

Great House, Llanblethian

Authority	Vale of Glamorgan	Grade	II*
Community	Cowbridge with Llanblethian	Date Listed	17/05/1988
		Date Amended	16/09/1999
Locality	Llanblethian	Grid Ref	29898 17393
		Record No	13424

Name **Great House with Forecourt Walls & Gatepiers**
Street No, Name **Bridge Street**
Street Side **NW**

Location

About 100m SW of bridge over River Thaw.

History

A house which originated around 1600, with some C17 enlargement, but the present appearance dates to C18. Dates of 1703 on facade, and 1710 on kitchen fireplace. Initials "TW" refer to Thomas Wilkins, a noted local lawyer.

Exterior

Rendered, slate roof, 4 stone stacks. Two-storey, three unit frontage with projecting gabled 5-window centre block, 2-window wings also with gables. Semi-circular headed sash to centre gable, sundial over, oval window to each side wing gable, other windows are square headed sashes with glazing bars, moulded stone architraves. Central panelled door, wooden doorcase with pediment on scroll brackets. Chamfered quoins to ends and centre unit. Stone-walled garden forecourt, pair of square stone gatepiers fronted by small stone foot-bridge over stream.

Interior

Entrance doorway leads to lobby against central chimney. Hall to R, and kitchen beyond in wing; parlour to L, and dining room beyond in wing. Wooden stair to rear of parlour; stone stair to rear of chimney. Early C18 panelling in parlour. Kitchen fireplace with date of 1710.

Listed

Graded II* as particularly fine and well-detailed C17 and C18 house, preserving its character to remarkable degree.

Reference

J Newman, Glamorgan (Buildings of Wales Series), Cardiff, 1995, pp 372-373.
RCAHM (Wales), Glamorgan Inventory, Vol IV... Part II, Farmhouses and Cottages, London, 1988, p456.

Above are listed building notes – B Alden

Great House was built on land which was probably part of the property conveyed in 1668-9 by Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Lord of the Manor of Llanblethian, to Thomas Carne of Nash Manor and John Carne of Cowbridge. The sundial on the central gable is dated 1703 and probably marks the date of the building of the present house, which displays the symmetry popular in sizeable buildings of that period.

The owner in 1702 was probably Thomas Wilkins, a lawyer; certainly it was his son, Cann Wilkins, who sold the house in 1751 to William Bruce for £2,250. Bruce, born in 1705 to Capt James Bruce and his wife Margaret, had been a navy agent and banker in London. After his marriage in the 1740s to Jane Lewis of Llanishen, he became interested in holding land in South Wales, and though she soon died, he purchased first the Duffryn Aberdare estate, and then Great House in November 1851. He then married Mary Turberville, and they lived in Great House for most of the time up to 1768; he became sheriff of Glamorgan in 1756, and Commissioner of the Exchequer for much of South Wales in 1760. William Bruce died in 1868, leaving his estate to his son, Revd Thomas Bruce, rector of St Nicholas, with the proviso that Mary should have the Llanblethian property for her life.

Thomas, in turn, left his lands in trust for the children of his two sisters; one, Margaret, had married John Knight of Barnstaple, who helped run the family estates, and they lived in Great House between at least 1784 and 1797 when they moved to Bath. Their son, John Bruce Knight, attended Cowbridge GS and went on to Oxford; when he reached the age of 21 he changed his name to John Bruce Bruce, and later to John Bruce Pryce when he inherited the Dyffryn St Nicholas estate.

After 1797 James O'Brien was a tenant for a short time, followed by Sir Robert Blossie, an Irish baronet. David Jones has a description of a memorable party: there was dancing on the lawn in front of the house, the square piece of road now thrown into the front field, and nearly all the County assembled there, 'open house' being kept for a whole week or more. "Sir Robert danced with his lady and a fine couple they looked", "all the village was there to see the dancing". An ox was roasted whole before the large fireplace in the coachhouse (a very big fireplace it was: the grate would hold nearly half a ton of coals). Unfortunately the rope holding up the ox burned through, and Evan Morgan of the farm, whose responsibility it was, fell into disgrace. Dr Malkin the historian said that the 'little villa' successively inhabited by Sir Robert and Lady Wallscourt adds to the gaiety of the village.

The Revd Paull and his family were the next occupants of Great House. They employed as a nurse Margaret Williams, the daughter of Ned the ostler at the Bear in Cowbridge, who had been brought up in the Darren, perhaps at Rock Cottage. Her mother, Nancy the Darren, sold crumpets and teacakes through the town of Cowbridge. In looking after the children she picked up so much knowledge that she became nursery governess, and also attended the lessons provided for the eldest daughter. She eventually became governess to the only daughter of Lord Ponsonby who held a high position in the affairs of state. Lady Ponsonby being unable to entertain visitors, it was Margaret who took her place. At the peace of 1815, it was said that in a drawing room crowded with senior statesmen from all over Europe, she was the only person able to converse with every distinguished guest in the language of his own country.

Captain James Boorder, RN, purchased the property in 1808. Having distinguished himself in the war against France, having gained a certain amount of prize money, and being unfit for further service, he purchased Great House, some orchards and three cottages for 2000 guineas. He suffered very considerably from gout or rheumatism and was practically immobile - and soon had to be carried about in his chair. His wife soon died, and he needed someone to look after the household. His brother's illegitimate daughter, a beautiful actress named Mrs Careless, installed herself at the head of her uncle's household, and did all she could to persuade her uncle to leave the property to her. Despite the difference in names, it seems likely that she was the 'Frances Boorder otherwise Frances Harben commonly called Frances Harben the reputed wife of Thomas Henry Harben Esq' named in Boorder's will and who, according to David Jones lived in the house for some time after Boorder's death in 1818, and then let it.

Among the occupants were Captain Dawson, of the Royal Engineers, who was engaged in the trigonometrical survey of the county, and who had his men camped in half a dozen tents in the field opposite the house. Among his officers was Lieut Boteler who later married a Miss Casberd of Penmark, and subsequently as Colonel and Mrs Boteler lived at Llandough Castle. Capt Dawsom married twice - first

a daughter of the Revd R Nicholl of Dimlands in Llantwit Major, and secondly a daughter of John bevan of Cowbridge. Subsequently, the Revd R Knight, rector of Tythegston near Porthcawl lived in the house for a time, and then the Macgregors.

They were succeeded by the Donnes - William, his parents Mathew and Ann who had been farmers at St Donats and then Llanmihangel, and also William's older brother with his wife and daughter by a previous marriage. The latter two seem to have played on the old people's belief in ghosts to organise mock hauntings in an attempt to persuade Thomas to move out of quiet Llanblethian. Certainly by 1843 all had gone - William to Monkton farm, and they were succeeded by the Abrahams for two years. The house was vacant for a year till Thomas Jones, father of David Jones of Wallington, moved in in Christmas 1845. David Jones and his mother remained there till 1863, though his father died in 1858. It was here that David's love of Llanblethian and the Vale was nurtured.

In 1862, the property was auctioned, and bought by John Bruce Pryce of Dyffryn St Nicholas, who effectively repurchased the family home. He died in 1872, and the house and lands were again auctioned in 1877 - this time to John Truman Jenkins of St y Nill. Jenkins died in the following year, and the property was again put up for auction in 1879. It was bought by William Morgan, farmer and butcher, for £2500. William was the son of Robert Morgan, the butcher of Causeway Cottages, and in the 1871 census was farming at Porth y Green. (At the time Great House was occupied by John Morgan, a forty-seven-year old farmer, born in Llanblethian, and his family).

The 1881 census show that William, a farmer of forty acres and a butcher, lived here with his wife Rebecca, born in Llandow, and their nine children who varied in age from eighteen years to nine months. In 1890, it was again auctioned and William moved to 50 High Street, Cowbridge. The purchaser was Robert Williams, a retired innkeeper from Llanbethery, who obtained a mortgage from Revd Thomas Edmondson of Old Hall. Williams could not keep up with the repayments, so Edmondson foreclosed on the mortgage, and sold Great House to William Hancock and Co. During their period of ownership, 1893 to 1911, the occupant was the chairman of Hancocks, Joseph Gaskell.

The following years saw more changes of ownership. The property went firstly to William Henry Mathias of Tynycymmer Hall, Porth, from 1911 to 1920, and then to Owen Williams of Crossways, the shipping magnate, from 1920 to 1924. Great House, at the time divided into two, and occupied by Thomas Thomas and George Morris, was then auctioned in a desperate attempt to raise some funds to offset the decline in Williams's fortune; he had bought it for £4000 but only obtained £2000 in the auction. Mrs Mary Morgan of 68 Eastgate, Cowbridge, wife of Robert Morgan the butcher, purchased Great House. Once again the house reverted to the family of a previous owner, as Robert was the son of William Morgan who had owned the house and lived there from 1879 to 1890. Robert was living in Great House by 1926. The adjacent barn (now a separate dwelling) was used as a slaughterhouse: the quality of Robert Morgan's black puddings was celebrated in the area.

In 1943, the house was purchased by Mrs Carne and Mrs Prichard. Mrs Prichard's son had married Rosemary Christie, the daughter of Agatha Christie; their son is Matthew Prichard of Pwllwyrach, Colwinston.

From 'Llanblethian Buildings and People', CRS 2001

1668 Conveyance – Philip, Earl of Pembroke to Thomas Carne of Nash Manor and John Carne of Cowbridge of land and property in Llanblethian *D/D C 75-87*

The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Buildings in Wales suggests that the earliest part of the house dates from about 1600, and was enlarged (to less than half its present size) in the mid-17th century

1702 Owner: Thomas Wilkins; details of Thos. Wilkins and Cann Wilkins
Royal Commission Ancient & Historic monuments; 'History of County of Breconshire', Theophilus Jones, 1809; vol.II, part I, p 137

Thomas Wilkins was a lawyer and deputy prothonotary on the Brecon circuit of the Great Sessions, and ancestor of the De Winton family of Breconshire.
'The Welsh Judges' by W R Williams; Burkes 'Landed Gentry'.

1702 Date of the sundial, with initials TW, on the central gable – probably marks the date of the building of the present house.
'The Garden of Wales' by Maud Gunter

1710 Initials TW and date 1710 carved on the kitchen fireplace (Wilkins's name, and that of his wife Hester, are cast on the bells of Holy Cross church, Cowbridge).

1751 (November) Conveyance (for £2,250) – Cann Wilkins to William Bruce
Morgannwg XXI, Hilary Thomas

1752, 12 February Surrender and admission of the copyhold part of the estate
Bute deeds 1515 (National Library of Wales)

William Bruce was a moderately wealthy navy agent and London banker, who had established a connection with Glamorgan by his first marriage to Jane Lewis of Llanishen. In 1750, he bought the Dyffryn Aberdare estate, and in 1756 was high sheriff of the county. He married again to Mary Turberville, and they lived in Great House for most of the time up to 1768.
Morgannwg XXL, Hilary Thomas

1768 *Death of William Bruce* *Llanblethian church records*
On his death, the estate passed to his only son, the Rev. Thomas Bruce, rector of St Nicholas.
Morgannwg, Hilary Thomas

1784-97 John Knight of Barnstaple (his wife Margaret Bruce) and their family occupied the property, which had been put in trust for the children of Margaret Knight and Jane Bruce (the two sisters of William Bruce). John Bruce Knight, the son of John and Margaret Knight, was born in Llanblethian in 1784 and attended Cowbridge Grammar School.
Morgannwg XL and XXI, Hilary Thomas

1788 Will of Thomas Bruce *D/D Br 70*

Thomas Bruce died in 1790 and left instructions that the Llanblethian property should be sold. *Morgannwg, Hilary Thomas*

The Bruces had owned a fairly extensive, though typically rather scattered estate in Llanblethian, which included not only Great House but also Kingscombe farm, Llanblethian mill, the Verlands, the Town Mill, as well as sundry fields...
Dunraven estate maps 1778 etc; land tax assessment of 1784; Aberthin deeds 29-30; Philip Riden 'Kingscombe Farm'.

After 1797, James O'Brien was the tenant for a while, followed by Sir Robert Blosse, an Irish baronet. There is a description of a memorable party there. There was dancing on the lawn in front of the house (the square piece of land now part of the front field), and nearly all the County assembled there. 'open house' being kept for a whole week or more. 'Sir Robert danced with his lady and a fine couple they looked', 'all the village was there to see the dancing'. An ox was roasted whole before the large fireplace in the coachhouse (a very big fireplace it was : the grate would hold nearly half a ton of coals). Unfortunately, the rope holding up the ox burned through, and Evan Morgan of the farm, whose responsibility it was, fell into disgrace. (Sir Robert was apparently twice married. His first wife was buried at Llandough with many jewels on her. When the vault was opened for the interment of Sir Robert, watch was kept day and night lest the coffin be rifled).

From David Jones of Wallington (raconteur and illustrator of Cowbridge and Llanblethian life, in the scrapbooks of WAH Fisher - notebooks in Cardiff Central Library).

Dr Malkin, the historian, said that the 'little villa', successively inhabited by Sir Robert and Lady Wallscourt, added to the gaiety of the village.

1803 Margaret Knight and Jane Bruce (children of Thomas Bruce) devised property late in possession or occupation of James O'Brien Esq., now or late of Sir Robert Blosse, to Andrew Armstrong, late of Ireland but now of Llandough Castle. *D/D C 1144*

The Rev Paull and his family were the next occupants. They employed as a nurse Margaret Williams, daughter of Ned the ostler at the Bear in Cowbridge, who had been brought up at the Darren, perhaps at Rock Cottage, Westgate, Cowbridge. In looking after the children, she picked up so much knowledge that she became nursery governess, and also attended the lessons provided for the eldest daughter. She eventually became governess to the only daughter of Lord Ponsonby in London, who held a high position in the affairs of state. Lady Ponsonby being unable to entertain visitors, it was Margaret who took her place. At the peace of 1815, it was said that in a drawing room crowded with senior statesmen from all over Europe, she was the only person able to converse with every distinguished guest in the language of his own country.

1808 Transfer of copyhold – Andrew Armstrong to Captain James Boorder *Deeds*

Captain James Boorder RN had distinguished himself in the war against France. Having gained prize money and being unfit for further service, he purchased Great House, some orchards and three cottages for 2000 guineas. He suffered considerably from Gout or rheumatism and was practically immobile, and soon had to be carried about in his chair. His wife died, and he needed someone to look after him. His brother's illegitimate daughter, a beautiful actress named Mrs Careless, installed herself at the head of her uncle's household, and did all she could to persuade her uncle to leave the property to her. Despite the difference in names, it seems likely that she was the 'Frances Boorder otherwise Frances Harben, commonly called Frances Harben the reputed wife of Thomas Henry Harben Esq.' named in Boorder's will and who, according to David Jones, lived in the house for some time after Boorder's death in 1818, and then let it.

1813, 7/8 January James Boorder of Llanblethian House near Cowbridge,
Glamorgan, Esq., captain RN *Conveyance of a property, held in
East Sussex Record Office*

1818 Death of James Boorder, who bequeathed his property to niece Frances
Boorder/Harben *Deeds*

1818 Obituary *Cambrian newspaper 8/8/1818*
*On Sunday 2 inst at Llanblethian House aged 58, James Boorder Esq., captain in the
Royal Navy, who had for some years been in a declining state of health, occasioned by
the most unremitting attention to his duty and in the interest of his country, during long
and repeated cruises in the North seas. Although a man of retired habits and austere
manners, the poor never left his door unrelieved, and his purse was ever open to the
distresses of a friend.*

1819 Auction of furniture etc. at residence of the late James Boorder, RN
Cambrian, 27/3/1819

1820 To be let.....Mansion house.....Llanblethian House and 15 acres, apply Deere
and Hodson, solicitors, Cowbridge *Cambrian, 13/5/1820*

1824 To be sold at auction at Llanblethian House, the residence of WW Lawrence
Esq., modern and valuable household furniture, including a four-posted
bedstead with twisted pillars, and chintz furniture lined throughout. Large
wardrobe of Spanish mahogany, six mahogany chests of drawers etc, etc.
Cambrian 11/9/1824

1829 Captain William F Dawson, Royal Engineers, commissioned 1812
First Lt. Robert Boteler, RE, commissioned 1826 *Army lists in PRO*

The tenants around this time included Captain Dawson of the Royal Engineers, who was engaged in the trigonometrical survey of the county, and who had his men camped in half a dozen tents in the field opposite the house. Among his officers was Lieutenant Robert Boteler, youngest son of the late William Boteler Esq of Brook House, Eastry, Kent, who in 1835 married a Miss Maria Anne Casberd, daughter of Revd Dr Casberd of Penmark, (and as Captain and Mrs Boteler later lived in Llandough Castle).

Captain Dawson married twice – first a daughter of the Rev R Nicholl of Dimlands, Llantwit Major, and secondly a daughter of John Bevan of Cowbridge.

Subsequently, the Rev R Knight, rector of Tythegston near Porthcawl, lived in the house for a time, and then the Macgregors.

1830 To be let – a dwelling house called Llanblethian House

Cambrian 27/3/1830

1831 Proprietor : Mrs Harbin, occupier : Rev. Robert Knight of Tythegston
House and land

Land Tax Assessment

1839 The tenant of Great House, with its 17 acres of land, was William Donne. Also living there were his elderly parents, Mathew and Anne Donne, who had been farmers at St Donats, and his older brother, Thomas, with Thomas's wife, and her daughter by a previous marriage.. (Mathew Donne had been a well-to-do tenant farmer at St Donats Castle, and later at Llanmihangel Place, but David Jones says they were 'now decayed in circumstances'.)

Mrs Thomas Donne and her daughter were 'accustomed to the gaieties of a watering place' (wrote David Jones), and they found Llanblethian a very dull place. But Mr Thomas Donne preferred the quiet country life.

The Llanblethian Ghost.

The older people in the village, including Mathew and Anne Donne, believed in ghosts, and old Mrs Donne had been frightened out of her wits on more than one occasion by a 'ghost' in Great House. Mrs Thomas Donne and her daughter devised a plan which might persuade Thomas to leave the house and move to Brighton – they would organise the haunting of the house. There were nightly performances of knockings and scratchings in one of the bedrooms, which soon attracted audiences of six or eight persons. David Jones (who was only five at the time) later wrote : 'I can remember their taking place and the excitement and commotion caused in the village thereby. My father who lived next door denounced the whole thing from the first as humbug'.

What turned out to be the last of these 'seances' (David Jones's word) was attended by eight or ten persons, one of them being Mr Reynolds (probably James Reynolds the auctioneer) and another the printer from Cowbridge, Josiah Thomas Jones. 'As it drew towards midnight the printer gently took off his shoes and crept from his chair very softly

under the bed. In due time the knocking and scratching began and the printer, having assured himself of its whereabouts, put up his hand, and there was a lady's hand, with one finger encased in a thimble tapping away at the wood of the bedstead! There was an outcry from the young lady immediately – Oh, mama, mama! I felt a hand of flesh. Let us have a light to see whose it can be. The excitement amongst those present was immense and, in the commotion which followed, our friend the printer returned unobserved to his seat...and joined as eagerly as any in the search for the owner of the hand'. There were no performances after this, but we are not told if Mrs Donne and daughter succeeded in persuading Mr Thomas Donne to move to Brighton.

The printer wrote a ballad called 'Llanblethian ghost, and a local rhymester, Neddy Llewellyn recited a 'debased' Welsh verse on the occasion in the Picton inn.

Brian James's account, which uses sources from David Jones's notes in Cardiff Central Library, and 1851 censuses.

See also chapter in Morgannwg (Vol LV 2011) – Glam. Hist. Soc.

1840 Owner : Mary Ann Harben, occupier : William Dunn *Tithe 280*
(Some confusion about 'Mary Ann', as it was Frances Harben who owned the property)

1843 William Donne had left Great House by this date for Monkton Farm, Monknash, and Thomas Jones (father of David) had succeeded to the tenancy from the house next door. Mr Thomas Donne died in 1847 and was buried at Welsh St Donats.

Brian James (as above).

The house was then tenanted by the Abrahams for two years, and then vacant for a year, until Thomas Jones, father of David Jones of Wallington, moved in at Christmas 1845 from the house next door. David Jones became a noted recorder of life in the Vale of Glamorgan. His mother remained in Great House until 1863, after his father died in 1858. It was here that David's love of Llanblethian and the Vale was nurtured.

1851 Thomas Jones, maltster and farmer of 58 acres + wife Hannah + son David + visitor +2 servants *Census 43*

1861 Hannah Jones, farmer of 33 acres, employing 2 boys + son + boarder *Census 51*

1861 Death of owner Frances Boorder /Harben *Philip Riden's account from deeds*

1862 Property auctioned : purchased by John Bruce Pryce *Deeds*

John Bruce Pryce, of Dyffryn, St Nicholas, had effectively re-purchased the family home, being originally John Bruce Knight, son of John and Margaret Knight, and born in Llanblethian in 1784. He died in 1872, and the house and lands were again auctioned in 1877.

The freehold portion of the Great House estate conveyed in the first of 2 deeds of 8 October 1866, consisted of the capital messuage itself with stables, garden and other

outbuildings (tithe 281), a field of about two and a half acres behind the house described as an 'Orchard' (280), a house divided into 2 cottages immediately to the east (282 – now Ashley and Mardy cottages), a cottage to the west of Gt House garden (254 – now 2 cottages, Brook Cottage and Sunnyside), and a house and garden to the north of the orchard nr Llanblethian mill (279 – now Brook House). The latter had formerly been part of the parcel called an orchard (280). 284, 287 and 288 are 3 fields running up the hillside as far as a boundary with William Nicholl's property centred on New House Farm. All were pasture in the 19th century as they are today.

1865 Sale of stock & household furniture – Edward Nicholas leaving neighbourhood
from Great House, Llanblethian *Bridgend Chronicle*

1867 Will of JB Pryce leaves property to his daughters Mary Sinclair Bruce, Ellen
Bruce and Gertrude Emma Bruce of Bath *Deeds*

1871 John Morgan, farmer, and family *Census 58*

1874 Occupier : John Morgan, owner : Bruce Pryce *Glamorgan County Rate 55*

1877 Auction of property : purchased by John Truman Jenkins of Sant y Nill, St Brides
Super Ely *Deeds, Fo LB 42.658.82*

1878 Death of JT Jenkins

1879 Auction of Great House : purchased by William Morgan . 'Freehold residence
called Llanblethian House, offices, brewhouse, coachhouse, and six-stalled stable,
piggeries and sheds, including a cottage in two tenements with garden, together with a
barn and four pieces of very excellent meadow land (total 17 acres 1r 11p)...'
D/D SA8/1 and Fo LB 42.658.82

It was bought by William Morgan, farmer and butcher, for £2,500 – he was the son of Robert Morgan, the butcher, of Causeway Cottages, and in the 1871 census was farming at Porth y Green, Llanblethian.

(Brook Cottage and Sunnyside now occupied by Joseph Davies and William James.
Other cottage property disposed of 2 yrs earlier at the Bruce sale).

1881 William Morgan, farmer and butcher + family *Census 60*

1889 William Morgan, Great House *County Register*

William Morgan then moved to 50 High Street, Cowbridge.

1890 Great House and adjoining fields conveyed to Robert Williams (mortgage Rev.
Thomas Edmondson) *Deeds, Bute*

Robert Williams was a retired innkeeper from Llanbethery, who obtained a mortgage from the Rev Thomas Edmondes of Old Hall, Cowbridge. Williams could not keep up with the repayments however. Brook Cottage and Sunnyside now out of the estate.

- 1891 Robert Williams, dairy farmer + wife + two sons *Census 17*
- 1892 Sale of Great House, Llanblethian *Western Mail*
- 1893 Rev. FW Edmondes foreclosed on mortgage – property sold to William Hancock & Co. (Cardiff brewers). ‘Sale of freehold residence with convenient outbuildings, large garden and orchard or paddock, watered by a running stream.
Tithe 280 Orchard or paddock 2a 2r 23p
Tithe 281 House, garden and buildings, Great House 0ac 2r 36p
Great House is of picturesque appearance and pleasantly situated and contains 3 reception rooms, 8 bedrooms, dressing room, 2 WCs, 2 kitchens, sculleries, dairy, cellar etc. The drawing room is panelled in oak, and the house is filled with bells throughout. The outbuildings consist of 6-stall stables and coach-house, cowshed to accommodate 6 cows, piggeries, washhouse etc. There is an excellent supply of spring water on the premises.
Also, 3 fields of pasture, and Tithe 282, 287, 288 = 14 acres, 0r 13p
Sale documents D 458.45 (P)

1894-1911 Occupied by Mr Joseph Gaskell, chairman of Hancocks
Letter, LG Williams and Prichard, solicitors

- 1901 Charles Durston, head, married, aged 57, railway engine driver, born Catcott, Somerset, wife Mary, 50, born Ashcott, Somerset, son George, 18, butcher, born Radyr, Glamorgan *Census 44*
(1901 *In Brook Cottage, near Great House, lived Thomas Vaughan, a tailor working for a Cowbridge outfitter. He lived in Westgate area of Cowbridge in 1861. Info from descendant Vivian Flanders 2007*)

1910 MJ and G (or C) Durston : occupiers in rating valuation.

‘My great-grandparents farmed at Great House, Llanblethian for many years, up to the early 20s I believe’ – a postcard showing George Durston as a dispatch rider with the Severn Defences, based at Burt St, Cardiff in the 1914-18 war, was sent to his brother Albert and sister-in-law Jessie, then living in Laleston. The card states, amongst other things ‘Hope you are all well and Nita (daughter of Albert and Jessie) improving. Shall be going home on Monday. I have some pigs to slaughter for Hopkin Thomas ...’

Information from Jean Williams, Cardiff

1911 Conveyed to William Henry Mathias (of Tynycymmer Hall, Porth).

Deeds

1917 John Morris, solicitor of Great House, Llanblethian
Western Mail

1920 Conveyed to Owen Williams of Crossways (shipping magnate and co-founder of the Golden Cross shipping line). *Deeds*

In a desperate attempt to raise some funds to offset a decline in Owen Williams's fortune (see notes on Crossways House), the property was auctioned. He had bought it for £4000, but only obtained £2000 at the auction.

1924 Auctioned and sold to Mrs Mary Morgan of 68 Eastgate, Cowbridge (wife of Robert Morgan) *D/D SA 3/686 and deeds*

Once again, the property reverted to the family of a previous owner, as Robert was the son of former owner William Morgan. The barn adjacent to the house (now a separate dwelling) was used as the slaughterhouse; the quality of Robert (Bob) Morgan's black puddings was celebrated in the area ('not a drop of blood wasted' - *Memories of Mervyn Harkett*).

Mary Morgan (nee Howell) was the aunt of Gaynor Morris's mother. Her brother was Gaynor's grandfather, who was fined 6d for jumping his horse over the town wall to avoid paying tax. The 6d was later spent by the fining magistrate to have a drink with him in the Bear. *Info from Gaynor Morris 2014 (sister to Jeffrey James, of Rhoose Hist. Soc.)*

1926 Occupied by Robert Morgan, butcher (of 68 Eastgate, Cowbridge) *Kelly's directory*

1943, 3/11 Sale, Mary Morgan to Nora Diann Prichard, Pwlllywrach, Colwinston and Isobel Carne, Nash - £3900.

In 1943, the house was purchased by sisters Mrs Carne and Mrs Prichard. They had come over here from Canada, and eventually married two of the local gentry (into the Edmondes and the Carne families). Mrs Carne lived in one half of Great House. Mrs Prichard and her husband had two sons and a daughter, the eldest son marrying Rosalind Christie, only daughter of Agatha Christie the crime writer of renown, and the latter was a not-infrequent visitor to Great House. Matthew Prichard, whose father was killed in WW2 around the time of his birth, lived until recently at Pwlllywrach, Colwinston and was the only grandson of Agatha Christie. She assigned to him, when he was a child, the royalties from the long-running London play, 'The Mousetrap'. His mother Rosalind married for the second time, a Mr Hicks, and they settled at Greenway, Devon, Agatha Christie's summer home, which is now in the hands of the National Trust. Walter Stone, former Llanblethian miller, was very friendly with the Hickses, visiting them at Greenway. Matthew Prichard has donated a large proportion of the 'Mousetrap' royalties to Atlantic College, St Donats, where, for example, there is an Agatha Christie library.

Alenka remembers visiting Mrs Prichard and her sister at Great House for tea. Mrs P would come indoors from working in her beautiful garden to put on her hat to serve the tea. The photo (chs 04146) shows Mrs Prichard sitting on Great House steps with Janet Edmondson (later Llewellyn, the sister of John Edmondson, Alenka's husband). It was probably taken by 'Poppet', Dyliss Williams, who was the granddaughter of Mrs Prichard's granddaughter, daughter of Mrs P's daughter Lydia, and great friends with Janet.
Information from Alenka Edmondson to B Alden 2016

1943 Occupied by Mrs Prichard and Mrs Carne

WAH Fisher's notes

Some related family pedigrees:

Edwards (?from Pembrokeshire) = three children

1. ? Edwards, father of Ralph Edwards and grandfather of Nicholas Edwards (Lord Crickhowell, and former Secretary of State for Wales)
2. Mrs Carne
3. Mrs Prichard, whose only child, Hubert, married Rosalind Christie (daughter of Agatha Christie). Their son is Mathew Prichard of Pwllyrwrach, Colwinston. Rosalind re-married (to Anthony Hicks) after her husband was killed in WW2.

Thomas Wilkins of St Mary Church m. Jane Carne of Nash
Their son, Thomas Wilkins m. Anne, daughter of Richard Cann of Compton, Glos., then Anne, daughter of Meredith Bowen of Llangwern, and finally Esther Shrenton of London.
From the first marriage came Cann Wilkins, who married Mary Sparrow

Sources/references :

GRO = Glamorgan Record Office

PRO = Public Record Office, Kew

NLW = National Library of Wales

D/D = deeds in GRO

Tithe accounts, register of electors = in GRO

Bute deeds, Glamorgan County Rate = in GRO

Land tax assessments = in GRO