

Cymdeithas Hanesyddol Tyddewi a Phebidiog St Davids and Dewisland Historical Society

Houses of the Close (cont) Cathedral Close Census

The houses of St Davids Cathedral Close can be traced, in part, through the National Census for Wales – between the dates of the census each decade from 1841 to 1911. In the earliest Census returns the houses of the close appear simply as part of 'The Valley' and it is difficult to distinguish those houses which make up the Cathedral Close from those in the surrounding area but the inhabitants of the close seem to be very different from those of the 21st century. The houses which form the Close appear as **'Ex Par'** (or Extra Parochial) and this distinction is made more clearly by 1851 when the 'extra-Parochial' houses fall into a separate Census Division, which includes Ramsey Island and the Bishop's Lighthouse!

This is a handwritten census form for the Parish of St Davids. It features a grid with columns for 'Parish as bounded by', 'No. of Houses', 'No. of Inhabitants', and 'No. of Families'. The rows list individual houses with their names and the names of the occupants. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged paper.

This is a printed form titled 'DESCRIPTION OF ENUMERATION DISTRICT'. It contains several fields: 'Name and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Parish or Place', 'Within or Outside of the Parishes of the County of Brecon', 'Approximate Population of District', 'Registrar's District', and 'No. of Houses'. The form is filled out with handwritten text: 'Parish of St Davids', 'Manor of St Davids', '392', and '3'. A large handwritten note at the bottom reads: 'All that part of the Parish of St Davids which comprises Ramsey Island and Bishop's Light House including all the Close'. The name 'James Appleby' is written at the bottom right.

Whilst many of the houses continue to be referred to as the 'Valley' some of the houses in the Cathedral Close are referred to by name eg Deanery, Cloister Hall, Chancelor House and the Archdeaconry. Whilst the Deanery and Chancelor House are occupied, at the time of the Census, by servants the Cloister Hall is occupied by a medical gentleman and his family and the Archdeaconry by an Agent (equivalent to a property manager rather than a secret agent!).

This is another handwritten census form, similar to the one above, showing a list of houses and their occupants. It includes columns for 'Parish as bounded by', 'No. of Houses', 'No. of Inhabitants', and 'No. of Families'. The rows list individual houses with their names and the names of the occupants. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged paper.

This is a third handwritten census form, showing a list of houses and their occupants. It includes columns for 'Parish as bounded by', 'No. of Houses', 'No. of Inhabitants', and 'No. of Families'. The rows list individual houses with their names and the names of the occupants. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged paper.

Philemon Appleby and James Roberts, both residents of the 'Valley' are both Vicars Choral and James Roberts continues to live in the same house, with the same servant, till his death in 1895 (aged 82) ... and his servant continued to live in the same house after his death until her own death in 1901 (aged 80 - shortly after the Census).

Right through till the Census of 1891 the Cathedral close – as Extra-Parochial – continues to be recorded separately from the remainder of

All that part of the Parish of St Davids which comprises Ramsey Island and Bishop's Light House including all the Close

St Davids and 1881 is the last point when it is recorded as a distinct enumeration district (along with the unlikely companions of Ramsey and Bishops Light House.

This is a fourth handwritten census form, showing a list of houses and their occupants. It includes columns for 'Parish as bounded by', 'No. of Houses', 'No. of Inhabitants', and 'No. of Families'. The rows list individual houses with their names and the names of the occupants. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged paper.

The National Census records of 1881 show the most complete list of houses in the Cathedral Close and includes: The Treasury, The Archdeaconry St Davids, The Archdeaconry Brecon, The Chancelor House, The Cloister House and The Deanery. It also contains the fullest record of individuals linked with the Cathedral – with the Dean (in the Chancelor House) and two of the Vicars Choral – and stone masons in the Cloister House and the Deanery ... no doubt responsible for continuing the restoration work on the Cathedral started by architect Sir George Gilbert Scott 1864 – 1876 (famous amongst other works for designing workhouses!)