



*Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol
Llandysul a'r Fro
Local History Society*

In an interesting file of newspaper cuttings, which Lesley had come across, I found the following article from the Llanelli District Notes in the South Wales Evening Post published on 6 March, 1979. It records the reminiscences of a lady who started work as a housemaid at Alltrodyn Mansion, Capel Dewi in 1906.

I've added a few things from our Archives; we have a whole file on Alltrodyn in our cupboard if only I could find it! (Yes, we are currently re-organising our ever-growing store of research materials stored in the Library to make it easier to locate individual items!).

In the meantime, stay safe, this pandemic is still with us.

Jane
Chairman



Llanelli District Notes in the South Wales Evening Post 6 March 1979:

UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS
By Fred Bennett

An 87 year old Burry Port woman has a host of memories of her real-life "Upstairs Downstairs" experiences at a Welsh stately home during the reign of Edward VII.

Mrs. Margaret Jane Davies, who was only 14½ when she became under housemaid at Alltrodyn Mansion, near Llandysul, the home of Captain James Stewart, a prominent J.P. and

Deputy Lieutenant of Cardiganshire, who had served in the Royal Madras Horse Artillery during the Indian Mutiny.

Her pay and hours of work would give today's trade union official nightmares. Margaret was paid £12 a year – about 4s. 7d. a week – and worked seven days a week. There was no such thing as a half day or an evening off, although she was allowed to attend church every other Sunday morning. She could ask for the rare day off if she had a sufficient good reason.

She had to be up at 6 am and occasionally at 4 am, when rooms had to be given a special going-over. This consisted of turning everything out of the room. There were no such things as carpet sweepers and every inch of carpet had to be swept by hand with a special carpet broom.

All the walls were cleaned meticulously, along with the mirrors and glassware; the furniture was polished, and when everything was moved back into the room it was gleaming.

There was a whole retinue of staff – butler, cook, kitchen maid, head housemaid, then came Margaret as under housemaid. There was a lady's maid, footman and laundry maid.

Two women had to come in every fortnight to help with an enormous pile of washing.

Outside staff consisted of a groom, coachman, gardener, under gardener, farm bailiff, cowman, and carter.

The eight servants used to have their meals together below stairs, with a real-life Hudson presiding at the head of the table, a man named James Morris.

Christmas was a real treat; the staff had a goose and plum pudding, the Stewart family having the traditional turkey.

An ordinary dinner was a substantial five-course affair, with soup, followed by fish, then the main course, after which came the sweet, then a savoury and coffee.

The family used to dress for dinner, and Margaret had to put out their evening clothes.

The captain was immaculate in his dinner jacket, and his widowed daughter-in-law, the Hon. Evelyn Stewart (her husband, Lieut. James Logan Stewart, of the 7th Hussars, had died in a horse riding accident), wore an elegant evening dress.

Every stately home worthy of the name had its resident peacocks, and Alltrodyn was no exception. There were swans on the pond, too.

Woods abounded, and the captain had friends along for the shooting. He owned several farms, which produced all the milk and butter for the household, along with vegetables and home-cured bacon.

The cook baked all the bread in an old-fashioned brick oven.

Alltrodyn boasted an orangery which produced small tangerines, used to decorate the table at Christmas.

The cook made jam and preserves from fruit grown in the orchard. There were grapes, peaches and green figs from the glasshouse.

The stables were beautifully kept like a palace, says Margaret. There were two bay horses which were kept perfectly groomed and they drew a gleaming carriage. A liveried coachman supplied the finishing touch.

But all things come to an end, and after the death of the captain in April 1908, at the age of 77, drastic economies were made.

The butler, footman, groom, cook and coachman all had to go. The housemaid, who was kept on, became house parlourmaid, and the kitchen maid had to do the cooking. The lady's maid and Margaret were also kept on.

Margaret left Alltrodyn after three years' service, but returned in 1918 as cook. She stayed there for 15 years, leaving for good in 1933, when she went to look after her father, a widower, in his declining years.

After a lifetime of service, Margaret married late in life and is happy with her memories.

Mrs. Davies worked at Alltrodyn between census, so does not appear. But the Butler, James Morris, appears on the 1901 census:

1901 Census at Alltrodyn						
Name	R'ship	Status	Age	Occupation	Born	Lang.
James Stewart	Head	Wdr	70	Magistrate	Woodford, Essex	Eng
Margaret Brenchley(?)	Sister	Wd	72	Living on own means	"	Eng
Eveline A. Stewart	D/law	Wd	43	"	Dunfrieshire	Eng
James A. Stewart	G/son		8		Bombay, India	Eng
Douglas D. Stewart	G/son		3		Bognor, Sussex	Eng
James Morris	Servant	Wdr	64	Butler	Manordeifi, Pembs.	Both
Mary Williams	Servant	Unm	58	Cook	Blaenffos, Pembs.	Both
Anne Jones	Servant	Unm	30	Dairymaid	Capel Dewi	Both
Anne Harries	Servant	Unm	33	Housemaid	Llandygwydd	Both
Mary Davies	Servant	Unm	24	Housemaid	Llandyssul	Both
Ellen Jane Carter	Servant	Unm	26	Nurse	---- Berkshire	Eng
John Davies	Servant	Unm	20	Groom	Llandyssul	Both
James Evans	Servant	Unm	17	Footman	Llandygwydd	Both

At Alltrodyn Lodge, in the same year, lived Anne Jones, a 50 year old widow, who described herself as a pauper. Living with her was her son, George, aged 13 years.

**SALE BY MESSRS.
Hards, Vaughan & Jenkinson
THE WELL KNOWN
ALLT-YR-RODYN, BLAEN DYFFREN, & HEOL-DDU ESTATES**
(With the Minerals underlying the same), the property of the late JOHN DAVIES LLOYD, Esquire,
comprising an area of about 4,622 acres, with a rent roll of nearly £3,100 per annum.
3 August 1881

Carmarthen Journal & South Wales Weekly Advertiser

13 November 1891

DEATH

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of George Parry Morris, son of Mr. James Morris, coachman at Alltrodyn, which took place on October 28th, at the early age of 26, after a lingering illness of several years, borne with Christian fortitude. He was interred at St. John's Church, the Rev. E.P. Jones, Curate of Llandyssil, officiating. An impressive sermon was preached, in which reference was made, in touching terms, to the deceased, in whose death the Sunday School has lost a bright and useful member. Great sympathy is felt for the parents, who mourn the untimely death of so dutiful a son.

Carmarthen Journal & South Wales Weekly Advertiser

21 July 1893

ALLTODYN

The Royal Wedding was celebrated at this lovely mansion, Alltrodyn, by a tea given to the children of St. David's Board School, by Capt. Stewart and Mrs. Logan Stewart. Before partaking of the good things so liberally provided, our worthy donor called for cheers for the Queen, the Duke of York, and the Princess May of Teck, and a hearty response was made.

After doing ample justice at the tables, sports were indulged in and prizes distributed. A tug of war took place between the boys and the girls. It was a fair contest, but the girls won being assisted by Mrs. Logan Stewart. She very soon won the hearts of the little folks.

The games being over, cheers were called for Captain Stewart and Mrs. Logan Stewart, and responde to lustily, and "God save the Queen" was sung. When leaving each child received a bun and an orange; having enjoyed themselves to their hears' content. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd, Waunifor, sent over a large sum of money to be distributed among the children of the above-named school.

The Aberystwyth Observer

30 April 1908

DEATH OF CAPT. J. STEWART

Captain James Stewart, J.P., D.L., of this county, and of Alltrodyn, Llandyssil, died at Bognor on Thursday evening, at the age of 77. He was second son of Alexander Stewart, of Woodford Hall, Woodford, and 5 Cambridge square, London, W., by Agnes Marshall, daughter of Edmond Logan, of Clarkstone, co. Stirling, N.B.

He was captan in the Royal Madras Horse Artillery, and served in the Indian Mutiny, married Louise Charlotte, daughter of James Butler of the Indian Army, and had two sons and two daughters. James Logan Stewart, lieutenant 7th Hussars, who pre-deceased his father, having married Hon. Eveline Dormer, and left two sons. Captain W.E.L. Stewart, D.S.O., late Welsh Regiment, married Mary Helena Rice, Mrs. Wardell, and Mrs. Pryse-Rice. He was aman of sterling character and unbounded generosity, a staunch Churchman and a Conservative.

