

Farm Bills

Introduction

Oswestry Library holds a digitised collection of farm bills on DVD. The collection ranges from 1875 to 1940, spans four generations of people and three farms where they successively lived and worked, from the late 19th Century until the middle of the 20th century. The bills, many of which were originally kept on a metal spike, tell us much about farming activity. They also reveal much about the economic and business activity in the area close to the farms, which were near to Llanrhaeadr, Llanfyllyn and Morda. Other bills tell of activity further afield, in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool. Some show an international dimension. Importantly the bills also speak of domestic, social and religious life. Taken together the collection is an important resource for historians.

The Farms and The People

Maes-y-Bwch was the first of the three farms. Also known as Maes-y-Bwll it was tenanted by John and Mary Morris, who lived there with their son David. Situated close to the River Rhaeadr, it lies about half-way between Llanrhaeadr and Pistyll Rhaeadr. Remote now, it must have seemed even more so late in the nineteenth century. While there is no record of the tenancy in the bills, it was occupied by the Morrisises from about the mid 1870's to the late 1880's.

Llanerch was the second of the three farms. It also appears as Llanerch y Awr, Llanerch a Awr and Llanrach. Llanerch lies roughly half-way between Llanfyllin and Llanrhaeadr. It appears to have been tenanted initially by David and his mother, the tenancy beginning in the late 1880s. It can be surmised that David became the sole tenant. Rent receipts from 1903 until 1919 show he paid the rent at that time.

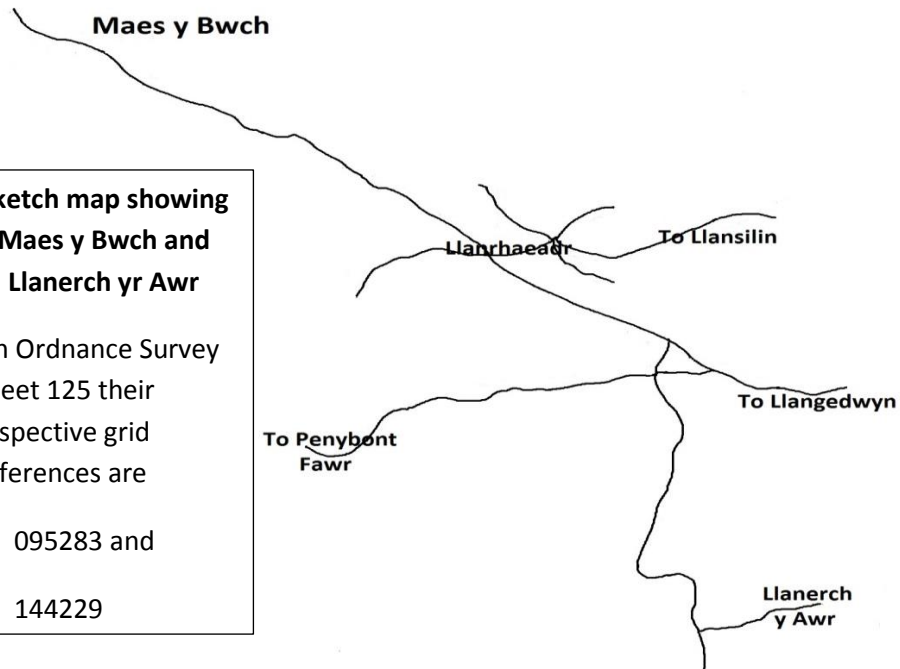
Bryn y Mopsis, was the third farm. It lay in Morda some two miles south of Oswestry and was bought on mortgage by David Morris in 1919.

Sketch Maps Showing the Locations of the Three Farms

**Sketch map showing
Maes y Bwch and
Llanerch yr Awr**

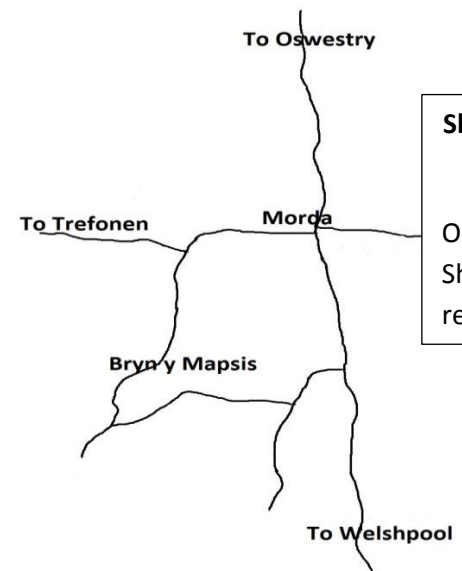
On Ordnance Survey
sheet 125 their
respective grid
references are

095283 and
144229



**Sketch map showing
Bryn y Mapsis**

Ordnance Survey
Sheet 126 grid
reference 284278



The Farms and Their Occupancy

<u>Farms</u>	<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Key People</u>
Maes y Bwch	Tenancy from c. mid 1870s until late 1880s. No record of tenancy in bills	John Morris Mary Morris David Morris
Llanerch y Awr	Tenanted until 1918/1919 Fields at Bwlch y Llan also rented for part of this period	Mrs Mary Morris David Morris Mrs Elizabeth Elinor Morris (David's first wife) Mrs Eliza Morris (David's second wife) Miss Jane Mary Morris (Daughter of David and Elizabeth) Edward Morris (Son of David and Elizabeth – d. 1915)
Bryn y Mopsis	Bought on mortgage in 1919	David Morris Miss Jane Mary Morris who became Mrs Jane Mary Jones Edward Lloyd Jones, husband of Jane Mary Charles Richard Jones, son of Jane Mary and Edward Ella Elizabeth Elinor Jones, daughter who became Mrs Morris Stephen Morris, husband of Ella Elizabeth Elinor

Marriages and Children

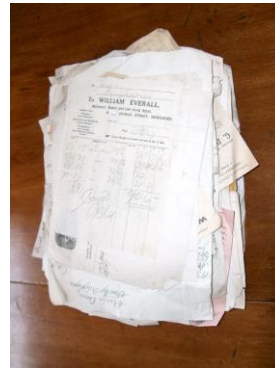
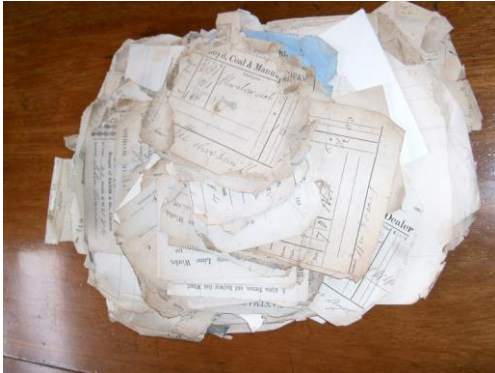
David, son of John and Mary Morris, first married Elizabeth Elinor Owens. There were two children of this first marriage, a daughter Jane Mary and a son Edward who died in his teens. When David married a second time, after the death of his first wife, his new bride was Eliza Jones. There were no children of this second marriage.

Jane Mary Morris, daughter of David's first marriage, married Robert Lloyd Jones who later farmed Bryn y Mapsis. They had two children, Charles Richard Jones and Ella Elizabeth Elinor Jones. In September 1950 Ella Elizabeth Elinor married Charles Stephen Morris and they continued to live and work at Bryn y Mapsis until their retirement.

Recording and Accessing The Bills


The bills have been digitised by volunteers in the Oswestry Family and Local History Group. Many of the bills show the holes made by the spike. Before the involvement of the group the bills had been removed from the spike and some effort made to classify them. The classification was far from complete but endeavoured to show, for example, the purchase of farm supplies and dealings with local tradespeople over time. This attempted classification disrupted the chronological order.


The bills as originally received




It was decided to place the previously classified bills in their chronological order by trade/business. All of the remaining bills were then organised chronologically. As a next step all of the bills were digitally organised by trade/business and in year order. A DVD was then made which shows the bills in trade/business and year order. A folder containing a limited number of hard copies has also been created. Both the DVD and the folder can be viewed at Oswestry library.

A Sample of the Bills Spanning from 1875 to 1940

London House.
Llanfyllin, Feby 23 1911
M. J. Jones
FROM ROBERT JONES
IRONMONGER
CYCLE AGENT AND IMPLEMENT DEALER
Pay Cash on a/c £50.00


1870-1940
Mr. Jones & Mrs. Morris, Brynmagris.
To Hall, Wateridge & Owen, Ltd.
1928 re Probate Valuation
July 18th. To Attending at Brynmagris and making an Inventory & Valuation of the Live & Dead Farming Stock, Household Furniture, etc for the purposes of Probate.
Fee 5 5 0
Expenses 10 6
2 5 15 6


Mr. Morris Llanfach
From John Griffiths receipt
1899 3/11/1917
Handwritten list of items and prices:
24 2 basket ... 5 6
... 1 1/2
... 1 6
... 2 0
... 1 3
... 1 3
... 1 4
... 2 11/2
... 1 3
... 1 6
... 1 10/6
... 4 6
... 4 11/2
... 2 10
... 3
... 7
... 4
... 2 6
... 8 0
... 4 2
... 4 6
... 1 2
... 1 2
... 1 2
... 2 0
Total 3 13 11/2


INVOICE No 2962
Feb 23 1920
M. J. Jones
Llanfyllin, Caerwys
Bot. of R. & A. JONES & SONS, 25, Middleton Road, Oswestry.
PETROLEUMS—all grades, PETROLS, TURPENTINE, LINED OIL, COD LIVER OIL, MOTOR & TRACTOR OIL
CREOSOTE, COOKING and HEATING STOVES.
50 GALLS *Coal Oil* @ Price
5 *Paraffin* @
net @ 50
TOTAL
M. J. Jones Driver
Above Goods Received by *R. A. Jones*

PONTRADIN, LLANFYLLIN, May 6 1897
M. J. Jones
TO JOHN JONES,
Carpenter, Wheelwright, Builder, Joiner,
AND TRELASHING MACHINES PROPRIETOR.
A well selected Stock of Seasoned Materials always on hand.
TERMS—Cash in Three Months. Interest charged on overdue accounts.
1897
Feb 9 Threshing 6 hrs @ 2/6 per hr 1 5 0
dotted June 8 1897 10 6
J. Jones
Our Terms be at 25.00000 Llanfyllin
on June 8th 1897

ESTABLISHED 1800.
The Oldest Established Ready-Made Clothing & House Furnishing Business in Oswestry.
1 WILLOW STREET, OSWESTRY, LANC.
BOY OF DALES BROS.,
JEWELLERS, CLOTHIERS
AND GENERAL HOUSE FURNISHERS COMPLETE OUTFITTERS
DEALERS IN KEYS, GOLD AND SILVER WATCHES, DIAMOND, WEDDING RINGS, ETC.
Boots
Letter to M. J. Jones
1914
1914
Boots
1914

Between them this small sample of bills tells that Welsh was the medium of much oral and written communication. Farmers bought services from other specialists, for example from smiths and wheelwrights. Estate valuation was one task following bereavement. The extent of stamp duty and the range of goods and services to which it applied is illustrated. There is much more besides.

Thanks

The bills have been returned to their owner, Mrs Ella Elizabeth Elinor Morris. The group is grateful to her for allowing and encouraging the digitisation of the bills. She and her husband gave information which clarified who was who at each farm. Had they not done so it would not have been possible to work out family relationships. Sadly there are no photographs of these enterprising and industrious people about whom information was given. Happily the treasury of bills conveys many images of the people and their lives.

Charles Stiles OF&LHG

31 Oct 2013