recent."

Coroner: "Did the condition of the vessels and brain show deceased to have been a person of intemperate habits?" - Witness: "Yes."

Coroner: "You don't think death was due to that I suppose?" - Witness: "Not in my opinion."

Coroner: "I suppose that if a person had been of sober habits the blow might not have had such a fatal effect? Witness: - "No."

Coroner: "Might the injury have been caused by a fall against the wall?" Witness: "No, not without a projection. It might, if the head struck against an angular projection."

The Coroner asked Selby if he had any question to ask the doctor. Selby said no, but he should like to ask the servant girl whether Mrs. Selby did not tell her what she told him - that she fell down in the bar that day. Ellen Prodger was again called and said: "No, she did not tell me anything." Selby: "Well, she told me that, but she did not say she hurt her head. She fell down several times. Her ankle was weak and she fell on the pavement here one day. Coroner: "Was there anyone here but you on Tuesday?" Selby: "I was in drink that day, sir. I don't know."

The Coroner then proceeded to sum up to the jury. After going through the evidence, he went on to say that the doctor had attributed death to the wound on the head. As the doctor had said, if the person who had received the cut had been of temperate habits the result

might not have been fatal. If the jury found that the violence of the husband caused the extravagation of blood, then they should bring in a verdict of “manslaughter” against him. That a person was in bad health, through drinking or anything else, did not exculpate a person who, by violence, caused injuries resulting in his or her death. There was no direct evidence of the husband striking the deceased - only what she herself had told some of the witnesses. It was, of course, possible that Mrs. Selby might have fallen against the wall or some projecting surface. But there was no direct evidence, and if the jury thought it probable that the injuries were caused by Selby it would be better to send the case for trail.

A Juror: “Would a fall out of bed, on the floor, have caused it?”

The Doctor: “When was that?” - The Coroner: “On the Thursday.”

Doctor: “It might have produced this clot of blood.”

Coroner: “I think it is my duty as ask you, too, would a fit be likely to produce this effusion of blood?” - Witness: “It might.”

Coroner: “Or a fit might have been caused by the effusion, I suppose?” Witness: “Yes, it might.”

Juror Tamplin: “Do you think the inflammation was started before the Thursday?” - Witness: “Most probably.”

Coroner: “And you don’t think it was due to drink?” - Witness: “I don’t think so.” A Juror: “Was she subject to fits before?” - Selby: “No, I don’t think so.”

Mr. Evans, (deceased’s brother): “I never heard of it.”

A Juror: “She did not complain of having fallen out of bed any rate?”

Coroner: “No, we have heard nothing.”

The room was then cleared, and the jury deliberated for over an hour. Ultimately, the following verdict was return by 12 out of the 14: - “That Mary Selby was found dead in bed, and that she died from the effects of extravagation of blood on the brain, but there is not sufficient evidence to show what caused the said extravagation.”

## **Prisoner before the Magistrates**

The inquest being concluded the following day Maurice Selby was brought up at the Pontypridd Police Court charged with causing the death of his wife. Jessie Thomas, daughter of the deceased gave evidence similar to that which she had given at the inquest. Cross examined by Selby, she stated: "I was having dinner in the taproom when I heard my mother fall. She was lying on her back on the floor when I got up." The girl Ellen Prodger also gave evidence. Dr. Davies gave his result of the post mortem again and in reply to Dr. Leigh, Dr. Davies said he had attended the deceased about twelve years ago for a bruise over the eye, which she had, he believed, sustained through a fall out of a trap. It was a flesh wound, as far as he was aware, she had suffered no ill effects after it. Replying to Mr. Matthews, he said he noticed a cupboard in the taproom, and it was his opinion that if the deceased were pushed hard against the corner of that, the wound, which caused death, might have been produced. Selby was remanded for a week on bail, himself in £100 to two sureties of £50 each.

At the Pontypridd Police Court on the following Friday, May 2nd (before the Rev. D. W. Williams, M.A.; Fairfield, Mr. D. Owen, Ashgrove. and Mr. L Gordon Lenox), Morris Selby, was again charged on suspicion of the manslaughter of his wife. Mr. Eusor, solicitor, Cardiff, appeared for the prisoner. Selby, who had been released on bail, surrendered himself. It was at this point a legal argument took place. The case was to be adjourned said Mr. Stockwood, clerk to the magistrates.

Mr. Eusor, for the defendant opposed this and stated: "I appear here on behalf of the prisoner, who has had the heaviest charge next to that of wilful murder hanging over his head for a considerable time. The charge has been fully enquired into before the coroner and a jury bent upon investigating the matter in every possible way, after going through the whole evidence they arrived at the only verdict open to them - that the death of the deceased was occasioned by the cause,

which the doctor prescribed. They did not couple it with any sort of misconduct on the part of the prisoner.”

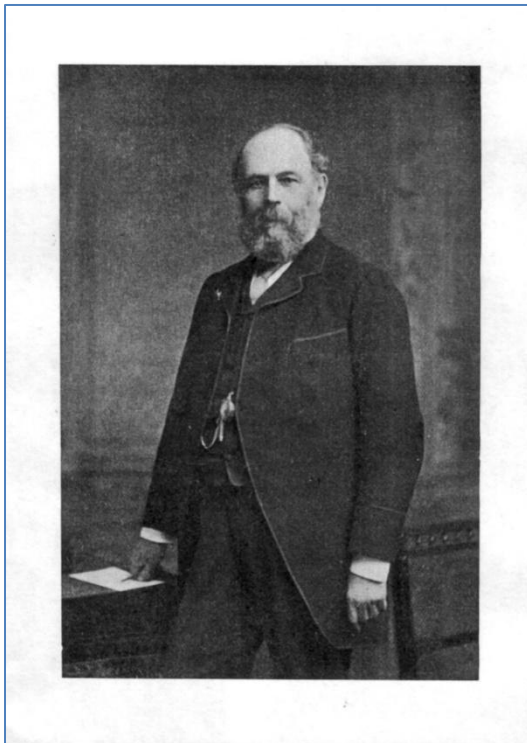
Mr. Stockwood: “I suppose you know, Mr. Eusor, that it was quite contrary to the opinion and advice of the coroner that the verdict was arrived at?” Mr. Eusor said that he took his stand upon the undoubtable evidence and verdict. Mr. Lenox stated that Supt. Matthews applies for a remand in order that he may make further enquiries.

Mr. Eusor: “I appeal to the magistrates, and ask them whether it is conceivable that in a case of this kind, where (as have been told by Supt. Matthews) the whole evidence is exhausted, there would be the slightest possibility - I won't say probability - that, if remitted to another tribunal, any adverse verdict would be returned. Here is the defendant, and he surrenders his recognizance. The charge which hangs over his head is a cruel one, there is no reason why - I respectfully submit to an experienced bench of magistrates and magistrates clerk's - this man should not have the deliverance he is entitled to in a charge of this character. I have gone through the whole of the evidence, and have no hesitation in saying that, with the exception of the evidence given by a respected medical man, Dr. Naunton Davies - and of course that is colourless - there is no evidence at all of the defendant having committed any act in which can in any way be considered to have resulted in the death of the deceased.”

“It is quite enough trouble for him that he should have lost his wife under such circumstances, without having the heavy charge hanging over him. It would be most unfair and proper that his case should be again adjourned because the newly appointed Stipendiary does not appear to be here. Why should not the case be heard by you, and then, if, in your opinion, the evidence justifies committal, let the man go to trial?”

“The assizes commence today and in three or four days he will have deliverance. A precedent should not be established or followed of adjourning a case simply because the gentleman appointed by the secretary of state to the post of stipendiary magistrate is not here. And that is the only reason why a remand is asked for.” However, Mr. Lenox stated that it was the unanimous opinion of the bench that the case should be adjourned a week to the following Wednesday.”

When the case was again brought before the magistrates, Supt. Matthews said that there was no other evidence elicited, but at the same time, he submitted the police had been justified in their actions in asked for an adjournment. The Bench then discharged the prisoner.



**DR. NAUTON DAVIES**  
**WITNESS AT THE GELYNOG INQUEST**



*Gelynog Inn 1903*

**THE GELYNOG INN 1901 (ABOVE) & 1965 (BELOW)**



## **Attempted double Murder at Ynysybwl - Two girls shot September 26<sup>th</sup> 1885**

The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*', of Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1885 reported: - On Saturday last the rural neighbourhood beyond Ynysybwl was the scene of what cannot be considered as anything less than an attempt to murder two girls. The house in which the attempt was made is called Pistyll Goleu, and it is situated opposite to the valley, but a little further along the River Clydach than Black Grove Colliery, and the nearest houses to it are Nant-yr-ysfa (or Nant-yr-orosfa), and the residents of Mr. Howell Williams, both of these being hundreds of yards off. It appears that Mr. John Evans, who lives at Pistyll Goleu is a widower, with five children, the eldest only about 15 years of age, and that while working as a contractor at Penrhiwceiber Colliery, he resides in this somewhat lonely and distant place in order to keep a small farm. His wife died about eighteen months ago, and he employed a young woman named Rosanna Jones (daughter of a master haulier at Mardy), as a servant. This girl and Evans's little girl of nine are the persons who murders were attempted on Saturday.

At the colliery Evans had in his employ up to a short time ago a man named Evan Lewis, a tall, fine, fellow - about six feet two inches in height - of somewhat merry disposition, but, in Evans's estimation, an idle one. As the work did not proceed satisfactorily, owing to this man's habit, Lewis was discharged, and it seems he has failed to obtain employment elsewhere. This may have embittered him and caused him to seek revenge upon his former employer. At all events, he made his appearance on Saturday at Pistyll Goleu and asked for John Evans. He was told that he had gone for his pay. Then he asked for milk, but was told it had all been sent to Ynysybwl in the morning. However, after consulting John Henry, her master's boy, the servant made some tea for the stranger because he had said he knew Evans. During the meal the man chatted merrily with the servant, and afterwards gave some coppers to the children.



The eldest daughter, was away at the Llanwonno public house, assisting. The boy, John Henry, had gone on horseback to the village for meat for Sunday's dinner. The youngest children were out in the garden playing. The only person in the house were the servant girl and the little girl, called Annie Mary, when the man went out through the backdoor, around the house, came in at the front door, and again went to the back door, where he appeared to be doing something to the back door; it is now thought he was trying to bolt it. Then he came back into the house, and without saying a word, fired at the girls with a revolver, shooting the servant in the neck and aiming at the little girl in such a way that the bullet entered her lip just under the right nostril. The child put her little frock up over her face after the first shot and the bullet mark could be seen in the frock later. The brute, however, fired at least four shots, for there are three bullet holes in the wall, and these are so near each other as to show that he had a steady hand.

The servant seems to have put up her hands to her neck and a bullet has cut across the back of one hand and the thumb of another. The little girl ran out through the front door. The servant made for the backdoor, but before she reached it her assailant struck her across the top of the head with the poker, cutting a wound four inches long, to the bone, and splashing her blood against the wall. What happened next is not exactly known, but the two girls met and made their way towards Nant-yr-ysfa. The children playing in the garden say that the stranger came to ask there the girls were and they said they did not know. Then he left. The injured girls, leaving behind them a bloody track, managed to reach the farmhouse named and there were received by Mrs. Walters, who was naturally alarmed at their appearance. Someone who saw the girls on the way met John Henry coming home and told him what had occurred. He immediately went to Black grove and asked Mr. Howard Williams to come down. That gentleman went, and the sight that met his gaze at Nant-yr-ysfa was a fearful one. The girl, Rosanna Jones, was covered with blood, and the place was like a slaughterhouse.

He at once set about bathing the wounds and trying to staunch the blood, Mrs. Walters assisting him. About three-quarters of an hour afterwards, Dr. Morgan, Ynysybwl, came, and succeeded in extracting the bullet from the lip of the little girl, but the shot which lodged in the servant girls' neck, remained there still. The patients were afterwards taken home, and both were progressing favourably. It is believed the servant will recover, although she is very weak from loss of blood. While the doctor was attending to the injured girls, P. S. Oliver and a number of men living in the neighbourhood scoured the hillsides in search of the miscreant who had committed the outrage. William Lloyd, who lodges at Evan's house, at once concluded from the boys description of the fellow, that it must be the man Lewis, and enquiries were about to be made at his lodgings at Penrhiwceiber when the news came that he had given himself up to Inspector Thorney at Aberdare.

It is supposed Lewis had been prowling about the neighbourhood for some time past. Mr. Howell Williams remembered that about three weeks ago a man like the prisoner walked with him along the road from Ynysybwl towards Llanwonno and asked where Pistyll Goleu was. To the remark, "You will call there?" the man replied "No, not tonight." It is believed he was seen by the girls loitering about the field in front of the house on the Wednesday before the outrage. Soon after the affair Mrs. Williams, Black-Grove, saw a man, moving rapidly up the mountainside from the direction of Pistyll Goleu towards Aberdare. Prisoner was brought up at the Aberdare Police Court on Tuesday, and was remanded at Pontypridd.

### **Prisoner before the magistrates at Pontypridd**

At the Pontypridd Police Court on Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, before Mr. J. Ignatius Williams, (Stipendiary Magistrate) the court was densely crowded and great excitement was manifested as it was known that the prisoner, Evan Lewis, was charged with the attempted murder of two girls on the Llanwonno Mountain. Prisoner was brought into court handcuffed and was strongly guarded by police.

He is a tall man, dark hair, bushy whiskers and moustache. The expression of his countenance certainly would not suggest the idea of his being likely to commit murder. During the brief examination he turned his back towards the people, and with one hand resting on the front of the bench, he looked down all the time. Mr. T. Phillips, solicitor, Aberdare, appeared for the prosecution.

The magistrate's clerk: - "The woman is not able to attend, is she?"

Mr. Phillips: - "No; Not for another fortnight. I will not trouble your worship with any remarks, but simply give the evidence of Inspector Thorney and ask for a remand for a week - really for a fortnight. Inspector Thorney was then sworn.

Mr. Phillips: "You are an inspector of police stationed at Aberdare?" - "Yes."

Mr. Phillips: "On Saturday last did the prisoner come to the police-station at Aberdare?" - "He did."

Mr. Stockwood (magistrate's clerk): "At what time?" - "At about half-past two in the afternoon."

Mr. Phillips: "And he made a statement to you, did he? - "He did."

What did he tell you?" - "I want to give myself up; I want to be locked up." "I said what do you mean? What do you want to be lock up for?" "He said: 'I have shot a woman.' I said where?" He said on Llanwonno mountain, and if you don't believe it look here; he went to put his hand in his coat breast pocket, but I put my hand there and found this six-chambered revolver (produced). I examined it and found that it contained one loaded cartridge, four empty cartridge cases, and one empty chamber. In the same pocket I found ten cartridges of a similar make and size as those I found in the revolver. They fit the revolver."

"Did he tell you where he shot the woman?" - "He said he shot her in a farmhouse at Llanwonno."

"Did he name the house?" - "He mentioned the name of John Evans."

"In the course of conversation?" - "Yes Sir."

“He made other statements about which I will not trouble you with for the present?.” - “He did.”

“Have you since been at John Evans’s house, Pistyll Goleu, Llanwonno?”“I have.”

“When?” - “Sunday morning.”

“Did you find there the servant girl Rosanna Jones and Evans’s daughter Annie Mary Evans?” - “Yes.”

“Did you ascertain that they were both suffering from bullet wounds?”

“Yes, I did.”

Stipendiary: “Did you see the wounds?” - “I did.”

“Were they such wounds that would be caused by those bullets?” - “I think so. On Rosanna Jones I saw a puncture wound on the side of the neck. I saw the Doctor probing it.”

“Would that wound be caused by something of this size?” - “I think so.”

Magistrate’s clerk : “Which side of the neck?” - “The left side of the neck and a large wound on the head.”

“What was the age of the woman?” - “Rosanna Jones they said, is 21; and Annie Mary Evans. Mr. Phillips said he would not offer any more evidence today.

The magistrate’s clerk, to prisoner: “Do you wish to ask Inspector Thorney anything?” - “No?”

Mr. Phillips: “I shall ask for a remand for the week, in fact I shall have to make it a fortnight. I hear the woman will not be able to come for a fortnight.”

The stipendiary: “Yes, if they are not able to attend.”

Mr. Phillips: “I shall offer formal evidence as to their condition this day week.”

The magistrate then remanded the prisoner for a week. Lewis was immediately removed to the police station under a strong guard.

## **Prisoner remanded**

At the Pontypridd Police Court on Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, before Mr. Ignatius Williams, (Stipendiary Magistrate) Evan Lewis was brought up on a remand charge of attempted murder. David James, of Mr. Phillips, Aberdare, said that that gentleman was not able to appear, but had instructed him to ask for a further remand of a week. P. C. Oliver said he saw the two wounded girls last evening. They were sitting by the fire. They were unable to attend the court today.

By the Bench: "Did they look as if they could bare the excitement of coming to court?" - "No Sir, they looked very ill."

The stipendiary: "Did they look as if they were too weak to undergo the fatigue of coming?" - "Yes, they looked ill. I do have a doctor's certificate." He said they would not be able to attend court for a fortnight. Lewis was remanded for a week.

## **The bullet extracted**

On Wednesday , October 14<sup>th</sup>, at 7 o'clock Dr. E. P. Evans, Mountain Ash, with Dr. Morgan, his assistant, visited their patient, Rosanna Jones, who was shot a fortnight ago at the farm Pistyll Goleu in Ynysybwll. Dr. Evans placed his patient under chloroform and performed the operation of extracting very successfully. The bullet was taken out of the girl's neck, on the right side, opposite the side it entered, and the windpipe has escaped injury. The girl Jones is now out of all danger.

## **Prisoner before the magistrates - Evidence of the victim**

On Wednesday, October 21st 1885 at the Pontypridd Police Court, before Mr. Mr. J. Ignatius Williams, (Stipendiary Magistrate), Evan Lewis, a native of Llanddewi Dreffr, was brought up in custody charged with the attempted murder of Rosanna Jones (19), and Annie Mary Evans, at Pistyll Goleu, Llanwonno, on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> September last. The court was crowded to excess, and the proceedings

excited deep interest. Mr. Thomas Philips again appeared for the prosecution. The prisoner was undefended.

John Evans: - "I am a timberman employed at Penrhiwceiber colliery. I also occupy a farm at Llanwonno called Pistyll Goleu. I work at night. The prisoner has been in my employ at the colliery about a month. He was discharged. The result was he was paid off the following day, 19th of September. I did not see him after until he was in custody. On 26th of September I left home for the colliery about 11 o'clock to get my pay, leaving Rosanna Jones and Annie Mary Evans at home. They were in good health. I returned home about 3 o'clock when I found the servant and daughter injured. I saw the bullet produced picked up by my eldest daughter in the kitchen.

Prisoner here said: - "All this trouble I am in is because of John Evans. He wanted me to go out of the yard to load timber. Philip Jones had said it was not my duty to do so, that I had nothing to do with timber outside."

Mr. Howell Williams, accountant, living at Ynysybwl, said: - "On Friday, October 11th I saw the prisoner. He overtook me on the road going from Mountain Ash to Ynysybwl. He asked where Pistyll Goleu farm was. I pointed out the place to him and asked him if he was acquainted with Evans. He replied 'Yes, I have seen him at Ferndale.' We then parted, and he went in the opposite direction to Pistyll Goleu farm.

John Pedrazzino, Beach Street, Cardiff, said: "I sold a revolver similar to the one now produced and fifty cartridges, between the 16th and 19th of September last, to prisoner. He paid either 7/6d or 7s for all. I am certain the prisoner is the man to whom I sold them."

Prisoner: - "It was a single barrel I asked for, but you said you could not recommend one. I had been used to a single barrelled one. I paid 8 shillings and sixpence for it and the cartridges."

George Steward, haulier, said: - "I was near the Llanwonno public House between 11 and 12 o'clock on the 26th of September and I saw

prisoner, who asked if it were Pistyll Goleu, at the same time pointing to it. I told him it was. He then asked if John Evans lived there, and whether he was a widower. I answered in the affirmative. Prisoner then went in the direction of Pistyll Goleu.”

Prisoner: - “It’s a lie, to say that I asked you if John Evans was a widower.”

Rosanna Jones, nineteen years of age, said: - “I am a servant at Pistyll Goleu. On Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> of September, Mary Anne, the children and I were home and saw the prisoner coming towards the house. It was between 11 and 12 o’clock forenoon. I went to the door, but he opened it first. He asked, “Is John Evan at home?” I told him no; he’d gone for his pay. He then asked for some milk. I replied, “We have sent it all to Ynysybwl.” We asked him to come in and gave him a chair. He asked for food and I gave him bread, bacon and tea. After his had ate his meal he went through the back door into the yard. In about 10 minutes he returned into the house through the front door and again passed through the house into the back kitchen. I saw him going towards the lobby by the back door. The bolt of the door had come off. He then returned from the lobby into the kitchen where the children and I were. I was standing near the settle, which forms a partition to the front door. Annie Mary was standing near the cupboard, close to the window.

When he was coming into the room I saw a revolver in his hand. When four or five feet from me he pointed the revolver at me and fired. The bullet entered the front of my throat. I dropped down on the settle. The prisoner then shot at Annie Mary twice. He was then about eight feet away from her. I did not know then whether the shots had struck Annie Mary. He then turned around and fired again. At the same time I lifted my hands to my face. I heard a report and felt myself struck on both hands. I then ran to the lobby of the back door. When I got there I found it fastened by a nail (produced). The prisoner overtook me at the door, and while I was trying to get out the nail and open the door, the prisoner followed. I did not notice he had a poker

in his hand, but I was struck with something on the back of my head. I was not stunned, but he had cut me.”

Cross examined: - “Did he strike with more than one blow?” - “No. After he struck me I saw him turn back into the front kitchen. I then opened the door. When I got outside I saw Annie Mary in the field, going in the direction of a farm near. I was bleeding at that time from a wound on my neck and from a wound on my head. The dress and apron produced are the ones that I was wearing at the time. The poker produced is the one which on that day was in the front kitchen. I pointed out to P. C. Oliver the spot where I stood and sat when I was fired at. I also pointed out the spot where Annie Mary stood when she was shot. At the point where she stood there are three holes in the wall which were not there before. Last week I noticed a hole in the wall behind where I stood. I had never noticed that hole before.”

Prisoner here said: - “I am glad to hear the wounds on the girl can scarcely be seen.”

Annie Mary said: “I am past nine years of age. I remember the Saturday the man (prisoner) came to our house. He had tea. After he had his tea he went out to the back and came in the front door. He went out to the back a second time, I saw him come back again and he shot the servant. I went to the corner near the cupboard. He then shot at me twice. I had my frock in my hands which I rose up to my face. I was not very much hurt. I had a mark on my neck from which blood came. I was also hurt on the upper lip on the right side of my nose. He shot at me twice. I then saw him pick up the poker and run after Rosanna who was running to the back. He picked the poker from the fireplace. I ran out through the front door and into the fields. The frock is the one I had on my hand. There is a hole in it which was not there before he shot at me.

Dr. Morgan, surgeon at Ynysybwl, said: - “On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> of September he was called to the farm, and on arriving there I found Rosanna Jones and Annie Mary Evans both suffering from bullet



wounds. I found Rosanna in a fainting condition and covered with blood. It was about 2 o'clock. On examination I found a wound on the back of the head 4 inches long and down to the bone. It had bled a great deal. On the thumb there was a groove and a slight laceration on the other hand. The groove was if a part had been shot away. On examining the neck I found a gunshot wound on the left. I could not that day trace the bullet. I extracted the bullet from the right side of the neck on the right side of the neck on the 14th of October. I produce the bullet. It is of a similar description as the ones now produced in court. The wounds on the thumb and the back of the hand have been caused by a bullet of a similar description. The poker produced would likely to have caused the wound and eyesore on the back of her head.

I also examined Annie Mary Evans and found a gunshot wound on the right side of the neck. I found the bullet about an inch from where it entered, which I extracted. I also produce that bullet which is of a similar make to the others. There was also a wound by the right nostril which penetrated through the lip. I think that might have been produced before. I cannot say it was caused by a bullet."

By the Bench: "Prisoner must have fired sideways at both girls and not point blank at their faces."

Inspector Thorney said: - "I am stationed at Aberdare. On this Saturday at about 2.30 in the afternoon the prisoner came to the station. I saw him in the front passage. He opened up the front door and came in and shut the door after him. He said, "I want to give myself up. I want to be locked up." I said, "What do you mean? Have you been drinking? What have you been drinking? Spirits?" I thought he had been drinking. He again said, "I want to be locked up. I have shot a woman at Llanwonno, and if you don't believe me look here. He went to put his hand towards his breast coat pocket and I said "stop" and put my hand in for the revolver produced. In the same pocket I found ten ball cartridges all of which were loaded. I then took him into the office and searched him and found the cover of the

cartridge box and had 2/2½ pence in money, some books and other things. I then examined the revolver and saw that four chambers had recently been discharged, and that empty cases were in them, I also found one ball cartridge and one chamber empty.”

Prisoner said: - I made a mistake and shot the woman by mistake. He was very excited. He said: - “I have been working at night at the colliery with John Evans, and he was the means of my being discharged a month ago. I have been travelling about looking for work but have failed to get it. I went to Cardiff and bought that revolver. I made up my mind to shoot John Evans. “ I asked who was this John Evans. He said: “He is bit of a contractor at Penrhiwceiber and lives at Llanwonno. A man with one eye.” He said, “I left Cardiff this morning, and went to Porth and had some drink, and walked to Llanwonno. He went to John Evans’s house. Saw the woman there and asked if Evans was home. She said no, and that he had gone to get his pay. They gave him tea and food. Then he shot the woman. He did not intend to shoot her, but intended shooting John Evans. I then placed him in the mess - room, I though he was labouring under some delusion, and called in Dr. Jones to see him, who had a conversation with him in my presence. He also showed the doctor a sore on the leg. He then made a similar statement to the doctor, only saying he had shot two women. The doctor also thought he was labouring under a delusion. Shortly after I received information of two women having being shot. I then formerly charged the prisoner with shooting two girls and attempting to murder them.”

He said, ‘I did not intend to shoot them. I went to shoot John Evans. Whenever I shall catch him I shall kill him. I then locked him up.’ The following day I had been to Llanwonno. Prisoner asked to see me. I had him brought into the office. He asked me if I had been to Llanwonno to see the girls. I said I had. He asked if they were alive. I told him they were. He said, ‘I’m glad they are, I don’t care now.’

P. C. Oliver said. "I was sent to the farm. I went to a neighbouring farm where I found the girls there suffering from wounds. The constable gave evidence as to the marks on the wall. Prisoner: - "I had no intention to shoot the girls when I went to the farm. I was looked for John Evans for throwing me out of work without any cause. I have been asked Philip Jones if it was my work to go into the yard to fill the timber or not. He said, 'Who wants you to do it?' I replied 'John Evans, that I am working with. He wants me to do it without extra pay.' Philip Jones said it was not my work, and I had nothing to do with loading timber in the yard. I was vexing that I was out of work and about my bad leg, which threw me out of work for months now and then, and I was vexing about my money wearing out. I believe I did the deed with great weakness of mind. I am very sorry I shot the girls, I had no intention of doing so. It was only John Evans I was looking for.' He was committed for trial at the next assizes.

### **Serious condition of Rosanna Jones**

The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' of Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> 1885, reported: - Since Wednesday last the condition of the servant girl, Rosanna Jones, who was shot by Lewis, has become more dangerous. The large cut at the back of the head, inflicted with the poker, has given some uneasiness to the medical gentlemen, because it is infected for a second time. The poor girl is now looking very ill. Should erysipelas set in, her life will be in considerably danger.

### **Prisoner at the Assizes - Heavy sentence**

At the South Wales Assizes on Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1885, before Mr. Justice Maisty, Evans Lewis, 40, labourer, who was charged with feloniously shooting Rosanna Jones and Annie Evans with intent to murder at Ynysybwl, Llanwonno, on 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1885. Prisoner was charged on other counts of lesser charges of intending grievous bodily harm and disable. Mr. B. F. Williams appeared for the prosecution while prisoner was undefended.

Mr. B. F. Williams in opening the case, repeated what had been told at before the magistrates of what had happened at the farm that day. The same evidence was given by the two girls, John Evans, and the medical men. Prisoner remained in an apparently indifferent state, and put no questions to the witnesses. The doctor said that the prisoner appeared to suffer from delusions, and considered it a duty imposed upon him (the prisoner) to kill John Evans.

His Lordship, in summing up the case, remarked upon its clearness. Besides the evidence of the girls, was the fact that the surgeon was called in, and found the girls wounded, and extracted bullets from each. Could they have any doubt, that the prisoner shot at them and wounded them? The prisoner had acted in a very determined manner, as in the case of Rosanna Jones he had shot at her twice, and wounded her, and took the poker and wounded her again.

The jury returned a verdict of ‘Guilty of wounding with intent to murder.’

Her Lordship, addressing the prisoner said: - “You have been convicted on the clearest possible evidence of one of the most terrible offences it is possible to conceive.” Prisoner: - “I had no intention of murder my Lord.”

His lordship: “It is too late to say that now. I do not see how the jury could have arrived at any other conclusion than they have done. You are found guilty most properly of shooting these girls with the intent to murder. I wish it to be understood I found a great deal of clear intention to murder. I have had occasion already this morning to deal with a terrible case where I passed a heavy sentence; but I am going to pass a heavier sentence upon you, and for this reason: In your case your object was clear and distinct; there was no mistake about it, and nothing to mitigate the offence in the smallest degree. If either of these children had died you would have unquestionably been executed, for a clearer case was never brought before a Court of Justice. Therefore the only doubt in my mind is whether you should

be sent to penal servitude for the rest of your life. As it is, I sentence you to penal servitude for twenty years.”



**The beautiful Pistyll Goleu waterfall on the Nant Clydach river between Llanwonno and Ynysybwł.**



**Pistyll Goleu (boxed - top left) on 1884 Ordnance survey map of Ynysybwl and Llanwonno (Compiled in 1875)**



**ALLEGED ATTEMPTED MURDER OF MOTHER AT TRAMROAD,  
PONTYPRIDD - December 27<sup>th</sup> 1886**

Colliers were hard-working men, who deserved a drink at the end of a hard shift underground or in the evenings or at weekends, but on returning home sometimes became violent after consuming too much alcohol. But times were also hard for those not it work and some people had to resort to going to the union workhouse on the Graig, where they were forced to work for little money, but were fed regular if meagre meals. Most of the 'inmates' themselves had drink problems, and as the following report shows the problem was not exclusive to the male sex: -

At Pontypridd Police Court on Wednesday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> 1887, before Mr. Ignatius Williams, Stipendiary magistrate, Lewis Lewis was charged with slitting his mothers throat. Margaret Lewis was a widow and had been in the workhouse for some time now. She came out of the union a few days before Christmas time and was staying at Mrs. Holmes's, a friend of hers, behind the Boot Inn. The prisoner, a collier, was in lodging. He was a single man.

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> inst., they were comfortable enough all day until evening. She went a little to forward like everyone else for a drop of drink and someone gave her a drop. He was on the Tramroad and of course, it disgraced the boy to see his mother intoxicated. He went to her and asked he to go indoors, saying, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, and to make a show of yourself to people on the side." He also said she could have a glass in the house if she wanted to. She turned very stubborn. She would not go in as he insisted. He took her by the arm and took her into Mr. Howe's house. She was giving him impudence and cheek all the time, her throat then was all right. She used fearful language, enough to let 'old Harry' knock her brains out. She aggravated him awful to the highest degree. He did not know his own mind until it was done. She did not know what she said to him. She felt something at her throat, but did not see anything in his hand. It was only a scrape. It was after she had tormented him fearfully.



She did not bleed much, nothing to make any difference. She sat down.

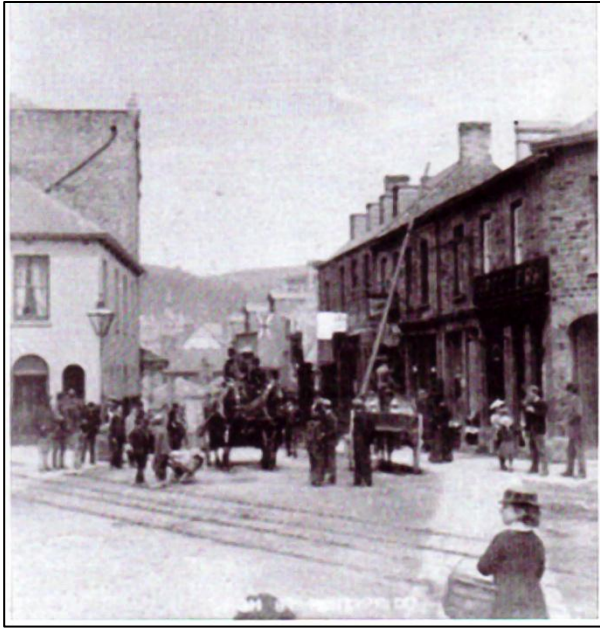
He did not threaten to kill her, nor anything of the kind. He had been a very kind boy to her. The doctor had been attending her. She was all right now. Mrs. Howe said that on the night about 8 or 9 o'clock Margaret Lewis was dragged off the street by her son. On getting into the house, the defendant said, "Here's a fine state to find a mother in. He said, "I picked her up by the Lamb Inn, drunk on the road, and there were a lot of men around her. This is a specimen of a mother." He was in an awful rage and went to a little box in which he kept his fancy things. She (witness) ran to the door. She did not see him take anything out of the box. She screamed murder because he said, "I'll cut my mother's throat." A near neighbour Mrs. Callaghan said that when she went to see

Mrs. Lewis she said that Mrs. Lewis was sitting on the ground and the prisoner on the armchair. The mother was bleeding from the throat; she said, "Lewis, what have you done?" He replied, "I have cut my mother's throat." She had seen the razor produced in the box. The mother cursed and swore at her son. After her throat was cut, she was taken into Mrs. Callaghan's house. The prisoner seemed very sorry afterwards. He was a very kind son and takes her tea and sugar every fortnight at the workhouse. He was drunk at the time. He was taken into custody and charged with the attempted murder of his mother "Yes," he said "I did do it, what did she get drunk for?" The police searched the room and found in the corner under a table an open razor with blood on both sides of the blade. The prisoner was committed to trial at the assizes.

Early on a Saturday in February 1887 at the Glamorganshire Assizes at the Town Hall, Cardiff, before His Lordship Mr. Justice Wills the case came up for hearing. In passing sentence, his Lordship remarked that the prisoner had done grievous bodily harm to his mother, and it arose from drink, which was at the bottom of more than half the cases of this kind that he tried. He should not inflict so heavier a sentence

as might have otherwise been the case, however, because he did not think that the prisoner meant to do the injury to his mother which resulted from his violence. As the prisoner had been in jail one month, he sentenced him to eight months with hard labour, adding, "When you come out of prison, now, keep away from drink. You may end with murdering someone in a drunken fit."





Two photographs of the Tramroad at the 'Tumble' on Station Square, Pontypridd

**MURDER ON THE GRAIG**  
**Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup> 1887**

**ONE MAN SHOT DEAD - EIGHT PERSONS INJURED AT  
GRAIG - "BRECON TOM" IN CUSTODY - GREAT  
EXCITEMENT**

Intense excitement was created in Pontypridd on Wednesday evening, August 24<sup>th</sup> 1887 by the news, which spread with wonderful rapidity that Thomas Morgan (generally known as "Brecon Tom"), a butcher carrying on business on his own account at 13 Union Street, had killed one man and injured several others. It did not seem to be known how many had been shot, but rumour varied it from five to fifteen. On enquiry, it was found that the intelligence as to the death of one man was only too true, and no fewer than fourteen persons had been more or less injured by gunshot.

The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' continued: - It appears that on Wednesday his wife returned home after a week's absence on a visit. That day was market day in the town and "Brecon Tom" returned home somewhat the worse for drink, a practice to which he was addicted. Next door to 'Brecon Tom's' butcher's shop, by the side of Wood Road, close to the town, resides a young married woman named Mrs. Higgins and her husband. They have a lodger named Arthur Andrews. During Mrs. Morgan's absence from home it seems Mrs. Higgins paid close attention to Thomas Morgan's movements. It appears that on Wednesday, during Thomas Morgan's absence at the Pontypridd Market, where he has a stall; Mrs. Higgins made some communications to Mrs. Morgan as to Tom's movements during her week's absence. It was, according to Mrs. Morgan's alleged by Mrs. Higgins that a certain female had on Tuesday paid a prolonged visit to Tom. On the other hand, Mrs. Higgins declares that it was Mrs. Morgan who had first hinted to her that Tom was displeased with her about something, for he had requested her not to have any communication whatever with her.

Mrs. Higgins was stung by this, and she told Mrs. Morgan why Tom was afraid for them to talk to each other - that he was afraid that she (Mrs. Higgins) would mention something about the mysterious female visitor to him during his wife's absence. That evening Mrs. Morgan mentioned to Tom what Mrs. Higgins had been saying, and it seems that Mr. Morgan manifested some temper in reference to the matter. It appears that Tom and his wife were "having words" about the above when who should come in but Mrs. Higgins in reference to some debt for meat which she owed Tom. The last named was, his wife states, livid with rage the moment Mrs. Higgins entered. High words raged between them, and Mrs. Morgan was terrified at the awful rage that was depicted in her husband's countenance. In addition to alleging that Tom's claim against her for meat was wrong, Mrs. Higgins taunted him about the visitor mentioned above.

Tom sprang forward and hurled her from the back room into the shop, where he held her with great force against the wall. Mrs. Higgins screamed. Her husband, in his own house, heard her cries, and ran into Tom's shop. Blows were exchanged between the two men, and while the men were thus fighting, Mrs. Higgins made her escape into her own house. Meanwhile a fierce encounter was going on between the two men, and the before-mentioned lodger, Arthur Andrews, went to Higgins's assistance. Mr. Higgins, now with his waistcoat torn to ribbons by Tom, made his escape, leaving Andrews in infuriated Tom's clutches. Both fell down inside the shop counter. By this time, people were arriving in large numbers and crowded about the doorway and the single window of the little shop. Intense excitement prevailed as the two men were still seen struggling furiously with each other. Arthur Andrews now screamed with agony, saying at short intervals that Tom was biting him. Those gazing through the window saw that Tom's teeth were fixing in Arthur's arm and now five men dashed into the shop and over the counter and quickly released the sufferer. He then bounded over the counter and fell against the wall opposite like one dazed, and then followed Higgins into their own house.

Tom, still mad with rage took down a breech-loader, which rested on nails driven into the wall over the entrance to the kitchen from the shop, and went with it to a corner of the shop near the shop desk. He was observed there moving his hands about the gun and desk very rapidly, but it is not known whether this was the action of charging the gun. The accused's little son stated that they had been shooting pigeons the day before, and that he "believes" the gun had remained loaded since that day. Tom, now in terrible tones, threatened to shoot those in his shop unless they went away instantly. The road in front of the house was now crowded with people, but many when they saw the gun in Tom's hands hurried away.

However, the sight of the gun, and the threat to shoot exasperated others, among them David Roberts, Thomas Smith, and one or two others. They rushed forward and caught hold of the muzzle of the gun, and pulled until Tom, who was inside the counter, while they were outside it, was dragged against the counter. He still clung to the stock of the gun, but those having hold of the muzzle were stronger than he was, and the counter gave way sideways, towards the men. At this moment, when the two parties were pulling at the gun, it went off with a loud report, the charge passing through the thick lower part of David Robert's left arm above the elbow, and passing out on the opposite side of the arm. It then went diagonally through the doorway, and struck poor Morgan Salathiel, who was in the crowd in the street, in the region of the heart. He ran down the road after being shot, about twenty yards, and then fell, and rolled in the dust several times. His aged mother, whom he had just requested to leave the crowd, was the first to catch hold of him. She lifted his head; he gasped two or three times, and then expired.

The utmost consternation prevailed, for the most distressing cries were heard on all sides from other injured people by the shots, which had flown in all directions. David Roberts seemed in imminent danger of speedily bleeding to death from an awful gash in his arm. Dr. Howard Davies appears to have been the first medical gentleman to arrive on the scene of the tragedy, and subsequently Dr. Jenkins and

Dr. Hunter arrived, and they did all they could in attending to the injured. The injured including David Roberts were taken to the surgery of Drs. Davies and Jenkins, Ash Grove, where his waistcoat was found to be still on fire, but it was afterwards decided to remove him to the Cardiff Infirmary by Mr. George Griffiths J.P. and the sufferer's brother. Dr. Peterson attended the wound and saw that none of the great blood vessels of the arm had been injured. But a piece of the muscle of the arm had been shot away and a nerve had been injured.

Mrs. Morgan was a member of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists at Penuel Chapel, Pontypridd, and during the afternoon the Rev. William Lewis, the minister, who was accompanied by the Rev. Mr. James, Calvinistic Methodist, Porth, called upon them.

Morgan Sathiel was the son of the late Mr. Henry Salathiel, Twynpenygarn, Pentyrch. The father was cousin to the late John and Eben Salathiel, Dinas.

Inspector Evan Jones, who heard the report of the shot from the railway station, dispatched Sergeant Jenkins who went to Morgan's house, and, single-handed, apprehended the man. Morgan by this time had naturally cooled down, and only said "What was I to do?" or words to the same effect, indicating that what he did was in self-defence.

Now the indignation of the populace was acquiring a tinge of fierceness, which the examination of the wounds did not lessen. There was an angry clamour in the air, and there could be little doubt that had he not put in a timely appearance the prisoner would have been roughly handled if not lynched there and then. The Inspector now arriving saw the appearance of affairs, and told Sgt. Jenkins to get the prisoner off. The prisoner was also scared, and stated to the officers that he would go where they choose. Sgt. Jenkins then marched him towards the police station. Whether the prisoner by that time felt fear or shame increasing is a matter of uncertainty, but when

opposite the Taff Vale Railway station, he again seems to have had another outburst of anger, and refused to proceed further. A cab was then procured, and the accused safely lodged in the cells.

The doctors soon made postmortem examination of the remains of Morgan Salathiel in the poor little cottage, situated within 50 yards of "Brecon Tom's" shop. The region above the left breast seemed riddled with buckshot, and there was a round hole, into which a portion of the shot had been driven about just below the left breast

Up to a late hour on Wednesday night, Supt. Matthews, Inspector Jones, P.S. Jenkins, P.S. Macdonald, P.S. Menbinick, and others, were engaged in making investigations. It is said that when the prisoner was arrested, there was one charge in the gun, which was afterwards secured by the police. Seldom, if ever, has there been such excitement in the town, people standing in groups in the streets until about midnight talking over the sad event.

Of course, the feeling was divided, many expressing sympathy for the prisoner, and especially for his wife and family, while others considered that the people whom sympathy ought to be shown were the relatives of the dead man and the persons who had sustained injuries from the random shot.

### **Antecedents of Morgan**

On Thursday morning, the prisoner seemed more depressed than overnight, and said that he was sorry that he hurt Sathiel, who he did not know. He admitted that he took the gun himself, and that no one handed it to him or counseled him to point it at the crowd. His poor wife and children, Herbert, Sara, Jacob and Elizabeth, were much grieved. Mrs. Morgan and the eldest lad were shedding bitter tears when they visited him that morning. Meanwhile David Roberts was not progressing very favourably at the Cardiff Infirmary and it was reported that it was uncertain whether he would live or not.



The cartridge found by the police in the gun was examined by Inspector Jones, and found to contain about 282 shots. Probably the cartridge fired contained the same number, which would account for so many being injured by a single charge from the gun. Arrangements are being made to open the inquest that afternoon at the Horse & Groom Hotel. The prisoner's pastor and other friends visited the police station on Thursday evening. The prisoner was admitted to the charge room and had a rather long interview with his father. Thomas Morgan's father, who resides at Brecon, was a very respectable man and a member of the Calvinistic Methodist Church and used to visit his son periodically, when they would attend Penuel chapel together, but the son never did so otherwise.

"Brecon" Morgan carried on his business in an old-fashioned thoroughfare named Union Street, which attends along the hillside, at a few minutes' walk from the railway station, and overlooks a magnificent panorama of valley and woodland. He is a man of about 38 years of age, and is of powerful stature, being nearly six foot in height. His face wears a determined and resolute expression, being clean-shaven, and his hair dark. His character was strangely at variance under the difficult conditions of sobriety and drunkenness. When sober, he was affable, civil to customers, and always ready with a pleasant remark to his customers, and once he ostentatiously had given half-a-sovereign to a poor woman near her confinement. But under the influence of liquor, he lost all command of his reason, and used to get into a violent paroxysm of frenzied rage.

Thomas Morgan is a native of Ponftaen Village, Merthyr, Cynog, Breconshire. His wife, a most respectable woman, is a native of the neighbourhood of Bridgend. They were married 15 years ago, and went to business at the Mumbles, Swansea. But during the past 13 years, they have been in business at Pontypridd. The shop is reached from the roadway by four steep and narrow stone steps.

The window, a rather large one for the size of the house, lies to the left, and between it and the door a solid-looking counter runs up the floor, making a passage about a yard in width.

A turn to the left brings the visitor into the body of the shop, and the door to the back kitchen is then on his right hand. The opposite wall is covered with prints and almanacs, whilst in the far corner to the left, between the wall and the window, is located a small writing desk. The whole shop is not much more than twelve foot square and is of a rather squalid appearance. The house has no back entrance, and is a two-storey building elevated and recessed from the roadway.

The shop, which was the scene of the tragedy, was visited by curious and interested crowds of sightseers during the whole of Thursday. The place was not closed, and there were some small pieces of meat lying exposed for sale on the counter and in the window. Mrs. Morgan, who is a rather prepossessing looking young woman, was occasionally to be seen in the shop, whilst her children were either sitting on the doorsteps or mixing with other little ones in the road. The general feeling amongst the bystanders was that, although Morgan had committed a terrible crime, there was some palliation, or rather explanation, for the action in the interference of the bystanders, who had greatly annoyed him by their presence and subsequent jeering comments.

### **The shocking tragedy at Graig**

Intense interest has been taken throughout the week in the incidents connected with the shooting tragedy reported in our last issue, reported the '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' of September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1887. Many of the details of the version then given are now found to have been incorrect. Persons, doubtless, in their excitement helped to spread erroneous reports. However, rather than enter into such matters again, we refer our readers to the lengthy report of the inquest upon Morgan Salathiel given in our present issue. Fourteen persons were more or

less injured in the affray (including Salathiel, who was killed), and the particulars as far as can be gleaned, are as follows: -

Morgan Sathiel	18 years, Pontypridd. Shot dead.
David Roberts	Collier, Rickard St, Graig. 22 Shot in the arm.
James Rowlands	Union Street. Shot in bowels.
Charles Johns	Collier, 16, 15 Rickard St, Graig . Shot in bowels.
Thomas Smith	66 Rickard Street, Graig. Shot in the face.
David James	80 Rickards Street. Graig. Shot in leg.
Henry Adams	53 Park Street, Treforest. Shot in the groin.
Eleanor Thompson	8 Furnace Row, Pontygwaith. Shot in face.
Mrs. Marrs	99 Rickard Street, Graig. Shot in the bowels.
Arthur Roberts	Son of Graig postmaster. Slight injury to head.
Mr. Freedman's boy	Wood Road, Glazier. Slightly injured.
Mr. Turner	4 Alma Terrace, Graig. Slightly injured.
Mrs. Elizabeth Alice Cook	26 Graig Terrace, Graig. Shot in elbow.
Arthur Andrews	12 Union St, Graig. Bitten on arm.

## **Inquest upon the body of Sathiel**

Verdict of the jury - Morgan to be indicted for murder

On the afternoon of Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup> at the Horse and Groom Inn, Pontypridd, Mr. H. L. Grover, deputy coroner, opened the inquest on the body of Morgan Salathiel, who died on the previous evening from a gunshot wound in connection with the shooting tragedy at Pontypridd. Mr. T. Phillips, Cardiff, appeared for Thomas Morgan, who was in custody.

The following is a list of the jury: - Mr. James Coombes (foreman), Mr. Parry Thomas, Mr. Joseph Neyes, Mr. C. H. Herdson, Mr. David Rees, Mr. J. Morgan (Trallwn), Mr. S. G. Jones (Rhiw Factory), Mr. C. Phillips, Mr. John (St. Catherine's Street), Mr. Daniel James, Mr. Jenkin Thomas, Mr. Samuel Jones, Mr. Evan Howells, Mr. William Wilker.

Among those present were Supt. Matthews, Sergt. Jenkins, Drs. Hunter and Howard Davies etc. The coroner, at the outset said that they would that day only call evidence to identify the body; some medical evidence, and a little further testimony, after which the jury would view the body and then they would adjourn until Tuesday, by which time the police hoped to have the case solved.

### **Evidence of deceased's sister**

Mrs. Janice Evans, 48 years of age, Hafod, the wife of James Evans, a miner, testified that she was the sister of the deceased, who lived in Union St. He had now been working on the Barry Tunnel, but was a collier by occupation. He had been working the last fortnight on the tunnel, but previously at the Maritime Pit, Pontypridd.

Under questions from the coroner, she stated that her brother had been single and had been born in Pontypridd and never left it. He was eighteen last birthday. She testified that she had first heard at Hafod of her brother's death about nine o'clock the previous night, which

was some time after his death. She had never seen him speak to Thomas Morgan, but knew they were quite friendly and knew each other well, and there had never been a bad word between them, and did not know anything Thomas Morgan had against her brother. She had viewed the body and identified it as that of Morgan Salathiel.

### **Evidence of one of the injured**

Thomas Smith, labourer, 60, Rickard's St., Graig, the next witness, who had shot marks on his face stated: - "Seeing people running down the road, I came out myself last evening about train time. I went down to the butcher's shop, and got on the pavement. I knew Thomas Morgan and his shop and looked through the window and saw Morgan on top of another man inside the counter, their heads just being visible. They were struggling and the one underneath was shouting for help and I went in with the others. There was a woman in the shop and after she asked, we succeeded in parting them. Then, the 'under' one jumped over the counter and by doing so the counter fell. He got up again and ran out. Thomas Morgan, then fetched a gun. He went into the inner room, and reached the gun from over the door leading into the inner room. He ran so far as the desk and took something out. Then men I did not know ran and grabbed hold of the barrel of the gun. Morgan had the stock towards himself, and the barrel out over the counter. I sprang forward and helped the men, and caught the barrel myself, and by so doing, by wrestling the barrel from him the counter fell down. I had two hands on the barrel at the time. The lady had now left the house."

He continued: - "The counter fell towards the door, bringing the muzzle of the rifle through the doorway. I still had hold of the muzzle almost to the top with one hand, with my right hand on the wall, and I stood on the bottom step. Whilst myself and two or three others were struggling the gun went off. I did not know the other men grappling with the gun. I felt marks on my face and heard a report in my ears. I heard no more for a spell. The sound of the rifle stunned me, and kept ringing in my ears. I went home and saw no more about it." Smith

was asked if he knew any of the others struggling with Morgan, and said that he did not, though he thought some were present for this inquest. William Williams was identified by Smith and more or less confirmed what Smith had testified.

### **Medical evidence - shot in the heart**

Dr. Howard Davies was then called to give evidence. He said that in conjunction with Dr. Hunter and Dr. Jenkins, he, that afternoon, made a post mortem examination of Salathiel. He stated, "I found externally, the chest was riddled with shot, more particularly the upper and middle part of the left side; that both lungs had been penetrated by those shots more or less, and also the heart"

The doctor then produced some of the shot that he gave to the judge so that he may know the gauge. The doctor continued by saying that death was a result of the shooting - the result of injury to the heart. One shot had gone through the substance of the heart and that death was almost instantaneous. The shot must have been fired at close quarters as the shot had passed through the chest walls and into the heart. At this point the Coroner adjourned the inquest until the following Tuesday at 11.30 a.m.

### **Second day's proceedings**

The resumed enquiry into the circumstances of the death of the unfortunate young man Salathiel, was held at the Horse and Groom on Tuesday morning, August 31<sup>st</sup> before the Coroner. The inquiry continued for a considerable time, the verdict not being announced until a quarter to nine p.m. Mr. T. Phillips, solicitor, Cardiff, again appeared for Morgan, though there had been a rumour abroad that he had been replaced by Walter A. Morgan, Pontypridd.

## Evidence of Mrs. Higgins

Elizabeth Emma Higgins was the first witness called. She said, "I am the wife of Thomas Higgins, a driver, living in Union St. I know Thomas Morgan, butcher, and his family. I live next door to them. Last Wednesday evening, between 6 and 7 o'clock, Morgan's little girl called me into Morgan's house. I was sitting outside my own house at the time, with my husband and two lodgers. The little girl said, 'Come here Mrs. Higgins, mother wants you.' I then took the jug of small beer in, and when I was on the door of Morgan's house, Morgan took hold of me and banged me against the wall. His wife was there. He began beating me, and my screams brought my husband to him. The lodger (Andrews) went in and then my husband came out. I was bad in the house and don't remember anything. I am subject to fits. I did not know that the shot was off even."

The coroner asked why Morgan had struck her, to which she replied: - "He insulted me on Friday and I said that I would tell his wife. His wife, who was then away, came home on the Monday, and this was the second time he had insulted me. He had first insulted me last March. I went there on Wednesday and told her that her husband had forbidden her to talk to me, and she wanted to know the reason, and I told her. I had been accustomed to deal there, and I had gone there as usual. I told her what Morgan told me. He said something insulting, and when I went on Saturday to ask for the bill he again said it. I asked what I owed. He said 4/4. I then gave him 1/- and said that I would not pay more for his cheek, and would not buy anything there again. When I told the wife, she said it was not the first time for her to hear such a thing. I believe Mrs. Morgan wanted me to say it to his face when I called in, but nothing was said then."

She added, "On the Tuesday Mrs. Morgan came into our house and brought some of the water she had brought back from Builth. Nothing was said then about the insult, and I would not have mentioned it next day if she had not asked me. There was the matter of the account between me and Mr. Morgan. On the Saturday I had a

word with him about the meat. He said that he could have sold it if I had not said I would have it. I said it was because he had insulted me on the Friday. I had the loan of threepence from Williams, the assistant, and he put it down sixpence on my bill. I afterwards admitted that the account was correct. So far as I know the little girl had called me in about the account. I did not then go further than just inside the door. Morgan was not inside the counter. He banged me against the door and I don't remember anything after. I remember coming out screaming that he beat me. I don't remember going around the counter. If I did, I must have been unconscious. I was in Morgan's arms when my husband came in. When my husband came in and caught hold of him I was able to go, but not before. One of the lodgers went in after my husband. I don't know whether the lodger punched Morgan behind the counter. I did not tell person about the insult because I promised not to do so if he undertook not to say such a thing again. He did not say he would turn me out on the Saturday, and I said that he could not until we had finished the business." "All I owe him is 3/4. I paid a shilling on the Saturday, but he did not take it down. He said he did not take shillings, and he would put me in court on Monday, but he kept the shilling. I did not tell Mrs. Morgan that Morgan had a woman with him." Mrs. Higgins was taken away in a fainting condition at the conclusion of her evidence.

### **Testimony of Thomas Higgins**

Thomas Higgins, husband of the last witness testified: "I have lived at 12 Union Street, six or eight months, and have generally been on good terms with Thomas Morgan. The 'missus' dealt in Morgan's shop. My wife told me about a week last Saturday that Morgan had insulted her. I never spoke to Morgan about it. On the Wednesday evening between six and seven, Morgan's little girl called my wife as we sat outside our own house. My wife did not go the first time and the little girl came out again to call her. My wife went into Morgan's house, and the first thing I heard was the missus screaming. I ran in and saw Thomas Morgan hit her on the back of the head. She was then at the farthest end of the counter from the door, but outside the counter."



“She was then free from him, standing before him, when he struck her. He struck her with his fist. I think that there was someone else inside, but I am not sure. I did not hear Morgan say anything. I caught hold of Mr. Morgan, and then my wife went out when she came free. Morgan struck a blow at me and I struck him back. We struggled with each other. We did not get on the ground. Both of our lodgers came. The first I saw was Thomas Williams. Arthur Andrews was the other. My waistcoat broke when Morgan was trying to pull me inside the counter, and I got free and ran out. I did not see the lodgers do anything. Morgan took up the chopper from the block. He did not say anything. Morgan did not follow us out of the shop. I was not in the shop more than a couple of minute’s altogether. I went into the house.”

“I afterwards heard the gun fired. Both of the lodgers had come out. The missus was in the house in a fit when I got in. Neither I nor the lodgers returned until after the shot. Williams had come to the house with me, but Andrews did not come then. However, he was in before the gun was fired. After the firing of the shot I went out and saw a crowd and a man holding a gun to his head. About a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes passed between the time I went into Morgan’s house and the time I heard the shot fired. A crowd had gathered around the shop before I came out of it. My wife did not recover consciousness until just after the shot went off. I am quite sure I never heard Morgan say any language at all.”

While questioned Thomas Higgins stated that he had not seen Morgan and Andrews scuffling. “Could not be sure how long before the shot was fired Andrews came into our house almost immediately. All he said was that he had been bitten on the arm. I don’t remember on what day my wife told me about the insult. Have not been in the habit of using such terms myself. My wife was at the other end of the counter. She was not by the outer door when I went in. I thought it proper to take my wife’s part. A crowd came there. I cannot say whether it was because of the row, but I made no row. He had no

business to send for my wife and beat her. I was so overcome by my feelings that I don't know who was in the shop." The inquiry was here adjourned for a short time and then resumed.

### **Explanation of lodger Andrews**

Arthur Andrews said, "I lodge with Thomas Higgins at 12 Union St, and am a tipper at the Great Western Colliery. On Wednesday evening I and Thomas Williams, Thomas Higgins, and Mrs. Higgins sat on the wall cracking nuts. Mrs. Higgins was opening a bottle of small beer for us. I heard screams. I did not notice Mrs. Higgins going away, but I heard screams coming from Morgan's house, next door. I saw Higgins rush into Morgan's house, and Williams and I followed him. I saw Higgins and his wife and Thomas Morgan together scuffling in the corner. The scuffling was going on by the door leading to the back kitchen at the end of the counter, but outside it. As soon as I got there, Morgan said 'Give me my knife,' I then got hold of him."

A plan of the house, prepared by Inspector Jones was now put in, and the witness Andrews pointed out the spot at which he saw the three standing.

Continuing, the witness said: - "Morgan said: 'Give me that knife.' I do not know whom he was addressing. I did not see a knife. Did not notice anybody in the shop other than Morgan, Higgins and his wife. With that I caught hold of him, and he reached the chopper from somewhere. Mr. and Mrs. Higgins and Williams went out as soon as I got hold of Morgan. I struggled with him until someone took the chopper from him. I don't know who took it. Morgan said when he had the chopper that he would chop my bastard head off. We went on tussling after the chopper was got out of his hand until he got me on the block inside the counter. He said I should not go out of the place; he would kill me."

“Then I fell off the block, and Morgan fell too. In the struggle I got on top of him. Then Morgan got me under him, and made an attempt to bite my nose. I pushed his head, and he bit me on the arm (marks shown to the jury). He bit me through the shirt. The mark on the left arm was not that of a bite, but it was produced during the struggle. Williams, his partner, who stood behind him, said - ‘Let him have fair play,’ when Morgan was on top of me, and biting me. I got my arm free, and he had hold of it a second time, and when I again got it free Morgan said: ‘Fetch the gun, and I will blow his brains out.’ At that a rush came in and pulled him off me. The struggle was inside the corner, and he had my head under the counter. I don’t know who came in with a rush. I put my foot on the block, fell over the counter, and ran out to my lodgings. I did not notice the report of the gun. I did not go out again until I heard the report of Salathiel’s death.”

Under question from bench and jury Arthur Andrews stated that the partner Williams did not interfere except when he told Morgan to give me fair play. He called for help when struggling with Morgan, before the rush. He continued: “ I asked Morgan to hold on, so that I could get out. I had gone in to assist Higgins, I did not do anything to Morgan such as strike him. I was afraid of him. I ventured in to assist. I knew I could have help if it was wanted, but they all ran out. I did not know they were going to run out. I got away from Morgan as soon as I could.”

“I took hold of Morgan when he asked for his knife. I knew he did not want to cut meat. I tried to leave but he caught hold of me. I was scared to leave him for fear he would cut me. I asked him to let me go when he had the chopper. I could not tell if Williams was there all the time. I saw Mrs. Morgan once in the corner - I believe it was when I went in.”

### **Narrative of eyewitness**

Henry Chidzey, a mason living in Rickard’s Street confirmed the above evidence saying that he saw Morgan looking in the breach of

the gun, but could not confirm to say if Morgan was looking to see if it was loaded. The Coroner thought Chidzey knew Morgan meant business and had quickly got out of the way. About half a minute or a minute of leaving the room he had heard a shot and saw Roberts, who had his arm shot, come out of the crowd, and afterwards saw them pick Salathiel up and carry him away. He had not seen Salathiel before.

Albert Griffiths, living at 7 Tower Street, gave a similar account of events, and stated, "I am a bricklayer, and was coming from work on Wednesday evening when I saw a lot of people outside Morgan's house. I had seen the shop once before, but did not know it. Looking through the window I saw a man, this Morgan I suppose, with another man under him. I did not know Morgan before. I heard the lower man shouting for help pitifully, and the people saying outside: 'What a shame no one don't go to his assistance; he is killing him.' I went in the shop with another man - a stranger to me, and was going to part them, when a man in the shop said, 'No one interfere, it's a quarrel, let them have it out.' And he stopped us from going to interfere. Have not seen him since, but would know him."

Williams William, Morgan's partner, was called in and identified as the man Griffiths was talking about inside the shop. Griffiths testified that he saw two men holding the barrel of the gun and subsequently the gun went off. Someone said 'Catch the gun' and he sprang and caught hold of the barrel of the gun. This was some seconds after the shot. Morgan stood about 8 feet from the door. He had hold of the barrel and Morgan the butt. The latter said nothing, and in a few seconds he let it go. Griffiths kept the gun until Inspector Jones turned up. Griffiths stated: "I could see Morgan when the gun went off. The two men were holding the barrel when it went off. I did not see anyone pull the trigger, but Morgan had the butt, and the other men the barrel. There was nothing to entangle the trigger. (Witness showed how the two men held the gun). No one put his hand nearer the trigger than a foot from the muzzle."

At this point the Coroner ordered the gun to be shown around the jury to see how closely the guard fitted. Griffiths stated that there was no one behind Morgan when it went off. He had not seen any scales on the counter and that when the counter fell it did not fill up the doorway, as it swung inwards. He confirmed that the two men holding the barrel were the only people in the room apart from Morgan. The counter falling, in his opinion, was not the means of the gun facing the door. Mr. Phillips, representing Morgan said that one of the two triggers was loose. But the Coroner said that this was not the one that went off.

William Thomas, Collier, Graig, gave evidence that he was one of the men holding on to the barrel in Morgan's house, and looked away as the shot went off and saw James Roberts put his hand to his side. His story mirrored those told by the others.

### **Evidence of a friend of the deceased**

Elias Thomas, a collier, Graig said: "Salathiel was a friend of mine. I went to Salathiel's house on Wednesday evening. He was with me in the house. His little brother came in and said there was a row. We went up together by Morgan's house, and saw two men scuffling on the ground under the counter. We both looked through the window, and heard Andrews calling for help. Two or three went in, and the counter fell. I jumped into the road. I believe the counter fell before Andrews got out. I stood with Sathathiel on the middle of the road. I did not see the gun at all. I could see Morgan from the road, and heard him say he would make the bastard a square now. There were two or three trying to pull something from Morgan, but could not see what it was. I heard the shot. After he had got shot Salathiel ran about 24 yards and I went after him. He was standing in the middle of the road, opposite the door. He only gave one groan. John Thomas took him from me."

## **Evidence of Inspector Jones**

Police Inspector Jones said, "About five minutes past seven, in consequence of hearing a report and seeing people running, I went towards Thomas Morgan's shop. The first I saw was the deceased Morgan Salathiel lying in front of his own house. He had been shot. I saw no signs of life. On the way saw several reported to have been injured. Saw Albert Griffiths in front of Morgan's house, on the steps, with gun in his hand. I took the gun from him and examined it. In the right barrel I found this empty cartridge (produced). On opening the breech, smoke came out. The empty cartridge is marked "No. 12 Joyce, London." I have examined similar cartridges shown me by Sergeant Jenkins. I produce some of them. They contain 280 to 290 shots - I have counted several, and the average weight of the shot is one ounce and 170 grains. They are small size shot. I went into the prisoner's house. He was in the back room with Sgt. Jenkins. As soon as I went in prisoner said, "Inspector Jones, I fired the gun. They were beating me in my own shop." In consequence of the excited crowd I advised him to go quietly to the station, and he went with Sgt. Jenkins. I produce the gun handed to me by Griffiths. I did not caution the prisoner. I really did not know what the charge would be against him - whether it was an accident or not. I sent him to the station for safety. It was purely voluntary on his part."

## **Further police testimony**

Sergeant Jenkins said, "On Wednesday evening last, about ten minutes past seven I heard the report of a gun, and saw people running towards Union Street. I went to Morgan's shop, I saw the deceased lying down, but did not notice whether he was dead or dying. Saw prisoner sitting down by the desk in the shop. Just as I got through the door he said, 'What could I do but shoot? They were full of my shop, I thought they would kill me.' I got him to the desk; and told him he must come to the station. He made no reply then, but said, 'Let me go into the back room for a drink.' We went, and he got some ginger beer. I then took him to the station, and left him in the

charge room. Went up again and saw Salathiel. Then I went to the charge room, and charged him with shooting Salathiel, and cautioned Morgan that whatever he said would be used against him. He said: 'I was not the one who committed the murder - that is the man (pointing to Griffiths, as the witness had looked through the chargeroom door), he took the gun off me before it went off. I then went to the house, and in a little drawer in the desk I found 15 cartridges (produced).' The desk was in the corner."

Both policemen stated that Morgan appeared perfectly sober, though it was his habit to drink on market day. The shot taken from the body of Salathiel matched that of the shot in the shop drawer.

William Alfred Thomas of 59, Rickards Street, give testimony that he was one of them that had hold of the barrel in the shop, and that Morgan's hand was not near the trigger when it went off, but he was the only one at the breech end. Thomas asked Morgan if it was a blank cartridge that had been fired, to which Morgan replied "No, I'm afraid it is not."

### **Evidence of Morgan's assistant**

The final witness called was the assistant, William Williams, who stated that when the incident began he was in the back room. He heard a commotion and saw the two lodgers holding Mr. Morgan. One man went out and the other continued to scuffle with Morgan. He entered and asked the crowd to stand back. He had not tried to stop people helping Higgins, but intended parting them himself. He had asked for fair play and so he did. Smith assisted him and several more. Andrews got away. Morgan asked the crowd to clear out, and then saw the gun in Morgan's hand, but had not seen him get it. He did not hear Morgan make any threats. The men dragged the counter, scales, and gun and all fell. The men had hold of the barrel and Morgan the stock when it fell. Morgan fell forward but did not lose his footing. He could not tell whether Morgan lost his grip of the gun when the counter fell. Could not say whether Morgan kept the gun

loaded. Morgan had been using it to shoot pigeons at Berwyd-dy on the previous day. Morgan had sent up the gun with the little boy the previous night, and on Wednesday morning. Williams saw it on the table in the shop. He did not know who put it on the wall. Morgan had been drinking a few glasses as usual on market day, but was not the worse for drink. This concluded the evidence.

### **The Coroner's summing up**

The Coroner said he thought it required little or no summing up from him, as nearly all the evidence had been taken on the same day, and it must be fresh in their memory. The first matter the jury had to decide was the cause of the death of this poor fellow Salathiel, and they could not have any possible doubt, he took it, that he died from the effect of the shot discharged from this gun out of Morgan's house on Wednesday evening last, and, therefore, that the case of death must have been the shooting. There were several points which they would have to decide, but there was one which would require special consideration. It was no use mincing matters. Thomas Morgan stood in almost painful and dangerous position as regards his partaking in this matter on Wednesday night, and would require a great deal of thought and consideration on the part of the jury to decide how far he (Morgan) might be liable for Salathiel's death. Of course, the crime of murder always required proof of malice; that malice might be expressed or implied, but there must be malice first to make it murder.

The distinction between murder and manslaughter was that in the case of murder there was an intent to bring about that man's death, - the result of passion - hurried passion very often, or something else, whereas if a man did it without premeditation, the crime was reduced to manslaughter. The most difficult point that Morgan and his advisors had to contend with, was that Morgan took the gun, which was a deadly weapon, and if they came to the conclusion that it was known by him to be loaded, or after taking it down he did load it, and if subsequently it was discharged by him, by his own act, and if they were satisfied that Salathiel died from that discharge by him, they



could not possibly bring in any other verdict than murder against Thomas Morgan.

As to provocation sufficient to excuse a man, mere words were not sufficient to reduce a murder to homicide. There must be more than simple words, and more than blows in some cases. Pollock laid it down that no provocation by words only, would reduce it to manslaughter, particularly in a case when a man used a weapon calculated to cause death. In this case the weapon was a deadly one, and one from the use of it alone malice was to be inferred. Baron Pollock, said that when a deadly weapon was used, the intent of that person was manifest. The jury must judge if there was any provocation themselves. The present Justice Stephen said it did not extenuate unless the person was deprived of the power of self-control by the provocation he had received, and regard must be had to the circumstances attending, such as the state of mind, the time that expired between the time of the provocation and the offence etc. The Coroner then recapitulated the leading portions of the evidence. He incidentally remarked that the evidence did not specify whether Morgan found the gun loaded or loaded it afterwards or not. The evidence as such was that it went off in the struggle, and the evidence on all sides proved that there was a struggle between Morgan on the one side, and that the counter fell as they had heard.

### **The verdict**

The jury then proceeded to consider their verdict, and the room was cleared at a quarter past six, p.m. On the readmission of the public at about quarter to nine, Mr. Coombes, the foreman, said that the verdict was - "We find that Morgan Salathiel died from a shot fired by Thomas Morgan."

The Coroner: - "Do you find any provocation?"

The foreman: "That is the verdict. We could not come to any other verdict according to the evidence."

Coroner: "That means a murder."

It was then stated that Morgan would be committed for trial on the charge of 'Wilful Murder.'

Thomas Morgan did not appear at the inquest that day, but was brought before Mr. George Griffiths, J.P; at the Pontypridd Police Station on that night, and was remanded until the following Wednesday. He was next morning taken in a cab to the railway station to Cardiff Gaol. Crowds had watched him each day near the railway station.

### **Morgan before the magistrates**

At Pontypridd Police Court a week after the conclusion of the inquest, Thomas Morgan was to appear before the Stipendiary, charged with wilful murder. He was brought up from Cardiff and, owing to the crowd, Sergeant MacDonald took him in a cab to the court. Morgan, who seems to feel his position acutely, asked to be allowed to come without handcuffs, and his request was granted. There was a good deal of excitement in and around the court.

The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' of September 9<sup>th</sup> 1887 carried this report: - Keen excitement prevailed in Pontypridd on Wednesday in connection with the trial before the magistrates of Thomas Morgan, known as "Brecon Tom," upon the charge of having caused the death of Morgan Salathiel. The court was crowded, and many were unable to gain admittance. The prisoner looked exceedingly haggard and weak, and was accommodated with a chair.

He leaned his head upon his hands all through the hearing except when his solicitor (Mr. Rhys) occasionally consulted him. He could not be seen when he was left to himself, and the moment he would lift his head the crowd in the court rose to their feet, and some apparently on tiptoe, to get a glance at him. Some commotion was caused in the early part of the day by two women fainting -one being Mrs. Higgins, and the other Mrs. Evans (Salathiel's sister). The hearing lasted over six hours, but the crowd in the court was larger at the close than

during any part of the day. The prisoner, when charged, pleaded “not guilty,” but did so in such a low voice that he could scarcely be heard by anyone except Mr. Rhys and those close by. After the formal committal he was removed to the police station, and tottering along by the side of P.C. McDonald looked quite broken down. The crowds in the streets waited until after the nine o’clock train to see if he would be taken to Cardiff, but the police kept him at Pontypridd for the night. A full report stated: -

### **The Prosecution**

At the Pontypridd Petty Sessions, before Mr. Ignatius Williams, stipendiary, and Mr. T. P. Jenkins, Thomas Morgan was again brought up on the charge of murder. Mr. William Spickett, solicitor, appeared for the prosecution; Mr. Rhys (Morgan & Rhys) for the defence; and Mr. T. R. Phillips, Cardiff, watched the case for Morgan’s father. Mr. Stockwood was the magistrates clerk. Mr. Stockwood read the depositions already taken. Mrs. Higgins was the cross-questioned. She denied that she had gone to Morgan’s shop to borrow 3d or any money at all. She denied having any meat that day. Arthur Andrews’ depositions were then read and when cross-questioned said that Morgan did not have the chopper in his hand when he had caught hold of him, and that Morgan could not reach it because he was behind Morgan and had hold of both his arms and did not see it at all until it was in his hand.

Albert Griffiths testified that there was a row going on in Morgan’s shop, and people outside said what a shame somebody did not separate the two men, Morgan and Andrews. I went in with Roberts, and was going around the counter to Andrews, but Williams prevented me, saying it was a fair fight, let them have it out. But as Andrews continued to cry out, I went and tried to release Andrews, but could not. Roberts came to my help, and we then got Morgan off Andrews. When Morgan went for the gun, I went out. Afterwards I saw Morgan holding the stock of the gun, and Roberts the barrel, with a young man named Smith. As they were pulling the counter fell.

Morgan was standing inside the counter, about three feet from the door, and opposite the centre of the door. In a few seconds the shot went off. Neither Roberts nor Smith could have pulled the trigger. Did not see Morgan do so, but he might have done so. Saw blood running down Roberts' arm. The barrel of the gun was level with the door.

“There was nothing which I could see which could have let the gun off unless Morgan pulled the trigger. I was standing on the step of the door when the gun went off. I sprang and got hold of the gun, and took it from Morgan and gave it to Inspector Jones. Morgan did not resist more than a second when I took the gun. I could not see whether the gun was at full cock. I did not see Morgan do anything to the lock. We were all clear of the counter when the gun went off.” A plan of the interior of the shop, prepared by Inspector Jones, was handed to the witness by Superintendent Matthews, and the witness pointed out where the counter fell.”

The next witness called was David Roberts, who had his left arm in a sling. In reply to the Stipendiary he said his arm was painful. Examined by Mr. Spickett he stated: “I remember the 24<sup>th</sup> August. I heard of someone being hurt and went up the road to Morgan's shop. It was about seven o'clock. I saw a man beating another behind the counter or bench, whatever it was. I was outside in the road, looking through the window (Morgan was here asked to rise, and witness identified him as one of the men). I believe Andrews was the other man. One was crying for help. I went in and tried to separate them. There was some other man who went in with me. I don't remember if there was anyone else in the shop at the time. I separated them. A man told me to let them fight it out. That man was inside the counter. He raised his hand and threatened to strike me. (William Williams was here called in, and witness said that he was the man). In separating them I did not strike Morgan at all. Did not see anyone strike him. After separating them Williams told me to go out or he (Morgan) would be sure to shoot me. I saw the gun in Morgan's hand. I was talking with Williams, and did

not see Morgan get the gun. Morgan said ‘I will shoot the bastard lot of you.’ Morgan seemed to be very wild, and in great passion.”

Roberts continued: - “At the time Morgan was looking towards the lock of the gun. Cannot say his hands were near the lock. I was frightened at seeing the gun, and ran towards it, and caught hold of it. Morgan at the time was coming on towards me. He seemed very wild, and was very red in the face. I was standing about the inner end of the counter. I had hold of the barrel with two hands - one hand about the middle, and the other near the top of the barrel. Morgan had hold of the stock. I cried for help. One or two came to my help. As I was pulling the gun the counter slewed round. When I got to the door the counter fell. There were a few seconds in between. I could not tell exactly. I did not see anyone else holding the stock except Morgan. I can’t say, for I was watching the mouth of the gun as I was afraid of it going off through my body. From the time I went into the shop I did not see anyone do anything to Morgan except me and the other man taking him off Andrews. I was shot in the under part of the left arm, between the shoulder and the elbow. I ran for the doctor.”

Cross-examined Roberts added: - “The other man who took hold of the gun put one hand nearer the lock than my hand was. I kept the muzzle of the gun pointing to the ground all the way till I got to the door, and then I slipped over a bit of a step and lost my grip of the top of the gun, and then the muzzle pointed upwards. When I let go of my hold of the top of the gun, the gun went up sharp, and went off. At the time the gun went off the counter was not between us. I had got over the counter, and Morgan must have been pulled over the counter. If I had kept my hold when the gun fired the shot would have gone to the ground. He did not point the gun at me. I don’t believe he did, but when I saw the gun I was frightened.”

Thomas Smith said he saw Morgan take the gun off some nails or hooks that were over the door leading to the inner room, and gone towards a desk. He repeated his previous evidence at the inquest, stating that the gun went off the same instant as the counter fell.

Before the man jumped to take hold of the barrel, the gun was not pointing towards that man, but quite in a cross direction. He did not know how many pulled the counter over, but that it brought the muzzle of the gun out through the door. He did not believe there was any necessity for anyone to grab the muzzle of the gun in the first place.

James Rowlands, collier, living at 20 Union Street, a witness who had stood in the door of the shop, who had not testified at the inquest, stated that Morgan had fetched the gun and had one hand over the trigger. It was after the counter fell that the gun went off - 15 to 20 seconds. Witness was shot in his bowels and left arm. There were several hundreds of people outside in the road, and the doorway was blocked by people looking in. Mr. Rhys said that it appears that there were five pairs of hands on the gun before the counter fell.

William Williams, the prisoner's assistant, the next called, repeated the evidence he gave at the inquest. Witness was with Morgan at Berwydd-dy shooting on the day before this affair. Morgan there fired off two barrels at pigeons, but witness did not know whether Morgan again loaded the gun. Prisoner's little boy finally carried the gun home from the slaughterhouse that night. In the house afterwards the gun was placed upon a table which was low enough for the children to reach it. It was usually kept on the nail. Had seen some cartridges in the desk in the corner by the window. He didn't know if Morgan usually kept the gun cocked or not. He had not threatened Roberts with his fist.

William Thomas, collier, Graig, recapitulated the evidence given at the inquest and under cross-examination stated that he and Roberts had taken hold of the gun, but whether another two who went in with him had hold or not he could not say. Another had his hand between his hands. He could not say what other hands were on the gun.

Inspector Jones deposed to visiting the prisoner's house and obtaining the gun from the witness Griffiths. When he went in prisoner said "I fired the gun; they were beating me in my own shop." Both barrels were on full cock. Sgt. Jenkins repeated his evidence from the inquest.

Dr. Howard Davies described the injuries to the deceased. There were about 130 shots in Salathiel. The shot had gone to the heart, and the pericardium was distended with blood. This concluded the case for the prosecution. The Stipendiary formally read the charge and cautioned the prisoner in the usual way that he was not obliged to say anything. Prisoner, in a very low tone, said he was not guilty.

### **The defence**

Mr. Rhys addressed the bench for the prisoner. He argued that the offence of the prisoner could not amount to more than manslaughter. He stated that the distinction between murder and manslaughter was clearly put in Roscoe's Criminal Evidence, where it was laid out that: "Whenever death ensues from sudden transport of passion, or heat of blood, upon reasonable provocation and without malice, or upon sudden combat, it will be manslaughter; if without such provocation, or if the blood has considerable time to cool, or if there be evidence of express malice, it will be murder."

"With respect to the interval of time allowed for passion to subside, it has been observed that it is much easier to lay down rules for determining which cases are without the limits, than how far exactly, those limits extend. It must be remembered that in these cases the immediate object of enquiry is whether the suspension of reason arising from sudden passion continued from the time of the provocation received to the very instant of the mortal stroke given, for, if in legal presumption there was time or opportunity for cooling, the killing will amount to murder - it being attributable to malice and revenge rather than human frailty. The following are stated as general circumstances amounting to evidence of malice in disproof of the

party's having acted under the influence of passion only. In between the provocation received to the very stroke given, the party giving the stroke fall into discourse or diversions, and continue so engaged a reasonable time for cooling, or if he take up or pursue any other business of design not connected with the immediate object of his passion, or subservient thereto, so that it may be reasonably supposed that his intention was once called off from the subject of his provocation; again if it appeared that he meditated upon his revenge, or used any trick or circumvention to effect it in these cases the killing will amount to murder.”

Mr. Rhys pointed out that all these elements were absent in the present case, and that there was no evidence whatever of a deliberate intent on the part of the prisoner, but on the contrary, the evidence proved clearly that the act was committed by the prisoner in the frenzy of his passion, and that during the series of events from the time Mrs. Higgins entered the house until the fatal shot the prisoner had not deliberated for an instant, but had seized the gun when carried away by his anger. He argued that Mrs. Higgins when she came to the house made an unfounded charge of adultery against the prisoner, and that this being made in the presence of his wife was a very gross provocation. At the same time he admitted that it was very difficult for him to prove this owing to the weakness of Mrs. Higgins for going off into the fainting fits as soon as he commence to cross-examine her, though she did not appear to suffer from such weakness until she had finished giving her evidence in chief, and also owing to the fact that by the rules of evidence both the mouths of prisoner and his wife were now closed, so that neither could give their version of the conversation with Mrs. Higgins. He contended that the prisoner's wife should have given her evidence before the coroner's jury, when this rule would not have applied, and had this course been taken he ventured to think that the coroner's jury would not have returned the verdict they did.

He further contended that the evidence, so far from showing the prisoner had any intention of shooting when he took the gun down,



went the other way, as all the witnesses were agreed that the gun was pointing in the opposite direction from the crowd until Roberts, under the natural impulse of the moment, seized hold of it, and with others endeavoured to drag it from the prisoner in the direction of the door, thus causing its muzzle to point toward the crowd, which was never intended by the prisoner, who had then ceased to have control of the weapon. He further contended that the very evidence as to the prisoner having fired the gun was very doubtful, and that it was quite consistent with the evidence that the fall of the counter or the hands of the persons struggling might have caused the gun to go off, and he submitted on the whole facts that the injustice of the case would be met by the prisoner being committed for manslaughter.

### **The verdict**

The Bench, after deliberating for a short time, stated that they had decided to commit the prisoner for trial for wilful murder; there were several points, they thought, in prisoner's favour which a jury would take favourable notice of, but on the whole they considered the question was one for a jury. Addressing the prisoner, the Stipendiary said: - "Thomas Morgan, you are committed to take your trial at the next assizes."

People still retained their places until Superintendent Matthews stated that the business of the Court was over. Morgan was then removed to the cells, but was allowed an interview with his wife in the police chargeroom. On Thursday morning he was taken to Cardiff goal by Sergeant Jenkins. Many people watched the cab passing through the streets to the railway station. Prisoner was silent and downcast.

### **Brecon Tom sent to jail**

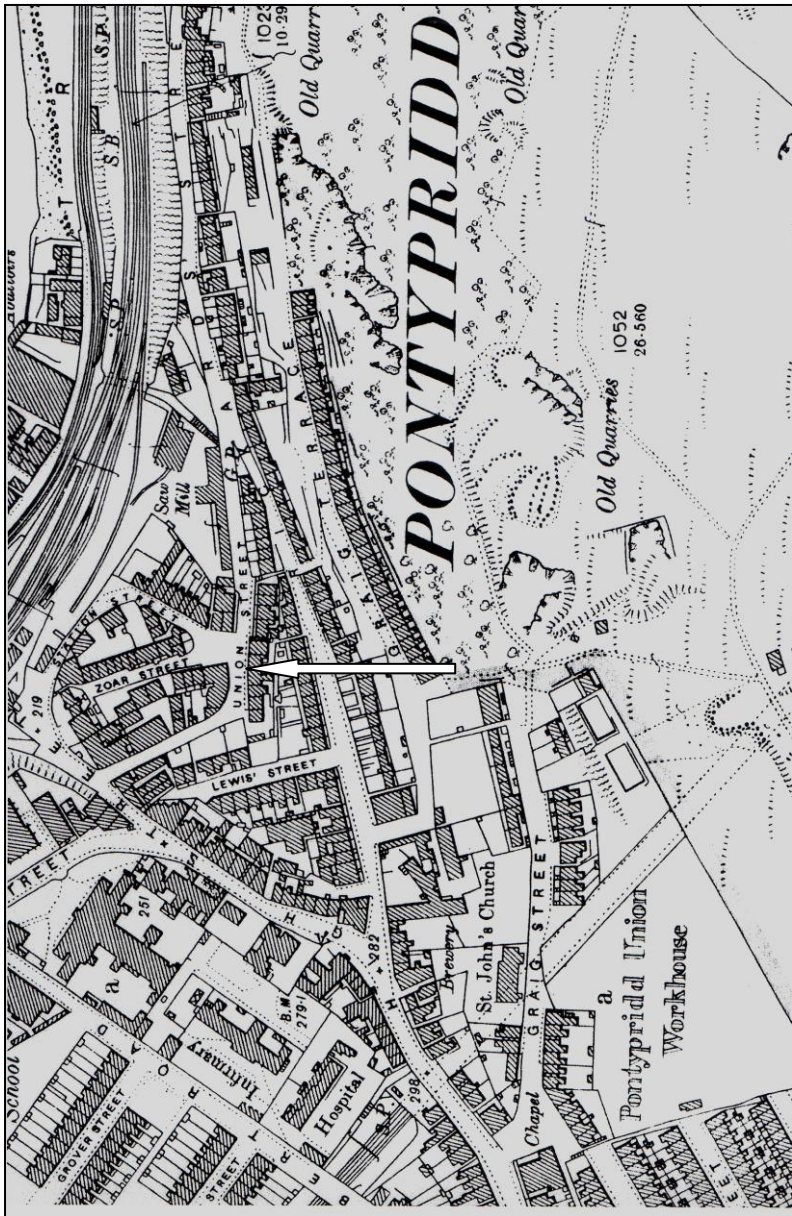
At Swansea Assizes on Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> 1887, Mr. Justice Cave delivered sentence in the case of Thomas Morgan, butcher, Pontypridd (alias "Brecon Tom"), who was charged with the manslaughter of Morgan Salathiel by shooting him. The

circumstances of the tragic circumstances were fully detailed. The judge said the prisoner's conduct was distinguished by the most reckless violence, and he (the Judge) would pass upon him a sentence that he hoped would be a warning to others and also to themselves in giving way to so violent a temper. At the same time there was a great difference between an intentional act and negligence from recklessness, however reckless that negligence may be. The Jury found him guilty of doing this involuntarily, otherwise he should undoubtedly have passed a sentence of penal servitude. As it was, he would sentence him to twelve months' imprisonment. The prisoner swooned on hearing the sentence.

At the Glamorganshire Assizes at Swansea, on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1889, David Roberts sued Thomas Morgan (Brecon Tom), Pontypridd, for £500 damages for injuries sustained by the discharge of the gun by the defendant on Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Arthur Lewis appeared for the plaintiff; defendant was undefended by counsel, although Mr. E. C. Spickett, of the firm of Spickett & Sons of Pontypridd, rendered him valuable assistance. There was a counter claim for £500 for trespass by plaintiff into defendant's house. The action was brought by the man whose arm was injured during the scuffle for the gun in the manslaughter case. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff for £20, and gave their fees to the plaintiff.

#### **Addendum**

You would have thought that after spending 12 months in jail, Brecon Tom would have learned his lesson, but apparently not. The author, while looking through documents he had compiled some years ago, came across the following story about Dan Thomas, owner of several small collieries, including the Pwllgwaun Colliery, who had been the unofficial lightweight boxing champion of the world, but who had packed in the fight game and taken to religion: - On another occasion while walking home from Carmel Baptist Chapel one Sunday through Mill street, Dan Thomas was accosted by a notorious character known as 'Brecon Tom,' who had served a sentence of imprisonment for manslaughter. Brecon Tom, a big and powerful man, asked him jeeringly "Where was the text today, Dan?" Dan Thomas walked up to him and said quietly: - "Ill give you a week to think it over Tom. I shall be coming home from chapel through Mill Street next Sunday. If you will meet me here then and ask me the same question in the same way I'll give you a text that you will never forget as long as ever you live." The following Sunday, when Dan walked home from chapel Brecon Tom was nowhere to be seen.



Location of Union Street on the Graig, 1881

## **FATAL FIGHT AT CILFYNYDD**

### **November 16<sup>th</sup> 1888**

On Friday afternoon, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1888, a quarrel took place at the Cilfynydd Inn, Cilfynydd, a mining village just north of Pontypridd, between two men named Frederick Stevens, a mason's labourer, better known as John Stevens, living with his brother at 38 Rickards St. Pontypridd, and William Davies, collier, Cilfynydd.

The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' of November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1888 reported: - The men went out to the road near the public house to fight in the presence of a number of their friends, and after fighting several rounds, according to the evidence at the inquest, there was a cessation of hostilities for a short time, and Davies put on his coat, but was forced back by his backers, and made to go on the common to fight. There, he and Stevens stripped to the waist, and fought for some time, and ultimately Davies kicked Stevens in the abdomen, killing him almost instantly. The police were communicated with, and P.S. Jenkins and P.C. Reeves apprehended William Davies on Friday evening as the principal in the fight. They subsequently arrested Price Davies, his brother, and James Fitzgerald, on the charge of aiding and abetting.

### **The Inquest**

Mr. E. B. Reece, Cardiff, Coroner, held an inquest at the Horse and Groom Inn, Pontypridd, on Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1888, on the body of Frederick Stevens. The following jury were sworn in: - Messrs. James Edwards (foreman), Richard Rogers, W. Barnhouse, Philip R. James, T. Llewellyn, W. Reynolds, C. Phillips, W. H. Davies, J. Morgan, E. Moore, T. Gitton, J. Morris, S. Jones, G. Watkins, & F. King.

Mr. Superintendent Matthews watched the proceeding on behalf of the police; and Mr. W. Spickett, solicitor, on behalf of the accused. P.S. McDonald, P.S. Jenkins, and P.C. Reeves were present, as were also the father of the prisoner Davies.

## The Evidence

John Stevens, mason, 38 Rickard St, Pontypridd, identified the body as that of his bother Frederick. His age was 26 last birthday. Benjamin Morgan, collier, living at No.6 New Road, Nelson, Llanfabon, said - "I know the deceased by sight. I saw him on Friday last. We were in the Cilfynydd Inn together about 2 o'clock. Davies, whom I knew by sight, was there. James Fitzgerald and Price Davies were there too. A quarrel took place, and the deceased and William Davies had a few words together, and went out for the purpose of fighting. It began that way."

Coroner - "I don't want to know how it began, or anything of that kind, did you go out and look on?" - "I went out on the pavement, sir."

Coroner - "You stood on the pavement outside the house?" - "Yes, sir, I did."

Coroner - "Did you see them begin to fight?" - "Yes, sir, first they took off their coats, and fought for a couple of minutes with their shirts on. Then they took their shirts off, and were stripped to the waist."

Coroner - "How long did they fight outside the house?" - "Indeed, I could not say; they fought a good bit."

Coroner - "On the road?" - "Yes."

Coroner - "Did they fight two, three, or four rounds?" - "I did not take notice how many."

Coroner - "Was anybody acting as seconds for them?" - "Yes, sir, Fitzgerald was acting as second for the deceased."

Coroner - "Was Price Davies acting as second?" - "I cannot say. I did not see him."

Coroner - "Was someone acting as second for William Davies?" - "Yes, sir, but I don't know who."

Coroner - "Were the seconds giving the men a knee to sit down between the rounds?" - "Yes, Sir."

Coroner - "Was the fight finished here, or did they go somewhere else?" - "They finished first, and Davies put on his shirt, but was forced back by his backers to go up to the common to finish it."

Coroner - "Was there any betting?" - "Not that I know of."

Coroner - "Was he forced back by his friends, you mean then?" - "Yes."

Coroner - "How far off was the common?" - "About thirty yards from the road, and 500 yards, sure to be, from the Cilfynydd Inn."

Coroner - "Did you go and look on?" - "No, sir, I had a little business, and went on, but when returning I went to them?"

Coroner - "Where there a good many people around them?" - "Yes, sir, a sight of people."

Coroner - "Were they were both stripped to the waist then?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "Was Fitzgerald still acting as second for the deceased up there?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "And who was acting as second for William Davies?" - "Well, he was a stranger to me."

Coroner - "Was it the same man who had been acting as second down below?" - "Well, I believe so, sir."

Coroner - "Now tell us what happened at the end of the fight." - "Deceased shouted, 'Oh, my privates!' Davies was on his knees on the ground."

Coroner - "Did you see the deceased strike him then?" - "No, sir. I saw Davies jumping up, and kick the deceased in his privates, deceased shouted, and fell back."

Coroner - "Was the deceased standing up when Davies kicked him?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "Are you sure of that?" - "Sure of that, sir."

Coroner - "Did he kick him more than once?" - "Yes, sir, he kicked him a second time, as he was falling, the kick reaching him on the left side, under the heart."

Coroner - "Were any of the kicks given while he was on the ground?" - "I did not see any. Davies and his backers turned away, and I said, 'You have killed this poor man.'

Coroner - "Were these kicks given with great force?" - "Well, they were very strong, sir."

Coroner - "Did you see what boots Davies had on at the time?" - "I don't believe they were nailed boots. I can't say whether they were the boots he has on now. They were not heavy."

Coroner - "Before the kicks were given did you hear anyone crying out to Davies to kick him?" - "I heard a shout 'kick him down to the canal.' I can't say who it was."

Coroner - "Did you think it was more than one person?" - "No, sir, but someone shouted just before Davies kicked him."

Coroner - "Did you go forward to see what was the matter with the deceased?" - "Yes, sir. He was lying on his side with his head on the ground."

Coroner - "You went directly after he had the second kick?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "Could you see any blood coming from his trousers?" - "No blood, sir, only water."

Coroner - "Did anybody take them down to see what was the matter?" - "No sir; they let him be."

Coroner - "Was he groaning?" - "About three times I saw him breath altogether."

Coroner - "And then he died?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "Where was he taken too?" - "He was carried to the Cilfynydd Inn."

Coroner - "He was in the act of falling when he got the second kick was he?" - "He was in his double, sir."

Coroner - "Were the men drunk or sober?" - "I cannot say, Stevens and I had a quart between four of us, but I don't know what he had had before."

By Mr. Rogers - "I and Stevens came up from the works together, and that was the first drop that I had."

Mr. Barnhouse - "Was it a ring-fight." - "No, sir."

Mr. Barnhouse - "A harem-scarum fight?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "Simply fighting with a crowd around them?" - "Yes, sir."

Mr. Edwards - "Have they fought one round before they got on the side of the mountain?" - "Yes, sir, and more. I only saw two rounds."

Coroner - "And was it at the end of the second round that you saw kicks?" - "Yes, sir,"

Mr. Phillips - "Did you go into the public house to drink before the second fight?" - "No, Sir."

By Mr. Superintendent Matthews - "Did you see Mr. Price Davies at the fight?" - "Yes, but did not see him pick him up."

Coroner - "Did you see him on the common?" - "Yes, at both places."

Coroner - "Did you see Price Davies doing anything at all?" - "I saw him carrying water in a pewter pint."

Coroner - "Did you see him giving water to either of them?" - "Yes, sir, to the both."

Mr. Matthews - "Was more than one man handling William Davies?" - "No, sir."

Coroner - "You say it was the same man giving William Davies a knee, but you don't know who he was?" - "Yes, sir."

Mr. Matthews - "Could price have given any active part?"

Coroner - "No, I won't ask that."

Mr. Matthews - "We shall call the witnesses."

Coroner - "Oh, very well then, but this man says he only saw Price Davies carrying water to the men, and I won't asked him any more questions!"

Annie Roberts, servant at the Cilfynydd Inn, said, - "I remember the fight that took place near the Cilfynydd Inn on Friday last. I did not see the beginning of it. I know James Fitzgerald and Price Davies by sight. While Frederick Stevens and William Davies were fighting, I saw Fitzgerald helping the deceased. He lifted him up after he fell, but I did not see him take the deceased on his knee. Price Davies was helping his brother, William Davies, in the same way. Both the men sometimes fell down. I was standing upstairs looking through the window. The window was shut, and the men were close below. I did not see the end of the fight on the road, because I went away from the window. I did not see them fighting on the common at all. Price Davies and another man were helping Davies. I don't know who the other was. I saw William Davies sit on the knee of a gypsy."



Thomas Davies, mason, of Llantrisant, said "I was engaged at Cilfynydd works on Friday. There was a fight going on up the road outside the Cilfynydd Inn, and we ran up to see. The canal was between us and where the fight was going on, so we were twenty or thirty yards off. I knew the deceased by sight. He was working with us. The other man who was fighting was William Davies. I did not see anybody acting as second. I saw a tall man now and then lifting up the deceased when he fell, but I could not see whether it was Fitzgerald or not. We went to work, and again ran up to the common and saw two rounds. I saw the prisoner Davies deliberately kick the deceased. I did not see anybody help the deceased, but saw Price Davies alongside of his brother. I did not see him pick him up, but saw him take hold of him. In the second round I think Davies fell. In the second, Stevens fell on his knees. Whilst Stevens was standing up, Williams Davies kicked him until he went on his knees, and he kicked him again repeatedly. Deceased cried 'Oh.' He kicked him four times. He was going down the hill, and deceased was in a bending position, Davies following him and kicking him as he went along. All four kicks were around the lower part of the body. Then the deceased fell, and did not say a word afterwards. I did not hear anyone in the crowd telling either of the fighters to kick the other."

Coroner - "Did not anybody try to prevent it?" - "No, sir; they were a strong gang."

Coroner - "Do you mean a strong gang of Williams Davies' friends?" - "Yes sir."

Coroner - "You are sure four kicks were given?" - "Yes, sir."

Coroner - "Did you see the deceased kick at Davies at all?" - "No, sir; I did not see him."

Coroner - "Did you see Fitzgerald helping the deceased?" - "No, sir; I heard deceased say that he did not want anybody to help him. I saw someone throw his coat over him."

Coroner - "Did you see Fitzgerald there?" - "I could not swear, but some man like him."

Coroner - "Were they violent kicks?" - "Yes, sir, and given quickly."

Coroner - "I hope they were given too quickly for anyone to interfere; I can't understand, otherwise, how the crowd could be so cowardly as to let the thing go on."

Mr. Matthews - "I think only a few minutes passed between the time of the kicks and the time the man was dead."

In reply to Mr. Barnhouse, witness said - "I think deceased was the strongest man."

Isaac John, of 5 Ashgrove Terrace, Cilfynydd, mason, said - "I saw the whole of the fight on Friday. Fitzgerald was helping the deceased, picking him up when he fell down now and again, and deceased was telling him to keep back, as he did not want help. Price Davies and another - I don't see him here, helped William Davies. They helped on the road and also on the mountain. They were picking him up and putting him on their knees. I saw two kicks given. William Davies was falling, and the other man hit him as he was falling. Davies fell, got up, and ran at Stevens, and kicked him in the privates. I heard Stevens say 'He has kicked me in the privates.' As Stevens was falling, Davies kicked him on the left side. Deceased lay down, and never spoke anymore."

Doctor James Lyttle, Pontypridd, said, - "I saw the body of the deceased, Frederick Stevens, on the morning of the seventeenth inst., at 38 Rickard St; Wood Road, and made a *postmortem* examination of the body. Externally the face was much swollen and contused. The nose was broken. There had been some bleeding from the nose and left ear. There was a bruise on the upper part of the chest. I examined the scrotum, and found it was blackened on the front and sides. Those were the important marks. There were other slight bruises about the body. I opened the body, and found all the abdominal organs healthy, including the bladder, which was perfectly sound, and contained about half-a-pint of water. I removed the skin of the scrotum, and found a patch of extravasated blood on each testicle."

"The organs in the chest were healthy, with the exception of the right lung, which was adhering to the pericardium and to the chest wall in

the side. I opened the head, and found a clot of blood over the frontal bone, and a large clot on each side above the ear. Found the brain healthy. There was no fracture of the skull. The blood on the ear might have come from a blow on the ear itself. I believe death was due to the shock from injury to the testicles. They might have been occasioned by a kick. I did not observe any bruise in the region of the heart. One kick might have caused the injury. I could not tell by the appearance that more than one had been given. The adhering of the lung to the pericardium showed remains of an old attack of pleurisy.”

The inquest was here adjourned for a short time. On the resumption of the enquiry, the coroner called Thomas Thomas, who said - “I live at Cilfynydd, and am a farm labourer, but I have not done anything for about 12 months. I live at 6 Pritchard St, Cilfynydd. I saw the fight between Frederick Stevens and William Davies on Friday. I did not see the fight begin, but I saw the fight outside on the road by the Cilfynydd Inn. I saw two men helping the fighting men; they were rising the men as they fell. Fitzgerald and Price Davies were the two men. I saw Price Davies raise the deceased several times. I saw the fight temporarily stopped, and afterwards they went to the common. I accompanied them to the common. Fitzgerald was helping Stevens, and Price Davies was helping his brother.”

“They fought to rounds on the common - the last two rounds. I saw Davies kick Stevens once. He was kicked in his privates. I did not hear Price Davies or anyone else tell Davies to kick the deceased.”

By Superintendent Matthews - “I did not hear Morris, a contractor from Mountain Ash, say anything. He did not prompt them to fight, but tried to stop them. There were about 100 or 150 persons present.”

By Mr. Spickett - “I am known in the neighbourhood as ‘Tom Cilfynydd.’

By the coroner - “These men fought near the public house for about twenty or thirty minutes.”

P.C. John Reeves, stationed at Cilfynydd, was sworn, and deposed to have parochial locality of the scene of the fatal affray.

The coroner, addressing the jury, said the question to be decided by them was whether the deceased met his death by an intentional act of kicking on the part of William Davies. If they considered that there was an intention to kill, then they must return a verdict of wilful murder, but if there was no such intention, they could bring in that of manslaughter. The witnesses who saw the affray agreed that there was a kick given in the deceased's testicles, and some of them went so far as to say that two, and even three or four kicks had been inflicted. However, the medical testimony went to show that the man met his death as the result of a kick, and the only point for the consideration of the jury was as to the motive, if any, which prompted such a kick.

It was clear that the deceased had received injuries more than a mere blow from a fist, but if such injuries were caused unintentionally, in a momentary transport of passion, they would return a verdict of manslaughter. As to the other two men, Price Davie and James Fitzgerald, who were in custody, what the jury had to decide was whether these men aided and abetted the fight by acting as seconds. If so, then they were guilty of manslaughter as well. The jury, after a deliberation about a quarter of an hour, returned a verdict of manslaughter against the three men in custody.

### **Defendants at magistrate's court**

At the Pontypridd Police Court on Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> 1888, before the Stipendiary and Mr. E. Thomas, William Davies, Price Davies (brother) and James Fitzgerald, were brought up in custody charged on a coroner's warrant with the manslaughter of Frederick Stevens Honeychurch, known as John Stevens, on Friday last. The facts of the case are fully reported in another column, but in addition to the parties already named there also appeared in the dock a man named Thomas Rees, from Cilfynydd, who was arrested in court by P.C. Reeves on a charge of aiding and abetting in the fight which led

to the unfortunate man's death, by acting as a backer to William Davies. The evidence given at the inquest was repeated at length, but with reference to the cause of the fight between the two men, Benjamin Morgan explained, in addition to what he said at the inquest, that the fight was caused in consequence of a dispute between the parties in the Cilfynydd Inn.

Price Davies came into the bar, and challenged anyone present to play a game of dominoes. Deceased accepted the challenge, when Price Davies said his brother would not play him except for money. Deceased replied that he only had sixpence in his pockets. "Very Well," said Price Davies, "he will play you for that, and a bellyful." Soon after the game commenced the players quarreled, and agreed to settle the dispute by an 'appeal to arms.' They went outside and fought, and afterwards proceeded to the adjoined common to finish the fight, when Honeychurch received a kick which caused his death.

A witness named Isaac John deposed to having seen Thomas Rees taking part in the fight as backer for William Davies. P.C. Rees said he had arrested William Davies on the Friday at his residence at Cilfynydd. Prisoner at the time was in bed, and when he heard the charge, he exclaimed, "O dear." The boots worn by William Davies during the fight were comparatively light ones, with no nails, but they had protectors in the fore part. Witness arrested Price Davies on the following Sunday, at the Bunch of Grapes in, Pontypridd. P.S. Jenkins deposed to apprehending Fitzgerald in Bridge St; Pontypridd, on Sunday night.

Mr. William Spickett, solicitor, who defended all the prisoners, submitted that there was no case against the three aiders and abettors, and as for Price Davies, the only evidence against him was that he gave his brother a drink of water. As to Thomas Rees, only one witness spoke of seeing him taking any part in the fight, and even against Fitzgerald, all he did was to pick up the deceased once or twice. Deceased really had no backers, for as several as the witnesses pointed out, he refused assistance, and requested that Fitzgerald and

others to keep away. But even admitting that they had participated in the fight, still they had not aided or abetted the kicking which caused death, as this really took place after the fight was virtually over.

Mr. W.R.Davies, who appeared for the prosecution, said - "In this case, if the fight was over, then William Davies should be charged with murder. The Stipendiary did not think any judge would allow the man to be proceeded against on a charge of murder in this case. However, he would commit all the prisoners for trial to the Assizes on a charge of manslaughter, but admitted the three alleged backers to bail in £10 each, and two sureties in £10 each."

### **Manslaughter case at the Assizes**

At the Glamorgan Assizes held at Swansea on Monday, Dec.17<sup>th</sup> 1888, before Mr. Justice Charles, Price Davies, Thomas Rees, and Patrick Fitzgerald were put into the box charged in connection with William Davies, with the manslaughter of Frederick Stevens, of Pontypridd. Mr. Benson, who appeared on behalf of the Crown to prosecute, said the facts of the case were that on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November William Davies fought Stevens in the roadway and then at the common at Cilfynydd, and the other prisoners were present and aided and abetted them.

William Davies had pleaded guilty, on behalf of the crown, and with the sanction of the judge, he proposed to offer no evidence against the three prisoners, who, in the opinion of those who instructed him, could not be held responsible for a result which was not the necessary corollary of an ordinary fight. His Lordship said he had heard all that had been said by prisoner's counsel, and seen his testimonials, but he could not overlook the fact that he had kicked deceased, not only once, but four times, so that he met his death, not in consequence of the fight, but out of the blows inflicted by prisoner whilst the fight was not actually proceeding. He would be imprisoned, and kept to hard labour for eight calendar months.



The modern day Cilfynydd Inn

**SHOCKING DEATH AT YNYSYBWL**

## Allegations against the stepfather- January 1890

Mr. R. T. Rhys, coroner, held an inquest in the Windsor Hotel, Ynysybwl, on a Friday in January 1890, on the body of Simon Villias, 28, labourer of that place, who had died from the effects of burning. Mrs. Hillat Keziah Villias, said that the deceased was her husband. At about half-past eleven on Monday night he came in to the house where they lodged much the worse for drink. When in that condition he was generally bad-tempered, and had assaulted her on several occasions. On Monday evening he cursed her and ordered her to lock the front door. She, being frightened, ran to her step-father's house and begged him to go and fetch her child. Washford (her step-father) got out of bed and went. Hearing screams afterwards she followed, and then found her husband rolling in flames on the kitchen floor. There was no one with him, and, seeing the flames, she was so frightened that she ran out and fell on the pavement, where her mother and step-father were standing. She did not know how to put out the fire.

A juryman asked if three persons went out on the pavement, leaving the deceased burning in the kitchen. The coroner said that was what the witness had said. George Washford, the step-father referred to, said that he went to the house and found the deceased in bed with the child. The witness said "Simon, my boy, give me the child, and I will take it to its mother." And at the same time he reached over the deceased to get at the child. The deceased caught hold of the witness's throat, struck him in the face, and said, "If you are a better man than I am, take him." The deceased got up, struck him down, and a struggle took place, during which a "Comet" lamp was upset, and they were left in the darkness. After much struggling, the witness managed to get away to the landing. Mrs. Washford brought up a paraffin lamp, which by some means fell on the deceased, whose head was immediately covered in flames. The witness ran out to get fresh air, as he was nearly suffocating. The witness, after being cautioned by the coroner, replying to Sgt. McDonald, said that he said not remembers saying while the deceased was burning in the kitchen "let the b\_\_\_\_\_ burn to death." Replying to the coroner, the witness said that he did not know who put the fire out; he was too exhausted himself. He went in a second time to fetch the child, but by that time the room was full of people, and he (witness) could not see what was going on there.

Mrs. Dorothy Washford, wife of the last witness, mother of Mrs. Villias, said that she heard the men fighting in the dark, and fetched a lamp as stated. When she got upstairs the deceased drew himself up as if to strike her, but instead of doing so he struck the lamp out of her hand. It fell upon him, and his head took fire. She got frightened, screamed, and ran out. She did not see the deceased until the next morning, when she did all that she could for him. The coroner: "Will you take your oath that you did not throw the lamp at him or strike his head with the lamp?" Witness: "Yes." A juryman asked if she had heard her husband yell: "Let the



B-----d burn," or any words to that effect? Dr. Morgan, who was called in at about midnight on Monday, said that he had found the deceased naked on the kitchen floor, and suffering from burns on the head, face, back, chest, and arms. He had died on Wednesday from shock and inflammation of the lungs - the effects of the burns. The Dr. was not called to the house by any of the family, but a neighbour called James Davies. William John Evans, age 16, deposed to seeing the landlady of the house, a Mrs. Miles, with her head outside an upstairs window crying "murder, murder!" He saw Mr. and Mrs. Washford on the pavement. Mrs. Villias was there also, crying and screaming. He was the first on the scene, and was told by the Washfords to run upstairs, and fetch the child, who, they said, was nearly burnt to death. He went, but when at the foot of the stairs, he saw Villias lying on his face in the kitchen, and flames leapt up from his body. He (witness) extinguished the flames with his hands. He distinctly heard Washford say: "The b-----d has not burn half enough." Morris Bebb, collier, said that on the pavement he asked what was the matter, and he heard Washford say "Stand out and let us shut the door. Let the b-----d burn to death." Witness, however, entered, and in the passage met Evans, who had said that he had put out the fire.

The inquest was adjourned to the following Monday, when Police-Inspector Jones watched the case on behalf of the police. Mrs. Miles, the landlady of the house where the deceased lodged, having been called, the coroner summed up the evidence, and advised the jury that though the case contained several ugly features, there was no evidence of incriminating either the step-father, George Washford, or his wife, who, however, had acted in a manner which shocked the feelings of every humane man. At the conclusion of the summing up, George Villias, Mountain Ash, the deceased's brother, entered the room, and said in evidence, that half-an-hour before he died his brother told him that Mrs.. Washford had thrown the lamp at him, and that they (the Washfords) had finished him between them. The deceased told him that several times, and seemed quite conscious at the time. After some further remarks by the coroner, the room was cleared, and the jury after a lengthy consideration, returned a verdict that the deceased had "died from the effects of burns, but that there was no evidence before them as to how the burns were caused."

They considered, however, that Mr. and Mrs. Washford, as Mrs. Villias, the widow, deserved severe censure for their inhuman conduct in running away and leaving the deceased to burn in the house. The coroner expressed his concurrence with the verdict, and marked this disapprobation of the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Washford by disallowing their expenses. He would give their costs to the lad Evans, who had so courageously gone into the house to extinguish the fire.



**A distant view of the Windsor Hotel, Ynysybwl**

Map of Ynysybwl 1890 and Winsor Hotel

# SAD SUICIDE OF A YOUNG GIRL AT PONTYPRIDD

December 9<sup>th</sup> 1893

Drowns herself in canal - farewell letter to her parents and the police

The town of Pontypridd and district was thrown into a tense excitement on Sunday, when the news spread that a respectfully connected young girl named Leah Thomas, about nineteen years of age, had committed suicide by drowning herself in the canal at Coedpenmaen, Pontypridd on Saturday night Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> 1893 or early on Sunday morning.

It was seen that the deceased was in service with Mr. Davies, cattle dealer, Courthouse St, Pontypridd, and on Friday, it is alleged, she stole the sum of £8 from the house, and was taken into custody at 9.30 that night; she was detained until the following day, when she was bailed out by Mr. William Seaton, contractor, Pontypridd, who became surety for her, she having to appear at the police court on Wednesday last. Her mother was arrested the same night on the charge of receiving the money.

After leaving the police station on Saturday, the girl wandered about, and would not go home with her relations because of the scandal and the shame attached to the money matter. About midnight on Saturday P. C. Lionel Nicholls saw the poor girl at Norton Bridge, when she notified the constable that she was trying to find a house of a girl called Nixon at Coedpenmaen, who she wanted to come with her to the Sunday School the next day. The constable directed her to Coedpenmaen, and in proceeding there she would have to cross the canal bridge. It is conjectured that the charge holding over her head unhinged the mind of the unfortunate girl and in a fit of frantic despair she sought death in the waters of the canal.

## The inquest

The inquest took place at the Green Meadow Inn, Pontypridd, on Tuesday morning at ten o'clock, before Mr. H. L. Grover, deputy coroner and a jury, of which Mr. Groves, master of the Workhouse was the foreman. The first witness called was Levi Thomas, brother of the deceased, who said he last saw his sister alive at the father's house, 95 Rickard St, Graig, on Friday evening last. He noticed nothing unusual about her that night. The next morning he heard that she had been arrested.

Inspector Macdonald, Pontypridd, deposed that the deceased was arrested at 9.30 p. m. on Friday night last on a charge of stealing money from her employer. She was detained in the police station until the following day, when she was bailed out to appear before the magistrates on Wednesday. Her mother was also in custody, and when they were liberated some words passed between them. The mother went

away, but the girl stayed in the police station. The inspector told her to go home and not to take any notice of what her mother had said. She replied, "how can I go home when my mother is so cruel towards me?" Eventually, however, she went away, going through the arcade as if she was making for the direction of her home. She appeared in great trouble. The girl made no remarks which would leave him to believe that she contemplated such a rash act. Witness here produced a hat which she wore when arrested, and was found on the canal bank. The hat was picked up by a young man named Evan Jones, who found an envelope pinned into the lining of the hat. The paper was handed into the coroner who said that although it was not strictly evidence he thought it had better be read. The letter was written in ink, and was as follows:

"Dearest Mama and kids and brothers and sisters, I know I have broken your hearts, but I hope you will forgive me as you hoped to be forgiven. Pray on Mr. Seaton to forgive me too. Tell them I have repented when it is too late. My head is awful; I think my brain is turned. - From Leah. Your poor misguided daughter's dying love."

On the other side of the paper was written:

Mother, give me thy blessing,  
Kindly give me council now;  
Souls have my pathways darkened,  
Sadness has o'erhad'ed my brow.

For I have learned to love you,  
Mother, for I am thru every woe,  
Fondly press me to thy bosom,  
Farewell, mother, I must go.

Mother, I shall ever love thee,  
Thou has been so kind and true;  
Though you fondly may caress me,  
None can be more sure than you.

Though it breaks my heart to leave thee,  
Though the tears of sadness flow,  
We shall meet again in heaven,  
Farewell mother, I must go.

Mary Ann Lewis, sister-in-law to the deceased, said she saw the deceased coming from the railway station about quarter to eleven on Saturday night. She had been

missing from home all day. Witness went and told her mother that she had seen her, and the family went in search of her, but could not find her. In reply to the coroner, Superintendent Jones said there was nothing known about her during the day. She came by train at half-past-ten from somewhere, but had failed to ascertain where she spent the day. Evan Powell, a lock-keeper, Coedpenmaen, said that shortly after 9 o'clock on Sunday morning his attention was called to a jacket on the bank. He saw a body in the water about two yards above the top gate. Witness then sent for the police, and with the help of some men, pulled the body out of the water, and conveyed it to the Bonvilston Hotel. Later on in the day he saw the hat floating in the water about 200 yards lower down. He had not seen the young girl about the canal on the previous evening.

Superintendent Jones was the next witness, and he said that on the Sunday morning he had received the following letter addressed: "To my parents and the Police Superintendent, Pontypridd." On a piece of notepaper inside was written -

"I, the above signed, have determined to make away with myself. I have not been home at all. My father and mother know nothing about the money, I took it myself and placed it in the bag; I do not know what possessed me to do it. I only signed for myself; my mother and father did not sign for me. Hoping that they will all, including Mr. Seaton, forgive me for my weakness. Give my love to both Annie and Jack Reynolds. Tell Charlie Steer I died with hatred in my heart towards him. Love to all. Don't send to tell Ned. - Leah Thomas."

The coroner, in summing up, said the letters were exceedingly pathetic. There was no doubt that the poor girl had met her death by drowning, no-one had the least doubt that she had committed the rash act. The evidence certainly showed her mind had been upset somehow or other. It was a very painful case altogether. The jury found the deceased had committed suicide by drowning while in a state of temporary insanity, and a verdict to that effect was returned.



**Scene of the suicide many years later  
(Looking towards Coedpenmaen School)**

## **SHOCKING DEATH AT YNYSYBWL**

### **January 1890**

Mr. R. T. Rhys, coroner, held an inquest in the Windsor Hotel, Ynysybwl, on a Friday in January 1890, on the body of Simon Villias, 28, labourer of that place, who had died from the effects of burning. Mrs. Hillat Keziah Villias, said that the deceased was her husband. At about half-past eleven on Monday night he came into the house where they lodged much the worse for drink. When in that condition he was generally bad-tempered, and had assaulted her on several occasions. On Monday evening he cursed her and ordered her to lock the front door. She, being frightened, ran to her stepfather's house and begged him to go and fetch her child. Washford (her stepfather) got out of bed and went. Hearing screams afterwards she followed, and then found her husband rolling in flames on the kitchen floor. There was no one with him, and, seeing the flames, she was so frightened that she ran out and fell on the pavement, where her mother and stepfather were standing. She did not know how to put out the fire.

A juryman asked if three persons went out on the pavement, leaving the deceased burning in the kitchen. The coroner said that was what the witness had said. George Washford, the stepfather referred to, said that he went to the house and found the deceased in bed with the child. The witness said "Simon, my boy, give me the child, and I will take it to its mother." And at the same time he reached over the deceased to get at the child. The deceased caught hold of the witness's throat, struck him in the face, and said, "If you are a better man than I am, take him." The deceased got up, struck him down, and a struggle took place, during which a "Comet" lamp was upset, and they were left in the darkness. After much struggling, the witness managed to get away to the landing. Mrs. Washford brought up a paraffin lamp, which by some means fell on the deceased, whose head was immediately covered in flames. The witness ran out to get fresh air, as he was nearly suffocating. The witness, after being cautioned by the coroner, replying to Sgt. McDonald, said that he said not remembers saying while the deceased was burning in the kitchen "let the bastard burn to death." Replying to the coroner, the witness said that he did not know who put the fire out; he was too exhausted himself. He went in a second time to fetch the child, but by that time the room was full of people, and he (witness) could not see what was going on there.

Mrs. Dorothy Washford, wife of the last witness, mother of Mrs. Villias, said that she heard the men fighting in the dark, and fetched a lamp as stated. When she got upstairs, the deceased drew himself up as if to strike her, but instead of doing so he struck the lamp out of her hand. It fell upon him, and his head took fire. She got frightened, screamed, and ran out. She did not see the deceased until the next morning, when she did all that she could for him. The coroner: "Will you take your oath that you did not throw the lamp at him or strike his head with the lamp?"



Witness: - "Yes." A juryman asked if she had heard her husband yell: - "Let the bastard burn," or any words to that effect? Which she denied.

Doctor Morgan, who was called in at about midnight on Monday, said that he had found the deceased naked on the kitchen floor, and suffering from burns on the head, face, back, chest, and arms. He had died on Wednesday from shock and inflammation of the lungs - the effects of the burns. The doctor was not called to the house by any of the family, but a neighbour called James Davies. William John Evans, age 16, deposed to seeing the landlady of the house, a Mrs. Miles, with her head outside an upstairs window crying "murder, murder!" He saw Mr. and Mrs. Washford on the pavement. Mrs. Villias was there also, crying and screaming. He was the first on the scene, and was told by the Washfords to run upstairs, and fetch the child, who, they said, was nearly burnt to death. He went, but when at the foot of the stairs, he saw Villias lying on his face in the kitchen, and flames leapt up from his body. He (witness) extinguished the flames with his hands. He distinctly heard Washford say: "The bastard has not burned half enough." Morris Bebb, collier, said that on the pavement he asked what was the matter, and he heard Washford say "Stand out and let us shut the door. Let the bastard burn to death." Witness, however, entered, and in the passage met Evans, who had said that he had put out the fire.

The inquest was adjourned to the following Monday, when Police-Inspector Jones watched the case on behalf of the police. Mrs. Miles, the landlady of the house where the deceased lodged, having been called, the coroner summed up the evidence, and advised the jury that though the case contained several ugly features, there was no evidence incriminating either the stepfather, George Washford, or his wife, who, however, had acted in a manner which shocked the feelings of every humane man. At the conclusion of the summing up, George Villias, Mountain Ash, the deceased's brother, entered the room, and said in evidence, that half-an-hour before he died his brother told him that Mrs. Washford had thrown the lamp at him, and that they (the Washfords) had finished him between them. The deceased told him that several times, and seemed quite conscious at the time. After some further remarks by the coroner, the room was cleared, and the jury after a lengthy consideration, returned a verdict that the deceased had "died from the effects of burns, but that there was no evidence before them as to how the burns were caused."

They considered, however, that Mr. and Mrs. Washford, as Mrs. Villias, the widow, deserved severe censure for their inhuman conduct in running away and leaving the deceased to burn in the house. The coroner expressed his concurrence with the verdict, and marked this disapprobation of the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Washford by disallowing their expenses. He would give their costs to the lad Evans, who had so courageously gone into the house to extinguish the fire.

## ALLEGED MURDER AT CILFYNYDD March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1897

The '*Glamorgan Free Press*' of March 6<sup>th</sup> 1897 reported a mysterious death just outside the town: - Cilfynydd on Tuesday night, March 2<sup>nd</sup> was the scene of a tragedy. The dead body of a collier named Edward Watts, a single man, 32 years of age, lodging at 72 William Street, Cilfynydd, and employed at the Albion Colliery, was found at about 9 o'clock in the urinal of the Albion Hotel under circumstances that pointed towards a murder having been committed. The whole village was thrown into a state of consternation when the dreadful discovery was made, and this feeling was accentuated when about two hours later a married man named Henry John Harold, collier, 30 years of age, living at 6 Bonvilston Road, Coedpenmaen, was arrested on the capital charge.

It appeared that the two men were drinking in the Albion Hotel between about seven to half past on the evening and Watts challenged Harold to a fight. This the latter refused to do, and it is alleged that he afterwards drew attention to the deceased's conduct saying: - "I will give him a 'lift' just now." Watts then went outside the house and was followed by Harold, but as far as was known, no one saw them together after, and no one appeared to have heard any struggle taking place. In the course of some minutes Harold returned to the bar of the hotel and made a statement to the effect "I have given one to someone outside." Watt did not return to the hotel, and it was conjectured that he had gone elsewhere.

Not long after the conversation adhered to, Harold went home, but scarcely had he departed when Lewis Jones and William Lewis, Wood Street, went into the urinal where they were horrified to find Watt's dead body lying face down immediately at the foot of the wall. Police Sergeant Davies, P. C. George and Dr. Jones were soon on the scene and the body was removed to his lodgings. The officers made inquiries and as a result proceeded to the house of Harold, who they arrested, and he was conveyed to the Pontypridd police station, where he was formally charged with the wilful murder of Edward Watts. After making a statement in reply to the serious charge, he was removed to the cells. The accused was brought before the stipendiary and other magistrates the following Wednesday, and only sufficient evidence was brought to justify a remand, the only witness being Thomas Roberts, 66 Birchgrove, Cilfynydd, who was with the two men in the hotel. He had observed Watts going out to the back, and five minutes later Harold followed. Replying to Superintendent Jones, the witness stated that the prisoner remarked "I have been here since twenty minutes to five, and Watts has challenged me at the bar. If he

comes messing with me, I will give him one.” When Harold returned five minutes later he said that he had ‘given one’ to him, meaning Watts, and that he was lying on the ground under the wall. He also told the witness that if he told anyone of the matter he was not going to tell his (witness) father, mother, brother or wife. The prisoner had left the hotel and on the discovery of the body Roberts informed the police of what he had heard. In answer to Dr. Hunter, the witness said that Watts was awful drunk and Harold looked muddled. The prisoner was about to make a statement when the stipendiary told him not to do so. He, however, consequently stated “I said that I would give him one, and if he comes in again and bothers me I am going to give him another. He was a bigger and better man than me, and I was afraid of him.” The prisoner was remanded for a week.

It was stated by those that knew him well that the deceased was a man of very violent temper, and had been seen on more than one occasion, while in the state of drunkenness, grovelling on the ground and fighting with his cap and coat. On the other hand the prisoner was described as being a most respectable and kind man, quiet and inoffensive at all times. During his incarceration food was being brought to him by his heartbroken wife, who was piteous to witness.

### **The inquest**

An inquest opened at 12 o'clock on Friday, March 5<sup>th</sup> 1897 at the Albion Hotel under Mr. E. D. Reece and a jury. Harold was represented by Mr. James Phillips, solicitor, Pontypridd. Evidence was given by Thomas Roberts, W. Emery, George Protheroe, Lewis Jones and Sgt. Davies. Dr. Arthur Lloyd Jones, Cilfynydd, gave evidence to the effect that when he examined the body about 9.30 he found it warm and the face covered with mud. He made a postmortem examination on Thursday and externally found a jagged wound about an inch long, but not deep, under the left eye, and bruising around the wound. The wound could not have been caused by a fist, but it could have been by a hard substance, such as a fall against a stone wall. There were several slight bruises on several parts of the body and two slight scratches on the skull, but there were no further external marks of injury on the body. The eyes, mouth and left nostril had mud in them. Internally the right side of the heart was full of blood, while the left was empty and the congestion of various organs, showed that death was due to suffocation. The doctor told the coroner he thought suffocation was due to falling into the mud and that he had often seen similar cases. The jury returned the following verdict: “We are unanimous in the decision that the deceased died of suffocation caused by accidentally falling when in a drunken condition.”

## TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AT HOPKINSTOWN March 27<sup>th</sup> 1902

Hopkinstown was the scene of a terrible tragedy on Thursday afternoon, March 27<sup>th</sup> 1902, reported the *'Pontypridd Chronicle'* which caused great dismay throughout the district. The circumstances surrounding the dreadful event adding to the intense interest taken in the shocking affair. An ex-policeman named Philip Evans, and a young married woman, Jane Ann Saddler, wife of a collier working at the Cymmer Colliery, it appears contracted a "liaison," and had been living together for some time at 111, Coedpenmaen Road, Pontypridd. This naturally led to family differences, and on Wednesday week last, Mrs. Saddler was induced to return to her husband. This seems to have raised the worst passions in the mind of Evans, and on Thursday last he wired to her to meet him to settle matters. They were together for some time, and eventually called at the Holly Bush Inn, Hopkinstown.

**Philip Evans  
(The accused)**



**Mrs. Jane Ann Saddler  
(The deceased)**

Both appeared to be in the best of spirits, and calling for refreshments went into the kitchen. About twenty minutes afterwards the landlord, Mr. Horatio Rowlands, heard the report of firearms, four shots being fired in quick succession and found the man lying on the floor and the woman in a sitting position in a chair. He also noticed a revolver on the floor. Mr. Rowlands believed both were dead and went for assistance, He on becoming alarmed closed the door with a view to calling for assistance. He had scarcely done so, when another shot was heard, and returning he was horrified to see that both the man and the woman had sustained frightful injuries. Without a moments delay he sent for Dr. Evans, assistant to Dr. Roberts, whose surgery is not far away in Telekiber Road, and on the doctor's arrival a few minutes later he pronounced that life was extinct in the woman. The revolver was a six-chambered one, and when picked up one charge was loaded.

Evans, however, was still showing signs of life, and P. C. Bodger having arrived in the meantime, he removed him to the surgery, and his wounds were attended to, after which he was removed to the Pontypridd Police Station as he could not be taken at the Workhouse Infirmary, and no-other institution is available at Pontypridd, he was taken in a cab to Porth, after remaining about four hours in the charge-room, and by the courtesy of Dr. Ivor Davies was admitted to the Porth Cottage Hospital, where he now remains, still conscious, but suffering great pain, in the custody of the police.

### **The scene of the fatality**

The Holly Bush Inn is situated about a mile from Pontypridd, and marks the first penny-stage in the tram service to Porth. The landlord, Mr. Horatio Rowlands, and his wife, are well known and respected in the neighbourhood, and the house bears the reputation of being one of the best conducted in the district. It was about half-past-three in the afternoon the ill-fated couple entered the Inn, and went to the long-room, which is used as a kitchen, and seldom used for serving refreshments. On the right-hand side a long bench is fixed to the wall, and it was here that Evans and Mrs. Saddler sat down, to all appearances on the best of terms with each other.

When the Landlord went into the room after the first four shots, they were leaning on each others shoulder. The Doctor, in his examination, found that the woman had two wounds, one in the right temple, and the other just below the eye, and it was seen that the latter caused the death, the bullet entering the brain. Evans had three wounds, also in the head, but one of the bullets, evidently the last fired, dropped out, the other two at the time of writing not having been extracted.

The awful affair happened in the afternoon as colliers were leaving work at the nearby Great Western Colliery, the greatest consternation was caused, and men in their working clothes, begrimed with coal dust, might be seen in groups, discussing

the occurrence with abated breath, rumour as is always the case in incidents of the kind, adding to the terrors of the catastrophe. The interest was intensified when it became known that Evans was a timberman at the Great Western Colliery, and well acquainted with many who were eagerly seeking for particulars, and many followed the ambulance to the surgery, and thence to the Police Station at Pontypridd, some actuated no doubt by that morbid curiosity which usually prevails on such occasions.

### **The painful story of love and hate**

The victim of the tragedy was the wife, as stated, of Mr. Saddler, of 30, Charles Street, Porth, working at the Cymmer Colliery, and was married when she was between 16 and 17 years of age, and had eleven children, although she had only attained her 33<sup>rd</sup> year when she met her untimely death. Four of the children still survive, the oldest sixteen and the youngest seven. One reporter calling at the deceased's sister, naturally found her in a most distressed condition; the dead woman's youngest boy was in the room; it was his birthday, "And," said the lady, with deep emotion, "a terrible birthday for him poor boy."

Mrs. Saddler was the youngest of twelve children, and the family originally belong to Sirhowy, both parents since being dead, two brothers and sisters still surviving. All reside in Porth, with the exception of one brother, who having buried his wife, about eight weeks ago, had gone to live at Tredegar. It would appear that Evans, after Mrs. Saddler had returned to her husband, had, according to the sister, uttered threats not only against the deceased, but the family; this statement is verified by a telegram sent on the fateful day.

### **Was the man insane?**

This is naturally one of the first questions asked, and man's antecedents certainly point in that direction. He was for some time an officer in the Glamorgan Constabulary, and stationed at different divisions, the last being at Dowlais, where in consequence of certain complaints as to his mental condition, he left suddenly, and some alarm was felt for his safety. After a time he was traced to Waterford, and his brother went across the channel to bring him home. At the time he could give no explanation as how he got to Ireland, and this itself casts a doubt as to the balance of his mind. The body of the deceased was removed on Good Friday to Mr. Saddler's house, at Porth, and the internment is fixed for Tuesday next at Lledrddu Cemetery. The Inquest will be held today, Saturday, at the Police Station, Porth. The injured man, we are authorised to state, is no relation to Sgt. Evans, now stationed at Porth.

## **The Inquest at Porth - Verdict of wilful murder**

An inquest was held on the following Saturday afternoon, April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Police Station, Porth, on the body of the victim, by the District Coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys, Aberdare. Mr. W. J. Shipton, solicitor, Mountain Ash, watched the case on behalf of Philip Evans. The jury of fourteen was empanelled on which Mr. Joseph Brooks, Porth, was appointed foreman. In opening the enquiry the Coroner intimated that he was not well acquainted with the facts of this case; he would therefore reserve comments until the evidence had been taken. The first witness called was Charles Saddler, the deceased's husband, a collier working at the Upper Cymmer Colliery, and resident at No. 30, Charles St, Porth, who stated that his wife was 33 years of age last August. They had been married 16 years last September, and there were four children living. He had not lived with his wife all the time. For two years and eight months, about five years ago, she lived with a man named Abraham John Jenkins, at Llandaff, Cardiff and Penygraig, as his wife.

He (witness) had taken her back to him after this first parting. She again left him, and went to reside with Philip Evans at Coedpenmaen. Away until the previous Thursday, she returned, and apparently having given Evans up, and stating that she would never live with him anymore. They resumed conjugal relationships. On Thursday morning, the day of the tragedy, he left his wife in bed and went to work. She said she would have a nice supper for him when he came home. He was not aware of any message. He heard of her fatality on returning from the colliery at 5.15 p. m. She had complained in the morning of feeling unwell, and he had taken her a cup of tea up to bed. There had not been a cross word or any trouble between them.

In reply to Mr. Shipton, witness said his wife was a very mild tempered woman.

Mr. Horatio Rowlands, Landlord of the Holly Bush Inn, which he had held a licence for 25 years, next gave evidence of what took place. Deceased and Evans came to the house about 3 o'clock on Thursday afternoon. He did not know either of them, nor did he notice there was anything wrong, or he would not have allowed them in; to all appearances they were quite sober. They first went into the little bar, but as someone went in there, Evans asked for a private room, as he and the deceased had business. He showed them into the taproom; they ordered some bread and cheese, a glass of rum, and a bottle of beer. He left them alone. About five minutes after he heard shots, two almost together and a brief space between the second two, the distinction being barely noticeable.

His wife came onto the landing and asked what was the matter? He could see smoke, and went into the room to see what it was; the door was partly opened. The woman's head was on the man's shoulder, and the revolver was on the floor. They

were sitting close side by side, and they were both bleeding from the head. He shut the door, and then going to another room heard a fifth shot. He then sent for a doctor and police. On hearing the last report he returned to the room; the couple were still sitting in the same position, and so remained until Dr. Evans came a few minutes later.

Until the doctor arrived no one went into the room. He did not hear any altercation; the parties seemed to be good friends, nor was there any loud talking, or he should have turned them out. The doctor put the deceased on the floor and the man got up and lay on his back on the floor. The witness saw a pistol in his left pocket; he found a bullet (produced) on the windowsill close to where they had been sitting. In reply to Mr. Shipton, Mr. Rowlands said the injuries were on the right side, and the revolver was about a yard away; a tall man could have reached it. Dr. Llewelyn Roberts, medical attendant to the Great Western Colliery Companies workmen, said he regretted that his assistant, Dr. Evans, who was first on the scene, was unable to be present owing to an attack of influenza. He examined the body of the woman about 4.30; his assistant, who was a qualified man, had seen it before. The body was lying on the floor.

There were two bullet wounds in the head, one being the right eye and another a little below the cheekbone. The skin was scorched and blackened at both wounds, one bullet was directly horizontally behind the right eye, and had broken the bone in two or three places and penetrated into the brain. The lower one had taken an oblique course and fractured the cheekbone. Either wound would have proved fatal, and death would have been instantaneous from one or the other.

Replying to the Coroner, Dr. Roberts stated as his opinion that the pistol was fired from about a distance of a yard. Evans was a right-handed man. The man was taken to his surgery, and his injuries attended to; two bullets had remained in his head, the third, which Mr. Rowlands had found, had run under the skin about an inch and a half, and come out at the center of the forehead. The man was conscious when he saw him. He had seen him at Porth Cottage Hospital on Friday, and his recovery was doubtful. The position of the bullets was not located, for which purpose he was putting him under the roentgen rays that afternoon.

Mr. Shipton: "Taking the position of the wounds, could they have been caused by the man using his right hand?" - Dr. Roberts: "It was practically impossible, although they might have been caused that way."

P. C. John Bodger, who was stationed at Hopkinstown, deposed at being called to the Holly Bush at 3.20 on Thursday afternoon; the doctor had arrived just before him. The deceased was on her back on the floor; she was dead. Philip Evans was sitting on a settee near the window. There was a large pool of blood on the left side



of him, and about a foot and a half away a similar pool. Dr. Evans, Hopkinstown, was examining the wounds. He sent to Pontypridd for assistance, and the ambulance was brought by two constables, and the man was taken to the surgery, and his wounds dressed, and then conveyed to the Pontypridd Police Station. He was quite conscious. At the Holly Bush Evans asked him "Is she dead? If she isn't, she ought to be. I gave her two bullets and three myself. I wish I was dead too." Mr. Rowlands handed him (P.C. Bodger) the revolver, it was a six-chambered weapon; five had been discharged and one remained loaded. He searched the prisoner, there were no more bullets on him. He visited the house at 111, Coedpenmaen Road, on Good-Friday, and found 44 cartridges in a tin box in a white glove. The bullets corresponded with the one found. There were no papers to show the relationship between Evans and the deceased.

Mr. Shipton: "When did you take your notes?" - Witness: "At the time, and made the report."

By the Coroner: "He had not enlarged or distinguished the statement; Dr. Evans was there and could corroborate."

Morgan John, assistant to Mr. J. S. Williams, Ironmonger, Pontypridd, identified the pistol as one he had sold last Saturday to a tall man with a light moustache. He recognised the shop mark on the box of cartridges which he sold at the same time. The price paid for the revolver was 7/6d. The Coroner: "It is a shame that such things should be sold."

Continuing, witness said the man had not mentioned he was going to emigrate to South Africa, or any other dangerous place. P. C. Bodger, recalled, said he had seen Evans and the deceased going towards Hopkinstown together about twenty minutes to two in the tram on Thursday; they were leaning together in a most friendly manner and seemed quite sober. Coroner: "It is not material to the case where they had been during that day."

Mary Ann Evans, living in apartments at 111, Coedpenmaen Road, said Philip Evans was the Landlord. She had been residing in the house seven weeks from that day (Saturday). When she went there, Mrs. Evans was living with him; that was the name she went by, and passed as his wife. She left him a week last Wednesday. They had no quarrel she was aware of. He seemed to be very fond of her, and "vexed" a great deal when she left, and when she saw him on the Thursday morning, he looked as though he had been crying during the night. He had not been working that week, nor for five weeks. He had a pay the previous week Saturday. He had a bad leg, and had been drinking spirits every day last week, but never seemed the worse for it.

This week he had not brought any spirits into the house, but had done so the week before. It was usually rum, and he had taken it to bed with him. He was in the

house most of his time, and seemed very depressed. She knew nothing of his buying a revolver, in fact, they were bad friends. In reply to the Coroner, the witness said that Evans and the deceased quarreled occasionally, but not more than was usual between man and wife. She had only lived in the house with them seven weeks, and had not noticed anything eccentric in the man's habits. The following letter was then handed to the Coroner:

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*Porth Hotel, Porth  
Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1902*

*Dear Jenny - Please bring or send explanation of sudden disappearance. Please act at once, all's right, you know, if you think that way. Act without any crowd. Let me know by return, I am going back down now. Yours etc.*

*P. Evans*

*P.S. I am willing, but come and make some arrangements about things.*

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The Coroner said the letter had been well written - that there was something about the style which reminded him of a noncommissioned officer. Had Evans, he asked, been in the army? Mr. Shipton explained that he had not, but had been in the Glamorgan Police. Saddler, recalled, said that the night before his wife left she said: "Thank God, you have come for me." She added that Philip Evans had drugged her and kept her upstairs, and that when she awoke she did not know where she was. She tried to go downstairs, but he would not let her, pulled her back, and ripped her blouse, which she showed to him (the husband). They took away the furniture, which belonged to deceased's mother, last Thursday.

### **The summing up and verdict**

Coroner in summing up, said that it was regretful that Dr. Evans was not present, having been the first to arrive, and it was he who moved the woman on the floor. But Dr. Roberts was on the spot soon afterwards, and his evidence was equally as good. Dr. Roberts had given the evidence as to the fatal injuries, and they had heard the statement of Evans to P. C. Bodger as to what had taken place. The jury had not the slightest difficulty to find a verdict of "Wilful Murder" against Evans. They were not concerned as to the condition of his mind, and it was only right and proper that he should take his trial for causing the death of the woman, and the state of his mind could then be inquired into by another court. What the jury had to consider was whether there was sufficient evidence to show that the woman died from her wounds inflicted by Evans, and whether he intended taking her life away.

There was evidence of motive, for the woman had parted from Evans and gone back to her husband and that it was possible that when they met last Thursday Evans tried to induce her to return to him; that she might have refused, and said "No, I am going back to my husband," and that he then shot her. That he intended doing it was plain by the fact that he bought the revolver and the cartridges last Saturday. The foreman asked whether the question of drink should be considered. The Coroner: "Drink is no excuse for crime. But it might be taken into consideration, if the man is convicted to the degree of his guilt, and the punishment to which maybe meted out to him, but it is not in itself an excuse at all." The jury retired, and after an absence of less than quarter of an hour returned the following verdict: "Death was caused by bullet wounds given by Philip Evans."

However, Philip Evans was never to stand trial, as the day previous to the above inquest he had died of his injuries. A report in the same newspaper read:

### **Death of the Hopkinstown murderer**

Philip Evans, against a verdict of "Wilful Murder" was returned at the inquest on the victim of the Hopkinstown tragedy, succumbed to his self-inflicted injuries at the Porth Cottage Hospital at ten minutes to four on Friday afternoon April 4<sup>th</sup>.

At the early part of the week Evans, though seriously ill, was still able to communicate with people and was able to move about in his room and take light nourishment. He had reportedly been hovering between live and death since his removal to the hospital, and the daily newspaper reports concerning his condition had been followed up with deep interest throughout the district, where expressions of pity for him and hope that he would not survive his self-inflicted injuries, and hence escape the punishment (hanging) that invariably awaited him for his crime, were heard on all sides.

The Rev. W. Thomas, vicar of Porth and Cymmer, was to see Evans on three or four occasions. On the occasion of the first visit Evans spoke to the vicar, but he did not know then that Mrs. Saddler, the woman he had shot, had succumbed. He was informed of her death subsequently on Tuesday by a brother and since then Evans had been absolutely mute. The Rev. Gentleman thought this knowledge of the death the woman he appeared to have entertained a strong passion for had died, had caused the injured man a shock, and this had affected his speech.

After Wednesday morning he did not speak and his right side was practically paralysed, and his temperature was 102 degrees and appeared to be getting weaker. On Wednesday night when he was asked if he suffered any pain gave no reply, but raised his hand to his head, evidently intending to indicate he was suffering there. A

little later that night he was seized with three fits and his case was considered hopeless. A local reporter was told by some that had seen him that he presented a pitiable sight, and that he tries to speak but cannot. His throat and tongue are much swollen. On Thursday morning the doctors consulted each other and it was decided an operation was necessary to try and save the man's life.

### **The operation**

The operation was made by Dr. Roberts, Pontypridd, Medical Practitioner to the Great Western Collieries, assisted by Dr. Llewellyn, Penygraig. Evans was removed to the operating chair, chloroform being administered by Dr. Weichart, Penygraig. Dr. T. H. Morris, Tylorstown, and Mr. David Thomas J. P; Tylorstown, were also present.

The wound on the right temple was probed by Dr. Roberts, and after meeting with a hard substance on that side he used the operating knife very skilfully and removed the bullet, which was bent. The fragments of another bullet, which had worked its way to the front of the brain on the left side, was not extracted, as this could not be done without injuring the brain. The extraction of this bullet for the time being, owing to the condition of Evans, was deferred. It seems the operation was made owing to the condition into which Evans fell when he turned quite blue in the face and appeared to suffer much pain and appeared to be practically unconscious. His parents, who lived near Hereford, where his father was employed as a signalman, had not been to see him, but a brother who lived at Porth had been frequently to the hospital, while another brother from Cardiff had also seen him.

On Friday morning it was reported that he had passed a very restless night and was expected to live not many hours, and the fears of the medical men in attendance proved accurate in the result. For a couple of hours before death Evans had been breathing or groaning very heavily, and he passed away without recovering consciousness. After his death a hard substance was found in the throat and it is supposed that Evans had at some time laid violent hands on himself. He was a man of strong physique, standing 6 ft 2 inches in height, with a robust constitution, and to this is attributed the fact that he survived for so long.

The Rev. Thomas said that Evans did not present the appearance of being a bad, vicious man at all. Although he did not speak, he gave one the impression that he wanted to do so, and motioned with his hand to his mouth. The Doctor said: "I hoped after my first visit that he would have become a friend, and that he would have asked me to administer the sacrament, but since he heard on the woman's death he has not spoken. Evans was a fine-looking man, strong and robust, but if you saw him you would say that he has been severely punished for his crime, for he suffered terribly."

Soon after the death of Evans, news having reached Porth police station, the brother of the deceased visited the hospital, and subsequently a message was sent to his parents. A few minutes before Evans died a reporter met Mr. Saddler, the husband of the deceased woman, in the street in Porth. He said he could not get the terrible tragedy out of his mind. He still appeared to feel the blow very heavily, and said he could never forget his wife and the terrible way in which she had met her death. The ring which the woman wore has been handed by the police to her husband.

The death of the unfortunate man brought the painful incident to a close. The Coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys, Aberdare, was at once communicated with, with a view to fixing the date of the inquest. The '*Pontypridd Chronicle*' of April 12<sup>th</sup> 1902 reported: -

### **Last scene of the tragedy**

On Monday afternoon might be seen a small funeral cortege passing on the way from the Porth Cottage Hospital to Lledrddu Cemetery. It was a bright spring day, and the uniforms of the eight police officers who acted as bearers stood out dark in the sunshine as with measured tread they bore their burden to the grave. Few people were about, and it was but the appearance of the constables which led the passerby to conjecture who it was being thus laid to rest. It was the mortal remains of Philip Evans, whose name has achieved such a painful notoriety in connection with the Hopkinstown murder. He died in the hospital on Friday night at ten minutes to four, and after the inquest he was at once removed to the grave. Everything which medical skill could devise had been done for the deceased, but Dr. Roberts having from the commencement held out small hopes of recovery.

The Inquest was held at the Porth Police Station later that afternoon, before Mr. J. Rhys, Coroner. Mr. Shipton, Solicitor of Mountain Ash, represented the relatives of the deceased. A brother of the deceased said that Evans was peculiar in his ways. When he left the Glamorgan Constabulary Force he went to Ireland, where witness found him wandering in the streets at Waterford, and brought him home. Mr. Shipton: "When you found him at Waterford he had a bottle of poison in his pocket?" - "Yes!"

Mr. Horatio Rowlands repeated the evidence given at the inquest on Mrs. Saddler. P. C. Bodger repeated his deposition, and the words used by deceased when he lay in the taproom at the Holly Bush. "Is she dead? If she isn't, she ought to be. I gave her two and myself three. I wish I was dead too." After further evidence the Coroner in summing said that Evans had murdered Mrs. Saddler and then shot himself. He did not think there was any doubt about the matter. Having recapitulated the evidence the coroner added that they had to consider whether the

deceased's mind was in a proper state. He appeared to be perfectly reasonable on the day in question, but he had an history which showed he was often strange in the mind.

Referring to the purchase of a revolver for 7/6d, Mr. Rhys made some strong remarks, saying it was nothing short of a scandal that revolver and cartridge should be sold in such a manner. There ought to be regulations to prevent the sale of these weapons in such a free and easy manner. After a brief consideration, the Foreman of the jury (councillor Joseph Brooks, Porth) read the verdict, which was as follows: *"That death was caused by inflammation of the brain following self-inflicted wounds, deceased being insane at the time he fired the shots."*



**The Hollybush Hotel, Hopkinstown**

AN other photograph

## DEATH OF A DENTIST AT COEDPENMAEN

July 1<sup>st</sup> 1911

The '*Glamorgan Free Press*' of July 7<sup>th</sup> 1911 reported: - A strange shooting sensation has formed the one subject of conversation at Pontypridd and alleged murder is not without its dramatic features. The tragedy was in quick-as-lightening fashion in a lonely spot, and the assailant fled as soon as the foul deed had been done. The victim, Herbert Boote, a young man of 27 years of age, was a dentist, with business premises over Messrs. Jones and Co's. shop in Church Street, Pontypridd.



HERBERT BOOTE - THE INNOCENT VICTIM

About 9.30 in the evening he closed his business premises and started on his way home in company with his assistant, Thomas Lloyd, both of them residing in Hinckley Terrace, which is on the Merthyr Road side of the canal. They proceeded along the Coedpenmaen Road, and left the main road by the Coedpenmaen Post Office, opposite the English Baptist Church to cross the canal bridge. It was, of course, quite dark at the time. They then got over the bridge and were walking slowly towards Lock Terrace when they met a man going in the opposite direction. Neither Mr. Boote nor Mr. Lloyd appeared to know him, and there was no greeting of any kind between the parties. No sooner had their backs been turned on the stranger, however, than a sharp 'crack' rent the midnight air. It was the report of a firearm being discharged, and at the same instant Mr. Boote fell forward. So sudden



and unexpected was the whole affair his companion, Mr. Lloyd, could scarcely realise what had happened, but he had no sooner bent over the prostrate body of his friend than he found that he had been struck on the back of the head, and blood was flowing copiously from Mr. Boote's wound.

Mr. Lloyd was naturally greatly shocked, and his feelings may be better imagined than described. Looking round he saw a man running around the lock and up along the canal bank, carrying something in his hand. He had made off without a moment's delay. Mr. Lloyd's first thought was for his friend, for whom he did all he could under the circumstances, shouting for help at the same time.

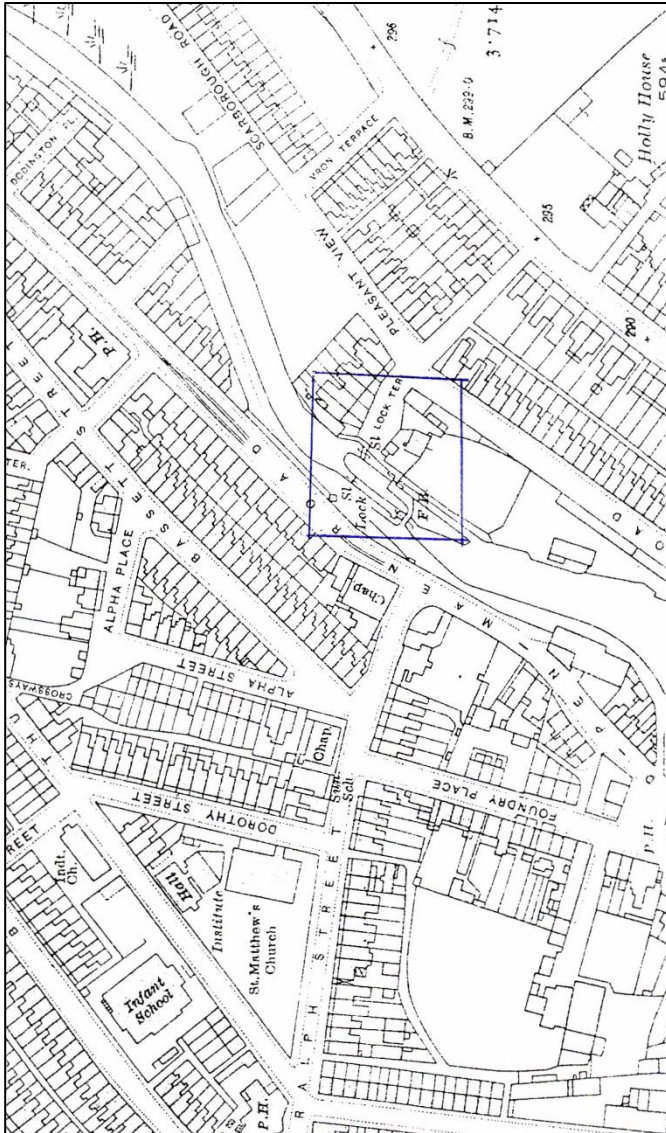
### **Police on the scene**

Police Constable Millett and P.C. Rendle happened to be on duty in the neighbourhood, and on hearing the report at once proceeded in its direction. They found Mr. Boote lying unconscious on the canal bank, but by this time there was no trace of the man who fired the shot. The injured man was promptly conveyed to the house of Mr. Coole, who lived near the spot, and a doctor was sent for. Dr. J. Morgan Rees was soon on the scene, and having attended to the injured man by bandaging his wounds he then ordered his removal to the Pontypridd Cottage Hospital, where he was conveyed on a stretcher. It was found that the bullet penetrated the back of the skull and entered the brain. His condition was critical from the first, and he remained unconscious. In the meantime information had been dispatched to the central Police Station at Pontypridd, and Supt. John Williams lost no time in making his way to the scene of the tragedy and accompanied the victim to the Cottage Hospital.

Inspector Rees and his men promptly concentrated their energies in the direction of running to earth the assailant. They were greatly handicapped in their quest for many reasons. In the first place, they could obtain no clue as to whom the man was. Boote was unconscious, and Lloyd, who was the only man who knew anything as to what happened, had taken absolutely no notice of the perpetrator of the deed, and could give the police no description at all. Then, again, it was past midnight, and it was not only very dark, but no one was about at the time, and their task was, therefore, rendered all the more difficult.

### **An arrest**

Undaunted by these difficulties, the police officers indicated, worked unremittingly, and, with a splendidly organised effort, they prosecuted their enquiries in all directions in such a way that, notwithstanding the cover of darkness, it would not have been an easy matter for anyone to have effected a flight from the locality. They redoubled their efforts, and it was not until several hours had elapsed that they



**The position of the lock at Coedpenmaen c .1919**

concluded their preliminary enquiries. Eventually they obtained certain important information which led them to arrest a young man named John Elias Parfitt (25), a haulier, living with his wife and two children in apartments in Fron Terrace, Coedpenmaen, about 200 yards from the scene of the tragedy.

The police continued the search for the missing weapon and Inspector Rees eventually found a weapon hidden in some rushes in a field on the side of the canal about 400 to 500 yards away. The weapon is the type known as a 'Winchester repeater,' and is similar to those used at public hooting galleries. The injured man was operated on at Sunday by Dr. Sheen, of Cardiff, and Dr. Morgan Rees, and he lingered as stated, until yesterday morning, when he passed away.

### **Mr. Lloyd interviewed**

In the course of an interview granted to a press man, Mr. Thomas Lloyd, a canvasser in Mr. Boote's employ said: "We were going home together when by the canal bridge I remember someone passing us, but did not take the slightest notice of him. We did not even pass the time of night. Immediately he passed us I heard a shot fired and Mr. Boote fell on his face. I thought he was joking and shouted to him to 'get up' more than once. Seeing that he did not move I bent down and I was staggered to find that he was apparently unconscious and blood was running from the back of his head. It was not until then that I thought that something serious had happened and raised the alarm. I saw a man carrying something like a stick in his hand running away along the canal bank, but I can give no description of him, as it was so dark. The police were there almost immediately." Mr. Lloyd added that he could not say anything as to motive. The whole thing was a mystery to him.

### **About the deceased**

The deceased man had lived in Pontypridd for about two years, and was the son of an Isle of Man contractor. He was unmarried, and is described as being by those who knew him as being of a quiet, inoffensive disposition.

Boote lay in a critical condition at the cottage Hospital. It appears the bullet penetrated the skull and entered the brain. On Sunday morning Dr. Sheen, of Cardiff, and Dr. G. Morgan Rees, assisted by other medical gentlemen, performed an operation. Though this was successful, the unfortunate man did not regain consciousness.

### **Before the magistrates**

A special sitting was held at the Pontypridd Police Court on Monday morning, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. James Roberts J.P; presiding, when Parfitt was charged with feloniously

and maliciously shooting Herbert Boote with intent to murder, on July 1<sup>st</sup>. P.C. Millett gave evidence to the effect that at 11.15 on Saturday night, acting on information given to him he hurried to the front of Lock Terrace, where he found the injured man in an unconscious state of bleeding from a wound at the back of the head. A man named Thomas Lloyd was standing by him. Witness helped to take Boote to a house nearby, and later on was successful in arresting the prisoner at Fron Terrace, about 100 yards away from where the injured man was found. On charging him at the time of the arrest prisoner simply replied: "Very well." Later on, in company with Supt. Williams and Inspector Rees, P. C. Millett made further inquiries and then formally charged the prisoner at the Police Station. In reply to the charge prisoner said: "I'll say nothing; I don't acknowledge I done it." Inspector Rees stated that the injured man was too ill to appear and still in a critical condition at the Hospital. The prisoner, who asked no questions and made no statement was remanded in custody until Wednesday.

### **Victim passes away**

The accused was again brought before the magistrates on Wednesday morning, July 5<sup>th</sup>, when P. C. Millett repeated his evidence concerning finding Boote lying unconscious, and arresting the accused. Supt. Williams informed the bench that the injured man was still unconscious, and therefore he (the Supt.) applied for the case to be remanded. Prisoner, who seemed remarkably cool under the trying ordeal, was remanded until Wednesday next. A little later that morning Herbert Boote succumbed to his injuries. Mr. D. Rees, the Coroner, decided to open an inquest of Friday.

Mr. M. L. Griffiths, manager for Boots Cash Chemists, Pontypridd, wrote in a local newspaper: "With reference to the sad shooting outrage that took place on Saturday night, We find that the impression has gone abroad that one of our staff was the victim. We have had at least a hundred inquiries about the affair. Will you be good enough to explain that it has no connection with any of our staff."

## **THE INQUEST**

### **ACCUSED LANDLADY GIVES SENSATIONAL EVIDENCE**

The inquest into the body of Herbert Boote, the Pontypridd dentist, who was shot under sensational circumstances on Saturday evening, July 1<sup>st</sup>, and died the following Thursday, was held before Mr. Coroner D. Rhys at the Pontypridd Police Station on Friday afternoon, July 7th. Mr. Ernest Roberts representing John Elias Parfitt, the young Coedpenmaen haulier, who had been arrested in connection with the affair, and Inspector Rees was present on behalf of the police. A warder from the Cardiff Gaol sat by the side of Parfitt. The jury was composed of the following

persons: Mr. John Stanfield (foreman), Messrs. S. T. Lewis (Corn Stores), Frank J. Hawkins (butcher), Walter Davies (Maltsters Arms), Walter Lewis, Thomas Jenkins, D. Thomas, George Griffiths, Evan Jones, T. Alain Scudamore, W. Hayes, Thomas Morgan and Henry Lewis.

Mrs. Clara Boote, mother of the deceased, said that she lived at Brownside, Central Road, Douglas, Isle of Man. Her son's full name was Charles Herbert Boote, and he was a dentist, he was 28 years of age. Thomas Lloyd, Hinckley Terrace, Coedpenmaen, canvasser, said he was employed by the deceased. Witness and deceased left their business premises about 9.30 on Saturday night. After calling at several places they proceeded along Coedpenmaen Road, in order to reach home they had to cross the canal by the Coedpenmaen Post Office, and at Locke Terrace someone passed them on the footpath. Witness did not know who the man was, after proceeding a few yards he heard a report of a firearm and Boote fell to the ground. Witness asked "What's the matter?" The deceased never spoke or moved. At the same time he saw a man running along the canal bank, but witness could not identify him.

John Thomas (14), a lad living a 5, Fron Terrace, said he was a collier boy. He was acquainted with the accused, who he knew as "Jack Parfitt." Last Saturday night about 11.15 he saw Parfitt crossing the footbridge across the canal lock and go into Fron Terrace. Accused was pushing a bicycle with his right hand and carried a rifle with his left. The bicycle caught in some iron railings on the bridge and witness freed it for him. He did not see Parfitt afterwards. Questioned as to the time witness said it was before the public houses closed.

The coroner said "Then it must have been before eleven."

Mr. Ernest Roberts: "Did you speak to him or he to you as you passed each other?" "No."

Mr. Roberts: "What was his state?" "He was a bit drunk, but not much."

### **Landlady's evidence**

Mrs. Rhoda Adams, Fron Terrace, said that Parfitt and his wife were in apartments in her home. They had two children. On Saturday night, Parfitt left the house at about 4 o'clock and between ten and eleven in the night he came to the back door and peeped in asking: "Has Emily come home yet?" He looked very upset. Witness said "No, Jack, I expect she is waiting for you to fetch the little girl." Parfitt then went out and later his brother Albert came to the house. Witness about ten minutes later, heard the report of a gun at the side of the house which was nearest to the canal. She got a candle and went to see if the chickens were all right. She went into the coal-house and on coming out heard another shot and thought that something went past her head. She saw no-one, and going to the house saw that the front door was locked safely.

When she returned to the kitchen, she heard someone trying the front door. She went to the front door and saw the shadow of a man who she thought was Jack by his cap. Later someone called to say that a man had been shot. Then Parfitt came in through the back way at the same time as the informant was telling her the news. She came inside the kitchen and she asked him if he had tried the door just previously. He said "No, I have just come straight from the Taff." Parfitt heard the lady, Miss Richards, say "come quickly Mrs. Adams, there's a man shot on the lock. Parfitt said, "I will go and see," and left the house. Witness went out about five minutes after and went to Lock Terrace and by an empty house in the middle of the terrace she met Parfitt returning. She said. "Jack, what have you done with that gun?" Witness here burst into tears. He said, "shut up, it is all right, I put the gun in the rushes." She took Parfitt home and put him in his room, gave him a glass of water and told him to stay there until she went to see his wife and sister, who lived at 86 Bonvilston Road. Whilst she was there Jack came in, but she did not remember anything else which was said.

The Coroner: "You are sure about that?" Witness: "Yes."

By the foreman of the jury: "Parfitt had not had a gun in her house and she had never see him with one before."

By Mr. Ernest Roberts: "When he said he would go and see he seemed silly and dazed, and was drunk." The Coroner: "Did you know the deceased man?" Witness: "No, only by sight."

The Coroner: "He had never been in the house?" "No, never."

She also stated that she did not think prisoner knew the deceased man.

Mrs. Ann May, who resided near the canal bank, said she saw a man running along the bank with something in his hand, which he threw into the rushes. After passing her about two yards or so he crossed the canal, there being no water in the canal at the time. She saw the man running to the door of No.7 Fron Terrace.

Reginald Adams spoke of hearing a shooting. It was not very long after when accused came into the house. Accused then admonished him not to say anything to anybody, adding, "I have flung the gun into the rushes."

Albert Parfitt (18) 86, Bonvilston Road, brother of the accused, said that he was employed on the book stall, Pontypridd. Witness had a Winchester repeater gun, and that was in the house last Saturday morning. Witness got home about 9.30 or ten on Saturday night, and when asked by his sister sometime after ten o'clock to look for the gun he failed to find it. He had not seen his brother that evening, and went to Fron Terrace after he had missed the gun. The gun produced was his property.

P.C. William Millett said he saw deceased lying on the ground unconscious, with a puncture wound at the back of the head. Witness then repeated the evidence given

at the Police Court hearing. Replying to the charge of attempted murder prisoner remarked: "I say nothing; I do not acknowledge I done it." Witness produced witnesses boots and trousers, which were bespattered with mud, although it was a dry fine day on Saturday. Witness produced a discharged cartridge, given him by Mrs. Adams, which corresponded to two holes made in a street lamp. When found the gun was loaded with seven live cartridges and one empty cartridge. Accused was cool and calm, and was not drunk, when he was apprehended about 1.15 on the Sunday morning.

By Mr. Roberts: "There was no doubt he had been drinking." Inspect. Ebenezer Rees stated that he found a footmark on the canal a distance of about 300 yards from the scene of the tragedy. Dr. J. Morgan Rees, Pontypridd, said the deceased man died on Thursday morning at 6.45 without having properly recovered consciousness. On Thursday witness and Dr. Lyttle made a post mortem examination. They found the bullet in the brain, it having been detected there after entering the skull. Witness was of the opinion that death was due to the injury and damage done by the bullet which was discovered in the brain. Witness produced the bullet, and added that it was a little lighter than one of the unused ones found in the rifle.

The Coroner addressing the jury commented on the entire absence of motive. The jury retired at 4 o'clock, and returned at 4.40 with a verdict of "Guilty of manslaughter." Parfitt was then committed on the jury's verdict to take his trial at the assizes on the charge of wilful murder and the Coroner, in view of the circumstances, granted the jurors as special fee of 5/- each.

### **Sordid story related at the assizes**

"I Fired at a cat and killed a man."

On Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> 1911 at the Swansea Assizes, before Mr. Justice Bray, John Elias Parfitt, 25, residing at Fron Terrace, Coedpenmaen was placed on trial charged with having with malice and aforethought killed and murdered Charles Herbert Boote, dentist, at Pontypridd on Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Llewelyn Williams, M. P; Mr. Elidyr Herbert (instructed by Mr. Stanley Jones, Pontypridd) were counsel for the prosecution, while Mr. A. T. James (instructed by Messrs. Wayne Morgan & Roberts, (Pontypridd) was the defence. The prisoner appeared none the worse for his imprisonment when he appeared in the dock. He was neatly dressed in a dark suit, with an "up-and-down" collar and dark tie. He was as cool as ever and pleaded "not guilty" in a clear voice.

## **The story of the crime**

Mr. Llewelyn Williams in opening the case said the prisoner stood charged having committed this very awful crime on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and after the jury had heard the evidence he did not think that they would have much difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the deceased man was done to death by the prisoner. The real question they would have to address their minds to was whether when the prisoner shot and killed Boote, he knew what he was doing, and was cognisant of the nature and quality of the act he was committing. That was the only real question and matter for them to decide.

The facts, of themselves, were short and simple. Prisoner and his wife lodged with a Mrs. Adams at Fron Terrace, Pontypridd, and on the day in question he did not go to work. He left the house about 4 o'clock and somewhere about 10 o'clock the same night he called at the house of his sister, who lived at Bonvilston Road, some little distance away. She was ill in bed. She had a conversation with prisoner, and he asked her something about his wife, and she informed him that she had gone to town on a message for her. Sometime afterwards, prisoner went into another room, and Mrs. Jenkins heard the noise of the click of a gun. She called out to prisoner, but he made no reply. Immediately the prisoner went away, Mrs. Jenkins sent for her younger brother, who kept a gun, which he saw in his room all right in the morning, but when he returned it had disappeared, and the suggestion of the prosecution was that the prisoner took it away. Proceeding, counsel said that after leaving his sister's house prisoner crossed onto the canal. He (Parfitt) was seen by a little boy carrying a gun and wheeling along a bicycle.

## **The shots heard**

Arthur Williams, a grocer's cart-driver, said he could not identify the man who had the gun and fired at his cart. He saw the man load the rifle, and after firing it witness asked him: "What's the matter?" Prisoner replied: "Nothing the matter yet, but gathering." He spoke calmly. Margaret Richards, single, said she was on the pavement at her mother's house and heard two shots on the night in question. She observed a man sixty yards away and coming towards her. When she went indoors, in about two or three minutes, she heard another report, followed by cries for help. Cross-examined, the witness said it appeared to her that the man was firing at the lamppost. The lamp was alight. P. C. Millett said he arrested the accused, who replied "I say nothing. I don't acknowledge I done it." When charged with murder the prisoner made no reply. Prisoner, when arrested, was sober, cool and not in the least excited. Prisoner's breath smelt strongly of drink at the time. Several witnesses also testified as they had at the inquiry.



## Prisoner in the box

On the conclusion of the case for the prosecution the prisoner went into the witness-box and gave evidence. He said that for some days before this occurrence he was drinking and was often drunk. He had not to his knowledge ever seen the deceased man. He left the house about 4.30 on that day, and called at the Ruperra, Victoria, Greyhound, and the Wheatchief public houses and drank dozens of pints of beer. He did not recall anything after leaving the Wheatchief. He probably went to the tramcar. He did not remember getting the gun. He had a hazy recollection of firing at the lamppost in Pleasant View, but not of shooting at William's cartwheel. The next thing he remembered was crossing the lock of the canal, but he could not remember meeting anyone. He remembered seeing a cat run across the road and shooting at it. He did not look to see what happened to the cat, but walked on, and as he was turning the corner of the bridge he heard a shout. "It shook me up, continued the witness, and made me think that a dangerous thing was doing with that gun. I went by the canal bank. I did not know I had done anything."

Mr. James: "Did you have the intention of shooting anyone? - "No intention at all, Sir; no one had done any arm to me at all."

In cross-examination prisoner said he started out of the house with a shilling and a few coppers in his pocket, and he met an old former workfellow named Roberts, who paid for some drink for him. Roberts had worked with him on the top of a pit for a couple of years. He had made no attempt to get Robert to give evidence upon his behalf.

His Lordship: "Don't you recollect going to your sister's house and getting the gun; a most simple thing you know?"

Prisoner: "I can't recollect. Sir."

Continuing, prisoner said he did not recollect shooting and breaking the glass of the gas lamp. The last he remembered was trying to sing a song at a public-house, but he was too drunk. Prisoner was further cross-examined by Mr. Williams as how he shot at the cat. He said he saw people behind him, but he did not apologise for shooting in their direction. He did not remember what he did with the gun. He remembers Mrs. Adams telling him " 'Tis you that have done it," but not telling her he had flung the gun into the rushes. The court then adjourned for lunch, and prisoner again entered the witness box when the court reassembled, and was further examined by Mr. Llewelyn Williams.

He swore he did not know that it was his brother's gun he threw away. Mr. Williams: "There's no doubt it was you that shot through the glass of the lamppost?" - "No doubt."

"And no doubt it was you who shot into the lock near the canal bridge?" - "I fired a shot there."

“There is no doubt you are the man that was seen running up the canal bank after the shot was fired?” - “Yes.”

“And there is no doubt you are the man who crossed the canal higher up?” - “Oh, yes.”

“And there’s no doubt you are the man who threw the gun into the rushes?”- “Yes.”

“If you were in this drunken state, can you explain how you were able to run over the canal bridge?” - “A drunken man can run, I got frightened.”

His Lordship: “What was it that woke you to the fact that you had done something wrong?” - “The shout.”

“You heard somebody shouting? How could that tell you that you had done something wrong?” - No answer.

Mr. Williams: “What was the shout about you heard?” - “I could not say exactly; I heard a shout on the other side of the canal.”

“Do you remember seeing Miss Richards?” - Well -

His Lordship: “Where was the cat - on the ground?” - “The cat ran past me and jumped onto a wall. I fired at a cat and hit a man. As I turned round the cat jumped up, then I walked away from there.”

Mr. Williams: “You never thought you had done anything wrong?” - “I never thought I had done anything wrong at all.”

“Why didn’t you go back and say you were sorry when you knew what had happened?” - “I didn’t think of that.”

“I suggest to you that you didn’t go back because you aimed at this poor man?” - Prisoner shook his head.

“That you knew at the time you had done wrong?” - No answer.

“Why did you run up the canal bank?” - “Because I thought I had done wrong by shooting in that way.”

“You jumped into the bed of the canal. You knew sufficiently what you were doing to realise that the canal was empty?” - “No Sir.”

“You do remember throwing the gun into the bushes?” - “Yes.”

“Do you remember going down to the front door of No.7 Fron Terrace?” - “I remember going towards a house. I don’t know whether I got to the front or the back.”

“Do you remember going into the house?” - “No I don’t?”

“Do you remember Mrs. Adams asking you ‘Was that you trying the front door half-an-hour ago?’” - “No, Sir.”

“Do you remember seeing Miss Richards come in?” - “No, I remember seeing her when I came out when I heard people saying ‘there’s a man been shot.’”

“Do you remember having a conversation with Mrs. Adams and she said ‘Jack, it is you who did it?’” - “I remember her saying that to me.”

“And did you say, ‘I have put the gun in the rushes?’” - “Yes, Sir.”

“Do you remember saying to the little boy Reginald?” “Don’t say anything to anyone?” - “I don’t remember that.”

“Do you remember asking for a glass of water?” - “Yes.”

“Did you go out that night afterwards to your sisters?” - “I went for a walk, my head was aching.”

“Do you remember the policeman coming in at quarter-past-one?” - “Yes, Sir.”

“Were you sober then?” - “I was getting over the effects of the drink then.”

“But at quarter-past-eleven you were so drunk you can’t remember anything?” - “I do not know what time it was.”

“Do you remember saying, when charged at half-past-five ‘I say nothing; I don’t acknowledge I done it?’” - “Well I never had to answer a charge before, and I didn’t know what to say. I said that, but that was not my meaning, I meant to say I had had nothing to do with doing such a thing.”

“Did you know at the time, it was you shot the deceased man?” - “No, I don’t know now if I was the man, but I can see how awkward it is against me.”

“But you acknowledge firing the shot at the spot where the man was killed? - “Oh, yes.”

“Do you remember being with some companions that night?” - “yes.”

“Do you know the landlord of the Wheatchief?” - “Yes.”

“Can you say whether he refused to supply you with any more drink that night?” - “I could not say.”

“Have you made any enquiries?” - “no, Sir.”

“Was it the landlord that supplied you with drink or the potman?” - “Anyone who was there.”

“Everyone who supplied you with drink could see whether you were drunk or not?” - “I don’t know about that.”

His Lordship: “If you were so drunk that you can’t recollect what took place, that must have been noticed?” - No reply.

Mr. Williams: “Have you caused any inquiries to be made at the Wheatchief?” - “Well, I didn’t think it was any good.”

“That’s your only defence today - that you were so drunk you didn’t know what you were doing. Don’t you think it is very important that you should get evidence to collaborate your story?” - No answer.

“Did you tell your solicitor about the Wheatchief?” - “I told him I had been there.”

“Is there anyone from the Wheatchief here today?” - “Not that I know of.”

“Have you got anyone here who saw you at the Wheatchief?” - “I’ve got no one as a witness, Sir.”

Being examined by Mr. E. T. James, prisoner said that he had gone up some distance along the canal bank before he found where it was dry.

“And before you started going along the canal bank that night you hadn’t any idea that the canal was dry?” - “No?”

The prisoner then returned to the dock. He had remained perfectly cool and collected while under cross-examination. In reply to the judge, Mr. James said

that the defence was that the prisoner was in such a condition that he was incapable of forming any intention either to commit murder or commit grievous bodily harm, and possibly this was an accident.

The judge: "Well, you will have to deal with the question of negligence, because for a drunken man to fire all over the place is about as negligent a thing as one could ever suppose."

### **Speech for the crown**

Mr. Llewelyn Williams then addressed the jury. He remarked that there could be no doubt that the man who was responsible for the death of Mr. Boote was the prisoner. Counsel for the defence had suggested that he was going to put it to the jury that the man's death was due to an accident. But could the jury, after hearing the evidence, have any doubt whatever that man's death was due, not to an accident, but to the shot of the gun aimed at him by the prisoner. Prisoner now stated for the first time that he fired at a cat. The whole story was the story of a man who shot recklessly, and must have shot at the dead man. The real question was: "Did he know what he was about when he fired the fatal shot?" Whether the prisoner was guilty of murder or not there can be no doubt he was guilty of a very atrocious deed. It would be an intolerable thing for this country if an innocent, inoffensive professional man returning home on Saturday night was to be placed in deadly peril by drunken or reckless men with fire arms, so reckless that they did not care whether they were taking people's lives or not. This was the intolerable situation. It was becoming a common defence either that a man had been subjected to a brainstorm or so under the influence of that he was incapable of forming any intention. That was becoming a dangerous thing, and juries must consider the effect of it.

Prisoner had sworn that he remembered nothing of what happened after 8.30 on the night in question. It was easy for men to go into the box and give a general denial of everything, and say that they didn't remember anything. The prisoner had not been able to produce a single person to support his statement, that he was in a state of drunkenness he alleged. If he was so drunk as he said he was, he (Mr. Williams) would have thought the landlord of the Wheatchief, or one of the prisoner's companions, would have come forward and given evidence to that effect. Why had not Roberts, his particular friend, who had been standing him drinks, been called?

No one was called, though this was the vital thing in the case. He (Mr. Williams) suggested that the reason why none of them were called was that the prisoner was not in the condition stated. Mr. Williams contended that the prisoner's actions and conversations both before and after the shooting were perfectly consistent with a rational state of mind. When asked, "What's the matter?" Prisoner replied, "there's nothing the matter now, but it's gathering." Did not this suggest that he had some

intention in his mind of doing mischief? Why did he run away after the shot? He must have known he had shot the man, and was trying to escape. It had been suggested that there was no motive, but the absence of motive did not make it less a murder, if murder was proved. The fact that the man was under the influence of drink was no excuse for crime. They must find that he was so much under the influence of drink that he did not know what he was doing.

### **Speech for the defence**

Mr. James, addressing the jury for the defence, submitted that the prosecution had completely failed to prove the charge of murder. That the deceased man did die of a shot fired by the prisoner appeared now to be common ground, but that that shot was fired wilfully and with malice and forethought was quite a different matter. Before the jury could bring in a verdict that the prisoner wilfully caused the man's death they must be satisfied that when he fired that fatal shot he wilfully intended to cause the death of the man, or that he intended to do grievous bodily harm. Prisoner and deceased man were absolute strangers to one another; so where was the intention of murder or bodily harm? What was the prisoner's state of mind that night? His state of drunkenness was undoubted. His reply, "It's no matter yet, it's gathering," was a reply of a man who was silly and stupid and trying to be clever. It was perfectly clear that he had no ill-will against anyone. If he was in that state of drunkenness that he was unable to form an opinion as to the danger incurred in firing a shot, then he asked the jury to say that there was no intent and no malice in the case. If they came to that conclusion, then there was no crime of murder. He spent six hours that night visiting public-houses, and had been on drink bouts during the week. There was no evidence whatever that he pointed the gun at anyone or that he had any intention to kill the deceased, who he had never seen before. Unless utter recklessness or indifference was proved against the prisoner he was entitled to acquittal.

### **Judge's summing up**

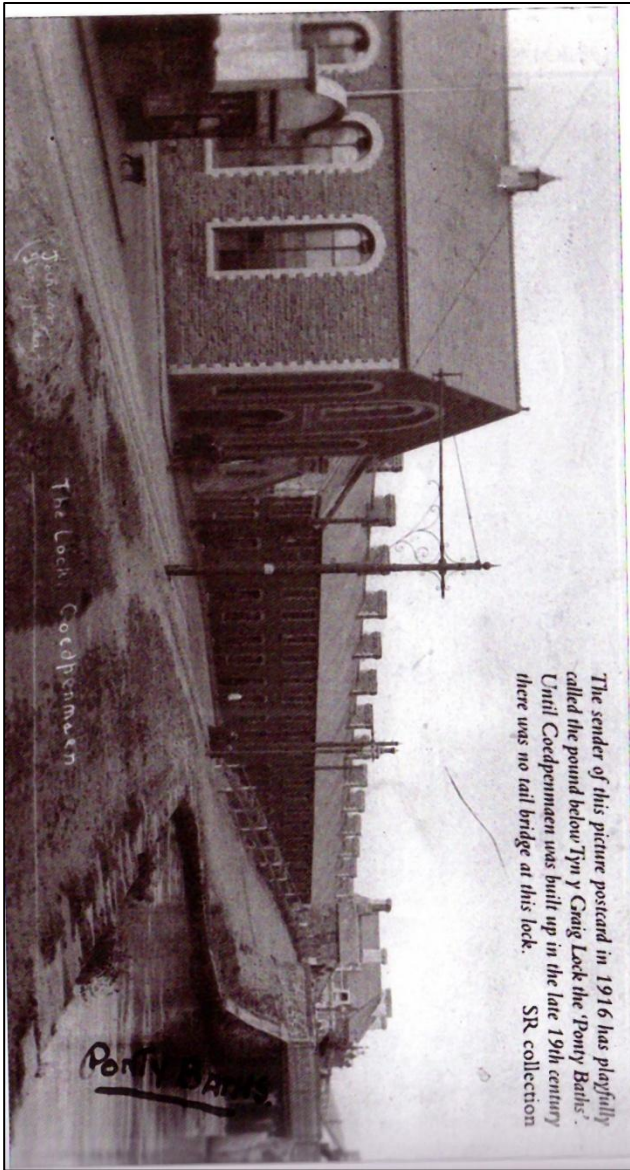
His Lordship, in summing up, said there was no doubt that it was the prisoner who fired the fatal shot, but the important question was whether he intended to kill. The great difficulty in this case was that the prisoner was not seen by anyone to take aim with the gun. It was clear that he was the person who obtained it, fired it, and put it amongst the rushes, and if anyone had seen him aim at the man's head the case would have been comparatively easy. It was clear that the prisoner did not know the deceased, and therefore could not have had a motive in killing him. It was not necessary to have a motive in a case of murder, but the absence of motive was a matter the jury must consider. Undoubtedly, the evidence did point to his being the worse for drink. A man might fire a most reckless shot without intent to kill. It seemed to be a case where the evidence might justify murder, but on the other hand

there were circumstances which might well make the jury doubt whether the prosecution had proved intention. The prisoner appeared to have been insufficiently master of himself not only to fire at the lamppost, but the pane. He said he aimed at a cat. He (the judge) did not think the jury would consider the incident of the cat very satisfactory.

The judge asked the officer in charge of the case to come forward. P.C. Millet entered the box and, in reply to his lordship's question as to what sort of character the prisoner bore, he said he had been convicted once for fighting. The judge (addressing prisoner): "I think upon the evidence the jury are justified in finding you guilty of manslaughter only. Therefor, I am released from the necessity of passing the extreme sentence. The verdict means that the jury are not satisfied that you had any intention to kill the man, but at the same time they have found you guilty of criminal negligence by firing in a reckless manner when in a drunken state. That is a very serious matter. I have had to consider whether I ought not to send you to penal servitude. I am not going to. The reasons are these - that you are a young man with fairly good character. There is nothing serious known against you, and you are a working man. It is quite plain that your fault is that you give way to drink. You have a chance of redeeming that fault. Give up drink! I must send you to prison for a considerable time. The sentence is 18 month's hard labour. The prisoner quickly turned round and disappeared below.



**Bonvilston Hotel c.1914**  
**- where the body of Herbert Boote was taken in 1911**



The Lock where the Coedpenmaen murder took place

## PONTYPRIDD SHOP ASSISTANT'S SAD DEATH AT TREFOREST

August 25<sup>th</sup> 1916

A sordid story was told at the Pontypridd Police Court on Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup> 1916 at the adjourned inquest presided over by Mr. Archibald Daniel, Deputy-coroner, into the circumstances surrounding the death of Thomas Hughes (also known as Walters), a draper's assistant in the employ of Messrs. E. Hughes & Co.; Market Street, Pontypridd, whose body was found on Friday last in a quarry at Treforest.

When the inquest was opened on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, evidence of identification was given by Mrs. Sara Millward, Tanybryn, Aberdare, sister of the deceased. Dr. Williams said he had examined the body at the mortuary, and in his opinion the injuries were consistent with Hughes having fallen from the top of the quarry. At this juncture Police-Inspector J. L. Rees applied for an adjournment. He said he wished to enquire into certain information respecting the movements of Hughes on Thursday night last. He (witness) had been informed that the deceased was seen in the company of a woman.

The first witness called on Tuesday was Mrs. Emily Watkins, wife of William Henry Watkins, 54, Wood Road, Treforest. She said that she had seen the body of the deceased at the mortuary, and identified it as that of a man she saw on Thursday night last in company with a woman in Wood Road between 9.30 and 10 o'clock p.m. The Deputy-coroner asked if she could see the woman in the courtroom and she pointed out a woman and said "Yes, there she is." She knew her as Martha Williams. When asked what they were doing she said he went into Mrs. Cox's fish and chip shop and bought a pennyworth of chips. She was in the shop and saw him leave and hand the chips to Martha Williams and head towards the direction of the Graig, the opening they used between the two villas leading that way. She did not see them returning, even though she stopped at the shop talking for between twenty and thirty minutes. If they had come back that way she would have seen them, but they could have gone round another way. The woman was wearing a dark shawl. She had seen Martha Williams with several other men. At this juncture the woman described as Martha Williams exclaimed: "That's a lie!" Proceeding, witness said she took particular notice of the man because she thought she knew him.

Mrs. Clara Cox, wife of John Albert Cox, shoemaker, 27, Queen Street, Treforest, said she kept the fish and chip shop. She remembered a man coming in for a pennyworth of chips on Thursday night. After he had gone out the previous witness made a certain statement and witness went to the door. She saw the man and woman together. Witness had seen the woman about the neighbourhood on three nights before Thursday. The Deputy-coroner asked if that woman was present in the court, and she replied: "Yes, there she is," indicating Martha Williams.



David John, collier, 34, Laura Street, Treforest, said that on Friday last he was in his garden, which was near the quarry, at 2.30, feeding the chickens. It came to rain, and he hurried back to the house. When he was having a bath, his child came in and said there was a man lying in the quarry. Witness hurried to the spot and found some other men there with the body. On Saturday morning he again went to feed his chickens, and in passing he looked over the quarry. He saw a shawl down in the quarry on the grass, and climbed down and secured it. Later he handed it over to the police. The shawl now produced was the one he found. It was wet at the time.

### **The woman's story**

Inspector. J. L. Rees said that on Sunday morning he saw Martha Ellen Williams at the Police Station and told her he had been making inquiries about the movements of the deceased and herself on the previous Thursday. He further told her that he had ascertained that she was in the company of the deceased in Wood Road between 9.30 and 10 o'clock on Thursday evening, and also that the shawl had been picked up in the quarry at bottom of which deceased was found. Witness told her that he had every reason to believe that the shawl produced belonged to her and that she was wearing it on the night in question. He cautioned her, and she made the following statement:

“I was boozed on Thursday night. I don't remember anything. I might have gone with a man to the top of the quarry. I had been drinking very heavily. My mind is a blank. I know this, I hurt my back, and it is no-wonder. When I came to myself about 9 o'clock on Friday morning, I found myself in a quarry off Wood Rd. I got away the best I could. I was dazed. I lost one shoe, and got another in tram-road. My back is sore now. It is a wonder I am alive. What kind of fellow was he? For I would not know him if I saw him. I was in a nasty mess whatever. There are marks on my hands and face now. I lost my shawl. As for remembering any more I cannot. When I get drunk I go senseless. I will tell the truth if I have to suffer for it.”

### **CORONER SUMS UP**

In summing up, the Deputy-coroner said that Benjamin Hughes, manager from Messrs. Hughes & Co.; had stated on Saturday that the deceased was in the shop on Thursday about 5 p.m. He said he was going to walk to Llantwit. He did not say which way he was going. The evidence that day (Tuesday) was that the deceased and Martha Ellen Williams had been seen going in the direction of the quarry. From the statement of the woman that she had evidently fallen down the quarry. It was a wonder that she did not meet the same fate of the deceased. There was no suggestion of foul play as far as he could see. It was a very sordid story. It was

quite clear that the man and woman went up the mountainside by a footpath that ran near the top of the quarry. It as looked if in some way or another they must have rolled down the quarry. Deceased unfortunately met his death, but Martha Ellen Williams though hurt, did not share the same fate. There was no evidence of what took place at the top of the quarry. There was no suggestion of a quarrel. It appeared they went there for a certain purpose. The jury, after a brief conversation returned a verdict that the deceased and the woman went into the top of the quarry for an immoral purpose and Hughes fell over the quarry. The verdict was recorded as 'accidental death.'



**Inspector J. L. Rees**  
**Witness at the inquest**

AN Other picture

## THE LLANWONNO MURDER JUNE 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917

### Alleged murder between Pontypridd and Llanwonno

Pontypridd police on Saturday morning, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917, made the sensational arrest of Alice Roberts, a sixteen-year-old servant girl employed at Penywal Farm, near Llanwonno, on a charge of murder, the victim being a fellow farm hand named Arthur Stokes.

Penywal Farm was occupied by Mr. Evan Evans and his family, who were highly respected in the parish. It appears that Stokes, who was 44 years of age, had been in Evans's employ for ten years and led a quiet sort of life. It is stated, however, that a curious story would be told of his courtship with several young women in Pontypridd and district.

Mr. Evans left his homestead on Friday in charge of his wife and mother. Early on Saturday morning Mrs. Evans proceeded to Pontypridd Market, accompanied by her son. In their absence Stokes and the girl Roberts had breakfast together, after which, it was alleged, the man attempted to take liberties with the girl. They rolled on the kitchen floor, and the girl then threatened to tell the police and neighbours of his conduct towards her. He got up, and at his request she reached down his gun and got a cartridge from the cupboard. The gun was loaded, and she believed that he was going out to shoot a rabbit. Handing the firearm to the girl, however, he was said to have remarked that if she loved him she should "show guilty," but otherwise that she should shoot him. According to her statement to the police she then fired at him with fatal effect.

The firing of the gun was heard by Mrs. Evans, senior, and immediately the news was conveyed to the neighbours, who sent for the police. Deputy-chief-constable Williams, Police-inspector J. L. Rees, and Sergeant E. Thomas arrived on the scene, accompanied by Dr. J. Wilson Williams, from the surgery of Dr. Howard Davies. They found the body of Stokes lying in a pool of blood in the kitchen, and Dr. Williams declared life to be extinct. Inspector Rees arrested the girl and Sergeant Thomas took possession of the gun. The girl was conveyed to the Pontypridd Police-station in a motorcar by Deputy-Chief-Constable Williams and Inspector Rees, and the deceased was brought down to the town mortuary in another car by Dr. Williams and Sergeant Thomas. Stokes was shot in the back, and had bled to death.

Roberts had been in service at the farm since last November. Her stepfather, a man named Shearman, lived at Bargoed. She was described by Miss Knight, the Pontypridd Court Missionary, as a most respectable and industrious young woman,

and soon there had been several offers made to defend her. The Deputy-chief-constable quickly communicated with the Public Prosecutor.

### THE INQUEST

“I meant to save my honour”

A sensational story relative to the death of a farm labourer named Arthur Stokes (46), employed at the Penywal Farm, near Llanwonno, was disclosed at the inquest held by Mr. R. J. Rhys, Coroner, at the Pontypridd police court on Monday afternoon June 25th. Unusual interest was taken in the proceedings in as much as the death of Stokes was brought about by a shooting tragedy which occurred at the farm early on Saturday morning, and a little girl of 16, named Alice Roberts, a domestic servant employed at the Penywal Farm, is now in custody charged with shooting Stokes with a double-barreled breach loading gun. The farm is situated just a few miles out of Pontypridd on the road leading to Llanwonno.

The first witness called at the enquiry was the deceased's stepson, named William Morgan, of 3 William St, Gilfach, Bargoed. Witness gave evidence of identification and said that the deceased was his stepfather, age 46, and he worked as a farm labourer at the above farm. The last time he saw him was in November last. Evan Evans, landlord of the Penywal Farm said deceased had been employed by him for the past ten years with the exception of two intervals of six months each. The girl, Alice Roberts, had been in his service since November, 1916 and was 16 years of age last April. Witness went to Blaenllechau Farm on Friday and intended returning home between twelve and one o'clock the following day. The tragedy occurred before he returned. He kept his gun in the corner of the kitchen and the cartridges in the cupboard in the same room.

Coroner: “Did the people in the house know where you kept the gun and cartridges?” - Witness: “Yes.”

“Did Stokes ever use the gun?” - “Yes, to shoot a rabbit occasionally.” “Have you ever explained the workings of the gun to anyone there?” - “No, never.”

“Have you ever noticed anything unusual between the two persons. (Stokes and Roberts)?” - “No, nothing whatever. During the time the deceased and the girl had been in my service I did not notice any familiarity whatever, and during Roberts' service she had conducted herself with propriety. She was a well-mannered girl and I had nothing to complain about her.”

Mrs. Catherine Evans, wife of the previous witness said that she left the house five minutes to eight on Saturday morning for Pontypridd Market with milk. Alice Roberts was at the table having her breakfast when witness left and Stokes was coming into the house. He mother-in-law, who lived with them, was rather hard at hearing, and she was 69 years of age.

The Coroner: "What time do the servants usually get their breakfast?" - "About 8 o'clock."

"How has the girl conducted herself?" - "She had behaved very good until recently. She used to carry on with a boy of 17 in our employ, but nothing with Stokes. She had to speak to her some little time ago about carrying on with the boy in question."

"Have you ever seen anything between the deceased and the girl?" - "No, nothing whatsoever."

"You engaged Stokes for certain terms?" - "Yes."

"You engaged the girl Roberts before deceased returned last time?" - "Yes."

"Have you ever had trouble with Stokes?" - "No."

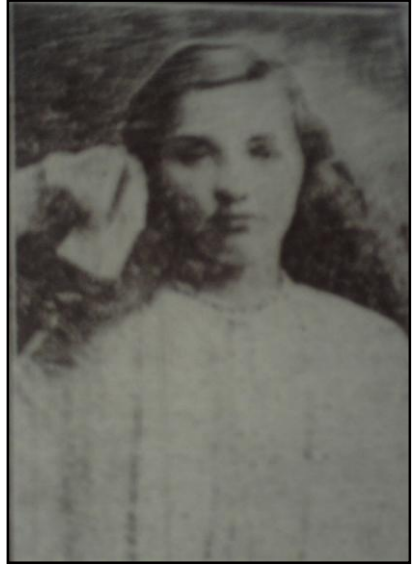
The Foreman (Mr. T. Jeremy): "Did you ask the girl why she shot Stokes?" - Witness: "No, I did not ask. It did not come to my mind." The Coroner said that they must remember that the old lady was upset.

Witness, replying to a further question, said that between the time she left the front kitchen until she returned would be about half-an-hour. Frederick Ball, the occupier of Hendre Farm, situated by the Penywal Farm said the girl Roberts came to his house about 8.30 on Saturday. She was very excited and said: "Oh, give me a drop of water," and witnesses wife asked her what was the matter. Roberts replied "Arthur has been at me again." At the same time Roberts covered her face with her hands and said, "I have shot him." Witness rushed to Penywal Farm and on going into the kitchen saw Stokes lying on the floor lifeless.

Lillian Alice Ball, wife of the previous witness, again testified that when the girl came to her on that Saturday morning her hair was hanging loose down her back. She appeared much upset. She said "Oh, let me in." Witness asked what was the matter, and Alice Roberts replied, "Oh, I can't tell you, something dreadful has happened, give me a drop of water." Witness said she turned to go into the house and the girl followed. She gave her water and Roberts then said: "Arthur has been at me again, I've shot him." She then cried bitterly.

The Coroner: "Did she tell you what else happened?" - Witness: "I went back to Penywal Farm with her and on the way she told me that Arthur had tried to insult her. He threw her down on the floor and tried to get over her, but she would not let him. She told him if he did not leave her alone she would run for a policeman. Arthur then got up and had a smoke and asked her to reach the gun and cartridge."

**Alice Roberts aged 14**  
**The defendant**



“She got the gun from the corner of the kitchen and a cartridge from the cupboard in the same room and gave them to him. She thought he was going to shoot a rabbit. Arthur then gave her the gun and showed her the way to use it, and said: ‘If you love me show guilty, if not shoot me,’ and she shot him.”

“Are you quite sure about that?” - “Oh, yes, quite sure.”

“Had the girl ever complained to you before about the conduct of Stokes?” - “Yes, several times.” “Lately?” - “Yes, last Friday night, the night before the tragedy.”

“What did she complain of?” - “I had occasion to go to the Penywal Farm on the previous Wednesday to fetch milk and Alice told me Stokes got into her bedroom. She was then asleep. When she woke up, Stokes was on the bed. She called out and deceased put his hands over her mouth. Stokes got off the bed and got under the bed. He afterwards cleared out of the room and she bolted the door. Witness asked her if she had complained to her mistress and Alice replied “Yes, she had.”

Dr. John Wilson Williams said he reached the Penywal Farm at 10.45 a.m. on Saturday. Stokes had been dead about two hours. He then examined the body and found a wound on the right side of the body in line with the twelfth rib. It was a circular wound, about two inches in diameter. He found two wads in the wound and could feel shot amongst the right kidney, which had been shattered, as well as the

lower part of the right lung. The eleventh and twelfth ribs were broken and there was a partial fracture of the dorsal vertebra. There was a large quantity of blood on the floor. Death was due to Hemorrhage from gunshot.

Police Sergt. Edward Thomas said he reached the Penywal Farm at 10 a.m. and Mrs. Evans, the old lady, handed him the gun (produced). There was a spent cartridge in the left barrel, and the right barrel being empty. In the cupboard he found a box containing nine live Kynoch cartridges.

Mrs. Ellen Evans, the old lady, was recalled and asked if Alice Roberts had done up her hair that morning? Mrs. Evans said that it was done up, but it was not done up tidy.

The coroner: "Was it hanging down her back?" - "Oh no, it was done up some shape on her head."

The Coroner in summing up, remarked that the case was an extraordinary one. The evidence showed that the girl (Alice Roberts) was molested by the deceased quite recently and reading between the lines they could see another feature in the case. The girl's mistress had spoken to her with reference to her conduct towards her servant boy in the same employ, who was of her own age. Continuing, the Coroner said that he quite understood that the girl would be more attracted by the boy servant of her own age and there might be some jealousy on the part of the deceased man. It seemed to him that it was their duty, without making a mountain out of the case, to commit the poor girl to take her trial at the next Assizes. The jury retired and on returning brought in a verdict of "Wilful Murder."

### **Before the magistrates**

On Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> when Alice Roberts appeared before the magistrates, she was remanded in order that the case might be prepared as it had been referred to the Public Prosecutor, and further remands saw the date put back until July 11<sup>th</sup>.

The accused was been brought up from the Cardiff Gaol in a motor car in the charge of two wardresses. The bench consisted of Mr. William Jones (in the chair), Messrs. Hopkin Morgan, William Phillips, John Evans and Ben Davies. The court was crowded with people interested on the case, who had been patiently awaiting admittance long before the court opened. Mr. W. P. Nicholas, of the firm of Messrs. Morgan, Bruce and Nicholas, appeared for the Public Prosecutor, and Mr. T. J. Thomas, solicitor, Bargoed, represented the accused, who sat in the dock in the charge of two wardresses, and appeared to be in good health and spirits.

Mrs. Ellen Evans, Penywal Farm, said she lived at the farm with her son, and was a widow of 69 years of age. Her son was the tenant of both Penywal and Hendre Rhys, but Mrs. Ball lived in the latter house. At Penywal there lived witness, her



son and daughter-in-law (Evan and Catherine Evans), three young children, and prior to the tragedy three servants, the deceased man Stokes, Alice Roberts, and a boy, Windsor Llewellyn.

She testified as she did during the inquest, adding that when she heard the shot she returned from the kitchen she saw Stokes on the ground with blood pouring from him. There was a slight movement of his left hand. She found the gun on a little table by the window, with the stock towards the window. She picked it up and placed it between the chest of drawers, and near the cupboard, where it was normally kept.

Mrs. Ball testified that Alice had arrived at the Hendre Farm and confessed to shooting the deceased, and of having already warned him that he did not leave her alone she would send for the police. Roberts had told her that Stokes had asked for the gun, which she gave to him and he then asked for a cartridge, which she did. She said she thought he was going to shoot a rabbit, but gave her the gun and showed her how to use it. He afterwards said that if she did not love him she should shoot him, which she did. The prisoner had complained to Mrs. Ball about Stokes when she had gone to the Penywal Farm for some milk on the Friday before

Mrs. Ball, Hendre Farm testified that she saw the accused on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> coming across the fields, and on reaching her she said: "Oh, let's come in." She asked her what was the matter, and she replied "I can't tell you, but something dreadful has happened. Give me a drop of water." She gave the girl water and she began to cry. Witness asked: "What is the matter?" And the girl put her hand over her face and said "Arthur has been at me again. I shot him." She cried bitterly. Witness commenced her journey to Penywal Farm and on the way the girl told her that Arthur had molested her and that she had told him that if he did not leave her alone she would run and tell the police. She said: "He asked me for the gun. I gave him the gun and he asked me for a cartridge. I gave it to him. I thought he was going to shoot a rabbit, but he gave me the gun and showed me how to use it. He afterwards said, "If you love me, show guilty; if not, shoot me," and, she said, "I shot him."

The prisoner had complained to Mrs. Ball about the conduct of the deceased on the Friday night before the tragedy when she went to the farm for milk. "The girl told me how Stokes was in her bedroom on Wednesday night. She said she was asleep when he came into the room and sat on the bed. She shouted. He put his hand over her mouth. The little boy, who was sleeping with her, woke, and began to cry. Stokes, who was on the bed, got off and went under the bed, and in a few minutes went. She got up and locked the door."

She continued: "She said he went away on Thursday morning because she had threatened to tell her mistress about him. She said she told him she would not stay there, and he said: - "Don't go away. I will go away for a couple of days, and I will come back again for my box."

Witness added that she returned to Penywal Farm in the evening and told Mrs. Evans about the man, Stokes, and Alice was present. Mrs. Evans said it was the first she had heard of it and that no sort of complaint had been made to her.

Police-sergeant Thomas deposed to going to the farm in company with Deputy Chief-constable John Williams and Inspector J. L. Rees. He found deceased lying on the floor as described and the accused in back-kitchen. Witness examined the gun and found it to be a double-barreled breech-loader. In the left barrel he found the empty cartridge (produced) and in the cupboard he found a box of cartridges.

Inspector J. L. Rees said that about 9.30 a. m. in the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Inst. in consequence of what came to his knowledge, and in company with others visited Penywal Farm. In the kitchen he found the dead body of Arthur Stokes, a farm hand, 46 years of age, who was in the employ of Mr. Evans. The body was lying face downwards, inclined to the right, with the right arm bent under the side of the body. There was a pool of blood on the floor in which the body was lying. In the back-kitchen they saw the accused sitting down, and of what came to his knowledge he arrested her and charged her for that she, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June, at Penywal farm, with malice aforethought, did kill and murder Arthur Stokes, by shooting him with a gun. He cautioned her, and in reply she said:

"I did it for my own good. I mean to save my honour. As soon as breakfast was over, he caught hold of me, squeezed me, and kissed me. The master had gone away last night. The missus had gone to town and Mrs. Evans, the master's mother, who is hard at hearing, was in the back-kitchen. He caught hold of me and threw me on the floor, and commenced to raise my clothes. I told him that if he did not get off I would run down and fetch the policemen. I struggled with him until my hair got loose down my back. He got up and got out his pipe to smoke. He then asked me to reach the gun. I did so. He then asked me to reach a cartridge. I gave him the gun and fetched a cartridge from the cupboard. I thought he was going to kill a rabbit. He then loaded the gun. He did not shut it, I shut it. It was standing by the window, and he was by the armchair. He then said, 'If you love me show guilty; if not, shoot me.' He told me to pull back the trigger. I pulled it and shot him. Then he groaned and fell down. He had interfered with me before, and I complained to Mrs. Ball, a neighbour, about his conduct. After I shot him, I ran and told Mrs. Evans, and I ran to Mrs. Ball's house and told her."

At the close of the evidence, Alice Roberts was asked what she had to say, and she said: "I say nothing, I am not guilty." She was thereupon committed for trial. Mr. T. J. Thomas formerly applied for bail, but Mr. W. P. Nicholas said that it was a unheard thing on a capital charge. The girl was then removed by the wardresses and subsequently conveyed back to Cardiff.

### **The plight of Alice and her father**

The plight of Alice Roberts and her father, and the legal bill they were likely to face touched the heart of the South Wales public and soon they were coming forward to assist. The 'South Wales Echo' of July 7<sup>th</sup> 1917 reported: - The committee of the Pontypridd and District Police Court Mission to Women and Children at their meeting on July 3<sup>rd</sup> passed the following resolution: -

*"That we unanimously desire to show our sympathy and support with the appeal for funds being made for the legal assistance of Alice Roberts, now committed to the Assizes, and open the local subscription list by contributing £2 -2s. We shall be pleased to receive any sums from those wishing to show practical sympathy in this case." Please send subscriptions to: - The Treasurer, c/o Mrs. Lewis, 13, The Crescent, Pontypridd*

*Signed on behalf of the committee  
D. Roberts Rosser (Chairman)  
Mr. J. Lewis (Hon. superintendent)  
S. Scudamore (Treasurer)*

The South Wales Echo newspaper had already begun their own fund and money started to flow in. The same newspaper carried a list of donations, many of them wishing to remain anonymous.

Previously acknowledged	11s - 0d
Father & mother of four daughters	2s - 0d
Mrs. F. E. J.	10s - 0d
An admirer	10s - 0d
Another woman	5s - 0d
Nat. Union of Railway Woman's Guild	10s - 6d
A.M.T.	5s - 0d
M. Williams	1s - 0d
J. A. H.	2s - 0d
Total	<u>£3-1s-6d</u>

The follow day subscriptions by 'Mothers and Daughters' of Crumlin; three Swansea maids, and others raised the total by 7s-6d. Daily the amount rose. On the 10<sup>th</sup> to £4-7-0., and on the eleventh to £9-17s-3d

On July 13<sup>th</sup> Mr. Bryn Davies, Secretary of the Great Western Lodge of the South Wales Miners Federations announced that a collection would take place at the colliery offices soon in aid of the defence of Alice Roberts. The following day the '*Echo Fund*' reached £12-0s-3d, while Mrs. Lewis, Pontypridd, stated that the sum of £22-16s-8d had been collected by the Pontypridd Police Court Mission to Woman and Children.

The following week the cash still poured in and donations from people such as: - Pwllglwlaw sympathisers; Sympathizers in Hancock's Mineral Dept; Aberkenfig; Nurse Cole, Pengam; Pity; and many, many others, and by Monday July 25<sup>th</sup>, the '*Echo Fund*' had reached £94-3s-10d. The same day the South Wales Echo published the following letter: -

#### **Fund brought to a halt**

We are requested to state that the committee constituted at Bargoed to administer the funds created for the defence of Alice Roberts have appointed Mr. Walter Lewis, J. P., miners agent, Bargoed, as secretary. The committee have come to the conclusion that sufficient money has now been collected and that the fund should now be closed. All moneys should be forwarded to Mr. Lewis, and made payable to the Rev. D. Leyshon Evans, Bargoed, as treasurer of the fund. When the accounts are closed the committee will issue a statement to the public giving details of the receipts and expenditure.

The total sent from the Pontypridd Police Court Mission to Woman and Children for £94-11-7d was quickly sent, but even as late as August 13<sup>th</sup> two weeks after the case at the assizes, the Woman's Co-operative Guild sent £25-12s-10d collected at its various branches.

#### **Alice Roberts' trial at the assizes**

Alice Roberts, domestic servant, appeared in the dock a week later to answer an indictment for the murder of Arthur Stokes at Pontypridd on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917. The prisoner, a bright-eyed girl, wore a woolen Tam-o'-Shanter cap and her hair hung in curls down her back, and seemed but a child.

Much of the evidence was the same as had been given before the Coroner and magistrates at Pontypridd. Lilian Ball, however, under cross-examination stated

that Penywal Farm was an out-of-the-way spot and that the prisoner did not have many friends, but that she had considered her a good friend. She stated that Stokes was short, but was not sure he was strong. She had told Mrs. Evans on June 22<sup>nd</sup> of the bedroom incident as Roberts told her, and that Alice had complained to her about Stokes before. Stokes had apparently asked Alice Roberts when she was 16, and he had said that he would 'have her' in the same position as the last girl. The last girl had been in 'a certain position' when she left the farm and was about to take out an affiliation summons against the deceased. She had also heard there had been complaints from other girls working at the farm.

### **Final statements**

Mr. Llewelyn Williams then addressing the jury for the prosecution, said if the jury had any doubt they must give the prisoner the benefit of it, but the prosecution submitted that they had made out their case.

For the defence Mr. Ivor Bowen said the case was so simple that there could be only one verdict - 'Not Guilty.' Would the jury rest at night if they convicted the girl of anything under the circumstances? The law had long established that a girl could defend her honour, and he (Mr. Bowen) pictured her terrified at Stokes's conduct, and did what any other woman would have done, and which a woman was entitled to do. If it was not an unlawful act, neither murder nor manslaughter arose in the case, and he asked the jury to say there was the slightest doubt that the girl used the gun to protect her honour. In doing so she might very well have pulled the trigger by accident.

### **The verdict**

The judge, Mr. Justice Sankey, in summing up, said the gun might have gone off accidentally. For a woman her virtue was a pearl of a great price, and it belonged as such to a humble servant as to a Queen on the throne. A woman was entitled to defend her honour, and when her honour was attempted and she killed a person, then it was not murder, it was justifiable homicide. If she did it in defence of her virtue, the jury could say she was justified. The jury then retired and shortly returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty.'

The funeral of Arthur Stokes took place at the Glyntaff Cemetery on Tuesday, June 26th. The Rev. A. H. Thomas, curate of St. Catherine's Church officiated. The chief mourners were Messrs. William and Thomas Morgan, stepbrothers and Mr. Evan Evans, Penywal Farm, was also present.



You would have thought the after spending 12 months in jail, he would have learned his lesson, but apparently not.

The author, while looking through documents he had compiled some years ago, came across the following story about Dan Thomas, owner of several small collieries, including the Pwllgwaun Colliery, who had been the unofficial lightweight boxing champion of the world, but who had packed in the fight game and taken to religion: - On another occasion while walking home from Carmel Baptist Chapel one Sunday through Mill street, Dan Thomas was accosted by a notorious character known as 'Brecon Tom,' who had served a sentence of imprisonment for manslaughter. Brecon Tom, a big and powerful man, asked him jeeringly "Where was the text today, Dan?" Dan Thomas walked up to him and said quietly: - "Ill give you a week to think it over Tom. I shall be coming home from chapel through Mill Street next Sunday. If you will meet me here then and ask me the same question in the same way I'll give you a text that you will never forget as long as ever you live." The following Sunday, when Dan walked home from chapel Brecon Tom was nowhere to be seen.

## PWLLGWAUN GIRL'S FLIRTATION

Tuesday, Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1920.

### Jilted lover commits suicide - Pathetic farewell letter

Saturday, Sept. 25th, 1920

Dear Ada,

*Now that I know that I can't have you I am putting an end to it all, by the time you get this letter I will be in another world out of your way. Ada, if only you had not told me that you loved me, but that you were only going with me for a pastime, and that when you were tired you were going to throw me over I should not have learn to love you so much. As it is, I think the world of you. I'd do anything for you. I'd have worked night and day for you and given you every penny I earned, if you'd have let me.*

*You have made a mess of my life so I can't stand it any longer. I love you with all my heart and soul - better than life itself. I have tried to forget, but I cannot. This last two months (it seems like years) I've been thinking of you all day and cannot sleep at night. I hope you will be happy with the boy you are with now, and I hope he will be good to you.*

*There is just one thing more. I should like to ask you Ada. You have got a good home and a good father and mother, and you really ought to appreciate the fact that your mother has worked for you, has bought that piano, music stool, and paid pounds for you to learn. You do not know how your mother worries over you. Now, for my sake, for the sake of one who loves you so much, that is going to blow his brains out rather than go through life without you, be a good girl, Ada. Think things well over and do as your parents wish, never mind what it is. They are older than you and know better than us youngsters.*

*Your mother advice to me was that if you did not listen to reason and wanted to flirt about, not to do anything rash, but the last couple of months, I know I can't do that. I can't stop in Pontypridd or anywhere else and hear the though of you going out with other chaps. If you would only have said, yes, and come back to me, I had a nice surprise for you. My father made me a present of £650 Housing Bond, that means that I could go and buy a house to that value anywhere, and that is a big thing today. We could have been comfortable on £5-5s a week. And I had a little money besides, enough to get married, on a month's notice. But I wanted you to give your answer first, as I didn't want to go with me again for what I've got. I wanted you to think that you were going with me because you loved me. You did*



*love me because you've said so many a time when I've held you in my arms and you've put your arms around my neck, and kissed me so passionately. You used to lift up your lips to mine and smile at me with those lovely eyes of yours. By God, Ada, I was in paradise.*

*The way we used to go to Church together on a Sunday night, we were both as happy as a couple of kids. But since Miss Davies left the hall you have been quite different, you would never dream of looking at a chap then, and always did what your mother and father told you. My mother and father and relations like and think a lot of you Ada, and as your father and mother think something of me, we could have been so happy together. I wish I could have had a last good-bye kiss off you. But as you didn't speak this afternoon up the house, I kissed your photo on the piano. Good-bye Ada, and God bless you. You are the only girl I have ever, or ever will, really love, and I will leave this world with your name on my lips. Your Brokenhearted Sweetheart,*

*Joe x x x*

The above letter was received on Saturday evening, Sept.-25th 1920, by Miss Ada Jones, of Lee Street, Pwllgwaun from Joseph Henry Ball, an electrician from Common Road, Pontypridd, who was found dead at the rear of Lee Street, about 1 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1920. Deceased have been keeping company with Miss Ada Jones but, as though by mutual consent, ceased to do so about a month ago. In the meantime the young lady had been seen walking out with another young man. It is stated that Ball had a brief conversation with her on Saturday evening last. On Monday night he was in company with her brother until 10.45, but gave no hint of his intending to commit suicide. Miss Ada Jones stated that she had become afraid of him because once or twice he had threatened to do away with himself and she had become aware that he carried a loaded revolver.

Early on Tuesday morning the Pwllgwaun residents were startled by the report of a revolver shot. P.C. Tarr was immediately called and on going to the lane between Pwllgwaun Road and Lee Street, picked up Ball just as he was breathing his last. Ball had been shot with a German automatic pistol, the bullet entering just above the right ear and coming out over the left eye. The tragedy happened at the back entrance to the young woman's residence. Dr. Macdonald was sent for but could only pronounce life extinct. Later the body was removed to the residence of his parents.

#### LETTER TO PARENTS

On the body was found a letter addressed to his father and mother which reads:

*Dear Mam and Dad*

*Please try and forgive me for what I have done and don't think bad of me. God knows how I have lived this last two months. I have lost the girl whom I love with all my heart and soul - better than life itself. I'd have been a burden to everybody. I've been as miserable as anything. I can't eat my food, I cry myself to sleep every night. I've tried to keep smiling and not show anything in the house but the last two months I've been going through hell.*

*I am not afraid to die and death will be glorious, as I can't stop here and see the girl I love with someone else. I've always treated her with respect and I hope she will have a good boy who will treat her with the same respect that I did. I wanted to go to lodge at Aber or Caerphilly, but you would not let me, but where ever I was I could not stick it much longer. Goodbye and bless you and all.*

*Don't worry over me as I will be in a better place and I'll be better off by the time you get this.*

*Your brokenhearted son  
Joe x x x*

#### The inquest

Mr. David Rees, coroner, held an inquest on the body of the deceased at the Pontypridd Police station on Wednesday evening. The father of the deceased stated that his son, whom he saw on the previous Sunday evening, appeared to be all right, and there was nothing abnormal about his general condition.

P.C. Tarr stated that he found deceased with bullet wounds in his head, lying in a pool of blood. About 12 inches from his right hand there was a German automatic pistol containing a spent cartridge case. There were two live cartridges in his pocket. In reply to Mr. W. F. Hammond who appeared for the relatives of Ball, witness said he understood that deceased had been left-handed since birth.

David George Ball, brother of the deceased, said he brought the pistol from France, and it had been kept in the cellar. Two months ago he heard deceased crying, and then asked if there was anything troubling him, he mention the name of Miss Ada Jones, Lee St; with whom he had been keeping company. William Jones, brother of Miss Ada Jones, stated that when he last saw deceased he seemed to be quite jolly.

## **Ada Jones Cross-examined**

Ada Jones, question by Mr. Hammond stated the previous to August Bank Holiday she agreed to become engaged to Ball, and a ring was ordered with her consent. Later, however, she said she would not become engaged. On being questioned by Mr. Hammond she stated that she had suddenly changed her mind because her parents did not approve of him. A man named Butcher came home on Furlough (leave of absence) from the Navy and gave her a ring as a present, which she sometimes wore on her engagement finger. When Butcher returned to the Navy she sometimes walked out with a man named Bloomer. Mr. Hammond said that the cause of all the trouble was that she flirted with other boys, to which she replied that she had told deceased that she did not want to marry him.

Mr. Hammond: - "Well, what did he mean when he wrote like this": - "I know that you do not mean me any harm. If you had not told me that you loved me and that you were going out with me for a pastime and would have thrown me over later I would not have learned to love you so much."

Jones replied: "He told me that he did not think of loving any other girl as he had his mind on his business." She had given Butcher his ring back last Friday. Bloomer had not given her a ring, and she was surprised that Ball had shot himself.

## **Coroner's summing up**

The Coroner in his summing up, said that there seemed to be no doubt that the young man had intended to commit suicide. Probably if deceased had lived another six months he would have found that the feelings he had were not permanent, and he would have found another girl. In justice to Miss Jones he might say that a girl had the right to change her own mind with regard to a young man who was going with her. It was quite evident from the fact that she did not actually become engaged to deceased that she was not a very willing partner, and it was far better for a girl to change her mind than to marry and regret it afterwards. There might be an excuse and a justification for the fact that Miss Jones did not tell Ball's parents about what he had threatened to do, because she may not have thought he was really serious in what he said.

A verdict of "Suicide during temporary insanity" was returned. Deceased had served in the Army on France and was regarded by his intimate friends as a particularly steady young man. His parents were held in high respect in the district and general sympathy was felt for them.

