

## GRAVE No: E75A [Related to E65 James] PARRY, Mary, James & Benjamin



### ***Inscription:***

In Loving Memory of  
MARY  
The beloved wife of  
JAMES PARRY  
of Llanelly Hill  
died June 7<sup>th</sup> 1916 aged 60 years.

Also of JAMES PARRY  
died August 12<sup>th</sup> 1923 aged 66 years.

Also of BENJAMIN PARRY  
son of the aforesaid who was killed  
at the Garn Drift Blaenavon  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 1936 aged 51 years.  
*'Rest in peace.'*

The story of the Parry and James families begins in the mid-19th century, rooted in the industrial communities of South Wales. Mary James was born in 1857 in Crickhowell, the daughter of Benjamin James, originally from Somerset, and Naomi Williams from Radnorshire. Around the same time, in 1858, James Parry was born in Aberdare, Glamorganshire, to William Parry, a coal miner from Llanellen, Monmouthshire, and his wife Harriet Richards from Troedyr, Cardiganshire.

By 1861, three-year-old James was living with his parents at 12 John Street, Aberdare, already part of a household shaped by the coal industry. Ten years later, the family had moved to Gellyfelen in Llanelly Hill, Breconshire, where both William and his teenage son James were connected to mining life. Nearby lived Mary James, aged 15, with her parents and siblings. Her older brother William was also a miner, reflecting the shared occupational threads that bound these families and their community.

Tragedy struck in 1881 when James's mother, Harriet Parry, died aged 56. Later that same year, James, then 24 and working as a coal miner alongside his widowed father, married Mary James in Crickhowell. Their marriage marked the joining of two families already closely linked by geography and industry.

James and Mary settled at Upper Gelly, Llanelly Hill, where they raised their family. Their first recorded child, Benjamin, was born in 1885, followed by Harriet, William, and Beatrice Maud, among others. Census records from 1891 and 1901 show a busy household, with James working as a collier and hewer, and later "at the face," a demanding and dangerous role in the mines. Their sons Benjamin and William would eventually follow him underground, continuing the family's deep connection to coal mining.

By 1911, James and Mary had been married for 29 years and had raised five children, all of whom were still living. Their daughter, Flossie Gertrude, remained at home, while their sons worked in the collieries. Life, however, was not without hardship. In June 1916, Mary died at the age of 60 and was laid to rest at St Elli Church.

James lived on as a widower, and by 1921 he was described as an invalid, no longer able to work. He remained at Upper Gelly, cared for by his daughter Beatrice Maud, now Mrs Cuff, herself widowed, along with his son Benjamin, who worked as a repairer at the Milfraen Colliery for the Blaenavon Company. James died in August 1923, aged 66, and was buried alongside his wife in Llanelly.

The risks of mining continued to cast a long shadow over the family. In October 1936, their son Benjamin Parry, aged 51, was killed in an accident at Garn Drift, Blaenavon. Working as a timber man, he was erecting supports when a fall of coal occurred. Despite efforts to rescue him, he died shortly after being extricated. He was buried at St Elli, bringing a poignant close to a life shaped, like that of his father and grandfather, by the coal industry.

This family's story reflects the resilience and hardship of generations who lived and worked in the mining industry.

## **SOURCE RECORDS**

### **1857 BIRTH RECORD Crickhowell Apr May Jun Vol 11b Page 156**

Birth of **Mary James** parents Benjamin and Naomi James nee Williams [E 65]

### **1858 BIRTH RECORD Aberdare, Glamorganshire from the Wales Census**

Birth of **James Parry** parents William and Harriet nee Richards.

### **1861 Wales Census living at 12 John Street, Aberdare, Glamorganshire.**

**James Parry** aged 3 years at school with parents William 36 a coal miner and mother Harriet aged 36 years.

### **1871 Wales Census living in Gellyfelen, Llanelly Breconshire.**

**James Parry** aged 13 born in Aberdare Glamorgan with Parents William 46 a coal miner from Llanellen, Monmouthshire and mother Harriet 46 from Troedyraur, Cardiganshire [Newcastle Emlyn.]

### **1871 Wales Census living in Gellyfelen, Llanelly, Breconshire. [Near the Parry household.]**

**Mary James** aged 15 years a scholar with parents Benjamin 43 from Somerset and Naomi 45 from Radnorshire [E65 next to E75A] with siblings William 22 a miner, Elizabeth 19 a dressmaker and Sarah aged 5 years at school.

### **1881 DEATH RECORD St Elli [Llanelly Parish Records]**

January Harriet Parry, the mother of James, dies aged 56 and is buried on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **1881 Wales Census living in Gellifelen, Llanelly, Breconshire.**

**James Parry** aged 24 with father William 58 a widower both working in the coal mine.

### **1881 MARRIAGE RECORD Crickhowell Oct Nov Dec Vol 11b Page 238.**

**James Parry** marries **Mary James**

### **1885 BIRTH RECORD Crickhowell Jan Feb Mar Vol11b Page 116**

Birth of **Benjamin Parry**.

### **1891 Wales Census living at Upper Gelly, Llanelly Hill, Breconshire.**

**James Parry** aged 33, coal miner with wife **Mary** and children Harriet 8, **Benjamin** 6, William 4 and Beatrice Maud Aged 1 year. Also present his father William Parry 67 a widower.

### **1901 Wales Census living at Gellyfellen, Llanelly Hill, Breconshire.**

**James Parry** aged 45 a collier and hewer with wife **Mary** 46 and children **Benjamin** 15, William 13 and Beatrice aged 10 years.

**1911 Wales Census living at Upper Gelly, Llanelly Hill, Breconshire.**

**James Parry** aged 54 a collier working at the face with wife **Mary** 54 with sons **Benjamin** 26 single collier working at face and **William** 24 labouring underground and daughter **Flossie Gertrude** aged 17 years. They have been married 29 years and had 5 children all living.

**1916 DEATH RECORD St Elli [Llanelly Parish Records.]**

7<sup>th</sup> June **Mary Parry** of Upper Gelly, Llanelly dies aged 60 years and was buried on the 12<sup>th</sup>. [E L Jones Curate.]

**1921 Wales Census living at Upper Gelly, Llanelly Hill, Near Abergavenny.**

**James Parry** aged 64 years, widowed an invalid and not occupied with daughter Mrs Cuff [Beatrice Maud wife of Joseph Cuff] 32 a widow of Llanelly Hill, housekeeper and son **Benjamin** 36 single a repairer at the Milfraen colliery for the Blaenavon Co Ltd.

**1923 DEATH RECORD St Elli [Llanelly Parish Records.]**

12<sup>th</sup> August **James Parry** of Upper Gelly, Llanelly aged 66 years, dies and is buried on the 16<sup>th</sup> [E Davies Rector.]

**1936 DEATH RECORD St Elli [Llanelly Parish Records] and Welsh Coal Mine Casualties.**

3<sup>rd</sup> October **Benjamin Parry**, 51, timber man at Garn Drift, Blaenavon died due to a fall of coal. He was erecting timber with another man. He stepped back after tightening an 'arm' when the coal fell. He died a short time after he was extricated.

**Benjamin Parry** was from Gelly, Llanelly Hill and he was buried on the 8<sup>th</sup>. [D Parry Jones Rector]