

chs07801 Hubert Thomas interview 26 January 1997 transcript V2.docx

Hubert Thomas

This transcript was made by John Sherwood in 2019 from a tape-recorded interview with Hubert Thomas on January 26th 1997. The interviewer is thought to have been Jeff Alden. Hubert, who lived in Cowbridge and district all his long life (he died in his 90s), became Public Health Inspector for Glamorgan County Council. He and his wife Pat lived in St Crispins, 8 Eastgate, Cowbridge, for many years, from where Pat ran her Montessori nurse school. B. Alden 2020

Track 1

His parents' families – his mother was the eldest daughter of Llewellyn and Sarah Thomas of Pen?? Llysworney; his father was the second son of William and Mary Thomas from Village Farm, St Hilary.

Father - school in Llandough, then Board School, Cowbridge, then the County School, Bridgend. He walked on Monday a.m. from St Hilary to Cowbridge, took the train to Llantrisant, then from there the Bridgend train. Stayed with an aunt in Sunnyside, Bridgend till Friday.

Mother and father married in Llysworney Church 1912 or 1913. They went to Ilfracombe by boat on honeymoon from Cardiff. Father had false teeth, and mother was concerned he would be sick on the boat & lose them. They lived in Rose Cottage, St Hilary.

Father then took up the tenancy of Llanblethian Farm, a thatched farm house. Hubert was born there 26 May 1916. His elder sister had health problems, so they then took the tenancy of part of the nearby Great House, Llanblethian (less damp), which was divided into two. The other part was occupied by George Morris, District/Highways Surveyor for Cowbridge RDC and family. They had a gardener from Llandough Castle.

Hubert remembers going as a family by pony and trap to the beach at Llantwit

Major or ? Track 2

A neighbour of the Great House was Enid Punter, sister of Dan Punter, and aunt of Gwilym Punter. She read stories to Hubert; became a maid at Bridgend Cottage Hospital. References to help from Mrs. Punter during illnesses.

He remembers going to Broadway school with his sister with Dai Cox, the milkman, on his dray. Walked back home for lunch, but on wet days mother would take their meals up to the school in a trap to avoid risk of them catching colds.

In summer months, his father farmed fields along Windmill Lane – Hubert would go after school to have tea with the men harvesting the hay.

(Interview stopped whilst daughter Ann served tea)

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Track 3

The farm where Hubert was born was the largest in Llanblethian and central in the village, and local children were welcomed to play there by his father. Around 1925, the Llanblethian and Llysworney estates were owned by the Carne family of Llysworney and were sold to Owen Williams of Crossways House, the shipping magnate who made his money during WW1. In a period of depression, he became bankrupt and the two estates were sold. Hubert's father bought his mother's old farm at Llysworney, and the family then moved there from Llanblethian. All the stock, tools etc. were moved by volunteers using horses and carts. The farm was separate from the village and had none of the basic facilities – no mains water. There were 5 bedrooms, two were occupied by a resident maid and a labourer Tom Harkett? who had moved with them from Llanblethian. Tom was fond of a drink at any time of day. Hubert started at Llysworney school – only 2 classrooms. The teacher was Miss Grant, who later married to Mr ? Terry. Hubert remained at this school until he went to Cowbridge Grammar School.

Track 4

Back whilst living at Great House, Hubert had operation on a small table in his bedroom for a swelling in the neck. Surgeon brought a nurse and administered anesthetic. It was TB gland from fresh milk.

In 1929 he started at Cowbridge Grammar School. They found lump on his rib - operated at cottage hospital in Bridgend - two wards, men's and women's. He was at home for two terms, and repeated a year at school. He left school without taking exams to work on the family farm. The following year, he applied successfully for the post of Junior Clerk with Cowbridge RDC Public Health dept. with numerous duties (described). Then he took a correspondence course, with extra tuition from Mr. McAdam, the maths. master at CGS and chemistry master Wyndham Hitchins? in Aberkenfig. He used to go on holiday with Ron Whittingham and enjoyed the good things in life - aged 19, he was earning £1 a week, but stayed in hotels costing 18/- a night. He passed the exams, then completed a course for Sanitary Inspector (described).

Track 5

Then he applied for and got a new post as Additional Health Inspector, with secure tenure (as protection against rich landowners influence on the council). His first job was to assess overcrowding in houses.

In December 1938, Hubert's father died (described).

Track 6

There were family arrangements in 1939. Hubert didn't wish to give up his job to farm with his mother. His sister Vera [and her new husband] became tenants of the farm.

Mother and Hubert

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moved to a newly built house near Nash manor. He describes air raids seen from there - parachute bomb, anti-aircraft fire from Llandow, incendiary bombs on Cowbridge.

Track 7

Cowbridge - recalls the cinema being built around 1924 - Saturday afternoon matinees. The cinema was built by Mr. Mills, architect and garage owner, whose wife played the piano for the silent films. Very few cars - horses, traps, trains etc., telegraph poles with hundreds of wires, town crier - his bell is now in the museum. They took a train to Barry for Sunday school outings, changing at Aberthaw. There were cattle pens and a goods station at Cowbridge station. No restaurants in the town, only Maud's cafe. Ham and eggs at the Bear (owned by Auntie Lily - first cousin to his mother and father.

Please note, the audio files are held in a folder separate from the main archive. At the time of writing the name and location of this folder has not been finalised but it might be found in Music or Documents\Audio Files.

JS February 2021