

Rock House and Darren, Cowbridge

1742 /1745 Lease for lives claimed by Cecil, Florence and Elizabeth Jenkins messuage and lands called darren *D/D Ed*

1746 Assignment and redemption of mortgage for £420 to Anne Howard and £70 to Evan Jenkins.

Ann Howard of Llysworney, spinster to Joseph Morgan of Cowbridge, mercer, to the use of Nathaniel Taynton of Cowbridge gent. and Thomas Edmond of Cowbridge gent.- much land and property in Cowbridge, including a messuage and parcel of land (three quarters of an acre) called the darren in the occupation of William Thomas, undertenant to CF and E Jenkins, spinsters, adjoining east the lands of Piers Cornish Esq., south the public highway, west and north the lands of John Jones

D/D Ed 1-3

1779: 'Cottage in the waste' *Dunraven estate map*

1783: John Reynold for the Lord Cardiff, the Darren - grant for 3 lives (2 ½ burgages) *Burgage rents #170*

1790: The Darren House, now in occupation of John Reynolds, shoemaker, with pigsty and garden *B/Cow 137*

1806-16: Marquis of Bute, o, J Reynolds, occ, Cottage by *Grant* *Burgage rents #170*

1824: David Reynolds tenant, cottage and garden at the Darran *Bute Terrier*

1824: Lease, Marquis of Bute to David Reynolds of Penllyne shoemaker – all that cottage situate at the Darren in the borough of Cowbridge, with 12p of ground (part of the garden at the Darren), now occupied by Thomas Evan, for lives of said David R, Alice R, wife, and David R their son

Deeds

1833: Marquis of Bute, owned, J Reynolds occ, cottage by grant *Burgage rents #170*

1843: Corporation of Cowbridge, owned, Thomas Lewis, occupied *Tithe*

("claimed by D Reynolds by lease from Lord Bute") *B/Cow 192*

1851: William Rees, occupier, aged 45, kitchen gardener, b St Donats + wife Sarah, 34, b Aberkenfig + William, son, 12, b Llanblethian + Mary, daughter, 6, b Llanblethian + Edward Williams, lodger, 27, agricultural labourer b Penllyn *Census#17*

1861: William Rees, 55, agric labourer + wife Sarah + Mary *Census#121*

1871: William Rees + Sarah *Census#135*

1881: William Rees, 77, general labourer, + Sarah (70) *Census#1*

1888: Conveyance, Marquess of Bute to Henry Preston of St Hilary carpenter – messuage now in occ of David Reynolds or his undertenants *Deeds*

1891: Richard Lewis, 69, mason, b Cowbridge + Margaret Lewis, 70, b St Donats, John Lewis, son, 29, mason b Llantwit Major *Census#9*

1901: Conveyance, Henry Preston of St Hilary, carpenter, to Henry Trott of Cowbridge, coal merchant, and his wife Ann, all that ruinous messuage, now and for some time past

unoccupied *Deeds*
(*Henry and Ann Trott, from North Petherton, Somerset lived in West Toll Gate house in 1881 - he a labourer, she the toll gate collector*)

1901: Agreement, David Reynolds of the PO, Penllyne, and Henry Preston of St Hilary (David Reynolds the younger in consideration of said Henry Preston releasing him from all claims to arrears of rent or repairs acknowledges the right of Henry Preston to take possession)

Deeds

1903: New house built

Deeds

1903: Agreement between John Bond of West End, haulier, and Ann and Henry Trott, latter having recently erected the dwelling house, re eaves and down pipes encroaching on to Bond's land

Deeds

1910: W Jenkins, occ, A King, owned *Record of Valuations, D/D PRO/VAL/1/46*

1912: Mortgage, Mrs Ann King and Eagle Lane, Cowbridge, (wife of William King, grazier) and Oddfellows lodge of Penlline, parcel of land with house called Rock House, now unocc but recently occ Mr Thomas, cycle mechanic – recites Henry Trott and Ann Trott demolished the ruinous house and erected another; Henry Trott died

1908; Ann Trott married Wm King in 1909. Money repaid 1920

Deeds

1920: Conveyance, Ann King of 1 Eagle Lane to Thomas Whitney of Folly Farm, Llb – house now occupied by George Richard Pickard

Deeds

1924: Conveyance, Thos Whitney To Gwendoline Yorwerth, wife of Thos Jenkin Yorwerth of 65 High St Cowbridge, house (46 Westgate) now occ by James Whitney

Deeds

1947: Probate of will of Gwendoline Yorwerth

Deeds

1954: Conveyance, WH Yorwerth and Judith O Evans to Emily Leigh of Rock House, 46 Westgate

Deeds

It would be interesting to find if one of the sub-tenants of the Reynolds family at the end of the 18th century was a Williams, an ostler at the Bear known as Ned the Ostler. David Jones of Wallington, the noted Vale historian of the 19th century said “he lived in the cottage at the foot of the Darran Hill, and his wife was a decent handywoman who was famous for her teacakes and crumpets which she sold about town : she was called Nancy the Darran.” Their daughter, Margaret, went into service with the Paulls at Great House, Llanblethian and there sat in with the children of the house at their lessons, and picked up so much knowledge that she became the nursery governess. She eventually became governess to the only daughter of Lord Ponsonby in London; a diplomat, he was greatly involved in negotiations and discussions relating to the Peace of 1815, and as his wife was incapacitated Margaret had to act as hostess. “Her acquirements as a linguist were very considerable, and it was said by those who knew her at this season of triumph that in a crowded London drawing room with all the rank and talent of Europe around her, she was the only person in the room who could speak to each and every distinguished guest in the language of his own country.” The closing years of her life were spent in tranquil happiness. She died at Cowbridge in 1863, and there is a small plaque to her memory in Cowbridge church.

Memories of Billy James (born Hillside, Llanblethian) - The auntie of ‘Bricksy’ (John Leigh) of Llanblethian, lived in this house. Known as ‘Ivy’, she always had the winners in the Grand National. *2015*

Darren means ‘rock face’ – this must have been a striking feature at the western entrance to the Borough of Cowbridge (Rock House is probably the last house in the Borough). The rock has been cut into somewhat with the widening of the road. *Brian James*

Sources/abbreviations :

GRO Glamorgan Record Office

Dunraven deeds, census, tithe, Bute papers, burgage rents - all in GRO

B/Cow Borough council documents (GRO)