

FOLLAND, HENRY (1878-1926), industrialist

Name: Henry Folland
Date of birth: 1878
Date of death: 1926
Spouse: Leah Norah Folland (née Thomas)
Child: Pattie Eugenie Gregory (née Taylor)
Child: Dudley Crofton Folland
Parent: Emma Folland
Parent: Thomas Folland
Gender: Male
Occupation: industrialist
Area of activity: Business and Industry
Author: David Wynne Thomas

Henry Folland was born on 15 June 1878 in Waunarlwydd, Swansea, one of the four children of Thomas Folland, a steelworker from Llangwm in Pembrokeshire, and his wife Emma who was from Llanfynydd in Carmarthenshire. Both his parents were Welsh speakers, and Welsh was the language of the home. In 1891, at the age of twelve, Henry began work in a colliery in Gowerton, a mile or so away from his home. Whilst walking home from there along the main railway line he was struck by a train and as a result had his left arm amputated, aged just fourteen.

Thanks to the kindly interest of a schoolmaster at Waunarlwydd he was given training in shorthand and typing and became a clerk, working initially as office boy at the *'Cambria Daily Leader'*, a Swansea newspaper, then with Messrs. Leach, Flower and Co, tinsplate manufacturers of the Melyn Works at Neath. In 1903 he got the job of book-keeper and cashier at the Raven Works in Glanamman, where he worked his way up to become manager within two years, and was appointed Director the following year. In 1907 he was appointed a Director of the Grovesend Steel and Tinsplate Company at Gorseinon, which was a much bigger concern, and the following year he became its Managing Director. When William Lockett Agnew died in 1918, Folland became Chairman of the company as well.

What marked Henry Folland out was his ability with figures and his managerial skills. He was said to be a brilliant mathematician and a first class organizer with a penetrative insight into the thinking of his employees. He forged an astute commercial and strong personal relationship with William Firth, another Director of the Grovesend Company, forming an aggressive and successful team, which was to merge with Richard Thomas and Co in 1923 to form the biggest tinsplate company in Europe.

In 1906 he married Leah Norah (Lily) Thomas (1874-1957), a schoolteacher from Penclawdd, daughter of the Rev. John Thomas. They had two children, Pattie Eugenie (born 1906) and Dudley Crofton (born 1912). The first family home was Frondeg in Glanamman, and then in the early 1920s they moved to a more substantial property, Llwyn Derw at Blackpill, Swansea.

Henry Folland was very active in public life and held many offices, including Justice of the Peace, High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire, second President of University College Swansea, Vice President of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, and Chairman of the South Wales district of the Federation of British Industry. He and his wife were prominent members of Mount Pleasant Baptist Chapel in Swansea. Lily Folland also did much public and philanthropic work, serving as JP and standing as Liberal candidate for the Gower constituency in 1923. She was awarded the CBE for political and public services in south Wales in 1939.

Henry Folland died from heart failure on 24 March 1926 whilst on holiday in Egypt. He is buried in Oystermouth Cemetery, Swansea.

Frondeg was gifted by Mrs Folland in accordance with her late husband's wishes to the community of Glanamman, becoming the Amman Valley Cottage Hospital in 1935. The road on which it stood, Horney Road, was renamed Folland Road by the local Council in 1936. The house at Llwyn Derw was a Red Cross Hospital during the Second World War, and in 1947 became an annex of Swansea General Hospital.

Author

David Wynne Thomas

Sources

Census records

Edward Henry Brooke, *Chronology of the Tinsplate Works of Great Britain* (1944)

Some Captured History of Glanamman and Garnant website, viewed 14/4/2016

Mr and Mrs Henry Folland in 'Some Captured History of Glanamman and Garnant' website

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