

Some Gower Memories From Gwen Beynon

Gwen Beynon of Reynoldston recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday. To mark this very special occasion, some of Gwen's friends took her for lunch to the Fairy Hill Hotel. The visit brought back so many memories for Gwen, who worked at this country house for ten years, from 1931.

Gwen Tucker was born in Horton, where her parents farmed. She was one of seven children and attended Porteyon Primary School (now a bungalow, on the hill, as you enter the village). Gwen states proudly she passed the examinations for Gowerton School, but she left school to help on the farm. At the age of seventeen she moved from home to be a childrens' nanny in Burry Green and then onto Oxwich Rectory (now the Oxwich Bay Hotel) as a maid. Three years later Gwen became a Parlour Maid at Fairy Hill, working for Mr and Mrs T. R. Harris. Mr Harris was a solicitor in Swansea. (This job move also coincided with the move of Gwen's family to Knelston Hall Farm).

Gwen can remember in detail her 'job description' at Fairy Hill. "I was paid £2.12 per month but accommodation and food was provided! I had to wear a blue dress and apron in the morning and a black dress, apron and white cap in the afternoon and evening. The day started at 6.30am when I had to clean the fireplaces, lay the fires and then light the fire in the lounge. The rest of the day would be taken up with cleaning, polishing and helping cook in the kitchen. My day would end at about 9.00pm. I was given either Sunday afternoon or evening off, as well as Thursday afternoon". Gwen joined a staff of two cooks, two cleaners and three gardeners. Gwen married the Head Gardener, Albert Beynon!

Other memories of the time were the weekend house, fishing and shooting parties hosted by Mr and Mrs Harris, walking to Reynoldston Church from Fairy Hill, across the fields at Hayes Farm and Apple Grove, meeting with young people from the other villages at Kennexton Cross on Sundays, seeing the Duke of Windsor playing tennis at Penrice and the excitement of the Gower Show.

Gwen and Albert moved to farm in Three Crosses, with Gwen then moving to Reynoldston in 1967