

HANES



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CAPTURE OF HEREFORD DICK

OFFICER AND PRISONER PROSTRATED AFTER 20-MINUTE FIGHT

The capture of a notorious sheep-stealer named Richard Hackford alias Hereford Dick has just been effected. He has for a long time been a terror to the county of Hereford. Having been committed to Hereford Gaol to take his trial for sheep-stealing, he broke out of the said gaol on the 5th of March last. Nothing was heard of him until Friday morning last at about five o'clock when PS Sadler, having been for some time on the lookout for him, met him on Hirwaun common in company with five other "navigators" going to work. The officer took hold of him by the collar and told him that he was his prisoner; he hesitated for a moment and then consented to come on. After walking on the road for about four yards he attempted to throw the constable, when a desperate fight ensued between them which lasted for about twenty minutes; during that time another "navigator" assisted the prisoner by wrenching the staff from the officer, and the prisoner then dealt the latter several severe blows with it. After a desperate struggle the officer again got possession of his staff and struck the prisoner several severe blows on the head and arms. Officer and prisoner being very much exhausted by loss of blood, they lay panting for breath on the ground - the officer having a firm grasp on the prisoner's neckcloth. The prisoner, having found that the officer was handcuffing him, drew from his pocket a large clasp-knife, opened it, and made several stabs at the officer upon which a most violent struggle ensued for possession of the knife, which ended in the officer disarming the prisoner, but not until the officer had received a dreadful cut on the head. The prisoner becoming weak, the officer threw him with great violence on the ground; he was then quite disabled and the officer put the handcuffs on one of his hands. Prisoner then said that he would go quietly. A youth coming along recognised the officer and assisted him in putting the handcuffs on prisoner's other hand. He was safely lodged in Hereford Gaol on Saturday last to the great satisfaction of the farmers of that county. CMG 6 Nov 1847.

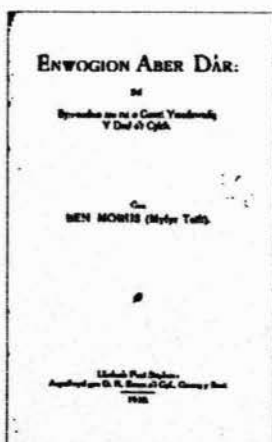
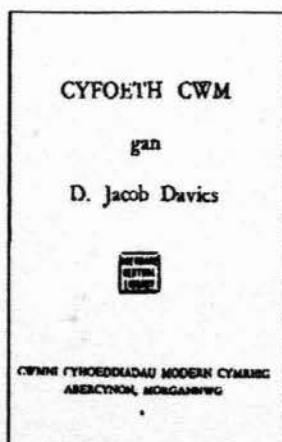
ENWOGION ABERDAR

("Famous persons of Aberdare")

"At the earnest request of several literary friends I decided to spend the Christmas holidays with them in Aberdare".

These were the opening lines written by Ben Morris (Myfyr Teifi) of Lampeter in "Cymru" for the month of March 1903. After a week of visiting the various communities in the valley, Rhondda, and Cardiff, meeting and exchanging verse with Ap Hefin, listening to "Silyn" in Siloa and enjoying the beauty of one of the most delightful parks in Wales, by Friday they arrived at the public cemetery absorbing the peaceful tranquility with only the sound of the wind rustling the leaves of the trees.

They moved from memorial to memorial - Telynog, Williams (Nebo), Lloyd (Gwladgarwr), Isaac Thomas, Huw Tegau (Bethel), and, in Morris's own words "looking at one of the most beautiful memorials in the cemetery - Caradog's. Then on to the Celtic cross now crumbling and without a name which marks the grave of one of the most eminent of workers, a giant in local industry and in the field of culture. This was the grave of David Williams (Alaw Goch). In the Temperance Hall on the 15th of January 1862 he was presented with an illuminated address and a gold medal for his ceaseless energetic endeavours and leadership with others in establishing the National Eisteddfod in its present form. Sited one year in the north and the next in the south, the first was held in 1861 in Aberdare. Alaw Goch took pleasure in poetic competition, often with colliers and labourers, with whom he was always generous with his praise. His determination with Price (Penpound) and Jones (Ceffyl Gwyn) in challenging the "Blue Books" on education in 1847 was an achievement. He subsequently became the first chairman of Park School (Vsgol y Comin). As Morris left the cemetery his comment was "The ground of this cemetery is truly called the couch of the immortals".



Ben Morris published his "Enwogion Aberdar" in 1910. It was a wealth of thumbnail sketches of over 80 men and one woman who, through their love of literature and music gave Aberdare during the second half of the 19th century the title of "The Athens of Wales". In August 1938 a pilgrimage of 1,500 people under the direction of John Davies (Pendar), W.W. Price and Sir Rhys Williams was held in the cemetery to pay homage to five of Aberdare's cultural giants, namely David Williams (Alaw Goch), Thomas Evans, (Telynog), D.W. Jones (Dafydd Morgannwg), G.R. Jones (Caradog), and James James (Iago ap Ieuan). In 1965 the Rev. D. Jacob Davies published "Cyfoeth y Cwm", "The Wealth of the Valley" (i.e. the other prominent people of the valley) whilst minister of the "Hen Dy Cwrdd" in Trecynon. This work added later jewels of the community to those in "Enwogion Aberdar".

Reflecting on these happenings leaves me wondering whether anyone in the new millennium will even remember, let alone pay homage to these immortals.

EDITORIAL



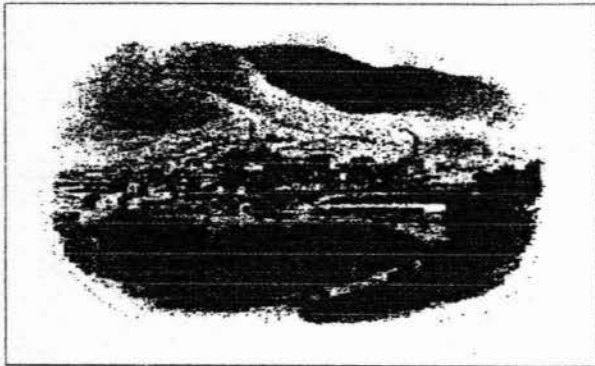
I am grateful to Doug Williams for his article on some of the "jewels of the community" of many years gone by. He asks whether anyone in the new millennium will even remember (let alone pay homage) to these immortals". I hope that the answer will be "yes". Like many other kinds of human recreation, interest in local history waxes and wanes over the years but never becomes totally extinguished. We regret the fact that in the last century the dates and circumstances of many important happenings were not noted at the time by persons who were in a position to do so, thus leaving yawning gaps in our knowledge of the period. It simply didn't strike them that the events would be of interest to their descendants. Unfortunately, we, who think ourselves more methodical than or even superior to our forebears in these matters, are just as guilty. I apologise beforehand to any readers to whom the following remark does not apply, but I do not know of anyone who regularly takes brief notes of contemporary local events, even those of a trivial and boring nature. Hands up those who, like me, are embarrassed at not being able to answer such questions as the date of closure of the local cinemas or even the date of formation of the local authority. Let us apologise for our fault to the historians of the next century, thereby drawing their attention to the fact that they are probably just as culpable as we are!

The following gleanings may be of interest.

In Glamorgan Record Office there now can be seen the National Surname Index to the 1881 census and a large collection of documents from British Coal which has now been listed and numbered. If the Surname Index is on fiche or microfilm an appointment to view may have to be made. Tel 01222 780283. GRO has also nearly completed the listing of the surviving records of the former Glamorgan County Council.

I have to apologise again for the late arrival of HANES due to new roof, pluuibing etc.

THE WAY WE WERE THEN No.9



AWFUL CATASTROPHE

On Monday last were buried in Aberdare churchyard Catherine, aged 56, and her daughter Catherine, aged 26, wife and daughter of Thomas Lewis, tiler, Aberdare, two more victims to gun-cotton. These two poor creatures were cleaning their house prior preparatory to whitewashing on Tuesday August the 20th and found a small ball of this dangerous material in a box with other lumber - it was supposed to have been left there by a nephew of the deceased who was a chemist in London but is since dead. The daughter threw it unwarily into the fire, though the mother had told her she had better throw it into the brook, and the explosion, which we recorded in our paper of Saturday, August 24th, took place. - CMG 7 Sept 1850.

RAILWAY TIME

In a recent number of Chamber's Journal the inconvenience of having two kinds of time was set forth with a considerable amount of humour. We have to present the other side of the leaf, On Sunday night last, at Rhymney, a police attempt was made to arrest a man for the non-payment of an affiliation order, It appears that such an arrest could not take place on Sunday; the policeman therefore waited until the Sabbath day was closed which he thought was the case at ten minutes past twelve. The party resisted, and the man being rescued made his escape. His companions were brought up before the

magistrates on Monday and charged with an assault upon the officer: but they were defended by Mr Bishop of Brecon; and it appeared that they were right in resisting the arrest. The policeman's watch was set by Merthyr time and Merthyr time is that kept on the railways of the United Kingdom - that of London; but as the law recognises no such new-fangled notions as steam engines and does not allow the sun to be distanced in the daily race, railway time is not the thing. Ten minutes past twelve by our Church clock is five minutes to twelve in law, in Merthyr and at Rhymney; and accordingly the policeman was a little too impatient, for the arrest took place on Sunday night. The men were discharged. CMG 6 Sept 1851.

The policeman's watch was set by Merthyr time *The invention of the electric telegraph made it possible to transmit time signals instantaneously to all parts of the country, and by 1852 Greenwich time (also known as Railway time) was in use on all railways, whence it spread to all towns and villages. Ed.*

DEPREDACTIONS AT HIRWAUN

Thomas Bacon was one of the five illegitimate children of the famous Anthony Bacon who was "the real originator of the pre-eminence of Merthyr Tydfil as the iron-smelting centre of Great Britain" (W W Price). When Anthony Bacon died in 1786 his will provided that one of his properties, the Plymouth Ironworks at Merthyr, was to go to Thomas together with a half-share in the Hirwaun ironworks. The other half went to the oldest son, Anthony Bacon II who later sold it to Thomas for £3,000. The letter which follows was written by Thomas from "Plymouth" on Thursday, September the 25th, 1817, and addressed to his solicitors at Brecon, Powell, Jones and Powell. At that time the Hirwaun works had been disused for some years.

Dear Sir,

As soon as you receive this I will thank you to send a confidential Clerk to Hirwaun in order to do what is right to put an end to the depredations committing there. The cutting the coal and the purchasing of it by the farmers seems to have become so much a custom that I fear that I shall be driven to the necessity of making an example of some of the parties and though I wish to frighten them heartily and by that means put a stop to the business. As the property has been so much neglected I think it hardly right to go to ----- against the poor devils when the temptation has been so great and so fairly thrown in their way. However a stop must now be put to it and the appearance of a professional man will I hope thoroughly effect it.

I would wish your clerk also to go to Dowlais Works and to find a woman of the name of Mary Streatly she is the woman who took possession of some of the houses and lived in one so long as she could pull up the floor, the door, and any other woodwork she could find and burn them. And she went into another and did the same, and by that means she has done a great deal of damage. She is also in conjunction with a man now living at Hirwaun one David Samuel and his wife, the sister of Mary Streatly, are the persons who have stolen most of the brass work from the engines. And these persons I understand also are

acquainted with most of the parties who have committed depredations there and if they were well frightened would readily tell all they know. And by this means many things may be recovered. At the same time it will be necessary to act with caution on any evidence they may give. The principal part of the brass work has been sold to a man of the name of Smith at Coed y Cummer. He must have known that the brass could not have come honestly into the possession of the parties from whom he bought it. In fact he deserves punishment more than the other parties.

There is a writ issued against two colliers for cutting coal but I hope they will run away from the country and save me further trouble. William Smith and Evan Gyles regularly employ people to cut coal for them, the former a blacksmith at Penderyn and the latter a lime burner near Aberdare, Philip Watkins employed by the former and Rosser Jenkin by the latter. There are now living in the houses several persons who are supposed to be the chief depredators. I wish your clerk to turn them (2 or 3 words missing) but let the poor creatures take their (1 or 2 words missing) with them and think themselves well off. It is not ——— for arrears of rent. Their names are David Samuel above-mentioned, Thomas Jenkins Jere Williams Nathaniel John and William Morgan.

I need not tell you that I particularly wish you to take immediate steps in this business when I state that the four different persons whom I have deputed to watch and take care of the premises declare one and all that it is entirely useless to attempt to do it until these people and their children are removed. I go to Farnbro? as quick as possible but shall very shortly return. Pray write to me Thursday what your clerk has done at Hirwaun.

I am, etc.
Th. Bacon.

BOOKS

No doubt there will be a few members with family connections "down the west" and they will be interested in a new book on the placenames of Pontardulais by Deric John, who wrote "Cynon Valley Placenames". The new book costs £7.50 and is available from Mr. John at 38, Abernant Road (Tel 877907).

The Society's reprint of "Children of the Mines" is now on sale locally at £2.50 or by post from Tom Evans for £2.80.

**We wish all our readers a Merry
Christmas and a happy New Year !**

MUSEUM REPORT

November witnessed the appointment of a part-time Education Officer to the museum staff Mr. Emyr Morgan who has previously worked for The Dyfed Archaeological Trust is eager to implement a schools education service as quickly as possible. The last few weeks have seen him familiarising himself with people and places of note within the area. His thanks are especially extended to Mr. Doug Williams and his Cook's tour service!

A notable recent acquisition has been a Jazz band costume which was worn during the Lockout of 1926. The museum continues to appeal for items of historic interest especially within the fields of sport and health.

Currently on display within our Temporary Exhibition room are a superb selection of tapestries which have been created by a number of local schools within our valley - the aim has been to celebrate the Millennium. A number of differing themes have been explored within these works by the children. They are the product of a great deal of hard work and ingenuity by the pupils concerned and are well worth a visit before they leave us to go to London.

The complete opening of the museum should now occur some time early within the new year. Presently, the cases are being dressed by experts appointed by the company overseeing the project. The text panels and multi-media points &c also on the verge of installation.

May we take this opportunity to wish all our patrons a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Nadolig Llawen A Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

LIBRARY REPORT

Rhondda Cynon Taff Library Service's aims include the promotion of the study, knowledge and awareness of the authority's past through the acquisition, preservation and organisation of print and non-print material. Clearly, an important element of this is material received by public donation. If you have any material that you feel will be of value to our local studies collection please contact Alun Prescott on (01685) 885318, who will be happy to discuss any queries regarding the local studies collection.

The Cynon Valley branch of the Glamorgan Family History Society has recently completed a surname index of the 1861 census for the parishes of Aberdare and Mountain Ash. Copies of this excellent work have been donated to the library and are available for public use. Another recent acquisition has been the donation of two volumes connected with Nazareth chapel, an account book and a chapel history. Given the relative lack of chapel records such donations are particularly welcomed.