

MINES and MEADOWS

The story of Prior's Meadow



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Mines and Meadows: the story of Prior's Meadow

Hidden away, just off Dukes field woodland in Three Crosses, on Fairwood Common, is Prior's Meadow, a biodiverse haven and precious fragment of meadowland with a fascinating history. Prior's Meadow is as rich in species as it is in memories; this small corner of Gower has a fascinating story to tell.

Until the 1850s, Three Crosses and Dunvant were two rural communities on the eastern edge of the Gower Peninsula. The history of Three Crosses dates back many centuries with the earliest reference being to the grant of 27 acres of land at Prior's Meadow to Llangennith Priory. Dunvant was recognised as a village in the 1860's. The second half of the nineteenth century saw both villages industrialised.

Prior's Meadow is situated between Three Crosses and Dunvant and linked by an old tramway that forms the main thread of the industrial narrative of the meadow.

The meadow has been documented as 'meadow' for over 600 years, between 1150 and 1850, until woodland was planted in 1850's. The wood was cleared and felled between 1914 and 1918 to suit the demands of the war -and before it was catapulted into the industrialisation of South Wales with the opening of the Brynglas colliery in 1930. Today, under the care of the Wildlife Trust and PONT the meadow is flourishing. PONT work with individuals and organisations to deliver appropriate grazing regimes for the benefit of wildlife, they do this at a local and regional level.

By placing the meadow in its historical context, a narrative has been uncovered describing a changing approach to our relationship with the land.

Early documentation of field systems around Prior's Meadow shows that the landscape has changed very little and still echoes its medieval past. We can also chart the use of the landscape during the two world wars, as a response to a change in demand and pressure to produce timber and resources both locally and nationally.

Importantly, Prior's Meadow is a small part of Gower with a much larger narrative, giving us an insight into the industrial landscape of Gower and South Wales.

Meadowland

What is a meadow and what does it mean to us? Why is it important to preserve our meadows?

A meadow is an ancient grassland, and we are a grassland species; therefore, how we feel in a meadow is a tangible link to the thoughts and feelings of our ancestors.

Local diversity and provenance are very important for the conservation of meadows, the species of plants we find in a meadow are best suited to it and inform future management, the use of local seed is vital when planting or creating new areas of biodiverse grassland. 'Celtic Wildflowers' are an organisation based in Penyrheol, Gorseinon, and they are 'on a mission to support the conservation of native flora'. They supply 'locally sourced native wildflowers and trees for large- and small-scale projects.'

Why do we love meadows? They are a rich place for plant diversity and pollinators, but the experience we have when we step into a meadow is primitive. To see a diverse range of

plants and insects – the buzz and flash of life and colour – describes to us that everything is ok. When we step into a landscape that is relatively unchanged, we understand how vital our relationship with nature is.

Prior's Meadow has never been intensively farmed, according to local memory, and documents show it as meadow for 600 years. This makes the meadow special. Local people describe memories from forty years ago where the common and meadow were full of butterflies and they called it 'butterfly meadow', as one recalled: "I would set off with my father and a net, and we would head off over the common, within minutes we were surrounded by butterflies and the grass on close inspection was full of grasshoppers and hoverflies." Another local describes heading for a walk as an eight-year-old: "On reaching the back of Dukes field, we usually hit mud, even in summer, but we hardly noticed for the tranquillity and the birds and butterflies."

The common itself is a mixture of marshy grassland with tracks crosshatching the surface offering a variety of walks. The most obvious and direct walk leads directly down to old brickwork buildings tucked away amongst the brambles and hawthorn trees near Dunvant. In Autumn, if you are lucky, you may see the fairy toadstools or Fly Agaric mushrooms, lending a little magic to secret corners. The track to Prior's Meadow isn't obvious and winds around through the trees. In late summer it's a journey with less obvious insect life than memories inform us of, but there are rich green patches of sorrel and on a visit in late summer there are numerous oak apples littering the floor. Close to the meadow it becomes quickly clear that the wildlife and plant life is diverse and soon the grasshoppers confirm its busy activity.

On route through the wood to the meadow there are open clearings near what we called the 'haunted house' as children but was Prior's Cottage. There is now little evidence of the cottage, perhaps one of the clearings is a field that was once adjacent to the cottage. Parts of the route to the meadow fields are currently blocked due to the disease Ash dieback. On arriving at the meadow, and from within it, there is a wonderful sloping perspective, enjoying a view of the common land and a distant view over Upper Killay.

The residents of long-standing within the village of Three Crosses shared memories which said very much the same thing: how wonderful Prior's Meadow was and how 'we knew the woods like the back of our hands, each twist and turn, but what we didn't know, however, was what those tracks and buildings and remnants from the past were'.

This document is an exploration into those remnants of the past, guided by local stories and documented research.

Llangenydd Priory

Our 'butterfly meadow' is called Prior's Meadow, and yet there is no priory nearby?

This is because Prior's Meadow came to be an asset of a priory in what we now call Llangennith and was called Llangenydd during the Middle Ages. This transfer of ownership happened in medieval times and occurred under the new order and rule of the first lord of Gower, Henry De Newburgh.

Llangenydd Priory was granted to St. Taurin Abbey in eastern Normandy in 1106-15, stating it was for 'the souls of his lord King William and Queen Matilda'. This gift basically

transferred the possessions of the ancient Welsh to the monasteries in England or the continent. St Taurin Abbey also had property in other parts of the Gower peninsula, at Knelston and Pennard.

A priory was an instrument of Norman conquest like the castle, and the Normans essentially re-founded the priory at Llangennith, disassociating it from its Celtic roots.

Prior's Meadow is mentioned in Cromwell's survey 1642, described as a medieval holding belonging to Llangennith Priory, the eastern end of Llangenydd village is referred to as Prior's town.

There is no doubt that the priory had Celtic foundations, there are stories of the monastery being burnt to the ground by Danes arriving like black gentiles on dragon ships in 986. (J D Davies A history of West Gower).?

The priory was confiscated by Edward the first in 1294 after the English kings lost at Normandy and ownership was transferred to All Souls College, Oxford.

Land was an important gift for the Priory as it was needed to farm and rent out to support its few monks and probably meet further demands from its mother abbey. Prior's Meadow was gifted to the priory to provide income, but also increase Norman power and land ownership on Gower. At the time of this gift, Llangenydd would have been a small cell, probably two or three monks, and we know they owned six cows.

Llangenydd priory eventually acquired 120 acres in all, not a great deal if you consider that Margam Abbey, a Cistercian monastery, had 6420 acres but Benedictine priories like Llangennydd tended to have far less.

Documented information helps us to understand that the meadow was meadow in 1150-1850. The area that is today referred to as Prior's wood is described within the tithe map of 1848 and comprised five fields plus the cottage called Prior. (See map). The two fields 1471 and 1472 on the tithe map are the largest fields coming in at 28 acres almost exactly the same as 27 acres given to the priory. There is good reason to suppose these are the fields gifted in the original medieval land grant. we can therefore speculate fields 1471 and 1472 belonged to the priory.

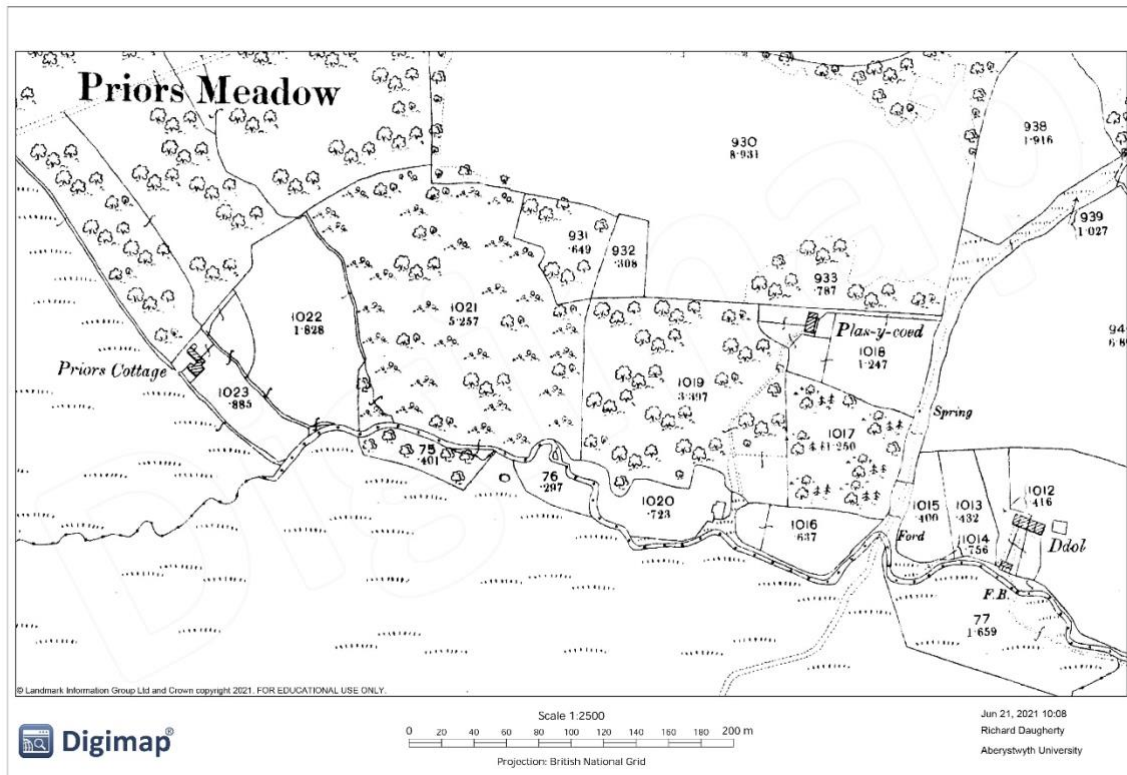
At the time the Tithe map was drawn up in 1848, the owner of the fields was Colonel Nathaniel Cameron, major landowner in the area, he probably leased the land as he is listed as occupier. From 1850 to the present, it is planted woodland.

In 1914-18 the woodland was clear felled to address the timber shortage. Historically, timber was always in short supply, any shipwreck on Gower was an excellent source of wood, before the sawmill in Parkmill, and then in Cilibion in the 1920s.

Prior's Cottage

Nestled in the woodland was an ancient cottage Prior cottage, initially thatched and made of stone. According to local memory the cottage became vacant in the late 1950's with the last residents remembered as living in the house in the 1940's.

The cottage is marked here on a map from 1890s and shows the field 1023 where people living at Prior's cottage kept animals or grew crops for their own use.



Local Three Crosses resident and former Lord Mayor of Swansea, Howard Morgan, has lived in Three Crosses all his life, and his family have lived in the village and surrounding area for generations. In conversations with Howard, he recalled the meadow, its appearance and the way it was used in the past.

We began our conversation discussing Prior's Cottage which Howard remembers as an ancient stone, thatched cottage in the Prior's Meadow woodland close to Fairwood Common. Howard explains that the houses were usually thatched and that the cottage was rented to work the fields. Fields were rented and not much changed with regards to the layout and pattern. The straw and reed thatched cottage in Prior's Wood, was inhabited, in Howard's memory, by the Carr family. The son of the family was in school with Howard in the 1940s, his father was Peter Carr. Today Three Crosses residents remember the Carr's cottage as a "haunted" shell, a place to frighten themselves during childhood adventures in the woods. By all accounts it was a poor and difficult existence for the Carr family and periodically the father was not present.

There is nothing left of Prior's Cottage today except two enigmatic Cornish granite gateposts.



There are many of these beautiful posts on Gower, the ones at Prior's are fine as they still have their original fixtures. A proper exploration of these would inform another document! The stone for the gateposts probably came in with trade in copper ore from Cornwall into Penclawdd; they weighed about 500 pounds. Because they would have been expensive, they seem at odds with a humble cottage so an explanation for them may lie elsewhere.



There is still a clearing in the wood perhaps indicating a former field adjacent to the cottage. The gateposts are presumably also a gateway to the clear felling and exit point for the timber and coal lines running out over the common. The trackway is still visible on the common, snaking between the old traveller camp central to Fairwood common and where Howard Morgan remembers watching the washing, hanging on lines between caravans, blowing in the wind over the open landscape.



Picture above: This track had two travellers' camps on either side, located where the trees are grouped together.

Memories

Howard Morgan vividly recalls the travelling communities who passed over, and camped on, the common. He remembers the names of the travelling communities and loved the smell of wood smoke in the small classrooms at Crwys village school.

Howard recalls Granny Harris in her wooden caravan selling peas and the Donovan family with links still in the village, and a Jim Sadler tobacconist.

Three Crosses was a rural community and Howard recalls old farming practices and methods that helped indicate when the hay was ready for harvest, Howard says: 'if you could 'hear the train over the Loughor bridge the wind was blowing northwest and the weather promised to be wetter, but if you could smell the oil refinery at Llandarcy the weather was settled and dry as the wind was blowing from the east'. This information told him if the weather was going to be good enough for hay cutting.

An intimate relationship with the natural and built landscape was instinctive and Howard's memory provides a precious document of skills lost.

The welsh poet, Edward Thomas, describes the subtleties of the weather indicating the time to cut the hay in his poem 'Haymaking'

His is a beautiful description of the skill involved in judging the exact time to cut the hay:

*After night's thunder far away had rolled
The fiery day had a kernel sweet of cold,
And in the perfect blue the clouds uncurled,
Further on in the poem
The swift with wings and tail as sharp and narrow
As if the bow had flown off the arrow,
Only the scent of woodbine and hay new-mown.....
Haymakers rested. The tosser laid forsook.
There is a wonderful sense of the job done.*

Fairwood Common

The meadow is adjacent to Fairwood Common.

The lowland common on Gower is an integral part of its distinctive landscape and makes up 70km² of land on the peninsula. The open landscape characterises Gower both visually, ecologically, and historically: its agricultural heritage is vitally important, and agricultural grazing has continued in line with commoners' rights for centuries. Gower's landscape is culturally rich with a diversity of habitat; its common land contains woodland and wet and dry heathland, havens for birds like skylark, linnet and snipe and for butterfly, dragonfly and newt.

These areas are sites for nature conservation (SINC) and sites of special scientific interest (Geological SSSI). The landscape has shaped Gower's people, practices and customs and it is essential to consider this when approaching conservation and future use of land on Gower.

Our commons are covered with ancient trackways, where people took their trade by foot or pony, and many places evidence the packhorse bridge or ancient Holloways. Examples at Barland and Gelli Hir indicate the connection of routes leading from Three Crosses past Fairwood lodge and out to Caswell. The commons may well have formed natural boundaries between English and Welsh speaking Gower, running northwest to southeast along the common, including Clyne common.

An influx of people speaking a variety of languages have passed through and settled in Gower over the ages. There were incursions into Gower by Picts, Danes, Normans and Saxons, indeed a Saxon coin was found on Pengwern common. These incomers have all contributed to Gower's unique dialect and left traces on the landscape, most notably the Normans. There is plenty of evidence for the existence of a cultural frontier delineating the predominantly English-speaking areas from the predominantly Welsh speaking areas. However, there were always Welsh speaking inhabitants of Gower Anglicana. Today Fairwood Common is still covered in tracks and scars that tell us how we have moved across the land linking place to place.

Fairwood Common lost its bronze age burial site 'Pennard Birch' to an RAF runway during the Second World War; Pennard Birch shows prehistoric bronze age activity and a ritual landscape underpinning the military uses of the common. We know people roamed and buried their dead here. In ancient times routes ran to sea to trade or to church, well-worn routes from estuary to sea and to Swansea from Three Crosses Dunvant and Killay across the commons to market. Howard Morgan talks of memories in the 1940's of geese, being driven over the common, on a Tuesday and Thursday and remembers the struggle of getting to school before the geese got onto the road and in their way as they journeyed to Crwys farm. The farm was owned by Joe Matthews when Howard was a boy. Howard explains that the grass on the common was lush and the geese kept the grass low like a bowling green. The geese came from Bryn Gwas farm in Cilonnen and were also walked from Mabbett farm near Welsh Moor.

Mining

Coal has been mined in North Gower since the 1200's. There are records from the thirteenth century but there are known bell pits that probably predate this. There were recorded mines at Llanrhidian, Landimore and Weobley. Sir Richard Mansel was the third son in line of the wealthy and titled family of Oxwich, Penrice and then Margam Abbey. HisThe family owned the rights to operate a colliery in Llanrhidian and Richard Mansel granted rights elsewhere. Wales was mineral rich and as a result exploited for its coal. South Wales had the largest continuous coalfield in Britain.

Bell Pits are a primitive method for mining coal, Iron ore or other minerals where the coal or ore lies close to the surface. A Bell pit in cross section looks like a bell and coal was extracted by winch. This type of mine was used in prehistoric times and in the Middle Ages. There are bell pits in Killan Fach mine in Dunvant and at Prior's Meadow. In the nineteenth century technique changed to speed up the efficiency of extraction.

Passages were made into the hillside to reach the deepest coal seams, with crossings for ventilation; these slants were cheaper than deep mines and were worked by hand. Trammers were those individuals who lifted the barriers and scooped coal into trams. – Ann Roberts Estuary people Penclawdd 1900 to 1970.

Life in the mines was hard but there was a tremendous sense of solidarity and community, because communities were so closely interlinked the mining disasters could impact enormously on families and nudge them into poverty.

The Elba Colliery, Gowerton, employed men from Three Crosses, and men from Penclawdd, Ann Roberts describes a particular incident on Friday 20 January 1905:

On this day about 48 men reported for duty on the night shift arriving at 5.00pm., earlier than other days, as Friday was payday. All gathered to descend the slant as usual, but one, George Rees of Penclawdd, had a premonition of impending doom, instigated by a recent dream. Although he voiced his fears to his workmates, all miners carried on regardless. Between 12.30 a.m. and 1.00 a.m. an explosion of gas occurred in the six feet seam in the lowest heading to the west known as no.7 heading. The uninjured men hurried to the surface, assisting shift injured men to safety.' The final death toll was eleven, some of the men died of their injuries at home, most suffered terrible burns and one casualty George Williams was a young door boy of fourteen, he had been at the colliery from only three weeks. William Bowen from Three Crosses was only 17 when he died along with David J Rees, twenty-one years old and from Three Crosses. The mine was then abandoned, but sadly it was not the only disaster in the area.

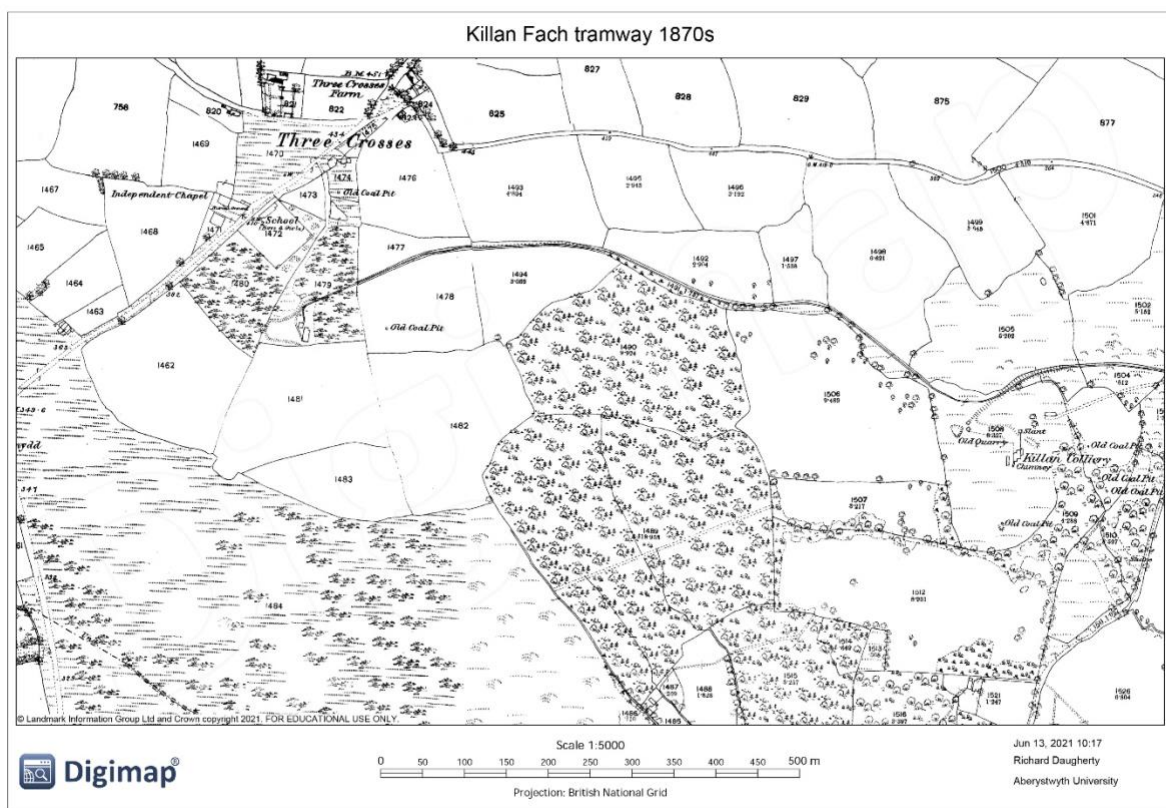
This account conveys with immediacy the loss and the horror of disaster. The sad information noting the young ages of the boy and young man who lost their lives, makes it heart-breaking to read. The mining disasters clearly illustrate the harsh reality of life on industrial Gower.

Communities and businessmen kept mining despite the risks. There was always *the* prospect of a railway connection to Swansea docks that led mine owners to hope for a more profitable trade running directly out from Gower.

In his comprehensive account of coalmining in the area, *Swansea and Gower Coalfield 1301-1968*, Paul Reynolds describes the history of coal in the area including a description of the mineral rich seams that surround and run through Prior's Meadow.

The seams were originally called veins and fall into three groups. The seams of the upper Pennant series outcrop between Penclawdd and Gowerton, north of Waunarlwydd and across Mynydd Bach-y-glo to the lower Swansea valley where they were worked intensively on both sides of the river. Below the upper Pennant series is the lower Pennant series. There was the Voylart seam south of Dunvant square, Killan Fach and Fawr mines 18 Penclawdd seam, Penlan seam, Gleilyd seam 64. In 1924 A terrible flood occurred in Killan colliery, Dunvant followed later by a disaster at Wernbwll in 1928.

The Tramway



The area around Three Crosses is geologically rich, containing coal seams clearly exploited in ancient times with physical rather than documentary evidence of Bell pits on Prior's and at Killan Fach. In the 17th century we know the mineral rights around Dunvant and at Penclawdd. were divided between a few owners: Dunraven, Morris, Cameron and Barrington estates. Coal pits show the mines were being worked in 1650. Waggon ways were created to carry coal to Penclawdd including from Gelli Hir and in the late 1800's the tram way was created to link the mines at Three Crosses to the main LNWR railway at Dunvant station. The Tram runs through Prior's Meadow and great fun can be had tracing the tramway from Howard's back garden near Crwys School to Killan in Dunvant, where the brickworks built in 1864 can also be discovered in the undergrowth. Howard's home is surrounded by the old mine evidenced on the map and he remembers the enormous hole

on his own property when a shaft opened in his garden, it sat there for some years until properly attended to.

Prior's Meadow mine

Prior's Meadow mine was opened by TP Rose, originally a grocer from Dunvant.

Mining in the area began in earnest in 1930-34 with the opening of the Brynglas colliery, Prior's Meadow colliery followed later in 1940-1945. (Paul Reynolds).

Miners were employed from the local and surrounding areas, in time a miner's bus would also bring miners from Gorseinon colliery but, before that, people would walk, and Howard Morgan recalls a man walking from Rhossili to Three Crosses stopping at Penclawdd to break the route where he also stored clean clothes for his return journey.

There is now little visual evidence of the mining on Gower, but it was carried out widely across the north-eastern corner of the peninsula at, Llanmorlais, Penclawdd, Crofty, Dunvant and Three Crosses',

One striking visual monument to the mining history in the area stands today, The Caer Eithen mine is situated on high ground near the Poundfald Farm. It is built from Killay brick and local sandstone. There is also a memorial on Blue Anchor Road that remembers the seven lives lost in the Wernbwl Colliery Disaster 28th November 1929.

Wernbwl Colliery existed from 1924-1937.

Wernbwl Colliery disaster

At 7 o'clock a terrible explosion occurred at no 13 level, management were informed and soon on the scene, some men were lucky, some not.

The Cambrian newspaper on Friday 29th November, reports the incident., This first-hand account is from Lewis who lost his colleague Griffiths; the men are referred to by their surnames.

'The only way I am alive now is because I went out to turn on some more blast for the machine. Griffiths was my partner. I left him at the machine boring, and the others were cutting coal at the top hole. We could not see them [...] I was blown down and I could feel myself being knocked back and forward just like as if I was in the middle of the storm, or as if I was on the waves of the sea. [...] I could feel myself being blown every shape. I was by the force of the explosion and when I stopped, I was twenty to thirty yards away, close to number 14 slant, my lamp out, still hanging on to my coat [.....]. If the machine had been working properly, I would have been with Griffiths'.

The loss of life still resonates today as a tragic chapter in the history of village life in Three Crosses. The plaque is simple, but each name denotes a son, friend or father lost.

Howard's memories of Prior's Meadow as a mine

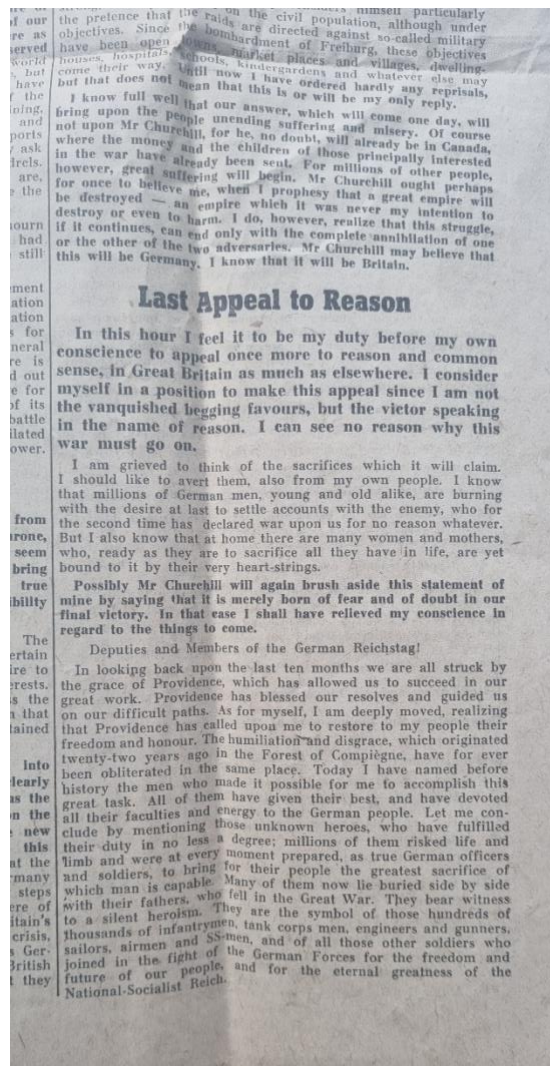
Three Crosses was a non-conformist community during the wartime when Prior's Meadow was active as a mine. Howard Morgan explained that there were no accidents at Prior's Meadow between 1939 and 1940 and 1944-1945. However, this is not to say that there was not a dramatic history at the Meadow. While the mine was in operation there was a missile propaganda drop over Swansea by the Nazi government. Howard Morgan was a young boy at this time, the date was 1940, and his family had a young evacuee with the surname Roberts billeted with them. The evacuee was from Sandwich, Kent, and he recalls that all the local children were told to stay away from the common as a missile had exploded and had possibly dropped a contaminated load.

In Howard's recollection the evacuee ignored the advice, went to the meadow, and collected many propaganda leaflets which had been dropped at the site – probably intended for the city not the woods.

No doubt others collected these also, and Howard had three in his possession until they were donated to Swansea Museum. Luckily for us, he still had one in his possession and when he presented it to me it had a small tear where it had hung off a tree on its descent from the skies. This was 1940, the year before the Blitz and the terrible destruction of Swansea. The tabloid-sized, four-page leaflet entitled **A LAST APPEAL TO REASON BY ADOLF HITLER** captures an extraordinary snapshot from one of the most momentous events in history.

This piece of Nazi propaganda is aimed at convincing its readers that Germany seeks peace rather than war and is only seeking a revision of the Treaty of Versailles. It proclaims that Hitler is 'appealing, once more and for the last time, to common sense in general.'





All threads of narrative are ultimately connected by the geological past and the coal seams, but the future of Prior's Meadow takes us back to its early beginnings as we preserve its ecological legacy.

Today the open landscape of common land, near Prior's Meadow provides a unique beauty that belies its industrial past, whether sun-baked or rain drenched the colours and mood change accordingly. The wide skies allow for a cinematic panorama of the fast moving and fickle Welsh weather. The common land is a place to lose yourself in nature and as you stumble upon Prior's Meadow, consider its importance and the vital work done by Pont and the Wildlife Trust sympathetic to all that is special about Gower.

If we look and listen closely enough, Prior's Meadow and Fairwood Common are full of life. The butterflies are still there thanks to its conservation, and the area is covered in tracks and scars that tell us how we have moved across the land through different periods of time linking people to place.

'Paths make you feel you can still feel them, turn around and hear them'.
— Edward Thomas.

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Edward Thomas The Annotated Collected Poems edited by Edna Longley

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Fred Cowley, The Monastic Order in South Wales.

Special thanks for Richard Daugherty for his help and for a fun day exploring Prior's Wood and for the attached further detail concerning the historical details of Gower's commonland.

Appendices:

Historical features

* **Barland Common**

A small remnant of what was once an area of common land that extended from Welsh moor, Pengwern and Fairwood Common eastwards to Clyne Common. Barland Common was reduced to its present extent by much of the original area being progressively enclosed and improved for agriculture in the 15th and 16th centuries.

www.ggat.org.uk: - historic landscape 085, Barland Common

* **Clyne Common** During the Boer War practice trenches at Clyne 1907-1909, there are also remains of a medieval cock – fighting pit.

* **Barland Castle**

Early mediaeval castles were of a 'motte and bailey' plan with banks of earth surrounding a central enclosure. Excavations here in 1898 found an earth bank with the imprint of a row of wooden stakes, the remains of a palisade which would have sheltered the lord of Bishopston.

Harold Grenfell and Bernard Morris (1970), *The Castles of Gower*

* **Little Hill, a Gower gentry house**

The remains of a typical late mediaeval Gower farmhouse the first record of which dates back to 1417. The 'parish gentry' family who lived there owned land not only in this valley but also, at various times, other properties as far away as Llanrhidian and Llangyfelach. William Wibberne, a weaver who rented the house from 1635, established one of the earliest woollen mills on Gower at Little Hill.

Andrew Dulley (2006), *Little Hill, Bishopston: a ruined house and its family*. Gower Society Journal vol. 57.

Bryan Taylor (2008), *Watermills of the Lordship of Gower*.

* **Animal pound**

Enclosures where stray animals were impounded were a feature of the mediaeval landscape. Owners of the animals would pay a fee before they were allowed to recover their animals from the pound. The remains of such a pound can be seen in the undergrowth behind the bus shelter at Barland.

Rod Cooper (2017), *Pounds in Gower*, Gower Society Journal vol. 68.

* **Pennard mill (or 'Higher mill')**

A flour mill was on this site from at least 1650, drawing water for its power via a leet from the stream. It was still in use until the late 1800s with Isaac Jeffries being recorded as the miller in the Census of 1881

Bryan Taylor (2008), *Watermills of the Lordship of Gower*.

* **Wernllath**

Wernllath ('Gwern y lath') was one of three hamlets recorded in Bishopston parish in the 16th century, the other two being Murton ('Moortown') and 'Kyla' (Killay). It was significant in the 17th

century for its nonconformism, a meeting house being recorded there in 1672. Geoffrey Orrin refers to Wernllath as still a 'thriving hamlet' in 1844 with the tithe map showing 11 buildings.

Iorwerth Hughes Jones (1967), *The place called Wernllath*, Gower Society Journal vol. 18.

*** Chapel of ease in Upper Killay.**

Isaac Harmon's survey of Gower in 1697 referred to three satellite chapels within Bishopston parish. The locations of two, Caswell and Backingstone chapels, are well known but the third, in the North of the parish, has only recently been identified by adjacent field names of Middle Killay farm on the 1844 parish tithe map - Capel Mawr and Capel Bach.

Andrew Dulley (2016), *Bishopston parish and the lost church of Killay*, Gower Society Journal vol. 67.

Old routes

*** Blackhills Lane**

This lane linking Fairwood Common to Upper Killay has been in use for at least 300 years. It is referred to in the 1721 Bishopston Tithe Terrier (an inventory of land in the parish) as "leading from Fairwood Moore to Swanzey."

Geoffrey Orrin (1982), *A History of Bishopston*, page 21.

*** Old lane down the valley**

There is evidence, both from map and documentary sources, of an old lane along the valley from the northern part of Bishopston parish to Barland Common and from there to the parish church. This may have been for several centuries the only route between Upper Killay and the parish church. Local tradition refers to today's route, via the South Gower Road across Fairwood Common, being created by a local farmer, perhaps in the 1600s or early 1700s.

Richard Daugherty (2019), *Tracing Gower's Old Lanes*, Gower Society Journal vol.70.

*** Old lane from Three Crosses to Barland**

*** Old lane from Ilston to Barland**

The original route from Ilston to Swansea is clear on the modern map and is still a right of way, along a track from Ilston past Courthouse Farm, across the South Gower Road and then, via a modern diversion round Kittle Hill Farm, down into the valley to Barland Common. It probably dates from at least mediaeval times because the villagers at Ilston would have taken that direct route via Barland to Swansea rather than today's much longer road routes either through Parkmill or through Upper Killay.

*** Barland New Road**

The old lane down the steep hill from Kittle, across the ford and then up towards Northway was for centuries the main route linking South Gower to Swansea. But from the late 1700s its importance declined as most travellers instead took what is now the South Gower Road across Fairwood Common. To bypass the ford the 'Kittle Hill Scheme' in the 1920s, immortalised in a poem by Gower poet Cyril Gwynn, built the main road that is in use today.

Geoffrey Orrin (1982)