

(HIGH ST STUDIO  
 COWBRIDGE, but  
 especially Ewenny  
 Rd, Bridgend)

Subj: **Edwin Miles**  
 Date: 19/11/2008 11:01:20 GMT Standard Time  
 From: [REDACTED]  
 To: [REDACTED]

Dear Michael,

I very much enjoyed our phone conversation on Sunday. I am grateful to Graham Evans for putting me in touch with you and sending me scans of a selection of the postcards.. I was very interested to hear of your postcard collection and detailed knowledge of my great grandfather's photographic work.

The family history in brief:

1. Edwin's only living descendants are through his eldest son, Edwin Albert (1894 -1924). They comprise EA's elder son, Norman, his two daughters and their 4 children, and my two sisters and I who are the children of EA's younger son, Geoffrey. My sisters and I have 8 children between us. The Miles name survives only through me and my son.
2. EE was born in Bristol, the only child of Joseph and Sarah (nee Sowdon) Miles. Sarah Sowdon's father's family were from near Tavistock, Devon, and her mother's family from Somerset. EE's mother died of TB when EE was only a few months old and Joseph soon remarried - confusingly to another Sarah. The family moved to Llantarnam sometime before 1881. The family story is that EE disliked his stepmother and left home at 13. Eventually he became a signman on the Great Western Railway, first at St George's super Ely and later I believe at Bridgend. His wife, Mary Emma Thomas, was the daughter of Albert Thomas, a signman at Llantrisant. Presumably the older man took a liking to EE and introduced him to his daughter. Albert was originally from "Little England beyond Wales" and spoke only English. EE and Mary Emma had 7 children, 2 of whom died in infancy. Mary Emma lived well into her 90s and I remember meeting her at Kenfig Hill in the late 50s where she lived with her younger surviving daughter.
3. EE was successful in business, much like his ancestors in Calne I imagine. He was active in the Territorial Army, the Boy Scouts, Hope Baptist Chapel and the local Masonic lodge. He served in the Army during WW1, first in the Welsh Regiment and latterly in the RASC where he was commissioned. The family story is that he was considered too old to be sent to France to die! He served in the UK and India. His son, EA, worked with him in the photography business and is the young man in the attached picture. He may also be seen in some of the postcards. EA was a photographer and amateur artist. EA joined the Glamorgan Yeomanry during December 1915, his first taste of action being at Dublin where he was stationed with a training unit at the time of the Easter Rising. EA later served on the Western Front where he was wounded twice and awarded the Military Medal. During 1918 he was captured by the Germans and spent some time in a POW camp. EA married Bronwen Davies (the family is known as "Cross-Inn") of Cefn Cribwr and started his own photography business. Soon after EA developed TB and died during 1924. As you know, EE continued in business, I believe with his second son Joe, until his death in 1929. As an aside, both EE and EA were keen motorcyclists.
4. EE's father Joseph was born in Calne, Wilts, where his father Edwin, uncles Henry and William and grandfather Thomas were all master tailors. Thomas and his siblings were born at Carshalton, Surrey, and the family moved to Calne sometime before the late 1790s. Both Thomas and Edwin married into Wiltshire yeoman families whose trees can be traced back for centuries. Joseph's father died at 39 of TB, the young Joseph and his sisters being raised by their grandfather, Thomas, until his death in 1858. At this the family was split up, the girls going into service and Joseph becoming an apprentice basket maker. He followed this trade as a journeyman in Bristol. Later he moved to Llantarnam where he worked as a warehouseman, perhaps at the ironworks. Joseph eventually moved back to Bristol where he died in 1912. He is buried there with his second wife.

The attached picture seems to be a page from a trade directory. It was given to me by my great uncle Reg, EE's youngest son. The other side of the page has display adverts (not photos) for other local businesses - Ewenny Pottery and an auctioneer. I don't have a date, but imagine it's about 1909.

I have some postcard (inevitably!) sized prints of EE which I'll scan and send to you. I only have one postcard, that of a GWR express at speed probably from the first decade of the 1900s. I'll scan and send them to you, either on photographic paper or JPEG files. If you'd like more family history, I can easily produce a longer version with a family tree.

I'd very much like to see your collection which must have taken you many years of work. The Glamorgan

Record Office sells digital images from its collection of his glass negatives (I think the National Museum may have others), but it'll be more interesting to see the postcards made by him. Three of my grandparents came from within 5 miles or so of Bridgend so it's possible that some of the scenes will be of particular interest.

Kind regards,

Vivian