

Mrs Mary Morgan, Breach Farm, Llanblethian

Mary Morgan and her husband have farmed in the Vale all their lives, and have lived in Marlborough Grange (half the property, which was divided into two), then for nearly 30 years at Breach. It is a Grade 2 listed building, built in 1650, with Glamorgan /Tudor front porch, and side porch – Mary is very interested in the history of the building and the families who lived there, but would love more warmth, light and comfort than she feels it affords! They now concentrate only on fattening up cattle to sell on (went to Abergavenny market yesterday, for example, to buy in). Marlborough and Breach were owned by Glamorgan Council and were sold off to farmers some years ago.

She was visited recently by a Mr Dickinson of Swindon who had acquired an ancient book (the 1776 journal of Miss Ann Williams of Breach) and had called to investigate Breach farm whilst visiting Cardiff. Unfortunately he did not show her the contents of the journal, but she has given him my address in the hope he passes on some details.

Ann Williams was born November 5th 1740 and was buried in Llysworney church November 18th 1795 aged 55. She was one of the children of John Williams and wife Mary, who were married in Llanblethian 30/11/1721. (He was the son of Henry Williams of Llanishen, Gent., and she the daughter of Thomas Jenkins of Stembridge, Gent.) There is information about the Williams family in Stewart Williams's book, Volume 2 of the Vale of Glamorgan series, and in the source book of 'Cowbridge Buildings and People', Cowbridge Record Society publication.

Mary was born in Craig Penllyn, her father being away in World War 2 and her mother having moved to live there, at Reed Cottage, with her mother, and then her sister. After the war, the family returned to their former home in Colwinston till Mary was 9. Her father then took work on the St Athan RAF camp, and they moved to Llanmaes. Mary went to school on the camp and did not enjoy being in such a large establishment (different from her former village school in Colwinston), where friends were continually moving away. She finished her education in Llantwit Major secondary modern school. She always wanted to farm and work with cattle.

Her mother worked in Colwinston for Matthew Pritchard's grandmother at Pwll yr Wrach, until her marriage. Mary's father was Dinlle Jones, from North Wales, one of 11 children. The family had moved south for work, and came first to Castellau near Beddau (his father had a smallholding as well as working as a miner, and his mother had cleaning work and walked regularly to Pontypridd market to sell eggs, butter etc.). Then they lived in Tonyrefail, then to the Merthyr Mawr estate near Llampha (Pentrehwt).

Mary's grandparents were Frank and Mary Katherine Gane, and feature in the Penllyn book (page 126). Frank was a woodcutter, descended from Albin Gane who had moved to this area from Glastonbury, Somerset. She remembers them well and has photographs of them. Frank worked for the Homfrays at Penllyn Castle and they lived in Mead Cottage, which came with the job. Mary has Frank's account and minutes book (1920s) of Penllyn village meetings.

Betty Alden, September 2013