

Llangwm 1892-1935

1892

Early on Thursday 18th August 1892, a series of tremors shook South Wales. The most severe shocks were felt in Milford Haven, but Llangwm was also affected. The Western Telegraph of 24th August reported that the first shock was felt at about 12.20 am.

A dead calm was experienced before the event. Sea birds circled overhead with a plaintive call and other animals behaved unnaturally. For a few seconds, a distinct rumbling sound was heard. The sound increased in volume until houses appeared to rock to and fro. Pictures on walls and ornaments on chimney-pieces rattled. In some places, people fell out of bed.

The second shockwave came at about 1.45 am – and was followed by lesser tremors. After the earthquake, people reported that there was a strong smell of ozone.

In a history of Llangwm written by Miss Eliza Morgan of North Nash Farm in 1953, Miss Morgan writes about her memories of the event. She wrote “The day before the shock was felt, my father was bothered about the abnormal ebb and flow of the tide. ----- However, he took his boat and nets out, and went fishing, with some other men, as usual.” Although Miss Morgan had gone to bed on the night of the 17th, she was unable to sleep. She continued “there was a loud long rumbling under the house, and as the sound receded, the house seemed to lift and settle, crockery rattled, birds outside were disturbed and cows that were in a field close by began lowing. I jumped out of bed for I knew it was an earthquake. My father was soon home.”

A tidal wave had been predicted, but it did not materialise. The centre of the earthquake was reputedly in the Mid Atlantic Ocean.

1903

Farm labourer Alfred Thomas (age 23) of Knap Farm was charged with unlawfully wounding Frederick Griffiths of Barn Farm, Burton, also a farm labourer, at Llangwm on the evening of Tuesday 7th July 1903.

The men had been drinking at the Black Horse Inn [now Knowle Cottage] in the company of Jim Llewellyn from Hook. As they left the pub arguing amongst themselves, the men met Evan Howells of Llangwm Farm and his teamsman [in charge of the horses used for ploughing] William Jones. Frederick Griffiths went back to Llangwm Farm with Evan Howells, while Alfred Thomas remained in the roadway shouting abuse. Frederick Griffiths went back outside, afterwards claiming that “I thought it was to be a fair fight with fists”.

During the ensuing fight, Alfred Thomas stabbed Frederick Griffiths five times in the fleshy part of the left arm and breast. The injured man was taken to Haverfordwest Infirmary (his arm having been temporarily bound up by Mrs Elizabeth Howells,) where the wounds were stitched by Dr Williams.

Alfred Thomas spent the night in custody and was bailed on a surety of £50 by Rev. Henry Evans, Rector of Llangwm. He was subsequently found guilty of unlawful wounding and sentenced to 6 weeks' imprisonment with hard labour. Alfred Thomas was said to have been of previously good character and was to have been married a week after the affray.

1906

One hundred years ago, Llangwm would have been largely self-sufficient for everyday items. Many of the residents would have grown their own vegetables and fruit, kept hens and perhaps a pig, caught fish in the Cleddau, made their own clothes. The village shops would have stocked a wide range of household items, but a wider choice of goods would have been available in the nearby towns.

You could buy your paint and wallpaper (cheap!) from Ernest E Powell of Charles Street, Milford Haven. Price and Russell (established 1856) of Tower Hill, Haverfordwest, would redecorate your home for you. If you planned to build an extension to your house, the Johnston Brickworks would supply the bricks. To heat your house, William Jenkins (adjacent to the Railway Station in Milford Haven) would deliver the coal.

Clothes were available from David Davies of 41 High Street, Haverfordwest, or Fred T Phillips of Leicester House, Bridge Street, Haverfordwest. To make your own clothes, you might visit the emporium of Greenish and Dawkins in Market Street, Haverfordwest, to buy dress material and haberdashery.

Edgar W Rees of High Street, Haverfordwest would supply your groceries ("largest stock, finest quality, lowest prices") with wines and spirits available from L H Thomas, Castle Square, Haverfordwest. Eggs could be purchased from Lewis and Son, Elm Cottage, Llangwm.

If you needed to order goods from further afield, the Bristol steamer "Menapia" (1000 tons, delivery every Friday) would trans-ship the order on to a lighter at Milford Haven and the goods would be brought up the river to Black Tar.

There were vacancies at Tasker's High School for Girls (Headmistress – Miss Waddy). Fees for the term were £1 5s 8d, with Greek, German and painting extra. Singing, organ and pianoforte lessons were available from Mr C Bulmer of Bulmer House, St Thomas Green, Haverfordwest.

1915

Celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 11th November 1915 were Mr and Mrs John Morgans of Anarcarco Cottage, Llangwm. According to a report in the 'Western Telegraph' newspaper, the couple were "staunch Wesleyans", but had married at Llangwm parish church in 1865. The newspaper reported that Mr and Mrs Morgan had seven surviving children and 27 grandchildren. The report concluded "We trust that they will be spared for many years to come".

John Morgans was 21 years old when he married 19-year-old Betsey Llewelin. He was the son of George and Mary Morgans of Guilford, Burton parish, and the grandson of Edward Morgans. John, George and Edward all worked on the river as fishermen or watermen [boatmen who plied for hire]. John's grandfather on his maternal side was John Morris, Lazareth Officer [a sort of medical man, but not a doctor].

Betsey Llewelin was the daughter of William Llewelin, a waterman, and his wife Margaret (née Davies). Betsey (or Elizabeth as she was formally known) had a twin sister called Ann.

The couple had eleven children – Mary, Ann, Elizabeth, George, Margaret Jane, Edward, Sarah, Jane, John, William and Thomas – born between March 1866 and March 1889. Margaret Jane died when she was 14 months old. George also died as an infant. Thomas died when he was almost 13 years old and is buried in Llangwm cemetery.

In 1881, John Morgans was an able-bodied seaman on board HMS Widgeon. On the night of Sunday 3rd April 1881, the census records that the vessel was moored at Pembroke Dock. HMS Widgeon was a wooden paddle ship, launched at Chatham in Kent in 1837, and employed as a tug at the RN Dockyard in Pembroke Dock. According to the 1881 census, Betsey and five of their children were living at home in Llangwm.

On the 1901 census, John and Betsey were living in a three-roomed cottage in Mill Street with Sarah (aged 23), John (aged 17) and William (aged 14). John Morgans senior was once again working as a fisherman on the river.

Betsey Morgans died on 24th February 1918 aged 70 and John Morgans died on 15th March 1919 aged 74. They are buried at Llangwm cemetery between the graves of their son Thomas and their daughter Elizabeth, the wife of William Evans of Foxhall. Their grave bears the inscription "The bodies are laid to rest here between their two children Thomas and Elizabeth, but their spirits are gone to their giver until the Resurrection Day when there will be a reunion".

December 1935

Michael Fox, a 50-year-old hawker from Swansea, crashed into the stationary car of Dr Douglas in Main Street, Llangwm. At the time of the accident, Police Sergeant Ivey was a passenger in the Doctor's car.



Llangwm Parish Council proposed that councillors who never attended council meetings should be made to resign.



Death of Leonard Payne of the Kilns, aged 66. "His last illness was so short that it was impossible to bring his children, who all reside in England to his bedside before he passed away. One son, John Payne, is still ignorant of his father's death, being at sea".



Llangwm Wasps were beaten by the Grammar School. This was described as a "surprising victory" due to "bad defensive tactics".



The bridge between Pill Park and Knapp Farm was in a dangerous state. The Parish Council received a complaint from a woman who had fallen through the middle of the bridge.



Advance notice of the Llangwm RFC Dance to be held at Llangwm Schoolroom "on the new floor" at Easter 1936 was publicised with the request "Please do not clash".

Researched by Nikki Bosworth. Information from the 'Haverfordwest & Milford Haven Telegraph' and 'Pembrokeshire Herald' newspapers, police charge sheets, parish registers and censuses at Pembrokeshire Archives and Local Studies.