

**Hanes Ysgol Bancyfelin
1872–2022**

Golygwyd gan Trefina Jones

**A History of Bancyfelin School
1872–2022**

Edited by Trefina Jones



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Mae'r llyfr yma wedi ei gyflwyno i holl staff a disgyblion Ysgol
Bancyfelin ar hyd y blynyddoedd, gyda diolch am eu hymroddiad,
eu gwerthoedd a'u cyflawniadau mewn amrywiol feysydd.

This book is dedicated to all the staff and pupils of Ysgol Bancyfelin over the
years, with gratitude for their dedication, values and successes across all fields.

Diolchiadau

Acknowledgements

Diolch i bawb sydd wedi cyfrannu atgofion a lluniau, yn arbennig Mr Bruce Wallace, am ei ymchwil a'i waith yn croniclo hanes cynnar yr ysgol.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed memories and photos, especially Mr Bruce Wallace, for his dedication and research into the early history of the school.

Cynnwys

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Cyflwyniad

Mae Bancyfelin a'r cyffiniau wedi chwarae rhan bwysig yn addysgu pobl ifanc Cymru ers canrifoedd. Trwy haelioni Madam Bridget Bevan, Cwrt Derllys, Bancyfelin, bu'r ysgolion elusennol a'r ysgolion cylchynol Cymraeg yn dysgu rhwng traean a hanner poblogaeth Cymru i ddarllen yn ystod y 18fed ganrif. Fodd bynnag, nid tan 1872 y bu adeilad ysgol parhaol ym Mancyfelin. Yn nhudalennau'r gyfrol hon, gobeithiwn roi darlun i chi o hanes yr ysgol dros y 150 mlynedd diwethaf, trwy waith diwyd yr hanesydd lleol Mr Bruce Wallace ac atgofion a ffotograffau staff a disgyblion, ddoe a heddiw.

Introduction

Bancyfelin and the surrounding area has played an important part in the educating of the young people of Wales for centuries. Through the generosity of Madam Bridget Bevan of Derllys Court, Bancyfelin, the Welsh charity schools and circulating schools taught between a third and a half of the population of Wales to read during the 18th century. However, it wasn't until 1872 that there was a permanent school building in Bancyfelin. During the course of this book, we hope to provide you with a snapshot of the history of the school throughout the last 150 years, through the diligent work of local historian Mr Bruce Wallace and the memories and photographs of staff and pupils, past and present.

Pennod 1

Cyflwyniad i Bruce Wallace

Daeth Bruce a Sylvia Wallace i fyw i Fancyfelin yn 1987 a dechreuodd eu dwy ferch fynychu Ysgol Bancyfelin ar unwaith. Ar ôl gyrfa mewn llywodraeth leol, dechreuodd Bruce ymchwilio i hanes cymdeithasol yr ardal ac mae'n parhau i weithio'n ddiflino yn y maes hwn. Mae, hyd yma, wedi ysgrifennu dros 50 o bapurau ar hanes Bancyfelin a Llangynog, gan gynnwys hanes yr ysgol. Mae ei waith ymchwil yn parhau, felly os oes gan unrhyw un stori, dogfen neu lun o'r ardal a'u bod yn fodlon eu rhannu, hoffai Bruce glywed ganddynt.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Bruce Wallace

Bruce and Sylvia Wallace came to live in Bancyfelin in 1987 and their two daughters immediately started school at Ysgol Bancyfelin. After a career in local government, Bruce began to undertake research into the social history of the area and he continues to work tirelessly in this area. He has, to date, written over 50 papers on the history of Bancyfelin and Llangynog, including the history of the school. His research continues, so if anyone has a story, document or photo of the area and they are willing to share it, Bruce would like to hear from them.

John Richards a David Rowlands (1851–1872)

John Richards and David Rowlands (1851–1872)

Ysgol Bancyfelin was built in 1872 but the story of full-time education in Bancyfelin began earlier.

The earliest indication of full-time education in Bancyfelin appears in the 1851 census. One of the residents of the village, John Richards, recorded his employment as Infant School Teacher. Where he lived and where he taught was not recorded but it was probably in a building associated with the former chapel building. The class may have been small because the census for the village only records four children as ‘Scholars’.

The 1861 census records a new schoolteacher in Bancyfelin: David Rowlands (18). He was born in 1843 in Cwmau Uchaf, a farm in the adjacent parish of Merthyr, and was lodging in a house that was probably in the terrace of four across the side road from the chapel. He was lodging with Dan Griffiths (33), an agricultural labourer, his wife Mary Griffiths (also 33), their four children and Mary’s mother.

| No. of Schedule | Road, Street, Sq., and No. or Name of House | HOUSEHOLD No. Name and Age | Name and Surname of each Person | Relation to Head of Family | Condition | Age of Male Female | Rank, Profession, or Occupation | Where Born | Whether Single, or Married |
|--------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | Miss Lewis | Daughter | Wid | 1- | None | Warrington, Lancashire | |
| | | | John Morgan | Step-son | Wid | 18 | Scholar | Do | |
| | | | John Jones | Wid | Wid | 42 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Mary Ann Gilbert | Wid | Wid | 14 | Do | Do | |
| 26 | Bancyfelin | 1 | John Griffiths | Head | Wid | 33 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Mary Griffiths | Wife | Wid | 33 | Do | Do | |
| | | | David Rowlands | Scholar | Wid | 18 | School Teacher | Do | |
| | | | Mary Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 7 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Elizabeth Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 5 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Thomas Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 4 | Do | Do | |
| | | | John Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 3 | Do | Do | |
| 27 | | | John Griffiths | Head | Wid | 33 | School Teacher | Do | |
| 28 | Wheaton Sheaf | 1 | John Griffiths | Head | Wid | 33 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Mary Griffiths | Wife | Wid | 33 | Do | Do | |
| | | | John Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 7 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Elizabeth Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 5 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Thomas Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 4 | Do | Do | |
| | | | John Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 3 | Do | Do | |
| 29 | Bancyfelin | 1 | John Griffiths | Head | Wid | 33 | School Teacher | Do | |
| | | | Mary Griffiths | Wife | Wid | 33 | Do | Do | |
| | | | John Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 7 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Elizabeth Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 5 | Do | Do | |
| | | | Thomas Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 4 | Do | Do | |
| | | | John Griffiths | Daughter | Wid | 3 | Do | Do | |

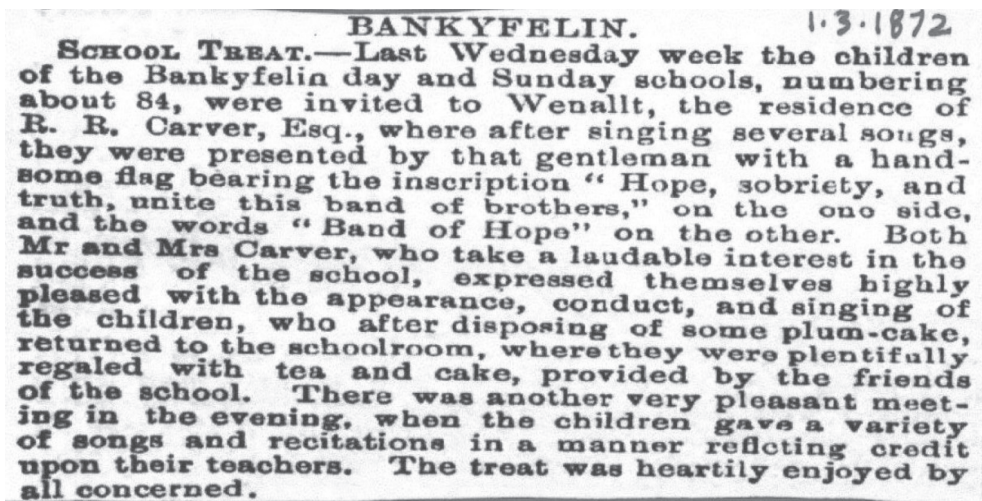
The 1861 census form for the west end of Bancyfelin, with the 26th household occupied by the Griffiths family and David Rowlands, boarder and schoolmaster, and the Wheaton Sheaf nearby.

The 1861 census described at least 30 children as ‘Scholars’. David Rowlands was clearly popular, even though he was only 18 years old.

In the 1871 census, *David Rowlands Schoolmaster* was still lodging with Dan and Mary Griffiths, although they had moved to 2 Spring Gardens, a house in the rear of the terrace at the other end of the village (now called Rose Cottage). The census again recorded about 30 ‘scholars’ in the village, but there was still no dedicated school building in the village.

Who was David? What was his background? What was he doing taking on the education of children, some of whom were probably only a little younger than he was? The census forms don’t help here. All we know is that he must have had some form of calling. It was to prove his vocation for the rest of his life, and he would always be known as ‘Y Mishtir’.

In 1871, David had an assistant, a *Miss Griffiths* who was the sewing mistress. She was probably Margaret Griffiths (1853–1876), the older daughter of his landlord. By 1871, Margaret would have been 17 years old.



A newspaper report from March 1872. This confirms that there was an earlier day school in Bancyfelin because the current building did not open until December 1872. It also confirms that it was linked to the Sunday school.

The first page of the Ysgol Bancyfelin Log Book begins in September 1872. It therefore records the last three months of the day school in the chapel vestry. Not until the second page (17th December 1872) does the Log Book say ‘*Entered into the New Schoolroom*’ (see page 28).

From these first two pages, we can draw the conclusion that after 10 years as the school-teacher in the vestry school room, David Rowlands was running it on formal lines. The first entry refers to him reopening after the August holidays of 1872. It also states that there was a *Register* and a *Timetable* (27th September 1872), and four classes – ‘*30th October*

1872. Mr Charles James Smith Arms, Bankyfelin visited the school and took charge of the 4th class through the morning'.

As well as reference to learning grammar (8th November 1872) and arithmetic (29th November 1872), much of the curriculum included learning poems. Scholars learnt 'Be to others kind and true', 'Good night to you all', 'The song of the Coopers', and 'The jolly little cracker', all from a book called *The Blackbird*.

1
Sep. 16. 1872. Reopened the school after the Holidays
" 20 " Commenced to learn "Be to others kind and true" from the "Blackbird"
" 23 " Every thing passed off satisfactorily.
" 27 " The Registers were called according to Time Table through the week.
Oct 1. 1872 The classes made fair progress this week.
" Attendance very small this day, owing to the wetness of the weather.
" 11 " Commenced to learn "Good night to you all" from the Blackbird
" 18 " Every thing paped off satisfactorily.
" 21 " Commenced learning "Good night to you all" from The "Blackbird".
" 21 " Commenced learning "The song of the Cooper" from "The Blackbird"
" 25 " All duties were carried on according to Time Table all through the week.
" 28 " Mr David John Lower Court visited the School, and examined the 1 and 2 Standards in Arithmetic.

The first page from the school Log Book covers its period before the new school was open, and lessons were taking place in the 'School Room'.



Charles James and the stone he carved.

Charles James ac adeiladu Ysgol Bancyfelin (1872–1877)

Charles James and the building of Ysgol Bancyfelin (1872–1877)

The 1870 Education Act made primary education a national responsibility and made school attendance compulsory. School Boards had to be formed, elected by ratepayers who, with help from the Treasury's annual grant, financed part of the cost of the schools. The children also had to pay school fees.

In Bancyfelin, things moved along a little slower. A publicly funded School Board was not formed until 1877. Until then, local people had to develop a school themselves. David Rowlands had shown the way with his school in the chapel vestry. Now the village needed a dedicated building. Two legal documents dated 1876 and 1877 (full text in the Appendix) reveal how this was done. They confirm that the principles of generosity and benevolence in the field of education continued in Bancyfelin after Madam Bevan, with a man called Richard Richards Carver.

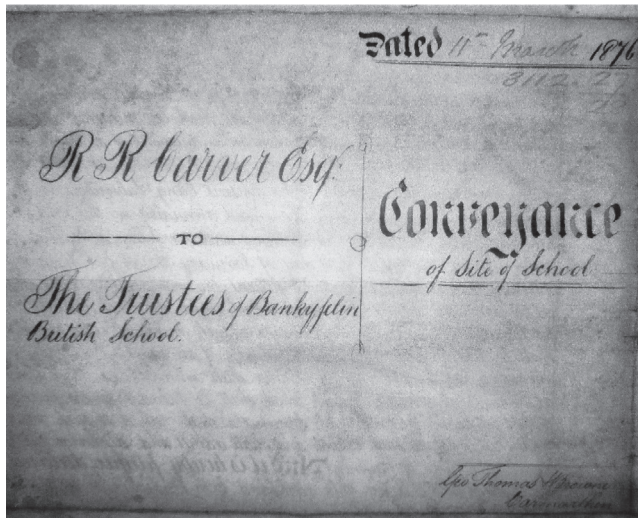
Richard Richards Carver was a gentleman farmer living at Wenallt. He was the son of William Carver, a former Church Warden for the parish. Some of his land fronted the main road through the village. With the coming of the railway in the early 1850s, the village began to expand and Carver built houses along the road. Within a few years, he owned half the houses in the village.

With financial security, Carver became a philanthropist by donating land fronting the main road as the site for a school.

The school was designed by T.W.A. Thompson of Carmarthen in 1870 and built in 1872 by Mr Charles James (1845–1923), a local mason who also ran the Smith's Arms Public House, on the other side of the school to the Fox and Hounds (now called Arfon). Charles carved his initials and the date on a stone that today is located on the entrance steps.

Without evidence to the contrary, it seems that Carver may also have paid for the construction of the school out of his own pocket.

After four years, Carver decided to formalise the situation. In 1876, he sold the site for £90 (£10,000 at current value) to a Trust of six local farmers, set up under the principles of the 'British and Foreign School Society'. British Schools, as they came to be known, were developed in the early 1800s, by Joseph Lancaster. The Lancaster system promoted education for the poor through the establishment of Trusts. The six farmers were Thomas Edwards Wern, John Davies Plasnewydd, Thomas James Parc-yr-Abbot, William Griffiths Cwmdwyfran (later called Maescowin), Henry Harries Jones Gwarwenallt and John Davies Llwynbrain.



The 1876 Conveyance from Richard Richards Carver to the six Trustees. The text appears on page 14.

Darlun manwl o hanes Ysgol Bancyfelin dros y 150 mlynedd diwethaf

Llyfr wedi'i gyflwyno i holl staff a disgyblion Ysgol Bancyfelin ar hyd y blynyddoedd, gyda diolch am eu hymroddiad, eu gwerthoedd a'u llwyddiannau ar draws pob maes.

Er bod Bancyfelin a'r cyffiniau wedi chwarae rhan bwysig yn addysg ieuenctid Cymru ers canrifoedd, nid tan 1872 y bu adeilad ysgol parhaol ym Mancyfelin.

Wedi'i churadu'n ofalus gan Trefina Jones, mae *Hanes Ysgol Bancyfelin 1872–2022* yn rhoi cipolwg manwl o hanes yr ysgol dros y 150 mlynedd diwethaf, wedi'i ddwyn yn fyw trwy waith diwyd yr hanesydd lleol Mr Bruce Wallace ac atgofion a ffotograffau staff a disgyblion, ddoe a heddiw.

A detailed snapshot of the history of Ysgol Bancyfelin throughout the last 150 years

A book dedicated to all the staff and pupils of Ysgol Bancyfelin over the years, with gratitude for their dedication, values and successes across all fields.

Although Bancyfelin and the surrounding area has played an important part in the education of the young people of Wales for centuries, it wasn't until 1872 that there was a permanent school building in Bancyfelin.

Carefully curated by Trefina Jones, *Hanes Ysgol Bancyfelin 1872–2022* provides a detailed snapshot of the history of the school throughout the last 150 years, brought to life through the diligent work of local historian Mr Bruce Wallace and the memories and photographs of staff and pupils, past and present.



Mae **Trefina Jones** wedi bod yn brifathrawes Ysgol Bancyfelin ers ei phenodiad yn 2016. Roedd gan Trefina Jones eisoes gysylltiadau cryf ag Ysgol Bancyfelin, fodd bynnag – gan fod ei swydd gyntaf fel athrawes yn Ysgol Bancyfelin, lle bu'n dysgu rhwng 1987 ac 1990. Yn dilyn ei phriodas yn 1995, daeth i fyw i'r pentref, lle bu ei meibion hefyd yn Ysgol Bancyfelin, sef y bedwaredd genhedlaeth o'r teulu sydd wedi mynychu'r ysgol.

Trefina Jones has been head teacher of Ysgol Bancyfelin School since her appointment in 2016. Trefina Jones already had strong links with Ysgol Bancyfelin, however – as her first teaching post was in Ysgol Bancyfelin, where she taught between 1987 and 1990. Following her marriage in 1995, she came to live in the village, where her sons also attended Ysgol Bancyfelin, being the fourth generation of the family that have attended the school.



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