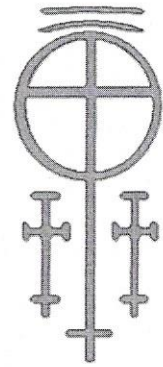


# Meisgyn and Glynrhondda

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Llantrisant and District Local History Society

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Pontyclun Athletic Club



## Llantrisant & District Local History Society

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### An Account of the role played by Pontyclun Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital [now Pontyclun Athletic Club], the staff and volunteers who ran the hospital from 1915 to 1919 in World War 1

#### Start up

An extract from the work of the Glamorgan Branch of the British Red Cross [BRC] shows that the building was opened for care on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1915 and that it closed to patients in February 1919. Up until 31<sup>st</sup> December 1916, there had been 91 admissions of which 70 had been discharged leaving 21 patients at that year's end. No other year by year statistics of patient admissions and discharges have been found.

The Tablet erected in the Athletic Club shows the total number of patients treated over the four years was no fewer than 661. That Tablet appears to have been paid for by Mr Wyndham Damer Clark of Talygarn in the sum of £30. It was his family who had presented the Pontyclun Institute building to the people of Pontyclun in the 1920s. The Pontyclun Hospital was one of many BRC hospitals

More than 100 years have passed since the First World War started and the most casual glance at the huge casualty figures for Allied forces is scarcely believable. The BRC organisation was at the very heart of British efforts to care for and rehabilitate injured servicemen. When I was researching for this brief paper and reading the BRC website, I was struck by the sheer number of buildings pressed into service as hospitals in the four years of this period. Perhaps "pressed" is the wrong word as most premises were given freely and willingly as was the medical, nursing, cooking, laundering and many other skilled tasks necessary to successfully manage these facilities.

In the UK there were 3,000 such hospitals and in Wales alone there were 113 hospitals; in Glamorgan a total of 49. Those close to Pontyclun were at Ash Hall [Ystradowen], Llwynypia, Radyr, The Rest [Porthcawl], and St Fagans.

To give an indication of facilities in Pontyclun, the BRC Division Number 9 [Pontyclun] in a summary of its work up until June 1916 says "An Institute at Pontyclun, given by Mr Godfrey Clark, has been turned into a hospital for

which it is well adapted. There are three good wards with ample offices and conveniences, and plenty of open space for the patients to sit out and for playing games. The hospital has been entirely worked by the members of Pontyclun, Llantwit Fardre and Llanharan Women's VAD [Voluntary Aid Detachment]." The photograph on page six shows one of the wards to have been in the present day lounge which years ago was a snooker room with bar.

#### How was the effort organised and coordinated?

Following the outbreak of the war on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914, the British Red Cross formed the Joint War Committee with the Order of St John. They worked together and pooled their fundraising activities and resources. Services were supplied at home and abroad. The role of the BRC and Order of St John was to provide hospitals and convalescent homes for wounded servicemen; much of the preparatory work was done before wounded men began to arrive.

Auxiliary hospitals were usually staffed by the following;

A **commandant** who was in overall charge except for the medical and nursing staff

A **quartermaster** who was responsible for the receipt, custody and issue of articles in the provision store

A **matron** who directed the work of the nursing staff

Members of the **Voluntary Aid Detachment [VAD]** who were trained in first aid and nursing.

In many cases, such as in Pontyclun, local people from the neighbourhood volunteered in the hospitals part-time although it was often necessary to supplement voluntary work with some paid roles, such as for cooks.

Local members of the medical profession did a large amount of work in these hospitals and, in 1917, the War Office decided that some payment should be made to doctors rendering these services.



Each auxiliary hospital was attached to a Central Military Hospital which directed the movement of patients who remained under military control.

Generally, they did not have life-threatening injuries but needed to convalesce. Servicemen preferred the auxiliary hospital to a military hospital as the discipline was not as strict, conditions were less crowded and the surroundings more homely. Some of the auxiliary hospitals were so successful that they were reopened in the Second World War but this appears not to have happened in Pontyclun.

The photographs show both patients and staff and although some detail of the staff is shown later in this account, there are no records of the patients who were treated in Pontyclun. The National Archives in Kew, London [collection reference MH 106] does hold some records but they advise that most records are believed to have been destroyed. For those readers interested in finding out about a specific serviceman there is some chance that the National Archives can help.

#### Who paid for the Auxiliary Hospitals?

The War Office fixed and paid grants to hospitals which were administered under County Directors. The grant increased annually during the war and at the highest rate the Government paid £1.23 per week or £63.70 per annum for each patient looked after. All costs were to be covered by these sums.

#### Who worked in the Pontyclun Auxiliary Hospital?

The BRC website contains a lot of information; this is shown below together with some additional information I have been able to find. Of course not all those mentioned will have worked at the hospital at the same time and roles would have changed from person to person as dictated by circumstances.

Staff are shown in alphabetical order of surname rather than rank.

**John Arcott** of Chapel Road, Llanharan from March 1915 until September 1917; Sergeant Orderly who worked 670 hours. He was born in Devon in 1874 and was a Railway Station Master.

**Fred Ball** of Church Terrace, Llanharan from March 1915 until September 1917; Private Night Orderly who worked 360 hours.

**Stanley Ball** of Church Terrace, Llanharan from March 1917 to September 1917; Private Night Orderly who worked 50 hours. He was born in Monmouthshire in 1872 and was a Gardener.

**Eunice Bartlett** of Cowbridge Road, Pontyclun from 24<sup>th</sup> March 1915 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 1919; she carried out nursing and general duties amounting to 624 hours. Eunice was born in Llantrisant in 1897 and lived in the Post Office in Miskin Village.

**Mrs Lilian Berry** of 43, Dolau, Llanharan who accumulated 1,000 hours between January 1915 and March 1918.

**Mrs Elizabeth Browning** of Glen View House in Llantwit Fardre who worked from 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917 to March 1919. She was a full time laundress and cleaner paid 2 shillings [about 10pence] per day. She later took up maternity training.

**Charles Brownsey** of Station Road, Pontyclun who was born in Bristol in 1887. He was a joiner in Pontyclun Joinery and boarded at one time in 10, Cowbridge Road, Pontyclun. Charles worked full time in the hospital and was connected to the St John Ambulance Brigade.

**Mrs Lilian Isabel Bruce** was of Lanelay Hall and served from 12<sup>th</sup> April 1915 to February 1919 as Commandant. She was the wife of Sir Gerald Trevor Bruce, was part time and was credited with 3,000 hours of work. Mrs Bruce also worked at Beaupre and Tuscar House hospitals when needed and was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Service Certificate.

For more on the Bruce family in Lanelay read pages 77 to 83 of my book on the *History of Lanelay* which was published in 2015.

**Miss Marion D H Bruce** was born in Pentryrch in 1898 then lived in Lanelay Hall and was the daughter of Mrs Lilian Isabel Bruce [above]. She was credited with 3,100 hours of work on nursing and general duties.

**Ebenezer Coghill** lived in Talyfan Road, Llanharan and was a Private Night Orderly who worked from March 1915 to September 1917 accumulating 310 hours.

**George Cox** was of Bridgend Road, Llanharan. He worked for 600 hours as a Night Orderly from March 1915 to September 1917.

**Fred Dare** lived in Church Terrace, Llanharan and was a Private Night Orderly who worked 550 hours. He was born in 1891 in Llanharan and was a Colliery Pumps man.

**Henry Date** was recorded as living in Bridgend Road, Llanharan who worked in the hospital from March 1915 to September 1917 as a Private Night Orderly for 620 hours. He was a coal miner having been born in 1898 so was just 17 when he was doing this work.

**William Date** was brother of Henry Date [above]. He was also of Bridgend Road, Llanharan, was also a night orderly and worked 540 hours. A year older than his brother he was also a coal miner.

**Miss Jenny [or Jinny] Davies** was of London House in Llantrisant. From 24<sup>th</sup> March 1915 until 31<sup>st</sup> January 1919 she worked on nursing and general duties for more than 2,000 hours.

**Miss Mary Jane Davies** lived in Chapel Road, Llanharan and was engaged on nursing duties for 1,000 hours from



1915 to March 1918. She was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Service Certificate.

**Miss Rachel Davies's** address was shown as Council Schools, Llanharan. She was a part time nurse for 500 hours from January 1915 until March 1918.

**Mrs Florence Dingle's** contact address was The School, Pontyclun. From 24<sup>th</sup> March 1915 to September 1915 she worked on nursing and general duties for 132 hours. More on Mrs Dingle who was born in 1871 can be found in my book on the *History of Pontyclun Junior and Infant Schools* to be published in 2017.

**Philip Dunn** of Crofta, Groesfaen was, at various times, Commandant, District Inspector, Secretary and Treasurer. He was born in Carmarthen in 1849 and was of "private means". He and his wife lost two sons, Gwynne and Philip, within three weeks of each other in February 1917 and a further son, Brian, who died in 1926 after gallant service in this war.

For further detail on Gwynne and Philip Dunn see New Series Volume VII Number 1 of March 2012 entitled "*The Pontyclun War Memorial*" published by Llantrisant and District Local History Society.

**Mrs Florence Eastwood** lived at "Lynwood", Pontyclun and served from 24<sup>th</sup> March 1915 to October 1915. She worked on cooking and general duties for nearly 700 hours. She was born in London in 1884.

**Tudor Edwards** lived in Llantrisant Road, Pontyclun and served for 320 hours between March 1915 and April 1917.

**Mrs Nellie Evans** of Brynheulog, Llantwit Fardre was a cook who worked 700 hours between 19<sup>th</sup> November 1916 and March 1919.

**Mrs Elizabeth Evans** [Nee Thomas] was of Brontaf, Tonteg who undertook nursing and general duties and amassed 5100 hours of work up until March 1919. She also worked in Tuscar House and Beaupre hospitals and was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Certificate.

**Miss Edith Gronow** lived in Coed Bychan Farm, Llanharan and was born in 1885. She nursed for 700 hours between January 1915 and March 1918 and was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Certificate.

**Miss Gwladys Gronow** of Coed Bychan, Llanharan who was sister to Edith Gronow [above]. She was a nurse and completed 300 hours between 1915 and 1918. Born in 1893 she was awarded the same Certificate as her sister.

**Charles Harris** of Brynna completed 250 hours as a Private Night Orderly between March 1915 and September 1917.

**Walter Hawkins** of Brynna was a Night Orderly from March 1915 until September 1917 and he accumulated

550 hours of work. He was born in Stroud in 1868 and in the 1911 census was shown as a lodger in 11, Southall Street Brynna. He was employed as a tipper.

**Miss Cecilia Jenkins** was shown as living in Gringall Farm, Groesfaen. She worked as a nurse and on general duties for more than 5,000 hours between March 1915 and January 1919.

**Mrs Florence Jenkins** lived at the Vicarage in Llantwit Fardre and was Quartermaster for a period up until March 1919. She was answerable for the properties of the detachment and also carried out cooking and mending duties amounting to about 1,000 hours. She was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Certificate for her service.

**Miss Mary Anne Jenkins** lived at Gringall Farm, Groesfaen from March 1915 until January 1919. Her expertise was in nursing and general duties on which she worked for nearly 5,500 hours.

**Mrs Mary Jane Jenkins** lived in the Old Church in Llantwit Fardre and worked for about 150 hours on nursing and general duties between April 1915 and March 1919.

**Miss Ceridwen John** [later to become **Mrs Capson**] of Coed-y-twr Cottage, Tonteg worked for about 1,800 hours as a nurse and on general duties between October 1916 and March 1919. Her record with the British Red Cross states "She is a teacher of music so cannot spare much time". Ceridwen was born in 1895 in Llantwit Fardre and also worked in Tuscar House and Southerndown.

**William John** of Brynna was a Night Orderly who worked about 200 hours between March 1915 and September 1917.

**Mrs Emma Jones** of New Mill [probably present day Miskin Village], Pontyclun was engaged between March 1915 and September 1915 on nursing and general duties for 588 hours.

**Thomas Ajax Lewis** of "Clunsfield", Pontyclun worked between March 1915 and April 1917 for 1,978 hours on secretarial duties. He was born in Porth in 1880 and worked as an Assistant Surveyor with the Glamorgan County Council.

**Mrs Agnes Lloyd** of "The Glyn", Pontyclun worked on nursing and general duties between March 1915 and January 1919 for 1,880 hours

**Mrs Alicia Logie** worked as a nurse for 954 hours. She was born in 1881 in Glasgow and in 1911 lived in Garth House, Pontyclun with her husband [see below].

**John Logie** was Commandant and Medical Officer from March 1915 to August 1915 for 2 hours per day; a total of 320 hours. He was born in 1870 in Glasgow. Mrs Alicia Logie [above] was his wife.



**Mrs Maud Lord** of Chapel Road, Llanharan was a part time nurse who worked 700 hours between January 1915 and March 1918 .She was born in 1882 in Cardiff.

**Miss Ellen Michael** of Lanelay, Talbot Green appears to have been employed in Lanelay Hall and was shown in the Red Cross records as "Cook in private house and cooked on Sundays until a permanent cook arrived". In total she worked 200 hours between April 1915 and March 1919.

**Charles Morgan** of Brynna was a Night Orderly who worked 200 hours up until September 1917.

**Mrs Lilla Morgan** of "Sunny Bank", Chapel Road Llanharan was a part time nurse from March 1915 until March 1918.

**Mrs Isabel O'Rourke** was recorded as living in the Talygarn Estate Office. She was at various times Commandant, Secretary and Quartermaster from August 1915 until March 1919. She amassed nearly 9,000 hours so must have been virtually full time. She was born in Norfolk in 1877.

**Mrs May Payne** of Cowbridge Road, Pontyclun worked for about 7 months up to October 1915 on cooking and general cleaning duties.

**Edward Pick** of Bridgend Road, Llanharan was a Night Orderly between March 1915 and September 1917 for about 100 hours. At the same time he worked as a coal miner in Meiros Colliery, Llanharan. Edward was born in Cinderford in 1888.

**Miss Penelope Price [1886-1977]** of East Caerlan, Llantrisant served from April 1916 to March 1919 and was a nurse and music teacher. She accumulated 2,800 hours of work and also served in Beaupre and Tuscar Rock hospitals. Penelope was the second daughter of Dr. William Price of Llantrisant whose statue stands proudly in the Bullring in Llantrisant and was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Service Certificate as well as a number of other honours for her charitable works.

**Mrs Florence Russell** lived near The Crown, Llantwit Fardre, was a cook, cleaner and laundress who was paid two shillings and sixpence per day [12 pence in present day currency] between September 1916 and March 1919. She was awarded two Service Bars and the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Certificate.

**Miss Gertrude Russell** was from Church Village and worked in the hospital from April 1915 on general duties for 100 hours. Gertrude was a teacher who was born in 1881 in Cymmer.

**Mrs Mary Salter** was from Efail Isaf who worked on nursing, mending and general duties from April 1915 until March 1919 for 2,688 hours. She was awarded a One year Service Bar and the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Certificate.

**Mrs Mary Savage** of Gwynfryn Terrace in Llantwit Fardre was a cook and laundress from April 1915 until August 1918. She was awarded two Service Bars and the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour Certificate.

**Albert Sheppard** lived in Bridgend Road, Llanharan and was a Private. He was a Night Orderly and was credited with 70 hours of work between March 1915 and September 1917. Albert was born in 1880 in Blackwater, Surrey and was a stationary engine driver in a local colliery.

**George Sheppard** lived in Mill Road, Llanharan, was a Night Orderly and worked between March 1915 and September 1917; he did 50 hours. He was a coal miner and was born in Blackwater, Surrey in 1883.

**Edward Smith** of 41, Bridgend Road, Llanharan worked in the hospital between March 1915 and September 1917 as a Night Orderly for 140 hours. He was originally from Coleford, Gloucestershire where he was born in 1880. He was a coal miner.

**Mrs Ada Thomas** was from Mwyndy, near Pontyclun. Between January 1917 and January 1919 she was a nurse in the hospital but also did cleaning and did 480 hours equivalent to about 5 hours per week.

**Mrs Elizabeth Thomas** was of Turberville, Llanharan. She was Quartermaster [or Quarter mistress] from January 1915 until March 1918. In total she accumulated 200 hours in the hospital including some nursing work. She was born in Llanharan in 1860.

**George Harry Trotman** served from November 1915 up to September 1917 as a Night Orderly. He was of 41, Bridgend Road, Llanharan, was a colliery labourer and was born in Tortworth, Gloucestershire in 1870.

**Mrs Mildred Trotman** was the wife of George [above] but her address was shown as 41, Dolau, Llanharan .She undertook nursing duties from January 1915 until March 1918 for about 1000 hours equivalent to about 26 hours per month. Mildred was born in 1876 in Luton, Bedfordshire.

**Mrs Lilian Tucker** of "The Laurels", Llanharan was Commandant from March 1915 until February 1919. She amassed 2000 hours in that time and did some nursing duties as well. From Pimlico, London, Lilian was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour and Certificate to mark her achievements.

**Samuel Archibald Tucker** was the husband of Lilian [above] and was Medical Officer from August 1915 until February 1919. He was born in Dublin in 1878.

**Mrs Rose Tummy** lived in Cowbridge Road, Pontyclun and did nursing duties from September 1917 until March 1919. She amassed 2800 hours work in the hospital.



**Mrs Cassie Watkins** of the Post Office, Pontyclun was Quartermaster [or Quarter mistress] from March 1915 until March 1917 doing 1002 hours in total.

**Miss Ceinwen Williams** lived in the Post Office in Llantwit Fardre and worked in the Pontyclun hospital as well as at Tusker House and Beaupre hospitals from November 1915 until March 1919. She did general and nursing duties of 2700 hours and was awarded the Queen Alexandra Roll of Honour and Certificate.

**David Williams** of Llantrisant Road, Pontyclun was a Corporal from March 1915 until July 1919 for 1897 hours.

**Mrs Emma Williams** of Miskin Manor was a generous donator to a number of hospitals in the Pontypridd and Rhondda area. She was Lady Vice President and Commandant of the hospital in Pontyclun for 14 months and was born in 1843 in Cadoxton Juxta Neath.

**Howell Williams** of Brynna was a Night Orderly for 600 hours from 1915 to 1917. He was born in Pontypridd and was a Waterman for the local Council.

**Miss May Williams** lived in Llantwit Fardre and was employed on general duties from November 1914 until March 1919. Born in 1870 she was a school teacher.

**Miss Amy Williamson** was of "The Talbot", Llantrisant and a nurse and general duties volunteer. She worked in Beaupre as well as Pontyclun from 1916 to 1919 for 160 hours.

**John Wintle** was of Picton Terrace, Llanharan and was a Night Orderly. He was there from March 1915 until September 1917, was born in West Dean, Gloucestershire and was a coal miner.

**Mrs Gertrude Wood** lived in Mill St Llanharan and was a nurse for 1000 hours between January 1915 and March 1918.

**Jesse Woodroffe** lived in Stuart Street, Pontyclun and worked on general duties in 1915. He lived in Lewis Street, Pontyclun in 1911.

**William Wright** lived in Bridgend Road, Llanharan and was designated a Private. He was a Night Orderly from 1915 to 1917 for 800 hours, was born in Gloucestershire and was a painter and decorator.

**Those who have helped putting this account together** Trevor Wooding, Jemma Lee [Archivist in British Red Cross, UK Office], persons who have passed photographs to me and Mrs Peggy Taylor.  
December 2017



*A ward area in what is now the lounge. The roof timbers would have been exposed in those days.*



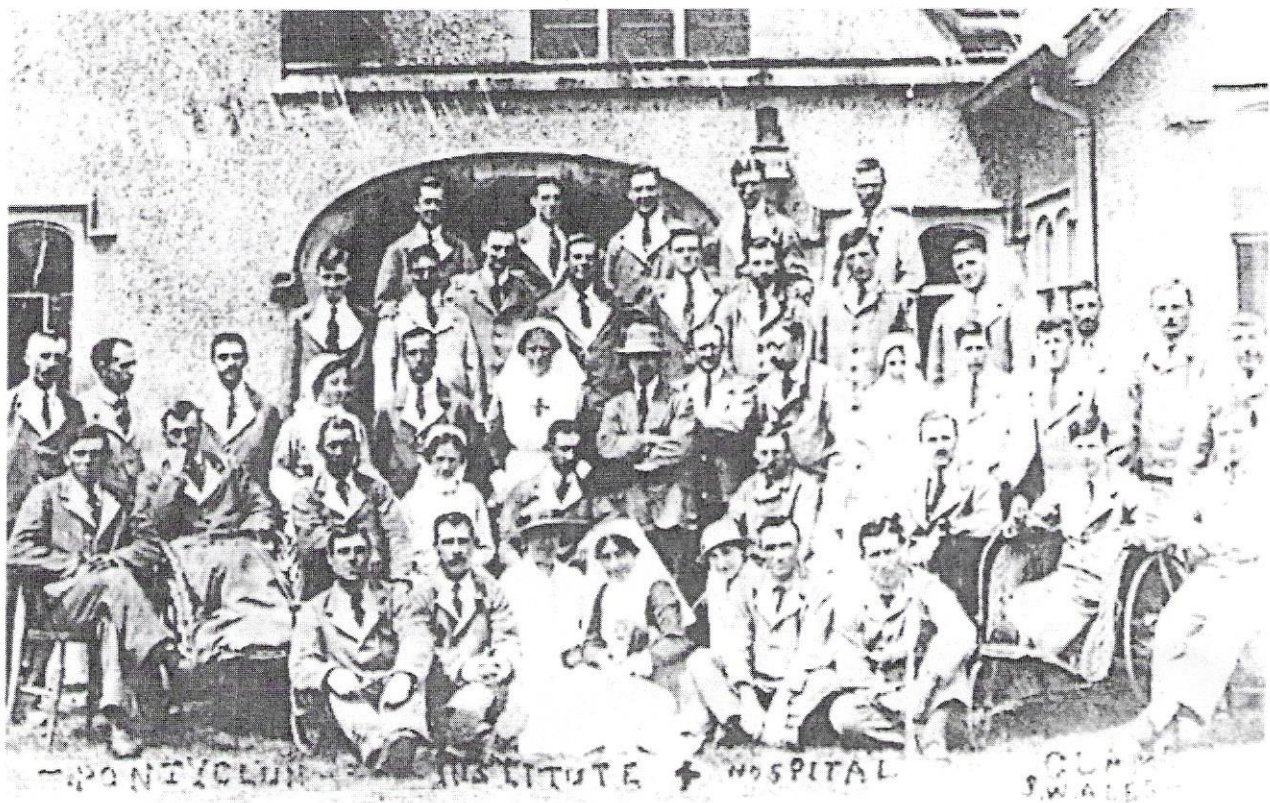


*This is probably a 1916 photograph. Note the gentleman holding a tennis racquet and the gentleman in centre front, arms folded, who might be a Medical Officer or another senior person.*



*This photograph is a mix of patients and staff; note the ancient wheel chair, the gentleman third from left [standing] who has a rather ill fitting jacket and the only nurse who does not have a cross on her uniform. I wonder why.*





*Another photograph showing a mix of patients and staff. Note the lady at centre front who appears not to be in uniform. Perhaps she is a "manager" of some kind. All the men have ties!!*