

GRAVE NO: F101

DAVIES, William & Albert, Solomon, Margaret, William Jnr



Inscription:

In loving memory of WILLIAM DAVIES, of Gellyfellen, who died 11th November 1889 aged 47. And of ALBERT, son of WILLIAM & RACHEL DAVIES, died 4th July 1880 aged 16 months.

Also SOLOMON, their son, who was killed by the lamentable accident at Tylerstown, 27th January 1896 aged 25.

In the midst of life we are in death.

Also, Margaret Davies, daughter of the above, who died April 4th 1901 aged 16 years. Also William Davies, son of the above, who died June 24th 1918 aged 52 years.

The Davies Family of Gellyfellen, Llanelly Hill

The Davies family lived at Gellyfellen, Llanelly Hill, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, their lives closely tied to the coal industry that shaped much of south-east Wales.

Around 1842, William Davies was born, later becoming a coal haulier, a demanding occupation that involved transporting coal from the mines — physically exhausting work essential to the local industrial economy. By 1871, William, aged 29, lived at Gellyfellen with his wife Rachel, 28, and their children: Thomas (10), Daniel (8), William (6), Martha (3), and baby Solomon, just five months old. Coal hauliers played a vital role in the mining communities of Wales, moving coal from the pithead to local markets or canals for shipment.

By 1881, the family had grown further with the births of Sarah J (6), Benjamin (3), and baby John (4 months). William's older sons — Thomas (20), Daniel (18), and William (15) — had begun work as coal miners, following in their father's footsteps. Rachel managed the household, keeping the family together in what was often a harsh industrial environment.

Life in a coal-mining community was dangerous, and the Davies family were not spared. Earlier, in 1880, Albert Davies passed away and was buried at St Elli Church, followed by the death of William himself on 11 November 1889, aged 47, and his burial at St Elli Church on 16 November.

After William's death, Rachel became the head of the household. By 1891, she was living at Gellyfellen with her children: William (25), Solomon (20), Benjamin (18) — all working as coal miners — along with Sarah Jane (16), John (10), Rachel Ann (8), and Margaret (6). The family's reliance on mining work reflected both necessity and the industrial opportunities available locally.

Working as a coal miner was extremely hazardous, with long hours, dangerous conditions, and frequent accidents, yet it was one of the few stable sources of income in these valleys.

Tragedy struck the family again when Solomon Davies, who had become a collier, was killed in a mine explosion at Ferndale Colliery, Tylorstown, on 27 January 1896. The disaster, caused by firedamp, claimed 57 lives. Solomon was buried on 3 February 1896 at St Elli Church, a reminder of the ever-present dangers of mining life.

Rachel, now in her fifties, continued to manage the household. By 1901, she lived with her surviving children: William (34), Benjamin (23), and John (20), all unmarried and working as coal hewers, while Rachel Ann, 18, worked as a domestic servant at home, and Maggie (16) was a dressmaker. The family continued to experience loss: Margaret Davies died in 1901 and was buried at St Elli Church, and William (the son) passed away in 1918. Rachel, the matriarch, lived to see her family grow and change, likely passing away in 1925 at the age of 80, and was buried at Llanfihangel, Pontymoile.

The story of the Davies family reflects the resilience, hard work, and hardships of coal-mining communities in Wales. Through loss, dangerous work, and the daily demands of industrial life, the family endured and remained rooted in Gellyfellen, leaving a legacy of perseverance and community ties.