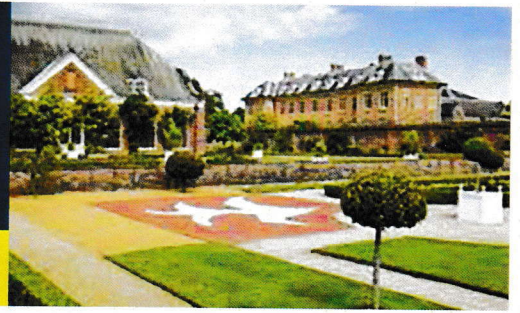


# Friends of *Tredegar House* Newsletter



## THE HOUSE OF ELIOTT - By Paddy Landers

I wonder how many Friends remember this wonderful BBC Costume drama of the early 1990s? Based in 1920s London, it told the story of two sisters, Beatrice and Evangeline who, having led a very privileged life, suddenly found themselves penniless on the death of their father who had accumulated huge debts. Ill-prepared to earn a living, the sisters turned to their passion for fashion and set up a dressmaking business.

Week after week we watched their business develop and become a fashion house. We were intrigued by the mixed fortunes, as they lurched from triumph to disaster and back. At one point their designs were stolen and later, their clothes were destroyed in a fire, just before a major fashion show. They were building their business in a world riddled with class snobbery, patriarchy, where the belief was that only men could run businesses, and the assumption that Haute Couture could only come from Paris, Rome and New York.

The drama ended after the third series and we were left feeling that we had lost two good friends. We had also fallen in love with the beautiful 1920s fashions and missed seeing them paraded before us every Sunday night. So it was a great pleasure for us to hear that the travelling exhibition of House of Elliott costumes was to be displayed in Tredegar House.



The exhibition was magnificent and the setting perfect. Over 3000 people flocked to see the elegant dresses, coats and hats. The exhibition was supplemented with dresses from the Bury St Edmunds Costume museum. Friends were invited to a private viewing with drinks served in the Orangery, a conducted tour through the costume gallery and a buffet supper in a marquee on the lawn with music from the Norman Thatcher Ragtime Band. We all dreamed of returning to an era of such elegance!

Finally, the real cherry on the cake, not only did we have the costumes, but the costume designer for the House of Elliott, Joan Wodge came to speak to us. It was a fascinating lecture which gave us a real insight into the research undertaken by the BBC to ensure accuracy for their costume dramas.



## WILLIAM SAYZELAND – TRUSTED FRIEND – By Monty Dart



William Sayzeland came from Hertfordshire. By chance he found an advert in a newspaper for a house-boy or gentleman servant for Courtenay Morgan, who gave his address as Hampstead, London. According to Sayzeland's son, who was interviewed at Tredegar House in 1991 he received a guinea a year plus his keep and his clothes.

William Sayzeland began his working life with the Morgan family as a Valet to Courtenay Morgan and lived with them at Ashford Court, three miles from Ludlow, Shropshire. At that time Lieutenant Courtenay Morgan and his wife Katharine, along with their two children Evan and Gwyneth were trying to hold together a family life.

Will Cross (my writing partner) and I were looking at other records in the Shropshire Archives when we saw a deposit of a butler's book from Ashford Court, the home of Lt. Col Courtenay Morgan and his wife Katharine. The period in which the books were written was to be the last time that the family lived together but this was to be thrown apart in 1906 when Courtenay and Katharine decided to go their separate ways – and sold the entire contents of their home in an auction, the butler's book for some reason ended up with the auction posters. It had been mis-catalogued as 'Fazeland' so could only be discovered by accident. We knew about Sayzeland, who took a chance and ordered up the archive – it was to prove fascinating.

Written by William Sayzeland during his time at Ashford Court it tells of the day to day expenses of the Morgan family and so much more. It is a social document of an aristocratic family from 1901 to 1906. It starts in January 1901 and we see a journey Courtenay made with Sayzeland – we have the porters carrying luggage at Ludlow Station – 1 shilling – to Hereford and thence to Portman Square where the Morgan family had a house. Sayzeland notes in his book 'Lent Major Morgan £2 when 'dressing for dinner' he also lent Courtenay 5 shillings for a cab to Fenchurch Street Station.

In February 1901 we find Sayzeland and Courtenay at Durban Station in Africa, on the way to the Boer War – 2 shillings and 6 pence for the luggage. At the Bridge Hotel in Durban, Courtenay consumes a small bottle of whisky and six bottles of soda. Things were getting drastic and two rolls of toilet paper were purchased and noted in the butler's book.

By September Sayzeland writes of Katharine - 'Lent her Ladyship £2 at Kings Cross Station and she got a cab to Portman Square'. Katharine was on her way to North Berwick Station – heading for Kinnaird Castle where she was born and stopping in at various friends and relatives on the way – the book records the expenses. In the meantime Sayzeland ordered 2500 gun cartridges in London to send to the Transvaal

The auction catalogue shows the items for sale under the instruction of Lieutenant Colonel Morgan and the price they realised. Over the course of 4 days the entire contents of the house and gardens were auctioned and both Katharine and Courtenay walked away from Ashford Court with the certain knowledge that they would never live together again.

Albeit that you see in the books again - Katharine visiting Liberty, Courtenay's yacht where we catch up with Sayzeland again – he followed Courtenay faithfully – on sea and land. All over the world. William Sayzeland and his wife Ada moved, with Courtenay to Tredegar House in 1913 with their one year old child Jack. They first lived at Pencarn Avenue where there were 8 houses built by the Morgans especially for servants and estate workers. Barnes the head chauffeur, Holloway the Head Keeper, Seyama the gardener and Albert Osmont a mason also occupied this row. The Sayzelands had 4 children, one of whom Alfred worked on the Tredegar House Estate as an architect surveyor and he was still there in 1939.



William's daughter Betty married Henry Smith, Evan's valet. According to the testament of Sayzeland's son Alf, Evan, then Lord Tredegar knowing perhaps that he had much longer to live asked Henry Smith what plans he had for the future and Henry said he would like to keep a public house. Amongst the Morgan holdings were many pubs and inns but he was surprised when Evan offered a choice of 3! The Tredegar Arms in Bassaleg, the Rhiwderin Arms and The Angel at Castleton. Henry Smith chose The Angel, as it was a Free House and Evan gave it to him outright. When the Angel was demolished to make way for road widening, Henry, William Sayzeland's son in law bought the Wentloog Castle pub entirely furnished by Harrods! When a syndicate came along and offered him a tidy price, he took it, making a nice profit and the family decided to settle in Australia. To come.....the Morgan artefacts from Australia returned to Tredegar House bought by the Friends.



### **MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN - Mrs Judith Rice**

On the 21st April we held our 35th Annual General Meeting in the Morgan Room at Tredegar House, unfortunately it was not well attended by members. Following our meeting we were addressed by Mrs Clare Turgoose, the House Collection Manager informing us about the conservation work that is being undertaken in the House. Also Mrs Linda Wigley General Manager gave us an insight into what their proposed plans are for the next 10 years. A big thank you to Gene our Catering Co-ordinator for putting on an excellent spread once more.

It is with regret I have to announce the death of one of our long standing members Mr Derek Richards who passed away in early May. I am sure you would like me to send our sincere condolences to his wife and their family.

Our Treasurer Mr Hugh Clatworthy has informed the committee that due to family commitments he will be standing down at the end of this financial year. I am sure you will all agree he has given a first class service to the Friends during the last 14 years and will be greatly missed.

Pirates day once again was a great success. A big thank you to everyone for turning up to assist with all the games. We had quite a few people showing an interest in the Friends and one person has already joined our happy band.

The emergency repair work to the east range of the roof in the inner courtyard has been completed. We were informed there were eight different areas that needed repair including lead replacement, gutters to be repaired, slipped slates replaced and finally work done on the chimneys.

During the month of September the House is holding an exhibition called Treasures of Tredegar. The Trust are creating a role profile for the exhibition host and the Friends have been invited to apply. Please see the attached form enclosed with this Newsletter.

Sometime last year one of Monty's lever arch files went missing of research on Evan Morgan. If you borrowed it please bring it back.

### **FROM FRIENDS ARCHIVES – NEWSLETTER AUGUST 1989 Marble Bust of Sir Charles Morgan, Bt**

The Friends have been delighted to finance the purchase of a white marble bust of Sir Charles sculpted by John Evan Thomas in 1841 offered at a Christie's sale recently and held at Durwards House in Essex. When it's conservation work is complete it will again occupy a prominent place in the House. Another example of the sculptor's work is already on display – a marble seated figure of Sir Charles which was the model for the bronze statue in Newport's Park Square.



## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

### CHRIS EDMUNDS' RESPONSE TO POINTS RAISED AT HIS RECENT TALK TO FRIENDS.

(a) Was "Mittie" a local lady, or did Godfrey become acquainted with her in London or elsewhere?

Mittie was not local. Her family, the Thorolds (pronounced 'thorough') were an old Lincolnshire family, while she herself was born in Berkshire. The first meeting of Mittie and Godfrey is not recorded, but since she did not seem to have had any Monmouthshire connections, I think it is safe to assume that they met on the London social scene at some point.

(b) Did "Mittie" and Richard Naylor ever have a Mansion in Derbyshire?

No. Their first mansion was Hooton Hall in Cheshire (this was demolished in 1932) and then they moved to Kelmarsh Hall in Northamptonshire. The Naylor family are buried at Kelmarsh. Naylor himself was from Liverpool and made a fortune in banking and cotton trading.

(c) Did "Mittie" and Richard have any Children? I think I heard something about a daughter. Am I right?

Yes. 2 daughters. Mary and Martha (known, like her mother, as 'Mittie'). It is stated in a letter at Aberystwyth that "Lord Llanover is making mischief over Godfrey Morgan and Mittie Naylor." Did that refer to the mother or the daughter? If it is the daughter then that would give some credence to the rumours that she might have been Godfrey's child. She was taught to ride at Tredegar House and, on at least one occasion, she entered the Servant's Ball down the staircase with the rest of the Morgan family. It's interesting to speculate...

(d) Is there a commemorative statue of Godfrey anywhere in Newport. I don't recall hearing of one.

No. There was much discussion about this when Godfrey died in 1913, but it was decided that Courtenay would donate The Friars to the Royal Gwent Hospital in memory of his uncle instead. The Friars was to be used as a convalescent home originally. Sadly there is no mention of Godfrey at The Friars at all, so it isn't much of a memorial, in truth!

(e) Is there any information available about how the building of the Cardiff Royal Infirmary and the Royal Gwent Hospital were financed?

I'll try and dig out some information for you. Buildings of this sort, before the NHS, were often funded by public subscription. It is worth noting, as far as the Royal Gwent Hospital is concerned, that not only did Godfrey spearhead the funding, donate the land, and serve as president of the hospital, he also left them the massive sum of £5,000 in his will. (that amount is over £500,000 in today's terms).

(f) One of the "Friends" in last night's audience had been on a conducted tour around St Woolos Cemetery, during which it was suggested that the land for the Cemetery was donated by one of the Morgans and that it was the first public cemetery in the UK Is this fact or fiction?

Yes, I think it is fact. Certainly in 1853, Sir Charles Morgan Robinson Morgan gave them 14 acres of land on which to build the cemetery. It is said to be the first public cemetery (as opposed to churchyards and private burial plots, of course) in the UK.