

## GRAVE NO: F91

### REES, William Reginald, Phyllis Elsie



#### *Inscription:*

In Loving Memory of WILLIAM REGINALD, the beloved husband of PHYLLIS REES, who met with an accident at Keys (Kay's) Slope Colliery, Blaenavon, January 27<sup>th</sup>, died February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1931 aged 31 years.

Also his wife PHYLLIS, died August 6<sup>th</sup> 1953, aged 51 years. Reunited.

*To my dear Daddy from Irene  
(on flower urn monument)*

### The Story of William Reginald Rees and Phyllis Elsie Kay

William Reginald "Reggie" Rees was born in 1900 at Llanelly Hill, Crickhowell registration district, the son of William Rees, a collier, and his wife Annie. In the 1901 census, baby William, then just nine months old, was living with his parents and two older siblings, Eliza and James, at Llanelly Hill. By 1911, the family were recorded at Upper Gelli, Llanelly Hill, with William's father still working as a collier-hewer, his brother Henry James employed as a colliery labourer above ground, and younger sister Elizabeth Maud joining the household.

Phyllis Elsie Kay, who would later become his wife, was born in Blaenavon around 1902. In 1911 she was living at 8 Upper Garn Terrace, Blaenavon, with her parents, Joseph Kay, a surface collier born in Blaenavon, and Barbara, who had been born in Llanelly. Also in the household were Phyllis's younger brother Thomas James, and her uncle, James Kay, a retired colliery blacksmith.

On 21st June 1919, just after the end of the First World War, William Reginald Rees, then 19 years old and working as a miner in Llanfoist, married 17-year-old Phyllis Elsie Kay at Llanfoist Parish Church. Phyllis was recorded as living at Upper Garn, Blaenavon.

Their marriage was destined to be short-lived. William Reginald worked as a collier at Kay's Slope, Blaenavon, and on 27th January 1931, aged only 30, he was fatally injured by a fall of coal. He lingered for several days in Blaenavon Hospital, but died on 3rd February 1931. His burial took place on 9th February at St Elli Church, Llanelly Hill, with the Rector, W. G. Davies, officiating. At the time of his death, William and his family were living at Llamarch, Llanelly Hill.

Widowed at just 29, Phyllis was left to raise their children. The 1939 Register records her living in Abersychan, described as a widow and "unpaid domestic," with William H. Bartlett, and with her daughter Clarice I. Rees (likely Clarice Irene Rees), then aged 13. In time, her children began lives of their own: Clarice married John E. J. Fowler in Pontypool in 1943, and two years later Phyllis herself remarried, becoming the wife of William Symonds in Abergavenny in 1945.

Phyllis's life was also cut short. She died on 6th August 1953 at the age of 51, while living at 16 Lower Garn Terrace, Garn-y-Erw, Blaenavon. She was buried five days later, on 11th August, at St Elli Church, Llanelly Hill, the same resting place as her first husband. Probate was granted the following month to her second husband, William Symonds, described as an electrician's labourer.

Thus, the intertwined story of William Reginald Rees and Phyllis Elsie Kay is one marked by the hardships and resilience of mining families in Monmouthshire—shaped by youthful marriage, tragic loss underground, and the strength to rebuild life in the face of adversity.