

W.H Jones "A History of Swansea and of the Lordship of Gower". - 1920

Thomas Coghlan..A Prominent Villager



The grave of Thomas Coghlan (1844-1937), marked by a large headstone, can be found on the left hand side of the path leading up to St. George's Church. Thomas' father came to Gower, to be the gardener, firstly, at Stouthall and then at Fairy Hill. Thomas served his apprenticeship with a blacksmith in Llanelli before becoming the blacksmith in Reynoldston. The ruins of his forge can still be seen beyond the village, on the road to Fairy Hill.



I came to Reynoldston in August 1867 to be the village blacksmith and held the place for 46 years. My mother attended the services in William Jones' house in 1847: few people had any education then. Most of the children had to start work at 7 or 8 years of age. The hymns were always given out 2 lines at a time after I came

here.



After his retirement as a blacksmith, in his 70s, Thomas Coghlan became an oil salesman, selling paraffin for lamps, from house to house. He lived in *The Croft*, on the Lower Green. Win Crabbe, who lived next door, in *Pound Cottage* used to recollect her childhood memory of travelling with Coghlan, on his cart, around the farms of Gower and ringing a large bell to announce that 'the oil man was com



ing'. Win remembered that the cart and oil was stored in the shed above *The Croft*.



It is as a leader of the Wesleyan Methodists in Reynoldston and as a travelling preacher that Coghlan will be remembered. He began preaching in 1866 and continued right up to his death in 1937. The *Note Book of a Gower Man* (W.L.Tanner) in the *Herald of Wales* in 1935 observes "What a wonderful man is Tom Coghlan of Reynoldston. I saw him last summer aged 91. He had just returned from Llanelli where he had been preaching at a Wesleyan chapel. The previous Sunday he had preached at Manselton. In 1900 I remember him preaching and travelling over Gower on horseback with a lanthorn to light his way home on dark nights. He is the doyen of Wesleyanism in Gower".

Thomas Coghlan had a high profile as well in the more general community of Gower. Chairman of the Parish

Council, Member of the School Board, an active member of the Temperance Movement and a spokesman for the rights of farm labourers.



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