

**Murder in St  
Thomas,  
Swansea**

**9 January 1952**

# The Bevan Tragedy

January 1952

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*Please come quick. I have killed my wife.*

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When the police receive a message like this they do tend to respond quite quickly. It was 5.50 pm on 9 January 1952 and three detectives went immediately to the house at 180 Lydford Avenue in Grenfell Park, St Thomas, where a horrible scene waited for them.

Brinley James Bevan, a bus driver aged 48, had killed his wife Alma May by hitting her on the head several times with a rusty hatchet. It is a tragic story which The Evening Post tells using Bevan's own words. It is his curious and unreal detachment that makes this story so moving.

After he killed her Bevan phoned the police from the Grenfell Park Post Office and when he got back he met a neighbour, Mrs Huish, who asked him if he was locked out.

*'No Mrs Huish. I have killed my wife.'*

It is not really what anyone expects to hear but, to her credit, Mrs Huish managed to stay calm.

*'What have you done Mr Bevan? What are you saying?'*

SAFETY  
FEBRUARY 16, 1952

**MEGGEZONES**

FOR  
THROAT  
COMFORT

RECOMMENDED  
BY DOCTORS

# South Wales Evening Post

No. 24,505

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 1952

## SWANSEA WIFE MURDER CHARGE: Phone call sent police to St. Thomas house

### Swansea Brigade put out the WATER

A Swansea Fire Brigade pump yesterday helped to keep production going at Morriston Gasworks.

There was no fire, but there was methane from a fault at the works.

The pump was kept busy for several hours until the fault was remedied.

### TENNIS TURF COMES BY AIR

Colonel Duncan Macaulay, secretary of the All-England Tennis Club, left Australia for England by air last night carrying a square slab of turf from the centre court of a winter city club at Sydney.

He is bringing it to Mr. Fuller, groundman at Wimbledon, who, says Fuller, asked for a piece on the court on which the new Cup challenge round is played.

### TANKER IS TAKEN IN TOW OFF BARDSEY

Tug heads for  
Irish coast

The 66-ton London motor tanker, Audacity, was taken in tow four-and-a-half miles south of Bardsey this morning by the tug, a Fulmar, of the Irish Admiralty. The tug Audacity also got a tow. Later both tugs were taken to the pier of the Salween and towed to the pier of the Audacity. The Irish coast guard said "I don't require the presence of a lifeline at present. There was little wind at night but there appeared to be plenty in the morning."

LLOYD'S MESSAGE  
The text of the broken tape when Lloyd's received the message from the

### Bus driver accused in court

A 48-YEAR-OLD Swansea bus driver, Brinley James Bevan, of Lydford-avenue, Grenfell Park, St. Thomas, was formally charged before the Swansea justices this morning with the murder of his wife, Alma May Bevan, aged 49, to whom he had been married for 25 years.

Bevan was charged that "on January 9 you did kill and murder Alma May Bevan."

Only preliminary police evidence was heard before the Stipendiary, Mr. H. Llewellyn Williams, K.C., who, on the application of the Chief Constable, Mr. D. V. Turner, remanded Bevan in custody for seven days. A certificate for legal aid was granted.

### 1,000 WANT TO WRITE FOR T.V.

Over 1,000 people, all experienced writers, are anxious to write plays for television.

Mr. Roydon Morley, Senior Controller and deputy head of the Television Drama Department, said that applications at the rate of 160 a day had been made for the B.B.C.'s special week-end course for would-be television writers, to be held in London on February 8 and 17.

"Only thirty can be taken at the course," he said. "We shall pick the people we think may be most useful to the B.B.C. in the future. This first experimental course is a success there will be others."

### Fire call: Two children with

A medium-built man, of medium height, grey and close-cut hair, and wearing a tweed coat and grey trousers, Bevan shook his head when asked by the clerk, Mr. A. H. Dixon, if he had anything to say.

**EVIDENCE OF ARREST**

Making the application for a remand, the Chief Constable said the facts of the case would have to be presented to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Other evidence of arrest would be given.

Referring to the Stipendiary, the Chief Constable said Bevan was not legally represented.

Detective-Inspector Thomas Dunford, in his evidence of arrest, said at 6.9 pm, yesterday, in response to a telephone call received at the Central Police Station, in company with Detective-Sergeant Parker and Detective-Sergeant Perks, he visited Bevan's house.

**AT POLICE STATION**

"I saw the accused there," he said, "and the dead body of his wife. Accused came to the Police Station and continued inquiries in the area."



ST. THOMAS HOME in which Mrs. Brinley James Bevan was found dead last night. The house is that on the extreme left of the picture.

### CHURCHILL RELAXES ON FIFTH AVENUE

Mr. Churchill was relaxing in New York to-day after his four strenuous days in Washington. He will spend two entirely social days as the guest of his old friend, Mr. Bernard Baruch, with no public engagements.

### SORRY — SWAN ON THE LINE

Unusual excuses for many London people late for business to-day was—swan on the line.

Rail traffic between Pulney and Wimbeldon was halted in both directions for 30 minutes from 1.45 a.m. while officials pondered how to tackle the serpent slither.

Finally, police came to the rescue by removing the swan to an R.S.P.C.A. clinic, from where it was taken to the picnic atmosphere of the adjacent Thames.

### Airfields building stumbling block

U.N. say 'No'

again to Red  
cease-fire plan

The United Nations, after further study to-day, repeated their rejection of the Com-

So he told her again two or three times.

When the police arrived he waved to them and said

*'Up here, boys, up here.'*

He took them inside and said *'What do you think of it? It's terrible isn't it?'* He seemed bewildered. *'She was one of the best wives a man could have. Then for me to kill her like this, even without a quarrel. Don't let the neighbours see.'*

Bevan shut the front door and they found her body on the floor between the hall and the kitchen. He showed them her last cup of tea. It was still warm. The police described him as composed, but through his words you get a picture of a man completely disengaged from his actions.

*'It is alright, I am calm now,'* he told them. *'I don't know why I did it. I own the house we live in and we've got another and £1000 in the bank.'* They had been out shopping earlier in the day and when they got back he *'got the hatchet from the back and waited until she had her back to me. Then I hit her a couple of times. I feel better now. There was no quarrel. I don't remember what came over me. I do remember hitting her on the head with a hatchet several times. As soon as I struck her I seemed to come right. I was quite normal when I telephoned 999.'*

In court Bevan was described as *'a medium built man, greying and close cut hair, wearing a tweed coat and grey trousers.'* He had been a bus driver for twenty years but hadn't been at work for six weeks because of illness. He said that he had had a nervous breakdown. His father had committed suicide and he had spent some time as a patient *'in a mental hospital.'* He and Alma May appeared to be a very fond couple but she had nine injuries to the scalp and other wounds to the skull caused by a *'rusting hatchet about 18 inches long.'* He told the police

*'She looked after me like a baby. Now I have killed her. She was a lovely woman. I am not worried now. I know what the end is going to be.'*

Suddenly in a single inexplicable moment, two lives had been destroyed. Whatever Bevan thought would happen, there was only one possible outcome. At the Glamorgan Assizes on 12 March 1952, he was certified insane and detained during Her Majesty's Pleasure.

He was committed to Broadmoor. He died there on 10 May 1953. He was fifty years old. A year later in July 1954 probate was granted to his brothers, William and Douglas. His estate was valued at £2079.

This is the first time I have written about this case. It is one which I find so very tragic and unsettling and also very moving. Alma, an unsuspecting, innocent victim. And Brinley too, a victim of such terrible storms inside his head. No amount of punishment could ever right that wrong.

The story does not appear in either of my books *Swansea Murders* or *Swansea in the 1950s*. It is only available here.

You can download the flipbook however, using the icon at the top of the screen if you want to save it.

For more information about *Swansea Murders* then follow this link to my website.

[How to Buy – Geoff Brookes](#)

If you would like to see a brief video presentation about the book, then click on the image below.