

ATGOFION O'R BORTH

Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy

Menai Bridge and District Civic Society

MEMORIES OF MENAI BRIDGE

Mae Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy yn diweddarau ei chofnodion, ffotograffau a'i Gwefan er mwyn ei gwneud yn haws i'r aelodau eu gweld. Byddwn yn ceisio ychwanegu at y rhain yn gyson drwy gydol y flwyddyn ac yn cyhoeddi pigion gyda'ch Cylchlythyr. Mae croeso mawr bob amser i gyfraniadau newydd, yn ogystal â help i adnabod pobl yn y lluniau.

Ewch i'n Gwefan yn [www.menaibridge](http://www.menaibridge.org.uk)

Menai Bridge Civic Society is updating its records, photographs and Website to make them more accessible to members. We will try to add to these regularly throughout the year and publish extracts with your Newsletter. New contributions are always welcome, as is help with identifying people in photographs.

See our Website at www.menaibridge.org.uk

Memories of Menai Bridge

Volume 9



Rowland Williams, on the left, and Wil (Rallt) on his cart - delivering milk; pier gates in the background.

In our Memories section we have usually told one person's story; but for this volume we are telling, albeit briefly, the story of a family spread across two generations - the Rowland Williams family of Glyn Derw, Wood Street; they helped build Menai Bridge.

Rowland Williams & Sons, Wheelwrights & Builders, Funeral Undertakers was set up at the about the turn of the century, that is 1900. Rowland came from Amlwch and with his wife Anne from Llanllyfni. They first lived at the house on the corner of St. George's Road and High Street, once a public house, and later went to live in 22, Dale Street, where at the rear of the property was a very small parcel of land which he eventually bought. This was where his first workshop was built, working as a wheelwright - the old workshop is still standing now owned by the owner of Bennett Homes. From there he managed to persuade the Marquis of Anglesey's Land Agent to rent him some land in Wood Street, and built the house known as Glyn Derw

(red brick house opposite the Bus Station) and alongside built a workshop and sheds for storing timber. The house was built in 1904 and the business of Rowland Williams & Sons, Wheelwrights & Builders, Funeral Undertakers carried on their trade until 1982, when his son-in-law, Edward Trefor Williams died.

Rowland Williams, employed 11 joiners and builders in his workshop and yard in Wood Street. As a skilled carpenter and builder, he made all kinds of small carts, such as dog carts, builders carts, wheel barrows, etc. selling many throughout Anglesey. Most rural builders and joiners had other businesses such as being funeral undertakers. In

those early days Rowland owned trees in the small woods by the football field, and would fell these, season them and use the timber to make coffins. Some of the larger funerals were massive by today's standards; the Welsh Bard Cynan had 500 cars attending. In the early days of the undertaking business, before motor vehicles were that common, the hearse was horse drawn by two black horses. The hearse was hired through Chisolm's bakery (where the Chinese take away is now, next to Siop Moss, Bridge Street) and was kept at the back of the bakery. He also hired the horses from local farms and adorned them with black plumage.



Funeral of Dr. Thomas Charles Williams, 1927, Minister of the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel. Funeral Director Rowland Williams, who follows the cortege with his sons.



1928—First Queen of the Menai Straits, Queen Megan.

Rowland had a large family, five sons and four daughters and two children who died in infancy, and his family played a large part in the life of the Town. It's difficult to single out who contributed most, but if we take one sister and one brother, it will give you an idea. In 1928 Megan was crowned the first Queen of the Menai Straits by Megan Lloyd George (then MP for Anglesey). The first Carnival was a huge event and the Gaumont newsreel can still be viewed on YouTube. Megan became a teacher in Gaerwen and married Glyn Owen of W. Owen Grocers in the High Street, Bangor.

Idris joined RAF Bomber Command when he was 18 years old. His story sounds like something out of 'Roy of the Rovers'. He took part in many major offensives and had to parachute to safety. On one occasion, according to his father's diary, ending up in the Bethesda/Betws-y-Coed area and being given a hero's welcome when he was able to convince the local police he was not a spy and being allowed to visit home at Glyn Derw. Unusually newsreel of Idris still exists as well (Pathe News 1942 raid on Renault works) and can also be seen on YouTube.



Trefor, Idris, Rol, William, Glyn



Rol, Blodwen and Idris

He was something of a 'pinup' for the RAF. He wore his Caterpillar Club insignia with great pride. Idris was a very keen footballer and rejoined the Menai Bridge Tigers as a centre forward. He was part of the team that won the 1947/8 NW Junior Cup. He and his many friends enjoyed themselves after work going to the public houses/hotels and dances in Bangor and that is where he met his wife, Kathleen O'Brien from

Birkenhead in Cheshire, who now lives on the Wirral. Kathleen and her sister often came to Bangor to stay with their grandmother in Caernarfon Road, by the old Bangor Laundry. They both loved dancing and would often go to the Ambassadors Club, behind Johnnie Sixpence's shop in the High Street(now Williams Butchers),



Queen Megan greets a new 'Straits Queen'



TOP ROW J HUGHES D H DAVIES J E GRESTY J JOHNSON H PARRY
CENTRE C M ALFORD W MILLWARD R J WILLIAMS I WILLIAMS J B COWELL A POPPLEWELL T LOCK J S EVANS R G WILLIAMS
FRONT T HUGHES C JONES W ROBERTS T WILLIAMS G I HAWKES E WILLIAMS

the C and A Hospital Nurses' Social Club (now Morrisons Supermarket), half way down Glanrafon Hill, the club above Burton, etc. Idris moved away to work in the Cotswolds and sadly died when he was only 44 years old.

We are grateful to Selwyn and Ieuan Williams for sharing their family history of their Grandfather, Father and Uncles and Aunts, with us.