

# The History of Crossways House



*A view from, today's entrance hall, of the courtyard in the front of the house*

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**Owen Williams was a very successful ship owner who, with his brother Watkin Williams, owned one of the many shipping companies that prospered out of the port of Cardiff at the end of the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries. At the height of their business success they had built up a fleet of 22 ships and traded as the "The Golden Cross Line" which travelled all over the world trading in coal, grain, wood, textiles and fresh food.**

**In 1917, at the age of 55, Owen Williams fell in love with Margaret the 17 year old daughter of Mr Daniel Thomas a mining engineer and manager of Pwllgwaun Colliery near Pontypridd. In that year, Owen Williams purchased this large and beautiful Tudor house in the Vale of Glamorgan and then spent the next 4 years totally renovating and extending the house into the magnificent mansion of Crossways House. In the rebuilding he and Margaret built many new and interesting features including a magnificent 40' ballroom, the beautiful oak carved ceiling in the entrance hall with impressive panelled walls and hand carved staircase.**

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*view of the cupola and the large Flemish brass chandelier*

**To set their seal on the property they had their joint initials (O & M W) carved in stone, together with the completion date of the building work, above the archway at the front of the house which can still clearly be seen today as one walks around the property.**



**Unfortunately, for Owen Williams his happiness was not to last long. The 1920's saw an end to Cardiff's great post war boom and freight rates began to tumble. In 1919, brother Watkin retired from the business but Owen embarked upon a shipping innovation that was to play a major part in his eventual demise.**

**In that year, Owen Williams invested in the new technology of diesel powered engines. He commissioned the building of two large ships using these engines at a time when more prudent owners were reducing their fleets. Inevitably, the cost of maintaining and running these ships was considerably above their projected figures and both were never to become economic propositions. At the same time, his wife Margaret fell in love with a visiting Indian prince who had stayed at Crossways. The prince, Sir Ranjitsinhji Vivhaji, the Maharajah of Nawanager and Margaret returned to his native India in 1924. In that year, Owen had to sell Crossways and all his prized possessions to fund his mounting debts and to keep his shipping company solvent. The house wasn't sold immediately, due to Margaret's reluctance to sign the papers as joint owner, although it's contents were disbursed. It was eventually purchased in 1928 by the Cardiff Hospital Committee and was used as an orthopaedic children's hospital until 1964 when it was purchased by a Mr Ean**

**Pugh and re-established as a private residence.**

**During the 1970's Mr Pugh converted part of the old house into private apartments which were leased and eventually sold by his successor Mr Michael Davies in the 1980's. In 1995, Mrs Anne Paterson who had in turn purchased the property from Michael Davies converted part of the remaining house into a Guest House.**

**Today's owners, John and Mandy Davies, are continuing to run Crossways as their family home as well as a Guest House with the object of extending the business through the provision of additional rooms and facilities as well as restoring some of the old and original features of this grand mansion.**



*seating area in foyer*