

Interview with Mrs Enfys Brown, Windmill Lane, Cowbridge

(September 12th 2013)

Enfys (with daughter Jane) lives in the same bungalow she moved into with her late husband, Alan Brown (one of the Brown the printer's twins) in 1956 when they married.

The land was owned by Vivien and Arthur Gwyn (solicitor bothers), Vivien living in Trem y Glyn, Windmill Lane (now demolished and two modern houses built), and Arthur in Bryn y Fro, just below Windmill Lane on Broadway Hill, which he built.

Arthur built the bungalow now lived in by Enfys (post-war, the first on the right on entering the lane), and Vivien the one next door but one. Gerald Walker (of Gaskill and Walker's solicitors) built the bungalow next door, and so the lane became known as 'Chancery Lane'!

Arthur Glyn and his wife lived in Enfys's bungalow in their retirement years, and when he died and Mrs Glyn moved to Cardiff, a Charlie Farmer, photographer, moved in. Enfys and Alan followed. There was very little building going on in Cowbridge at that time – just some houses on the south side of Broadway. Enfys has not changed the bungalow since the '50s, other than emulsions over the wallpaper. She believes it was the Farmers who installed the marble-effect fireplace in the living room and wall-papered throughout.

Enfys's grandfather was Owen Jones, a north-Walian, who was the minister of Ramoth chapel in Cowbridge. Her father (Morgan Howell Jones) and her aunt grew up in Cowbridge therefore, but he travelled on the train daily to Pontypridd for his education, as the Grammar School here did not accept non-conformists at that time. Enfys's maternal grandfather farmed at Newton, and his family's schooling was at the Eagle Academy, as that educated children of farmers.

When Enfys's parents married, they moved to Treforest, where her father worked for the Midland Bank. In the 1920s, when Enfys was 4, he became manager of the Midland Bank in Cowbridge, and they lived in Llwyn Celyn, 77 High St – managers of this bank did not live on the premises as they did at Barclays opposite. Enfys's close friend was Judy Watts, who lived in West House across the road up Westgate. They went to Bontfaen primary school together, walking there, returning for lunch, then walking back again for afternoon lessons. They often played in a beautiful hedge on Broadway where the council houses have been built. If it was pouring with rain, Enfys's father got his car out to take them. It was garaged in the land behind the Midland Bank, where the St Quentin's Suite of the Bear hotel has now been built – the land was shared with Oakley House, 59 High St. Enfys recalls picking apples in that garden, and throwing them up at the windows of the Bear ballroom where soldiers were billeted during the war.

She remembers 'lovely fires' in Bontfaen school. Two Miss Mileses taught there (sisters, but at separate times. Their father was Johnson Miles, a prominent Labour councillor. The Head was Mr Sloman, and Miss Gwynneth Thomas ran Standard 5. Enfys

grew to like her very much, but can remember her hitting her and Judy when dissatisfied with their mental arithmetic. She was nicknamed 'Loudspeaker'. Mr Frederick taught Standard 2 – he built the solitary house on the Aberthin road just past the present comprehensive school. Enfys left school at age 10 and went as a boarder to Howells School, Cardiff until it suffered bomb damage in January 1941 (it was impossible to get there by public transport on a daily basis for 9 a.m). Then she had to take the bus in daily. She took her School Certificate in 1941, and went on to study pharmacy, working in the Glaxo laboratories in Middlesex. She gave up work on her marriage.

Town and parliamentary elections were big events. Everyone went to the Town Hall for the results. They were made known in the Mayor's Parlour, but then the candidates filed up the front steps in order of election votes to a big party atmosphere - sing songs etc (led by Billy).

Jim the cooper lived next door to her family on High St, and her mother used to take him Sunday lunch. He had very dark hair. Eddie John owned all the sheds there and stored his corn and grain there. He used the Spread Eagle, on the corner of Westgate as his offices.

She cannot remember what year the town had its main sewerage system, but recalls it was a very hot summer. Angela Morgan (Eastfield House) had a son working as a 'navvy' on the system.

Betty Alder.
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