

# AGNES HERMIONE JENNINGS

Agnes Hermione Jennings was born on the 7th May 1848 at Wargrave Berkshire. She was the third of six children 4 brothers and 1 sister, born to Richard Jennings and his wife Agnes Catherine Annabella Hamilton.

She grew up in a loving close family, educated at home which was the normal way in the mid 1800. She was very adept at languages and the arts. She also loved music as many of her age did, and was an accomplished painter, she also turned her hand to poetry and also wrote a number of lyrics . In her later life she wrote a laudatory poem of 8 verses for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, The Queen graciously accepted and acknowledge.

Agnes grew up at a time when life was governed by the circle of one's friends and relations. Contact with other levels of society were of a formal nature, but if they did find themselves in a situation certainly with the lower classes it could become quite distressful. (see Picture)

Agnes know more as 'Hermie' was an unusual young Lady she was a tall, attractive brunette with finely moulded features and steady, enquiring green eyes. Her life was a round of country houses, county towns, leisurely spa's, hunt balls, race meetings, theatres, croquet, billiards, concerts and music. a world governed by good manners, wit and a tolerance of people who were perhaps a little different or a bit of a maverick who were tolerated but not ostracised.

Sharp words might be spoken but daggers were never drawn.

She wrote journals following her life, in her teenage years but unfortunately only two remain, the first is about her life in Wales and London in 1865-66 and the other when she went on The Tour of the Continent in 1868-69.

It is quite evident that the journals were not for anything other than her own perusal as she makes some quite cutting remarks about people she meets .

The first journal covers her life in West Wales from August 1865 where the country pursuits were quite leisurely, In early to mid March 1866 they moved home to London for 'The Season' which was an extremely hectic four and a half months.

Their circle of friends and acquaintances in Wales numbered the Philipps's of Aberglasney, Gulstons of Dirleton and Derwydd, HamlynWilliams's of Dynevor, Ferryside, Thompson's of Glyn Abby, Crosse's of Iscoed, Powell's of Maesgwynne, Jones's of Pantglas, Hamilton's of Plas, Llanstephen, Green's of Oakfields, Mansel Lewis's of Stradey Castle, and also in Pembrokeshire the Gower's of Clynderwen, Colby's of Ffynnone, with occasional visits to the Biddulphs of Dirwin near Swansea and Breconshire

Hermie's Journal starts on Saturday August 18th 1865.

'Mamma, Uncle William, and I went from Kidwelly by the 9 o'clock train to New Milford this journey took 2 hrs They crossed the Haven by steamer. They then went to the Pier Inn and took a trap to Tenby. on the way they stopped at Pembroke and Manobier Castles both of which she (Hermie) sketched. she writes " At the former I was very much molested by the turkeys , cocks and hens which, having been accustomed to being fed were tamer than was agreeable. I broke my parasol in driving them from me as they prevented my drawing. "

They went on to Tenby only staying 1hr. " We walked up to the Castle Hill and saw Prince Albert's statue which I didn't much admire" but there were beautiful views from there which she sketched.

They left Tenby at about 2pm. and drove back to Pembroke Dock or Paterchurch stopping at Carew Castle on the way, for 1/4 hr " There is a curious old cross outside the castle which I sketched without the carriage stopping."

They then returned to Pembroke Docks at Hobb's Point where they had arrived only to find the steamer on the other side so they had to cross over in an open boat, but during this journey she managed to sketch Milford Haven. They returned home by the Mail Train which reached Kidwelly at a quarter to seven and they reached Gellideg at 7.30pm.

Hermie was very fond of Archery and gained a mastery of the sport. The Carmarthenshire Archery Club met for practice days four times a year and they had three competition days each

year. These took place at Llandiello with mainly gentry and a few middle class supporters.

In each competition 72 arrows were shot by each member at 60 yds and 80 yds.

### Archery Meeting At Llandiello.

Wednesday 6th September 1865. (See Picture)

Hermie, her mother and brother Edward, left for Llandiello at 6.30 am. and drove to Carmarthen Station. as they left her brothers Arthur and Willie and sister Louy throw Oxford shoes after them for good luck. When they reached the station they had to wait for 1hr as the train did not start until 8 45 am. they reached Llandiello in about 30mins. An omnibus took them to the Cawdor Arms , after a while she and her brother went for a walk.

They had asked several times if the competition was to take place as the weather was not good, but were told that the early rain had cleared and although it was still gloomy it would still start. After a while they felt hungry so went to a shop a bought 1/2 a pound of biscuits as they had breakfasted early that morning, they took these back to the Cawdor Arms to eat. while later we found ourselves rather thirsty after the biscuits so we went out to a chemists shop and purchased some soda water with orange syrup. In a while we left to go to the park when we arrived Mr. C. Bishop Secretary, came and asked our names and

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which targets I would prefer. I told him I wished to shoot with Miss Gulston. Soon we collected our equipment and went to our targets. Our Captain was Mr Rocher, the other team

members were Miss Gulston her brother, and Miss Bishop. They shot 4 dozen arrows at 60 yds and then stopped for luncheon, at about 3 pm. They started again at 4pm. Mrs Gulston persuaded Edward and Mansel Louis to shoot for the stranger's prize which her son was trying for. They finished at 5 pm. then the prize giving took place with Mrs Biddulph giving the prizes.

1st. Miss Hughes £5 5. 0d and a gilt and enamel inkstand.

2nd. Miss J. Bishop. Gilt inkstand.

3rd. Miss Gulston, China Casket.

4th. Miss H. Bishop, A Fan.

5th. Miss Jennings, A Gilt match box.

6th. Miss Snead, A Scent Casket.

The gentlemen prize winners were Mr Rosher, Mr G. Lewis, and Mr A.S. Gulston.

After this they returned to the Cawdor Arms by carriage for A Tea Fight!! they gave us tea, muffins and cakes etc., after tea Captain Crosse sent us to the station in his omnibus we waited for 30 mins the Biddulph's train came at 7.30 pm. and ours came soon after. we got to Carmarthen at 8 pm. and got home at 9.30pm. Edward stayed for the Hop afterwards and came home next day.

Lavish entertainments in country houses was a feature of the period, as many as 20 or more guests some accompanied by personal servants would arrive often to stay of three or four days or more. The guests were entertained and entertained themselves, they played music, sang, played charades, games, dancing, walks, boating, picnics, bright conversations and pithy gossip. There were also concerts and plays in local towns. On occasions her brother Richard gave lectures to the public, and when at home in Gellideg, Hermie gave magic lantern shows.

### Visit to Plas Llanstephen

Thursday 28th September 1865.

Today Papa, Mamma, and I along with Lee the ladies maid went to stay with Sir James Hamilton. We left home at 11 am. we did some shopping in Carmarthen then waited in the gardens of the Ivy Bush till 3 pm, during which time Hermie sketched the view of Merlin's Hill, We then drove to Plas and arrived at 5pm. They were shown into the drawing room where Sir J and Lady Hamilton and Mr and Mrs Latimer Jones who were just calling were. The Latimers only stayed for another 15 mins " to my great relief " They then had tea and Lady H. took them around the gardens Where Sir James joined us, here he gave me a peach, Then they went to see the cows milked and Lady H. had a glass of warm milk which she had daily. we then saw the fernary, we then sat down in the garden where we were soon joined by Papa who had come over by the ferry. At 6pm we went up to dress for dinner . I chose my muslin dress

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with the blue sash and snood. When we came down General Sir Charles York had arrived having come by a fly from Carmarthen. During dinner we heard the door bell and Mrs Sheffield Grace arrived having taken a carriage rather than the Fly. We did not do anything particular this evening .

Friday 29th Sept.,

I was up and dressed by 9am as there were prayers in the Hall, and everybody including the servants were expected to attend. Whilst we waited about the Hall for breakfast to be served. Sir James fed his peacocks and pigeons.

A typical breakfast would likely be (see menu) After breakfast although it was a cold and grey day Lady Hamilton took us to the gardens and she showed me a place to sketch the castle from but I did not make much of it. I then tried the view from the front of the house. We then went in and I looked at 'books and things' until lunch. At 1.30pm Sir James drove Papa, Sir C York, Mamma and I over to the Llaugharne Ferry. There he left Sir C York, Papa and me, taking Mamma back. We crossed over to Laugharne by ferry boat we left a note at the house of a friend of Sir James, and then went over the church which had recently been restored. We then went to the house of the gentleman who owned the castle to get permission to look around but he was away but after a while of talking to her she let us in. 'The Castle' stands in the middle of his garden and on one of the castle walls he had fruits growing, and in some niches he had put up statues "which did not look at all well." Afterwards they walked to the ferry and crossed back and then walked back to Plas some three miles and uphill nearly all the way which "as my boot hurts me, was rather a painful proceeding. In the evening Mr and

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Mrs Talmache, Mr and Mrs Scott and Miss Shield dined with us. Mamma and I took our departure at 11am the next day and returned through Carmarthen. Papa went in with Sir James.