

Llangwm in 1867

The first baptism at Llangwm parish church in 1867 was that of Margaret Alice, daughter of David and Margaret George of Great Nash, on 2nd January. There was only one marriage at the church between July 1866 and June 1867 and this took place between William Martin and Martha Phillips, both of Hook, on 23rd March. The burial service for 98-year-old Mary Lewis of Guilford was held on 14th March.



Another Mary Lewis of Guilford, daughter of sailor John Lewis and his wife Mary, was baptised at Llangwm church on 15th March. Sadly, this child died aged 12 days and was buried on 19th March. In 1867, Guilford was still in the parish of Burton but its proximity to Llangwm meant that many residents preferred to attend the nearer church.



William, son of Robert and Betsy Palmer of Black Tar, was baptised on 27th January and appeared on the 1871 census as a 4-year-old with his father but, by this time, William's mother had died, buried at Llangwm church in July 1870.



At the Petty Sessions court in April 1867, William Evans of Llangwm was charged with neglecting to maintain his elderly father. William was a farmer at a property known as Roadside but had previously worked at Hook Colliery. He occupied 37 acres of land, for which he paid £40 a year, "but was backward in his rent and now owed his landlord £10". The Overseer of the parish of Llangwm stated that the father was allowed 3 shillings a week, 1 shilling 6 pence of which was supposed to be contributed by the defendant. William added that he was also supporting the two illegitimate children of his daughter (the grandchildren being Emma, born in Aberdare in 1857, and Sarah, born in Llangwm in 1860, their father being deceased and their mother lame from a disease in the hip joint) without assistance from the parish. The Bench considered that the defendant could not afford to pay any more and the case was dismissed.



In March 1867, Elizabeth Lewis of Llangwm was charged with assaulting her neighbour Martha Skyrme following a dispute over the ownership of a pile of manure. Mrs Lewis was accused of lifting the shovel over her head and threatening "to lay her down with it". Mrs Skyrme wrested the shovel from the defendant and hurled it away. The dispute continued with threats, fists clenched and spitting in the face. The magistrates considered this case "too trifling to call for further interference and dismissed it".



Snow lay on the ground in February 1867 when James James was accused of assaulting John Phillips. James, who had one leg and walked with the aid of a crutch, admitted giving John Phillips two smacks in the face with his open hand "but they were not severe". The defendant was fined 10 shillings.

David Reynolds of Troopers Inn was fined 1 penny for allowing a cow to stray onto the road and Benjamin Hitchings of Llangwm was fined the same amount when his two donkeys strayed from home.



In mid-February, there was a railway accident between New Milford (now known as Neyland) and Johnston. The Irish cattle train, after leaving New Milford, became too heavy for the engine to draw up the incline to Johnston (now the cycle path) and came to a standstill. The guard Rees then divided the train and sent one half on to Johnston and remained with the latter part on the up-line. In the meantime, a passenger train left New Milford. The engine driver, not knowing that there was danger ahead, ran into the cattle train, smashing the guard's van to pieces. Several Irish drovers, who were in the train at the time, saved their lives by jumping out as they saw the other train approaching. The engine was thrown off the rails but the driver, stoker and passengers all escaped uninjured.



In the Autumn of 1867, there were two weddings at Llangwm parish church. On 20th October, William Morgans and Mary Bryant were married and, on 20th November, Edward Morgans wed Jane Skyrme. The occupation of the fathers of both brides and bridegrooms was "waterman". A waterman was someone who transferred passengers across and along a river.



William Morgans, aged 21, waterman, was the son of William Morgans senior who had died in November 1854 and was buried at Llangwm parish church. Mary Bryant, also aged 21, was the daughter of James Bryant who lived on the Gail with his wife Betsy and at least 8 children. Edward Morgans, aged 25, sailor, was the son of George Morgans of Guilford. Jane Skyrme, aged 24, was the daughter of John Skyrme of Black Tar. According to the censuses, everyone had been born in Llangwm.



The other boat-related occupation commonly found on the river was that of "lighterman". This was someone who worked on a large open flat-bottomed boat (known as a "lighter") loading and unloading ships and generally moving cargo around. Both watermen and lightermen were known to occupy their spare time with fishing and, on the census, they may all be recorded as fishermen.



The year 1867 saw the first meeting of the Board of Conservators for the East and West Cleddau Fishery District. From 1st September, it became illegal to fish for salmon without a licence and the Board was also responsible for controlling fishing for trout. The annual licence for using a rod and line was 10 shillings 6 pence [55 new pence] and fishing with a coracle net cost £1. Other methods of fishing included draft or hang net, box crib or cruive, otter, lath or jack, putts and putchers. Night fishing was not permitted. The closed season for salmon was from 15th September to 15th March and for trout 29th September to 1st March, although fishing with rods had a shorter closed season - from 15th November to 15th March.

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.