

## The Bartleys of North Wales

### ORIGINS

*'A book or a kind of diary of their (the Bartleys) origin was written in the Greek language, and handed down by each generation to my father. The book held by my father was translated into English by the schoolmaster of the Grammar School at Hawarden (the home of the Gladstones).'* This is taken from a three page, hand-written note dated 1929, found nearly 70 years later in an old book belonging to my grandfather, John Howell Bartley. According to his notes, the ancient book was loaned to a Rev. Evan Evans who wished to add to it his notes on the recently deceased Rev. John Bartley, who died in 1884, but sadly Rev. Evans, who died in Liverpool in 1897, never returned the diary although my grandfather made many efforts to locate it.

The loss of this book creates a major problem in tracing the early history of the Bartley family for there seem to be two lines to follow, both having a traces of fact to make them possibilities, but neither seems compatible with the other.

One line is that set out by my grandfather John Howell Bartley who died in 1932. The document written by him in 1929, from which the opening quotation is taken, came to light by accident. In it he claims that *'three brothers named Samuel, John and James, with the surname Bartholomew (whitesmiths by trade) left Athens during a time of national strife, at the time when Greece gained her independence about the year 1700.'* According to John Howell, John, one of the three brothers settled in Cornwall, another. Samuel, my direct ancestor, settled in North Wales while James remained or settled in near Shrewsbury.

Apart from these details there seems little more to support the Greek connection. The name Bartholomew sounds Greek and it is possible that the name was anglicised, (Bartley is an accepted diminutive) and this might support the case. Added to this is the reference to Samuel Bartley or Bartholomew, coming from an old Shropshire family (see below). There is one twist to this Greek idea for there is another Bartley family in North Wales, centred on Denbigh, with no known link to our family.

A conversation with one member in 1994 brought forth the comment "I don't know much about our family history - it is not a subject in which I have much interest but I seem to remember being told that there was a Greek connection." This information could hardly have come from our family for there had been no known contact between the two groups. The earliest known member of this Denbigh family was also a Samuel, born c1736 and he married a Mary Peacock in Liverpool in 1761. The reference to the original brothers being whitesmiths does seem relevant for the trade of blacksmith runs throughout the early known history of the family, starting with 'our' Samuel, (born c1700 but died in 1767 at Llanddoged near Llanrwst.

However, the other line of approach also seems credible and there are four references which can be quoted. The first has been mentioned - the James settling in or near Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The next appears in an appreciation of Richard Bartley, born 1764, by his son John, (the Reverend John, mentioned above) written in the Welsh Methodist Year Book 'Yr Eurgrawn'. He refers to his father as being son of Richard Bartley of Pant y Gloch and grandson of Samuel Bartley "*(neu, yn hytrach, Samuel Bartholomew; canys felly y gelwid ef weithiau)*" 'or rather Samuel Bartholomew, for that is how he was more often called') from an English family previously from Shropshire.'

Samuel Bartley is traced to the Smithy at Llanddoged where he died in 1767. His son Richard lived there, supposedly born 1735 according to my grandfather, although there is no register entry of such a birth to be found so far. This Richard had at least one brother - Robert, born 1737, but nothing more is known about him. Richard married and had six children: Jane, 1758, Catherine, 1760, Richard, 1764, John 1768, Samuel 1779 and Margaret 1779. In 1746 and 1747 Samuel acted as Church Warden, as did son Richard in 1772 and 1773. On the Tithe Map, plot 160 is shown as Homestead, (acreage 5/0/2, rent charge £1/5/0), and plot 161 as Barn and Yard (acreage 1/0/4) rent charge 7/10p, the landowner being Henry Kyffin. Some time after 1773 a move to Pant y Gloch was made, date uncertain.

A brief digression - The name Bartley may have come originally from Batholomew but once accepted as Bartley it was spelled either with a T or a K. Richard Bartley signed his name with a T, although the ministers used a K.

Whether this has any relevance to the fact that there were other Bartleys/Barkleys in the Wrexham and Buckley areas, later to become 'T's but earlier 'K's is not known. A Will exists made by a Joseph Barkley of Gresford in 1719 in which his nephew Samuel Barkley is named (see Chapter 2) and there is evidence of a Blacksmith named Samuel Bartley in Chester in early days - and there is also a blacksmith in Shropshire named Bartholomew Barkley.

During a visit to NLW, Aberystwyth in 1995 a Will was located, dated 1713, by a Rees Bartholomew, alias Bartley, of Henryd in the Conwy Valley. Everything was left to his wife, Grace, vch David, and her brother, John David. No mention was made to children. There were other Bartholomews living in the Conwy area at that time and who might be related although no link is known as yet.

To return to the story of 'our' Bartleys. The third reference again appears in 'Yr Eurgrawn' when Rev. Evan Evans (the person who had been loaned the Greek book and failed to return it) wrote an appreciation of Rev. John Bartley. He, too, referred to Richard having descended from an English family from Shropshire. In John Bartley's handwritten account of his life (original held in Bangor University Archives) he mentions the fact that in Trefriw at the time of his childhood - the first decade of the nineteenth century - there were supposedly only three people in the village able to read and speak English, and his father was one of the three. As Richard had been born in, and lived all his life at Llanddoged and Pant y Gloch, it poses the question - where did he learn his English if not from his family's English background?

The fourth reference comes from the 1929 hand-written document by my grandfather where he says "*I remember my father saying that there was some property near Shrewsbury which someone wanted him to take up, called Lower Ridge, but whether the property was mortgaged or in Chancery he did not know, and said he was not going to throw good money after bad.*"

Lower Ridge, near Whittington, nowadays a Georgian farmhouse in 200 acres, has had Barkleys living there from the early sixteenth century until the latter part of the seventeenth - after which the Bartleys appeared at Pant y Gloch.

A later chapter in this book will attempt to sort out a little of the complex story of Lower Ridge but at this stage the link between those Barkleys (with many variations on that spelling, including Bartley) is not established - there certainly seems to be no sign of any Greek connection, although name Bartholomew occurs and the name Richard is common. The Welsh patronymic system was frequently used and the Samuel Bartley/ Bartholomew interchange could be a result of this – as mentioned above there was the Bartholomew Barkley in Shropshire, at Knockin, also a blacksmith, plus a Samuel Bartley, blacksmith, in Chester.

The evidence of the Shropshire (particularly Lower Ridge) Barkleys leads me to believe that someone (great-grandfather?) had been looking for the family name in Shropshire and had come across references to Lower Ridge and had assumed a possible link. My researches lead me to think that that the Barkleys were of too high a social standing, with a genealogy stretching back too far to be connected with us.

As there is some doubt about the early days of the Bartleys it is best to stick now to more verifiable facts, moving forwards to consider the progress of the family from the known days at Pant y Gloch, above Colwyn Bay.

## **PANT Y GLOCH**

The Bartley family story must begin at Llanddoged, near Llanrwst, where the Samuel Bartley (or Bartholomew) is known to have lived. When he arrived there is unknown, so the beginnings of the story are still confused. The appreciation by Rev. John Bartley, referred to above, places Samuel at Pant y Gloch but this is incorrect. Samuel died in 1767 at Llanddoged - Richard, his son, was the one to make the move to Pant y Gloch. Richard was born in 1735 (according to my grandfather) and died at Pant y Gloch although it is not known where he was born. There is no sign of Samuel's marriage although it is known that his wife was Jane. One other son is known – Robert, born 1738, but there is no further record of him. Neither is there any record of Jane's burial. This could well be because she retained her maiden name for some purposes and there are too many Jane's to be sure.

It could be that if a record of Samuel's marriage can be found her name and the names of more children will be found also. It is my belief, although I have no real evidence (except, perhaps, the passing-on of the Greek story to the Denbigh family could have originated here), that the first known Bartley in Denbigh, also Samuel and born 1736, was brother to Richard, and thus Samuel (Bartholomew)'s second son. No one, so far, can locate the birthplace of the Denbigh Samuel.

Another 18thC Will, located at NLW in 1995, is by a Joseph Barkley of Gresford, who refers to a nephew, Samuel, son of his brother Thomas. The Will, dated 1718 implies that Samuel was under the age of 21 at that time, so born probably between 1698 and 1717, most probably the Samuel, son of Thomas, Gwersyllt, and baptised 14 March 1711. Samuel Barkley, of Gresford, married Elizabeth Roberts of Llanefydd 9 June 1709 (PD/52/1/3 record 228). Another strange folk tale held in the family is that an Elizabeth (Betty) Bartley, having completed a drove to London was returning to Wales with the profits when she (they?) were attacked by Dick Turpin. Turpin lived 1709 - 1739 and so this could be a possibility. Could this be the father of the Samuel Bartley of Denbigh, born 1736, and even related to our Samuel?

In the graveyard at Eglwyswen, Denbigh, there are gravestones to two Thomas Bartleys, clockmakers, one the son of the other, both of whom were supposedly born in Pwllheli. The eldest was apparently born in the 1720's although the Denio, Pwllheli, parish records have no entries. They both moved to Denbigh (appearing also in Manchester and Liverpool, where, in the latter there once existed a Bartley's Court) and so it might be that they moved to be near other family members.

All that is known is that Richard (born 1735) died at Pant y Gloch (see his Will). When the move northwards was made is not known but as Richard was Church Warden in 1772 it would be shortly after that time - possibly after the birth of Jane in 1775, as a result of a growing family requiring more room than was available at the small Llanddoged smithy, or possibly because of an improvement in the family's fortunes. His son Richard (born 1764) lived at Pant y Gloch before eventually moving to Yr Angor, Trefriw, leaving the farm in the hands of Samuel. Both Richard and Samuel became ardent Wesleyans and for many years thereafter, Pant y Gloch was not only an important farm and smithy, but became a centre

for the developing Methodist movement in North Wales, its doors always open to welcome visiting preachers and ministers. More light on Pant y Gloch and on the Wesleyan connection can be read in some detail in the biography and autobiography of Rev. John Bartley, and the biography of Samuel Bartley, to be found in the appendices.

The farm and smithy known as Pant y Gloch stood on the Bryn y Maen Rd. above Colwyn Bay. The old buildings were demolished - whether for the first or second time is uncertain, but finally in about 1924, when a modern building was erected on the site. Next to it, in the grounds of the old farm an even more modern building was built, one which today carries on the name. Pant y Gloch is shown on old Tithe maps as existing in the 1700's and families named Edwards and Williams are recorded there. Prior to that ownership is in doubt.

The Ty'n y Gongl papers, nos.596, .603 .611 and .667 (Bangor University) refer to the place being mortgaged, as below:

TYN .596 1732/3 March 15th

1. Thomas Williams of Pwll y Crochan, co. Denbigh, Esq.
2. Richard Price of Little Britain in the City of London, Yeoman

Mortgage of the messuage and farm called Rhiw in Llandrillo yn Rhos and another farm called Pant y Gloch in the same parish. Consideration £250.

TYN .603 1746 June 26th

1. Robert Williams of Pwll y Crochan, co. Denbigh, Esq. Brother and heir of Thomas Williams, late of Pwll y Crochan, dec.
2. Margaret Price, widow and executrix of Richard Price, of Little Britain in the City of London, Yeoman.

Agreement to change the sum of £500 and interest in a messuage called Rhiew and Pant y Gloch both in Llandrillo yn Rhos, mortgaged by the said Thomas Williams to the said Richard Price in 1732 and remaining unredeemed.

TYN .611 1763 July 7th

1. Jane Williams of Beaumaris, widow
2. Holland Williams of Pwll y Crochan, Co.Denbigh esq.

Grant of a life interest in the capital messuage of Pwll y Crochan together with the houses and fields called Isgwern and Rhiew, Llandrillo yn Rhos, and appurtenances called Ty'n y Caie, Pen y Groesffordd, Pen y Dorlan, Peny Gaylan, Ty'n y Ffordd, Rhiw Ganol, and Rhiw Bron Rhiw, all in Rhiw, Pant y Gloch, Llwyd y Coed, Glyn Bach, Bryn y Maen, Llwydcoed, Uchaf and Crysto, in the township of Llwydcoed Uchaf and Crysto in the township of Llwydcoed, Llandrillo yn Rhos, and Ty Gwyn in Mochdre to enable the grantee to be able to make a tenant to the praecipe to suffice a recovery of the said properties.

*This next is in chronological order but refers not to Pant y Gloch but to Bron yr Haul, Mochdre, another Bartley home.*

TYN .630 1802 July 31st

1. John Edwards of Penrallt, Llandrillo yn Rhos co. Denbigh, Yeoman, and Catherine, his wife.
2. Rev. Hugh Williams of Conwy, Clerk

Conveyance of Bron yr Haul laying on a certain common called Mynydd Mochdre in Llandrillo yn Rhos.

TYN .667 1780 February 14th

1. Holland Williams of Pwll y Crochan, co. Denbigh, esq.
2. Owen Morris of Beaumaris, Gent.

Mortgage of a tenement called Borthaethwy and the ferry over the Menai Straits; together with tenements called Pant y Gloch, Llwydcoed, Glynbach, Bryn y Maen, Llwydcoed Uchaf in the township of Llwycoed. Consideration £400.

None of the above entries show the name Bartley but the family would have been tenants only while the deeds referred to above concerned only the gentry owners.

Also, it should be remembered that such a farm could have a number of workers living in or around the place so others could rightly be named as being there as, for example, baptisms at Pant y Gloch show an Elin, to Edward Williams and Gwen, August 30 1752 and Mary, ditto August 14 1759.

The next farm uphill, named Pen y Bryn Uchaf, was also connected to the Bartleys for Catherine Bartley (1760), then Williams, died there in 1840. Her story belongs to the line leading to William Williams, Colwyn, which will appear in one of the appendices.

Apart from the mysterious Robert, 1738, Richard (1735) is the only known descendant of Samuel. He married Elizabeth Jones, at Betws yn Rhos, in 1757. They had a number of children, Richard, the eldest, born in 1764, Catherine in 1766, John 1768, who died young, Samuel 1769 with, after her death, everything in four parts, to sons Richard and Samuel and daughters Jane and Catherine, share and share alike. Should either of the four die then his/her share was to pass to his/her children.

Signed 16 January 1803 Richard signed his name, rather than placing his mark. The Will was proved on 13th May 1805. He was listed as a Yeoman but another part of document, SA1805/62, refers to him as a blacksmith and he and Elizabeth are spelled as Barclay.

Richard died in February 1805 at Pant y Gloch and Elizabeth remained there until her own death in 1823. The only brief reference to him comes in an appreciation of his son Richard by his grandson, Rev. John Bartley, written in 1832. (see below). Nothing more is known of Elizabeth's family.

Following chapters will recount later generations, stemming from Richard's four children, with the direct line to the writer coming from the eldest son, Richard, born 1764. His brother Samuel headed a lengthy line and there is much to write on there.

The daughters' lines are more sketchy, especially Jane's, which can be dealt with at this point. She married a John Foulkes, a few months *after* the birth of their daughter Jane in 1795. Nothing more is known but, due to the Bartley's associations with the Welsh Methodist movement, continuation might be possible with more study of Wesleyan history.

Catherine's line is very interesting in its early days and, based on the biography of one of her sons, William Williams, to be found in 'Yr Eurgrawn', and developed by a descendant, Gwenda Jones of Cadwgan, Old Colwyn, this has been traced to the present day.

What is known will follow chapters on her two brothers, Richard and Samuel for some of the information comes from her nephew, John Bartley, son of Richard (1764).

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As at October 2009 this is as far as the story goes – much more work will be required to carry on to the present day.

For the sake of David Gates, whose meeting with the family was much more recent, a brief note is now added to say a little about the Rhosneigr Bartleys.

John Howell Bartley died in 1932, before I was born but according to the family memories he was a self taught and quite able linguist. It is said he had a command of about seven languages but one of his 'specialities' was knowledge of Esperanto.

As can be read in the above account the Bartleys had long been blacksmiths/farmers but John Howell found work on the swiftly growing railway, starting in the Queensferry area where he had been born, before becoming Station Master at Llanrhaidr, south of Denbigh. He married Margaret from Prestatyn and had five children. Lavinia was born in Saltney on the border near Chester, but she died when only a young lady. Howell, John (my father) and Richard were born at the Llanrhaidr Station House while the youngest child, Norman, was born nearby at Llanynys – the father still Station Master. Howell served in WWI and died a young man, in Rhosneigr, after wounds received during the war.

Before long a move was made when John Howell became Station Master at Rhosneigr, on Anglesey. For a long time the family resided in the Station House, but eventually a house was bought closer to the village centre. My memories as a child are of many family holidays there.

After Margaret died Norman and Richard had a pair of semi-detached houses built near the church and John the eldest son, inherited Glyndwr. In later years this was sold, Norman and his wife, also a Margaret, died, (she only recently), Richard had died and Glyndwr was sold. Thus ended our long link with the village.

It is understood that in the early days at Rhosneigr, John Howell Bartley's ability in Esperanto, a language quite popular at that time, meant that lecturers and students would camp in the field behind the station and John Howell would give *al fresco* lectures on the language.

Norman Bartley, who had served on destroyers during WWII, often on the northern convoys to Murmansk, sometimes across the Atlantic, later worked as a clerk on the railway at Valley. (Margaret, his wife, was in the Wrens). I can just about remember, as a very small child, sometimes being allowed out of bed late at night when a little after the 10.0pm mail train had passed through Rhyl, a sailor appeared at the door, was fed and watered while my parents and I (although I did not understand much) heard about life on the destroyers. Norman often docked at Liverpool but with such a short leave pass found it too far to travel to and from Rhosneigr and so dropped off for a night's sleep on land at our house.

Richard did not see active service but was attached to naval hospitals in this country. After the war Richard was employed at Rhosneigr Station. It was a small, lightly used station, probably most of the passenger on and off being holiday makers. The Station Master was almost an 'absentee landlord' type of figure, hardly ever to be seen and Richard was left more or less running the show. A courteous, pleasant man who never married, he did endear himself to many visitors, at that time many being regular return-ees to the village, and was well-liked in the village. At his funeral and after there were many messages of condolence left by visitors who lived many miles away, all saying what a pleasant welcoming presence he had been at the Station.

Richard did not marry and lived a very quiet life. His house was let to tenants and he spent most of his time 'next door' with Norman and Margaret, seldom leaving Rhosneigr except for his annual two week holiday (year on year!) in Jersey. He is buried, as are the other Bartleys, at Llanfaelog Church.