

# Some Memories of Pwll

by

Pam Morgans (née Thomas)

## A Bônau Cabbage Patch Supplement.

Introduction: Pam Morgans now lives in Brecon but was born and bred in Pwll. She read an article by Kay Pascoe in a recent edition of The Bônau Cabbage Patch and that brought back some fond memories. Memories she now shares with us.

My mother, Millie Roberts, was born in Pwll, as were her mother and grandmother. Her father, who was the choirmaster in Holy Trinity Church, died when she was only ten. My mother and grandmother moved from Brynhyfryd (half way up Libanus Hill) to Cwr y Coed (next door to the Travellers' Well).

My mother's cousin, Gertie, and her husband Syd Davies were the landlords and dispensed drinks at the bar and petrol at the pump outside with very little joy. In later years, my father much preferred to drink at the "Blue" with Joe Bonnell in full voice and lots of fun.



(Gertie & Syd Davies with their daughter)

My grandfather's unmarried sister, Elizabeth, stayed on in Brynhyfryd renting a room from Daisy Rogers who was very

good to her. Aunty "I's" was always knitting and kept us supplied with sweaters for years. The knitting was perfect but I can still feel the pain of too tight collars being pulled down over my ears.



(The Traveller's Well)

Family circumstances were such that when my mother matriculated from the Grammar School she was unable to go to university. Instead, she completed all her music exams and became a piano teacher.

Life would have been fairly quiet and peaceful until my father Pricey, left the family business

in Burry Port, rented a shop from Mrs Daniels and opened a butchers shop across the road.

At 40, I think he decided he would remain a bachelor. Being an uncle to the children of his eight brothers and sisters may have influenced him. Then he met Millie, fell in love, and within three months was married on 10th December 1939.

When I used to tease him about "whirlwind romances" he would say, rather bashfully, that war had been declared and anyway, I wasn't born until 1941!



(Bassett Terrace)

John y Gwas, Lavinia's son, who worked for my father, joined the army and my mother was catapulted from piano to chopping block. Even though she had lived in Pwll all her life and knew most of the customers, she was shy. My father was quite the opposite and loved nothing more than to sit in the shop and chat.

One of my earliest memories is of Lucy, Penwch Farm, dispensing milk from a churn in the back of the cart. I remember her vividly, bare freckled arms and a mop of red hair.

I went to Pwll School where Miss Dennis was my teacher – she had also taught my mother and we both loved her. I distinguished myself in Pwll School by swapping my gold bangle for a goldfish. The 'rag and bone' man used to wait by the school fence in the lunch hour. My father eventually caught up with him and persuaded him to take back the goldfish.

Kay mentioned Miss May Powell who lived in the Croft over the road from the shop.

Sometimes she would bring me home from school and she did indeed take me with her to a house near the Talbot Inn, where a baby had died. I had nightmares for weeks about that tiny coffin. I wonder if the old people thought this was good for us?

By the time I was six Mrs Daniels, who had rented the shop to my father, decided to sell the house and move further up Bassett Terrace. (Sixty years later, in Australia, I would be reminded of Mrs Daniels by an extraordinary coincidence). Tod, the policeman, feared by adults and children alike, held up the occasional car as we carried furniture and clothes across the road.



(Pig Sty in Pwll Garden)

There was a much bigger garden with room for children, ducks and even pigs. Floods swamped the basement and garden fairly regularly until the sea wall was repaired.

On Monday afternoons I used to go with Dad in the pony and cart to Felinfoel Brewery to buy hop husks to feed to the pigs. The smell was wonderful!

Saturday mornings in the shop were very hectic. People called in for their weekend joints and orders were taken around Pwll in the van. Dai Duggan worked for us for years and kept in touch with my parents until he died. Les Ellerton worked for us until my father retired.

As the shop door opened at 8:00am we would see Joe Evan's children, Maude and Handel, trudging towards Llanelly, loaded down with sacks of vegetables from their garden to sell in the market. Winter and summer they wore the same clothes: Maude a heavy tweed coat and a brown felt hat; Handel, a crusty Gaberdine mac, belted with string.

Cyril Jenkins and his wife lived next door. He had spent all his working life in the mines and coughed endlessly.

I remember Gwen Beynon and Gwyneth and a son called Emlyn who had a very good voice. Mr Beynon drove double decker buses and always seemed far too small to do so.

Next door to Mrs Daniels and her daughter, Freda, lived Jack the coal merchant (Jack y Glo) and his wife. During the war my father remembered Jack sprinting to the air raid shelter, pulling his trousers on over his long woollen pants and yelling to his wife to go and keep their horse company in the stable.

On Sunday afternoons I used to take a bowl to the Billiard Hall for several scoops of ice cream. Ice cream has never tasted as good! A scoop in a glass, topped with lemonade was Pricey's idea of heaven.

The Leyshon family lived further up. I remember their son, Warren, who became a policeman. They were rather more conventional than the Singletons. Mr Singleton worked for Burton's the Tailor and always wore a pinstriped suite, black hat and a navy overcoat over his shoulder. All this and a cigarette holder too!

Idris Francis and his wife Connie had a business where the garage is now. I think they sold petrol but they certainly sold electrical goods. I remember Idris delivering our first television – black and white and cunningly concealed in a cupboard, in time for the coronation. Idris had the first "combover" I had ever seen – with a parting somewhere near his left ear.

Thank you Kay for reminding me of Mrs Cunningham. I had several of those little silk purses and when John and I were married in 1966, she gave us two beautiful quilted cushion covers.

As children we all looked forward to the Fete and Gala, later to become the carnival. It was held in the summer in Cae Pop – ice cream, candy floss and carnival queen. My mother won the ankle competition one year and was so embarrassed when my father insisted on

putting her prize – a painted plate – in the shop window.

During the summer, when the shop closed early, we would walk down the 'Stank' for a swim. Does anyone know why it was called the 'Stank'? We used to pass Trevor Lott's scrap yard, where he lived in a small caravan with four enormous curly coated Labradors.

I remember Miss Wishart, a tall gentle lady, who lived with her mother in the Lodge. Nearby was the gap in the wall, near the Speck's garden, where we used to play for hours in the woods.

Archie Evans, the undertaker, lived across the road. He had two children, Joyce and Roy. A death in the village followed a familiar pattern. News would reach us in the shop from a relative or neighbour (no one ever died undiscovered in Pwll). Then Archie, having been employed to build the coffin and conduct the funeral, would call in the shop for a fillet steak. He would be followed by the family of the deceased, ordering ham and tongue for the wake and finally Mr Bowen, or one of the other ministers would ask my father how many mourners he could take to the funeral. It is for this reason that my father only ever bought black cars until he retired.

An infrequent visitor to the village was the man with the steamroller. I can't remember his name, but he used to pause outside the shop long enough to buy his supper and then trundle down to his pitch near Manchester House.

Mrs Cook, her daughter and grandson, Gordon, lived on the other side of Cwr y Coed. Years later we frequently caught the last bus to Pwll from the Town Hall – 10:00pm at Billiard Hall or my father would be furious. Kay and her parents lived next door to Betty Crompton, whose great friend was Bobbie Evans. Bobbie lived in Stepney Road, as did my great friend Barbara Marshall.

Almost down at the Terminus lived Auntie Ada – everyone's favourite and a great character. She would sit in the shop for hours and make everyone laugh. She once told me that when she worked in the Tin Works the only way to know whether or not she was going to work or coming home was to look in her lunch box!

John's Auntie Mattie lived in Manchester House. She was, I think, the first person to practise 'Neighbourhood Watch'. No one used or abused the telephone kiosk without her knowledge. I think she also made sure that the trolley buses ran on time, but I could be wrong.

I remember the twins, Ann and Margaret and their sister Sylvia in Wauneos. Their cousins Dorothy and Peggy were the leaders of style in the village – always immaculate!



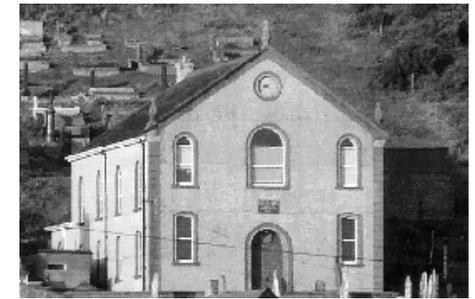
(Pwll Post Office)

Mr and Mrs Mackay and their daughter Alison lived in the Post Office. If there was a new 'Famous Five' or 'Secret Seven' book in the window (7/6d hard back) I used to run home for money before they closed.

John and Laura Stephens, sons Brian and Colin and grandmother Hannah Jane – I remember them all so well, particularly Hannah Jane who was a great dressmaker and always managed to turn my most outlandish ideas into reality.

My father went to Libanus and my mother had played the organ at Holy Trinity for

over twenty years. On Friday nights I went to



(Libanus Chapel)

Band of Hope in Libanus Chapel, where Mrs Williams lectured us on starving children in India and China. I would come home, clutching a collection box and vowing to clear my plate.

On Sunday mornings I went to Church with my mother, have our lunch and then back up Libanus Hill for Sunday School with a lovely lady called Beryl. The Rowlands family lived half way up the hill; there seemed to be lots of children, but I remember Euronwy in particular. Six p.m. found me back in Libanus with my father, fascinated by the tiny glasses of wine passed around in a silver stand.

Mrs Daniels resplendent in her St John's Ambulance Brigade uniform, also made sure I supported Bethlehem in a small way by borrowing me for lessons in First Aid in Salem – I was bandaged over and over again.

I was a religious revival on my own and I suppose had there been a Catholic Church, a Jewish Temple or a Salvation Army Citadel in Pwll, my weekends would not have been long enough.

It's a childhood I remember with enormous affection; a village full of characters, where it was safe to play. I am grateful to the Bônau for stirring such wonderful memories. I must confess to having just one unpleasant memory. Nurse James – the district nurse, considered an enema to be the cure for any complaint!

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(Some of the photographs used in this supplement are representational and do not necessarily reflect the true likeness of any individual or location mentioned in the text).